Race, Law and Education in the Post-Desegregation Era
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Four Perspectives on Desegregation and Resegregation

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This book is dedicated to my four children: Nichole, Crystal, Shayla and Dewn. Contained within this book is all the wisdom that a father can convey to his children. This book is also dedicated to the rainbow of my life, my wife Dianne. Without her support, encouragement and patience I could not have completed this book.
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Preface

This book is intended to address the era of the desegregation of public schools that occurred in American society over the past fifty years. Thus, it discusses the rise of desegregation from the Supreme Court’s 1954 decision in Brown v. Board of Education to the fall of desegregation beginning in the late 1980s to the current educational reform movement of expanding school choice. These developments are discussed primarily in terms of their implications for African-American schoolchildren because they were designated as the principal beneficiaries of desegregation. But this book is an examination of the desegregation of American education from the vantage point of this, the Post-Desegregation Era. Thus, while this book discusses the history of race relations, the desegregation of public schools and the current educational situation of African-American schoolchildren, this book is not about those issues. Rather this book is intended to discuss and reveal the most significant realization about racial phenomena and racial issues that stems from the experience of the desegregation of American society. This realization also constitutes the core experience of the Post-Desegregation Era.

To understand and experience something, it must be conceptualized against a sub silento background of a much larger set of ideas. These larger unseen, and often unperceived, background sets of ideas provide the conceptual contexts to place given events into “proper” context. The comprehension of racial and ethnic phenomena are merely a subset of this basic limit of human understanding. Thus, the comprehension of any particular racial or ethnic phenomena is always done against a background of a much larger set of ideas about race and ethnicity that structures and limits the perception of such a phenomena and the types of arguments that are persuasive to resolve a given racial or ethnic dispute. And just as important, there have always been multiple sets of background ideas about race and ethnicity in American society in which to comprehend a given racial phenomena and discuss a given racial issue. As a result, there are always multiple understandings of racial phenomena and thus multiple solutions to given racial conflicts. While
these different background sets of ideas could be viewed as different points of view or different perspectives, this book will refer to these larger diverse sets of ideas as the following: “discourses”; “patterns of understanding”; “systems of meaning”; or “cognitive frameworks.”

When reexamining the desegregation era of public education from the vantage point of the Post-Desegregation Era, it must be acknowledged initially that this reexamination can not provide only one objective and truthful interpretation, but rather multiple interpretations. It is the recognition that racial phenomena are understood against the background of different discourses that is both the most significant realization of the Desegregation Era and the core experience of the Post-Desegregation Era. Thus, how to comprehend the desegregation of public schools, as well as the history of race relations and the current educational situation of African-American schoolchildren, will largely be a function of the discourse upon which the comprehension is based. In order to reveal the structures and limits of thinking about race, this book discusses these racial issues within the conceptual limits of four different patterns of understanding referred to as Traditional Americanism, African-American Centralism, Colorblind Individualism and American Collectivism, which provide alternative understandings of these racial issues.

There is a philosophy woven into this book. Despite the fact that understandings of separate racial phenomena ostensibly appear as detached and distinct occurrences, our appreciation of them is never in such isolation. The comprehension of racial phenomena that force themselves into our consciousness is the comprehension of a part of a much larger pattern of understanding that is present to provide structure for and limitation of what is consciously perceived. There is also a hope that is woven into this book as well. To be constantly aware of multiple interpretations of racial phenomena requires an acculturation into a broader horizon of knowledge for which new, and hopefully, better solutions to racial conflicts can be conceived, developed and implemented.
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