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Challenging Racism in Catholic Schools Through Intimate School Leadership: Counternarratives of Black Catholic School Leaders

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by

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To Thu, you are a manifestation of Christ's love for me. You teach me the intimacy of relationship.

To Micah and Jordan, you motivate my ministry. We build this church for you and future generations.

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To the Catholic Church, to you I owe clarity in vocation and the tools for a life of joy. My membership keeps me close to Christ. It is with great love that I conduct this research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to its participants. This study is a meditation on your work and without your ministry it would lack relevance. You exemplify what Catholic social teaching aspires for the church. Your love for God's people inspires me. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

Challenging Racism in Catholic Schools Through Intimate School Leadership: Counternarratives of Black Catholic School Leaders

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Michael Ilagan Santa Maria

Conversations regarding racial equity are uncomfortable for many Catholic school leaders. This is due to a lack of clarity between Catholic social teaching (CST) and its implementation regarding racial justice among Catholic schools. This necessitates coherent guidance to address systemic racism in Catholic education which responds to the need for greater equity, inclusion, and antiracism in its Catholic schools. The purpose of this study was to work with Black Catholic school leaders to understand how they operationalize antiracism in their leadership practice. To understand this paradigm, this study addressed two research questions: (1) How do Black leaders experience their role as Catholic school principals? (2) What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice? Through a series of journal entries and semi structured interviews data were collected and interpreted through a critical race methodology. This resulted in two main findings. First, the data indicated intimate school leadership and culturally responsive school leadership as an operationalization of CST in Catholic school. Second, that racism was a key deterrent to CST implementation. The research findings suggested that an authentic commitment to Catholic schools serving the Black community requires intimate school leadership among leaders in positions of governance as modeled by the participating Black Catholic school leaders of the study.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The social uprising in the United States during the COVID-19 global pandemic has revealed the effects of systemic racism across the nation in a way that has struck a chord with mainstream culture. The recognition of the "dual pandemics" (Martinez et al., 2021, p. 1548) has sparked a national conversation on how to address systems of oppression across the nation. This recognition has had a unique effect on the educational sector, particularly in the kindergarten to 12th grade levels. The transition to distance learning during the height of the COVID-19 global pandemic unveiled issues of inequity in communities of color through the availability of internet connectivity, devices, and digital resources. For Catholic education, the reality was even more grim. Many schools' tuition-based funding models were greatly affected by the economic downturn caused by pandemic restrictions, questioning parochial schools' long-term viability. Schools serving communities of color have been disproportionately affected by this reality (National Catholic Education Association, 2021).

As a diocesan school leader, I recognized the commitment of Catholic schools to serve communities of color demands a response from the church and its Catholic schools. In the early months of the COVID-19 global pandemic, I worked alongside principals and teachers to ensure the continuation of student learning and witnessed the disproportionate effect of the COVID-19 global pandemic on schools that served communities of color across the diocese. By summer of 2020, social unrest broke out across the country as a response to police violence toward Black Americans, such as the cruelty which resulted in the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. In the first days and weeks of the protests following the deaths of these Black

Americans, the Catholic Church responded with statements condemning racism as an inherent evil. However, I witnessed many schools struggle to respond to systemic racism in a substantial way.

In conversations about race at the school and diocese level, there was a palpable discomfort among school site leaders in addressing these issues. When dialogue did occur, school leaders often addressed racism through Catholic social teaching (CST) and cited phrases like human dignity and a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Yet, school leaders stopped short of taking the necessary next step to leverage CST to upend racism in their schools. Catholic school leaders struggled to criticize its structures, policies, and curriculum that result in unbalanced per student spending and an inequity of student success. Additionally, many school leaders were uncomfortable talking about these unjust structures and how they have had a disproportionate effect on Black and Brown students. The result becomes an overemphasis on CST as doctrine, rather than framework for action in Catholic schools, as this study suggested. In other words, CST was used when addressing instances of racism in a performative way through pontification and pastoral letters without a strategic plan that resulted in a more equitable and inclusive Catholic Church in the United States.

Through the experiences of Black Catholic school leaders, this study sought to understand the disconnect between the church's spiritual tradition, its social teachings, and the lack of critical self-reflection and action toward a culture of equity and antiracism in Catholic education. Just as schools across the United States grapple with systemic racism that shapes their policies and practices, Catholic school administrators must attend to the impacts and legacies of racism in their schools. Moreover, to meet this crucial moment in the church in the United States,

Catholic school leaders are prophetically called to put the gospel message of love and justice into action by directly confronting systemic racism in Catholic education.

Catholic Schools in the Dual Pandemics

The original intent of Catholic schools in the United States was to serve immigrant Catholic communities as a response to the mainstream pan-Protestant moral education of public education in the 1800s. As a result, Catholic schools became a haven for people of color as they were venues where faith, culture, and language were celebrated. By the mid-1960s Catholic schools in the United States became the largest private school network in the world. However, parochial schools struggled to serve the shifting demographics in urban environments (Convey, 1992). In fact, this inclusive approach experienced by White Catholic immigrants were not shared by non-White students. Exclusionary admission policies and increasing costs of tuition began to exclude students of color, specifically Black and Latino children (Green & O'Keefe, 2001). By the turn of the century, the declining enrollment in Catholic schools exacerbated competitive admission policies and increasing tuition cost which intensified the exclusion of students of color across the nation (McLellan, 2000). In fact, critics of private schools condemned its market approach to education and accused private schools of perpetuating historical segregation in schools (Parker & Margonis, 1996). The COVID-19 global pandemic has introduced an added level of vulnerability to the mission of Catholic education to serve the poor and marginalized communities in the United States.

Two months into social distancing in 2020, the Huffington Post highlighted the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the long-term sustainability of Catholic education in the

United States (Klien, 2022, p.1). Kathy Mears (2020), the acting CEO of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) said:

> The Catholic schools that serve wealthier clientele will probably be fine, but the ones that serve the working class and the poor, it will be difficult. . . . If this trend continues, I worry there won't be Catholic school options, especially for the middle class and poor. (as cited in Klien, 2022, p. 1)

The COVID-19 global pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of Catholic schools in underprivileged communities across the country which undermines their ability to fulfill their mission in the United States.

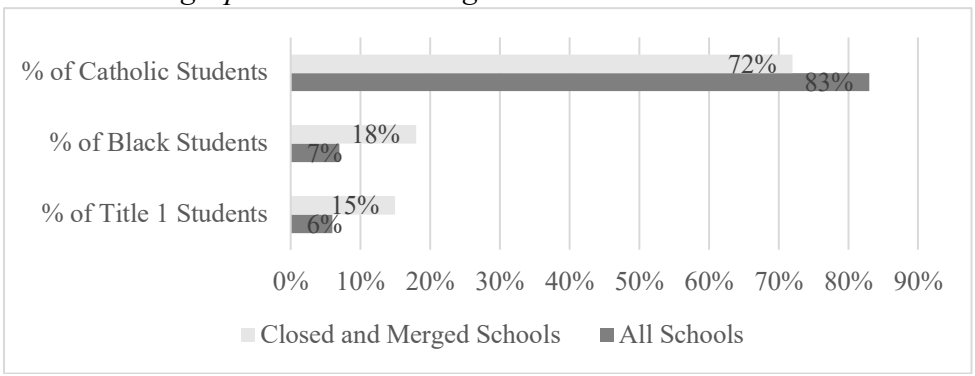
On May 25, 2020, 6 days after the Huffington Post published its article on Catholic schools (Klien, 2022), George Floyd was murdered by police which sparked national social unrest (Hill et al., 2020). His untimely and unjustified death at the hands of police magnified the systemic violence and injustice against Black Americans present in the U.S. society since its conception. This moment in 2020 amplified the issues of systemic racism in U.S. society because of the effect of the COVID-19 global pandemic on underrepresented populations. The spread of the Coronavirus disease unmasked the disguise of equality in the United States through its disproportionate effect on communities of color across the nation (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 2020).

The COVID-19 global pandemic had taken its toll on the viability of Catholic schools. According to the National Catholic Education Association (National Catholic Education Association [NCEA], 2021), Catholic school enrollment dropped 111,000 students, a 6.4% decrease, from the 2019–2020 school year to the 2020–2021 school year; the largest single year

decline in nearly 50 years (NCEA, 2021). The NCEA specifically named Black families, Title I students, urban communities, and non-Catholics as overrepresented in the demographic sample of closed Catholic schools. They further added these undeserved communities were over twice as likely to have their Catholic schools closed as illustrated in Figure 1. The convergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic and racial crises in the United States provided a unique opportunity for Catholic school administrators to critically reflect on Catholic school's mission to serve communities of color with efficacy and to investigate the dynamics of race and equity in Catholic education.

Figure 1

Student Demographics: Closed/Merged Catholic Schools Versus All Catholic Schools



Note. Adapted from "Data Brief: Catholic School Enrollment and School Closures, Post-COVID-19," by National Catholic Education Association, 2021, *Data Brief: Catholic School Enrollment and School Closures, Post-COVID-19.* (https://www.ncea.org/NCEA/Proclaim/Catholic_School_Data/NCEA/Proclaim/Catholic_School_Data/Catholic_School_Data.aspx?hkey=8e90e6aa-b9c4-456b-a488-6397f3640f05). Copyright 2021 by National Catholic Education Association.

CST and Race

CST is a tradition in the church that is rooted in the scripture. Both the Old and New Testament have recurring themes of God standing on the side of the poor, the enslaved, the immigrant, and the marginalized. In the Old Testament, the Exodus depicts God freeing the Hebrews from the land of Egypt through the prophet Moses. In the New Testament, God enters

the world as an immigrant born out of wedlock from Nazareth in the land of Judea. At the Sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes, Jesus calls the poor, those hungry for righteousness, and the persecuted, blessed (New American Bible, 2011, Exodus 11; Luke 1: 26-35; Luke 2: 1-14; Matthew 5: 1-13). In a modern context, CST emerged out of the social conflict sparked by capitalism and the industrial revolution. In *Rerum Novarum* [Of New Things], Pope Leo (1891) addressed the plight of the working class and called the church to be critical of the systems that create these conditions. Through Pope Leo's critique, the seminal themes of CST (i.e., human dignity, common good, and a preference for the poor and vulnerable), were born. Today, CST is a body of work that is made up of papal encyclicals, conciliar documents, and episcopal statements. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB; 1998) have summarized CST into seven themes (a) life and dignity of the human person; (b) call to family, community, and participation; (c) rights and responsibilities; (d) option for the poor and vulnerable; (e) dignity of work; (f) the rights of workers; and (g) solidarity. These themes are intended to serve as a guideline for policy making regarding the church's social work. Catholic education, by definition, is a social work of the church; therefore, CST has direct implications of what a Catholic school is, what it teaches, and whom it serves.

As this study specifically looked at the roadblocks to the implementation of CST regarding race in Catholic education, it was important to identify what encyclical, exhortations, and pastoral letters had to say about the issue of racism in the church universally and specifically to the Catholic Church in the United States. In the Second Vatican Council, the synod reflected on the role of the human person and the Catholic Church in the modern world. *Guadium Et Spes* [Joy and Hope] by Pope Paul VI (1965) specifically tackled the proper development of culture in

an increasingly pluralistic world. In this context, the council pointed to discrimination as an urgent Christian duty regarding culture stating:

> Especially for Christians, is that of working diligently for fundamental decisions to be taken in economic and political affairs, both on the national and international level which will everywhere recognize and satisfy the right of all to a human and social culture in conformity with the dignity of the human person without any discrimination of race, sex, nation, religion or social condition. (Pope Paul VI, 1965, para. 60)

On the 8th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* [Of New Things], Pope Paul VI (1971) directly addressed racism and pointed to its systemic nature when he stated:

> Racial discrimination possesses at the moment a character of very great relevance by reason of the tension which it stirs up both within countries and on the international level. Men rightly consider unjustifiable and reject as inadmissible the tendency to maintain or introduce legislation or behavior systematically inspired by racialist prejudice. (para.16)

More recently, the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace (PCJP; 1988) directly tackled the issue of racism as international attention was drawn toward the opposition of the Apartheid in South Africa. The church addressed the institutionalized nature of racism evident in constitutions and laws in countries around the world. It named this problematic ideology as, "Justified by an ideology of the superiority of persons from European stock over those of African or Indian origin 'colored,' which is, by some, supported by an erroneous interpretation of the Bible" (Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace [PCJP], 1988, para. 9). In 2001, the PCJP acknowledged the role of the church in participating in racism and recognized pardon as path for national reconciliation. In the request for pardon, the PCJP specifically named the people of Israel,

American Indians, and Africans and identified education as central to addressing racism and discrimination (PCJP, 2001). Today, racism is still a point that surfaces from the Vatican in the conversation around human dignity and the church's call to greater communion with one another. In *Fratelli Tutti* [All Brothers] Pope Francis (2020), called for greater human fraternity and social friendship around the world and addressed racism as a way in which people dehumanize each other hindering kinship with one another when he stated:

> A readiness to discard others finds expression in vicious attitudes that we thought long past, such as racism, which retreats underground only to keep reemerging. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think. (para. 20)

This was a demonstration of the recognition of racism as a contemporary issue of the church and a continued conversation in the Vatican.

The USCCB has also addressed racism in U.S. churches. As a response to desegregation 4 years after the Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954), the USCCB (1958) addressed racism in *Discrimination the Christian Conscience*. The bishops condemned compulsory segregation, identified it as a cause for racial oppression, and positioned it as contrary to Christian love. The issue of resegregation was named vital and urgent; however, no clear plan was laid out to address racism in the church except to caution that the path forward should include "Prudence . . . to view problems in proper perspective" and that "All must act quietly, courageously, and prayerfully before it's too late" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1958, para, 20, 23). Ten years later in 1968, de facto segregation resulted in civil disorder across the country marked by the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The

Catholic Church acknowledged that they had not done enough to address racism in the *Statement on National Race Crisis* (USCCB, 1968). Specifically, the document named the Catholic Church had failed to eradicate racism from its own institutions, parishes, schools, hospitals, and convalescent homes. It called upon churches in the United States to address issues that contributed to de facto segregation in the areas of education, job opportunity, housing, and welfare assistance. These pastoral letters admitted racism was in issue in the United States, but there was a distinct lack of decisive action to address racism in the country and within the church.

In 1979, the bishops again acknowledged the enduring problem of racism in society and in the Catholic Church with noticeably stronger language in the pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (USCCB, 1979). Here the bishops characterized the nature of racism as a sin. First, they addressed racism and poverty as distinct and interrelated problems that afflicted people of color. Second, they stated racism was a social sin that was systemic and appeared in overt and covert ways rooted in the values of a society. Third, the bishops identified racism in the United States was rooted in slavery and colonization and acknowledged:

> How great the scandal given by racist Catholics who make the Body of Christ, the Church, a sign of racial oppression! Yet all too often the Church in our country has been for many a "White Church," a racist institution. (USCCB, 1979, p. 5)

Importantly, they noted despite this, underrepresented people have survived, increased, and made a positive imprint on the church. Lastly, they called the church to respond individually and systemically which included: (a) calling for an examination of conscience on attitudes and behaviors towards people who are Black, Hispanic, Native Americans, and Asian; (b) fostering

vocations among underrepresented groups and educating the ordained in on the history, contributions, and liturgical traditions of Catholics of color; and (c) expanding Catholic education to serve communities of color, specifically naming people who are Black, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian.

Most recently in 2018 the USCCB wrote *Open Wide Our Hearts*, with its message rooted in the words of the prophet Micah, to do justice, love goodness, and to walk humbly with God, seven social teachings taking prominence. First, the bishops tied the teaching of racism directly to its teaching on the sanctity of life naming racism as an erosion to this central teaching. Second, the bishops called all Catholics to acknowledge and educate themselves in the counternarratives of Catholic communities of color, highlighting specifically the experience of Native Americans and African Americans. Third, they called on all Catholics to have an honest examination of conscience on their attitude about race. Fourth, the bishops named resistance to racism, the openness to others, relationship building, and healing as the work of the evangelical mission of the church. They pointed to the acknowledgement of sin and the process of reconciliation as initial steps in this endeavor. Fifth, the bishops identified a plan to address racism in the work for justice, in the education of all the ordained, and the laity by improving curricula related to racism and reconciliation in Catholic schools, seminaries, and deaconate formation programs. Sixth, they called for the promotion of cultural diversity in churches by promoting martyrs, blessed, and saints for all cultural groups and specifically supports the canonization of the first African American saint. Lastly, they called upon an ecumenical coalition to address racist policies and institutional barriers (USCCB, 2018). CST has been effective in identifying racism and acknowledging its complicity and participation in it; however,

CST is criticized for its inability to address the prevailing culture of Whiteness within the church. To address this, Massingale (2000) proposed a shift in ethical reflection for the Catholic Church in the United States. These shifts are identified as: (a) conversation on racism to White privilege, (b) parenesis to analysis, (c) personal sin to structures of sin, (d) moral suasion to liberating awareness, and (e) unconscious racial supremacy to intentional racial solidarity. These proposed shifts addressed the culture of Whiteness in the Catholic Church.

Whiteness and the Catholic Church

The relationship of the Catholic Church with racism in the United States has not been a glamourous one. Since the beginnings of the modern civil rights movement, they have recognized that racism is counter to the gospel message but have struggled to contribute significantly to dismantling racism in U.S. culture and within the church. As CST in the US evolved a systemic understanding of racism emerged which is illustrated through the culture of whiteness in the Catholic Church. Cressler (2020) research depicted the nature of Whiteness in the church through an analysis of complaint letters of regarding the desegregation of Chicago in the 1960s. His close reading of this "race mail" (p. 276) helped identify the culture of Whiteness prevalent in the Catholic Church in the United States. Catholicism operates as religio-racial formation in U.S. society. This understanding helped explain how Whiteness has shaped the Catholicness of White Catholics. According to Cressler (2020), Catholic has been used in the American narrative to describe a White, immigrant, blue collar ethnicity. In this definition, ethnicity becomes problematic because White ethnicity does not occur naturally or consistently in U.S. culture. The semantics of Catholicism in the American vernacular points to the Eurocentric identity of Catholicism, which ignores the majority of U.S. Catholics who are not

White. This example of the blurred lines between what is racial and what is religious is endemic in U.S. culture, including the historical role of the Catholic Church in slavery, segregation, racism, and White supremacy. This narrative within the Catholic Church does not recognize its problematic relationship with racism. Rather it points to the role of religion in civil rights and highlights interracial and integration activism and while ignoring it in most of its congregants who were pro-segregation. Cressler (2020) used the response of Catholics to the desegregation of Chicago in the mid-1960s to illustrate the culture of White supremacy in the Catholic Church. Through the close reading of the Archdiocese of Chicago's archives of parishioner's letters that expressed their repugnance toward the Archbishop support of integration. Three themes from those letters illustrated Whiteness in the Catholic Church as: (a) law and order obedience, (b) policing the political and the spiritual, and (c) Whiteness as representatives of what is real. Many of these themes are still part of Catholic culture in the United States which guide its practice and policies in parishes and schools. These themes helped define the character of Whiteness in the church which contributed to the reinforcement of systemic racism within its ministries.

In the pastoral letter, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, the USCCB (1979) acknowledged there have been some strides in the fight for racial justice but named the systemic nature of racism in the church that Cressler (2020) described. The Conference of Catholic Bishops recognized the experience of many U.S. Catholics of a White church as a racist institution. They pointed out specific areas in which church leadership must respond. However, despite its strong language condemning racism, the document received very little publicity and resulted in minimal change. Massingale (2010) identified that lack of efficacy of CST on race in the American church occurred for three main reasons (a) it is uninformed by social science, (b) it lacks theological

reflection, and (c) it fails to identify an actionable plan. These deficits are rooted in how the Catholic Church approaches race.

Massingale (2010) noted CST misunderstands the issue of race by failing to recognize that its teachings are set within a White culture. He illustrated the point when he brought attention to the title of the USCCB (1979) pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters to Us* and asked the question "Who is *us*?", identifying the church's social teaching were written in a White narrative and for a White Catholic audience. This further illustrated the systemic racism that the pastoral letter condemns. The church's social teaching misunderstands the nature of racism by identifying personal and communal conversion as of a primary concern. This was rooted in an understanding of racism that is, "impressionist or anecdotal, and its conclusions are thus too often pious exonerations" (Massingale, 2010, p. 75). This resulted in a conversation of race in the Catholic Church that was centered on the ignorance of people of good will and fails to recognize the dynamics of power in race relations, which are not solved by dialogue and education. To address systemic racism within the Catholic Church requires an understanding of racism as a culture within the church which privileges White Catholics to the determent of Catholics of color. To address this colorblind culture in the church requires a willingness to listen to the counternarratives of victims of racism, which acknowledges their experience and perspective. Lastly, Massingale (2010) attributed the lack of efficacy of CST on racism to a lack of passion. He illustrated this point by highlighting other social teaching in which the churches fervor was unwavering. For example, the church's stance of the sanctity of life from conception to natural death is not communicated in ambiguous terms. However, racism as "radical evil" (p. 6) was not met with the same response (USCCB, 1979). Instead, the USCCB (1989) committee

on Black Catholics identified a lack of attention on systemic racism in the church educational institution, seminaries, religious congregations, parishes, and schools. This illustrated that antiracist theology was not central to the American Catholic identity.

To position racism as a radical evil in the church's moral philosophy, the USCCB (1979) rightly pointed to a need for clergy of color in addressing racism. Representation is necessary in elevating the counternarrative of Black Catholics without which true theological reflection on racism in the church is not possible. For the narrative of Black Catholics to take root in theological reflection, Cone (2000) argued Catholic theologians must address White supremacy as a theological problem. In defending their belonging to the church, Black Catholics often point to history rather that theology to justify that they belonged. This tactic pointed out that Black Catholics have always been part of the church and that White dominance in the church cannot push them out. However, in his critique of Black liberation theology in the Catholic Church, Cone (2000) pointed out a historical perspective does not fully condone the belonging of Black Catholics in the church. Rather, significant critical dialogue was needed. Cone (2000) asked Black Catholic theologians to be unapologetic in their critique of their church by bringing attention to White supremacy and the profound incompatibility between Christianity and racism. Cone (2000) stated, "We must make our critique of the arrogance of White theology so profoundly clear that no White theologians will feel comfortable without making race criticism an essential component of their understanding of Christian theology" (p. 739). The construction of critical Black theology in Catholic Church dialogue regarding White supremacy in the church is essential. It should be met with rigorous debate and not be ignored or viewed as a passing issue.

The dialogue around White supremacy in the church should rightly begin with the counternarrative that the Black community holds. Grimes (2017) argued White supremacy in the church is endemic to the point of corrupting its sacramental practices. To prove the point, she illustrated how the sacrament of baptism was used by Catholic slave owners, including clergy, to wash away Black identity, to destroy Black kinship, and to develop a moral order in which Black people could only accept salvation through slavery. Additionally, she identified the use of the Eucharist to sacramentally neglect Black bodies and Black souls by withholding the Eucharist from enslaved communities. During Jim Crow, rather than testifying to the Gospel, the Catholic Church welcomed segregation and excluded Black Catholics from its ministries of healthcare and higher education. Grimes argued that sacramental optimism played a role in the strengthening of the ties in White communities to the exclusion of communities of color. Grimes (2017) described sacrament optimism as:

> The belief that the church's practices can, if enacted and understood properly, possess a demonstrable capacity to resist the atomizing individualism of the modern world and thereby enable the church to performativity receive its identity as the body of Christ. (p. 34)

This worldview resulted in a belief that the church resisted the violence of the modern world by intensifying its role as different from the world. Grimes argued this point of view was problematic because it ignores the fact the church is a social body and is susceptible to being influenced by the society that it exists in. Grimes (2017) proved this point by identifying the role of the Catholic Church in slavery in the United States and stated, "In the era of slavery, these sacraments did not fail to incorporate disparate individuals into a cohesive body; they simply did

so perversely, acting to consolidate systems of White supremacist slavocracy" (p. 37). To the contrary, she argued the church was not separate from the world but rather lives within the world as the body of Christ. In the context of the afterlife of slavery in U.S. culture and its relationship with the church, the sacraments of initiation were enacted by racially segregated Catholic communities solidified White supremacy within the church. The vice of racism will only cease when it no longer has the power to perpetuate White supremacy and racial segregation in neighborhoods and parishes. Therefore, the church must move beyond moral suasion and toward a strategic purification of racism within the body of Christ if it is to maintain its identity as Christ's body, both eucharistic and ecclesial.

The Black Catholic Experience

To fully understand how Catholic schools can respond to racism in schools, it is important to recognize that schools exist within the greater culture of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is a social body which is influenced by the society in which it exists. For this study, it is important to recognize the history of the Catholic Church in the United States to understand the dynamics of racism in the church in the United States. Massingale (2010) defined racism in this way:

> Racism is a cultural phenomenon. That is, a way of interpreting human color differences that pervades the collective convictions, conventions, and practices of American life. Racism functions as an ethos, the animating spirit of U.S. society, which lives on despite observable changes and assumes various incarnations in different historical circumstances. (p. 12)

Thus, the Catholic Church in America is steeped in this cultural phenomenon and therefore, it struggles to live out its teachings and traditions. This results in complicity toward the sins of racism and slavery, and collaboration in the development of institutionalized racism in the United States. Raboteau (2009) suggested two Christian identities had developed in the United States, one White and one Black. The White Christian narrative depicts the church in the United States as the promised land, where Christian can practice their faith freely without fear of persecution. The Black Christian narrative depicts African American Christians as the chosen children of God illustrated by the Exodus story, where God found God's home with the oppressed and enslaved. Thus, the Christian African American experience in the United States flips the dominant narrative of the United States as promised land demonstrated by the American Dream to one in which the racial degradation of Black Americans is inverted to transpose the biblical message of justice.

In the Promised Land, The White Immigrant Experience

When defending the role of CST in Catholic schools, the narrative that Catholic schools developed schools that were pro-immigrant, culturally diverse, and responsive to the needs of its communities. The original intent of Catholic schools in the United States was to provide an alternative education to the mainstream pan-Protestant moral education of public education in the 1800s for a new wave of Catholic migrants of European descent. During this period, Catholics were a marginalized immigrant class who were economically disadvantaged. As a result, Catholic schools became a haven to underrepresented people, where faith, culture, and language were celebrated. This resulted in economic security and cultural preservation for Catholic immigrants (O'Keefe & Evans, 2004). In the 1840s, the Irish potato famine led to an influx of

Irish Catholic settlers in the United States, followed by Catholics from southern and eastern Europe right after the Civil War. These migration patterns resulted in ethnic parishes in urban areas serving students in Catholic schools. (Burns & Kohlbrenner, 1937; Walsh, 1996). In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, Catholic schools established themselves in the United States while developing close-knit parishes segregated by ethnicity. These communities provided safe havens from tension developed between different nationalities while honoring each groups native heritage and language (Sanders, 1977). By the mid-1960s Catholic schools in the United States became the largest private school network in the world, providing social mobility for Catholics in urban areas (Convey, 1992; Dolan, 1985, 2002; Grant & Hunt, 1992). By the end of World War II these White Catholic ethnic communities developed into socioeconomically and racially homogenous communities which migrated into suburban neighborhoods across the United States. This narrative is used in Catholic circles to identify the role of cultural responsiveness in evangelization and to justify the need to cater to new immigrants at the turn of the century. (Scanlan, 2008).

Still in Egypt, The Black Catholic Experience

Central to the predominant narrative articulated in relation to CST is the erasure of the Black Catholic experience which did not appear in the absence of White ethnic communities in Urban areas in the second half of the 19th century. Rather the rich history of Black Catholics demonstrated their resilience as a community of faith while illustrating the nature of systemic racism present in American Catholic culture. The presence of Black Catholics was present in its impetus. Through a dreadful journey to the Americas four Spaniards survived, arriving in the Mexican territory of what is now Florida, Texas and Arkansas in 1536. All four were Spanish

speaking and Catholic who marked the beginning of the story of Catholicism in the United States. Unlike his fellow survivors, Esteban was a slave, and is known as the first Black Catholic in the United States. Esteban became the first scout and guide identified by the Franciscans to seek out the possibility of missionary work in the territory. His expedition resulted in his death by natives in the city of Cibola, in modern day New Mexico. By 1565 a Spanish colony name St. Augustine was formed in modern day northern Florida, marking the oldest parish in the United States which lasted till 1763 when the Treaty of Paris ceded the Florida colony to the British. Parochial records in this 200-year period confirms the presence of Black Catholics in the Florida colony. The 2nd Spanish period lasted in St. Augustine from 1784 to 182. Church records at that time show active Black participation both slave and free. Similarly, in the west coast of the United States the town of Nuestra Senora de Los Angeles was founded in 1781. Of the 11 founding families, all were Catholic and over half the adults were Black. This is the first of many cities in California which share in the same story, racially Afro-Hispanic and Catholic in faith (Davis, 1990).

One of the states in the early Catholic Church in the United States where African slaves made up a major component of the Catholic Church was in Maryland. The prefect Apostolic of the Maryland colony was Jesuit John Carroll. The financial need among Jesuit communities in the United States recovering from their suppression by Pope Pius VII resulted in slave ownership. Many Catholic families at the time including John Carroll were slave owners. American Jesuits were conflicted by the slave ownership and hoped for emancipation. The older generation saw salvation of slaves as their responsibility while younger Jesuits looked to sell slaves to shift their activity from agriculture to education. Ultimately, under the leadership of

Thomas Mulledy, 272 slaves were sold in 1837 separating families and some sold to non-Catholic owners ending the possibility of the practice of their faith. Jesuits were not the only participants in slave ownership. In need of domestic help, the Vincentians in Missouri under the leadership of Joseph Rosati, who later became bishop of St. Louis, was supplied slaves by the bishop of New Orleans, Louis William DuBourg. Vincentians would own slaves till the beginning of the Civil War. Sulpicians owned slaves and religious women like the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans, Carmelites of Maryland, Daughters of the Cross in Louisiana, Religious of the Sacred Heart in Louisiana and Missouri, Dominican sisters of Kentucky, and two orders founded in Kentucky, the Sisters of Charity at Nazareth and Sisters of Loretto. Slave ownership by these Catholic institutions illustrate the moral quicksand of convenience and the inhumanity that entrapped the American church (Davis, 1990).

In 1839 Pope Gregory the XVI condemned and forbade slavery in his Apostolic letter, *In Supremo Apostalatus Fastigio* [Walking in the Footsteps of our Predecessors]. However, in southern states bishops saw themselves as defender of slavery citing Catholic tradition, scripture, church canon and local synods. One example would be Bishop John Englans, the first bishop of South Carolina. England argued that Pope Gregory did not condemn slavery in full rather limited its condemnation to the Spanish and Portuguese slave trade. He argued that history, scripture and church canon all have documented the existence of slavery without condemning it and making slavery legitimate. Another example would be Bishop Auguste Marie Martin, Bishop of the Diocese of Natchitoches in northern Louisiana. Bishop Martin view slavery as a disguised blessing for Africans who he saw as a degraded class. He argued that slavery was noble in so much as it fulfils God's plan for conversion of the Black race through the White race who they

were dependent upon. Not all bishops and priest in the South supported slavery. There were a few like Bishop John Baptist Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, who publicly spoke out against slavery (Davis, 1990). As slavery is a stain on the United States identity of democracy. So too, slavery is a stain on the American church's identity in gospel message. Despite the growing moral consciousness of the Catholic Church outside the United States to oppose slavery, the American church was unable to speak clearly on the issue of slavery or take any decisive action on the matter. As a result, the Catholic Church stood on the moral sideline throughout the Civil War era.

Black Catholic Resistance

In the time since the Civil War era, Black Catholics have been disenfranchised by the church. However, Black Catholics have advocated for the place in the church and has made their One example is the founding of St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls in Baltimore. St. Frances Academy was founded in 1828 by two freeborn refugees from San Domingo, which in known as the island of Hispaniola, Oblate Sisters Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange and Sister Marie Frances. The oblates understood the workforce options for African American women at the time but insisted on academic preparation and philosophical formation therefore developing a classical and vocational education. Included in their curriculum was the history, achievement and treatment of Africans in the Caribbean, Europe and the United States. The Oblates faced significant resistance from the Catholic Church. They were pressured to disband by the religious hierarchy while enduring the risks of educating African American women through the Civil War. During reconstruction the Oblate Sisters were rejected from educational training in Catholic institution of higher education. It was not until the 1920s that Catholic institutions began to admit

the Oblate Sisters, St. Scholastica College Atchison Kansas in 1923, Villanova College, Pennsylvania in 1925, and St. Louis University in 1927. Against all odds, St. Frances Academy lives on as the oldest continuously operating predominantly African American School in the United States. Their students continue to be educated in both philosophy and vocational studies with African American heritages integrated throughout the curriculum. Their graduates have a 99% college acceptance rate (Polite, 1996; St. Frances Academy, n.d.). Similar stories can be found across the nation like the legacy of Holy Angels school in Chicago's Southside (Shields, 1996).

Despite these examples of resistance and perseverance, the support of the church to Black Catholics was negligible throughout the 1800s. By 1919, the violence to African Americans became too hard to bear for the Vatican. The summer of 1919 was witness to significant violence against African Americans starting with the demobilization of Black soldiers who fought in World War I, followed by 72 lynchings of Black people beginning in June and 25 race riots beginning in April the bloodiest of which was in Elaine, Arkansas, killing 200 Black Americans. This time was so violent the Vatican intervened urging members the American bishops to deplore the violence against Black Americans. Despite the directive from the Vatican, the apostolic delegation gathered in Washington did not take issue with the plight of Black Americans. By the time of the civil rights movement, Black Catholic clergy were able to organize to gain voice in the American church. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, the Catholic Clergy Conference on the Interracial Apostolate had convened in Detroit in April 15–16 which resulted in the assembly of the Black Catholic Clergy Conference (Davis, 1990). This was a momentous occasion for Black Catholics in the United States. In their

first statement to the American bishops they declared, “The Catholic Church in the United States, primarily a White racist institution, has addressed itself primarily to White society and is definitely part of that society” (Black Catholic Clergy Conference, 1968, p. 1). The work of this caucus has led to the documents which communicate CST on racism in the American church.

Raboteau (2009) was accurate in his analogy of two Christian identities in the United States. One White identity that identified with the United States and the promise land. The other, Black, who saw themselves still in Egypt. The historic understanding of Whiteness in the Catholic Church is crucial in deconstructing systemic racism in the church. It becomes the initial step in fully understanding the critics of the churches social teaching on race in the United States.

Interpretive Framework: Critical Race Theory

In confronting racism in the Catholic Church, CST is used to affirm the church’s antiracist stance. However, Massingale (2010) criticized the implementation of CST in the Catholic Church in the United States because its social teaching were (a) uninformed by social science, (b) lacked theological reflection, and (c) provided no formal plan. This resulted in performative actions without a coherent strategy from the Catholic Church to confront the sin of racism in the United States. Massingale attributed this to the Catholic Church’s inability to listen to the voices of the victims of racism, socially analyze the nature of racism within the church, and understand racism through the context of White privilege. He further added the Catholic Church lacked the passion and priority to address racism as a sin in the church. In the context of Catholic education, the church’s social teachings were unable to take root in Catholic schools because they were steeped in the larger culture of the Catholic Church in the United States and

suffer from an inability to operationalize CST on racism in their schools, as does the larger church.

According to the Congregation for Catholic Education (1997):

> In its ecclesial dimension another characteristic of the Catholic school has its root: it is a school for all, with special attention to those who are weakest. . . . Spurred on by the aim of offering to all, and especially to the poor and marginalized, the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, of human and Christian formation, it can and must find in the context of the old and new forms of poverty that original synthesis of ardor and fervent dedication which is a manifestation of Christ's love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth. (para. 15)

In the United States, systems of racism endemic to the fabric of the nation sabotage the church's mission to manifest Christ love for the poor, the humble and those seeking truth. In the United States, these are communities of color. Therefore, to fulfill the mission of Catholic schools will require its leaders to criticize structures of racism that has seeped into the church while developing ways to respond to the needs of communities of color. Without addressing racism directly in the ministry of Catholic education, Catholic schools may inadvertently underserve communities of color who have come to Catholic schools because of its social teaching. Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework that can be used in Catholic schools to understand its history in the United States, recognize unjust systems that have developed which are not consistent with the church's social teaching and strategize a solution to address what hinders the mission of Catholic school for communities of color.

CRT uniquely addresses the Massingale's (2010) critic of the implementation of CST in the church in the United States. CRT found its roots in the shortfalls of critical legal studies. CRT questioned how law reproduces and normalizes racism in society. CRT migrated to education to challenge the systemic nature of racism in schools. Capper's (2015) research clarified the role of CRT in educational leadership. His work surfaced six tenets which intersected CRT with education leadership: permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, counter storytelling, interest convergence, colorblindness and intersectionality.

Permanence of Racism

Permanence of racism is the belief that racism is normal and ubiquitous at all levels of society, individual, institutional, and epistemological. It is often used to contradict the idea in which society has come to a post racial existence. Regarding educational leadership, this tenet recognizes racism as a paradigm and leaders engage in a lifelong process of confronting racism personally as they lead school systems in the same journey. By understanding racism from this perspective, leaders avoid incremental change the transfers injustice from one place to another. To do so requires four interrelated leadership practices. First, educational leaders ought to develop an antiracist identity. It is important to point out that this identity rarely results from diversity trainings, book studies or workshops alone. Rather, these are experiences necessary to as part of a leader's lifelong journey toward an antiracist identity. Second, successful school leaders do not avoid opportunities to discuss racial issues. These school leaders participate in informal conversations about race both individually and as whole faculties in real time as problems occur. Third, is to recognize the historical and current pervasiveness of racism by moving beyond diversity trainings by confronting difficult issues racism surface. Leaders can

evaluate their efficacy professional development on racism by their ability to address the six tenets of CRT in educational leadership. Lastly, is to use equity audits to collect and analyze data on race to strategize solutions for racial equity (Capper, 2015).

Whiteness as Property

Whiteness as property stemmed from the value of property rights over human rights in U.S. history. To participate in civic society required men to own property and to own property required one to be White. African Americans could not own property but were seen as property, being bought traded and sold. Therefore, to be White in the United States meant an automatic entitlement to right and privileges resulting in Whiteness as property. An example of a White property that is protected for themselves is advance placement and gifted curriculums which are held up by remedial, tracked, and special education programs. Additionally, curriculum that disregards and eliminates of the experience of people of color is passionately protected. Regarding educational leadership, defining Whiteness as property was particularly helpful in navigating pushback against equitable school curriculum. In eliminating inequity school leaders often used data as a tool to surface systemic racism to achieve community buy in, without acknowledging the fervor behind the protection of White property. To find success in equity, work leaders in education must anticipate resistance and use counternarratives to illustrate White normativity (Capper, 2015).

Colorblindness

Colorblindness as a belief system appears in two ways. First, that educators do not see student's race or that race does not matter. Accepting this belief denies the legacy of slavery, the ubiquitous nature of microaggression and systemic racism that is central to the experience of

students of color. Second, when educators mistake race neutrality for White culture, therefore, expecting students to conform to Whiteness. This was experienced through the resistance to culturally responsive practices, when seen as inappropriate, threatening, and divisive. Color blindness defined this way is also evident in a neoliberal approach to education. Here, school academic initiatives promote the marketization of education characterized as an over emphasis on high stakes testing and undiscerning data collection which were deemed objective and left unchallenged despite its disproportionate negative effect on students of color (Capper, 2015).

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence is the idea that achievements toward racial equality in the United States have only occurred when racial equality has a concurrent positive effect on White Americans. The critical analysis of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) would surface that this decision was made to demonstrate democratic values internationally during the Cold War era when in fact it served as a strategy to suppress African American uprising in the United States. A critical analysis on education in the United States through the lens of interest convergence would surface how the marketization of education focuses results on increased student learning among communities of color while benefiting White students and businesses primarily. Interest convergence helped leaders in education critically analyze how mainstream practices that intended to result in equity may harm marginalized communities. However, Aléman and Aléman (2010) cautioned interest convergence had limitations in equity work. It should be focused on upending systemic racism in education. The politicization of interest convergence can result in systemic resistance toward antiracism work and an acceptance towards slow incremental gains rooted in ideas meritocracy, colorblindness, and fairness (Capper, 2015).

Counternarratives

Counternarratives is the value of the experience of people of color against the narrative that White experience as normative found at all levels of being: individual institutional, societal, and epistemological. In education there are four majoritarian narratives that prevail: (a) to be fair means to be blind to race by treating all students equally, (b) intelligence is genetic explaining racial inequalities in education, (c) student achievement is due to talent and effort and funding spent on gifted and hardworking students is a better investment than low performing students of color, and (d) focusing on student of color unfairly punishes hardworking students. To counter the majoritarian narrative school leaders must genuinely include communities of color in the school's equity work. This includes decision making among faculty and staff which emphasizes the importance of hiring educators of color and mentoring them into leadership positions. By understanding the role of counternarratives in developing equitable schools, leaders can investigate the impact of White privilege on communities of color while disempowering racial essentialism (Capper, 2015).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined as the intersection of race with other forms of identity: other races, gender, class. Often CRT is researched within a specific racial demographic (e.g., people who are Black, Latino or Asian). An intersectional approach recognizes that these studies have an intersectional application among races, like studies among Black and Latino students or between race and gender, like studies about Latina students. All these critical examinations among different identities are seen as essential parts of addressing social justice as a whole.

Through intersectionality eliminating racial injustice is seen as part of the larger goal of eradication all forms of oppression (Capper, 2015).

Therefore, CRT is a lens in which school leaders can address Massingale's (2010) critique on of CST on race in the United States. First, through an examination of conscience, the church can understand its struggle to reconcile with the sin of racism, the ways in which Whiteness functions as property that the church protects, the motivations that underlie philanthropic support to communities of color, and the sanitization of racial injustice through social and economic classifications. Second, by listening to the experience of communities of color and its intersection with other identities with an empathetic heart. These become initial steps that inform CST with social science. When inspired by the gospel and done in a prayerful way, it can lead to greater theological reflection. Ultimately, its fruits can identify an actionable plan to operationalize CST on race throughout the church in the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Catholic schools are prophetically called to put the gospel message of love and justice into action by directly confronting systemic racism in Catholic education. However, this is challenging work given the Catholic Church's history and the complexities of addressing systemic racism among school communities. At the time of this study, very little research had been published on how Catholic schools might respond to the challenge of systemic racism.

On a practical level, the dioceses across the nation need to develop an approach to the formation of school leaders in confronting racism in schools. While each school will need to address specific issues within its community, there is a need for coherent guidance from diocesan

school office to address systemic racism in its school that is rooted in CST and respond to the need for greater equity, inclusion, and antiracism in its Catholic schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory, qualitative study was to understand how Black Catholic school leaders in Southern Californian schools live out their school's missions in a way which results in school communities that implement CST. The goal of the study was to produce a framework for school leaders to use to operationalize the churches social teaching on race, resulting in communities of equity, inclusion, and antiracism.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How do Black leaders experience their role as Catholic school principals?
2. What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice?

Significance

As the dual pandemics has surfaced the nature of inequity and systemic racism in society, Catholic schools were compelled to address issues of race, equity, and inclusion in ways they had not had to face in the past. Political polarization has bled into the church leading to ideological confusion in church teaching among its Catholic school ministers. This study investigated Catholic school principals who were able to apply CST in way which resulted in antiracism, inclusion and equity.

Method

Using qualitative research methods, this study investigated principals' beliefs and actions related to race, racism, and leading toward antiracist action. Qualitative methods were

appropriate for this study because it was descriptive and exploratory and because it investigated a topic that previously had been understudied in the literature on Catholic schools.

Participants

Participants of this study were school site leaders in elementary and high school from a diocese in Southern California who identified as Black or African American. These leaders were diverse in age, gender, and tenure all identified through purposeful sampling.

Data Collection

Data were collected using journal entries to surface demographic data and background information that is relevant to the study. The purpose of journaling was to surface educational and professional experiences without the limitation of a semistructured interview. Semistructured interviews were used to directly address the research questions.

Analysis Plan

Coding was used to make meaning of the data collected. These codes were synthesized and sorted into categories. This process was recoded and categorized until themes emerge from the data.

Limitations

This study was conducted in the spring of 2022. The participant in the study were subject to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice. The leadership of a Catholic school during this traumatic time undoubtedly influenced the data collected.

Delimitations

This study purposefully researched Black Catholic school leaders. The study was intentionally limited to the diocese in which the research was conducted to capture the

experience of Black Catholic school leaders and the roadblocks they faced in implementing the churches social teaching on racism within a specific system of schools.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly summarized the history of Black Catholics in the United States. Unfortunately, this history is stained with the church's participation and complicity to slavery and racism in the United States. This is uniquely problematic due to the church's social teaching. The dual pandemics have highlighted the nature of racial injustice across the nation in a way that it can no longer ignore. For Catholic education, the COVID-19 global pandemic has called into question its educational mission to serve the poor and marginalized communities of its church. This moment provided a unique opportunity to critically reflect on Catholic school's mission to serve communities of color with efficacy and investigate the dynamics of race and equity in Catholic education. In Chapter 1, I gave an overview of the literature with regard to the role of Catholic schools in serving communities of color and sought application of social justice leadership that directly affected the church mission to serve the poor and marginalized, specifically communities of color. A brief history of urban Catholic schools serving students of color and identify recent research on social justice leadership theory will be provided in Chapter 2. The methodology of the study and research design will be described in Chapter 3. Data analysis will be provided in Chapter 4 and a discussion and implication of the study in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter 1, this study addressed the history of race in the American Catholic Church and the criticism of Catholic social teaching (CST) on race in the United States. Additionally, it has positioned Catholic schools as an avenue to address these criticisms, to gain an understanding of the operationalization of CST informed by CRT and theological reflection to surface a plan for leadership formation on CST to address systemic racism in Catholic education. In this chapter, I give an overview of urban Catholic schools serving students of color and recent research on social justice leadership theory. I specifically address areas of social justice leadership theory that address issues of racism in schools.

Urban Catholic Schools Serving Students of Color

Limited research exists on how Catholic school serve students of color. Through a review of the literature, York (1996) examined the differences in academic achievement of African Americans that attend Catholic schools versus those who attend traditional public schools. The results of her findings showed research on African Americans in Catholic schools was mired with criticism due to methodological design and interpretations, pointing to the insignificant population of African American Catholic schools' students in comparison to a significantly larger population of African American students in public schools. The result of her study identified the positive effects of Catholic education on African American students in their resiliency to low socioeconomic levels and parental education in a Catholic school setting. However, more research is needed to explain what specific Catholic school attributes result in positive outcomes for African American students. African American students need to be studied

specifically rather than as a secondary result of larger studies in Catholic education. York recommended African American Catholic students should be studied specifically through the lens of historical separatism present in the Catholic Church. Hypothesizing that cultural separatism was effective for European immigrants and may provide the same cultural responsiveness needed to serve African American students.

Green (2010) affirmed this lack of research on African American Catholic students and pointed out that research in Catholic education prioritizes studies on class and gender over race. Through the context of Black theology, he identified the reasons that African American families seek out Catholic schools and how they have developed these culturally responsive Catholic schools. He argued that Black theology serves two purposes: "First, it tells the Black story of Christian faith in the United States. Secondly, it gives a Christian interpretation of the American Black experience behind its faith" (Green, 2010, p. 441). In this context, Black theology transposed their experience of racial injustice to that of the chosen people of God to criticize the integrity of mainstream Christianity and for Black Catholics, the Catholic Church (Raboteau, 2009). Catholic schools have become a venue in which the purposes of Black theology could be operationalized. To do this well requires an understanding of the social and cultural history of Black Catholics' battle to educate themselves and their communities. Green (2010) offered four reasons to understand why African Americans seek a Catholic education (a) an understanding of what it means to be Black and Catholic, (b) a focus on the needs of the child, (c) the communal support of educating children, and (d) the seamless relationship between church, home, and school. In Catholic schools that serve Black communities, there is an understanding that children come to school with cultural capital and that these cultural gifts enrich the spiritual and

educational consciousness of students. Therefore, placing Black Catholic identity at the center of the school. These Catholic schools understand children's needs by recognizing that they are not empty vessels to be filled, but rather students who are hungry to learn and teach to that hunger. In addition, these Catholic schools were supported by African American communities who viewed the education of their children as a communal responsibility pointing specifically to the role of elders in supporting the moral and spiritual development of children. Lastly, Green (2010) pointed out the triad between church, home and school as essential. Catholic schools serving Black communities recognize the centrality of parents and family in the joint effort of academic, moral and spiritual formation. Green (2010) specifically pointed to schools founded by religious orders as uniquely able to demonstrate these four characteristics that make Catholic schools attractive to African American communities.

Irvine and Foster (1996) took a similar approach in understanding the experiences of African Americans in Catholic schools and looked at it from a historical and sociological lens. They acknowledged the role the Catholic Church played in perpetuating racism within the church and pointed out how the funding model of Catholic schools continue to exclude African American families. Additionally, Irvine and Foster (1996) complied narratives of the Black Catholic experience in Catholic school as a way of challenging dominant deficit narrative of African Americans as helpless victims in a culture of marginalization. Their volume illustrated that African Americans have been resilient in creating cultural and political spaces in the church while protecting their cultural identity. Specifically, they brought attention to the St. Francis Academy for Colored Girls in Baltimore and Holy Angels school in the south side of Chicago as previously mentioned. These schools were examples of all-Black Catholic school which

capitalized on what Green (2010) identified as reasons why African Americans sought out Catholic schools. As an example, Holy Angels accepts families rather than students, recognizing parents as partners in education. Their faculty are trained to confront deficit ideologies while focusing on students' needs, integrating a relationship between church, home, and school (Shields, 1996).

Irvine and Foster (1996) surfaced three major themes among the experience of African Americans in Catholic schools: (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) common values and shared visions, and (c) race and racial identities. Their compilation of narratives surfaced a mixed bag of experiences in Catholic schools among African Americans some positive and others negative. Though many African American parents chose Catholic school for curriculum and instruction the experience surfaces by Irvine and Foster showed that curriculum in Catholic schools were overwhelmingly Eurocentric with few examples of lay African American teachers identifying the importance of their history in the curriculum. Pedagogy in Catholic school classroom were described as traditional, didactic, unremarkable and having no special pedagogy focusing on engagement with students and a philosophy of care as central to their success. Regarding common values and shared visions, the narratives illustrated the integrated nature of home and school through values of order, discipline, character development and high expectations. The role of parents was identified as being pivotal to students' success. Many of whom were active participants in the school community and who made significant financial sacrifices to provide a Catholic education for their children. Lastly Irvine & Foster, addressed the struggle of race and identity in the Catholic school experience pointing out to varying degrees of experiences from the disregard for their African American heritage to learning about Black liberation theology and

civil disobedience. Irvine and Foster highlighted the importance of racial identity in Catholic schools recommending the examination of overt and hidden curriculums that effect the African American experience of Catholic education.

In comparison to the research on Black Catholics which is historical and sociological in nature, research on marginalized and underrepresented school communities have examples of studies with an empirical approach. Though different, these studies helped identify current research on the issues of race and racism in Catholic education. Aldana (2016) studied the institutional culture of a social justice minded, male single sex, Catholic high school that served a predominantly Latino population. Her research showed that despite the school's charism rooted in brotherhood, family and social justice, deficit ideologies about Latino students surfaced among the data. Students affirmed the value of brotherhood as central to their experience of belonging and named social justice as a way to connect their Catholic values to their lived experience. However, her findings raised two main stereotypes, students who were college bound found in honors or advance placement classes and those who were not. These stereotypes created a de facto track system at the school. Students who identified as being in general education classes expressed that low expectation was harmful to their academic identify, while teachers confessed, they focused more on behavioral issues in their general education classes as compared to their advance placement classes, leading to internalization of failure among students in general education. This research highlighted the importance of self-reflection among teachers and administrators in to recognize the effects bias on Latino students thereby surfacing deficit ideologies that create oppressive school structures.

These deficit ideologies could be characterized as hidden curriculums which oppress marginalized students when unexamined. Scanlan (2008) identified this hidden curriculum as a primary reason that hinders the implementation of CST in Catholic schools, namely human dignity, the common good, and a preferential option for the marginalized. In his research, Scanlan operationalized this hidden curriculum as the unquestioned selectivity of Catholic school admission processes which systematically excludes students with disabilities, emergent English speakers, immigrant students and children living in poverty. His research showed that the more closely a school community aligns their recruitment and retention models with the values of CST by responding to the needs of the community the hidden curriculum can be better examined. Despite this focus, the data showed contradictions to CST appears when examined from a systemic lens. The movements toward inclusivity were haphazard and incremental. Schools continued to segregate students with learning challenges, struggled to foster economic and ethnic diversity, and ignored issues of institutional racism. Significant to note, that none of the participating schools recognized CST as a significant influence but rather pointed to school leadership as having the highest influence on inclusive practices. Consequently, examination of CST on school policies, processes, and protocols remains a needed area of research.

Castillo (2019) specifically examined the leadership practices around tuition policies and community outreach programs in schools that serve Latino families by measuring the role of CST and culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL). Despite demonstrating the intention to have policies rooted in CST and CRSL, school leaders expressed this with limited frequency and at varied and moderate levels. The data demonstrated a need to go beyond the presence of culturally responsive practices to those which engage the community toward greater social

justice. Similarly, the participants perceived CST as influential but struggled to have meaningful implementation of CST practices. Critical self-reflection was cited as key to making the transition between held values and implementation (Castillo, 2019). Though this study specifically addressed CST in CRSL in a school predominantly serving Latino families, it serves as an example of the current research on race and Catholic schools.

The literature on Catholic schools serving communities of color illustrated the legacy and commitment of Catholic institutions in serving communities of color. However, the works of Aldana (2016), Scanlan (2008), and Castillo (2019) highlighted the need for social science to maximize the impact of CST. Social justice school leadership becomes helpful in identifying how CST can be operationalized in a school context.

Social Justice School Leadership

Empirical evidence has highlighted the impact of the principal on school culture. A meta-analysis of 35 years of research on school leadership by Marzano et al. (2007) found school leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement. In the work of social justice in education, this positions the principal at the center of the social justice agenda in education. In his seminal work on social justice leadership, Theoharis (2007) developed a theory that describes the work of social justice leaders. Theoharis (2007) described social justice leadership as "principals [who] make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalized conditions in the United States as central to their advocacy, leadership, practice and vision" (p. 223). His research identified that social justice school leaders enact social justice by improving education environments through increased student achievement, enhanced school structure, expanded staff capacity, and a developed school

culture. A defining characteristic of his research was a framework for resistance to social justice school leadership. The data showed leaders meet resistance as a result of their social justice agenda and when addressing students who are historically marginalized. Consequently, social justice leaders developed their own resistance to sustain their work in social justice (Theoharis, 2007). Preparation to confront resistance toward social justice is pivotal to ensuring equity in schools. Other social justice leadership theories have emerged from this work like transformative school leadership (Shields, 2010) which studied social justice leadership broadly. However, there are social justice leadership theories that address racism more directly. Namely, CRSL, CRT and antiracist leadership.

CRSL

One avenue that intersects social justice leadership and race more specifically is CRSL. Culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 1994) have been prevalent frameworks in the sphere of social justice in education. Culturally responsive school leadership is an important area of study because it supports the systematic effects of culturally responsive pedagogies leading toward sustained success. A review of the literature on CRSL by Khalifa et al. (2016) surfaced four major behaviors that result in CRSL.

Critical Self-Awareness

A culturally responsive leader, according to Khalifa et al. (2016), must have an awareness of self which includes one's values, beliefs, and dispositions specifically regarding children of color. Without the willingness of a school leader to interrogate their personal assumptions, it makes it difficult for them to lead teachers and school communities to do the same. Self-awareness around one's bias toward students of color is not a one-time event, rather it is a result

of consistent practice. A specific area of self-reflection that surfaced in the literature that are necessary on developing inclusive school environments are the internalization of racism, normalization of Whiteness, and colorblind ideology. These barriers are hegemonic and require a commitment to ongoing critical self-reflection in a school leader for a school leader's to be able to lead a school community in the same practice. Khalifa et al. (2016) pointed out suggested starting points like cultural and racial autobiographies, educational plunges, cross cultural interviews, diversity panels, and journaling on critical topics of culture.

Culturally Responsive Curricula and Teacher Preparation

Khalifa et al. (2016) indicated a culturally responsive leader is able to recognize patterns of inequity and lead the school community toward courageous conversations to interrogate curriculum and policies that result in disenfranchising students of color. A culturally responsive curriculum is not limited to the context to which standards are delivered but include responsive instructional practices. The literature reviewed for this study surfaced the importance of developing leadership teams and research-oriented dialogue to sustain this work. Culturally responsive school curriculum and teacher preparation become anchors that hold up culturally responsive school practices. The school leader has a specific role in developing cultural responsivity among teachers and taking action when teachers do not recognize the value of such work. Recruiting, retaining, and developing culturally responsive teachers becomes crucial to an effective culturally responsive school. To do this effectively requires ongoing leadership formation that sustains the work.

Inclusive School Environments

CRSL develops culturally responsive and inclusive school environments (Khalifa et al., 2016). This is accomplished by critically examining exclusionary and marginalized behaviors like racialized suspension gaps or disproportionate referral of students of color to special education. Here the practice of critical self-awareness as previously mentioned, among leadership is key to exclusive behaviors. To do this effectively requires administration, faculty, and staff to move forward in community held together by an inclusive and empowering school vision.

Engaging Students and Parents in Community Context

Most important to cultural responsivity is the ability of school leaders to engage students, families, and the larger community. The CRSL has the specific role in connecting the school to the context of the community by celebrating students' native language, accommodating to the lives of parents and developing spaces for the identity and behaviors of marginalized students to be recognized. This goes beyond traditional events that foster community like parent teacher conferences, fund raising meetings and sporting events. Community engagement requires organization and advocacy for community-based causes and the development of space to authentically include the community context as part of the school community. This includes validating the social and cultural capital that students bring into school (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Similarly, Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) have identified characteristics that operationalized Khalifa et al.'s (2016) behaviors. In their case study of CRSL they identified six characteristics of cultural responsiveness (a) caring for others, (b) building relationships, (c) persistence and persuasiveness, (d) presence and communication, (e) modeling cultural

responsiveness, and (f) fostering responsiveness. These characteristics were directed to students first and foremost, but they were equally expressed to all the schools' stakeholders and functions as the pillars to which CRSL was held up. These characteristics result in a reduction of power struggles when skepticism arose and enabled school stakeholders to grow together resulting in the best possible outcome for student learning.

Caring for Others

An ethic of care for all school stakeholders is a defining characteristic of the operationalization of CRSL. At the root of this care is the commitment to working with families who are culturally and linguistically underrepresented to ensure that their students succeed. This ethic of care begins with teachers. The data from Madhlangobe & Gordon (2012) showed supportive and nurturing behaviors led to a collaborative working environment that resulted in positive student outcomes. This care was demonstrated in the leader's involvement with parents and her commitment to supporting parents in navigating the school's expectations. Parent participants identified that this level of care demonstrated her passion while communicating the value of their perspectives (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, p. 184).

Building Relationships

Relationships were identified as the cornerstone of CRSL. Central to the school culture was the belief that the entry point to pedagogy was through the heart. The result was a reduction of anxiety among students which hindered participation in school from fear of making mistakes. Student testimonies were used to empower students to communicate the value of culturally responsive pedagogy while strengthening the student teacher relationship. This culture was not only evident in students but among teachers by focusing on relationship first then problem

solving pedagogy. Trust and respect became a prevailing value that became central to relationships between all stakeholders, student to teacher, teacher to administration, and administration to students (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, p. 186).

Persistence and Persuasiveness

According to Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012), demonstrating the worthiness of an idea was key to how the leader demonstrated the value of cultural responsiveness. Motivated by the reality that African American and Latino students were performing below state and district averages across multiple data points was what fueled the leader's tenacity. Engaging teachers in the work and soliciting teachers for ideas legitimized the culture on inclusivity at the school which led students and teacher to construct new forms of knowledge around cultural responsiveness. To develop ownership of a culturally responsive school vision required delegation of responsibilities resulting in increased capacity and shared empathy in the struggle of the work (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, p. 190).

Presence and Communication

High level of visibility in the classrooms, in school meetings, and throughout the school is critical in ensuring that a school lives out its culturally responsive vision. Presence is used a tool to gather data to improve the school's culture of inclusivity. Collaborative walkthroughs were used as a tool to capitalize on this presence. Through collaborative walkthroughs, leadership is distributed as teachers are co-opted in collecting data to improve their practice and provide feedback leading to increased culturally responsive capacity at all levels. Clear communication from administration, students, and teachers is necessary in identifying the school's ability to live out its culturally responsive vision (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, p. 191).

Modeling and Fostering Cultural Responsiveness

Modeling cultural responsiveness starts with promoting inclusive curriculum and instructional programs, which is a role that a school leader has the positional authority to fulfill. Part of modeling is acknowledging culturally responsive teaching when it occurs. This feedback legitimizes the collective effort of the school community. Consistency of behavior modeling is important to build legitimacy for both faculty and staff as well. Office and support staff's consistency in inclusive behavior is crucial in creating inclusive environment for students, parents, and the community at large. Fostering cultural responsiveness starts with ongoing professional development. Cultural responsiveness is not a destination or a set of strategies but rather a mindset that requires ongoing training. Teachers are adult learners and they benefit from differentiated instruction depending on their journey toward being culturally responsive. Lastly, fostering cultural responsiveness was most effective when the school showed interest in understanding the home life as a way of processing student behavior and partnering with parents to identify solutions (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, p. 193, 195).

Critical Race Theory

As mentioned in Chapter 1, CRT found it roots in critical legal studies and found its way into education as a way to criticize the normalization of racism in education. Capper (2015) identified six tenets which intersects CRT with education leadership, these are: (a) permanence of racism, (b) Whiteness as property, (c) counter storytelling, (d) interest convergence, (e) critique of liberalism, and (f) intersectionality. These tenets are used in educational leadership research to identify the role of leaders in bringing equity and antiracism to schools.

Amiot et al. (2020) specifically used counter storytelling, Whiteness as property, and colorblindness to investigate how a school leadership team implemented CRT to develop racially equitable pathways to address the achievement gap in a racially diverse school. Amiot et al. used equity audits as an initial step to collect data. From this exercise, Amiot et al. data showed that teachers exhibited thinking that can be characterized as the normalization of failure among students of color pointing to poverty, lack of parent interest, immigrant/refugee status as reasons for student's low performance. Instructional inventories and post observational data resulted in the same narrative. To deconstruct these teachers held beliefs the school leader addressed three interrelated areas, systems/structures, culture/climate, and instruction, to improve student learning (p. 208). These areas were operationalized through the use professional learning communities (PLC) and coaching was used to analyze data from an equity lens, utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in curriculum design and surveying students and parents to surface a counternarrative.

Two racially equitable pathways emerged. First, communication resulted in shifting teacher mind sets. Student survey demonstrated that 70% of students desire to complete college studies (p. 213). Dialogue with parents demonstrated their deep care for their children. These forms of communication surfaced a culture of colorblindness that resulted in deficit ideologies. Second, an examination of the school discipline policy surfaced more disciplinary actions toward student of color compared to the White counterparts identified by the leadership team as Whiteness as property. This resulted in the implementation of restorative practices with teachers, and students. Amiot et al. (2020), identified how CRT can be implemented by educational leaders to dismantle institutional racism found in schools.

Similarly, Chapman (2013) used CRT to investigate how school policies and practices support a racially hostile environment for students of color in a majority White suburban school. Chapman's (2013) data showed academic tracking of students demonstrates the school curriculum as White property. The majority of students of color in Chapman's (2013) study were found in the lower academic track of the school. Many of which have been identified and placed in these lower tracks as early as kindergarten demonstrating de facto segregation in school curriculum. In this example, White students benefit from of rigorous education resulting in high-ranking college opportunities which students of color are not given the same opportunity. This segregation goes beyond school curriculum and is evident in social setting and extra-curricular activities. Chapman's (2013) data showed homogenous White activities like soccer and tennis are valued more that homogenous Black activities like basketball by the school community.

This study also illustrated the negative effects of colorblindness in the school culture. Students expressed those classrooms were not safe places for student learning because they often seen as racial authorities in classroom discussions leading them to feel uncomfortable and defensive when discussing issues of race in the curriculum. Additionally, students expressed a double standard in the implementation of school discipline noting that Black girls and Latinas were more likely to be reprimanded for wearing short shorts or leggings as compared to their White counterparts. The research also demonstrated an over-surveillance as students of color due to a focus on their behavior over academic ability as compared to their White counterparts. Chapman (2013) suggested critical multiculturalism be used by school leaders to empower the school community to evaluate how Whiteness as property and colorblindness are perpetually and consistently constructed on campus rather than making race obscure in the reality of the school.

Alemán (2009) and Matías et al. (2016) brought attention to the character of resistance leaders experience in implementing CRT in school reform. Alemán (2009) identified cordiality, civility, and decorum as hindering work in CRT implementation in school leadership by maintaining the status quo and silencing the voice of marginalized students and their communities. Studying the practices of Latina/o and Chicana/o school leaders in addressing the achievement gap affecting students of colors, Alemán (2009) found that niceness inhibited the abilities of school leaders to name racism as systemic in the funding of models of their schools which is concealed by dialogue around the achievement gap and the normalization of racism. Additionally, the participants expressed that coalition building was a deterrent to honest conversations about race and racism. Rather than demonstrating a united front in the work of antiracism, the decorum that the coalition required inhibited a solutions-based strategy to address systemic racism in their schools further marginalizing their school communities. Second, is the fetishism of urban education, which is the desire to help or save urban schools based on beliefs of White supremacy (Matías et al., 2009). The research identified this theme through emotions of guilt and excessive attachment. Guilt is experienced through the desire of White teachers to give back to communities of color what was taken through systemic racism. Whereas excessive attachment is the desire to collaborate with other teachers of color in a way to mask their complicity toward Whiteness. This research signified the need for school leaders to be explicit in the tenets of CRT to address the resistance faced in White emotionality. Alemán (2009) and Matías et al. (2016) illustrated the need for school leaders implementing CRT to know how to confront resistance to CRT work.

Antiracist Education

As described by the literature on CRT in the field of education, CRT is used in research as a theoretical framework to understand the racialized experience of students and educators to critique the status quo in areas of the permanence of racism, the character of Whiteness, colorblind ideology and the importance of counter stories and intersectional experiences. When CRT is operationalized as pedagogy CRT researchers surface themes found in CRSL as identified by Khalifa et al. (2016) and Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012). There is a small emerging body of literature that intentionally conflates CRT and CRSL called anti-racist education. In her work on antiracist education, Kishimoto (2018) identified five key outcomes of antiracist pedagogy. First, students are to challenge assumptions and foster critical analytical about knowledge and its production. Some examples that she gave are criticizing Eurocentric curriculum and the assumed apolitical and ahistorical approach to pedagogy. Another is a nuanced understanding of oppression and hegemony as a multifaceted and dynamic issue versus dichotomous one. Second, students and teachers are to develop awareness of their social positions through self-reflexivity. This begins with the understanding that racism in experienced both individually and systemically. Therefore, regardless of the curriculum, the learning community is invited to see themselves as part of the issue being discussed. Third, teachers should decenter authority in the classroom. Here self-reflexivity of the educator is key. The goal is to have students take responsibility for their antiracist education. To do so, the development of a safe space for learning is crucial. Fourth, the learning community, teacher, and students, are to criticize curriculum and pedagogy. Problematizing curriculum and pedagogy are a way of putting antiracist theory into practice. Lastly, a collaborative and supportive learning community

is necessary to support antiracist pedagogy. In this environment deconstructing racism and reimagining an antiracist society can result in a true learning experience.

An example of antiracist pedagogy can be found in the work of Baker-Bell (2020). Through the lens of anti-Blackness, Baker-Bell problematized the field of language and literacy. Using antiracist pedagogy, she challenged the Eurocentric understanding of literacy which results in linguistic violence, persecution, and dehumanization of Black-language speakers. To confront the tradition of White privilege that language and literacy uphold, Baker-Bell suggested antiracist Black-language pedagogy as a way to challenge the status quo by being centered in Blackness, confronting White linguistic and cultural hegemony, and by contesting anti-Blackness. She defined Black language as genre that is rule bound and grammatically consistent which is characterized through conventions like storytelling as a mean of communication. Her framework carried with it the key outcomes that Kishimoto (2018) suggested, like dismantling the normalization of anti-Black-linguistic racism in pedagogy and curriculum, providing students with critical literacies and competencies to name, investigate, and give students opportunities to experiment, practice, and play with Black language use, rhetoric, cadence, style, and inventiveness.

Conclusion

The limited research on urban Catholic schools serving students of color can be identified as historical and sociological. To fully operationalize CST in Catholic education, the research of Aldana (2016), Scanlan (2008), and Castillo (2019) identified the need for the integration of social science and CST. Thus, this literature review has covered the research on social justice school leadership and identifies CRT and CRSL as constructs that can help ensure that CST

results in its intended outcomes of social justice, equity, inclusion and antiracism. Interestingly, the review of literature has surface parallel themes found in Massingale's (2010) critique of CST which are (a) it is uninformed by social science, (b) lack theological reflection, and (c) provides no formal plan. In the following chapter, this study presents a methodology that investigated Catholic school leaders understanding or practice of antiracist work and identified their theological motivations to surface themes helpful in operationalizing CST in Catholic schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to work with Black Catholic school leaders to understand their experience in Catholic schools. Specifically, the study sought examples of how school site leaders root Catholic social teaching (CST) in antiracist work. In this chapter, I explain the methodology for this study including the participants, data collection and analytic plan.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How do Black leaders experience their role as Catholic school principals?
2. What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice?

Rationale for Qualitative Approach

This qualitative study used a critical race methodology (CRM) to surface an understanding of participants' experiences of racism and the roadblocks to implementing antiracist education in Catholic schools (Brayboy & Chin, 2018). Specifically, through semistructured interviews, participants surfaced counter narratives illustrating how racism was experienced in Catholic schools at the time of this study. Additionally, participants reflected on how they have endured in CST despite the roadblocks that they have experienced. Brayboy and Chin (2018) highlighted the value in CRM in the study of racism. Specifically, they identified its ability to personify the essence of racism, CRM brings light to the structure of racism and how to overcome it, and CRM helps to disrupt beliefs about the world that are taken for granted. This was what the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB; 2018) called American Catholics to do in *Open Wide Our Hearts:*

> We instruct our priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, lay leaders, our parish staffs, and all the faithful to endeavor to be missionary disciples carrying forth the message of fraternal charity and human dignity. We ask them to fight the evil of racism by educating themselves, reflecting on their personal thoughts and actions, listening to the experience of those who have been affected by racism, and by developing and supporting programs that help repair the damages caused by racial discrimination. (p. 27)

The goal of a CRM is to elevate the lived experience of the participants to evaluate what is possible in confronting racism in Catholic schools.

Because the elevation of the racialized experience of leaders in Catholic education is central to CRM, journaling was used as a method to document the participants narrated identities through a process of self-examination. The intent was to get a glimpse into the life of a Black Catholic school leaders while freeing the participant from the formal constraints that a semistructured interview may impose (Kuan, 2010). Conversely, semistructured interviews were used to surface a theoretical understanding of participants experience. Open ended questions were used to elicit data rooted in the participants' experiences while structured questions were used to draw out experiences rooted in a CRM. These methods provided context to the leadership behaviors of the participants to derive meaning from their experience (Galleta, 2001; Seidman 2006).

Method

This qualitative study engaged school site leaders from Catholic schools in Southern California to investigate how they operationalized and implemented antiracist education in

schools. Due to the nature of the setting of this study its description as well as participant descriptions are intentionally vague to protect the confidentiality of all involved in the study. Additionally, I used pseudonyms and generalities among the data to ensure an added layer of confidentiality for all involved in the study. The following descriptions contextualize the methodology and its findings.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to identify five school leaders selected in this study; all of whom served in schools ranging from preschool through 12th grade. Participants ranged in tenure as school site leaders: two have served in leadership positions for less than 5 years, two between 5–10 years, and one for more than 10 years. Two participants worked in Catholic schools which historically served the Black community and the remaining participants worked in schools which serve diverse communities with substantial Latino populations.

Setting

Southern California is home to the three largest counties in the state: Los Angeles County, San Diego County, and Orange County. The demographics of Southern California are described in Table 1. People who are Black or African Americans made up 9% or less across the three counties which makes them a minority among the Southern California population. White was the majority race across the three counties, with Hispanic or Latino with a near majority in Los Angeles County.

Table 1

Southern California Three Largest Counties Demographics by Race

Race	Percent of population		
	Los Angeles	San Diego	Orange
White alone	70.20	74.60	69.70
Black or African American alone	9.00	5.60	2.20
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.50	1.40	1.10
Asian alone	15.60	12.90	22.80
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.40	0.60	0.40
Two or more races	3.30	4.90	3.80
Hispanic or Latino	49.10	34.80	34.10
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	25.30	43.80	38.50

Note. From "Quick Facts: Los Angeles County, California; San Diego County, California; Orange County, California" by United States Census Bureau, 2022, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia,sandiegocountycalifornia,orangecountycalifornia/PST045221. In the public domain.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using a combination of participant journals and semistructured interviews. These methods were chosen to provide an efficient method to collect detailed data from the participants.

Participant Journals

Approximately 1 month prior to meeting with the researcher for the semistructured interviews, participants completed a brief journaling assignment. The participants were asked to to reflect on questions about their educational and professional background (Kuan, 2010). Responses from these journals were utilized as cues to guide the semistructured interviews which assisted in facilitating a CRM. Journal prompts are included in Appendix A.

Semistructured Interviews

Following completion of the journal, participants' entries were reviewed and a 60–90-minute semistructured interview was scheduled (Galleta, 2001; Seidman, 2006). The

semistructured interviews focused on two areas: (a) How school site leaders implemented antiracist education within their schools, including structural supports and impediments to this work, and (b) How school site leaders understood how antiracist education related to church teaching and doctrine, including principles of CST. In the first set of questions, I used CRM to surface a counternarrative in the participant experiences. Sample questions for the semistructured interviews are included in Appendix B. A discovery of this study which became apparent in the data collection phase was the language of CST as a deterrent from antiracist implementation. Participants were able to articulate CST to varying degrees but struggled to connect antiracist and culturally responsive practices to the body of work. This nuance assisted the data analysis.

Analysis Plan

The data collected for the interviews was coded to derive meaning. These codes were synthesized and sorted into categories. Then, this process was recoded and categorized until themes emerged from the data. I used analytic memos to document the interpretation of the coding into categories until clear themes emerged (Saldana, 2016). Some initial codes that resulted in a set of themes were service, Black Catholic identity, silence, loneliness, principal/pastor relationship, community engagement, confronting racism, ideological clarity, and heavy responsibility. Looking at each counternarrative individually was helpful in inductive coding from which the construct of intimate school leadership emerged. As previously mentioned, CST proved a hindrance from a deductive approach. However, when culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) was used in deductive coding, the data lit up with examples of CST implementation. Critical race theory (CRT) was used as an interpretive framework. This led to the use of CRSL as a deductive tool to make sense of the data. It was also integral to the

understanding of participant experiences of racism as demonstrated further in the discussion (Brayboy & Chin, 2018; Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I used theoretical triangulation to interpret the data through two theoretical frameworks, CRT and CRSL (Leavy, 2017). I used member checks to ensure the accuracy of the data. This was accomplished by supplying participants with transcripts of the interview and selected quotes to assure accuracy. Participants were given the opportunity to add, delete or restate their statements. Lastly, my role as diocese school leader has provided a specific lens to the dynamics of leadership among Catholic schools. As a Catholic, Filipino-American, cisgendered male, I interpreted these data from my positionality given my personal history and experience as a practicing Catholic and lay leader in the church.

Delimitation and Limitations

This study intentionally examined Black Catholic school leaders and their experiences to understand their leadership practice. Therefore, participation in the study was limited to that criterion. In the diocese in which this study was conducted, very few leaders identified as Black substantially limiting the sample set. This study was conducted in the spring of 2021 and participants have endured a global pandemic that has had a disproportionate negative effect on communities of color (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 2020). Social unrest and political polarization were palpable during the data collection of this study. These factors undoubtedly affected participant racialized experience as Catholic school leaders and therefore influenced the data collected.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand how Black Catholic school leaders operationalized antiracism in their leadership practice. Specifically, this study investigated how school site leaders root antiracism work in Catholic social teaching (CST) and what obstacles they faced in these efforts. To understand this paradigm, this study addressed two research questions:

1. How do Black leaders experience their role as Catholic school principals?
2. What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice?

To surface data to answer these questions, principals participated in a series of journal entries and semistructured interviews which were coded, synthesized, and sorted into categories. This study used analytic memos to document the interpretation of the coding into categories. A combination of deductive codes derived from the theoretical framework and inductive codes emerging from the data were used to result in the themes discussed here.

The research questions surfaced two clear sets of themes respectively. In addressing how Black Catholic school leaders experienced their roles, the participants in this study identified intimate school leadership and culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) as central to their practice. In identifying roadblocks, participants addressed racism as a key deterrent. Critical race theory (CRT) was used as an interpretive framework to understand the intricacies of how racism functions in Catholic schools. As an interpretive framework, CRT functions as a set of concepts which are not mutually exclusive. The interpretation of the data illustrated the interrelated nature of the concepts of CRT. This interpretation resulted in three manifestations of racism in Catholic

schools: (a) the permanence of racism in Catholic schools, (b) White property and interest convergence as features of Catholic education, and (c) resistance as a way to protect White property.

Research Question 1

Due to the limited research on Black Catholic school principals, this study seeks to understand how Black principals experienced their roles as leaders in Catholic schools. When I had the chance to sit with these participants, their stories were marked with an intimate knowledge of their school community. This intimacy was evident by themes of love, care, advocacy, vulnerability, and courage. Participants in this study are experts in their own right. All participants held advanced degrees—two of whom hold doctorates—and among them decades worth of experience serving students of color in Catholic schools. Yet when we sat down to talk, what became clear was the power of their expertise was highly informed by an intimate knowledge of their school community. Each participant made sure to convey they knew their people and their people knew them. It was through this intimacy that their expertise took root in each child, each parent, each teacher. The results were communities that exemplified joyful learning, academic achievement and a Catholic lifestyle rooted in the gospel.

Intimate School Leadership: Counternarratives from Lucinda and Claire

Although all participants illustrated intimacy in their leadership, two specific narratives illustrated what intimate leadership looks like. Both Lucinda and Claire served in Catholic schools that have traditionally served the Black community. Both were alumnae of their institutions and were proud parents of graduates of their alma mater. Lucinda has dedicated her life's work to the St. Martin community. Her experience was rooted in instructional leadership

informed by a personal knowledge of her school community. For Lucinda, St. Martin was not a place of work but an extension of her family. She described her relationship to her parish this way:

> I have grown up at that place, I have a lot of my milestones have happened at that place. I met my husband at that place. If you know me, you'll know that a vast majority of my growing up happened at St. Martin.

Lucinda attributed her effectiveness in leadership to being "authentic" and "transparent." Thus, her leadership was marked by her vulnerability to the school community. She described her experience as a school leader this way:

> When you're in that building [St. Martin] you know me, you know my faults, you know my flaws, you know my story. I share it, you know me, there's nothing that I'm hiding. I am who I am. You have to love me for who I am or respect me for who I am. . . . There is a level of comfort knowing that there's no judgement there. You know me for who I am and that's it.

This form of authentic and transparent leadership has resulted in a family-centered school culture. This was evident when she described what makes her school a special place. She explained:

> It's because its family centered. It's nurturing! There's something about the school I can share my highs and lows and not feel you know alienated because of what I'm feeling. There's a sense of security there. St. Martin is like come here [gestures a hug]! The people who come through the school, it's just so easy to love them and receive love from them.

Her willingness to be vulnerable to her school community was how she teaches as a school leader. By leading in this way, she modeled unconditional love and acceptance for her students.

It is important to note that Lucinda was a professor of education who specialized in curriculum and instruction. At the center of her ministry was assuring that each student is on a path to the fullness of their academic potential. When asked about her personal vocation, Lucinda described it this way:

> I would describe my vocation as being a difference maker in the lives of children. I want to continue to facilitate and instill in them the love of learning, more specifically, finding love in seeking strategies to get to the answer more than the answer itself.

Lucinda saw her role as an instructional leader as being "responsible" and "intentional." When it comes to student outcomes, she recognized herself as responsible for student learning and ensured that all educators in her school community have the primary goal of "making a difference in the lives of children." As an instructional leader, Lucinda used curriculum, instruction, and design intentionally to achieve the ultimate goal of student success. She described her instructional leadership in this way:

> If you have an appreciation and a love of learning, not necessarily getting to the answer but taking the path of discovery to get to the answer which is most important to me.

Her philosophy of education ensured students have transferable skills that are applicable to real life situations which she described this way:

> If you give them the tools, so that they can find the answer on their own, they will remember that, because they did it themselves and they will be able to apply that to other problems and situations.

Her vulnerable form of leadership allowed for a culture of continuous learning among adult learners. She attributed student success to the ability of her faculty to observe each other in the classroom. She facilitates faculty meetings to identify which constructivist approach best serves her students.

For Lucinda, student outcomes are at the center of her ministry. She has devoted her life's work to ensuring that all students are equipped as lifelong learners to become active contributors to their community. What was made clear by Lucinda's leadership journey, was her academic prowess only took root because of the environment she created at St. Martin school. An environment characterized by the intimacy she had with her school community. One in which every student, parent, and teacher is loved and seen in a transparent and authentic way.

Claire's experience at Epiphany School was another example of leadership based on an intimate relationship with her school community. What struck me about my conversation with Claire was the pride in which she carried herself. As we conducted the interview, Claire wore an Epiphany spirit jacket with the word principal hung on a string banner with a flag carrying each letter. Every time she said Epiphany School, she would light up with joy. Claire's journey with her school community began in the third grade as a student. She attributed the leader that she has become and her Catholic identity to her elementary school experience. She described this time in her life this way:

> I have never forgotten about the little Black girl I once was when I came to Epiphany in the third grade. I remember the Black History programs, the gospel music in church, having friends who had the same cultural experiences as me and I remember having teachers who looked like me and taught me that rap really was a form of poetry. I

> also remember the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and how as a fourth grader I thought it was cool that my teacher lived at the school and prayed. The life of a sister was so exciting to me at this age, and I believe it was in fourth grade that having a sister as my teacher helped to shape my Catholic identity.

What Claire made clear during our time together was that her role as principal of Epiphany school was no accident. She described her calling to lead Epiphany school a "divine intervention." After a career as a teacher in both public and Catholic schools she had the opportunity to return to Epiphany, as vice principal. A school where she had been a parishioner since birth and where her children attended school. Claire described that opportunity as "an honor to have the chance to come home to Epiphany, and work within the community that fostered my love for education and building relationships." Within a year, her principal had moved on, making her the interim principal. This interim year illustrated what made her principalship "divine intervention." Through her short tenure as vice principal, Claire understood what bad shape her school was in. Claire described it this way:

> There were too many things that I saw that I needed to improve it was it was overwhelming. . . . There wasn't a lot of structure in the way the teachers did things. There were some good teachers in place and there were good bones. But there was no consistency in the way things were done. Sometimes people are late. Sometimes people took off early. The curriculum, there wasn't one. Everyone did their own thing. We still had chalkboard, the green ones. There were no computers, no students using a device. There was a computer lab [with outdated computers] that no one really used.

Claire earned the respect of her community by turning her school around. A process which resulted in significant resistance especially from parents. Claire described the years in which she insisted on higher standards for the school community this way:

> I figured, I'm back at my old elementary schools this will be great, but it wasn't great. The parents were abrasive. They were like who are you? Let me tell you, who I am. I want to be here. From my own community, there was a lot of push back.

Claire earned the respect from her community through her commitment to academic excellence and her advocacy of her school community. The commitment of showing up every day and demanding excellence fueled the intimate relationship she has with her students, parents, faculty, and staff.

To add to the difficult turn around, Epiphany Parish went without a pastor for 7 years, leaving her with sole responsibility of the faith life of the school. Claire described those 7 years this way:

> There's no heartbeat. You just you come to church, you go home, there's nothing there. No leadership. No one engaging you. No ministries, I mean there is a finance council, a parish council, but there's no life.

During these years, the school was the sole ministry of the church and through an inconsistent time, Claire was the constant for the parish community. Claire described the intimacy which she shares with students and parents today when she said:

> Children, other than knowing who they are, if they're all here under our little house, in our family, you know everybody in your family's name. It gave me the opportunity to get a broader sense of who they were. I can tell you; your parents chose this school for

> proximity and for safety. Your parent chose this school because you have a family legacy. Your parent chosen school for a faith-based education. This is only possible because I have that relationship in some capacity, with all the kids in the school.

Claire's experience with her school community illustrated that intimate leadership is a result of a persistent commitment to one's community despite the gravity of the circumstances it finds itself in.

Claire's response during the COVID-19 global pandemic was an example of what intimacy in school leadership looks like. She described her experiences during the early days in the pandemic this way:

> When it was time to open up, I had to say I am not in a position to do it. We are in a community of predominantly Black people, there's no vaccination, we're being affected by this virus at a disproportionate rate than everyone else. I'm not even considering that, right now, until there is some sort of vaccine where and we're a little bit safer.

Upon the availability of the vaccine, she was confronted by vaccine hesitancy by her faculty and staff. Her ability to be responsive to her community was rooted in care, love, and respect. Claire elaborated:

> With the vaccine being available, my new challenge was this. Most of the teachers are Black. [They said] we're not doing that Claire, we're not comfortable with the vaccine because there's a history of experiments and all sorts of things that have affected Black people, and we don't know about that. I can't open this place without them. So individually, one by one I talked to them. What are your concerns? Let me tell you why I

was vaccinated. My grandmother's 86 she's lived through multiple world health issues. She's been getting vaccinated her whole life, she got vaccinated. So, I have to, if I want to be able to be with her. We're gonna have to go on faith and trust that people in leadership, are doing the right thing. One by one, they started getting vaccinated. Once that started to happen, I said, "Okay, I'll open the school backup."

In the end, the unapologetic persistence of her leadership allowed her to be known to the school community in which she earned her the trust of students, parents, faculty, and staff. As we wrapped up our interview, I asked Claire what it was like to have no pastor for 7 years? She replied:

It's lonely. There is no one to call our own. No one to say, that's my church!

Through the absence of a pastor, Claire was the one whom Epiphany called their own. It was Claire who was proud to say, "That's my parish."

These two narratives exemplified how Black school leaders experience their role as leaders in Catholic schools. Their experience identified three characteristic of intimate school leadership (a) love, (b) fidelity, and (c) vulnerability to their school communities. These counter narratives identified a familial love for their school communities rooted in a generational knowing of their people. Lucinda and Claire demonstrated a fidelity to their school community demonstrated by a persistence toward their school mission despite the circumstances. They accomplished love and fidelity through vulnerability. They brought their full selves to the school community without pretense. These characteristics allowed them to lead with authenticity because it is whom God called them to be. Therefore, the experience of the participants surfaces a unique form of leadership which was identified in the data as intimacy with their school

community. Researchers of school leadership have identified a similar phenomenon in the construct of CRSL (Khalifa et al., 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

CRSL

Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) described the characteristics of CRSL as caring for others, building relationships, persistence and persuasiveness, presence and communication, modeling cultural responsiveness and fostering cultural responsiveness. Similarly, Khalifa et al. (2016) described a CRSL as one who engages students and parents in community context, develop inclusive school environments and are critically self-aware. Seen through this lens, the themes of CRSL emerge in the data. Jennifer identified her training in CRSL at a Catholic college as "changing my lens on what it means to be a leader." She described her training as focused on cultural responsiveness and equity explaining:

> Why it's important to fight for children to be taught grade level, why it's important to give [teachers] observations, to get into the classrooms give valuable feedback, to get everyone on that [equity] mindset.

Culturally responsive school leadership, as defined by Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) and Khalifa et al. (2016), gives the language to understand the operationalization of CST among the participating Black Catholic school leaders.

Critical Self-Awareness

According to Khalifa et al. (2016), essential to a culturally responsive leadership is the ability to be aware of their values, beliefs and dispositions. Leaders use these values to evaluate their leadership practices. Damien's reflection on the right financial model for his school exemplified this critical self-awareness. Acknowledging that socioeconomic diversity is

necessary in the financial health of his school, equity was top of mind in developing his financial strategy. He demonstrated critical self-awareness toward the financial leadership of his school this way:

> We have the opportunity to grow into a space where we serve more affluent families here. How the school responds to that is very important. I never went to value the needs of an affluent family over a non-affluent family. I don't think there's any wrong answers there's, just like value-based answers. The whole faculty and staff, we had a conversation about it. Our goal is to be financially healthy. We need a lot of support to fund the financial needs of our students and families, so much so that it's not sustainable. We have to get to a point where we can be attractive, we can create programs and services that are attractive to more affluent families to make [our school] financially sustainable. We can get to a point where we have socio-economic diversity. Once you get that socioeconomic diversity, all families have a voice in how they went to school to run. But you have to weigh those proportionally, with equity in mind.

Damien explained financial decisions based is on good stewardship often led to inequitable financial decision due to fear. His critical self-awareness was illustrated in the dynamics of his decision making. He described theses dynamics through a dichotomy of love and fear and explains it this way:

> In organizations that I've worked for, I've seen decisions made based on fear. When you operate from fear it's dangerous. You need to operate from love. As a leader, I try to operate from love, when we make decisions, I ask what is it based on? As a Catholic and someone who loves the church, I also recognize that the church is led by men, as humans

> we do our best to operate from love. At the end of day like we're just trying to spread the good news, and so I try to bring that into decision making. How does this unify people? How does this foster belonging in our community? If the decision we're making doesn't do that, we got a problem.

Here Damien explained that good financial practice requires that he step into the shoes of the people he is making decision for and to see it from their perspective. Damien kept stakeholders' perspectives in mind when negotiating the right financial decision. Despite his clarity in his values as a Catholic and a school leader his ability for critical self-reflection made him recognize the constant need to evaluate, change and grow. He described this in his leadership practice:

> I always believe we can always do better. We can we need to grow and change because the people we serve are growing and changing. The world we live in is growing and changing. So, schools need to do a better job of adapting and growing and changing while maintaining their integrity and commitment to their values.

Damien's critical self-awareness in his decision making ensured that his values of unity, equity and diversity are at the forefront of his decision making. He was intentional about seeking the perspective of his stakeholders and integrating those points of view toward a decision based on love. Love, as described by Damien is developed through a relationship founded on care.

Care and Relationship

Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) identified caring for others and building relationships as key identifiers of CRSL. Caring for others is described as the sensitivity to the perspectives of the community in a way that is supportive and nurturing. A disposition of care is further strengthened by a leader's ability to build relationships with student, families, faculty, and staff.

Madhlangobe and Gordon's (2012) research noted that relationships are built on trust and respect for all members of the school community. The values of caring for others and building relationships was exemplified by how the participants led their school communities through the COVID-19 global pandemic. Lucinda shared that leading through a global pandemic was marked by anxiety and uncertainty. However, she attributed the ability of her school to succeed in providing her community with a Catholic education despite the circumstances, on trust:

> What made this experience good was that the parents know me, and they trust me, and they trust the decisions that I'm making are going to benefit the children so that has made this super easy because the parents they're like I trust, whatever you say, I trust, what you're doing, because you know what you're doing.

As trust was key in Lucinda's ability to serve her community during the COVID-19 global pandemic Claire's relationship with her staff marked her ability to care in a culturally responsive way. As mentioned in Claire's counternarrative, her response to the COVID-19 global pandemic was an indicator of an intimate relationship with her school community. Trust and care are key elements to love as identified in intimate school leadership. This trust was illustrated in how she served her community during the pandemic. Claire's relationship with her staff indicated her ability to care in a culturally responsive way. The care she had for her faculty and staff was evident in how she related to them. She talked to each person and drew from her own personal experience of navigating her fears of vaccination and Coronavirus exposure. Claire's genuine care and relationship was central to the trust that her community had in her. These virtues allowed both Lucinda and Claire to navigate a very fluid situation during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Ultimately, it was their ability to be a culturally responsive leader that supported them

in fulfilling their school's mission during a treacherous time. Care and relationship are the bedrock of a healthy and vibrant school community. This characteristic of a CRSL enables school leaders to engage their community through their leadership praxis.

Engaging in a Community Context

Khalifa et al. (2016) identified community engagement as key to CRSL. Engaging students and families in a community context resulted in welcoming spaces that were more culturally responsive than traditional forms of communication like parent–teacher conferences, fundraisers, emergency meetings, and phone calls. Lucinda's described how she operationalizes community engagement in a way that leads to a welcoming environment when she described what makes St. Martin school a unique place:

> It's the relationships we have with our children and our parents. Every morning the there are six teachers outside on the sidewalk and we greet them all good morning by first name. Every teacher greets every student. We greet the parents, they come up, we talk. When we talked to the kids, we talk to them as if they're our own children. Parents really appreciate it. That's one of the unique things about St. Martin we're all on first name basis with the children. They know us all we're always visible. Parents will always see all of us every day. When, I became leader we started greeting on the sidewalk, we need to have a presence outside. [During COVID] we have been limiting parents coming in, because before the parents would come into the school, we will all be on the playground together. We don't do that anymore because of COVID, but we still need to keep that presence, so we go outside to the front of the school. That's why [parents] feel like it will be okay when dropping their students off.

Khalifa et al. (2016) added that a culturally responsive leader is a community organizer and an advocate for community-based causes. This was evident in the way in which Claire and her pastor engages the Epiphany community. Claire described the community celebration around the installation of her new pastor:

> He was talking about being installed [as pastor] and he wanted to have a full weekend of events. He says I'm gonna tell you what I want to do, he says on the Friday night before I'm installed, I want the school to have a fundraiser and all that money is going to go towards scholarships. On a Saturday we're going out into the community. He called it a homeless connect and we're going to go and we're going to feed the homeless. I'm listening to him like he's crazy, he wants me to send these kids to Kennedy Park! On Sunday we're going to have an installation with a luncheon, then that money that we raised will use that money to help paint the church. And I want you to organize the whole weekend. On Sunday we had the installation, I've never seen that many Black priests and deacons in my life! Every Black priests, who lives here must have come. So his tactic was to get us all together. It worked! He's like if you go out into the community and you engage these families, then, they are going to see that Epiphany is a part of it, because otherwise we're just sitting here on Rosa Parks Boulevard doing our own thing.

This illustrated an alternative to traditional community activities like book readings and musicals which may not be authentic to the school community (Khalifa et al., 2016). Claire's pastor's leadership demonstrated community engagement that is culturally responsive, rooted in community organizing and advocacy. Engaging in a community context as illustrated in Lucinda's and Claire's experience provided opportunities to model and foster CRSL.

Modeling and Fostering Cultural Responsiveness

Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) identified modeling and fostering cultural responsiveness as essential to a CRSL. They identified this through the development of inclusive curriculum and instruction, the unification of the home and school experiences, and the acknowledgement of culturally responsive practices. As identified in her counternarrative, Claire described how attending Epiphany as a child was influential to her identify as CRSL and ultimately her identity as a Catholic. Similarly, Jennifer described how attending a historically Black Catholic school modeled CRSL for her. She described her Catholic elementary school's cultural responsiveness this way:

> They really dug deep into our culture, every morning, the vice principal, her husband was from South Africa, so she adopted Harambe, that means coming together. That's when we would pray, shut out any birthdays, and share announcements. Each classroom was named after one of the Kwanzaa candles, so it started with kindergarten which was Umoja which means unity and then it went all the way up to sixth grade was Imani which is faith. It was something that that was that was clearly represented in the school at all times, anything that was done, it was representative of the students that went there. I felt like that was impactful.

As a school leader, Jennifer fostered cultural responsiveness by celebrating the heritage and diversity of her school community to elevate the value that cultural diversity brings to her school:

> We started with Hispanic heritage month, then Filipino heritage month and now, with Black history month. Parents and volunteers made bulletin boards that would represent

> each month. We had Frida [Kahlo] for Hispanic heritage month, we changed her over to Dia de Los Muertos, and that's something that I've never celebrated. I didn't know anything about it. So, the kids taught me about it. In addition, they would talk about different Latinos that have been very influential in our community and different traditions. With Filipino heritage month we had a big flag and then we learned about food traditions. We learned about the pineapple shirt [Barong Tagalog] where it came from what it meant. We learned where the Philippines was and why a lot of Filipinos made it to California.

Jennifer explained that as a new member of the school community it was important for her to learn who her community was. Drawing from her own personal experience in Catholic schools she understood that knowing your students, their families and their history was vital in being culturally responsive. She explained, why she chose to do monthly celebrations as a part her 1st year in face-to-face instruction at her school:

> I did it selfishly, I wanted to learn, this is a community that I'm in and I need to know who I'm serving. But also, for the students, a lot of them didn't know, these are traditions that they're so used to, they don't even think about it.

She specifically noted a moment in which she addressed the increasing violence toward the Asian American community in the advent of the social unrest sparked by the dual pandemics. Jennifer explained:

> These are ways of acknowledging that there's a world around us that we need to be aware of. I remember last year; we did a short prayer service for the Asian women that were that were murdered in April and the kids really appreciated that I acknowledged it. In this

> community it's acknowledging that things are happening and we're not living like nothing goes on, but we know that it does.

This illustrated the value of modeling CRSL. Jennifer learned how to be a culturally responsive from CRSL. Jennifer served a community with a diversity of cultures different from her own, yet she is responsive. It is valuable to highlight her responsiveness to the Asian population that she served during a period of increasing violence against Asian Americans. This illustrated the role advocacy plays in CRSL as previously mentioned.

Khalifa et al. (2016) added to this aspect of CRSL acknowledging the importance of inclusivity of children of color by resisting deficit constructions of their culture and validating their socio-cultural capital. Claire beautifully described how the Mass is used in at Epiphany Parish to validate the student's cultural capital:

> A big part of the Black Catholic Church is call and response. A big part of the Catholic Church is call and response. When the pastor says to the kids, "Praises go up," and they all know to say, "the blessings come down." He tells them you're going to get "hooked up" with God. He speaks in a way. That's culturally relevant, they [students] can understand. If he's talking about the readings in the Gospel, he's connecting it to what's going on the yard. As a Black man [pastor] they [student] can make that connection, because they're like well, he looks like grandpa. He makes church engaging, when he processes and he's clapping and singing in it in a style of liturgy that they're used.

After 7 years without a pastor, Claire reveled in finally having a spiritual leader for her parish and school community. She identified her pastor's ability to foster cultural responsiveness by

modeling what it means to be Black and Catholic. She described his ability to spiritually engage with students during mass this way:

> The vernacular and the metaphors. Music, references to music and things that the children know, things that the community knows, is how he engages them. He also will sometimes dance or rap. He's very in tune with his audience, he's very charismatic, he likes people. He's able to make people feel like this is cool. It's great to come to church! Then there is the Black Catholic liturgy and its origins and gospel music, African drumming, and dancing. Having that part of your culture infused into the Mass makes it a different experience. The music instructor took the amen and he redid the music, so it sounded like a jazz record. You have a full understanding of the universal church, this is the way we celebrate, this is the order of the Mass, but this is part of our culture, too.

The result of modeling and fostering cultural responsiveness in a Catholic school environment resulted in inclusive environments in which the Black community recognized they are welcome in the Catholic Church. Culturally responsive school leaders, as evident in Jennifer and Claire, illustrated the importance of critical awareness of the environment in which students learn, pray, and belong. By acknowledging the cultural capital in students, both Black and Catholic, children recognized they are valuable members of the Catholic school community.

In addressing the first research question, the counternarratives of Lucinda and Claire illustrated a form of leadership based on their intimacy with their school community. This intimate form of leadership was characterized by a felt knowledge of the communities they serve. Both Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) and Khalifa et al. (2016) identified a similar form of leadership in the construct of CRSL. The data showed specific examples of CRSL in their

leadership praxis. The second purpose of this study was to identify roadblocks to this praxis. The second research question identified racism as the predominant factor to the implementation of their leadership.

Research Question 2

The implementation of CRSL by Black Catholic school leaders is not done without barriers. Therefore, the second research question asked, "What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice?" First, the data collected in this study affirmed Theoharis (2007) findings on the resistance leaders experience in the implementation of social justice at their school site. The study surfaced resistance to social justice school leadership was evident within their school, in the surrounding community, from the diocese and beyond their school community. The result of which led to a significant personal toll and a persistent sense of discouragement in their anti-racist work. Second, the participants in this study identified that resistance goes beyond personal experiences but function as deterrents to the implementation antiracism and CRSL. Lastly, this research question identified the systemic nature of racism among Catholic school communities. CRT was used as interpretive framework to make sense of the experiences of the participants. In addressing the second research question, racism emerged as the predominant roadblock to the participants' leadership practice.

The Permanence of Racism in Catholic Schools

Across participant experiences, loneliness emerged as a theme when talking about the resistance to their leadership. These experiences of loneliness were colored by confronting racism in their school communities. These encounters with racism appeared in a variety of contexts surfacing as explicit racist behavior and covert racism that inhibits leadership praxis

through self-doubt and exhaustion. An example of blatant racism was Damien's experience of being called a racial slur during a YouTube broadcast of a student awards assembly. He retold the experience:

> I'm not surprised, there's a lot of crazy people out there, it's a YouTube comment, it's dumb and I just brushed it off. I haven't really been called a N---- by anybody to my face. But as a Black person in school leadership positions, you're called a N---- and more covert ways, which I'm used to.

Damien gave an example of how he was made felt less than by members of the surrounding community:

> Once, I was at a restaurant with my kids and my wife, I was wearing a polo with our school logo on it. Just the logo, no affiliate, no programs on there. I pull up to the counter to get a table, and then the host looks at my shirt and asks if I work there. He said, what do you coach? Why is this guy assuming that I'm a coach? Because I'm Black? I was like, I'm the principal. I can't tell you how many times that I have met someone, and I've introduced myself as the principal they take a double take. First you think, maybe because I'm young, or is it because I'm Black?

He also connected these experiences of racism to the assumption of his preference for student athletes. He described:

> You have situations like this that exist. People assume that I have a preferential treatment for student athletes. I'm a nerd. I was in GATE [gifted and talented education] classes. I didn't play high school sports. I did karate in high school. Why do policies I want to implement, whether it be grading reform or open access to AP [advanced placement]

> classes, which are all aligned with current research, seen as somehow being done because I want to help the Black athletes.

These experiences of racism were examples of the permanence of racism in Catholic education. This concept illustrated that Catholic schools, despite their social teaching do not exist in a post racial paradigm as illustrated by Damien's experience. Capper's (2015) interpretation of the permanence of racism in education recognized that all leaders engage in a lifelong process of confronting racism as part of their leadership praxis. For Black school leaders, this confrontation was a painful felt knowledge that racism is a ubiquitous and an unavoidable part of their ministry.

Virginia talked about her experience of racism in the assumption by parents of her being underqualified during her time as a classroom teacher. She retold the story:

> I think people have a perception when it comes to African Americans, how are you qualified? I've had conversations when I started first started [as a teacher]. It was a part time job, but the principal was like you're not going to be part time, you know you got to do more than that, so I taught PE half day and then that went to the classroom in the afternoon and taught. The following year she put me in junior high and the parents commented, "That's the PE teacher what is she doing in junior high? Who said she could do that?" I went to the principal and was like you need to talk to the parents, you need to let them know. I'm educated. I'm a teacher. I can do this. You know, we had to have a special meeting for that. Oh, my goodness, because they didn't have the confidence in me.

Virginia further shared that she experienced racism through perceptions of how she should be or how she should act as a Black woman. She explained:

> The perception is that you're African American, you're hardcore, you don't have the warmth that they want in a teacher. You know that's been part of the challenge in this journey, having to deal with that and not lose myself in all these experiences. But to show people who I am. They think all Black people can dance, all Black people have rhythm, all Black people can sing. It's the stereotypes that I have to get past. . . . I think there's a lot of that still in the whole world. I don't particularly blame my school setting. It's just the perception of African Americans in this country. It's just there. Another label, but it is what it is. I try to let people know who I am.

Jennifer shared a similar experience of racism as she was questioned about her job qualification during her interview to be principal. A member of the hiring committee told her that her vernacular was a hindrance to her being considered for the job. She shared her interview experience:

> She sat me down and told me that how you speak is seen as more colloquial, less professional. It's interesting because I've never been told that before and maybe it is true, but I also wonder. I feel like I speak professionally when I need to, and I speak colloquially when I need to, that's normal. You never know, being in my position, I'm sensitive to a lot of things, because these microaggressions and the way I've been treated. You know as a Black woman in leadership when people say things to you. What does it really mean?

Virginia's experience in relating to her parent community and Jennifer's interview experience were not only examples of the permanence of racism as shared by Damien but are an illustration of Whiteness as property. Being consistently questioned about your qualification or living up to how one should act were examples of ways in which school communities communicate that Catholic schools are White property (Capper, 2015).

Lucinda expressed that these experience of Whiteness as property were not limited to herself as a school leader, but were directed to her students as well. When engaging with donors, students were talked about in derogatory ways. Lucinda shared her experience engaging a donor for a possible donation:

> It's interesting because some people, they have the right intentions in their heart but they're off when it comes to their understanding. Sometimes their biases come up. I had a donor tell me that our kid's parents must be gardeners. Oh my God, you're so wrong, but yet this person wants to give money, help the cause, because they love the school, and they want to give back. When you say stuff like that, in a normal conversation I might want to educate you. But then, is this the right place to do so? I'm in a position where I am asking for you to donate. That's an interesting dynamic because if I say something am I going to lose this donation? I've challenged myself to address it when it comes up. In that moment I didn't, and I regret it. I'm in this position for a reason, and so I think these conversations are going to happen and continue to happen, it gives me an opportunity to advocate and use it as a teachable moment and bring them in to understand more about our kids.

This way of talking about student was not unique to donors; Jennifer shared her experience reading through letters of intent addressed to foundations written by previous leadership in which students were describe in derogatory ways. She shared:

> Some of the introductions to the community paint our kids and our family in a way that they're so poor and if they weren't at our school they would be in gangs, or jail, or be dead. You don't have to say all that. Yes, our students are underserved, they come from limited opportunities, in neighborhoods that have higher crime rates, but I don't want to paint a picture like that about our kids. Our kids are beautiful, they're great kids!

Both experience of Jennifer and Lucinda were additional examples of Whiteness as property. By positioning students of color as inferior in dialogue with philanthropy, Catholic schools were conversely positioned as White spaces and belonging for students of color were limited to a second class.

These experiences of racism have taken a great toll on the participants in the study, so much so that they questioned their efficacy as school leaders. Virginia spoke of this self-doubt when talking about her own experiences of racism and witnessing her Latina teachers suffer from it as well:

> My vice principal is White, and I love her dearly. But I can see that people will defer to her, instead of coming to me, sometimes little things and sometimes they rather hear from her then from me. There's a lot of little subtle things, I could be oversensitive, but I don't think I am at this age. I don't think I am.

However, she began to articulate self-doubt when she spoke of how her school community treats her Latina teachers:

> I do see how people are treated and we always tend to treat the ones that look like us the worst. My Hispanic teachers, they get it a lot over here, they really do. Sometimes I'm on protect mode. Are you kidding me? You have somebody [teachers] that is really interested [in the students]. I always question myself when I go home, and I think what I am doing here? Am I doing any good for anybody?

The experience of racism as expressed by the participants illustrated key patterns corroborated by the literature. First, an understanding of the experience of racism could be interpreted as through the constructs of the permanence of racism and Whiteness as property (Capper, 2015) Second, practicing social justice as a key figure in leadership praxis resulted in a great toll on the school leaders (Theoharis, 2007). The participants characterized this toll as self-doubt and exhaustion. These participant experiences provided personal experience of racism among Catholic school communities. However, the endemic nature of racism illustrates that racism is more than an experience, but rather a construct in Catholic school communities identified through a resistance to CRSL and antiracism.

Resistance: Protecting White Property

Resistance to cultural responsiveness and antiracism was a roadblock to its implementation which has contributed to exhaustion as expressed by the participants in the study. When sitting down with the participants, they articulated systemic ways in which racism existed among school communities. This experience surfaced not as onetime events, but patterns in experiences that resulted in features of Catholic schools that allow for racism to develop. A predominant moment of clarity for the participants was the response to the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent social unrest experienced across the United States.

Claire identified the resistance to antiracism from the church itself. She identified the performative nature of CST and the church's apathy toward racial justice as evidence for resistance to antiracism. She explained her experience after the murder of George Floyd:

> I definitely feel like the buzz words, Catholic social teaching and racism, they exist but there's been nothing concrete that's really been done that I'm aware of. If you think about what happened with George Floyd. The response from downtown and even bishop, it took a while. It wasn't right away, you could hear crickets for a minute, and that's the problem. But because of the nature of this school, in this place, it hasn't been a problem for us. But it's a problem in the diocesan community.

Similarly, Jennifer identified silence and complacency in her community's ability to articulate their antiracist stance. Jennifer was in transition as an incoming principal during the summer of 2020 and was copied on the school's communications during that period. She recognized the silence in addressing George Floyd's murder and the resulting unrest that ensued throughout the summer:

> Coming to St. Francis and I noticed, there was a lot of silence, there was really nothing to talk about and I think that it was only recognized when there was a Zoom bombing at the school during an assembly. Someone started to write racial words that was inappropriate. I remember seeing the communication go out, saying sorry that this happened and here's some literature, to read at home with their children, something very standard. And then I really didn't hear too much about it coming in, but I also knew that there was some complacency, well now that that's blown over, we don't really need to talk it about anymore. . . . But I knew coming in that that would be something that I would have to

> work on. To be a little bit more open to the community and allow people to not be afraid to talk about it. Oftentimes it doesn't matter if you don't agree with it or not, if you're silent about it does seem like you agree with what's happening.

Here she attributed the silence and complacency around addressing violence rooted in racism to fear. After over a year serving in her school community, she described the silence she experienced in the summer of 2020 this way:

> I would say there is still some complacency. But I also think that the opportunity was never given for have a discussion to happen so. I know that people get uncomfortable, nobody wants to say hey let's talk about this. I think that's a lot of it, I think that's 90% of it. No one's made it available to talk about. Therefore, people just don't, not because they agree with it, not because they're not aware of it, but because there isn't a platform to discuss. I do you think that 10%, which is always going to be people that don't care and cannot to bothered. It's not something that is centralized to them, it doesn't really impact them immediately. But I really think that opportunity wasn't there to embrace it.

These participant descriptions of an inability to communicate an antiracist stance and complacency on the issues of racism made clear in the response to the murder of George Floyd were examples of the dynamic of interest convergences in Catholic schools. Jennifer assessment was clear and acute, some people "cannot be bothered" by instances of racism that are not "centralized to them." In other words, an antiracist stance was communicated when there was a concurrent positive effect for the church or school as a whole. This helps to make sense why church leadership struggled to respond to the murder of George Floyd in a timely manner. It explained why the St. Francis community was silent on the issue of racism in the summer of

2020. In both instances, an antiracist stance did not provide a concurrent positive effect on the church, nor the school community.

Damien shared his experience in actively speaking up shortly after the murder of George Floyd and described the resistance he faced:

> When I did release a statement on George Floyd I had pushed back from board members. They did not support the statement that I released on behalf of the school recognizing that systemic injustice exists, racism exists, we as a society and as schools need to have more dialogue about inequity. We could all do a better job of facilitating that dialogue and even implementing systems and structures and policies to increase equity and be a more inclusive and equitable school. [The statement] I released was aligned with the church and the charism of our founding order. The board member basically said, racism doesn't exist. The United States is not racist. What you're doing is dividing and not bringing us together.

Damien's experience helps illustrate how colorblindness functions in Catholic school communities. According to Capper (2015) colorblindness surfaces among school communities in two ways. First, educators do not see race and deny the legacy of slavery. Second, educators mistake race neutrality for White conformity. Damien's experience illustrated this concept in two ways. First, by school board members stating that racism does not exist, they denied the church's history with slavery and its complicity with racism as described in Chapter 1. Second, by stating that United States was not racist, they communicated the ways in which the United States demonstrates racism were acceptable in Catholic schools.

Virginia described a similar experience when she addressed her school community regarding the murder of George Floyd:

> When George Floyd was killed by the police I came out with the video, and I addressed it. And I know some of my families were a little offended, but I felt like it needed to be said. I said it with as much tact, not having any judgment, but just looking at a life that was taken and how we as Catholics should respond. This was a human being, they deserved better. I took a little heat for that. Some people in this community and in the school felt that I should have stayed neutral. I told them I'm not neutral, so I can't be neutral. It was definitely about a Black person being mistreated. And they wouldn't understand. I know what it feels like to be stopped by a cop, and to get down on all fours, because somebody sees you walking down the street, I know what that feels like, I've been through it. I took a little bit of flak for that it to the point where people decided they didn't want to be here anymore, because that wasn't my place to say it, but I felt as a leader it's my place to say it.

Virginia pointed out an expectation of neutrality from her school community. Interpreted through the concept of Whiteness as property, this expectation communicated that addressing the murder of George Floyd threatens the idea of Catholic schools as a White property.

Virginia's experience with her school community not only demonstrated a resistance to Antiracism, but also a resistance to cultural responsivity. She explained this phenomenon as the disconnect between students and families and their cultural heritage:

> I find that our kids are not connected to their own culture, you know which is really strange to me that they don't know about themselves, their families and where they came from. They don't embrace all of those rich traditions that their cultures bring.

She further reflected on this disposition of her school community with their own culture in relationship to the Spanish language:

> I almost want to say they don't want their kids to be Hispanic. There's very few here who speak Spanish, which is crazy to me. [When I taught in] Florence Park everyone spoke Spanish. . . . I don't know what it is exactly. Maybe they feel like they have to build their kids up to be something more. More for them is material things.

She alluded to privilege as the reason for her family's aversion to cultural responsiveness. In talking through this phenomenon, she articulates the nature of the privilege which leads to resistance. She explained:

> I don't know, I think the parents don't really know the damage that they're doing to the kids because I feel like they could throw money at their kids. They can come up and yell at the teacher and the teacher is bullied into giving a grade instead of the kid earning it. I can't really put my hand on it like I want to, but I've not seen anything like it since I've been here. Every year I take all my time and I discern sometimes month to month, what doing here? Who am I teaching? How am I getting to anybody? Am I doing something to help? I feel like our school is in direct conflict with the values system that the parents are setting up for their kids. There is no humbleness. There's no giving back.

Here, Virginia tied together related experiences that demonstrate how Whiteness as property functions in Catholic schools. First, she described an aversion to cultural heritage and linguistic

heritage. Then she explained how these forms of heritage are seen and incongruent to privilege which is she names as a motivating reason to why families send students to her school. Virginia's experience illustrated the convoluted nature of Whiteness as property. Here Virginia's parents have conflated the privilege that came with a Catholic education and Catholic schools as White property. In an attempt to belong and participate in Catholic school privilege, parents found it necessary to deny their heritage and to conform to Whiteness.

White Property and Interest Convergence as Features in Catholic Schools

The history of the church as described in Chapter 1 is clearly uncomplimentary. However, a lack of understanding of that history resulted in a colorblind dialogue in understanding the legacy of racism in the system and structures of schools (Capper, 2015). The counternarratives of the participants illustrated the legacy of slavery in the church and its systems and structures which exclude Black communities. Through uncriticized decision and a lack of a coherent plan, interest convergence and White property became features of Catholic education. The participants experience brought light to how these features were used to ignore the Black community in Catholic education.

Exclusion From the Church

For 7 years Epiphany Parish went without a pastor. The absence of a pastor has had a significant impact on the parish community. For Claire, this meant that she carried the responsibility for the school community on her own. She acknowledged the support she received from the diocese but recognized that it was no replacement for a pastor. She described the 7-year vacancy this way:

> It's lonely. Every week there's a different priest coming. It's like having a substitute teacher for 7 years. No one who gets to know your name and knows where you sit. It's lonely. Wow. . . . No one wants to be around? God, that couldn't be true. There's got to be someone you can put here for us.

Claire's words clearly expressed hurt and loneliness in not having a pastor. She pointed to systemic reasons for not having a pastor and addressed the role of racism in her explanation:

> Just like this school and church not having a pastor, [it] was ignored**.** It shouldn't take 7 years for a church to get a pastor and even if no one wanted that responsibility because it's overwhelming. You find someone to do it if it's a priority. And then all of a sudden, things are unraveling you've got this moment or the movement, then now we have someone. You're not certain if it's the timing, you don't know what it is. Racism looks like that. It makes you question why did that happen? Or are we just ignored? Or, is there not enough of us to be important?

Here Claire pointed to the timing of being appointed a pastor at the same time the country was feeling the pressure to respond to racial injustice. She directly addressed the concept of interest convergence when she questioned if having a pastor was only granted by church leaders because of the church's interest in appearing in solidarity with the Black community in a time of political pressure. Claire added that a supporting reason for not having a pastor was due to the perceptions of her parish and the lack of understanding of their Catholic community. She explained:

> I don't think anyone wanted to be responsible for Black Catholic Church that was struggling. The community can be a little contentious and you got to know how to work within it. I was told that no one wanted to be here, I was straight up told, no one really

> wants to come here, and that hurt because, I don't believe that. . . . I don't believe that. I can only tell you that I know what it feels like to have a pastor now because I didn't have one for so long.

This illustrated how the permanence of racism functions in the church and perpetuates the exclusion of Black Catholics from parish and school communities. According to Claire, a contributing reason why her parish went with not pastor for so long was due to a lack of Black priest. When asked about the shrinking number of priestly vocations in the diocese she responded this way:

> Black people are inspired by people who look like them, who lead. When you can't make a connection, when you don't feel inspired by the people in leadership, you're not going to be motivated to go in that direction. If you never seen anyone that looks like you doing these things, you don't even think it's something that's attainable. You might not feel that that's a place for you, because maybe you can't bring your authentic self to the priesthood. Like I said, I feel like it we're a church that is ignored. Not a lot of emphasis put on us. You know, Father being the first Black pastor this church has ever had, the church is a little over 90 years old, that I mean that's just huge. It's huge and whether you agree with him or not, it's huge.

The lucidity of her pain was exemplified when she explained how having a pastor helped her understand what an injustice it was to not have a pastor for so long. Claire identified what it means to have a pastor this way:

> There are some bad days here. But Father is just super supportive. He knows all the teachers' names, he knows them, he really knows them, and he's taking the time to get to

> know the kids here. Having someone who understands. . . . He said, "The church will build itself when the school is built up, you know if we get students in school, they will come to church and the church will thrive." He understands that relationship. That's what's important. As a parishioner here, that's what you want. The school is super important because those kids are going to come to church and when those kids come to church the parents follow. Because in the Black [Catholic] Church, if you saw it on a Sunday, the median age is got to be 65. It's a very old parish. Catholics my age are not really coming to church. They have probably turned to other denomination wanting that fulfillment they're getting from there and left the church. By bringing the children back, that will help to build the Black Catholic Church here again and Father sees that.

Key to Claire's point was the recognition that both she and her pastor were active participants in the evangelizing mission of the church. The exclusion of Epiphany school from the leadership of the church depicted how Whiteness as property functions in Catholic communities. In Claire's experience, a pastor has become a White property that is saved for other parishes. In Claire's example, 7 years was significant because it solidified an absence of a pastor in a Black parish as a feature of their parish and school community. Extrapolated to the church at large, the absence of evangelization to the Black community becomes a feature of the Catholic Church which has a systematic effect of the exclusion of the Black community in Catholic parishes and their schools.

Lucinda shared similar sentiments of separation from the church due to a strained relationship with her pastor. She explained how the governing structure of the school is a challenge to the relationship between parish and school:

> St. Martin doesn't have a very strong relationship with the church. However, I reached out to the pastor because I want a relationship. I want to change the narrative because since I've been there, there hasn't been a real strong connection with the church, and so I want it to get the pastor more involved. I email him every week, just to say hey, praying all is well with you. We'll be heading over to church on Friday, and we'll be taking care of everything. Just trying to keep a dialogue with him because I want him to know that I want him to come over to the school, to be a presence on the campus and for the children to know him. That is an obstacle!

When I asked Lucinda what has caused a strain in relationship between the church and school, she alluded to the governing structure of the school:

> It was always my understanding that we're not a parish school, we're on the campus we're separate. The pastor has no input in the decision making, so when we're signing contracts, I don't have a pastor to signing my contract. It's just me. Any decisions happening at the school are made by me. I didn't like it then [before I was principal], I'm the principal now, I'm going to change this, but the pastor doesn't want any real involvement in the school. There's no pastor presence on our campus. Ever. I don't like it.

Lucinda identified that having a poor relationship with her pastor was not only lonely, but it also lead to a lack of belonging of the school in the parish community. She added that this was detrimental to the Catholic identity of her school. These examples showed structural forms of separation between Black Catholic schools and clergy through governance. Like Claire's

example, the length of time in which this separation occurred position the separation from clergy as features on their schools.

Interest Convergence: Lack of a Coherent Plan

The examples of structural separation identified above were overt examples in which Black Catholic School communities were excluded from the church which contributed to systemic structures that perpetuated racism in Catholic School. Another form of resistance identified by the participants was the lack of a plan for school serving Black students from the diocese level. Jennifer identified these sentiments in her experience when she was a principal in another diocese, prior to moving to California. Jennifer identified that the diocese had no plan to support the school she served as principal, a Catholic school which historically served Black students:

> The dedication to the school, keeping it afloat, was not there anymore. It has since closed. It [the school] was very historical, it was very important, it was it was a pillar in the community. It felt like a setup when we were getting to that point, because you could tell what was going to happen. Why did they put me here? It's my first time being a principal. There's a lot of work that needs to be done. It's really for somebody that's seasoned, yet I'm the one that got the job, it was interesting.

She identified a lack of foresight in maintaining the mission of her school to the Black community. Jennifer explained that even when there was a possibility to support the school the diocese was unable to respond:

> We had a couple of things that happened at our school, which was a good opportunity for the diocese to step in and invoke some change, but it just didn't happen. She [the

> superintendent] would make comments like I would never send my grandchildren there, their textbooks are so old. You are the superintendent. Obviously, we are Catholic schools running on our own funding. However, you [the superintendent] have the autonomy to step in. That was one of the first things I did when I became principal. I updated our textbooks.

Not only did the diocese fail to support her school, the superintendent would talk poorly of her school behind closed doors. Jennifer shared that this was not limited to her own school, but a problem among inner city Catholic schools in that diocese. She explained:

> There was no vision for the inner-city schools, and I shouldn't just say my school, but there was no vision for all the inner-city schools. Our suburban schools we're doing fine. . . . In our neighborhoods, we didn't have that [access to wealth], we didn't have anyone like to be that visionary. They [the diocese] would come up with these ideas, ideas are just ideas, they are not a plan. We needed a real concrete plan we needed a way to frame this to families for them to buy into it, to understand what it all was about, versus, we're going to change it and I need you to donate $20 a month or your time every month to do this, and they have no idea why.

Jennifer's frustration was a result of multiple opportunities for the church support her Black Catholic school in which the church allowed to pass. A lack of a plan for Jennifer's school demonstrated the function of interest convergence in Catholic schools. The church's mission of evangelization alone does not suffice in responding to Black Catholic children. For the church to commit to the evangelization of the Black community would require a concurrent positive effect to the church at large. Evident in Claire's experience at her parish as she described.

Interest convergence was also evident in a lack of coherence in when the church chooses to apply its social teaching. In Damien's perspective, a lack of clarity on the church's social teaching was a result of the politicization of antiracism which muddles Catholic values in the school community:

> Catholic social teaching aligns with all the efforts to address racism, to address the structures that were created from racism, the inequities that exist as a result of those structures that were created, a recognition of all that. But, the unfortunate thing is that you see a politicization of Catholic social teaching and antiracism and it pits them against each other. There's a lot of benefits to having diversity on your campus and in your community but you're going to open it up to many different beliefs. So, politicization does come with the territory. When you serve families who believe a certain way, live in certain areas, have their own information about certain things and opinions, you're going to have those conflicts with others. And sometimes both sides are saying this is Catholic. This is the way the Catholic Church, preaches and believes, and they might even have priests, that they can refer to that are in conflict with one another. So that's a bigger issue that I can't control, but I have to mediate it and I have to always tie it back to the mission of our school.

Damien addressed politicization among his school community, but also identified this politicization among priest leading to further confusion in CST. This lack of coherence was not outside of the influence church leadership. Interpreted through the lens of interest convergence the concern of church leadership has not elevated to the point in which clarity on the operationalization of antiracism in the church among priest was necessary. Damien added that

the way antiracism is dealt within Catholic schools is a misapplication of the church's social teachings. His experience surfaced those issues of racism are left to school site leaders to deal with because of the concept of subsidiarity. He explained that addressing racism in Catholic school as:

> Largely given to local control. This is your community you guys figure it out. We'll [the church] release statements, but I would say there's not a lot of action yet with the antiracist movement in the diocese. . . . I think there's a lack of understanding, a lack of passion, maybe they're operating from fear, if we operate from fear, we're just hoping nothing bad comes of this. Instead of being proactive. . . . These conversations are facilitated by me, the Black guy on campus, and another Black teacher, and anyone else down for the cause. . . . We're trying to do this the right way and have the right support. You don't really have anywhere to go for that.

This misunderstanding of the church's social teaching of subsidiarity leaves Black Catholic school leaders with the burden of dealing with racism alone. As Damien described, racism is not an issue that can be dealt with case by case, school by school. It must be addressed through a concerted effort of the diocese, its presbyters, religious men and women, and the laity. When interpreted through the construct of interest convergence, this concerted effort awaits a concurrent positive effect for the church at large for implementation to occur.

The lack of a coherent plan was a two-part problem. First, there was no plan. As Jennifer described, there was no strategic plan to support Catholic schools which serve Black communities. In this vacuum, good intentions and great ideas fizzle, ultimately leading to school closure or worse keeping a school open with a substandard Catholic education. Second was a

lack of coherence. As Damien explained, there was a lack of clarity around the church's social teaching on antiracism. Politicization within the church furthers muddled its social teachings, leaving school leaders to address the racism on their own under the guise of subsidiarity. This lack of a coherent plan illustrated how interest convergence functions in Catholic education. The result was a lack of seriousness in addressing racism in Catholic schools. Therefore, true progress awaits the moment when the interest of the church and its schools converges with that of Black Catholics and their children.

Conclusion

In addressing the first research, "How do Black leaders experience their role as Catholic school principals?", the counter narratives of Claire and Lucinda illustrated intimate school leadership was a key element to their leadership praxis. Intimate school leadership described the affinity and closeness both Claire and Lucinda demonstrated with their school community. Similar research has similarly described this intimate school leadership as CRSL. Therefore, in addressing the first research question, Black leaders experienced their leadership through intimacy, critical self-awareness, and modeling and fostering cultural responsivity.

In addressing the second research question, "What roadblocks do Black principals encounter in their practice?", racism surfaced as the predominant deterrent to their leadership practice. When interpreted through CRT, the experience of the participants illustrates four key results: (a) the permanence of racism, (b) Whiteness as property, (c) colorblindness, and (d) interest convergence. First, the permanence of racism was experience through an exclusion from the Catholic Church. This resulted in a personal toll on the participants social justice work. Second, Catholic schools were seen as property to be protected for White people experienced

through resistance to antiracism and CRSL among Catholic school communities. Third, Whiteness as property and interest convergence are experienced as features of Catholic schools through a lack of a coherent plan for schools serving the Black community. In Chapter 5, this study will discuss the findings as they pertained to Catholic schools and CST. It will identify the implications of the findings to the field of Catholic education. Lastly, it will make recommendations and suggestions for areas of future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

As made evident in Chapter 1, Catholic education in the United States is at a crossroad. The stress of the COVID-19 global pandemic has surfaced its vulnerability on two fronts. First, shifting demographics and low enrollment has threatened Catholic schools' ability to serve poor and marginalized communities in the country. Second, the social unrest due to racial injustice in the United States caught the church flat footed despite its social teachings, leaving many Catholic school leaders struggling to respond to demands for racial justice in their school communities. The Catholic Church's response has been to pontificate on its social teachings while participating in performative acts against racism, both of which have minimal impact on racial justice among lives of people of color. The church's overemphasis on narrow expressions of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) distracts Catholic communities from making the sanctity of life, human dignity, community, solidarity, and a preference for the poor and marginalized a lived reality in Catholic school communities. Herein lies the inspiration for this study: To understand the dynamics in Catholic education that have left leaders struggling to respond to blatant attacks to its social teachings, particularly when it came to racism. Using a critical race methodology (CRM), this study explored this phenomenon through the perspectives of Black Catholic school leaders who were active practitioners in Catholic school leadership. Through their experiences, an understanding of CST implementation emerged and an articulation of the dynamics of racism in Catholic school was brought to light.

In Chapter 1, this study described the context in which this research was conducted, identifying the history of the church and racism in the United States. It addressed prior research

on Catholic schools serving students of color and social justice leadership in education in Chapter 2. Chapter 3, provided a methodology for the study and identified critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework for interpreting the data. In Chapter 4, turned to Black Catholic school leaders to draw out their experience as school site leaders. The data showed the heroic nature of the participants illustrated in their intimate knowledge of their school communities and their needs. Their experience illustrated an expertise in Catholic school leadership demonstrating the concept of intimate of school leadership and suggest culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) as a way to fulfill the Catholic mission of the church in Catholic schools. The shadow of this success portrayed the painful consequences of racism in the church and its effects on its ministry of Catholic education. The experience of participants in this study identified racism as the predominant inhibitor of their leadership practice. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, CRT was used as in interpretive framework to understand how participant experiences helped make sense of the resistance to their leadership practice. In this chapter, this study will discuss its to understand their significance to mission of Catholic education and to make sense of the operationalization of CST on racism in Catholic schools given the data. Here the data were used to articulate how the experience of Black Catholic school leaders illustrated how CST has been delinked from lived experience and how their leadership illustrates how Catholic schools can move toward a more inclusive implementation of CST.

Discussion of Findings

In researching the experience of Black Catholic school leaders, the findings were clear. Participants have demonstrated an expertise in Catholic school leadership rooted in an intimate knowledge and affinity of their school communities. This intimacy in school leadership was

operationalized in CRSL. In understanding the roadblocks to their leadership practice the data showed that racism was a defining factor. Their experiences were identified as: (a) racism experienced in overt and covert ways, (b) resistance to antiracism and CRSL, (c) racism as features of Catholic schools, and (d) a disingenuous approach to the evangelization of the Black community in Catholic schools. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1997) has identified the Catholic school as the heart of the church and essential to the ecclesial structure of its evangelizing mission. To fulfill the mission of Catholic schools, leaders in the church must criticize the systems and structures that perpetuate racism in its schools. It was important to listen to the counternarrative of these participants through the lens of CRT to understand the implications of their experiences on Catholic school leadership and more broadly the mission of Catholic education. Therefore, the data gathered from this study were used as a tool for this criticism and they identified the problems with the implementation of CST in Catholic school and identify recommendations in moving forward.

Counternarratives in CST Implementation

As mentioned in Chapter 1, CST is a tradition in the church rooted in the Gospel message of love. Both the Old and New Testament illustrated God's love specifically for the poor, the enslaved, the immigrant and the marginalized. Rooted in the consequences of the industrial revolution, the first iterations of CST emerged which was further codified in the writing of Second Vatican Council. This tradition continues in the church, rooted in its central teaching of the sanctity of life and human dignity.

The participants in this study demonstrated that CST was central to their core beliefs as Catholic school leaders. However, notable themes in the interview data demonstrated

interpretations and implementations of CST that stood apart from the issues highlighted by the church, including: (a) intimacy in school leadership, (b) an outcomes-based approach to student learning, (c) service delivery through the COVID-19 global pandemic, and (d) pastoral ministry as a form of community engagement.

Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity

Foundational to the church's social teaching is the sacredness of human life. The root of this belief is that every person has inherent value as children of God, created in God's image and likeness (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1998). At the heart of the sanctity of life and human dignity is the belief that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God. This creates an intimacy between God and humanity. Sacred scripture illustrated these concepts through relational stories of God's love through the covenants of the Old Testament, the parable of the lost sheep, the image of church as the bride of Christ and prayer of Jesus before the crucifixion (e.g. Genesis 9:4-6, Genesis 17:4-9; Exodus 19:5-6, 2 Samuel 7:8-11, Matthew 18: 10-14, Ephesians 5: 25-32, John 17:1-26). The construct of intimacy of school leadership as illustrated in the counternarratives of Lucinda and Claire was founded on a felt knowledge of their school community built by their authenticity, vulnerability, commitment, and care. Therefore, the sanctity of life and human dignity as operationalized in Catholic school communities required this intimate knowing demonstrated by these counternarratives. The data highlighted the relational aspect of CST when applied to a Catholic school setting.

Preferential Option for the Poor and Marginalized

The USCCB (1998) recognized a basic moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. As mentioned previously, participants have linked human dignity to the concept of equity. Regarding an option for the poor and vulnerable, participants also used equity to articulate a preference toward the poor and vulnerable. A preferential option for the poor and marginalized was demonstrated in intimate school leadership outcomes-based instruction identified as fidelity. For Claire, Lucinda, and Jennifer, an expectation of academic excellence from faculty, staff and students were an operationalization of a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. As demonstrated by these counternarratives, excellence in curriculum and instruction could only take root through an intimate knowledge of their students and their families. As operationalized by the participants, CST goes beyond a proclamation and is identified through action felt in the lives of children and their families.

Another depiction of CST in action was how Claire and Lucinda ensured the mission of their school continued through the COVID-19 global pandemic. Lucinda attributed her efficacy during this time on trust. She ensured that the relationships in which her school was founded were visible during a time of separation, as she sent her faculty and staff to the streets to welcome families and students to face to face instruction. Claire ensured the continuation of her school's mission by addressing vaccine hesitancy through vulnerability. She addressed each faculty and staff member with an ethic of care, recognizing their fears and by sharing and addressing them with her own. For Lucinda and Claire, a preferential option for the poor was operationalized through an intimate knowledge of their school community. This knowledge

enabled them to respond with an undying commitment to the success of people which their school community serves.

Community, Family, and Participation

Rooted in the belief that each person is sacred, CST also acknowledged that each person is social. Therefore, a vibrant community was central in sustaining human dignity (USCCB, 1998). For Epiphany Parish, this social teaching was exhibited toward a pastoral ministry rooted in service, community engagement and advocacy. Claire made this clear as she described her core values as a school site leader. She explained:

> It is important to me that the children learn how to serve the community. All our journeys to service are different, I just want them to understand how important it is for them to have their place. Even as a child, you have a big impact on the community and what you do here will set that foundation up for what you can do beyond Epiphany School.

An example of the operationalization of community, family and participation was found in how Claire and her pastor chose to celebrate his installation. They used the installation as an opportunity to demonstrate their values of advocacy and community organization to the Kennedy Park community. Together, they used celebration to raise funds for students' scholarships, they organized the community to serve the homeless, and they built community by gathering Black Catholic leadership and vocations to celebrate the installation of Epiphany's first Black pastor. This counternarrative illustrated an action oriented social teaching. One that was rooted in community organizing and activism.

The Language of CST as a Roadblock

Despite the clear evidence of commitment to the church and CST, as a practitioner I found a common critique of the intimate school leadership was exemplified in Lucinda and Claire's stories, is that these values were not "Catholic"; that is, the work these and other school leaders were doing in their school communities did not align with the rhetoric the church had endorsed. Some examples of language deemed as non-Catholic were "culturally responsive," "antiracist," "diversity," "equity," , "inclusion", "Black", and "Brown" which stood in contrast to "Catholic" language such as "sanctity of life", "human dignity," "preferential option," "poor," or "marginalize." This type of discourse limits CST as dogma and served as a distraction to its implementation in Catholic schools.

The through-line of CST as defined by the USCCB (1998) starts with the respect for life and human dignity which acknowledged that humanity is made in the image and likeness of God. This respect for life is bolstered by the interplay between human rights and individual and societal responsibility. This was supported by the structures of family, community, and participation. Ultimately, the church's social teaching resulted in a proactive call to seek options for the poor and marginalized in society. However, the socio-racial dynamics of marginalization was not specifically addressed by this body of work. The connection between race and marginalization was not apparent in the summary of CST by the USCCB (1998). This was particularly remarkable given the church's unfortunate history with racism and slavery in the United States.

Summaries of CST are written in a colorblind context missing the opportunity to identify the relationship between race, marginalization, and poverty. Evidence of this articulation of CST

has found its way into Catholic school communities. Data gathered from this study surfaced these dynamics through the response of the school communities to letters of solidarity with the Black community following the murder of George Floyd. The data identified these instances through a demand from school communities to stay "neutral" on the George Floyd issue, by criticizing letters of solidarity by claiming "the United States is not racist," and through silence and complacency regarding racial violence.

The Catholic Church in the United States is not absent in mentioning race in it pastoral letters. In the context of Catholic education as a social work of the church the USCCB (2005) made this connection by directly addressing the need to serve the Latino Catholic population. The USCCB (2005) stated:

> The USCCB remains committed to the value of Catholic education in the United States. As Catholic education continues to address the many and varied needs of our nation's new immigrant population, the church and its schools are often among the few institutions providing immigrants and newcomers with a sense of welcome, dignity, community, and connection with their spiritual roots. (p. 4)

They specifically name immigrant populations as Hispanic/Latino stating:

> We must also serve the increasing Hispanic/Latino population, which makes up 39% of our current Catholic community. Hispanics/Latinos make up 41% of Catholics under the age of 30, and 44% of Catholics under the age of 10. It is currently estimated that by the second decade of this century, the Hispanic/Latino population will compose 50% of all Catholics in the United States. Catholic parishes and schools must reflect this reality and

> reach out and welcome Hispanics and Latinos into the Catholic faith communities in the United States. (p. 9)

Surprisingly absent from this socioracial conversation about the future of Catholic school was outreach to the Black community in the United States. The absence of the Black community from the USCCB commitment for Catholic school was peculiar because Catholic education is named as a priority in their pastoral letters regarding racism over a 26-year timespan from *Discrimination and Christian Conscience* (USCCB, 1958) to *What We Have Seen and Heard* (Black Bishops of the United States, 1984). The omission of the Black community from the commitment to the future of Catholic elementary and high school was revealing, considering the participants experience of their communities being ignored, seen as unimportant, and the lacking support from the diocese. Despite Latinos being named as part of the future of Catholic schools in the United States, Darder (2016) warned:

> Latino communities are susceptible to the culture of colorblindness in the church stating, This is phenomenon [racism] is particularly prevalent in color-blind views that persist in Catholic schools today. The hidden curriculum of White superiority silences the voices of Latino students, by ignoring their experiences of racism. Hence, unexamined racialized assumptions support an assimilative bias held by many Catholic educators—well-meaning and devout teachers who too often fail to perceive the racism embedded in their tendencies to judge and compare the success of poor and working-class Latino students against that of more affluent students from the dominant culture. Furthermore, the identification of Latino's as an opportunity for the expansion of Catholic education in indicative of interest convergence. (p. 41)

In addition to acknowledging the culture of colorblindness in Catholic education, Darder (2016) directly warned of interest convergence as the church turns its attention to Latinos due to their population growth in the Catholic Church in the United States.

Similarly, Claire articulated this sentiment of interest convergence. She questioned the timing of finally receiving a pastor, after 7 years, and the social unrest sparked by the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Jennifer shared in this experience through the lack of plan for her struggling Catholic school serving Black children. Damien exposure to interest convergence occurred in the misapplication of the concept of subsidiarity. These experiences of interest convergences were not unique to the participants, but were shared by the experience of the Black Catholic community as a whole. The timing of the pastoral letter regarding CST on racism demonstrated that the church's response to racism coincides with the pressure church leadership experience when their silence is interpreted as a lack of moral conscience. *Discrimination and Christian Conscience* (USCCB, 1958) was written in advent of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and 1 year after the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as violence and social unrest ensued as a response to desegregation and Black suffrage. The *Statement on National Race Crisis* was written during the civil rights movement, after a year of race riots and 21 days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (USCCB, 1968). *Brothers and Sister to Us* was written among controversies surrounding desegregation of schools, affirmative action and a decade of growing right-wing extremism found in the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis. *Open Wide Our Hearts* (USCCB, 2018) was written after the recognition of police brutality toward Black Americans and the response of the Black Lives Matter movement. This illustrated the reactive

nature of CST on race and its interest convergence can be interpreted as a response to racism rather that an essential part of CST.

Both colorblindness and interest convergence illustrate how CST was implicated in participants' experiences of racism. Colorblindness devalues CST on racism, especially among Catholics who do not share in the experience of racism or lack empathy in the experience of Black Catholics. The absence of racism as contrary to the church teaching on life and human dignity and the omission of the relationship of marginalization and race in the summaries of CST, ignored the existence of racism within the church and in U.S. society. Additionally, interest convergence muddled the moral authority of the church as it questions its sincerity among the faithful and illustrates a lack of importance in addressing racism to the mainstream church.

Black Catholic Resistance in Catholic Schools

Massingale (2010) pointed out that Catholic social teaching (CST) about racism in the Catholic Church in the United States was written as a White narrative for a White Catholic audience. He illustrated his point by underscoring the title of the U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on racism titled *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (USCCB, 1979) and asking the question, "Who is us?". Massingale acknowledged the dynamics of a majoritarian narrative and a counternarrative within the dialogue on race in the church. Additionally, CST on race has not been emphasized in the church. Massingale brought attention to this by citing research on the effectiveness of *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (USCCB, 1979). Since the publication of *Brothers and Sister to Us* to the publishing of this research in 2004, 18% of the nation's bishops issued statements condemning racism, and the survey shows 64% of Catholics had not heard a homily

on racial justice (Cavendish, 2004). Its findings show bleak improvements in the communication of the church's stance antiracist stance.

The data collected from this study illustrated the duality of resistance in the study of social justice leadership. Theoharis (2007) suggested that social justice leaders experience resistance in two ways. First, in resistance to social justice work, confirmed by the findings of this study identifying racism as the predominant inhibitor to the participants leadership practice. What is important to highlight in understanding the operationalization of CST in Catholic schools was the second form of resistance that Theoharis identified. That was the ability of leaders to develop the capacity for resistance to racism in their school communities. Despite the detailed accounts of racism by the participants and the lack of a coherent plan to serve the Black community, their fidelity to the church's mission through its Catholic schools was unwavering. Their resistance has laid the foundation for putting CST into action in Catholic schools. This illustrated Raboteau's (2009) concept of redeeming the religion of the master, one in which the racial degradation of Black Christians is transposed into an election of a moral and heroic Christianity among Black people. The participants' identities of being Black and being Catholic gave them a firsthand experience of what CST aspires for in the church. Their fidelity to the mission of Catholic education, despite the resistance they face, transposed the majoritarian narrative in which CST was written into a Black Catholic narrative. Ultimately, CST was transposed into a story of altruism and resilience in these examples: Claire's faithfulness to the mission of Epiphany Parish to the Kennedy Park community despite going without a pastor for 7 years. Lucinda's insistence that St. Martin Church and St. Martin School should be one parish, despite her school communities frayed relationship with their pastor. Jennifer's continued service

despite the lack of investment in her school community, which resulted in the closure of her school. Virginia's persistence in the preservation of her school's Catholic identity, despite resistance, fatigue, and self-doubt. Damien's ability to puts the needs of marginalized Black and Latino students at the center of the school's funding model, amidst an economically diversifying school. These stories were marked with resilience, fidelity, and tenacity and they provided a counter narrative which puts CST into action within a Catholic school context.

The counternarrative found in the participants' stories went beyond persistence in the face of adversity. It articulated an expertise in the implementation of CST in Catholic education despite the circumstances of their church. The evangelization of the Catholic Church to the Black community is mired with performative acknowledgements and missteps. Cavendish (2004), identified the failed response *Brothers and Sisters to Us*:

> The absence of effective, enculturated ministry formation programs may result in a loss of Black vocations as Black men and women, both young and old, seek in their formation programs evidence of the same culture, traditions, and liturgical styles found in their home parishes. Furthermore, the absence of enculturated ministry formation can result in poorly trained ministers for the Black Catholic community. This is especially problematic when candidates [seminarians and priest] who have little or no exposure to African American culture (e.g., White or African candidates) are assigned to serve predominantly African American parishes. (p. 5)

Here Cavendish (2004) acknowledged the lack of cultural responsiveness among church leadership and the ramifications of that lack of responsivity to the church. The data gathered in this study flipped the script of evangelization in Catholic school. Their expertise in intimate

school leadership and CRSL positioned them as the evangelizer. Rather than waiting for the church to evangelize their communities, their counternarrative identified participants as evangelizing the church to its own social teaching.

Understanding Resistance to CST

In addressing the roadblocks to CST implementation in Catholic education, the participants in the study shared multiple accounts of resistance attributed to racism. To understand these instances of racism, CRT was used to make sense of this contradiction given the Catholic identity of the school communities and the school system of the participants. The result of the interpretation of the finding explained the disconnect between Catholic schools and their espoused values: a lack of ideological clarity and the nature of racism as sin.

Ideological Clarity

A consequential finding of this study was that racism characterized as resistance to an antiracism stance and CRSL. The previous discussion on the language of CST pointed to reasons why there is a separation between CST broadly and CST in respect to antiracism. The data suggested that Catholic school communities suffer from a lack of ideological clarity among church leaders and the Catholic community regarding CST. This was due to a lack of prominence of CST on racism as compared to other life and dignity issues in the church. Massingale (2010) identified this anomaly in CST when he talked about a lack of passion in addressing the sin of racism among church leaders. Pointing out that racism as a "radical evil" was not met with the same unambiguous stance as abortion. In fact, opposition to abortion is a public marker of Catholic identify despite significant opposition in U.S. society. The experience of participants in this study did not demonstrate the same fervor on the issue of antiracism. In

fact, responses to racism were found to be untimely, evocative of a lack of importance and demonstrative of interest convergence. The audacity that a Catholic school leader could be called the racial slur in a public space at a Catholic school event, revealed the safety one feels using that word in a Catholic school environment. This illustrated the damage that a lack ideological clarity does to Black Catholic ministers and the communities they serve.

An understanding of the Catholic Church as White property was helpful in identifying why anyone would feel safe being overtly racist in a Catholic school environment. Through this lens Catholic schools were seen as properties exclusive to White culture and should be protected against people of color (Capper, 2015). Therefore, the experience of overt racism that Damien shared demonstrated an expression of Catholic school as a White space by a member of the school community. Cressler's research (2020) identified how White property reveals itself in what it means to be a "real" Catholic. Virginia shared her experience of her Latino families devaluing their own heritage while identifying membership in a Catholic school as a sign of privilege and entitlement. In this example, Whiteness as "real Catholicism" had been internalized to the point of an aversion towards one's cultural heritage. Darder (2016) has called this phenomenon in Catholic schools "internalization of inferiority" (p. 39). Darder (2016) defined this as "a process of schooling that has systematically conditioned Latino students to identify with the assumed superiority of the dominant culture to the extent that they participate in their own cultural negation" (p. 39). She further added that the purpose of a Catholic school is to "seek to transform, so that Latino students within Catholic education and beyond can truly find the place to be themselves and to exercise their cultural knowledge and language as an asset to their academic formation, rather than a hindrance" (Darder, 2016, p. 40). As made clear by the

data, the attempt to assert Catholic education as White property as a strategy for cultural dominance was not unique to Latino Catholics. Racism experienced through the questioning of participants, disposition, vernacular, motivations, and qualifications in Catholic school communities was seen as a property to be protected against Black Catholics. Given this depiction on how the Catholic Church and Catholic schools function as property to be protected against Black people, it was understandable why CST faced resistance and failed to take root in the culture of Catholic schools.

Another dynamic of White property as it relates to a lack of ideological clarity in Catholic school communities was sacramental optimism. Grimes (2020) described this concept as the belief that church practices, if performed correctly, can address the sins of the secular world. Grimes argued that this is a misunderstanding of the church as the body of Christ. Pointing out that the Catholic Church's participation in slavery and its tactics of withholding the Eucharist from Black community was a perversion of the sacraments. Therefore, the church is a social body which is permeable, making it susceptible to the sins of the secular world. Through this lens, it was understandable how a Black Catholic community could go without a pastor for 7 years. This analogy also helps to understanding the lack of clarity of CST on race in Catholic school communities. As a response to the murder of George Floyd, both Virginia and Damien published statements acknowledging racism which were consistent with CST. However, their letters were met with resistance from board members and the school community. This demonstrated a lack of ideological clarity among school boards and within school communities. Serving as an example of the permeability of the church to sin.

Cressler (2020) identified this perversion in the church as "policing the political and the spiritual" (p. 285). He explained this concept as the church controlling what is Catholic and what it political in religious terms. In this interpretation, life issues, while in the womb are considered Catholic, while life issues on the other side of birth are deemed political. This resulted in an interpretation of CST on race as dividing and not neutral rather than part of Catholic orthodoxy as demonstrated by the data. Shea (2020) further identified this phenomenon in the church in his book titled *The Church's Best Kept Secret*. He explained that CST functions as a secret in the church not because the teaching are confusing, rather that the church is confused. Pointing to the inception of U.S. politics into Catholic communities. Shea (2020) identified the lack of clarity to CST a result of:

> a gaggle of warring voices in our culture [which] assails us, urging us not to think with the mind of Christ, but with our favorite news vendor, or political party, or TV show, or pundit, or folk hero, or social media mini-pope, or circle of peers. (p. 12)

This understanding of how CST on race has been undermined by the policing of the political and the spiritual helped to understand the silence and complacency felt by the participants in addressing racism. Damien addressed this dynamic with his own school community attributing a lack of ideological clarity to different cohorts with opposing political view both claiming to be Catholic referring to priest with conflicting teachings. Claire pointed out, that this lack of ideological clarity is not experienced in the school community alone, but through the various levels of church hierarchy, identified as silent in the face of blatant attacks on CST. Faced with declined church participation and declining enrollment, (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2022; National Catholic Education Association, 2021) the church is torn attempting

to hold on to the extremities of the church which is influenced by U.S. politics, resulting in a muddled articulation of CST experienced by the participants as resistance, silence, and complacency.

The Nature of Racism as Sin

In addressing the ways in which the permanence of racism clarified the systems and structures which impede the implementation of CST in Catholic education, it was important to unpack why CST calls racism a sin. Racism as sin, "is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 1849). It violates the church teaching that every person carries the image of God (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 1702). By this definition, it is a personal offense. However, the church teaching on sin also recognized structures of sin stating:

> Thus, sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. "Structures of sin" are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a "social sin." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 1869)

CST on racism adopted both personal and structural sin when calling racism, a sin. The church also teaches that no person is without sin and all people are capable of sin stating, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 1847). The good news is, where sin abounds so too does grace. Church teachings states, "'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.' But to do its work grace must uncover sin so as to convert our hearts" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, para. 1848).

Therefore, to allow grace to overcome sin, one must do the inner work of acknowledgement and conversion. Through the understanding of racism as sin, the permanence of racism as defined in CRT takes root in the church's social teaching on racism. The permanence of racism is the belief that racism is pervasive and systemic in nature and contradicts the idea that humanity can arrive in a post racial existence. Consequently, the nature of racism as a sin makes all people susceptible to its temptation but through God's grace and mercy its power can be diminished through acknowledgement and conversion personally and together as in the case of structural sin.

Participants in this study acknowledged the consequences of personal sin of racism experienced as loneliness and being forgotten. Participants have also experienced the consequence of structural sin through systems that impede CST operationalization in Catholic schools. A finding of this study, pertinent to this discussion, was the exclusion of the Catholic school community from the church. Claire's narrative described in detail the difficulty of running a parish school absent of a pastor and explain the new life that filled the parish with the arrival of their new pastor. While St. Martin's governance model contributed to a worn relationship with their pastor. Important to note that both school communities, Epiphany and St. Martin had historically and continued to serve the Black community. This illustrated a lack of attention given to these school communities excluding them from a vital resource in Catholic schools, a pastor. Cavendish's (2004) research pointed to a lack of Black clergy which exacerbates this issue. Black Catholics represent 3% of bishops, and 3% of deacons which is commensurate to Black Catholic representation among the U.S. population. Yet, Black Catholics are not well represented among priest, sisters and lay pastoral ministers and directors of religious education. In areas where Black people are most represented like seminaries, the uptick in numbers are

attributed to recruitment from Africa. This is problematic for Black Americans who are culturally different from Africans. When asked why she thought there was a lack of Black priest, Claire attributed a lack of a role model which would inspire Black Catholics to consider priesthood and a lack of cultural responsiveness to the Black Catholic community. As previously mentioned, this is also confirmed by Cavendish (2004) research. First, two national surveys pinpoint an inadequacy among diocesan seminaries and ministry formation programs regarding the inclusion of the history, culture and traditions of Black Americans resulting in poorly trained ministers to the Black community and an overall loss of Black priestly vocation. This lack of follow through from *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (USCCB, 1979) from the Catholic Church has systemic and generational consequences to the evangelization of Black people and the church's mission to Black Catholics and the schools they serve.

A second finding of this study as it pertains to the consequences of the sin of racism was a lack of a coherent plan for Catholic school serving the Black community. This was evident in the experience of Lucinda and Claire's experiences of having no pastor and was directly discussed by Jennifer in describing the closure of her school in another diocese. Interestingly, education was highlighted as a strategy in all pastoral letters about racism in the church. *Discrimination and the Christian Conscience* and *Statement on the National Crisis* both name education as a basic human right that has been precluded from Black people (USCCB, 1958, 1968). *Statement on the National Crisis* specifically named Catholic school systems to address the social crisis of racism. *Brothers and Sisters to Us* called upon the expansion of Catholic schools in neighborhoods of color (USCCB, 1979). *What We Have Seen and Heard* (Black Bishops of the United States, 1984) acknowledged that Catholic education as a vehicle for Black

evangelization and stated, “We even dare to suggest that the efforts made to support them and insure their continuation are a touchstone of the local church’s sincerity in the evangelization of the Black community” (Black Bishops of the United States, 1984, p. 28). *Open Wide Our Hearts* called on Catholic schools to develop curricula addressing racism and reconciliation and call institution of Catholic education to break the silence on the issue of racism (USCCB, 2018). These pastoral letters were right to bring attention to education as a basic human right and to call for an expansion of Catholic education to facilitate evangelization to the Black community. However, the lack of a strategic plan to expand Catholic school in Black communities has caused the opposite to occur (National Catholic Education Association, 2021).

The final finding relevant to the consequences of the sin of racism that impede CST operationalization was the misunderstanding of the concept of subsidiarity which results in a lack of support of addressing racism among Catholic school leaders. Damien’s experience identified that navigating racism in Catholic school is left to local control, exhibiting the social teaching of subsidiarity. CST defined subsidiarity as the ability of local communities to initiate solution to local problems. The role of the government was not to replace local control but rather to support communities when their ability to facilitate justice exceeds their capability (USCCB, 1986). In the case of racism, which is ubiquitous, systemic, and multifaceted, local leaders should not be left to deal with these complicated situations on their own. Damien’s further explained that the response of diocesan leadership may not be an issue of subsidiarity alone but a consequence of fear. His counternarrative explained that the response to racism or lack thereof, is a result of fear which hopes that the solution will result in nothing bad happening rather than a proactive solution that address the root of the problem. As Damien’s experience showed subsidiarity would

require the consultation of the local leader in producing prudent support but required the governing body to arrive at a comprehensive and just outcome.

To address racism a Catholic community, both locally and national, would require a greater sense of solidarity on the issue of racism in the church. CST define solidarity this way:

> We have to move from our devotion to independence, through an understanding of interdependence, to a commitment to human solidarity. That challenge must find its realization in the kind of community we build among us. Love implies concern for all - especially the poor - and a continued search for those social and economic structures that permit everyone to share in a community that is a part of a redeemed creation. (USCCB, 1986, p. 89)

When applied to racism, the concept of solidarity would imply that the experience of racism in the Black community degrades life and human dignity in totality. Additionally, the solution to addressing racism locally requires the redemption of all people from the sin of racism. Therefore, diocese leadership should seek local input to resolve racism but acknowledge the need of a collective strategy and the communal nature of its solution.

Toward a More Inclusive CST

The separation between Catholic school values of antiracism and their lived reality among Catholic school communities were laid bare through the dual pandemics. The murder of George Floyd became a flashpoint of realization that Catholic school must do more in implementing the church's social teachings on racism. However, racism in the church is not new. Historians recognize the role the Catholic Church played in slavery in the United States both explicitly and implicitly. The result were the consequences of racism among the church's

ministry as described by the participants. The legacy of racism in the church is in direct contradiction to the gospel message, leaving the church and its leaders in an awkward position. In an attempt to reconcile the contradiction between the church's action and the gospel message CST on racism in the United States was born. From 1958 to 2022, the church continues to grapple with racism among a highly politicized U.S. context. The result are performative acts that do not address racism in productive ways.

The key recommendation of this study was to reclaim CST in Catholic schools by moving beyond performative acts and emphasizing intimate school leadership. The challenge for Catholic education is to reengage CST in ways that speak true to what the church aspires it to be; to leverage CST as guidelines for greater union and communion. Intimate school leadership gives Catholic schools a construct to move toward the communion that CST desires for humanity. Fortunately, the participants in the study have identified the characteristics of this construct through their counternarratives. Building on their expertise these recommendations serve to develop an inclusive implementation of CST among Catholic school communities.

Supporting Black Catholic School Leaders

This research intentionally focused on Black Catholic school leadership praxis to discover constructs of CST implementation in Catholic schools. The participants demonstrated intimate school leadership and CRSL as ways of implementing CST in a Catholic school setting. This made their work both innovative and vital to the future of Catholic schools in the United States. Additionally, this research illustrated that this expertise in CST implementation is done in spite of racism experienced as the predominant roadblock to their leadership praxis. In fact, this dynamic positions Black Catholic school leaders as evangelizers of the church's social teaching.

This made supporting Black Catholic school leaders central to the service of CST in Catholic School at this pivotal moment in history.

This study recommends intimate school leadership as a construct to support Black Catholic school leaders. The data from this research identified key characteristics of intimate school leadership (a) love, (b) fidelity, and (c) vulnerability. When speaking of supporting Black Catholic school leaders it was important to identify the supporters. These suggestions are addressed to those who support school leaders from a governance perspective. Depending on the variety of governance models across dioceses in the United States, these include but are not limited to pastors, presidents, superintendents, and boards of limited jurisdiction. I also extend these recommendations to school stakeholders. Some examples are advisory boards, parish finance councils, parent associations and university, and philanthropic partners.

Love

The data described the relational aspect of school leadership in the participants love for their school community. The counternarratives illustrated this love in a familial sense that is rooted in a close relationship with their student and families. I suggest that a Black Catholic school leaders deserve the same form of intimate leadership from governing leaders. First through the act genuine care for these leaders as holistic people. The data in this study has made clear, the toll that resistance has on Black Catholic school leaders identified as loneliness, fatigue, and discouragement. In these moments it may be tempting to rearticulate our commitment to antiracism as a sign of support. Instead, I recommend that governing leaders attempt to take on their experience with a felt knowledge. This will require active listening especially in instances where leaders receive resistance to their work in cultural responsivity and

antiracism. In these moments, CRT proves helpful as an interpretive framework when listening. This will allow for a visceral knowledge of their experience to inform how governing leaders can respond lovingly. Specifically, to listen with a loving disposition and to be sensitive to experiences of the permanence of racism, White property, color blindness and interest convergence. These forms of listening will help develop cultural responsivity among leaders in positions of governance.

Listening leads to understanding but listening alone is not enough. Consistent growth in critical self-reflection and cultural responsivity are necessary to make an impact on antiracism in Catholic schools. I suggest pastoral ministry as a vehicle to inform critical self-reflection and cultural responsiveness. To minister in a pastoral fashion requires leaders to go out, literally to the margins of school communities. But also spiritually, to the edges oneself to develop critical self-awareness and cultural responsivity. Pope Francis (2017) described this form of pastoral ministry this way, "Instead of being shepherd living with 'the smell of the sheep.' This I ask you: be shepherds, with 'the smell of the sheep,' make it real, as shepherds of your flock, fishers of men [evangelist]" (p. 7). As Epiphany Parish clearly demonstrated in Claire's counternarrative, it was vital to engage in a community context. Leaders in positions of governance must challenge themselves to step out of their comfort zones, immerse themselves into the community and pursue counternarratives. Pastoral ministry done in this way is pivotal in developing critical self-awareness and cultural responsivity, and identifying the most loving response. Lastly, as the data in this study demonstrated, loving in this way results in positive outcomes for school communities. Thus, leaders can measure their efficacy when Black Catholic school leaders are

empowered and supported in their ministry, students of color are formed as Catholics and excel academically, and barriers to Catholic education for all are diminished.

Vulnerability

The participants in this study illustrated vulnerability in leadership through their authenticity, transparency, and courage in leading their community. This was particularly evident in the ways in which they address the COVID-19 global pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. These counternarratives showed that leadership with authenticity and transparency required difficult conversations that speak truth to power and requires empathy as a guiding principle. The participants modeled for governing leaders how vulnerability in school leadership functions. Thus, governing leaders must engage in these vulnerable situations. Capper's (2015) research acutely described vulnerability in antiracist work. It requires the understanding that school leaders engage in a lifelong process of confronting racism personally as they lead school systems in the same journey. This insight avoids incremental change and the displacement of injustice from one place to another. Developing an antiracist identity requires the discipline to not avoid opportunities to discuss racial issues. In fact, sitting in the discomfort of racial conversations is vital. Governing leaders must be self-aware of their fears of racial dialogue and engage whenever possible (Capper, 2015). As a practitioner, I identified this fear as the anxiety in saying something racist, appearing out of touch or getting the antiracist stance wrong. Therefore, it was important to recognize that an antiracist identity is a lifelong journey as Capper (2015) suggested. It is engaging in dialogue about race and racism, it is possible that governing leaders will unintentionally say something that is racist, appear out of touch or get it wrong, in the

development of critical self-awareness and cultural responsivity. In these moments it helpful to recognize those blunders, apologize, forgive oneself, and do better next time.

This dynamic of fear and vulnerability was identified in the data as the dynamic of operating from fear versus operating from love. Damien identified these instances when decisions are made because of a fear of an unfavorable result rather than decisions made from the most loving response. Engaging with Black Catholic school leaders in a vulnerable way is necessary in building a relationship based on mutual love and respect. Vulnerability when expressed as a leadership practice results in agile and resilient relationships of love and forgiveness as the counternarratives suggests. Therefore, acknowledging that critical self-awareness and cultural responsivity are a lifelong process of growth and vulnerability in school leadership is necessary in its facilitation.

Fidelity

The counternarratives captured in this study identified a commitment that went beyond faithfulness to their school communities. Their experiences showed a persistence in showing up for their communities' day in and day out despite the challenges their communities present them. It portrayed a selflessness that is rooted in their love for their ministry that survives racial slurs, a lack of support and the exhaustion of antiracist work. Fidelity as demonstrated by the data was more than devotion to a community. It was a form on faithfulness that is committed to positive outcomes for their students and families. The participant model for governing leaders the level of fidelity that was required to support Black Catholic school leaders and their ministries. It necessitates governing leaders to stand with and for them when their antiracist work results in acts of racism and when their ministry surfaces systems and structures that are too difficult to

overcome on their own. It necessitates governing leaders to get their hand dirty in the struggle for racial justice in Catholic schools as partners in arriving at just and equitable solutions. This requires time and a prioritization of these relationships thereby operationalizing a preferential option for the marginalized. As previously described, this level of fidelity requires vulnerability. By the nature of antiracist work, the relationship between school site leaders and governing leaders will be put under stress. The courage to be catalyst for healing and reconciliation within the relationship and among school communities are essential aspects of fidelity in these relationships. Lastly, fidelity to these Black Catholic school leaders require recognition of success, acknowledgement of the toll of the work, and confronting difficult conversations necessary in maintaining these relationships.

Inclusive CST in Catholic Schools

The aforementioned recommendations are personal in nature, intentionally focusing on the relationship between governing leaders and school site leaders and are necessary steps in supporting Black Catholic school leaders. The subsequent set of recommendation address systems and structures that perpetuate racism in Catholic school. Primary is recognizing that the legacy of racism in Catholic schools have systemic ramifications. These legacies are ubiquitous and are often unquestioned. This is exemplified by the colorblind nature of CST and the consequence that has on Catholic school communities and described by the data. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate CST and the church's teaching on antiracism as a cohesive body of work. As evident in Cavendish's (2004) research, the church's antiracist stance in not common in Catholic dialogue and is further muddled by a lack of ideological clarity as Massingale (2010) and Shea (2020) suggested. Therefore, documents like *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (USCCB,

1979), *What We Have Seen and Heard* (Black Bishops of the United States, 1984), and *Open Wide Our Hearts* (USCCB, 2018) must be integral parts of religion and theology curriculum in Catholic school and in Catholic school leadership training among Catholic school offices and Catholic university partners.

Integrating CST and the church's teachings on antiracism is a necessary step but will not have efficacy on students and school communities unless the cultures of colorblindness and White property evident in Catholic school are critically analyzed and addressed. Therefore, this study recommends equity audits as a method in which Catholic school offices and Catholic school sites can address the racial context in which CST needs to be implemented in Catholic schools. Skrla et al. (2004) suggested three key areas to investigate when addressing equity at school sites or among school districts: (a) teacher equity, (b) programmatic equity, (c) and achievement equity. Their research suggested that these key areas have a formulaic relationship in which teacher equity and programmatic equity results in achievement equity. They defined teacher equity by evaluating teacher education level, teacher tenure, and content area expertise. Program equity is defined evaluating special education programs, gifted and talented education, bilingual education, and student discipline. Achievement equity is evaluated through standardized test, dropout rates, high school graduation tracks, and SAT, ACT and/or advance placement assessments. Skrla et al.'s (2004) equity audits have prescriptive steps to engage the school communities into a process which surfaces inequity and identify measures for success toward equitable outcomes. By utilizing equity audits, Catholic schools can use data to identify systems and structures among school communities that disadvantage communities of color. A systematic approach like Skrla et al. (2004) suggested, will help Catholic school communities

bring systems and structures of colorblindness, White property, and interest convergence into the light.

Lastly, the evidence from this study pointed to culturally responsivity as guiding construct to CST implementation in Catholic schools. Therefore, this study recommends the integration of CRSL in leadership training for Catholic school leaders at Catholic universities and diocesan school offices. Additionally, this study highlighted the importance of a cultural responsivity among teachers, faculty, staff, and school families. Therefore, included in this recommendation is the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy in teacher preparation programs facilitated by diocesan school offices and university partners. As a consequential finding of this study, it was important to articulate to all stakeholders that expressing CST is not enough. Rather CST must take root in school culture, curriculum, and its policies. As evident in this study, CRSL is a construct which ensures CST takes root among school communities.

Future Research

Due to the limited scope of this study, delimited to the experiences of Black Catholic school leaders, more research in necessary to determine if intimate school leadership is a phenomenon present among Catholic school communities throughout the nation. There are two specific areas of research that will benefit the study of antiracist implementation in Catholic education. First, is to understand the nuances of intimate school leadership among majority member leaders who lead Catholic schools of underrepresented populations or minority leaders who serve majority populations. Jennifer's counternarrative began to scratch the surface of this dynamic. However, the scope of this study did not allow for further investigation.

A second area of study would be the dynamics between school leaders of color and governing leaders. The counternarratives of Lucinda and Claire uniquely pointed out a need for reconciliation in this specific relationship. A better understanding of this relationship which includes best practices and pitfalls beyond the recommendations of this study would benefit Catholic school leaders of color. These two areas of further research will better articulate a possible phenomenon in intimate school leadership and lay additional frameworks in implementing CST on racism in Catholic schools.

Conclusion

As I witnessed Catholic schools grapple with racial justices through a series of virtual meetings in the summer of 2020, a sadness came over me. It did not make any sense, given the church's social teaching, why was it so difficult for Catholic school communities to stand in solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters. The disconnect between Catholic school espoused values and their lived reality left me dumbfounded. The result, a curiosity to understand this phenomenon in Catholic schools. My hypothesis was that Black Catholic leaders would help determine this disconnect and identify a path forward for CST in Catholic schools. The results of the research proved my hypothesis true; however, I didn't anticipate that the language of CST itself would be a hindrance to understanding what the participants were clearly communicating. CRT proved instrumental in making sense of the disconnect between the professed values and lived realities in Catholic schools. Culturally responsive school leadership was critical in naming the ways Black Catholic school leaders implemented CST in their schools and surfacing the construct of intimate school leadership.

What this study provides is a counternarrative with a name, a face, a community. This intimate knowledge of the experience of Black Catholic school leaders forces Catholic educators to see the how CST has been problematic; it speaks to the empathy written into the human heart. Even more significant is that the participants in this study illustrate the dynamics of the intimacy of relationship among Catholic school communities which results in the construct of intimate school leadership. The dual pandemics have revealed how difficult relationships can be. Evident in U.S. culture is how objectification of those deemed as "other" results in division and separation. The data from this study showed that the objectification of "others" has seeped into Catholic education and results in problematic interactions with the church's social teaching. Therefore, it is tempting for Catholic educators to capitulate to the influence of racism, politics, and division in Catholic schools. This study identified an alternative. Through intimacy in relationship, Catholic educators and Catholic schools can become a truer version of the body of Christ that the gospel calls them to be.

EPILOGUE

There is no getting around to the critical nature of this study. It is by design, meant to surface the characteristics of racism with clarity to call the church to be a better version of itself. What also needs to be clear is that this study was conducted out of my love for the church. To which I owe my spiritual tradition, my cultural understanding, and a clarity in vocation, one which has led to a life of joy. Here lies the great opportunity for Catholic schools. Catholic school can be venues where student experience Christ's love. Catholic school communities can demonstrate the dynamics of intimacy of relationship as demonstrated in this study. This is pivotal in understanding that love is real, and its experience is possible in one's life. Additionally, Catholic schools create the environment for the discovery of one's vocation. Rooted in the understanding that children are created in God's image and likeness and that each life is created with purpose. Catholic school are venues for learning, experimentation, invention, innovation, philosophy, and service learning. All of which lead to clarity of vocation. Thus, Catholic schools become facilitators for the discovery of God's calling, the result of which leads to a life of joy. What demographic data show is that this opportunity for Black communities is diminished in the Catholic Church (National Catholic Education Association, 2021). It shouldn't be a surprise that many Black Christians seek Christ's love elsewhere. This questions the credibility of the Catholic Church's mission and the purpose of Catholic education. We must do better! We can do better.

I am confident because I believe. In an interview by *Ceredere* magazine, the reporter asked, "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?" Pope Francis responded, "I am a sinner. . . . I am sure of this. I am a sinner whom the Lord looked upon with mercy" (National Catholic Reporter Staff,

2016). The duality that the Pope describes is very helpful in my ministry. Both are true at the same time. I am a sinner, and I am loved by Christ. This is helpful imagery not only in self-reflection but in how I see the church. I have used "the church" numerous times in this study. When I use this phrase, I don't refer to something that is outside of me. I am part of the church, and the church is part of me. Thus, we are sinners whom the Lord has looked upon with mercy. I have lived experience of this truth.

Living through martial law in the Philippines, my parents immigrated to the United States with the hope of a better life for their future family. Foreigners in an unfamiliar land, the Catholic Church welcomed my family into the United States. For our family and many Filipino Catholics, parish life is at the center of their social network. I grew up on parish grounds, running amuck in the church parking lot as my parents attended prayer meetings. I was spiritually formed in catechism class, confirmation programs and youth ministry. The faith community became an extension of my family in which everyone at Mass was considered *Tito* or *Tita*. Ultimately, I attended a Catholic university where a priest accompanied me in the discovery of my vocation. He taught me the life of the Eucharist and the invitation of Sacraments. One which exercises what it means to be taken, blessed, broken, and given. The church is where I met my wife, and it is within the church that I raise my two children. This has resulted in a life of joy and fulfillment. For me the church is my religion, my spirituality, my culture, and my family. It is evidence of God's loving mercy.

What is also true are the way in which I am othered in the church. It is in the Catholic community that I inherit a colonial mentality, where Spanish and American forms of Catholicism are privileged over Filipino expression. It is in this church, where my membership to the

millennial's generation is used to question my faithfulness. It is in Catholic ministry that I struggle to understand the role of laity and I continue to discern where I belong in the Catholic Church as a lay minister. It is from this position that I can empathize with my Black sisters and brothers and recognize the work they do for the church despite the obstruction of racism.

The purpose of this epilogue is to illustrate this duality in me as a researcher. It is true, I am a sinner. It is true, I am God's beloved. This human truth applies to the church as well and lays the foundation for critical dialogue. I admit that the church has been an immense gift to me and my family. The ministry of Catholic education is living proof that my experience is not an anomaly but is shared by many whom have been blessed by Catholic schools, catechism class, confirmation programs, and youth ministry. Yet, this ministry is flawed and requires its members to facilitate reconciliation. This research is an act of love. This is our difficult conversation, a necessity in any intimate relationship. We have a responsibility to evangelize the gospel to all people and to the extremities of each community. It is our responsibility to share the gift of the church in a culturally responsive and antiracist way. Here we can do better. Here we must do better.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT JOURNAL

[Opening text]

1. How did you become a principal in the Diocese of Southern California (DSA)? In your response, please respond to the following:
    a. What was your educational and professional journey that brought you to your current position as a principal in DSA?
    b. How would you define your personal vocation and how does it motivate your current work?
    c. How does your Catholic identity impact your role as an educational leader?
    d. As a Black leader, what has been a formative experience that you have had as a leader in a Catholic school? How do you understand your role as a school leader interacting with your identity? What has been your experience as a leader of Color, in Catholic school?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What are the reasons that you became a principal?
2. How did you come to choose your school community?
3. Describe your core values of school leadership? Where do these values come from?
4. How would you define Catholic social teaching (CST)?
5. How were you trained in CST? Where did you learn about it?
6. In this area, what did you learn or gain from leadership training at the DSA? What do you wish you learned or gained?
7. How have you integrated CST in your work in social justice? Specifically, in the area antiracism?
8. Critics of CST on race and racism have pointed to (1) a lack of passion, (2) strategic plan, (3) theological reflection. Has this been your experience?
9. How have your integrated the church's social teaching on racism into the mission and Catholic identity of your school? If not, why not? Are there any obstacles to this goal?
10. Tell me about your experience with pushback against your antiracist work?
11. What do you think is unique about your experiences as a Black Catholic school leader?
12. As Black school site leader, what obstacles have you encountered as a school site leader and how have you dealt with those obstacles?
13. What is your experience with advocating for your school with philanthropy, attending donor events, and leading fundraising initiatives?

14. How have you customized your school curriculum to meet the needs of your students? What has been your experience in getting this done?
15. What was it like leading your school through the pandemic?
16. What was it like leading through the summer of 2020?

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