

***Black Girls and School Discipline:
A Holistic Case Study Through a Black Feminist Lens***

Presenters' Bio:

Shena Sanchez is a PhD student at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research pertains to the ways in which education policies and practices are racialized and gendered. In 2015, Shena started the Lavender Girls Project, a study that focuses on the academic experiences of urban Girls of Color, particularly with regard to their college-going trajectory.

Jamelia Harris is a PhD Student at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her primary research explores race, space, gender, and the criminalization of Black girls in urban schools. She is committed to diminishing the educational opportunity gap for Black youth through developing and influencing policies that address the social and structural barriers they confront.

Abstract:

This work is a holistic case study of the phenomena of school discipline as it pertains to urban Black girls. It explores the experiences of three urban Black girls in high school and their perceptions of and interactions with school discipline vis-à-vis their race, gender, and class. This qualitative study illuminates students' sentiments regarding experiences with school discipline and the ways in which it has impacted their academic trajectory. Using Victor Rios' "youth control complex" and Black Feminist thought, this paper interrogates the severe and disproportionate punishment of Black girls in schools and the effects of school discipline on their education. It centers the voices and experiences of Black girls to more deeply understand the following: (1) the class, family background, and other social factors that surround the punishment of Black girls; (2) the types of infractions for which Black girls are disciplined; (3) the ways in which school discipline shapes the academic trajectories of Black girls.

Session Description:

This research explores the experiences and perceptions of urban Black girls in a high school in California, focusing on the factors that lead to their punishment, the types of infractions for which they are penalized, and the impact of school discipline on their academic trajectories. It centers the voices of Black girls in order to interrogate the ways in which they are disproportionately and severely punished, highlighting the damaging effects of discipline on their education.

Using a Womanist Care framework alongside current research, this session will discuss the ways in which a school's environment shapes academic achievement for Black girls who have been disciplined in excessive and severe ways. This session will provide empirical knowledge,

conceptual and theoretical frameworks, strategies, and resources to build a caring environment that is culturally sustaining for Black Girl students.