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Taking Heed: Principals Who Identify as African American or Black Working in Predominantly White Schools

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TAKING HEED: PRINCIPALS WHO IDENTIFY AS AFRICAN AMERICAN OR BLACK

WORKING IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOLS

by

Elizabeth Erenberger

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ABSTRACT

TAKING HEED: PRINCIPALS WHO IDENTIFY AS AFRICAN AMERICAN OR BLACK WORKING IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOLS

by

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019
Under the Supervision of Dr. Elise Frattura

This is a narrative study of the lived experiences of school leaders who identify as African American or Black and are working in predominately White school settings. The study sought to understand the lived experiences of these school leaders by exploring how these leaders make sense of their work in a predominantly White setting. This included the opportunities and challenges they encountered and the leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies they employed to navigate the predominantly White school setting. A critical race methodology was used throughout the study that centered race and racism in all aspects of the research (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This was important to the study as predominantly White school settings are racialized organizations that seek to marginalize students and educators of color learning and working in their organizations (Ray, 2019). Data was gathered using interviews which generated narratives for each of the ten participants. A thematic data analysis of the narratives resulted in eight common themes with related sub-themes. The six findings of the study are focused on elevating the voices of the ten school leader participants who are African American or Black to an audience of White district leaders that are called upon to disrupt their predominantly White organizations so that all children receive an equitable education.

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Dedication

To my mother, Charlotte Ruth Marshall Donovan

A model of all that was good and just

To my father, Ralph Leo Donovan

An animated and humorous storyteller

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* United States Supreme Court decision was intent on altering the landscape of American education through declaring segregation in schools unconstitutional by requiring all students, regardless of race, receive an adequate education (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007; Patterson, 2001). While it can be argued that public education is the great equalizer in American society, critical race theorists have struggled to find sufficient evidence that this is an accurate assumption (Cogan, McKnight, & Schmidt, 2010-11; Kantor & Lowe, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Rather, these same prominent critical race scholars argue that there is ample evidence to support that Whites were the benefactors of desegregation laws, rather than the Black and Latino students that the law seemingly sought to benefit (Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Patterson, 2001). Legal scholar Derrick Bell (2004) argues that civil rights advances for Blacks have always coincided with changing economic conditions and self-interest of elite Whites.

Further evidence of this argument is represented in the *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) court decision which enabled suburban districts to not only remain predominantly White, but also to take financial advantage of urban districts by accruing greater per pupil funding for the urban student transferring to the suburbs (Wells et al., 2016). In addition, this decision has allowed suburban districts to limit the number of students of color entering their schools in such a way that the suburban schools retain financial advantages without burdening their systems (Well et al., 2016). "With the abandonment of funding for federal desegregation of assistance to schools in the 1980s and a spate of court decisions that ended judicial oversight of desegregation in the 1990s, there were fewer and fewer levers to counterbalance residential segregation" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 35).

The manipulation of court rulings by the elite ruling class was not the only way in which the integration of American schools failed. The response of privileged European Americans unwilling to accept the integration of American schools was to either enroll their children in private schools or move to suburban neighborhood schools (Well et al., 2009). Privileged White Americans have used zoning laws, racial steering, and other practices to perpetuate residential segregation to their advantage (Kozol, 2010).

Additionally, there was a historic failure to integrate teachers and school leaders, who were African American and their curriculum, into the integrated White schools (Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Thandeka, 1999). These calculated oversights are significant to understanding the construction of Black-White disparities found in American schools historically (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). For example, "In the eleven years following *Brown,* more than 38,000 teachers and administrators in 17 southern and border states lost their jobs" (Delpit, 2012, p. 106). Of all the inequities that resulted from *Brown*, principals who were of color fared the worst; it was estimated that 90 percent lost their jobs in the southern states alone (Delpit, 2012).

Diversity in Suburban America

Regardless of the failure of the courts to integrate suburban schools through busing and inter-district transfer, population trends show that families of color are living in suburbs in greater numbers today. Lassiter and Niedt (2013) strongly assert that the characterization of suburban areas as homogeneous is a myth, and has been for decades. There has been a rapid growth of racial diversity in America throughout the 20th century: one out of eight Americans were a race other than White in 1900; by the year 2000, one out of four Americans were a race other than White (Frey, 2011). Additionally, at this same time, the number of non-Southern

states with populations other than White increased from two to 26, further representing the spread of racial diversity across America (Hobbs, Frank, & Stoop, 2002). Concomitantly, while suburbs were experiencing an increase in racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse populations, European American populations were declining in the suburbs (Gillum, 2009). By the close of the twentieth century suburbs, although remaining predominantly White, accounted for the greatest increases in racial diversity of the population (Holme et al., 2014; Wilson, Singer, Berube, & Frey, 2009).

As of 2014, students of color constituted 50 percent of the nation's overall K-12 population, making students of color the fastest growing population in suburban schools (Andalzua, 2015; Wells et al., 2016). Therefore, a majority of White suburban schools are also experiencing rapid growth in racial diversity of student populations. In the Midwest, the rapid growth of diversity in the suburbs is largely represented by those who are Hispanic and African American, the largest racial groups in America respectively (Wilson, Singer, Berube, & Frey, 2009; Holme et al., 2014). Some of the major factors influencing the growth of diversity in the suburbs are as follows:

1) Culturally, linguistically, and racially different people who can afford to live away from the city and are doing so to escape poverty and violence;

2) Business relocations to the suburbs have created jobs attracting people of varying backgrounds to the suburbs to work and live;

3) Local and state educational policies have allowed for culturally, linguistically, and racially different students to attend school in the suburbs while still being residents of the city;

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4)   Infrastructures that connect the city to suburbs have allowed suburbs to be more accessible to diverse populations (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014).

Moreover, it is significant to understand that families of color are still typically limited to just a few suburban communities, so that neighborhoods and schools, while increasing in diversity, can still remain White dominant (Evans, 2007; Orfield, 2001). This lack of choice is largely due to federal, state, and local student assignment and enrollment policies that often create invisible barriers for families of color, such as access to information, self-transportation requirements, and structural challenges (Wells et al., 2016). For example, there is evidence that the general public supports students of different races attending "same schools"; however, the public school choice process is complicated by definitions of "school quality" that align with the demographic characteristics of schools that promote choice that tends toward keeping schools homogenous (Wells et al., 2016). Regardless of efforts to derail school integration, student populations in urban, suburban and/or rural schools today have remained or continue to become more racially diverse. Therefore, the likelihood that students who are African American will attend a suburban school today that is still perpetuating the White, middle class ideal is very probable (Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Just as American suburbs are ground zero in the 21st Century quest for racial integration and equity, so too will suburban school districts (Orfield, Frankenburg, & Siegel-Hawley, 2010). As racially diverse populations continue to grow in the suburbs, suburban school systems will bear a greater responsibility for educating students of color (Evans, 2007).

Accountability for American Schools

By 2001, with achievement gaps between students disadvantaged by poverty and their non-disadvantaged peers showing no statistically significant narrowing, the federal government

lost patience with public education. This resulted in a bipartisan reauthorization of the

Elementary and Secondary Act, which is commonly referenced as the No Child Left Behind Act

(2001). This legislation put American school districts and their schools on notice to close

persistent achievement gaps between identified groups of students: students of poverty and their

wealthier peers, students of color and their White peers, students with disabilities and their non-

disabled peers, and students who are English language learners and their English speaking peers

(Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Diamond, 2006; NCLB, 2001). While many subgroups were

included in this legislation, Ladson-Billings (2006) states that NCLB was legislation largely in

reference to matters of race and class in education.

Most noteworthy this legislation, for the first time in the history of education, linked test

results to accountability. This performance-based accountability reflects a practice of evaluating,

rewarding, and sanctioning schools based on measured student achievement performance in math

and reading (Elmore, 2005). While it could be argued that this type of standardized

accountability is actually discriminatory toward marginalized students (Apple, 2003); others

argue it challenged ideological assumptions about underperforming children being able to

perform at high levels and created a sense of urgency for closing achievement gaps (Boykin &

Noguera, 2011). With this new accountability for students of color to learn at the same rates and

levels as their White peers, suburban districts/schools and their leaders, were now put on public

notice to lessen achievement disparities or be subjected to sanctions (Deruy, 2016; Diamond,

2006; Whitaker, 2001). These sanctions included annual publishing of disparaging test results in

math and reading, publically labeling districts and schools as failing or in need of improvement,

potential termination or reallocation of federal funding, allowing parental transfer from failing

schools, and/or state takeovers of local districts or schools labeled as failing (NCLB, 2001).

At the close of the 20th century, with the increase of racial diversity in American suburban schools coupled with the introduction of this new federal accountability, urgency was created for district and school organizations to address previously overlooked disparities in education between children of color and their White peers (Diamond, 2006). Racial disparities in schooling were now public reports of achievement test results of student differences in the areas of reading and math (NAEP, 2015).

Persistent Racial Disparities in American Schooling

Achievement gaps between students who are Black and their White peers are found in grades, standardized test scores, advanced course selection, dropout and suspension rates, and college admission and completion rates. The persistence of the achievement gap between students who are Black and their White peers has been well documented by the National Center for Educational Statistics since 1978; students who are Black have consistently underperformed their White peers by 20 or more points, which is the equivalent of two years, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments in reading and math (NAEP, 2012).

More specifically, as measured and reported by the NAEP assessments (2015), there was no statistically significant improvement in the reading and math achievement gap between students who are Black and their White peers from 2013 to 2015. On the Grade 4 reading and math assessment, the gap showed a respective 26 and 24 point difference on each assessment, similar to the Grade 8 reading and math gap difference of 26 and 32 points, respectively (NAEP, 2015). Essentially, there has been no significant narrowing of the Black-White achievement gap over the past 25 years in reading and math as measured and observed in the NAEP trend data (2015).

The findings of Diamond's (2006) research, and others, provide evidence that these racial achievement gaps are socially constructed (DiAngelo, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1998). Diamond (2006) found that students who are African American and who are integrated into affluent suburbs often outperform students who are African American in less-affluent urban schools. However, students who are African American and of a social class similar to their White peers still experience disparaging racial gaps when compared with their White peers. Diamond (2006) also attributes these gaps in grades, test scores, and course taking practices to subtle, racially motivated exclusions found in suburban schools, which create disadvantages. First, there are structural limitations that do not give students who are African American access to valuable resources outside of the school setting. Second, there are institutional barriers that position students who are African American in the least advantaged locations for learning, evidenced by over identification of students of color in low tracked classes and special education. Last, there are ideological barriers brought about by a devaluing and questioning of African American culture and intellectual capacity (Diamond, 2006; Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). While the largest achievement gaps are found between schools with higher densities of students who are African American and schools with predominantly White student populations, persistent and large racial achievement disparities are also found between students of color and their White peers, within suburban schools (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Lassiter & Niedt, 2013; NAEP, 2015).

In addition to this Black-White achievement gap, there are disparities in school discipline that highlight further socially constructed differences between students who are Black and their White peers (Irby, 2012; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Students who are Black, especially males, are suspended three times more often than White males; Black females

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are suspended four times more than White females (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Students who are Black also tend to receive harsher behavior consequences than their White student counterparts, such as suspension and police intervention (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Irby (2012) describes the space that students of color fall into when in trouble at school as, "socially constructed, contested, and symbolic" (p. 201). Other research regarding discipline, behavior and race, further substantiates that there is no evidence that the overrepresentation of students, who are of color, in school suspension is actually related to higher rates of misbehavior (Kelly, 2010). This is also found in corollary research, which finds that students who are Black are more likely to be sent to the office for offenses that are increasingly vague or subjective (Losen, 2011).

Emdin (2016) asserts that traditional education promotes an imaginary White, middle class ideal that marginalizes students that are not conforming to that ideal. When students do not act or behave in ways that teachers are comfortable they become categorized as troublemakers or students with disorders. This often leads to over identification of students of color in special education programs, lower level tracked curriculum, and or lessened access to grade level opportunities (Diamond, 2006; Emdin, 2016; Frattura & Capper, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Obviously, these socially constructed behavior gaps can have significant implications for the well-being of students who are Black. This is further substantiated by the research of Carter (2010), who found that students who are Black in majority White schools exhibited lower levels of self-esteem and cultural flexibility than Black students in schools where students of color were the majority population.

Dominance of White, European Educators

Exacerbating achievement and behavior disparities is the reality that American educators, especially those working in suburban districts, are still predominantly middle-class, European American, and English-only speakers (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Ninety percent of all elementary and secondary schoolteachers are White, and almost half of the schools in the United States do not have a single teacher of color working in their schools (Picower, 2009). Even more challenging is the lack of school leaders of color, especially leaders who are African American. The National Center for Educational Statistics Student and Staff Survey data (Goldring et al., 2013) reports public school principals by race/ethnicity as follows: 81.8 percent are White, 9.4 percent are Black, 6.0 percent are Hispanic, and 2.7 percent are other.

Most often, these same White educators that dominate school principal positions, live in racial segregation with little to no exposure to people of color and have been taught to see everyone as the same; therefore they don't see color or racism (DiAngelo, 2012). White educators then rely on this same discourse of color blindness to explain and retain practices, policies, and beliefs that often perpetuate racism and White privilege in schools (Holme, Diem, & Welton, 2013). For example, many White educators, consciously or unconsciously, believe that students of color cannot achieve at the same academic levels as White students (Smith, 2005). These power dynamics, personal histories, and cultural clashes that stem from Whiteness, work against young people of color in traditional classrooms (Emdin, 2016).

This prevalence of Whiteness in American schooling is a strong influencer, such that educators who are African American too may have been socialized as White (Emdin, 2016). Howard (2002) asserts that White dominance plays a significant factor in perpetuating inequities in education in other ways, which he refers to as the dynamics of dominance. The first of these

dynamics is the assumption of rightness, which allows White educators to presume academic failure resides with the student and families. The second dynamic is the luxury of ignorance, which allows White educators to ignore the differences of racially diverse students from their White peers. Thirdly, the dynamic of legacy of privilege allows advantages to flow to some and not others based on their membership in the dominant culture.

Critical race theorist, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995, 1998, 2006), broadens the argument for school equity by asserting that until larger societal issues are addressed there cannot be equity in education for all. She argues that we still have a society where advantages are based on property rights, race still determines equity, and the issues related to the intersectionality of race and poverty remain unresolved (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Just as larger societal issues perpetuate school inequity, school inequities perpetuate societal inequities (Capper & Frattura, 2007). Other research establishes that a lack of awareness, respect, and acceptance of cultural differences on the part of educators most certainly contributes to students' lack of achievement (Irby, 2012; NAEP, 2015; Smith, 2005).

The Black-White achievement gap in American schools cannot be resolved until White educators confront the reality that the changes needed to make schools truly equal will require White educators to make sacrifices that alter the disparities brought about by material determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This material determinism includes giving students who are African American and their families' access to educational capital afforded to White students, such as access to grade level and leveled-up curriculum, educators who are highly qualified and optimal learning environments, where teachers are culturally responsive (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2006).

Suburban School Response to Racial Disparity

It can be assumed that the inequities found in suburban schools, dominated by teachers, school leaders, and policy makers who are White, are rife with inherent policies and practices that not only do not disrupt racial inequities but also serve to maintain and promote the racial inequities (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2006). Therefore, school district and school leaders in predominantly White settings, who are also White, are challenged to interrupt structural, instructional, and curricular practices that prohibit academic, social, and emotional growth of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Some common responses suburban district and school leaders have initiated to address racial disparities is to provide teachers with staff development in multicultural education, implementing inclusive policies, and/or doing family and community outreach (Evans, 2007). In spite of these efforts change has been difficult, as it is often up against resistant leaders and power structures supported by the upper middle class, who are most likely to be European American (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Evans, 2007). Many suburban parents who are White are often supportive of providing an equitable education for all children, as long as it is not disruptive to the education of their children (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Another response of suburban district and school leadership is to initiate policies to hire teachers and school administrators who are African American (Evans, 2007). With suburban schools having little success providing an equitable education to date and the mounting internal and external pressures to do so, these districts and school leaders are looking to school teachers and leaders who are African American as a panacea for resolving the persistent inequities between students who are African American and their White peers (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Vidal & Ortiz, 2017). However, critical race researchers take offense to the strategy of expecting

to hire educators who are African American into White dominant environments to fix achievement and behavior disparities between students who are White and their Black peers. Rather, it is argued this strategy is an act of camouflage, which has the real intent of serving majoritarian self-interests, power, and privilege (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Vidal & Ortiz, 2017). This resembles the findings in one study that gave voice to teachers of color where it was overwhelmingly reported that regardless of geographic location, expertise, and participation, teachers of color were left to work only with children of color and their voices were marginalized and left unheard (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Therefore it seems prudent that district and school leaders who are White, would be wise to first do an honest and critical examination of school cultures and systemic processes in order to develop the trust, support, and collegial working environments needed to support the expertise of teachers and school leaders of color (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Significance of African American School Leadership

In the 2008 presidential race, then presidential candidate Barack Obama confronted Americans with the reality that a biracial person could be the leader of the free world (DiAngelo, 2012). This led many pundits to naively and mistakenly declare that society was now "post racial," implying that racism was in the past and no longer significant in our lives (DiAngelo, 2012). However, it is highly superficial to claim that one racial group member's success removes barriers for any other members of that group (DiAngelo, 2012).

According to the research of Zweigenhaft & Domhoff (2006), even though there has been a slight improvement in the actual numbers of leaders who are Black, still today, they remain grossly underrepresented in leadership roles in all types of organizations relative to their numbers in the U.S. population. While statistics show that education has fared better in hiring

leaders who are African American or Black than the overall labor force, there remains

indisputable evidence that few African Americans are currently serving as school leaders –

especially in White, suburban settings (Goldring et al., 2013). In fact, the domination of White

males in public school leadership, regardless of geographic location, remains very prevalent

(Goldring et al., 2013). The reality is that over 80 percent of school leaders across America are

classified as White, while only ten percent are classified as Black (Goldring et al., 2013).

Further and most importantly, research asserts that the lack of diversity in school leadership

positions may be due to the White educator's lack of understanding of the various manifestations

of racism and the consequences of this lack of understanding in the administration of schools

(Young & Laible, 2000). Ray (2019) says that in racialized organizations, administrators who

are White often think they have fulfilled a moral responsibility by hiring a person who is African

American, which makes them less likely to hire another person who is African American.

The lack of African American school leadership in schools that are predominantly White

in student population, but experiencing an increase in students who are of color, is significant for

many reasons. The literature on racial socialization asserts that for students who are African

American, a strong racial identity, which includes a sense of closeness to a larger African

identity, is positively associated with academic achievement (Grills, Cooke, Douglas, Subica,

Villanueva, & Hudson, 2016). Dee (2004, 2005) finds that White teachers are not as effective

with students who are African American as teachers who are African American. Therefore,

students who are African American can benefit directly or indirectly from same-race teachers

and principals. There is also research that asserts there are many benefits for White students

having authentic interactive experiences with persons of color (Dee, 2004; Wells, 2016). This is

especially important as educational leaders of all races can serve as powerful role models for the appreciation of all cultures through socially just actions and words (Ballenger & Alford, 2011).

Eagly and Chin (2010) assert that leaders belonging to diverse identity groups are more likely to have multicultural competence and have more experience negotiating school cultures that are increasingly diverse. Moreover, Musteen and Barker (2005) find that multicultural competence can foster flexibility and openness to change that has widespread benefits for both students who are African American and White. Page (2007) also argues that racially diverse leaders are also more likely to be inclusive and open to the opinions of others, fostering practices that are inclusive of diversity to the benefit of all.

Further, the benefits of school leaders who are African American extend beyond a symbolic representation of fairness and equality or same-race advantages. Meier and Stewart's (1992) research found that the presence of principals who are African American reduced the number of special education placements, increased promotion rates, and lowered dropout rates – all of which are indicators of student achievement. In addition, there was a positive correlation between the presence of principals who are African American and their influence on school policies and practices, which have implications for improved student achievement outcomes (Meier & Stewart, 1992). This linkage of African American school leadership to African American student achievement outcomes has significant implications for disrupting school system structures that perpetuate the persistent behavioral and achievement gaps between students who are Black and their White peers.

With the shortage of school leaders of color in all aspects of schooling, it seems unlikely suburban schools will ever be able to attract, hire, and retain a critical mass to do the work of leaders who are White (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). Therefore, the challenge remains

for school leaders who are White, working in predominantly White schools with racial diversity, to create socially just schools that are inclusive of educators, and instruction that represents the racial diversity of the students attending their schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Significance of the Study

There is very little literature that allows for school leaders who are African American or Black working or having worked in predominant White settings that gives voice to their lived experiences working in this context (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003). One study that gave voice to teachers who are African American found that often voices of color are left unheard, regardless of school setting (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Further, these teachers voiced that their expertise in teaching and learning was limited to use with only who looked like them (Griffin & Tackie, 2016).

The intent of this study was to allow for the voices of school leaders who are African American or Black, working in a predominantly White school, to be heard. The audience for their stories and counter-stories is White district and school leaders who need a greater understanding of how systemic barriers of White dominance influence the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American and working in their schools and district. It is hoped that the stories and counter-stories told by these school leaders who are African American or Black can challenge district and school leaders who are White to move beyond superficial management of diversity in their schools and districts to the imperative work of disrupting implicit and explicit barriers in their organizations that perpetuate racial inequities (Diamond, 2006; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2006; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017). Superintendents are a target audience as they have hierarchical authority over

decisions in the organization to include how resources are managed (Ray, 2019). Their

positional power can be leveraged to make their predominantly White organizations socially just.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of school leaders who

identify as African American or Black, working in increasingly diverse but predominantly White

school settings. This study will seek to describe the opportunities, obstacles and challenges that

school leaders, who identify as African American or Black, have experienced while working in

predominantly White school settings. It will also seek to understand how these school leaders

make sense of their leadership work in a predominantly White setting. Given that

transformational and critical social justice leadership practices are most likely to challenge

White-dominant ideologies this study will also examine the leadership beliefs and practices used

by these school leaders who identify as African American or Black as they work in a dominant

White school setting (Stowall, 2004).

The following research questions guided the study of school leaders who identify as

African American or Black working in predominantly White schools:

1. As a school leader who identifies as African American or Black, what are

    your lived experiences working in a predominantly White school setting?

Sub-Questions:

2. What opportunities and challenges have influenced your experiences working

    in a predominantly White school setting?

3. How do school leaders who are African American or Black make sense of

    their experiences working in a predominantly White school setting?

4.   What unique leadership beliefs and practices do you employ when working in
        a predominantly White setting?

5.   How would you answer these questions differently if I (the interviewer) were
        not White?

Definitions of Terms

Using the term "majority" to describe a student population as heterogeneous can be misleading, as a somewhat diverse student population exists – even in schools of seemingly majority White populations of students (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). The research of Potter, Quick, and Davies (2016) regarding school integration, offers 70% of a single race or ethnic group in a school as a threshold for measuring racial isolation; they refer to this as a supermajority. Potter, Quick, and Davies (2016) report that social science researchers use the 70% number as it has been found that with this majority ratio, children other than those that make up the majority find it increasingly difficult to feel a sense of belonging. For the purposes of this study the term "predominantly White" refers to schools that have 51% or above student and staff populations that are White. This is based on the historical prevalence of Eurocentric dominance in all American schools and schooling (Ladson-Billings, 1998), making it seemingly logical to define majority based on the lowest mathematically number possible. Schools in the study that exceed 70% will be referred to as super majority.

The term "school leader" was used in this study to encompass the various titles that are used to describe persons that lead schools. This included titles such as principal, associate principal, assistant principal, head of school, and others. Throughout the study the term school leader was used as a convenience when discussing individuals that may have variations in titles for their leadership roles.

In this study, the term "African American" or "Black" was used interchangeably largely dependent upon what terminology was used in scholarly literature and/or participant narratives. However, Margaret Simms in a blog for the Urban Institute explains that the term "African American" came into use to highlight the experiences of people here [in America] and are a reflection of both their origins in the African continent and America and therefore may be too restrictive to use with the current U.S. population (2018). Simms (2018) also stresses that using the term African American or Black also requires an acknowledgement of the structural history of race in America. The use of critical race theory as a conceptual framework for this study asserts the social construction of race in America.

Conceptual Framework – Critical Race Theory

In teacher education and elsewhere in U.S. society and its institutions past and present, the supremacy of Whiteness — that is to say, the systematic and historical privileging of Whites' collective interests, accomplishments, values, beliefs, and interests — doesn't just unfortunately or accidently happen, and it is no mere or innocent coincidence that it continues to reappear out of nowhere. (Hayes & Juarez, 2012, p. 2)

Critical race theory can provide a useful theoretical framework to unpack and address issues of race and racism, internal and external to a school setting (Stowall, 2004). Moreover, it provides a perspective that places race at the center in all social situations and actions, which is important to understanding the work of a principal of color in a predominantly White setting (Evans, 2007). Additionally, critical race theory will provide a lens to elucidate the relationship among race, racism, and power in regard to the African American principal's work in a majority White dominant setting (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In this study it will also serve to challenge

dominant majoritarian understandings of race and racism and will aid the researcher in checking her own White lens, as her identity of gender marginalization and racial privilege are relevant to the study and impossible to dismiss (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The critical race theory movement found its beginnings in legal scholarship in the mid-1970s. This movement was led by Bell (2004), an African American professor of law at New York University, who is also known as the intellectual father figure of the movement, along with two other legal scholars, Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The movement rose out of discontentment over the slow pace of racial reform in America and was fueled by the perceived failure of the civil rights movement to fulfill its promises (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Today, the movement is comprised of activists and scholars from many disciplines interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Gloria Ladson Billings and William Tate (1995) are credited with introducing critical race theory to the field of education. It was first used in education to understand controversies regarding access to curriculum, history teachings, IQ and achievement testing, tracking, and disparities in achievement and discipline (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Since that time, critical race theory has emerged as a powerful and analytical framework in educational research (Duncan, 2002; Lynn, Yasso, Solórzano, & Parker, 2002). Education scholars have explored the useful application of critical race theory in education to examine matters of race, class, and gender (Chapman, 2007; Tate, 1997). Below are the five guiding principles that drive the use of critical race theory (CRT) in education research:

- CRT recognizes that racism is endemic in U.S. society and deeply engrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically;

- CRT crosses epistemological boundaries by utilizing philosophies and principles from various disciplines;

- CRT reinterprets civil rights law in light of its limitations, illustrating that laws to remedy racial inequity are often undermined before they can be fully implemented;

- CRT portrays dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society; and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society; and

- CRT challenges ahistoricism and insists on contextual/historical examination of the law and society (Tate, 1997, p. 234-235; Chapman, 2007).

Early critical race theorists disconnected themselves from liberalism as a framework for addressing America's racial problems. It was their belief that liberals are colorblind or color neutral, which also serves to keep persons of color in subordinate positions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Color blindness allows for acts of micro-aggression, which are small or subtle acts of racism encountered by the marginalized group that go unnoticed or acknowledged by the majority group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Therefore, critical race theorists believe that to truly eradicate racism a much more aggressive and swift approach is needed. This includes taking issue with how the American system applauds equal opportunity for all rather than pushing for equity (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Racism must be unmasked or exposed in its various permutations (Ladson-Billings, 1998). "For education scholars employing a critical race

perspective, the main objective is not to determine whether racism exists in schools, but to determine the manner in which the racial meanings and identities provide the basis for action, that is, educational decision making for students of color (Parker, 1998; Tate, 1997)" (Evans, 2007, p. 318).

Critical race theorists have found narratives, storytelling and counter-stories to be powerful ways to come to a better understanding of race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Matsuda, 1995). "The hope is that well-told stories describing the reality of Black and Brown lives can help bridge the gap between their worlds and those of others. Engaging stories can help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 41). This is important as White Americans often have historical recollections of race in America that minimize or embellish the role that White people play or have played in racism (Thandeka, 1999). Bell (1980) explains this difference between the storytelling of many Whites and African Americans as "interest convergence," which is to imply that when it comes to recollecting history, White people tend to believe that which benefits them most. Additionally, it describes the lack of empathy people who are White have, in understanding the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of those who are not White (Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; DiAngelo, 2012; Thandeka, 1999). Further, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), majoritarian stories are not stories but rather history, policies, procedures, rules, regulations and statements of fact. These majoritarian stories distort and silence the experiences of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, critical race theorists use story telling or "counter-stories" to interject cultural viewpoints of a person or persons that have been marginalized in American society that share a common history of oppression and racism (Barnes, 1990).

Storytelling has a rich tradition in African American communities and serves as an essential tool for survival and liberation (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It gives voice to people on the margins of society whose stories are often not told (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling is a method of telling a story that "aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises, myths, especially ones held by the majority" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 144). They allow people of color to speak from experiential knowledge about how society is structured around racism (Delgado, 1990). There are different types of storytelling, which have validity for using critical race theory in research: personal stories or narratives recount an individual's experiences with various forms of racism and sexism; other people's stories or narratives tell another person's story to reveal experiences and responses to racism and sexism; composite stories or narratives draw on "data" to recount racialized, sexualized, or classed experiences of people of color in a social, historical and political context (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Counter-storytelling is of particular importance as this strategy provides a necessary context for "understanding, feeling, and interpreting" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 13), while challenging privileged discourses. It allows for an understanding of what life is like for others and gives voice to marginalized groups (DeCruir & Dixson, 2004). Therefore, counter-storytelling is an effective tool for analyzing and challenging majoritarian stories in the following ways (Love, 2004):

- "Counter-stories" center race as a filter for examining existing constructs through exposing and challenging majoritarian stories of privilege (Matsuda, 1995);
- "Counter- stories" enable discourse to move beyond the broad label of racism so that ethnocentrism and viewing of the world in one way can be disrupted (Delgado, Bernal, & Villalpando, 2002);

- When people who are White listen to "counter- stories" they can "gain access to a view of the world denied to them by White privilege and White domination" (Love, 2004, p. 233);

- "Counter- stories" also allow for members of non-White groups to express how race has been socially constructed, by people who are White, in terms that the White members of the system will better understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Storytelling and counter-storytelling are essential constructs for making meaning when seeking to understand the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American working in a predominantly White school setting. Therefore, critical race theory was not only an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American or Black in this study but was also essential (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The main premise of this research was to re-educate those who were and are in dominance in American educational organizations in the 21st Century (Apple, 2003). More specifically, this re-education calls upon White district and school-level administrators to learn from the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American working or having worked in a diverse but White dominant setting. This is an important distinction, as too often the voices of the oppressed are used to serve the interests of the White majority in such a way that allows for privilege and racism to be maintained in these predominantly White educational organizations (Apple, 2003; Freire, 2001; Vital-Ortiz, 2016).

Therefore, this literature review is first focused on the evolution of leadership models used in American schools, which includes the following: 1) a discussion of the history of social justice in America as a context for school leadership needed in the 21st Century; 2) a review of the importance of school leadership to include a summary of research on beliefs, practices, and strategies employed by effective school leaders; 3) a focus on the racial context of the study and includes an understanding that race is socially constructed, the historical context of this construction, racial identity development, the role of race in education, and lastly, but most importantly school leadership and race research.

History of Social Justice

Early classical political thought from scholars such as, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, provide historical and contemporary understandings of social justice in American society (Jackson, 2005). As early as 380 BC, Plato included "justice" as one of his four virtues of Wisdom. Plato's interpretation of "justice" was largely understood in the context of what was an unjust, rather than just action (Robinson, 2010). Aristotle's early ideal of justice was concerned

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with ensuring that honor, political office, and money were distributed in accordance with merit (Novak, 2009). Mostly, Aristotle's writings regarded social justice as distributive justice, meaning a fair distribution of benefits (Miller, 1999). Further, his work also spoke of a need for political participation to be distributed and laws to be created that promote equality, fairness and economic distribution for the common good (Jackson, 2005; McCarthy, 2009). While this egalitarian view of "justice" would imply that every person should have the same level of material goods and services, it is often qualified that it was more of a moral ideal of equality than an economic principle that would be carried out (Lamont & Favor, 2016).

The actual term "social justice" first originated in religious circles and was first used around the year 1840 to describe a new kind of virtue, known as association (Burke, 2010; Novak, 2009). This virtue called upon people to cooperate and associate among themselves to solve problems for the greater good (Burke, 2010; Novak, 2009). An example of this is found in the work of the Jesuit philosopher Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio in 1843 (Burke, 2010). Taparelli d'Azeglio used the term social justice in his efforts to unify Italy when questions of power, authority and inheritance were at the forefront of economic and philosophical discussion (Burke, 2010; Novak, 2009). Considering possible causes of the French Revolution, Taparelli contemplated the meaning of justice from the perspective of commoners that raised their voices for equality and relief from the privilege and brutal treatment of kings and aristocracies (Burke, 2010). He distinguished justice as the habitual inclination to balance accounts and "social justice" as the proportions that exist between man and man (Burke, 2010). During this same historical period, the Roman Catholic Church, also in need of a renewal, engendered the spirit and practice of association for addressing the growing needs of life in the village and the town (Burke, 2010; Novak, 2009). This practice of association refers to the formation of small bands

of brothers outside the family who, for certain purposes, volunteer to give time and effort to accomplishing something for the greater good (Novak, 2009). The French philosopher, Tocqueville, wrote that this law of association was the first law of democracy (Novak, 2009). Therefore, in the context of association it is understood that social justice is a habit that people internalize which requires two sides of capacity: 1) a capacity to organize with others to accomplish a particular end and 2) a capacity for the ends to be extra-familial; meaning they benefit the neighborhood, village, town, country or world (Novak, 2009).

John Rawls, an early American political philosopher asserts that social justice is about assuring two primary principles: 1) the protection of equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities for all; 2) there is an existence of fair equality of opportunity that allows for the greatest benefits to go to the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 2002; Robinson, 2010). The purpose of these principles is to regulate agreements, specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into, and the forms of government that should be established (Rawls, 2002).

British political theorist David Miller (1999) defines social justice as a social virtue that pertains to what you are owed, as well as what you owe others and how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among the members of human society (Miller, 1999). This type of social justice requires that everyone agrees to treat each other as equals and there is agreement about what it means to be 'just' (Robinson, 2010). Further, Miller (1999) cautions that there is no central agency that distributes goods and services that is truly able to close societal gaps, therefore he places emphasis on the ways in which social institutions can influence the distribution of resources. Miller (1999) asserts three assumptions or conditions that must be in place to exact his practice of social justice. First, there must be a bounded society with a

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determinate membership so that an individual's fair share can be defined in relation to what shares are held by other members of the community. Next, the distribution has advantages or disadvantages accrued to different groups of people within the determinant membership. The principles of justice can be applied to an identifiable institutional structure. Major social institutions are able to distribute rights and duties and can determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. Lastly, there is some agency capable of initiating and directing the changes needed to create social justice (Jackson, 2005; Miller, 1999).

Iris Marion Young, an American feminist philosopher asserts that defining justice must be approached through the categories of domination and oppression (Blake, 1992): "Oppression refers to systemic constraints on groups that are not necessarily the results of the intentions of a tyrant" (Young, 2000, p. 36). For this reason, Young is credited with shifting the definition of social justice from a distributive paradigm to that of an inclusive paradigm. According to Young (2000), the scope of justice involves a well-ordered society, which realizes a good life is one not impeded by oppression and domination. Her work is informed by Freire (2001) who dreamed of a world that "is more round, less ugly, and more just" (p. 26). An inclusive paradigm acknowledges individuals as members of social groups that have common experiences that prompt them to form relationships and associations with one another more so than with those not identified with the group (Young, 2000). Human rights pioneers, such as the authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, and leaders of the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, have shaped the understanding of social justice to also be inclusive of human rights (Grant & Gibson, 2013). Other scholars, such as Dantley (2005) and Tillman (2004) build a social justice frame that is largely about changing inequities and marginalization in society (Theoharis, 2010).

Bell (2016) presents social justice as both a goal and a process; social justice is the reconstruction of society in accordance with the principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. The goal of social justice is full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs (Bell, 2016). "The process for attaining social justice should be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and have the capacity for collaborating with others to create change" (Bell, 2016, p. 4). Most importantly social justice should "enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities in which they participate" (Bell, 2016, p. 4).

Evolution of Leadership Models in Education

There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational-reform initiatives and having these reforms makes a genuine difference for all students. (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 14)

The scientific study of leadership did not begin until the twentieth century; however, the term leadership has been used since the early eighteenth century (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Early theories of leadership, known as the great man or trait theories, relied on biological and genetic explanations for who became leaders (Bass & Bass, 2008). It is these theories that proclaim that great leaders are born not made, implying that leadership is only for the few great men that possess the qualities of being a leader (Burns, 2003, 2008). Great man theory was based on the premise that if you emulated a great man (or sometimes woman), you too would

become a strong leader (Burns, 2003). William James, an early American philosopher, touted "the history of the world is the history of great men, who determined what the masses would accomplish" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 49). Trait theory attempted to improve on the great man theory by identifying the innate or inherited traits possessed by extraordinary leaders that enhance their leadership potential or performance (Van Seters & Field, 1990).

Carlyle's trait theory emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and was based on the premise that certain traits produce certain patterns of behavior across different situations (Bass & Bass, 2008). Traits such as courage, intelligence, decisiveness, self-confidence, assertiveness, and trustworthiness were thought to be the result of born leaders (Van Seters & Fields, 1990). Even though the idea that leaders were born was dispelled and the fact that many of the traits associated with extraordinary leaders tended to be male traits, trait theory lives on today through certain aspects of behaviorist theory (Van Seters & Field, 1990).

During the behaviorist era, mid-twentieth century, educational leaders became influenced by corporate and scientific leadership theory. Overall, the behaviors of managerial leaders are rationale and systematic allowing for problem solving that often directs others to fulfill a task or function (Zaleznik, 1977). Educational leaders emulated the traditional or managerial leadership behaviors, such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (Sergiovanni, 2005). Corporate leadership models have also influenced educational leadership practices in the use of reward and punishment systems as a way to manage and motivate people (Sergiovanni, 2005). Behaviorist leadership models such as this may also be known as Contingency or Transactional models of leadership (Bass, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2005).

Transactional leadership is characterized by using an exchange process to motivate the follower to comply with the leader requests or organizational rules (Yukl, 1999). The

transactional leader operates within the existing culture, with a preference for risk avoidance, attention to time constraints and efficiency, and a preference for process over results (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). To accomplish this, the leader investigates the motives and needs of followers and then designs a program that will meet the needs of the leader and the followers (Foster, 1986). As Bernard Bass (1990) furthered the study of transactional theory, it evolved into four primary characteristics: Contingency Reward, Management by Exception (active), Management by Exception (passive), and Laissez-Faire. Contingency Reward and Management by Exception (active) are most closely aligned to the behaviorist model, as the follower's performance is dependent on a promise and/or reward from the leader for good performance, or corrective action is taken when deviations from expected performance are observed (Bass, 1990). The passive counterpart of management by exception is characterized by the leader only taking action if the standard is not met. The laissez-faire leader delegates responsibilities and avoids making decisions at all cost (Bass, 1990).

There are arguments in the literature that the behaviorist influence on transactional leadership theory may not be as effective in the field of education. For example, the business model of leadership, which focuses on adopt, adapt and scale, often ignores the core work of educational organizations related to transforming (Papa, 2011). Sergiovanni (2005) also suggests another problem with this type of leadership is the reliance on the leader's capacity to always be able to offer the desired reward or deliver the consequence. Additionally, and most importantly, the extrinsic motivational aspect of this model, which is dependent on rewards and consequences, may not be desirable or motivational for all or most subordinates (Sergiovanni, 2005).

The challenges of applying the concepts of the behaviorist and transactional leadership models in education led to a new construct of leadership theory being introduced in the field of education. This model is referred to in the literature as transformational leadership (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership first emerged out of a seminal study by James MacGregor Burns (1978), a presidential biographer and a well-known authority on leadership. Burns (2003) found transactional leadership theory an inadequate framework to analyze the broader, deeper, dimensions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's wartime leadership. Burns (2003) states, "In the broadest terms, transforming change flows not from the work of a 'great man' who single-handedly makes history, but from the collective achievement of a great people" (p. 240). As he conceptualized this new type of leadership he drew from the literature on traits, leadership styles, leader-member exchange research, and put forth the idea of a full leadership model that included both the transactional and transformational leadership styles (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

There is a large and growing body of evidence that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional, especially in a modern world (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Given the grassroots nature of transformational leadership, Burns (2003) argued that this type of leadership is needed to solve the world's most critical problems, such as global poverty (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Since transformational leadership has the process of transformation and change at its core, it has the greatest potential in a world that is increasingly complex and fast-paced (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

A transformational leader is one who engages with others in a way that both the leader and the follower are transformed to a higher level of motivation and/or morality (Lowe et al., 1996). Transformational leaders go beyond their own self-interest for the greater good of society

(Bass & Riggio, 2006). They are described as visionary, pro-active, radical, innovative, inspirational, collaborative, and open to new ideas (Van Seters & Field, 1990). This type of leadership does not merely promise goods to followers but elevates followers to become enmeshed with the goals and vision of the leader (Foster, 1986). Ultimately, the goal of transformational leadership is to motivate and empower people to pursue happiness for themselves and others (Burns, 2003).

While Burns (1978) was the first to propose the models of both transactional and transformational leadership, Bass (1990) generated the most research on transformational leadership models and is known as the "Father of Transformational Leadership." Transformational leadership theory has four core components that describe how leaders behave to achieve superior results: 1) idealized influence emphasizes the leader as a role model for others; 2) inspirational motivation is when leaders motivate and inspire others around them; 3) intellectual stimulation is when leaders stimulate followers in such a way that creativity and innovation are promoted; and 4) individualized consideration is when the leader acts as a coach or mentor to promote individual growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In summary, transactional and transformational models of leadership both emerged as popular leadership models, but differ in their leader-follower types of relationships: transactional leaders set forth expectations and offer reward or recognition when goals are achieved, while transformational leaders appeal to followers through charismatic behaviors; transactional leaders specify compliance and may punish followers that are not compliant, transformational leaders motivate by bringing challenge and meaning to the work of followers; transactional leaders are reactive and may avoid giving clear goals and expectations, transformational leaders appeal to followers to be innovative and creative; transactional leaders

may be laissez-faire and provide no leadership, while transformative leaders act as coaches and mentors to meet individual follower's needs (Bass & Avolio, 2005).

While there are these significant differences between the two models, Bass (1990) clarified that transactional and transformational leadership are not necessarily polar opposites, but rather are both necessary and complementary in best meeting desired organizational goals (Bass, 1990, Lowe et al., 1996). As a result, Bass and Riggio (2006) further developed a model inclusive of both types of leadership known as the, Full Range of Leadership Model. The Full Range of Leadership model, which includes both of these components, is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Full Range of Leadership Model

Transactional Scales	Transformational Scales
Contingent Reward: Leaders clarify expectations and offer recognition when goals are achieved.	*Idealized Attributes/Behaviors*: Leaders that are admired, respected and trusted. Followers want to emulate these leaders.
Management-by-Exception-Active: Leaders specify the standards for compliance, as well as, ineffective performance and may punish followers that are not compliant with standards.	*Inspirational Motivation*: Leaders motivate others by providing meaning and challenge to their work. Individual and team spirit is mobilized.
Management-by-Exception-Passive: Leaders are reactive and avoid specifying agreements, clarifying expectations, and providing goals to be achieved by followers.	*Intellectual Stimulation*: Leaders stimulate followers to make efforts that are innovative and creative by questioning, reframing, and approaching problems in new ways.
Laissez-Faire: No leadership	*Individualized Consideration*: Leaders pay attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor.

Note. Source: Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J., 2005

Leadership models in education are subject to the same faddism that is apparent in the other areas of education. Today's favorite brand is soon replaced by another.

Nonetheless, it is fortunate that over the past 25 years, scholars have subjected both

instructional leadership (e.g. Glasman, 1984; Heck, Marcolouides & Larson, 1990) and

transformational leadership (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000s; Silins, 1994) to extended

empirical study. (Hallinger, 2003, p. 330)

With the influences of both the transactional and transformational models of leadership

over the past three decades, there has been an emergence of new conceptual models of leadership

in education influenced by the transactional and transformational leadership models; the two

foremost models as measured by empirical studies, are instructional and transformational

leadership (Hallinger, 2003).

Instructional leadership emerged in schools in the early to late 1980s along with the

effective schools movement, which took a top down approach to improving schools (Hallinger,

2003). Transformational leadership entered education in the 1990s as a rejection to authoritative

structures as it was a bottom up, rather than top down approach to management (Hallinger,

2003). Other leadership models, such as distributive or shared leadership (Spillane, 2011), social

justice leadership (Blackmore, 2009; Frattura & Capper, 2007; Gewitz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007),

servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009)

and transformative leadership (Capper, 1989), are school leadership models that have been

influenced by the transformational leadership model (Hallinger, 2003). Collectively, these

models provide a compilation of the beliefs, practices, and strategies most often found in school

leadership in the 21st Century.

Instructional Leadership

Traditionally, instructional leaders were known to create school atmospheres conducive

to learning by guarding instructional time, getting involved in staff development, and monitoring

classrooms (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). To this end, to be an effective instructional school leader it is important to not only understand which instructional practices improve student achievement but to also know how to support teachers to create positive change in instructional practices that will help students to learn (Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003). Most often, instructional leaders have a clear focus on improving classroom practices as the most important direction of the school (Leithwood, 2001). Hallinger (2003) conceptualized three dimensions of an instructional leadership in education, which are: defines the school's mission, which includes framing and communicating goals; manages teaching and learning to include coordination and control of instruction and curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress; and promotes a positive school climate to include protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for teachers and learning (Hallinger, 2003).

To be effective it is also important for instructional leaders to adjust their roles based on the social and situational context in which they work (Hallinger, 2003). For example, in a comparative study of effective schools, two principals in different school settings were able to achieve success using different goal setting strategies. The principal of a high poverty school set clear, specific measureable goals directly related to student achievement, whereas the principal in a low poverty school had a clear academic mission that was broadly communicated; both were considered effective instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2003). Additionally, a McRel meta-analysis conducted by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) further clarified that effective instructional leadership involves more than knowing what to do, it also involves knowing when and how to do it. Leaders need to know how to balance tension when pushing for change, and how to align and prioritize their work.

While there is little argument that instructional leadership dominates the collective understanding of the job of a school principal, this type of leadership is not without its skeptics. One of the biggest criticisms of instructional leadership is that it typically engages in first-order, rather than second-order change; see Table 2 (Waters et al., 2003). First-order changes are consistent with existing school norms, can be implemented with existing knowledge and resources, and tend to be problem and solution focused (Waters et al., 2003). Second order change conflicts with existing norms and seeks to disrupt all aspects of the organization at a deep level (Waters et al., 2003). Another concern cited in a research study on principal effectiveness cautioned that there is also a risk in narrowing a principal's focus to only instructional practice (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Therefore, it is important to recognize that instructional leadership is just one of many roles a principal engages in to succeed; they also have managerial, political, human resource and symbolic leadership roles in their schools (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Table 2

Characteristics of First and Second Order Change

First Order Change	Second Order Change
Extension of the past	A break with the past
Within existing paradigms	Outside existing paradigms
Consistent with prevailing norms and values	Conflicted with prevailing norms and values
Focused	Emergent
Bounded	Unbounded
Incremental	Complex
Linear	Non-linear
Marginal	Disrupts every element
Implemented with existing knowledge and skills	Requires new knowledge and skills
Problem and solution oriented	Neither problem nor solution focused
Implemented by experts	Implemented by stakeholders

Note. Source: Waters et al., 2003

In spite of these criticisms, research has established the contributions of instructional leadership in educational organizations (Leithwood, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2004). In an analysis of a body of research in this area, Hallinger (2003) concluded that instructional leadership did have positive influences in the quality of school outcomes mostly in indirect ways through actions that influence what happens in their schools. Additionally, he concluded that instructional leaders have a positive impact in the way they define the purpose and mission of their school in regard to achievement outcomes and how they align school structures to support teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2003).

Transformational Leadership in Education

Transformational leadership in education is often called upon when school leaders are engaging in deeper, more lasting change referred to as second order change (Fullan, 2008). These types of initiatives in schools are complex and therefore often require leaders capable of disrupting the status quo to transform their organizations (Leithwood, 1992). Second order

change calls for school leaders to help others acquire new knowledge or skills, and/or inspire and empower them to do this challenging work to improve their schools (Waters et al., 2003). This type of change requires a leader to have tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty (Jackson, 2005) and the ability to allow followers to arrive at a new and higher goal both personally and professionally (Leithwood et al., 2004). In order to accomplish this Leithwood and his colleagues suggest transformational school leaders are in constant pursuit of three primary goals: 1) help staff to develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; 2) foster teacher development and; 3) assist teachers in effective problem solving (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood et al., 2010). Other adaptations of transformational leadership practices in schools include leadership behaviors, such as modeling for others, setting high expectations, building a collaborative culture, intellectual stimulation, establishing shared vision and goals, and individualized support (Leithwood et al., 1992, 1999, 2004, 2006, 2012). In addition, Hallinger (2003) described transformational school leader as opportunistic, flexible, responsive, and context-specific. Other studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership has an influence on teacher collaboration and teacher attitudes toward school improvement and altered instructional behavior (Leithwood, 1992).

Other education researchers, past and contemporary, also suggest transformational characteristics are associated with positive outcomes in educational organizations (Hackett & Hortman, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Janzi, 1999). The research of Leithwood and Janzi (1999) found transformational leadership had strong effects on school conditions, which in turn had a strong effect on classroom conditions that ultimately can affect student learning. The more recent research by Hackett and Hortman (2008) found a relationship between skills and behaviors identified with transformational leadership and positive outcomes in schools.

Sergiovanni (2005) speaks of transformational leadership in education as a value-added leadership that makes the difference between ordinary and extra-ordinary performance.

Most important to education organizations is the ability of transformational leadership to positively impact student achievement outcomes. Sun and Leithwood (2012), in a large synthesis of unpublished literature, drew several primary conclusions regarding the overall effects of transformational leadership on student achievement, that are inclusive of positive outcomes and ambiguity about the effectiveness on student achievement. They concluded that the collaborative and individualized components make larger contributions toward positive student achievement outcomes than other components. They also found that studies of transformational leadership effects on student achievement have not done a good job of acknowledging the influences of organizational context and both indirect and direct studies at best show small positive and practical results on student achievement (Sun & Leithwood, 2012).

Another type of transformational leadership model, also used by school leaders, is distributive leadership. This model is also known to overlap or be synonymous with participative, collaborative, shared, and democratic models of leadership, all of which have the goal of transforming schools (Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon, & Yashkina, 2007). These types of leadership models can be viewed as transformational in that they are reliant on the principal's ability to enhance the knowledge and skills of others in such a way to build a productive partnership that is collectively working toward common goals (Elmore, 2002; Spillane, 2009). Distributive leadership models acknowledge principals cannot do the work alone and therefore the leader must empower others in the organization to share in the leadership, including key stakeholders such as teachers, curriculum specialists, associates, parents,

committees, collaborative teams, and community members (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2011).

While there has been widespread interest in distributive leadership in the 21st Century, there are some conflicting interpretations regarding the definition and understanding of the term (Leithwood et al., 2007). In attempt to clarify the model, Leithwood et al. (2007) identified two different approaches: additive and holistic. Additive leadership, conceptualized by Gronn, describes distributive leadership as an uncoordinated pattern of leadership, which has many different people in the organization taking on leadership roles, regardless of title or hierarchical positions (Leithwood et al., 2007). In contrast, Spillane (2009, 2011) describes a distributive leadership in which different people are leading in synergetic and/or interdependent ways that collectively lead the organization. This is known as holistic leadership. Research studies support that involving school staff in this type of leadership and decision-making is a characteristic of high producing schools (Leithwood et al., 2007). This leadership model places an emphasis on teams leading the organization, in contrast to an individual leader leading or facilitating teams (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Regardless of which style is used, at least one research study has shown that distributive leadership does not lessen the load for the formal leader; rather it changes the type of leadership work in which they engage (Leithwood et al., 2007).

Adaptive leadership, which has deep roots in the evolution of life, advanced in 1994 as an effort to understand in practical ways, the relationship among leadership, adaptation, systems, and change (Heifetz et al., 2009). For example, one aspect of adaptive leadership is the ability to motivate people to tackle challenge and thrive; the concept of "thrive" is taken from evolutionary biology, meaning to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments (Heifetz et al., 2009). Other aspects of this leadership model are also similarly related to biology: successful

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adaptive change builds on the past; organizational adaptation occurs through experimentation; adaptation relies on diversity; adaptation takes time; and new adaptations rearrange the normal way of being (Heifetz et al., 2009). In adaptive leadership, the reliance on diversity aspect refers to leadership that would build an organizational culture that values diverse views, rather than relying on a few at the top (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Social Justice Leadership

The late 20th and 21st century brought research and leadership concepts aligned with inclusive and relationship-oriented leadership, rather than authoritarian, top-down models (Beyer, 2012). While many of these leadership concepts are also reflective of the beliefs and practices found in the transformational leadership model, they are different as they include issues of social justice. Social justice became a new term in educational leadership, as accountability measures surfaced to hold schools accountable for achievement gaps between the dominant class and underserved populations (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; NCLB, 2001). Other education scholars define social justice leadership as advocacy for creating equitable schools and/or an equitable education for all students (Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Gewitz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007). Most certainly, social justice school leaders intentionally disrupt practices that marginalize students by race, gender, language ability, sexual identity, social class, and/or their intersectionality (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Theoharis, 2007). Further expansion of this leadership describes social justice school leaders as the "architects and builders of a new social order" where traditionally disadvantaged and marginalized students are given the same opportunities as their advantaged peers (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). It is one thing for teachers to empower their students but it is equally important for a school leader to give the opportunity to all stakeholders to confront injustices (Ballinger &

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Alford, 2011). In a study of highly regarded leaders of social justice three critical dispositions were identified: leaders of social justice are able to see the big picture in connecting issues of social justice and inclusion in their leadership practice; leaders of social justice have a bold and imaginative vision for equity and; leaders of social justice have a strong sense or belief in their ability to make changes and influence the organization in the areas of social justice and inclusion (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008).

Good leadership practices are not sufficient to ensure that all students will experience socially just and/or equitable situations that will lead to student success (Theoharis, 2007). Rather, school leaders of justice must have a compelling personal belief that students learn best when educated in heterogeneous educational settings, and an activist approach to ensure all students receive equity and excellence in their education (Frattura & Capper, 2007, 2016; Skrla & Scheurich, 2003; Theoharis, 2007). While good school leaders advocate for best practices on behalf of all children, socially just leaders are activists that leave nothing to chance; they demand, disrupt, ensure, and bravely make explicit decisions to remove barriers of entitlement and systemic privilege in their schools (Frattura, & Capper, 2007; Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 2003). The lens for the work of a socially just leader is one of equity and excellence (Skrla & Scheurich, 2003; Theoharis, 2007). To ensure the benefits of educational opportunity for all students, school leaders need to understand that schools are not race neutral or color blind organizations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Socially just school leaders must have done racial identity work of their own, have a strong commitment to social justice platforms, and be capable of working on issues beyond the school walls (Capper & Fraturra, 2009, 2016; Diamond, 2006; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Theoharis, 2007).

In conclusion, both instructional and transformational leadership models are a notable presence in American schools today and are considered effective models. These models have remarkable similarities, such as the creation of a shared purpose, focus on climate of high expectations and school culture, reward structures aligned to goals, activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and staff development, and being a visible presence in the school as notable complements between the two models (Hallinger, 2003). The primary difference between the two models is the degree to which the school leader will elicit change to disrupt the school organization; instructional leadership is associated with first order change, while transformational leadership is connected to the deeper, more sustainable second order change (Fullan, 2008). Most importantly, it is apparent that leadership models continue to evolve and are most effective when the appropriate type of leadership is linked to the needs of the school context (Hallinger, 2003). In the 21st century, effective school leaders must not only be transformational but must also be socially just; they must have a moral imperative to provide an equitable and just education for all students.

Importance of School Leadership

The importance of school leadership in reforming schools was implied in the accountability measures of NCLB (2001) and in the more recent *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015). Even though the principal role has consistently received less attention in public policy than the teacher role, there is mounting evidence that the importance of a quality school leader is essential to school reform (Rothman, 2017). After all, effective principals are largely responsible for attracting and retaining high quality teachers and creating school environments that facilitate high quality teaching and learning (Rothman, 2017). Education researchers Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) "equate the value of an effective principal as exceeding the benefit from a

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comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher" (Branch et al., 2013, p. 64). These researchers attest that this is the numerically equivalent of learning for an individual student of two to seven months in a single year (Branch et al., 2013). Other previous research supports principal leadership as having a similar measured effect. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) reported that the correlation between leadership and student achievement was a .25, which is the equivalent to one standard deviation or a ten percentage point difference in student achievement on a norm referenced test (Waters & Cameron, 2007). In a meta-analysis study it was solidly concluded that when considering all school related factors, school leadership's impact on student learning is only second to classroom instruction (Leithwood et al., 2004). Waters and Cameron (2007) assert that this effect on student achievement is possible through leadership focus on initiatives and the magnitude of change. Just as effective leadership makes a difference, it is also important to recognize that when leaders do not engage in effective practices they can equally have a negative impact on student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). The research of Leithwood et al. (2010) emphasize this point as well when they concluded that in the absence of good leadership, poorly performing schools stand "virtually no chance" of turning around (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Other longitudinal studies have also substantiated the value of an effective principal. Early research done by Hallinger and Heck (1998) studied principal effectiveness from 1980 to 1995 and were able to conclude that principals do contribute to school effectiveness and improvement. A longitudinal study by the Chicago Consortium on School Research (2002) also identified principal's leadership as a critical factor in determining if a school moves forward to improve opportunities for all students. The findings of a Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) study, done by a team of leading experts who analyzed 30 years of

leadership research and literature, found that there is "a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement" (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). In addition Leithwood (2011), in his study of successful turnaround schools, points to the findings of extensive research, which report that all successful turnaround schools have a good, if not exceptional principal.

In the 21st century, the stakes are high for all students to learn and it is widely believed that a good principal is a key to a successful school; new pressures and expectations were placed on school leaders greater than at any previously experienced in the history of education (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). The demands already placed on a school leader, such as school safety, student attendance and discipline, mediating adult relationships, and paperwork were now expanded to meet the needs of accountability (Panasonic Foundation, 2001). The already complex role of the school leader now included expectations to support instruction, promote collaboration, increase parental involvement, and analyze data, all of which required disrupting the status quo (Fullan, 2014; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2013).

Effective School Leader Practices

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us; we already know more than we need to do that; and whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far. (Edmonds, 1979, p. 15)

The complexity, multi-dimensional, and interactive nature of school reform calls for effective school leaders that are capable of bringing about second order change in their organizations to the benefit of all students (Ballenger & Alford, 2011; Fullan, 2003; Spillane, 2011). Therefore, school leaders can no longer work in isolation and must be able to motivate

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instructional improvement and innovation in their schools (Spillane, 2011). Minimally, they

need to be knowledgeable about assessment, skilled in using data and able to make high leverage

instructional decisions (Singh & Al-Fadhi, 2011). Optimally, they need to be transformative

leaders that are passionate to their core in their belief that they can create equitable and socially-

just schooling in which all children can be highly successful (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). They

are challenged to become culturally proficient leaders who will work for educational equity

through strengthening school cultures with respect for all ethnic groups, and serve as an advocate

for the high achievement of all students (Papa, 2011; Theoharis, 2007).

Bryk and Schnieder's (2002) Consortium on Chicago School Research study identified

strategies for reform that are commonly shared by productive principals. Their findings include

strategies such as a collaboratively developed, implemented, and school improvement plan, a

strong focus on student learning, effective management, and a reliance on both pressure and

support to motivate staff, an emphasis on building community relationships, increasing teacher

knowledge and skills, and building a school-based professional community (Chenoweth &

Theokas, 2011).

The Wallace Foundation School Leadership Study (2005) found that "successful school

leaders influence student achievement in several important ways, both through their influence on

other people or features of their organizations, and through influence on school processes"

(Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Myerson, 2005, p. 5). This study also reports the three

core leadership practices found in the work of Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and

Wahlstrom (2004):

1) Developing people: Enabling educators to do their job effectively, motivating

others, and providing models of practice and support;

2)   Setting directions for the organization: Developing shared goals, monitoring

organizational performance, and promoting effective communication and;

3)   Redesigning the organization: Creating a productive school culture, disrupting

ineffective structures, and building collaboration.

In addition, more recent research finds effective principals are centered on the work of supporting teachers, managing a focused curriculum, and promoting powerful teaching and learning for all students (Davis et al., 2005).

A research study regarding the role of school leaders in high stakes testing found that there were delineated differences in the goals envisioned by the school leaders (Demoss, 2002). For example, the school with the highest test outcomes over a period of time had a leader with a philosophy of selectivity and elitism (Demoss, 2002). While this school achieved admirable results, it came at the expense of excluding students not seen as worthy of the education they offered. This result demonstrates the need for understanding the context of a school leader's work to ensure that student achievement outcomes are not falsely represented (Demoss, 2002). Further, the two schools in this study that had some indicators of increased results were those with principals who had in common a clear instructional focus. Conversely, the remaining schools that did not have improved results lacked leadership with an aligned instructional focus (Demoss, 2002).

The research of Shannon and Bylsma (2002) regarding the instructional, administrative, and shared practices found in effective schools culminated in nine overriding characteristics. Effective school leadership was most notably one of the top nine characteristics found in this extensive study. More specifically, the study established that effective school leadership was required to implement the change process and to nurture an instructional program and school

culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Additionally, they acknowledged that effective school leaders have different styles and roles dependent on the needs of key stakeholders at all levels of the school organization (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

Waters and Cameron's (2007) McRel meta-analysis of principal leadership practices had several key findings regarding the relationship between effective principal leadership practices the "type" of change being implemented. They describe 21 leadership characteristics associated with first and second order change (Waters & Cameron, 2007). These leadership characteristics that positively and negatively correlated with second order change are found in the Table 3. It should be noted that a negative correlation does not imply a principal should not engage in these activities, rather that when implementing second order change these things are reported as being negative and serve as indicators that the organization is being disrupted (Waters & Cameron, 2007). Of the 21 principal responsibilities that show strong relationships with student achievement, situational awareness had the largest effect size (.33), followed closely by intellectual stimulation (.32), change agent (.30), and input (.30) (Waters & Cameron, 2007). The remarkable small difference between the effect sizes of these 21 responsibilities demonstrates the complexity of the work of the school principal and the flexibility a principal may need as they make decisions that work best in the context of their school (Waters & Cameron, 2007).

Table 3

Principal Responsibilities Correlated with Second Order Change

Positively Correlated	Negatively Correlated
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Culture Communication
Flexibility	Input
Change Agent	Order
Ideals and Beliefs	
Monitor and Evaluate	
Intellectual Stimulation	
Optimize	

Note. Source: Waters & Cameron, 2007, p. 12

Further results of Waters & Cameron's (2007) meta-analysis proposed a balanced

leadership framework. This model focuses on the three main components of leadership,

magnitude of change, and purposeful community. Focus of leadership refers to the leader's

ability to focus on initiatives of school improvement. Magnitude of change is based on the

principal's understanding of the nature of change and its process and implications. Purposeful

community is the capability of the principal to use all available assets to establish purpose and

produce outcomes that matter to all community stakeholders (Waters & Cameron, 2007).

In a larger study of principal impact on student achievement, Chenoweth and Theokas

(2011) studied 33 principals of schools of poverty schools that were getting desired student

achievement results. The principals studied averaged approximately 12 years of teaching

experience but only averaged 2.2 years of principal experience. The majority of the principals

(72%) described their role in the following ways: instructional leader, principal teacher, teacher

of teachers, lead learner, or educational facilitator. The remaining 28% described their role as

carrying a vision of equity and excellence (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011). Other notable

characteristics of 'getting it done' principals include the following: creating a clear vision for the

mission of the school (90% scored high on creating a common vision); creating clearly articulating, and managing tangible goals, providing common curriculum, assignments, and assessments; empowering staff to participate in decision-making; supporting effective collaboration; developing teacher expertise; and managing, hiring, firing, and observing teachers to ensure the right people are working with students (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011).

Fullan (2011) identified policies and strategies that are usually intended to improve schools as either the "wrong" or "right" drivers. He defined accountability, individualistic solutions, technology, and fragmented strategies as well intended for school reform, but as not actually producing the desired results, these are called the wrong divers. His proposed right drivers are related to capacity building, collaborative effort, pedagogy, and cohesiveness of the system (Fullan, 2011). In 2014, Fullan expanded on this research by proposing professional capital as the most effective driver for school success. Fullan's (2014) definition of professional capital refers to the principal's influences on human capital (quality of teachers), social capital (interactions and relationships that support a common cause, and decisional capital (resources of knowledge, intelligence, and energy that are required for human and social capital). The type of work Fullan (2014) is expecting of principals is what has previously been described as socially just. Socially just school leaders are knowledgeable and skillful about the complexities of working in diverse organization and are courageous, persistent, and uncompromising in their mission to have all students learn at high levels (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011).

Race and Racism in American Education

In order to transform American schools it will require socially just school leaders that are willing to disrupt the historical and marginalizing conditions found in American schools today (Antwi-Boasiako, n.d.; Frattura & Capper, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). This section of the literature

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sets the stage for understanding the current literature regarding school leaders of color and their work in American schools (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). To do this, first a discussion of race as a social construct is presented, followed by race identity development in both the individual and organizational context (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002; Cross Jr., 1991; Haney-Lopez, 1994; Helms, 1995). Next the literature related to the role of race in education is presented, as there are significant findings important to understanding the socially constructed inequities in American education (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Lastly, the findings from research studies of school leaders who are African American or Black are reviewed.

Understand Race is a Social Construct

At the same time that American school age children populations are becoming increasingly diverse, 90 percent of American schoolteachers are White (Picower, 2009). In fact, almost half of the schools in the United States do not have a teacher of color on staff; therefore regardless of the race of students, they will graduate from high school having been taught only by educators who are White (Picower, 2009). In addition, the National Center for Education Statistics (2011-12) reports that of the approximately 90,000 public school leaders across America, 80% identify as White and ten percent identify as African American. Of the approximately 8,000 school leaders who identify as African American, 50% work in the city, 24% work in the suburbs and the remainder work in towns and rural areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12). This data indicates that there are approximately 2,160 school leaders who are African American working in suburban districts across America, leaving students of color in predominantly White school settings staffed with predominantly White leaders that lack experience and training in how to disrupt discriminatory institutional practices and/or make decisions on behalf of students of color. This is important, as discriminatory

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institutional practices are deeply connected to racial ideologies and cultural belief systems that inform and shape everyday interactions and behavior of educators who are White (Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Ridgeway, 2006).

In an open mike conversation on Facebook (2015), Darrell Moore, an African American professor and Senior Correspondent at Mic, speaks about his experience teaching a course on Black women and prisons at a predominantly White university. In this insightful conversation, he reminds listeners that White is a color and that people who are White can learn from the voices of people of color:

> People of color should not be expected to educate White people about the ways individual or institutional White favoritism harms all of us, some more than others. But if White people want to be true allies in racial justice work, they should listen to the people of color who choose to engage them. Changing racially biased thoughts and behaviors requires internal and systemic transformation, and it requires this of all of us. (Moore, May 12, 2015)

His comments are further supported by research, which also finds that in general, people who are White have a very limited understanding of race and racism. Therefore, it is essential that White educators be able to engage in critical thinking about race; most specifically White educators need to be able to recognize and analyze the historical, political, and social constructions of race in America (DiAngelo, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McIntyre, 1997). In her book *What Does It Mean to Be White*, Robin DiAngelo (2012) describes seven prevalent dynamics that Whites will need to overcome racism in American society and schools.

- Dynamic One: Whites will need to stop pretending that everyone is seen as an individual and recognize the significance of group membership; this will require

Whites to recognize that not all groups have access to the same resources based on whether they are perceived as White or a person of color.

- Dynamic Two: Whites will need to recognize that our country was founded on slavery and racism that did not end when slavery ended, allowing Whites an accumulation of wealth that is not accessible to persons of color.

- Dynamic Three: Whites will need to think critically about the social and historical context of racism and its implications for the present.

- Dynamic Four: Racism is an institutional system; practices, policies, norms, laws, traditions, and regulations hold racism in place.

- Dynamic Five: Whites will need to acknowledge the power they have as a dominant group and allow collective socialization to overcome the power imbalance.

- Dynamic Six: Whites need to acknowledge that when you see and act as though everyone is a unique individual it upholds a false truth of meritocracy and perpetuates colorblindness; success is not solely the result of hard work and ability.

- Dynamic Seven: A lack of group consciousness allows White people to see themselves as different from others in the group and not to take responsibility for racism of other Whites.

These dynamics are built on the premise that individualism is the largest impediment to overcoming racism in America, as racial classification at the individual level allows race (and racism) to operate in subconscious ways, through implicit bias (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013), which promotes tokenism and color blindness (Garces & Cogburn, 2015). However,

institutional discrimination is equally as harmful and can be found in both the public and private sectors of society (Pincus, 2000). When institutional discrimination is found in social institutions, such as diverse but dominant White public schools, the harm is predicated through the power and control the dominant group has over the organization and the minorities in the organization (Pincus, 2000). Racism is also defined by Pincus (2000) as a system of beliefs, policies, and practices maintained by White superiority.

To say that race is socially constructed is to acknowledge that society has assigned meaning to individuals or groups of people based on the color of their skin. There is no truth or fact to support this "assigned" meaning, however it has very real consequences for people of color (DiAngelo, 2012). Socially constructed race informs a definition of race as the "false concept that superficial adaptations to geography are genetic and biological determinants that result in significant differences among groups of human beings" (DiAngelo, 2012, p. 82). "African Americans constitute the group most rigorously defined along putatively biological lines, both externally through the powerful racial ideologies of our American society and internally via the advancement of a positive self-image tied to physical difference and ancestry" (Haney-Lopez, 1994, p. 9). "Race" essentializes and stereotypes people, their social statuses, their social behaviors, and their social ranking (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Important to this discussion is the recognition that Whiteness is also a social construct (DiAngelo, 2012). The term racialization is used to capture the active dynamics of race as a social process, rather than a fixed condition (DiAngelo, 2012). In the United States, one cannot escape the process of racialization; it is a basic element of the social system and customs of the United States and is deeply embedded in the consciousness of its people (Smedley & Smedley, 2005) and its organizations (Ray, 2019).

Even though it is widely accepted that race is a social construct in the discipline of social sciences (Haney-Lopez, 1996; Omi & Wiant, 1986; Waters, 1990), many individuals still think of race as a biological fact based on scientific distinctions (Obach, 1999). However, most scientists today reject the idea that race is a useful biological concept by which to classify human beings because it does not correspond with the reality and complexities of human biological variation (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). It is a scientific fact that there is no gene or cluster of genes common to all Whites or non-Whites (Haney-Lopez, 1994). Further, various scientists have demonstrated that intragroup differences exceed inter-group differences, which thereby provides more strong evidence that dispels any biological argument; rather, genetic differences are correlated to geography, not race (Haney-Lopez, 1994). Therefore, "there are no sharp divisions between, Blacks, Whites, and Asians, but rather gradually shifting differences as one moves up the African continent and across the Eurasian land mass" (Haney-Lopez, p. 12). Not only have physical traits been inaccurately transformed into markers or signifiers of social race identity in American society, but in addition this type of thinking has become an indoctrinated norm such that even when physical traits are not present, non-Whites are racialized (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

While Haney-Lopez's (1994) presentation of research provides indisputable evidence that race is not biological, he acknowledges that race is a central and persistent element of American society that is a social construction. His definition of race as a social construct relies on the notion that human interaction, rather than natural differentiation, must be seen as the source and continued basis for racial categorization (Haney-Lopez, 1994). To clarify his understanding of race as a social construct Haney-Lopez (1994) uses the term racial formulation. There are four facets to the social construction of race: 1) humans rather than social forces produce race; 2)

races constitute an integral part of a whole social fabric that also includes gender and class relations; 3) the meaning and/or systems surrounding race change quickly rather than slowly; and 4) races are constructed relationally, meaning against one another rather than in isolation (Haney-Lopez, 1994).

The persistence over time in American history for racial categorization, that is illogical or without a biological foundation, is largely due to the many advantages it affords the wealthy, elite, and privileged White American. Therefore, it is not a surprise that racial classification schemes that function to maintain differences are also an integral part of the formal education system (Kozol, 1992). For example, the privileged status of White males in America today is almost exclusively due to the fact that White males historically benefited from the first public schooling in America in 1821 (Ferrante & Brown, 2001).

Other evidence of the social construction of race in American schools is still notable and abundant in the 21st century. The research of Lewis and Diamond (2015) finds that students of color who underachieve their White counterparts are as equal or more than equal to their White counterparts in their commitment to educational achievement, and yet great disparities are found between the groups in regard to achievement. Therefore, the achievement differences between students of color and their White counterparts is the result of a complex interplay of discrimination at the societal and school level, which Lewis and Diamond (2015) describe as the oppositional culture argument. In addition, they found the cumulative effect of racialized tracking and performance expectations significantly contribute to the underperformance of students of color as does "opportunity hoarding" by Whites (Lewis & Diamond, 2012). Opportunity hoarding is when the White parent is seemingly committed to diversity and the well-

being of all students, as long as Whites do not have to sacrifice any of their child's entitled advantages (Lewis & Diamond, 2012).

History of the Social Construct of Race

Since racial meanings were first constructed in colonial America, it is also helpful to review historical conditions to promote further understanding of race as a social construct (Obach, 1999). In other words, the legal system in colonial America that was created to support slavery was actually designed to split the lower classes along newly created racial lines (Thandeka, 1999). Haney-Lopez (1994), a legal scholar, strongly asserts that race is constructed by law and describes racialization as the creation of discriminatory laws that maintain material differences based on the premise of race and subordination. The language of the laws that serve to construct race speak directly to the prejudice that White lawmakers used in colonial America and continue to create color/race based classification systems that advantage Whites at the expense of Blacks (Ferrante & Brown, 2001).

While the naturalization law of the year 1790 determined who got to be an American citizen by restricting citizenship to persons who resided in the United States for two years and who could establish their good character in court, it was colonial law that is responsible for the construction of race (Thandeka, 1999). As wealthy European settlers in the Virginia colonies began to exploit labor to benefit their power, wealth, and status, both formal and informal laws were put into place that are responsible for constructing race (Thandeka, 1999). Native Americans were first able to escape the labor abuses of these wealthy plantation owners through their knowledge of the land and ability to elude the owners (Thandeka, 1999). Less fortunate fellow Englishmen became indentured servants to the plantation masters who treated them as property to be bought, sold, and traded (Morgan, 1972). Typically, these indentured servants

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were released and able to purchase land, however by 1676, about one fourth of Virginia's freemen had hit hard times and were without land of their own (Morgan, 1972). By this time Virginia plantation owners had already discovered the profitability of buying slaves. Different from the treatment of indentured servants, masters could subject their slaves and their progeny to servitude for life and could subject slaves to harsh beatings as a way to increase productivity (Morgan, 1972). In 1669 masters further their assurance of exploiting slaves through the enactment of law that exempted themselves from criminal suit for slave slayings (Morgan, 1972). Prior to these laws, White servants and slaves worked alongside each other in the fields and engaged in intra-class collaboration based on a shared predicament of abuse and beatings. It was a camaraderie of desperation that brought poor Whites and slaves to join forces; this was especially threatening to the maintenance of the power and wealth the masters had accumulated (Morgan, 1972). Therefore, new laws were passed to wedge a division between poor Whites and Black slaves. Poor Whites were given class privileges typically associated with the elite, such as the right to whip a slave. Giving poor Whites the right to abuse Black slaves created a psychological effect of White superiority over Black slaves (Morgan, 1972). The status and dignity afforded White servants by design, through law were largely illusionary but it served to create a new multiclass "White race" that was not biologically engineered but socially constructed (Thandeka, 1999). From this point on, "the definition of the White would now be legally bound to the inferior status of the Black" (Thandeka, 1999, p. 47). It is important to note that while the vast majority of slaves knew they were victims of White racism, the vast majority of poor Whites, who were White supremacists, were not aware of their victimization (Thandeka, 1999). In other words, these poor Whites came to identify themselves by what they were not: slaves and Black (Kolchin, 2002).

There are four patterns often used by sociologists to describe the dominance and insubordination that took place in history between groups based on race (Marger, 1991). These patterns can provide a helpful context for understanding the dynamics that created the social construction of race in colonial America. The first pattern is called annexation, which is a process that leads to the incorporation of all or part of a nation into an adjacent, more powerful nation. The next patterns are voluntary and involuntary immigration. Voluntary immigration is the process whereby people living in one country are pushed or pulled to live in another country, while involuntary immigration is the forced transfer of people from one society to another. The last patterns related to colonialism are conquest colonialism and internal colonialism; conquest colonialism is the imposed domination of an external country upon indigenous people and internal colonialism is when relations that exist among ethnic groups in the same country mirror those found in classic colonialism (Marger, 1991).

Racial Identity Development

Over the years, sociologists, psychologists, and educators have continuously suggested that racism is a White problem that needs to be addressed by the White community (DiAngelo, 2012; Katz, 1978; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McIntyre, 1997). It was not until the 1970s that theorists began to truly investigate and propose models of White racial identity that addressed the implications of racist attitudes for the dominant group (Helms, 1995; McIntyre, 1997). Further, the primary problem with White race identity development is that people who are White do not know who they are without persons who are Black and therefore are often unwilling or slow to do their own racial identity work (DiAngelo, 2012; McIntyre, 1997). If people who are White would become aware of their own racial being, accept the reality of White privilege that exists in the United States, and act to alleviate the forms of racism that emerge from the imbalance of

color-power, then they would be more effective in interrupting racism in our educational institutions (Katz, 1978; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Therefore, educational leaders who are White and working in increasingly diverse school settings will need to become aware of their own racial identity and the influence it has on the work they are doing in their schools (DiAngelo, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McIntyre, 1997; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Studies on intergroup interactions have revealed that a leader's ethnicity does have an impact on how they interacted with and were perceived by followers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Therefore, leadership in diverse organizations needs to be sensitive to workplace differences and be able to reduce negative stereotypes (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002; Steele, 2001). When educators who are White engage in identity work, intergroup contact and cross-racial interactions are improved toward an entire group and prejudice and implicit bias are reduced (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016).

Historically, social scientists simplistically described identities as largely a reflection of what others think of us based on what qualities are valued and what qualities are not valued by others (Cooley, 1922; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Others defined identity as a person's awareness of belonging to a certain social category or group, which also included the value and emotional significance of belonging or not belonging to a group (Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015). Over time other scholars began to acknowledge that social identities are much more complex, as they are inclusive of the intersection of personal, historical, and cultural interactions that are formed within a social context (DiAngelo, 2012). Racial identity is "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3). Racial identity development theory also includes

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the psychological implications of racial group membership and therefore is largely based on how others see and respond to us (Helms, 1990).

Racial Identity Development Theory

It is assumed that in American society, where racial-group membership is emphasized, that the development of racial identity will occur in some form in everyone (Tatum, 1992). Historically, in America new immigrants, who did not physically resemble the dominant group, were stigmatized in negatives ways by the dominate group, such that they had less political power and influence (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Oppression traditionally carries a strong connotation of conquest and colonial domination, even when it is not intended (Young, 2000). Therefore, a good understanding of whether a group is oppressed is dependent on one or more of the following five conditions are present:

- Exploitation which enacts structural relationships between social groups: There are social rules about who does what for whom, how work is compensated, and the social and systematic processes that extend to maintain and augment power, status, and the wealth of the dominant group;

- Marginalization that does not allow or refuses use of the system: This most dangerous form of oppression expels categories of people from useful participation in social life and thus deprives them of material possession and possible extermination;

- Powerlessness regarding authority, status, and a sense of self that is afforded to professionals: Oppression comes from lack of professional avenues, such as a college education, lack of work autonomy which may allow for authority over others, and lack of professional respectability that are part of professional culture;

- Cultural imperialism that universally establishes the dominant group's experience and culture as the norm for all. Members of the oppressed group find themselves defined by the outside, positioned, and placed by dominant meanings;

- Systematic violence by which oppressed groups live with the knowledge and fear of random, unprovoked attacks on their person or property (Young, 2000).

The variables of power, hierarchy, and resource scarcity, found in dominant group membership, increase the tendency for in-group membership to be viewed more favorable than out-group membership (Padilla & Perez, 2003). In-group members establish positive self-identities by favorably comparing themselves against the out-group (Operario & Fiske, 1999). In-group members can rely on their privilege and avoid objecting to oppression without fear of retaliation or oppression (Wildman & Davis, 2000). Due to the social construction of race, in the United States people who are White see themselves as the dominant or in-group and people of color as the minoritized or out-group (Hillard, 1992). The power system that supports the dominant or in-group has many benefits and privileges afforded to them by in-group affiliation; these are often referred to as White privilege (Wildman & Davis, 2000). The oppression that comes when one group dominates over others is what is referred to as racism (DiAngelo, 2012).

Racial identity development is important as it helps shapes individuals' attitudes about themselves, attitudes about other individuals in their racial group, attitudes about individuals from other racial groups, and attitudes about individuals from the majority. It also dispels the myth that all individuals from a particular racial group are the same (Poston, 1990). Chavez-Korell and Vandiver (2012), argue that racial identity should include the effect that specific racial identity attitudes may have on aspects of psychosocial functioning. Their model is based on the understanding that self-concept is comprised of two components: personal identity and

reference group orientation. Personal identity refers to general personality features, such as those things that can be measured by personality inventories, while reference group orientation is based on social affiliations, such as religion, race, gender, and sexual orientation (Chavez-Korell & Vandiver, 2012). Like Poston (1992), Chavez-Korell and Vandiver (2012) also assert that the formation of racial identity occurs largely in the reference group orientation, rather than the personal identity component of self-concept.

In his book Whistling Vivaldi, social psychologist Claude Steele (2010) discusses the circumstances and/or situations one has to deal with because of a given social identity. He calls these phenomena, identity contingencies and further defines the application of a bad stereotype regarding one or more of our identities in a situation by a member(s) of the dominant culture a stereotype threat (Steele, 2010). Steele (2010) contends that the racial, class, and gender achievement gaps plaguing our society are definitively influenced by stereotype threat. Steele's (2010) research concludes that there are four overriding patterns that are significant to understanding the role of identity:

1. Contingencies tied to our social identities do make a difference in our lives.

2. Identity threats damage our ability to function and play an important role in society's social problems.

3. Stereotype threats involve an allocation of mental resources and impair a broad range of human functioning.

4. The individual and society have the ability to reduce stereotype threats and in return have a significant impact on resolving society's problems.

The situations that Steele (2010) calls stereotype threats are similar to the encounter or triggering event that Chrobot-Thomas' (2012) research describes as what often first motivates

the individual to begin to explore the meaning and significance of race identity development.

These triggering events or situations are also described in William Cross' (1971) model of Black

racial identity development that is intended to characterize the process of accepting and

affirming Black identity in American society (Cross, 1991; Vandiver, 2001). His model consists

of five stages of racial development to include pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion,

internalization and internalization-commitment (see Table 4). These stages range from a person

of color fully assimilating into dominant White culture to stages of denouncing the dominant

White culture and replacing it with a positive sense of racial identity grounded in Blackness as

the point of departure for culture, ideas, and experiences (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). Even

though the process of racial identity development is presented as linear, race identity scholars

suggest that the stages should be viewed more as a spiral (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991).

Table 4

Racial Identity Development Theory Summary Chart

Black Racial Identity (Cross, 1971, 1978, 1991)	White Racial Identity (Helms (1990)
Pre-encounter: Individual who is African American absorbs many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture; assimilates with White culture	**Contact:** Individual who is White has a lack of awareness of one's own cultural and institutional racism and of one's White privilege
Encounter: Individual who is African American acknowledges the impact of racism in one's own life; usually precipitated by an event or series of events	**Disintegration:** Individual who is White recognizes one's own advantage of being White and acknowledges the role Whites play in maintenance of a racist system
Immersion/Emersion: Individual who is African American simultaneously desires to surround self with symbols of one's racial identity and actively avoid symbols of Whiteness	**Reintegration:** Individual who is White desires to be accepted by one's own race and reshapes their belief system to be more congruent with racism
Internalization: Individual who is African American becomes secure in one's own sense of racial identity; willing to establish relationships with Whites that are respectful of his or her self-definition	**Pseudo-Independent:** Individual who is White abandons beliefs in White superiority; seeks out individuals that are targets of racism to increase understanding
Internalization-Commitment: Individual who is African American has a positive sense of racial identity and seeks out ways to act and commit to African Americans as a group	**Immersion/Emersion:** Individual who is White seeks to replace racially related myths and stereotypes with accurate information about what it means to be White in U.S. society
	Autonomy: Individual who is White internally redefines sense of self as a White person; confronts racism and oppression in their daily life

Social identity theory suggests that groups that have been marginalized by the dominant society use various strategies for attaining positive social identity (Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015). One such strategy is similar to what Cross (1971) describes in the pre-encounter stage; the individual disaffiliates from one's racial group to join the higher status group. Other strategies include the pursuit of social completion to improve their group's material or legal standing, and/or social creativity in which group members make favorable social comparisons by

claiming positive characteristics for their group or disavowing negative ones (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012); this strategy is more closely aligned to Cross's (1978) stage of internalization-commitment. Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith and Demo (2015), find that despite the persistence of institutionalized racism, racial identification will be positively related to group evaluation among African Americans. In a study of how racial identity influences self-esteem and psychological well-being among African Americans, it was found that African Americans that strongly identified with their racial group and viewed membership to their racial group positively had greater self-esteem, greater mastery, and fewer depressive symptoms (Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015). Another study of identity in college students found that for among students of color, ethnic identity was not only an important component to understanding themselves but also linked to their academic identity (Walker & Syed, 2013).

Similarly to Cross's (1971, 1991) models of Black race identity development, Helms (1990, 1995) designed a theory of White racial development. This model is intended to be an evolution of identity that requires the abandonment of racism and the development of a nonracist White identity (Tatum, 1992). There are six stages in Helm's (1990) model of White racial identity development: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. A description of these stages is in Table 4. These stages resemble the transformations experienced by people that are White as they confront their own racial identity. The evolution of a positive racial identity for individuals who are White involves the abandonment of racism and the development of a nonracist White identity (Helm, 1990).

While both of these racial identity models have endured over time, there have been revisions and criticism of them. Kris Yi (2014), would argue that multicultural theories such as these, conceptualize racial identity in binary terms of the White oppressor and the injured racial

other. She presents a study that demonstrates the social construction of race from an

"internalization of one's own ethnic culture, not of the dominant culture/minority

dichotomization" (Yi, 2014, p. 433). Carlos Poston (1990) argues that there are several flaws in

the early models of racial identity, especially concerning the experiences of biracial individuals

in the United States. His criticisms of early models include the implication that individuals must

choose one group's culture or values over another; they suggest one must first reject their racial

identification and culture; and they do not allow for the integration of several group identities

(Poston, 1990). His proposed changes to the model are included in Table 5.

Table 5

Biracial Identity Development Model Summary

Personal Identity	Individuals at this stage are young; the child will have a sense of self that is somewhat independent of his or her ethnic background; identity is primarily based on personal identity factors such as self-esteem and feelings of worth they develop as a member of a family (p. 153)
Choice of Group Categorization	Individuals at this stage feel pressure to choose an identity; the primary choices at this stage are between identification with the minority or majority group; this can be a time of crisis and alienation.
Enmeshment/Denial	Individuals at this stage are characterized by confusion and guilt from having to choose one identity that is not fully an expression of their background; the child can't appreciate the culture of both parents.
Appreciation	Individuals begin to appreciate their multiple identities; they begin to learn about racial/ethnic heritages and cultures; they become involved in culturally relevant activities.
Integration	Individuals experience wholeness and integration; they recognize and value all of their ethnic identities

Note. Source: Poston, 1990.

Other critics of the traditional models of identity development have introduced an

underground model of racial identity development known as the Multidimensional Model of

Racial Identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The underground model

has four basic assumptions that have some connections to the early models and yet provide some

different perspectives. First, this model acknowledges that identities can be both stable and fluid

depending on the situation. Secondly, this model recognizes that individuals share many

different identities and that these identities are hierarchical. In other words, race may not be the

primary identifier for an individual, rather they may first identify with gender, religion, or sexual

orientation, etc. Thirdly, this model is a proponent for not judging racial identities as healthy or

unhealthy. Lastly, unlike the traditional models of racial identity, this model acknowledges that

the status of racial identity at any given point in time as more significant than placing the

individual in a particular stage in a developmental sequence (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, &

Chavous, 1998).

This model further identifies four dimensions that represent different ways racial identity

is manifested: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, &

Chavous, 1998). Racial salience is the extent to which one's race is relevant to one's self-

concept at any particular moment or in a particular situation. Racial centrality is the extent to

which a person defines him or herself in regard to race. Racial regard refers to the extent a

person feels positive or negative about his or her race. Public regard is the extent to which

individuals view being African American as positive or negative. Lastly, ideology represents the

person's philosophy about how African Americans should live or act. Sellers, Smith, Shelton,

Rowley, and Chavous (1998) have delineated four distinctive ideologies: nationalist, oppressed

minority, assimilation, and humanist. The nationalist ideology emphasizes the uniqueness of

being Black, individuals who espouse oppressed minority ideology are interested in similarities

and links between the oppression African Americans face to other minority or marginalized

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groups, the assimilationists ideology is characterized by the similarities between African

Americans and the rest of American society, and humanist ideology emphasizes the similarities

among all humans.

Individual and Organizational Racial Identity Development

We propose that in order to understand the conditions that affect an organization's ability

to attract, retain, and make the most of its cultural diversity as well as minority

employees'' experiences in the workplace, one must consider racial identity at both the

organizational and individual levels of analysis. (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2012, p.

324)

Chrobot-Mason and Thomas (2012) introduced an interactive model of individual and

organizational racial identity development. This particular model provides a theoretical

framework that describes the interaction of both the individual and the organizational racial

identity development at various stages of growth. Specifically, this model (Figure 1) helps to

explain the relationships that develop between employees of color and the White-owned or

dominated organizational employers (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2012). The stages of this

model include the following: Negative parallel: Both the individual and the organization are at

low levels of racial identification; Regressive relationships: Occur when the employee of color

is at a higher stage of racial identity than the organization; Progressive interactions: Describe

instances where the employee of color is at a low level of racial identity and the organization is

at a high stage of racial development: positive parallel relationships are when both the employee

of color as an individual and the organization are at a high level of racial identity development.

In this situation, both the individual and organization motivate the other to recognize and use

differences that exist as a competitive advantage (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002).

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Figure 1

Interactive Model of Individual and Organizational Racial Identity Development

Organizational Racial Identify   **Individual Racial Identity**

		Low Identity ←→ High Identity	
		Limited exploration of the meaning and significance of one's racial membership	Racial self-actualization (internalized sense of self)
Low Identity	Racial differences are ignored or de-valued (mono-cultural workplace)	Negative Parallel Interaction	Regressive Interaction
High Identify	Diversity as part of the overall business strategy (multicultural workplace)	Progressive Interaction	Positive Parallel Interaction

Note. Source: Chrobot-Mason, Thomas, 2002, p. 325

In a study of schools experiencing demographic change, Evans (2007) found that as White suburban schools became more of color, more "urban" respondents felt it signaled a decline in the school's social status and the faculty's professional status. This also led to school personnel who were White to draw distinctions between themselves and those who were African American; Whites belonged in the suburbs, African Americans did not (Evans, 2007). These findings are significant as they speak to how the school identities, actions, behaviors, and decision making on behalf of students of color depend on faculty beliefs about different racial groups' perceived ability to act on their own behalf (Evans, 2007). More importantly, this study illuminates how demographic change in the suburbs disrupts established school identities in such a way that schools have to assess and/or reassess the identity of their school and school community (Evans, 2007).

Most recently, Ray (2019) challenges the notion that organizations can be race neutral; rather he argues they are racialized. He defines race as a "relationship between persons mediated through things" thus "race is constructed relationally via the distribution of social, psychological, and material resources" (Ray, 2019, p. 4). Similarly, racialized organized are those that advantage Whites through their distribution of resources (Ray, 2019). Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations is constructed on four tenets: 1) power in racialized organizations is enhanced or diminished depending on racial group membership; 2) racialized organizations make it legitimate to unequally distribute resources; 3) Whiteness is a credential; 4) disengagement or separating is racialized (Ray, 2019). When considering American educational organizations the implications of this theory remind us that predominantly White schools are viewed as normal and neutral, while non-White schools are deviations a from the norm and marginalized (Ray, 2019).

Additional research by Sewell (2016) found that there were unequal distributions of people of color in the lower rungs of the organizational hierarchy, which can be important to understanding how minorities are placed in educational organizations. A study by Bendick and Nunes (2012) found that when advantaged organizations selectively hire a minority it is viewed as a "moral credential" which then absolves them from further hiring minorities, which may also explain the lack of representation of school leaders of color in predominately White organizations.

Impact of Race in Education

…as the nation becomes more racially and ethnically complex, our schools should reflect that diversity and tap into the benefits of these more diverse schools to better educate all our students for the twenty-first century. (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016)

Brown v. Board of Education held that separate schools for students who are Black and White are inherently unequal; however, the implementation of school desegregation was often "clumsy," inefficient, and sabotaged by legal decisions and White flight to suburbs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Frey, 2011; Kahlenberg, 2016). Despite the many factors working against the integration of American schools, due to the increase in diversity in the American population, schools today are becoming increasingly diverse (National Center for Educational Statistics). It is projected that by the year 2023, more than half of the American public school population will be a race or ethnicity other than White (NCES). In addition, America's suburbs and suburban schools are also increasing in diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and culture (Wells, Fox, & Cordovo-Cobo, 2016).

With suburban school experiencing increased diversity in their student population, disparities in achievement between students of color and their White peers can be perplexing to understand (Diamond, 2006). It was Coleman's (1966) Equality of Educational Opportunity study that first established there were achievement disparities between students of color and their White peers (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012). The NCLB (2001) legislation solidified this racial achievement gap by establishing accountability measures for public schools that were unable to narrow these gaps. However, it is interesting to note that racial achievement gaps in K-12 education closed more rapidly during the peak years of racial desegregation than ever in the NCLB accountability era (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). Lynch and Oakford (2014) argue that the economic benefit to closing achievement gaps is crucial to the well-being of our nation. "If the United States were able to close the educational achievement gaps between native-born White children and Black and Hispanic children, the U.S. economy would be 5.8% – or nearly $2.3 trillion – larger in 2050" (Lynch & Oakford, 2014, n.p.). This information should

be a powerful motivator for policy makers at both the governmental and school level to deconstruct the achievement gaps found in American schools.

What is lacking in the era of accountability is emphasis on the policies and practices related to student race and ethnicity, rather than the colorblind approach to labeling the disparities (Hawley & Neito, 2010). Critical race education researchers have long attributed racial gaps, in both urban and suburban schools, to the socially constructed lack of access for students of color to the most challenging curriculums and/or the most highly qualified teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Wells et al., 2016). Educators who are White and working in suburban schools rarely acknowledge that racial achievement and behavioral disparities may be related to race and ethnicity difficulties or tensions in their schools and classrooms (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). For example, many White educators, consciously or unconsciously, believe that students of color cannot achieve at the same academic levels as White students (Smith, 2005). In Evan's (2007) research of suburban school response to demographic change she found across all schools studied that students who were African American were negatively viewed: louder, more social, less motivated, less prepared, more confrontational, and lacking in home support. In response to these changing demographics in their schools, stricter discipline policies were enacted or stricter enforcement of existing policies and there was evidence of dumbing down the curriculum and teachers having lower expectations for students of color (Evans, 2007). Interesting to this discussion is that research on student behavior, race, and discipline has found no evidence that African American students' overrepresentation in school suspension is due to higher rates of misbehavior (Kelly, 2010; Lunenburg, 2012). This is especially true in discipline referrals that are subjective in nature (Bradshaw et al., 2010). This evidence suggests that just as race is

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socially constructed, so too are the behavior and achievement disparities found in suburban schools (Diamond, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Further, research alliances around school desegregation policy strongly argue that the exclusive focus on student outcomes as the central measure of equal educational opportunity has minimized the beneficial educational experiences of students in racially diverse school settings (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). Segregated schooling limits the prospects of both students of color and White students; all children benefit from an integrated education (Orfield et al., 2010). In fact, children who are White are better prepared than any previous generation of Americans to live and work in an interracial society, which is important for the opposition to integration to understand (Orfield et al., 2010; Yun & Kurlaender, 2004).

All students bring cultural values and experiences to their education, which are often disregarded by European White educators who are unfamiliar with other cultures (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). In a recent synthesis of research on the benefits to diversity in schooling, Wells, Fox, and Cordova-Cobo (2016) provide strong evidence to support the integration of schools. Results from a national, 10-year, longitudinal study regarding race composition on college campuses indicate that a positive racial climate depends on the presence of students of color in the student body (Garces & Jayakumar, 2014; Jayakumar, 2008). Historically, predominantly White institutions have excluded or limited access to students of color (Hurtado et al., 1999; Thelin, 1985). The *Baake, Grutter, and Fisher* (2014) court case addressed a college's goal of attaining a critical mass of students of color on their campus by stating, "the Law School defines its critical mass concept of reference to the substantial, important, and laudable educational benefits that diversity is designed to produce, including cross-racial understanding and the breaking down of racial stereotypes (539 U.S. at 330)" (Graces & Jayakumer, 2014, p. 117).

Graces and Jayakumer (2014), regarding this race conscious college admission court case, further argue that having students of color on campus does not have a positive benefit unless there is critical mass and interaction between students of different racial backgrounds.

"When African American parents pressed for an end to legalized segregation in the years leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, it was not the companionship of White children they were seeking for their children: It was access to educational resources" (Tatum, 2010, p. 29). Children who are White were attending schools that had better facilities, equipment, supplies, curricular options, and often more highly trained teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tatum, 2010). Along with the important skill of learning to interact with each other, racially mixed school environments also need to expect all children to perform at high levels (Tatum, 2010). When these conditions are present, there are many direct and indirect benefits to racially integrated K-12 schooling in the United States. In an extensive study by Wells, Fox, and Cordova-Cobo (2016), the following benefits of racially diverse schools were identified:

- Attending racially diverse schools is beneficial to all students and is associated with smaller achievement gaps;
- Students of all races who attend racially integrated schools have higher SAT scores and are less likely to drop out than students in segregated, high poverty schools;
- Racially diverse educational institutions help young people challenge stereotypes and implicit biases toward peers that are of different racial or ethnic backgrounds;
- Student satisfaction and intellectual self-confidence is increased when educators tap into the educational benefits of the diverse backgrounds of students to challenge assumptions and learn from multiple perspectives;

- Students' leadership skills, regardless of racial or ethnic background, are increased in integrated learning environments;

- Integrating schools allows for equitable access to important resources, such as facilities, highly qualified teachers, challenging courses, funding, and other social and cultural capital (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2014).

Same race benefits are also recognized through role modeling, establishment of high expectations that eliminate the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon, and recognizing there are important differences between teachers of different backgrounds in instructional strategies and interpretation of behavior (Goldhaber, Theobald, & Tien, 2015).

However, the findings of a recent study of teachers who identify as Black, working in the American educational system, concluded that building a diverse teacher work force is complex and requires more than just increasing the number of teachers who are Black working in a given school, district, or state (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Rather, "the issues that stifle the development and empowerment of teachers who are Black are so deep-seated that it will take honest and critical examinations of school cultures and systemic processes in order for school and district leaders to develop the trust, support, and collegial working environments needed to recruit and retain teachers of color" (Griffin & Tackie, 2016, p. 11).

The teachers in this study, regardless of context or geographic location, reported being restricted to teaching only Black students and then only being viewed as having expertise as a disciplinarian, rather than respected for their capabilities in the classroom; they felt they lacked opportunities for advancement, were undervalued, and unappreciated; their voices were not heard in staff meetings; and they had to "tone down" their personalities to be seen as professionals (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Given these findings, it should be no surprise that

teachers who identify as Black, working in American schools, only make up seven percent of the teaching force in the United States (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Further, considering that the pipeline to be a school leader is typically through the teaching profession, it then should not be a surprise that school leaders who are Black, only make up nine percent of the principal workforce in American schools (Goldring et al., 2013; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005).

In summary, it is not benefit enough to simply have integrated schooling or have a critical mass of diverse students; to impact a culture and to have all students benefit, regardless of race, they must genuinely interact with one another as a normal part of their schooling. In addition, in racially diverse schools, students of color and their teachers must have equitable access to the same opportunities and learning environments that advantage their White peers. To draw more attention to issues in education regarding race, Hawley and Nieto (2010) suggest the use of the expression "race and ethnicity responsive"; rather than more comfortable terms, such as "diversity" or "culturally responsive".

School Leadership and Race

With increased diversity in schools, educational leaders are needed who will advocate for culturally responsive teaching (Riehl, 2000) and lead schools through "culturally inquiry" (Johnson & Bush, 2005, p. 269). Fostering the development of culturally proficient leaders who will positively impact school improvement is needed in today's diverse school settings (Lindsey et al., 2003) (Ballenger & Alford, 2011, p. 131).

Much of the research on the principalship related to what it is and how they practice is based on the experiences of White males who have historically dominated the profession. However, "African American school leaders have a significant history of leadership, particularly in the education of African American students, and they continue to provide exemplary

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leadership, primarily in the urban school setting" (Tillman, 2006, p. 275). Educational research

has founded much evidence to support that there are many benefits to school leaders who are

African American working in American schooling. Eagly and Chin (2010) assert that leaders

belonging to diverse identity groups are more likely to have multicultural competence and have

more experience negotiating school cultures that have diversity but remain White dominant.

Moreover, Musteen and Barker (2005) find that multicultural competence can foster flexibility

and openness to change that has widespread benefits for both students who are African American

and White. Page (2007) also argues that racially diverse leaders are also more likely to be

inclusive and open to the opinions of others fostering practices that are inclusive of diversity to

the benefit of all. Further, Reed and Evans (2008) find "the literature supports the suggestion

that same-race affiliation between teachers, administrators and African American students serves

a critical function in their schooling and education" (Foster, 1997; Fultz, 2004; Lomotey, 1993,

p. 488). However, they also caution that it is presumptuous to conclude that there is always

mutual understanding and shared expectations between African-American educators and the

African-American community they may serve (Reed & Evans, 2008). Additionally, in their case

study of a female African American leader, they found that identity is not fixed, but rather fluid

and context specific; this principal of color was socialized in a mostly White school context and

it influenced her practice (Reed & Evans, 2008). In another study of principals who were

African American it was determined that the leader's ethnicity also had an impact on how they

were interacted with and perceived by their followers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Therefore,

school leaders that work with members of different ethnic backgrounds need to recognize

cultural differences in their followers and how it may influence how relationships are developed

and negotiated (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). This would include the ability to reduce negative

stereotypes, sensitivity to workplace differences, ability to form open and authentic relationships, and the ability to negotiate intergroup conflict (Chemers, 1993; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

When considering the experience of school leaders who are African American in suburban districts, intergroup theory helps to understand the diversity between leaders who are African American and their White followers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). School leaders who are African American that are working in majority White settings have the ability to live a contemporary equivalent of the duality characteristic of African American experience; hold multiple identities and multiple responsibilities without debilitating conflict (Brown & Beckett, 2007). Meyerson and Scully's (1995) research also identified persons of color trying to succeed in White dominant culture as having identities of a dual nature that they refer to as tempered radicals.

Tempered radicals have a quality of ambivalence that allows them to see from the outside in and the inside out of their White spaces. They also are able critics of the dominant status quo and of radical change in the organization (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). In these dominant settings this research also reports they experience isolation and loneliness, pressure to assimilate, and feelings of self-doubt, guilt and anger (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). When people of different ethnic groups interact with one another in the work place, there is an increased potential for intergroup conflict (Ayman, 2002; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). School leaders in these types of situations struggle with power differences with their majority school population and its impact on their ability to facilitate intercultural contact (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). For example, Chemers and Murphy (1995) noted that when persons who are African American enter into a leadership position in a mostly homogeneous organization, they often face misinterpretations by followers who are also likely to question their effectiveness. However, tempered radicals are

able to identify with and be committed to their White dominant school organizations and yet be at odds with the dominant culture of the organization (Alston, 2005).

Unfortunately, there is a notable lack of school leaders who are African American or Black working in American schools today, especially in predominantly White suburban schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2011-12) reports public school principals by race/ethnicity as follows: 81.8% are White, 9.4% are Black, 6.0% are Hispanic, and 2.7% are other. This is not surprising as drops in the number of African American principals were already noted during the period following the *Brown* decision; between the years of 1963 to 1979 there was a 73% decrease in principals who were African American (Patterson, 2001). However, even in present day, school leaders who are African American are hard pressed to find principal positions, and when they do it is often in urban, segregated, and under-funded schools (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). Critical race theorists believe that this pattern of placing principals who are African American in predominantly Black schools and to place principals who are White in not only majority White schools but also in majority Black schools should be understood in regard to the concept of Whiteness as property (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). Whiteness as property usually implies belongings or possessions, however it also includes expectations of knowing your race will not work against you for jobs and other privileges (Grant, 1995).

In a study of 13 school leaders who were Black and marginalized in London it was found that discrimination and prejudice affect the processes of selection and recruitment of school leaders who are Black and also marginalized (Coleman & Campbell-Stephens, 2010). This study also found the greatest challenges for principals of color was in the acquisition and promotion stage of employment (Coleman & Campbell-Stephens, 2010). Further evidence of race being a

factor in promotion was found in the work of Madsen and Mabokela (2005) where African American leaders identified a struggle between advocating on diversity issues in their schools, which created power issues with European-American followers that later put them at risk for promotion. These same leaders also identified frustration with the constant fight to prove themselves as a professional to their European-American administrative peers and followers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005).

As earlier mention, Ray (2019) contends that organizations are not race neutral but rather racialized organizations that diminish the agency of racial groups, legitimize the unequal distribution of resources, maintain Whiteness as a credential, and are unwilling to give up their advantages to address racial inequities in their organizations. When organizations are viewed as racialized it suggests that people of color are less likely to be hired, promoted, and in the upper hierarchy of positions, explaining why school leaders who are African American may be experiencing difficulty being promoted in school organizations. These racialized organizations are selective in how they incorporate people of color into their organizations such that their own hierarchical power is not threatened. Collins (1997) distinguishes two types of jobs held by Blacks in White corporations: racialized and mainstream.

> A job was coded "racialized" when its description indicated an actual and/or symbolic
> representation to Black communities, Black issues, or to civil rights agencies at any level
> of government (Collins, 1997, p. 399).

The results of her study of managerial elites in Chicago corporations showed that Blacks were more likely to have held racialized jobs than Whites. In addition, the disparate career pathways were not attributable to educational differences as the education level of African Americans was closely parallel to their White counterparts (Collins, 1997). Today in educational

organizations we see racialized administrative positions being created in schools and districts with titles such as such as equity coordinators and diversity officers. Racialized jobs allow for the White corporate elites to incorporate protected minority groups into their organizations while minimizing their impact on organizational culture and structure (Collins, 1997). In addition, racialized jobs de-skill persons by not allowing them to do the work of White elites in the organization (Collins, 1997). This has implications for how African Americans are marginalized in leadership positions in educational organizations, as diversity and equity are often code words for this marginalization and de-skilling. Vidal-Ortiz (2016) says:

> Diversity has become shorthand for the insertion of minority students, specifically who are African American, into predominantly White academic spaces, while at the same time leaving untouched the historical enforcement of exclusion inherent from the inception of these institutions. (p. 1)

In the absence of school leaders who are African American, White school leaders having lived in racial segregation with little to no exposure to people of color, rely on a discourse of color blindness to inform their practice (Apple, 2003; DiAngelo, 2012). As discussed earlier, color blindness allows for avoidance of racial realities in schools and the perpetuation of practices, policies, and beliefs that sustain racism and White privilege in schools (Apple, 2003; Welton, Diem, & Holme, 2013). "In comparison, African-American principals used a 'color conscious' approach, where race was always in the forefront in confronting intergroup differences between them and their school participants" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2005, p. 193).

There are other challenges for leaders who are African American working in predominantly White settings. The unequal power relationships in these White spaces perpetuate the oppression and marginalization found in White society. There are well-documented accounts

of students in higher education settings feeling shock, anger, and frustration when professors have ignored issues of race and racism in the classroom (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). The unwillingness of White people to discuss race or avoid issues of race and racism creates a culture of silence where voices of color are oppressed and silenced (Rusch & Horsford, 2009).

Educational leaders who are White must do the work. White elites need to recognize cultural differences in their followers and/or colleagues of color as the differences affect the ways in which relationships are developed and negotiated in their organization (Mabokela & Madsen, 2002). Gooden's (2012) research finds that, regardless of their race, school leaders must engage in a leadership practice that puts race at the forefront of their practice. To do this, he suggests the following are essential to begin this work: 1) Develop a working understanding of individual, institutional, and societal racism, which includes White privilege; 2) Complete a racial autobiography to understand their racial identity using Cross (1991) and Helms (1990) identity models; and 3) Conduct an equity audit of their schools to examine inequities based on race, abilities, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Gooden, 2012).

If educational leaders want to become leaders who are socially just they must be able to unlearn and relearn their privilege and be willing to surrender their inherent power in conversations of race (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). Essential to this unlearning and relearning is an assertion that the voices and experiences of people of color have inherent values (Delgado & Stefancic, 2009). White defensiveness in racial conversations, where voices of color are elevated, usually leads to defensiveness and counterattacks (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). Educational leaders who are White need to be able to engage in cross-racial dialogue which requires explicit listening, learning and shifting (Pillow, 2003). They must also be able to travel

with a care of responsibility to persons of color by committing to a "process of engaging with each other's worlds as a way to see ourselves in their eyes" (Rusch & Horsford, 2009, p. 310).

Summary

This literature provides a foundation of scholarly research necessary to prepare for this research study. Most important to a study centered on the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American is the acknowledgement that race is a social construct. In addition, it was important that this researcher unlearn and relearn the history of oppression and marginalization of African Americans in American culture and in the context of American schooling. While it is difficult to capture all of the research in its entirety it has been important for this study to do a thorough study of educational leadership to include research that captures how leaders who are African American make sense of their work in White spaces and what opportunities and challenges these leaders encounter when working in predominantly White school settings.

Therefore, as American suburban schools with student and staff populations that are predominantly White become increasingly diverse with student populations of color, there will be an increasing need to hear the voices of education leaders who are of color who work in these schools. White school and district leaders have a moral imperative to listen and learn from these school leaders who are African American as they are responsible for providing an equitable education for all students in their organization.

By further studying the lived experiences of African American school leaders working in predominantly White settings it is intended that their stories and counter stories are essential to disrupting American schooling so that all students receive an equitable education. The proposed research sub-questions allow for insights into how they make sense of their work in these

schools, what challenges and obstacles they encounter, and what leadership beliefs, practices,

and strategies might they employ to navigate in these settings.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the specific aspects of how the study was designed and conducted are presented. The first section of this chapter provides a brief summary of the problem being studied and the purpose of conducting the study. Included in this section is also a summary of the conceptual framework for the study, which is critical race theory. The next section is a discussion of the core elements of a qualitative study and the narrative inquiry approach as they apply to this research study. This is then followed by the design of the study which includes a description of the setting, participants, and interview techniques that were employed for the study. The next section is a discussion of the researcher's reflexivity, to include researcher role and positionality. The last section describes the data collection, management, and analysis methods that were used to determine the findings.

Overview of the Problem Being Studied

Eurocentric American schools and their predominantly White leaders have traditionally sought solutions to closing the academic gap, and reversing practices of oppression of children who have traditionally been marginalized, by acculturating students and educators of color to conform to majority culture practices (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). However, with changing demographics and increased pressure to serve all students who attend their schools, these predominantly White school leaders are looking to educators of color as a panacea for their own inadequacies in meeting the needs of children of color (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017). The reality is that there are few teachers or school leaders of color working in predominantly White settings and little is known about the experiences of these leaders of color (Goldring et al., 2013). While recent research has supported the benefits to having same-race educators working with children (Cheng & Halpin, 2016; Tillman, 2004; Wells et al., 2016),

critical race theory would argue the appropriateness of this strategy and challenge it to be analyzed considering issues of race, class, power, and culture. This is important since the predominantly White school organizations where school leaders who are African American or Black are working are Eurocentric dominated cultures (DiAngelo, 2012). Yet, little is known about the actual lived experiences of school leaders who are African American or Black working or having worked in predominantly White school environments; therefore it is important to hear their voices through stories and counter-stories (Chapman, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The voices of school leaders who are African American or Black are intended for an audience of district and school leaders who are White, so that they may gain urgency for disrupting the barriers in their dominant school settings that perpetuate racism and unequitable education for children of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017).

Undoubtedly there are advantages to having same-race school leaders and teachers in predominantly White organizations; however the benefits are to students, regardless of race, not to the organizational leaders who are White that may think they are recruiting a "superman or woman" of color to close their achievement gaps so that they can be relieved of the accountability pressures without disrupting the coveted Eurocentric environments (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017; Wells et al., 2016).

Therefore, the intent of this study was to conduct interviews with school leaders who identify as African American or Black and are working in predominantly White school settings. The data generated from these interviews would elicit stories, counter-stories and testimonials which can bring understanding to the lived experiences of these school leaders as they work in a predominantly White setting. The data gathered from the interviews is analyzed to determine

common themes which inform the findings of the study. The purpose of the study findings is to provide insight, urgency, and discourse for Eurocentric organizational leadership in predominantly White settings that often camouflage equity work in their organizations (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

Critical race theorists Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued that without listening to the authentic voices of educators of color, which include teachers, administrators, parents, and students, it is doubtful that the realities of education in our communities can be fully understood. In addition, they also contend that the voices of educators of color are required for a complete analysis of any educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race theory focuses attention on race and how racism is deeply embedded within the framework of American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002). The goals of critical race theory in research are to present stories of discrimination from the perspective of people of color, eradicate racial subjugation while simultaneously recognizing that race is a social construct, and to address other areas of differences, such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals (Creswell, 2013; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Since this is a study of school leaders who identify as African American working in predominantly White school settings, which are racialized organizations, it is imperative that this study use a critical race methodology throughout the research process (Ray, 2019; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical race methodology is theoretically grounded in research and has been used to conduct qualitative studies explaining the experiences of educators and students of color. It grounds race and racism in all aspects of the research but also challenges separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how these three elements intersect (Yosso & Solórzano,

2005). This methodology also challenges traditional research paradigms used to explain the experiences of educators of color; offers a transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and is focused on racialized, gender, and classed experiences of educators of color. Important to their understanding, this methodology views the experiences of race, gender, and class as sources of strength, not deficits (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). Therefore, in this study a critical race methodology was essential to considering questions of inequity, power, and race. In addition, it allows the space for voices of color to be heard, which is a necessary requirement for a study centered on a person who is African American or Black working in a predominantly White environment (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Foster, 1986).

When using critical race theory in education, Solórzano & Yosso (2001, 2005) contend there are five themes that form the basis of its methods: First, there is an examination of structures and practices within the school setting that may advantage one racial group over another. Second, there is an analysis of how power struggles within the educational realm mirroring power struggles within the larger society. Thirdly, there is a focus on a commitment to social justice and the empowerment of marginalized and oppressed groups through the elimination of racism and sexism. Next, there is value placed on the knowledge and experiences of the educator of color. Lastly, it is important to maintain an interdisciplinary perspective through which to analyze race and racism when examining the educational experiences of educators of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is employed when a problem or issue needs to be explored, rather than using predetermined information from literature or relying on research from other studies for exploration (Creswell, 2013). In addition, qualitative research is useful when a complex,

detailed understanding of the issue is needed, a story needs to be told, we want to empower others, and/or we want to develop theories (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative study has several core characteristics: 1) the study begins with an assumption employing a theoretical or interpretive framework; 2) data is collected in a natural setting for participants; 3) inductive and deductive data analysis is used to establish patterns and/or themes and is in a written form that includes the reflexivity of the researcher and the voices of the participants; and 4) it has a description and interpretation of the problem, and makes a contribution to the literature and/or has a call for change (Creswell, 2013). In addition Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that in qualitative research, the researcher is considered the research instrument. This allows the researcher to be responsive to environmental cues in situations where observations or interviews are being used as data collection tools. The researcher can interact in the situation as needed and make adjustments throughout the process. For example, in the interview process the researcher can ask for verifications or clarifications and/or explore unexpected responses.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as it allows for exploring an understanding of a human or social problem, which in this study is the lived experiences of school leaders who are African American or Black working in predominantly White school settings (Creswell, 1998). If the findings of this research are useful to district and school leaders who are White and have considerable influence in predominantly White organizations, then the study will have made a positive contribution that can ultimately benefit students and adults who are African American or Black learning and working in these settings (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Finally, the qualitative approach allows participants to tell detailed stories in their own voice through open-ended interviews, which provides insights and understandings to inform a positive contribution to both the literature and the practice of district leaders who are White.

Critical race methodology is focused on the stories and counter stories of individuals who have been historically marginalized or oppressed in American schooling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Study Approach

There are five different approaches of qualitative inquiry to be considered for conducting a study: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2013). These different approaches have similar and unique characteristics; however choosing an approach for a study can benefit the beginning researcher by providing detailed procedures for conducting the study (Creswell, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the narrative approach was used as it has several attributes that can be useful carrying out the study. Narrative research has the goal of capturing the detailed life stories or life experiences of a single individual or a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013). While other approaches, like the phenomenological or grounded approach may also have this as a goal, the narrative approach was desirable as it is focused on the stories of individuals, rather than the essence or theory of their experiences, respectively. In addition, the narrative approach to data collection and analysis lends well to the purpose of gathering stories and gaining insight and understanding from the stories (Creswell, 2013). For example, the primary instrument for data collection in a narrative study is interviewing the individual; the core of data analysis is providing individual stories and accounts and looking for common themes among the individual's storytelling. Other approaches may have the focus on group data collection and/or open coding, rather than the individual (Creswell, 2013). In this study, this type of data collection allowed for a written narrative of each individual participant stories, which is most suitable for capturing individual participant voices in the research and lessening researcher interpretation, which is especially important to this researcher, who is White.

Interviews

"Social abstractions", like "education" are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the abstractions are built" (Ferrarotti, 1981) (Seidman, 2013, p. 9).

Seidman (2013) contends that much research is done on schooling in the United States but little of it is based on the perspective of the students, teachers, administrators, and others working in the educational organizations. When an education researcher is interested in other people's perspectives, experiences, and stories, they can gather data through observation, exploring history, use questionnaires and surveys, or do an extensive review of existing literature (Seidman, 2013). However, if the researchers goal is to "understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry" (Seidman, 2013, p. 10). Kvale (1996) contends that, "through conversations we get to know people, get to learn their experiences, feelings, and hopes and the world they live in" (p. 5). Therefore, the use of open ended interviewing was used to collect the narrative data for this study.

Open-ended interviews are the primary tool for collecting data in a narrative study (Creswell, 2013). While there are no absolute models for interviewing, it is recommended that a rationale interview process be used so that the interviews can be well-documented and repeatable (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013). Seidman (2013) advocates for the interviews to be focused on four areas, 1) the experiences of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience; 2) the participant's point of view; 3) the participant's ability to reconstruct the phenomena being studied; and 4) the participant understanding of their "lived" experience in context. Further, he recommends an optimal interview protocol of conducting three 90-minute interviews, each with

a specific focus. The first interview focus has the participants telling as much about him/her in the context of the topic, the second interview has the participants detail the experience they have with the topic, and the third interview asks the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience (Seidman, 2013). Each interview should be spaced three days to a week apart to allow time for the participant to mull over the preceding interview but not enough time to lose the connection with the participant (Seidman, 2013). It is through this cumulative process that the researcher can develop a meaningful relationship with participants that will allow for the collection of detailed and authentic data (Seidman, 2013).

In accordance with Seidman's (2013) recommendations, open-ended research questions were designed for this study in alignment with the main research question and the sub questions. These interview questions used for this study are found in Appendix E. The interview questions were open ended, general, and designed to elicit stories, counterstories and testimonials that represent the lived experiences of school leaders of color (Creswell, 2013). Using a critical race methodology it was more important to allow the voices of participant's to be heard, rather than to adhere to scripted questions. Interviews for this study were conducted from June-December, 2018.

The goal of this study was to conduct two interviews with each participant; however this was not possible with all participants. The first interview was of considerable length and depth, with the average interview being around one hour and fifteen minutes and three interviews extending to two hours and beyond. Seidman's (2013) model allows for a thorough and systematic interview process however; it is important to note that it can be a cumbersome process. His in-depth process requires a large time commitment on the part of the participants, whom are often already over-extended school leaders. Therefore, using this process required

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some compromises; is it better to have fewer participants and a more intensive process or more participants and a less intensive process? Seidman (2013) contends that the governing principle is to strive for a rationale interview process that is both repeatable and documentable. However, he also asserts, "it is almost always better to conduct an interview under less than ideal conditions than to not conduct one at all" (Seidman, 2013, p. 25).

The questions intended for the first two interviews were mostly covered in a lengthy first interview. A follow up interview was conducted for two participants. One lengthy interview was more respectful to the demands and nuances of a school leader's busy and unpredictable schedule. The need for follow up information and clarification was determined by the researcher and participant at the end of the first interview. The length of the first interview was also determined in collaboration with the researcher and participant, with one hour to ninety minutes as a guideline.

Interviews were set up in advance at the convenience of participants and in a setting of participant choice. Seven participants chose their work setting, two chose the university campus, and one chose a local coffee shop. All interviews were in-person with the exception of one follow up interview which was done with Zoom. Verbal consent to participate in the study was obtained from the participants prior to the interview process. Verbal consent was in accordance with the IRB waiver for written consent to further protect the identity of participants. Prior to the start of the interview participants were given an overview of the study using the hand-outs in Appendix A. The overview included the purpose of the study, a description of critical race methodology and the research questions. Participants were also told how the results of the study would be used (Creswell, 2013).

Additionally, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Rev Services. A confidentiality agreement was secured with Rev Services prior to beginning the study. All electronic interview files were and are secured in a password protected file or a locked file cabinet in my home office.

It was an intention of the interview process to collect any documents that participants referred to as part of the triangulation of data. Examples of the types of documents that may have been collected are school improvement plans, school policies, emails or memos from district leadership, equity audits, perception data, staff development plans, and/or meeting agendas related to stories and testimonials shared by participants (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). The use of documents is enhanced through dialogue with the participants so that the researcher does not draw inaccurate conclusions about what the documents "mean" to the school leader's work (Creswell, 2013). It is also important to note that documents can easily obtain biases depending on the designed purpose or intent of the document, for example, data could be manipulated to show the school in a positive way, while hiding other results that may tell a different story (Creswell, 2013). Only one interview in this study generated the sharing of documents.

Field notes were taken prior and after each interview. Field notes provide an extensive, detailed record of events (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Field notes are little phrases, quotes, key words that are jotted down by the researcher as a means of recording important details so that they might be recalled later (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Important to this study, it was crucial when conducting interviews to only record data, not extrapolate or analyze; the purpose of field notes is for remembering (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Behaviors, concerns, or comments relative to the tenets of critical race theory were especially of interest for this researcher to note. Most of

my field notes were reflections of White guilt that I was feeling during the process. This guilt was for asking school leaders who are African American to give of their time and expertise to benefit a White researcher, with no obvious benefit to them for their participation. However; most participants verbalized that they understood that educators who are White can benefit from their voice. One participant, Michael, encouraged me to work through my guilt:

> You and I have been in education 36-37 years. We have done our time but we're still talking about making changes. Somebody has to take our mantle. They've got to pick up where we left off and the only way they are going to do that is if we teach them how to do it. Please I am learning as much from you as you are learning from me. But at the same time one thing I want you to learn is, it's your turn.

The success of the interview process is also dependent on there being a reciprocal benefit to both the participant and researcher to sustain the motivation and desire to participate in the interviews (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013). These benefits are discussed later in the section on setting and participants for the study.

Setting and Participants

In a narrative study the researcher reflects on whom to sample and/or who might be convenient to study based on availability, marginalization, ordinariness, availability, etc. (Creswell, 2013). Since this is a narrative study, it was necessary to find one or more individuals to participate that are willing, accessible, and can shed light on the "lived experiences" of being a leader who is African American or Black working in a predominantly White setting (Creswell, 2013).

In addition to meeting this criterion of identifying as African American or Black, participants needed to be working or have worked in a school that had a predominantly White

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student population. For the purposes of this study it has been determined that a "predominately White" school is one that has a student and faculty population of White students and educators that exceeds 51%; schools that have populations that are White exceeding 70% will be referred to as supermajority schools (Potter, Quick, & Davies, 2016). Currently, in the Midwestern state where this researcher resides, a state level demographic report of school data reports over 200 school leaders that identify as a person who is African American or Black working as a principal or associate principal. This data was gathered from a state department of education website and of the 200 potential leaders; approximately 30 school leaders were working in a predominantly White setting.

It is then no surprise that one of the limitations of this study was the challenge of finding school leaders who identify as African American or Black working in this context of predominantly White schools. Therefore, to expand the participant sample, the definition of school leader or principal was expanded to include those that may have worked in the setting in the past. In addition the definition of school leader was expanded to include education leaders that may have titles such as associate principal, vice principal, dean of students and/or school teacher leader; if there was evidence that the participant held a position reflective of principal type work, they were considered as a participant.

Participants were recruited from three Midwestern states however any participants that meet the criteria, regardless of geographic location would have been be considered; the larger sample size and larger geographic location served to further protect the confidentiality of participants. As a result of this process, ten school leaders who identified as African American or Black who were currently working in or had worked in a predominantly White setting agreed

to participate in the study. Participants had worked as school leaders in predominantly White settings across one Midwestern state and one Western state.

The following criteria was used to select participants for the study: 1) The participant racially identifies as African American, Black, or two or more races with one race being African American or Black; 2) The participant is working or has worked in a in a predominantly White suburban school setting; and 3) The participant meets the definition of a school leader.

Once potential participants were selected, an email was sent recruiting them for the study, this email is found in Appendix C. This email included information about the researcher, the study, and time commitment. Approximately thirty recruitment emails were sent across three Midwestern states. Follow up phone calls were made as well.   Each participant was contacted by the researcher in person to discuss the nature of the study, be provided explicit details about what is expected of the participant, and an outline potential benefits and challenges (Seidman, 2013).

Using this initial recruitment technique elicited a response from three initial participants. However, as the study got underway purposeful and snowballing sampling and educational leadership networking proved to be the most effective strategy for recruiting participants for the study. Purposeful sampling is when the researcher relies on his or her expert judgment to select participants that are representative of the population of participants to be studied (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Snowball sampling recruits participants through others that may already meet the criteria for the study; it is based on the premise that members of the target population often know each other (Singleton & Straits, 2010).   The researcher's insider status as a former educational leader having worked in two Midwestern states allowed for networking and recruiting across a wider area. During the recruitment process, some potential candidates needed some gentle

persuasion to participate and others needed references to ensure I was a trustworthy researcher. It is an art for a researcher to balance using too much persuasion with an unwilling candidate with the tendency to easily give up on a seemingly reluctant participant (Seidman, 2013).

Participation for the study was voluntary. Since all participants were adults, the potential harm or discomfort for participants is this study is considered low; conversely, the benefits may seem less than extraordinary. Regardless, it is important that benefits are identified and explicitly apparent to participants and potential discomforts are recognized and discussed with the participant before the interview begins (Creswell, 2013). Ideally, my explanations of benefits were intended to offset the time sacrifice being asked of the school leader participants. Possible benefits for the study are a cathartic or therapeutic benefit gained from dialoguing about their leadership, thoughtful insights prompted by reflection on interviews, an opportunity for professional growth based on issues or concerns presented, and an opportunity for networking. In addition, some gracious and altruistic participants could have benefited through the act of "helping" the researcher with the study. It was acknowledged that participants were members of predominantly White organizations that have historically marginalized people of color and therefore interviews could provide some discomfort for participants who are African American or Black as they may recall stories of marginalization or oppression. A verbal consent was obtained from participants prior to the first interview. The consent described the nature of the study, risks, benefits, confidentiality and voluntary aspects of the study. As previously mentioned, a waiver of written consent was suggested and granted by the IRB committee as another way to protect the participants in this study.

Overall, the physical risks for the participants in the study were relatively non-existent; however, as mentioned previously, there are some important psychological risks that were

addressed with participants prior to beginning the interviews. To minimize these psychological

risks, participants could opt out of any question that made them uncomfortable. Researchers say

participants may be uncomfortable depending on their personal background, experiences, and

personality (Seidman, 2013; Singleton & Straits, 2010). All participants gave verbal consent and

answered questions without opting out.

Participants may also be uncomfortable being voice-recorded, therefore participants were

given a choice to opt out of this data collection method, however all participants were agreeable

to the voice recording. Most psychological risks can be greatly minimized by allowing the

participant to opt out of or withdraw from any part of the process (Creswell, 2013; Seidman,

2013). Another way to minimize participant discomfort is to allow participants control in the

data collection process by allowing for the participant to withdraw any data in which they are not

comfortable (Seidman, 2013). Participants in this study were told at the beginning of the

interview that they could withdraw any data at any time during or after the interview.

Another significant risk of a study is a participant's right to privacy. The standard

assumption when interviewing is that participants will remain unidentified, placing the burden of

protecting a participant's identity on the researcher (Seidman, 2013). An IRB waiver for written

consent was granted and served to add a layer of privacy for participants as it eliminated the need

for a document that would have the participant's name on it. In addition, to protect the identity

of participants they were assigned pseudonyms for all names of persons, schools, school districts,

cities, towns, counties, and states throughout the study. Further protection was offered to the

client, as the researcher disclosed the Rev services to the participants as part of the recording and

transcription process; a confidentiality agreement was also obtained with Rev Services prior to

the start of the study.   It was also shared with participants that all audiotapes will be destroyed

once the dissertation has been accepted (Seidman, 2013). Lastly, and most importantly, throughout the process this researcher fully disclosed both her personal and professional self to the participants to facilitate a genuine relationship (Seidman, 2013). This disclosure included: an acknowledgment that I was aware of the advantage and privilege of my Whiteness, a disclosure that I had worked in education for 36 years and most recently had retired from a district level director of student learning position, and as previously mentioned an overview of the study to include my intent to use a critical race methodology.

Reflexivity in the Research Process

"One of the benefits of membership in a privileged group is being blind to the privileges one's membership imparts" (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, Phillips, & Denney, 2012, p. 24).

Qualitative research in education has a long history that began with attempts to assess the intellectual and school achievement abilities of African American and immigrant children (Kamin, 1974; Padilla, 2004; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001). Most notable in these studies was the use of White, middle-class-American-normed IQ tests to draw conclusions about the intelligence of non-White members (Padilla, 2004). These results were a failure; however, they had lasting implications for those marginalized by the conclusions drawn from these studies. With this understanding it seems an ominous task to undertake the study of non-White members of society and ensure that the study is done with insight, sensitivity, and inclusiveness to the extent to be considered a valid study. This is especially true when the researcher, like me, is a White person that is conducting a study that is reliant on gathering meaningful and authentic data from school leaders of color.

I am a White female that began exploring White privilege while working in an affluent, suburban high school with a student body composed of 99% students who were White and a staff

with no racial diversity. My first understanding of race is reflective of being colorblind, as I did not see there were any differences in individuals or groups based on race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). I was raised in rural America on a small farm in the most liberal county in a Midwestern state. I never recognized myself as a privileged person, and strongly identified with the working class. As a child that was not of wealth, I was more focused on the advantages and power that wealthy White people were afforded and the inequities that existed between these groups based on socio-economic status. Neither of my parents were college graduates but education was valued and encouraged with the expectation that we would have to find our own means of financing post-secondary education. Additionally, growing up in rural America, I had limited exposure to people of color; however my parents both had friendships through work with persons of color. My mother and father were registered Democrats. I was raised to be respectful to others, regardless of race, disability, sex, sexuality, or age. Specifically to matters of race, I had minimal exposure to people of color and when race was discussed it was in the context that people who are African American were no different than our family who was White. Therefore, I grew up thinking I was not a racist person as long as I was respectful of others regardless of their race or ethnicity.

In my mid-thirties, my husband and I relocated to a Midwestern city that is known as one of the most segregated cities in America. This was when I first began to understand that I was a racist person, regardless of my presumed benevolence, open-mindedness, and liberal ideology. As an educator I taught high school social studies and had been a school counselor in settings that were majority White populations of students and educators, while having a critical mass of students of color in attendance. It was through working with students of color, mostly who were African American that I began to actively pursue my racial identity development, with the intent

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of improving my work as an educator with students of color. I have now been working on my own racial identity development for over 20 years and currently find my stage of development in the pseudo-independent, immersion-emersion, and autonomy stages of development, depending on the situation or context (Helms, 1984, 1990). Given, that organizations can only evolve as far as the leader has evolved in their own racial identity, it is a desired outcome for this study that I grow in my racial development and in addition create urgency for other district and school leaders who are White to do racial identity work of their own so that their organizations are capable of disrupting barriers to equity for all students (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002).

Also important to this work is my awareness that regardless of my exposure to people who are African American, my engagement in racial identity workshops and literature, and my perceived advocacy, I am not a person of color and thus cannot be a voice for any person of color. I am also aware there are those that would bring into question my ability to do this research study with validity because of my Whiteness. As a researcher, the question that had to be answered was indirectly posited by a blogger; "can White people, no matter how nice, how good, how desirous of honest equality, really understand something they cannot viscerally experience" (Wilke, 2015). Her summary comments in regard to a discussion of why this might be possible, represents a rationale that I would put forward as to why I am engaging in this research knowing that there will be justifiably and rightfully be critics:

> If not enough is being done or something better can be done, let's educate each other without disdain or denigration. Let's accept authentic support and solidarity without alienating it for its lack of perfection. Let's understand the truth that, while we may not be able to fully experience each other's realities, we can learn from each other, we can teach each other, and we can exemplify the world as we'd like it to be. Because in the

wake of all that we see in the news, all that's mourned in families and communities across this country; all that's inflamed by continued rancor and racial disharmony, our actions of sincere solidarity – however flawed and imperfect – will slowly, inch-by-inch, moment by moment, person-by-person, get us closer to that ideal world. Which will be something, once we get there, we can all experience" (Wilke, 2015, n.p.).

As a White person, I bring a collective group history with me; therefore, it was important for me to recognize that for most people who are African American, my history is a history of harm (DiAngelo, 2012). Milner (2007) provides a framework to assist researchers, like me, who are White and conducting research with persons of color: First, researchers who are White in the process of conducting research must pose racially and culturally grounded questions about themselves. Secondly, researchers need to reflect about themselves in relation to others; in this study my reflection is in relation to school leaders who are African American, A third feature is for the researcher and participants to engage in reflection together. Lastly, researchers should take into consideration the broader context related to historical, political, social, economic, racial, and cultural realities (Milner, 2007). Considering this framework, throughout the research process I worked to earn the trust of my participants. One of the strategies I employed was to acknowledge to my participants that I was aware that my Whiteness advantaged me and allowed me privileges at the expense of disadvantaging others (Stewart et al., 2012).

My 36 years as an educator, and my experience as a district level administrator working with principals, allows for me some of the advantages of insider status, which is another form of identity. Berger (2013) notes that there are decided advantages to this type of insider position, such as access to the field and background knowledge that can assist better formulation of interview questions; there are also some disadvantages. Yet Drake and Heath (2011) caution that

the insider's position and familiarity carry the risk of the researcher blurring boundaries, imposing their own values and beliefs and/or own biases on the study. Kanuha (2000) also speaks to disadvantages of insider status:

> For each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may be accessible to a nonnative scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied.
>
> (Kanuha, 2000, p. 444)

For example, an African American woman researcher has insider status when studying African American women; however differences in social class and color (lighter or darker skin) can make her less of an insider (Merriam et al., 2001).

Regardless of status and positionality, it is important to recognize that there are numerous problems in conducting research with participants that have been marginalized or oppressed in society (Padilla, 2004). Research explains that when Americans, who are White, believe institutional racism can be changed, they may be motivated in ways that will achieve the goal of reduced inequality and hold more positive attitudes toward Americans who identify as African American; conversely Americans that do not believe institutional racism can or should be changed are motivated in ways to maintain the status quo (Powell et al., 2005; Tate, 1997). While the typical theme throughout history has been to frame complex issues, such as race, as dichotomies, it is argued by some researchers that qualitative researchers are uniquely equipped to explore "the complexity and richness of space between entrenched perspectives" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 57), which is the intent of this study. When the researcher is White and the

participants identify as African American, it is imperative that the researcher is not only aware of power dynamics but also negotiates power throughout the interview process (Merriam et al., 2001).

Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of preparing and organizing the data collected from interviews so that it can be analyzed for common similarities or dissimilarities (Creswell, 2013). In a narrative study, such as this study, "at the most basic level, it is the emphasis on stories and understanding lived experiences through the stories" that is the focus of this analysis (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014. P. 84).   Important to elevating the voices of the participants in this study, through their stories and counterstories, a thematic approach was used for the data analysis. According to Boyatzis (1998) a thematic analysis allows for a way of seeing, making sense, and analyzing quantitative data. In addition, and important to the data analysis for this study a thematic analysis assumes the significance of a theme is not determined by frequency but rather the substantive significance of a theme across and within study participants (Patton, 2002). This is further supported by Creswell (2013) as he states, "counting conveys a quantitative orientation of magnitude and frequency contrary to qualitative research (p. 185).

At the heart of this thematic analysis is the initial formation of codes or categories. "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a short word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative salient, essence-capturing, and/ or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). The process of coding involves aggregating the text from each individual participant's interview transcriptions into categories that can then be labeled and developed into themes (Creswell, 2013). In order to manage the volume of data generated from transcription, some researchers use coding software to assist with the development of categories

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and themes. However; when coding data, from open-ended questions, software programs may not be as useful as hand coding in generating multiple categories (Singleton & Straits, 2010). In preparation for hand coding the data for this study the researcher attended a full day workshop with Johnny Saldaña at the Association of Educational Researchers conference in Chicago, Illinois in 2016.

Just as Creswell (2013) suggests, a coding strategy was used for this study that began with reading each transcript several times and making annotations in the margins of initial codes. While Creswell (2013) recommends no more than 25-30 categories, after the first reading of the ten transcripts in this study, 55 codes/categories were generated.   After reviewing these codes, they were combined resulting in 27 codes/categories. At this time, the ten transcripts were then reread and again notations were made off to the side using the already identified codes as a guide. It is the process of reading and re-reading the transcripts that allows for "being-there-ness" and in doing so operationalizes our creative imagination to see what might have not been there before (James, 2012). During this second reading meticulous attention was paid to the language and stories of participants using deep reflection to identify emergent patterns (Saldaña, 2013). The volume of data that is generated from interviews can be very intimidating, therefore, Wolcott (1994) cautions researchers to resist the temptation to speculate and over interpret findings; reading and re-reading the transcriptions can bring increased clarity regarding the themes or patterns.

The goal of the thematic data analysis was to generate five or six themes (Creswell, 2013). To begin to formulate themes, the transcripts were then read a third time using a critical race lens. It was during this reading of transcripts that issues of race and racism were in the forefront and notations were related to the tenets of critical race theory (Solórzano & Yosso,

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2001). At the conclusion of this read, approximately 27 themes emerged which were then combined into the eight themes and 19 sub themes that are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

After the eight themes were determined, participant narratives were reviewed and selected to support each theme. The participant narratives selected to support each theme were largely chosen based on the explicit contribution the narrative made to the theme. Some narratives could easily have been used across themes; however given the robust number of narratives available to use this was not necessary. The title of each theme, the number of narratives used to support each theme and the number of different participant narratives represented across each theme is recorded in the table below. This is being presented as a visual representation of the contribution of narratives to each theme. It should be noted that a theme with fewer narratives does not necessarily mean that this theme is of less importance as some narratives are powerful or unique enough to warrant supporting a theme (Creswell, 2013). It is not the intent of a qualitative study to use quantitative measures to determine the significance of narrative data (Creswell, 2013).

Table 6

Overview of Participant Narrative Contributions to Themes

Theme	Title of Theme	Total Number of Narratives	Narrative Contribution by Participant Out of 10 possible participants
Theme One	Pioneering White Space	24	10-10
Theme Two	Why Am I Here?	16	8-10
Theme Three	Leadership Beliefs, Strategies, and Practices	27	7-10
Theme Four	Navigating White Space	10	6-10
Theme Five	Experiencing Racism	26	9-10
Theme Six	Intersectionality	7	6-10
Theme Seven	Champions, Mentors, and Heroes	10	8-10
Theme Eight	Influence of White Interviewer	4	3-10

It should also be noted that the findings for this study were constructed alongside the eight major themes and sub themes. As the themes were emerging, so too, were formulations of possible findings, this was especially true as transcripts were read using a critical race lens. Therefore, possible findings were noted on large poster paper to be reconsidered once the data analysis was complete. Informing the process of findings was also the literature review. Each possible finding was first examined against the scholarly literature to discover existing validity. Next, the findings were considered against the participant narratives to ensure there was support from participant voices to validate the finding. In alignment with critical race methodology, the goal of this process was to honor the stories and counterstories of the participants. The most significant findings are presented in Chapter 5. Significant findings were not necessarily related to the quantity of narratives that may have supported the finding but rather they were related to the elevation of a participant's voice such that the lived experience of each participant was valued and considered in the findings. All findings are in the context of critical race pedagogy.

Presentation of Findings

Wolcott (1994) encourages qualitative researchers to be storytellers. If we desire to have a greater societal impact storytelling is needed to engage other readers in our research, which can also assist with it reaching a broader audience. Wolcott (1994) suggests writing up research using critical or key events which speak to the themes and patterns that will be identified in the analysis. Another way to write up the findings is to use confessional tales. When using this style the researcher writes using a first person account to acknowledge their presence throughout the process (Hatch, 2002). This narrative style of writing allows the researcher's point of view to enter into the research by writing it into the text. Further, it acknowledges that the researcher is human and capable of making mistakes on their path to new learning (Glesne, 2010). Narrative

researchers encourage individuals to experiment with writing form based on individual preferences that allow for a flexible and evolving writing process that tells the stories of the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). In this study an individual narrative is provided that describes the participant's background, experience, and setting. This is followed by narratives that support each of the themes and sub themes. In accordance with critical race methodology the voices of these school leaders who are African American or Black were elevated and caution was taken to not alter their voices in the supporting narratives.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Credibility in the Research Process

The triangulation of data, member checking, and peer reviews are common strategies a good researcher should use to ensure credible and trustworthy findings. In a narrative study, when a researcher has corroborated evidence from different sources and documented evidence in a code or theme, they are triangulating data (Creswell, 2013). Member checking is when the researcher solicits participant views on the credibility of findings that can be useful in judging the credibility of the study (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, peer reviews can be an effective strategy, especially if they include peers that may be representative of gender, race, and experiences other than the researcher. Peer reviews can serve to keep the researcher honest and aware of personal bias entering into the study. Most importantly, a constant, deliberate, and vigilant effort on behalf of the researcher to be self- aware of his or her own experiences and biases as well as the limitations of the research are important to credible and trustworthy research (Berger, 2013).

Member checking was done with the participants in this study. All ten participants were sent a copy of the final draft of the dissertation. The entire dissertation was shared with participants to provide a framework of understanding themes and findings in the context of

critical race theory. Each participant was asked to specifically review their participant narrative, their quoted narratives associated with themes, and the findings. Eight out of ten participants responded and their responses were affirmative that their lived experiences were captured. Participants that responded did not ask for any deletions, additions, or other changes. Rashad responded by saying: "I am so glad that you offered me a chance to contribute to your research. I've read through most of it, and in reviewing the stories from the other contributors I felt a great deal of camaraderie and a shared sense of community in the 'struggle'." Samuel responded:

> I had the opportunity to review some of your dissertation. To say that I am
>
> impressed is an understatement. You have done an admirable job capturing much of
>
> what I, and many of my colleagues of color, have gone through and continue to
>
> experience daily. Well done. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your study.
>
> (Samuel)

In addition to member checking, a second reader was recruited to bring further validity to the study. Dr. Darrius Stanley, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Western Carolina University served as a second reader. Dr. Stanley read the study proposal and provided advisement on data analysis and additional educational literature mostly authored by researchers who are African American.

This study was designed to elevate the voices of ten participants through the stories and counter-stories found in their narratives. The participants for this study are school leaders who identify as African American or Black and working or having worked in a predominantly White school setting. Using a critical race lens throughout the research process these school leaders of color participated in interviews that were then coded for the purpose of identifying the most prevalent themes and sub themes found across all ten participant narratives. This analysis

resulted in six major findings followed by recommendations for the intended audience of educational leaders who are White. It is worthy to have school leaders who are African American communicate to their White counterparts matters that they are unlikely to know; but need to know if they intend to disrupt the injustices in their White dominant organizations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The main research question for this narrative study asked, what are the lived experiences of school leaders who identify as African American or Black and are working in predominantly White school settings? The four other sub-questions for the study explored what obstacles and challenges these school leaders of color encountered in their work in a predominate White setting, how these leaders made sense of their work in this setting, and what leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies guided their work. Also important to this study was an acknowledgement that I, the researcher, am White and how my Whiteness influences the narratives of my participants of color.

It was also the intent of the study to elevate the voices of school leaders who identify as Black or African American as they narrate their lived experiences in a predominantly White setting. To do this it was important that throughout the study the tenets of critical race methodology were honored (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The use of critical race methodology requires the researcher to engage in the collection, reporting, and analyzing of data in the following ways: 1) keep race and racism as the most important lens in all aspects of the research process; 2) view race, class, and gender as intersecting factors in the lives of the school leaders of color, not as separate entities; 3) offer a transformative solution to the subordination of race, class, and gender; 4) focus on the racialized, gender, and class experiences of school leaders of color and view these experiences as sources of strength; 5) use interdisciplinary knowledge such as law, history, sociology, women's studies, and the humanities, to better understand the experiences of school leaders of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

This chapter begins with an individual narrative of each of the ten participants who are all male school leaders identifying as African American or Black currently leading or who have lead

schools with a predominantly White student and teaching staff. These individuals' narratives introduce each participant and the predominantly White school setting(s) they are working or have worked in. In addition, if these details were available, narratives regarding their personal background, education, and career journeys have been included. It should also be noted that participant language regarding race or how they may define their identity was used. More specifically, some of the participants identify themselves as African American, others as Black. Some of the language used by participants may perpetuate a White cultural normative, such as but not limited to majority/minority.

The second part of this chapter is the presentation of themes and sub-themes that were common across the ten participant narratives. These themes were derived from an analysis that began with hand coding the narrative data with consideration to common phrases, words, or patterns found across the ten narratives. These common phrases, words, or patterns were then categorized and re-categorized which resulted in the organization of the data being represented with eight common themes and in some cases supporting sub-themes. An overview of these themes can be found in Table 6. These themes are presented as separate sections; however, the interrelationship between these themes, while complex, is also undeniable. In addition, the themes are presented with some attention to a logical progression that best allows for seeing the relationships across the themes; however it is cautionary that these themes are not to be considered a linear progression of any importance. Overall, these themes are intended to capture the lived experiences of these African American leaders in predominantly White school settings and in doing so also answer the more entailed research questions.

Overview of Participants

While these participants have many differences, they too, have many similarities. All of the participants in this study identify as African American or Black, either on state reporting data and/or as disclosed in their narratives. Two of these individual are biracial; however, both of these individuals acknowledge that they identify as African American. Collectively these individuals have almost 200 years of experience in education, with individuals ranging anywhere from 6 to 36 plus years of experience in the field. Six of the participants began their careers in education soon after completing college; six entered as teachers; five had career journeys in other areas, such as criminal justice, youth services, music, health sciences, and business.

All of these participants have earned a master's degree and minimally have their principal license. All but one participant attended colleges out of high school that were predominantly White, many attended college on scholarships for academics and athletics. Two of the participants have their doctorates; one is nearing completion while three others are either accepted in a program or in an early stage of doctoral studies.

Seven of the participants spoke openly about experiencing poverty as a child, four were raised by mothers who are African American, two by single White mothers, two by grandparents, and one was in foster care for much of his childhood; most often these caretakers were acknowledged by participants as having contributed to the success of these individuals. One participant's father died when he was a child, one had a father present, one had a foster father for a part of his childhood, and others did not have a father present growing up. At least six of the participants are married to women who are White, all were raised in large to very large cities in one of three Midwestern states and almost all participants attended inner city schools and expressed experiencing this schooling as a positive and empowering experience.

Four of these participants are still working as school leaders in predominantly White school settings. Three others are working in administrative positions at the district level equivalent to an assistant superintendent or director position; however only one out of these three is working in a predominantly White district setting. One individual is in higher education.

Individual Descriptions of Participants

The individual narratives below highlight each of the ten school-leader participant's unique personal and professional attributes and experiences. The purpose of these narratives is to introduce the varied backgrounds and experiences these individuals bring to their leadership practice. In addition, these narratives describe the predominantly White school settings that also have different demographic variations in who attends school in these settings.

Simon. Simon is the principal of a suburban district that is situated in a suburb between two larger metropolitan cities. While the community is considered suburban, it could easily be considered rural in its past. Simon has been the principal of this school for the past ten years and during this time has described a rapid growth in both the community and school population. Simon anticipates this growth will continue, "Within ten years we should be looking to build another elementary school, perhaps a high school, so when you look at a study of this area and how it continues to grow, we are probably one of the few communities [in this state] that continues to experience enrollment increases versus enrollment decline."

As the community and schools increase rapidly in population growth most other aspects of the schooling experience remain stable. A recently retired superintendent had a twenty plus year tenure and several school board members have also served over a couple decades. What has also remained unchanged is the diversity of the community and/or the school population. For example, since Simon's arrival the school population has grown from 200 students to 700,

however, the student demographic data has remained very stable. With the exception of a 4% increase in students who receive free and reduced lunch, no other demographic has changed. His school is a majority White school, with 87% of his student population identifying White, 6% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 2.3% two or more races, and less than 1% African American.

Upon Simon's arrival at this school ten years ago, he saw his challenge as "continuing to help our [school] remain fiscally responsible while growing in student achievement." Today he reports that the district is in the "lower third in the state in per pupil spending and at the top of the state in student achievement results."   Simon's school had 65% of his students performing at proficient or advanced on the state assessment in ELA, and 75% performed as such in Math. In an acknowledgment of the privileges that come with his setting he says, "By any measure we've done pretty well...as a school district and as individual schools...I think we do great things instructionally and social-emotionally for kids here. Obviously, given our [student] population, some of our kids come to us with families that are very supportive of education and learning... so we can't take all the credit for all the achievement that happens... we have very strong foundational educational opportunities for kids." Even with the opportunities described for students, it can't be said that families of color are not seeing this as a destination school. Simon says, "unfortunately, more and more we have these families [families of color] coming out here for whatever reason they do and they end up leaving and going back to [larger urban settings] and I get it because family is probably there, it's more comfortable."

In contrast to the story of the school where Simon works, his own childhood was more challenging. He describes himself as a "latchkey" kid who was raised by a single mother who worked as a bank teller. "I would definitely say I was a child of poverty growing up; I grew up in government housing in a suburb." He racially identifies as African American; "truth be told,

my mom is White and my dad is African American. I grew up with my mom and her side of the family, I didn't really know my dad a lot and his side of the family, so even the community I grew up in was predominantly White." Simon also asserts that being a latchkey kid "does not necessarily mean it was a negative [experience] and that "most of my friends and associates have been White or Caucasian, so I think, whether it is how I speak, how I act, too, transcends the color of my skin."

Simon knew he wanted to be a teacher since 7th grade and was largely influenced by his many aunts and uncles from his mother's side who were teachers. After graduating high school, Simon attended a predominantly White university that was located in a diverse Midwestern urban center. He began his education career as a middle school teacher in a predominantly White school and was mentored by his then superintendent to get an administrative license. Simon describes this mentoring: "So when he actually sat down and said to me 'I think one day you will be a great administrator' it meant a lot. He knew me, he saw things; so that's why I decided to pursue my administrative degree." After receiving his administration degree he applied at a "bunch" of different locations for a variety of middle and high school leadership positions. "I was a bridesmaid that whole summer; I finished second in every one of those positions." However, Simon views his leadership journey as the "stars aligning." "I feel like my path to where I am right now has been unique. I didn't have tons of struggles, other than really trying to get that first administrative position. At the time 'you were the second choice' was disheartening, but it was meant to be…I'm glad things worked out the way they did."

Simon is a self-described "child centered" principal who engages in many duties and responsibilities of a typical principal. He is most focused on instructional leadership; however, student relationships and social emotional well-being are assets that he is able to offer to his

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school and district wide. He is often consulted by other colleagues on these topics. He also describes himself as visionary, analytical, philosophical, and a relationship builder. It is important to Simon that he is "well-networked outside of my building." He is very active on local community boards, as well as in state and national organizations for school leadership, and has held offices in these organizations. He himself is well educated and has had his doctorate for some time. He says he aspires for a next step in his career but lacks clarity about what that might be for him.

Samuel. Samuel is the principal of an elementary school situated in a corridor between two large urban cities that are located in two different states. While his student population is predominantly White (56%), it is more racially diverse than other schools included in this study. Even with the diversity in his student population, his teaching staff [largely inherited from his predecessors] is 100% White; with his school having the lowest staff turnover in the district, this does not look to be changing anytime soon. He describes his staff reaction to him one day:

> It was interesting for sure because there were definitely some eyes popping open. People were wondering 'who's that new principal' because before me the principal was a White male, White male, White lady, White lady, White lady, there was never anyone of color, much less a man of color in the last 15-20 years. Coming into that dynamic, because I'm a man, number one, and then being a man of color, was a bit great. (Samuel)

He also acknowledges that his school and district lack diversity in the teaching ranks and says, "Unfortunately it is a little easier for someone [of color] to get a position as an educational assistant or a parallel status. On a regular day in this school you will see two Black female educational assistants."

Samuel's leadership style is reflective of a shared leadership model. He believes that "when you treat people well, you respect people, you bust your butt for them and you demonstrate words with actions, more often than not people are going to fall in line with you. I can't accomplish anything without you [my staff]." He speaks about how his leadership has helped to reshape the school to a destination for others in the district to desire to come to: "I've had people come from what is perceived to be prestigious schools here because they've heard of the environment, the leadership, and the support, and that's something they want to be part of." Some of the transformations he has engineered are: moving from an "administrator-managed behavior to teacher-managed behavior"; focusing the entire staff on "ensuring kids are college and career ready"; uniting the staff as a team centered on kids"; and minding an "instructional focus" especially in the areas of reading and writing. He is a school leader who is "open to feedback (constructive and critical), open to listening, and willing to adjust his practice," a "visionary," and "here for the kids."

Samuel has been in the field of education for over 20 years, first as a teacher for 12 years and then as a principal for nine years. He started his teaching career as an elementary Spanish teacher at a bilingual school and over time taught and developed a comprehensive four-year high school Spanish program. Samuel describes his achievement as a teacher as "reaching the mountaintop," which pushed his desire for a "change or new challenge." It was at this time that Samuel decided to put to use his Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in education leadership and pursue a leadership position. He initially had gotten his M.A. in education leadership while teaching with the impetus being for him to "move up on the pay scale." He started applying within his district for leadership positions, but found that things "just didn't click, wouldn't click." "I got in [to a leadership position] at the elementary level, even though I am a secondary

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guy." He was hired as an Associate Principal in this school largely because the new directing principal only agreed to take the job if Samuel would be the Associate Principal.

Samuel's challenges in securing a desired leadership position continued when he pursued a directing principal position and began interviewing. "I had interviews in district, out of district, and didn't make it at a couple of schools, but as I told you, things happen for a reason. I just kept telling myself there's a reason why I am not at this school." By the time he got his current position, he says:

> I had interviewed for athletic director, assistant principal, directing principal positions and was just going through the process… I can sit in front of 20 people and I'm not going to be fazed. There's a big interview selection committee [for this job] and we went through the whole gamut and I got a phone call offering me the job. (Samuel)

Samuel's mother is White and his father is African American; however since his father passed away when Samuel was seven, he considers himself to be a "product of a single parent home." He describes his race identity as "biracial but I relate as an African American male." He uses the word "adversity" to describe losing his father; Samuel draws personal strength from this adversity as he says, "so being Black in this state means getting through the system, not being incarcerated in the prison system, the education system, just making it through all that. I've used all the skills that I've learned to survive."

The loss of his father has also influenced the racial context of where he lived growing up as he went to high school and attended college in predominantly White settings; "My mom is White so I am accustomed to being around White people and because of that experience... I guess I've had enough experiences with people that I just kind of get a good read on folks or what not." Samuel good-naturedly describes himself in high school as "kind of a knucklehead

but popular" and as someone who "didn't have to work hard to do well in school." It was through a Spanish teacher in high school that he found a love for language, culture, and music. He is still connected to this teacher today. Samuel's mother worked in Information Technology in a school district; she worked her way up to a director level position in this area. It was one of his mother's beloved educator colleagues who had a significant influence on Samuel's decision to go into education and become a teacher.

Dante. Dante started his administrative career as an Associate Principal in a super-majority White middle school in a Midwestern city that had a student population of approximately 1000 students of which 96% identified as White. At the time of his arrival, the staff at this school was also 99% White. Dante was the first principal who identified as African American to be hired in this school and in the district. He was very nervous about taking the position but after "three long interviews," turning it down three times, and with much "persuasion" he accepted the challenge of being the first and only educational administrator in the history of the school (and district) who was African American. During his six years in the district, there were others of color hired as administrators; however almost ten years later there is just one administrator of color. Dante largely attributes the failed initiative to bring in administrators and teachers of color as, "The community wasn't ready for that. There was no cultural capital in the community."

At the time he accepted the position he was well aware of why he was being sought after; "I don't think they really wanted to state it but they were looking for African American administrators. A lot of that had to do with an influx of African American students that were coming from an urban city in this community." He navigates White educational spaces by

"learning to play the game" and the game is "learning how to be educated through the lens of a middle class White woman."

His adult career journey started with an undergraduate degree in social work from a predominantly White university. Out of college, he worked for about four years with adjudicated youth coming out of corrections. This job left him questioning how the education system was failing these students. He tells it this way:

> I've been Black a long time and I'm trying to figure out why there are so many disparities in the children that I am seeing in the work I am doing. I would go into their schools and try to support them; it seemed like they were set up for failure. The way the system was, I would say 99% of them [African American children he was working with] were identified EBD, Emotional Behavior Disorder, or whatever you want to call it, OHI, Attention Deficit Disorder or whatever. (Dante)

"As I began to learn about special education, IEPs, and those types of things" and with prompting from a then girlfriend, he obtained his special education teacher license and worked in this capacity at the secondary level for four years. It was during this time he got his administrative license with the intent of teaching for several more years and "getting a pay raise." But those plans were changed when he was recruited to be the first administrator of color in the predominantly White middle school. His education career currently has spanned sixteen years with 12 years as an administrator; his most recent position is at a director level in a large diverse school district.

Dante was one of the first high school graduates in his family, the first college graduate in his family, and the first person to have a Master's degree on his mother's side of the family. He says of his childhood,

I'm a latchkey kid, I'm getting home, I'm cooking for myself, I'm taking care of myself

until my mom gets home or even if she comes home to be honest. I didn't even think

people were capable of doing much other outside the ghetto because that's all I saw.

(Dante)

He spent 6 years of his childhood with a foster family. The intersection of Dante's past

and present are very poignantly articulated by him:

I'm at the point in my life where I'm on the outside looking in now, and I'm receiving

some level of privilege due to my position and career choice, but I am still watching. I

still go home and watch my family struggle. Most of my family are still working menial

jobs. There are very few males in my family that haven't been incarcerated to some

degree. My own mom spent 10 years in prison. My brother just got out of prison four

years ago and spent 16 years of his life incarcerated. (Dante)

Today Dante is married to a White educator that grew up in a small, rural Midwestern town. He

says with humor, "I tell people that every time I go to [this small town] I double the population

of people of color in town."

Michael. Michael has spent a large part of his 37 years in education working as a school

leader in predominantly White settings; however, he has also spent considerable time in his

career working in schools with predominantly minority student populations. He was first an

associate principal in a large high school, located in a wealthy suburb in close proximity to a

large urban center in a Midwestern state. The student population at that time was approximately

73% White, 19% African American, and 8% other ethnicities. His other significant experience

in a predominantly White setting was as a principal in a large rural high school in a western state.

The student population of this school at that time was predominantly White; however, it was

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experiencing an increasing population of Hispanic and African American students; today the student population is equally representative of these three ethnicity groups. He was the principal for seven years and this is what he says about the experience:

> It was at that time majority White, Anglo, and I'm the principal... I'm the turnaround principal. So they hire me and say that we need some schools fixed and if you can stay a couple years and make it work. What they were talking about was gangs and issues of race." Please understand, it wasn't like I was in the inner city, this is [rural area in western state]; mostly White and Hispanic. (Michael)

Michael's career journey did not begin in education. He grew up in one of the largest urban cities in the United States where he lived in the "inner city." His father left the family but was in a high-ranking law enforcement position and his brother is a detective. Michael began his own career as a police officer in another large urban city. "I was tired of busting kids after they committed a crime, I wanted to get to them beforehand, so I left police work, I wanted to do something different. I had a situation one day at a high school that I handled in a unique way and the next thing I know they were offering me a job as a substitute teacher and coach." It was about 10 years later that he took his first administrative position as an associate principal, at this same school where his education journey began.

Michael was the first school leader who is African American to work in both of the predominantly White school settings he was hired into, and quite possibly was the first educational leader who is African American to be hired in both the Midwestern and western states, as well as being the first head coach in a conference he coached in who was African American. Being the first person who is African American in White spaces was familiar to him in other ways. While he grew up in one of the largest urban cities in the United States, in the

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"inner city" he attended a small super-majority White college in a small city that was as much rural as city. He describes it this way,

> You're like in a culture shock...seeing wheat and what you think are corn fields beside the football field, where there was barely grass on the football field of my high school. It was different but at the same time you learn to adjust. (Michael)

Michael was raised by a single mother who was African American, whom he credits with being very influential in his life to the present day; he says "my dad left us and my mother was a fighter. My mother was big on 'no excuses' for what you could do, so we learned to adjust, adapt, and overcome." Michael uses this mantra and the spirit of a fighter to create youth organizations for young men and women of color. He believes in" leaving a legacy" and several of these youth organizations are still making a difference 27 years later. He says,

> We continue to fight the fight. The fight don't stop. Matter of fact, it's more important than ever we continue to fight the battle. We are not going to quit getting people to believe that the causes of diversity and race and culture are very important. (Michael)

Malik. Malik has been an educator for 17 years. He had a nontraditional entry to the field, as he was first hired to be a cultural liaison in a predominantly small White suburban school district that was experiencing growth in diversity in the student body. As he accepted the job he understood his role was to, "primarily work with minority students and families, bridging their home life and school life." While he was agreeable to these duties he also says, "here's the thing, I would only accept the job if I get to work with all kids."

Malik would go on to spend over twelve years working in predominantly White settings, with four of those years as the principal of an elementary school that had a predominantly White but racially diverse population of students: 70% White, 16% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 5% African

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American and 6% two or more races. He is presently in an educational leadership position at the district organizational level, similar to an assistant superintendent position, in a suburban school district with a diverse but still predominantly White student and staff population.

Working in predominantly White school environments is both in contrast and similar to his personal education journey. Malik started his childhood education in a very large Midwestern city before his family relocated to a smaller city in a different state where he attended diverse but still predominantly White elementary and middle schools. He describes himself at this time as, "I'm coming from the hood. My everyday life is around Black people, my family, the neighborhood, everything." It was in middle school that Malik was to later learn that his education had been altered. "I was in this room all the time, and never came out of this room. Later I asked [my mom], 'why was I in that room?' and she said, 'they thought you were mildly retarded'."

It was then that his mother made the decision that Malik needed to move to a private school for high school. At the time Malik resisted this decision outright as he told his mother, "I'm not going." He received a scholarship, and so acquiesced to his mother's demands. The resistance from Malik was in response to the lack of diversity at the school; he was "one of maybe four of five other students of color."

> I had a lot of pressure to leave [Green High School] because all my homies left. But then I'm also going home to a community that is drug infested, gang infested, crime, all kinds of things. That's how I knew. I didn't know anything else. So here's an opportunity for me that I had, that I took advantage of. (Malik)

He stayed all four years and says this, "If I had not gone to Green High School, I don't think I'd be where I am at today."

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This experience earned him a football scholarship to a predominantly White Midwestern state college, where he "was on the Dean's list every semester." He majored in the health sciences in college and "wanted nothing to do with education [as a career]." Three years later after working for a private business and volunteering in public schools where his wife taught, he changed his mind. In less than a year he had a teaching license and was accepting a teaching position where he was the "one and only Black person."

William. William is the associate principal at a suburban high school located just outside a very large, diverse Midwestern city. It is a predominantly White high school with a population of 70% White students, 15% African American, 7% two or more races, 6% Hispanic and 2% Asian. The area where the school is located is considered affluent but with the school having about 20% of the students on free and reduced lunch. William has been at this school for the past four years in an associate principal role. While he is not the first principal who is African American to work in this school, he is the second; however he works alongside a teaching and support staff that is 98-99% White. This is the first predominantly White school that William has worked at; prior to this job, he worked in a minority majority district and was a teacher, teacher leader, and administrator in this setting.

William says of his predominantly White staff, "A lot of [White] people have no idea where I grew up and how I grew up." William was raised in a very large urban city in a Midwestern state. He "saw the projects but also had friends that lived in penthouses" in the wealthiest part of the city. He lived in a downtown apartment, raised by a single mother, who was African American, and William was the "only Black male in the building" from a little kid all the way through high school." He goes on to say, "So no matter what I've done in life, they [White people] still see me [differently]." If they followed my upbringing and what I

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experienced and what I saw they would be like, 'Damn dude you were lucky! You had one of the best'." He describes himself in high school as,

> All my teachers loved me; I was not necessarily the class clown but I had all the teachers in my back pocket, for the most part. I never had bad issues, I don't think I ever had a referral or was written up for fights or anything. (William)

After high school, William attended a large university that while diverse, was still predominantly White. William first graduated with a degree in business, "I had dreams of being a marketing advertising executive but what I found was a lot of sales jobs...long hours." Williams's friends were educators and convinced him to "join a program that was providing [teacher] license opportunities for people with degrees."   After getting his teaching license he began teaching math. He was a teacher leader and team captain in the schools he taught in, which led him to get his administrative license. "I realized that if I can motivate and mobilize adults, and influence adults, I can help them influence my classroom, their classroom, and others' classrooms."

Rashad. Rashad is the youngest participant. Currently, he is the Associate Principal in a suburban majority minority middle school; however prior to this position he worked as an associate principal in a predominantly White high school for two years. He was also a teacher in this same school for three years, before becoming a school leader. He was not the first administrator who is African American to work in this school, but historically was one of a few educators of color to have worked there. This school setting is suburban and located in close proximity to a large urban city. Over the last 10-12 years the school population has remained stable in size but has experienced a change in the racial makeup of the student body. This change has seen a 12% decrease in its population of White students and a 3% increase in

Hispanic student enrollment; the enrollment of students who are African American has remained steady, representing 20% of the student population. The teaching staff at the time he was working there was also 100% White, which also remains true today.

Rashad began his career in education as a teacher working at an inner city school that was a predominantly minority charter school. He says of this experience, "the disparities were on full display and I became burnt out quickly, not because of the kids, but the adults, and how they treat kids." Therefore, Rashad took a paraprofessional position in a very wealthy suburban school that had a student and staff population close to 100% White. From there he worked at his "most rewarding" job as an education coordinator for a non-profit that provided education and job training support for youth. When the funding for this program shifted he went back to teaching.

> I had three job offers and decided to take the [public high school] because it was a traditional, high-performing school with a very strong union, and I felt that I needed something like that, not because it protected employees, ...but [I thought] they cared more about creating an environment that was conducive for learning and focused on kids. I got hired as a history teacher, loved it, and quickly became an instructional coach and director of the AVID program, and the following year became the associate principal. (Rashad)

During the time Rashad was teaching, he completed his administrative license at a small predominantly White university. After two years in the predominantly White setting as the associate principal, Rashad left for his current leadership position in a suburban middle school with a student population that is racially represented as 38% White, 45% African American, 7% Hispanic, 6% other, and 4% Asian.

Rashad grew up and attended neighborhood schools in the inner city of a large urban area that at one time had been described as

One of the most dangerous high schools in the nation because it was situated in the midst of three rival gangs and with drugs and all that comes with intergenerational poverty, things like that so there were a lot of challenges.

It was not the school I wanted to go to because I knew about the violence... my mom was sick, had no idea where my dad was, and so I was living with my grandmother; it was a difficult year and based on my seventh grade scores I was not able to get into the high school [that I had wanted to go to]. (Rashad)

However, the neighborhood school was complemented with a "rich history of graduates that had gone on to high level political, athletic, and writing achievements and had committed teachers who stayed and were committed to teaching, teaching in the community, and having continued relationships with those families." As it turned out, Rashad was class valedictorian and had a debate career that led to him getting a college scholarship to a small college that had a 95% White student population. He says, "My K-12 schooling was majority Black and now I was going to a college in the middle of nowhere and to majority White space."

Bukka. Bukka is in his first year as the principal of a high school that had a predominantly White student population as recently as six years ago (53% White); in the last 10 years the student population has shifted from 70% White to 40%. The decrease in the White student population has been offset by an increase in the Hispanic population of students, who now make up 37% of the school population. The enrollment of students who are African American has remained steady throughout this time. Prior to working at this school he was the principal at the middle school level in this same district that also saw similar shifts in the racial

makeup of the student population. Presently, this district is still overall predominantly White in both the student and staff populations. Bukka is was the first principal of color hired in the district and is the most experienced administrator in the district today, having served over twenty years in school leadership positions.

Bukka was "raised in poverty by a single mother who was Black." Growing up, Bukka went to an inner city high school and says, "I'm eternally grateful for my experience there." It was a "wonderful" experience; [the principal] was Black, female, and really, really strict. But I liked Ms. Tape though. I liked her. I was kind of afraid of her." She is retired, but Bukka still has contact. "[She] just a real impact. I mean, first of all, you're [Mrs. Tape], married to a Black man, married to an African man, she had stories of the African villages."

He was also influenced by his high school band teacher who was a White man; "I loved him. Because we talked about other stuff. You know what I'm saying? And so he would always let me practice. I taught myself piano [in his room]. And he just kind of gave me books." Bukka's love and gift of music was nurtured and developed at this inner city high school by this teacher.

After high school Bukka attended a predominantly White state university and majored in music. His aspiration was to be a band director but as he says, "music directors live forever." His career course was changed before he graduated from college when he had recruiters suggesting otherwise,

> These guys [recruiters from a large urban school district] so they are visiting college campuses and, 'hey, you're getting out soon. You might wanna think about special education. You can go back and get that as a minor, you can get a license. We're always needing people, so that's what I did. (Bukka)

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After teaching for 10-12 years he started doing diagnostic work in the special education department of a large urban district and this led him into administration. He was a principal in a predominantly minority district before taking a principal position in his present district.

Marcus. Marcus has 27 years of experience in the field of education ranging from kindergarten through higher education. He was the principal of a predominantly White school for three of those 27 years. Like Bukka, this experience was in a suburban district and school that over the past 10-15 years has shifted from being a predominantly White population of students to a present day predominantly minority district. The minority population of students is mostly represented by students of color; 50% of the student population is African American and 21% is Hispanic. As Marcus explained, "the district's student population has been influenced by a historical program to desegregate urban schools and integrate suburban schools," and more recently has been influenced by a statewide open enrollment program. When Marcus worked in this district, his school was predominantly White, with about 60% of the students reporting White as their race. He was the "first principal of color ever in the district."

Marcus's own K-12 education "was always in diverse schools [growing up], so it was important to me [to have a level of diversity] as an educator." After high school, he attended a very large state university after considering five other very prestigious schools, among them Northwestern and Duke. He describes his college decision this way: "My college decision was largely based on a desire to live away from home and [yet] live in a larger city." There were also financial considerations to this decision; the university he attended gave him a substantial enrichment scholarship. His college campus was and remains today a predominantly White campus in both student and staff representation. Marcus credits much of his success on this campus to a Dean that was assigned to be his mentor. He says this about his mentor,

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I just know that I could go to him at any time and he would literally drop everything. You know it was great to be a student of color on a predominantly White campus, a large campus, to have someone who had your back was tremendous. Not only to mention he was a White male, so it wasn't that all the mentors were all people of color." (Marcus)

Marcus earned a degree in education with English minor. After college, Marcus taught at the middle school level in this same college town for seven years. It was during this time he also earned a MA in Educational Psychology and obtained his education administration license. He had several offers for administrative positions but chose the position in the school that was predominantly White but yet diverse, to be closer to home, because it was "the perfect fit."

I knew I wanted to be with kids of color, diversity ... there were nowhere near the discipline problems [different from a minority majority position he considered] and it had a really good socio-economic mix to it [the school]. The school also had three Black staff members, which was unusual for that time. (Marcus)

Today Marcus has his doctorate and is well into a career as an undergraduate and graduate level professor at a small predominantly White liberal arts college. His work sustains him both personally and professionally. It allows him to still have 'hands on" experiences working with teachers and staff in K-12 school districts as well as to advise, mentor and teach college students.

Miles. Miles has been an educator for the past 25 years and most recently is in an assistant superintendent position in a racially diverse school district in a suburb outside a large urban city. Prior to his present position Miles had worked in several predominate White district and school settings. He began his career as a science teacher in a high school that was racially

diverse, and after five years of teaching he took his first administrative position as an associate principal in a suburban high school that was predominantly White. In this position he was largely responsible for "discipline and other initiatives." While Miles was not the first administrator of color in this district, he was certainly one of a few administrators and teachers of color to work in this large suburban district. He remained in this suburban district for 14 years; after four years at the high school level he took an elementary school principal position that he remained in for ten years. The elementary school where Miles served as principal was a neighborhood school with a 70% White student population and a teacher population that was all White. At the time Miles was principal the school had approximately 10% of the students on free and reduced lunch. Like other suburban districts in this study, this district and school, too, were experiencing some changes in student demographic. Over the ten years Miles was principal of this school, the number of students on free and reduced lunch doubled and the White population of students dropped by 10%; there was a slight increase in Hispanic and Asian enrollment. What remained unchanged was the population of students enrolled who were African American and a teaching staff who were super-majority White. Miles states,

> There were some challenges in the neighborhood because [my school] also served a high socioeconomic status area, so there were these wealthy families and then there were families that were not wealthy and then students [of color] who were bussed to my school. (Miles)

Miles's own education was in a very large urban school district where he attended neighborhood schools. He was raised by his grandparents but largely influenced by an uncle that was well educated and worked at a local university. It was his uncle's influence that Miles credits for his attendance at a Historical Black College (HBC) for his undergraduate education.

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He says, 'I attended a southern [HBC] and it was where I developed my passion for education and social justice; they promote a positive self-identity but also provide a social justice framework for thinking."   He tells a story of the conversation between him and his uncle that determined his future at a HBC:

> It was a time he [my uncle] had picked me up [from high school]; he was doing chores or running errands, something like that. We were in the car and a conversation came up. I was in high school at the time, and I said something to the effect that 'not all slave masters were mean to their slaves' and that he almost pulled the car over and crashed; but instead he said, 'where did you get that idea from' what I told him what was in my book at school that they treated slaves well and I'm telling him what we learned in school and that's when he said, 'you are definitely going to a Historical Black College because you need your Black history.' he knew were being indoctrinated with incorrect information and knowledge and he did not want that for us. (Miles)

It was after receiving a degree in science education from this HBC, Miles returned to the Midwest and began his career teaching science courses at a large prestigious inner city high school before beginning his educational leadership journey.

Data Analysis

Consistent with a narrative study, I began my analysis by reading each transcript several times using a critical race lens. This lens requires the researcher to have race and racism at the center of the analysis (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It should be noted that the interview questions were not particularly centered on race identity or race experiences; however given the participants are persons who identify as African American or Black working in a racialized

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dominant White culture, reported experiences of race and racism where expected and unavoidable narratives.

The next step in my analysis was to code each transcript with the purpose of accentuating common themes across each of the ten participant's transcripts. This initial coding generated well over 50 different codes. After working further with my data, categorizing and re-categorizing, the eight common themes found in Table 6 emerged. These themes best captured the lived experiences of these school leaders who are African American or Black working in their predominantly White settings.

Following are these common themes supported by participant narratives that include stories and counter-stories. Respecting the tenets of critical race methodology, the narrative that follows uses the voice of the participants to speak their truth, it is not my intent, nor should it be, for me as a White person to speak on their behalf. More specifically, I have not changed any language within the participant's voices to be more acceptable for a specific audience but have honored the voices of the participants.

Table 7

Overview of Common Themes and Related Sub-Themes

Theme	Title	Related Sub-Themes
Theme One	Pioneering White Space	*"All eyes on me" (Marcus, Michael)* *The Obama Effect* *"One and only"(Dante)* *"We're glad to have you here" (Marcus)*
Theme Two	Why Am I Here?	*"I can't be a Black knight in shining armor…" (Samuel)* *" I know where the skeletons are buried (Bukka)* *"Thinking outside the box" (Dante)*
Theme Three	Leadership Beliefs, Strategies, and Practices	*"We're not going to make excuses" (Marcus)* *"It's all about the code" (Michael)* *"I carry a light" (Rashad)*
Theme Four	Navigating White Space	*"Education has been the limelight for White privilege" (Malik)* *"He talks the talk and walks the walk" (Rashad)*
Theme Five	Experiencing Racism	*"Is it the color of my skin" (Marcus)* *"I get it, I don't get it" (William)* *"You are more than" (Michael)* *"I believe [racial] barriers exist" (Miles)*
Theme Six	Intersectionality	*"I always had to wait…" (Bukka)*
Theme Seven	Champions, Mentors, and Heroes	*"Only one person I ever had that is a true champion was my mother" (Michael)*
Theme Eight	Influence of White Interviewer	

Theme One: Pioneering in White Spaces

Of the ten participants in this study, seven were the first ever school leader who was African American to work in their predominantly white school settings. In addition, nine out of ten of these school leaders were the one and only African American working in their predominantly White school settings at the time they were hired, and this has remained mostly true throughout their employment. This theme presents narratives around the lived experiences of being the first and the one and only person who was African American working in their respective predominantly White school settings. Narratives speak both to the normalization of

being the first and one and only and the novelty of being the one and only. Participants drew parallels between the novelties of their leading a school as an African American at the same time that President Obama was in office. While there is surprise for parents who are African American seeing a leader of color narratives support that there is also a sense of relief for these parents when they see someone that looks like them.

Sub-theme: "All eyes on me" (Michael, Marcus)

Each of the participants spoke about how they were the "first" African American school leader hired to work in their predominantly White schools and oftentimes they were also the first school leader who was African American to be hired in the school district. In the conversation about "being first" they talk about the feelings, challenges, and responses they endured as "the first" person who was of color in these White spaces.

As reflected in the introductory personal narratives, these school leaders were "first" in many ways besides being the first school leader in their respective predominantly White school settings. Many of them were also the first in their family to graduate high school or go to college. Dante says, "I was one of the first high school graduates in my family, the first college graduate in my family, the first person to have a Master's degree on my mother's side of the family."

With Michael's over 37 years as an educator, he speaks to being first in most every situation he encountered as a young adult and an educator. He was not only the first associate principal and principal hired in two different high schools that were predominantly White, but he was very likely the first school leader of color in those districts and in the two different states where these districts were situated. He was also the first coach who was African American in a suburban conference and early in his career, the first person who was African American to visit

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many small rural towns as the member of a traveling softball team. He describes being first: "so when you are first, I now tell people this, 'all eyes are on you'."

He captures some of the harm, hurt and pressure of "being first" in his story below of his early years of experiencing racism in the rural Midwest. He also shares how he was able to assimilate using his athletic talents and ambassador skills as self-preservation when navigating these White spaces. One has to wonder if the story would end differently if he were not able to hit home runs:

> I used to play softball in all these little rural towns back when they had no African
>
> Americans. I was the first one they saw. So I had to learn to become an ambassador. So
>
> I would hear all these different jokes, you know, White man, Black man, Chinese man
>
> and ha-ha-ha. At the same time, I knew if I got militant that was not going to be
>
> successful. I had to be an ambassador. I'm in small town rural [Midwestern state] and
>
> I'm hitting all these homeruns and I got [White] kids wanting to carry my bat; they want
>
> to carry the Black man's bat and everybody got caught up with such emotion and I was
>
> laughing, smiling and looking at kids. They were asking for autographs, taking pictures
>
> of me, and stuff all because I wanted it to be a special experience for them [White kids].
>
> That's what I felt I had to do. I had to be an ambassador for my culture and race.
>
> (Michael)

The stories shared by other participants may be different in the type of situation but similar in that they too experienced racism from school and community members who were White. These stories reflect attempts to doubt, sabotage, and undermine them upon arrival in their new positions. Bukka tells of an anonymous caller his first week on the job: "You know

they threatened to kill me when I first came here. First day. 'Effing [n-word]... You blah blah, blah blah.' Oh yeah. For like three days in a row." And Marcus tells a story of staff sabotage:

> I mentioned I was the first administrator of color in the building. So that meeting that got sabotaged. The staff was upset by some of the increasing discipline issues that were happening. They tended to fall along the lines of Black male students. I came up with what I thought was a win/win solution that involved me and them. They wanted me to just solve it and make it go away, and I wasn't going to do that, and I think that that's what led to this plot to try to undo what I tried to do. (Marcus)

Dante had a similar experience with his all White staff and responds with empathy.

> At first they were standoffish...because I was the first Black administrator and for them [White staff] it was hard to process that. I think by the time I left, they actually didn't want me to go, I believe that was because I learned so much from them and they learned a lot from me too in the process. (Dante)

> Prior to his school leadership position, Rashad was the first teacher of color in a predominantly White school. He speaks to how he won over his doubters [White students and parents] and discloses the need to prove himself to [White people] before acceptance as an effective teacher.

> I'm their first Black teacher, and so there was a novelty aspect to that, sort of intrigue with that and I got a lot from parents; once they saw how good I was with their kids and then secondly, how good of a teacher I was, it broke down some walls that they had built up or some suspicion on my effectiveness as a teacher was diminished over probably a couple years. (Rashad)

And other participants, like Malik and Samuel, talk about how it "feels" to be the first educational leader who was African American to work in the building.

Being first feels like this, I'm not an administrator, I'm just the person that works in the building and for the most part I'm someone that's African American that you want to take advantage of; that's how it felt to me. So with it being that way, I took advantage of meeting kids where they were; that was my priority. (Malik)

So coming here on day one was interesting for sure because there was definitely some eyes popping open. People are wondering who's that new principal because it was White male, White male, White male and then White lady, White lady, White lady, White lady. There was never anybody of color, much less a man in the past 15, 20, years. It's been a few women and they have been long tenured, like eight-nine years. The one right before me was four years. Coming into that dynamic, because I'm a man number one, and then being a man of color, was a bit great. I'm pretty confident, not to the point of arrogance, humble but confident, in what I do and how I carry myself. (Samuel)

Lastly, Bukka, like most other participants, speaks to how "being first" is a normal experience for him, "he is used to it" [after 31 years in education] but it's the White American that does not understand the struggle of people who are Black in this country."

I think that African American teachers and administrators, we've lived that [being the first person of color in a setting]. Most of us have lived that. I know what it's like to be the first one to go. And I think that that's a perspective that a lot of... non-African American people don't know, they don't know that struggle. (Bukka)

Sub-theme: The Obama Effect

The majority of participants provided narrative that included the impact of having a United States President in office who was African American at the same time that they were a principal in predominantly White settings; six out of ten participants mentioned this effect. Their stories describe this parallel awareness on behalf of students who are White and African American. This awareness speaks to both the novelty of school leaders who are African American in these White settings and the strong influence they have as role models for their students. Malik's narrative describes this phenomenon:

So, it was kind of interesting, because Barack Obama was in office when I first became a principal. So, when I first became a principal, most of my kids would call me the president. I think number one, I think probably the biggest, biggest, biggest benefit to our African American kids, and I'm not going to even just say African American kids, I would even say our White kids as well, they're seeing a Black principal. They've never had that; they've never seen that. So, it was kind of interesting, because Barack Obama was in office when I first became a principal. So, when I first became a principal, most of my kids would call me the president. The first time they've ever seen it. This is the first time, if you think about our world, think about our country, the first time that they've ever seen a Black president. So, now, here are our kids who have never had a Black principal, or a Black leader. So, now he's here, he's here. (Malik)

Simon and Michael share similar stories of the "Obama Effect" and its advantages for students:

The other thing is, and it's cute, because there are some kids who, when Barack Obama was President, that they'd call me, 'you're the President of our school". So there's this

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connection in their head, principal - president [who are African American]; you run our

school like he runs our country. So, it was always a number of kids who would be like,

"Hi, President Simon," or stuff like that. I think there are great advantages to youth these

days seeing people of color in leadership, whether it's the country or law enforcement,

wherever there's authority to be had, they can see people of color, whether it's African

American or Hispanic or Asian. Whatever it may be, I think we can get more people to

understand and ascend to those positions, it's good. (Simon).

Michael discusses how the "Obama effect" impacts the conversations that principals who

are African American needed to have with students who are African American; his emphasis is

on students who are African American, knowing their history:

How are we going to enhance our culture [in the White school setting] so we can have

conversations about race; this is what we had to do. So we had to have these

conversations. Remember, this is also the age where Obama became President, so there

is this parallel where we had to say [to students who are African American seeing the

inequities in the White system] you cannot make excuses. It's about hope and we want to

maintain hope and at the same time we want to acknowledge that yes, we know where

you are coming from [regarding the inequities]. (Michael)

The narratives of Malik, Michael and Simon speak to the positive influence of having a

leader who is African American in the oval office. However, Malik offers a counter narrative

around this parallel between Obama and local school leaders who are African American. In this

narrative he discusses White power and privilege and draws a parallel between how President

Obama was stripped of his power, similar to the dynamic in White dominant schools where the

power of school leaders who are African American is also marginalized. Here is his narrative:

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I think the influence President Obama had was reflected in that a lot of kids noticed that I was the principal of in their building [a male who is African American], they called me the president. But for the most part the country is White, the country is ran by White people, the country is above for White people. For every system that we're in, we develop a White people. So when you really think about Obama being in office, he still had his hands tied because the majority that voted the house was Republican, so when you think about that, he didn't have as much power as people really thought he had. And, he still didn't have the power that he probably should've had, right? Yeah, look at how he was undermined. And, how they tried to take his power away his entire administration. Congress completely absolved his power, Yeah. So, it was kind of like that in schools, when I worked in both of these schools. That kind of surfaced a lot where it was more like, "he's too friendly with the kids." Or, whatever, but the kids get done what you want them to get done. (Malik)

Sub-theme: "One and only" (Dante)

The phrase, "one and only" was the most often used phrase across all interviews and eight of the ten participants spoke to being the one and only person of color in their settings throughout their tenure in the predominantly White setting. In most cases they did not have any colleagues who were African American in any aspect of their school or district setting and in all cases they had a staff that was super majority White. "If you look at the makeup of most schools, it is mostly White, middle class female teachers" (Malik). In fact, it was also mentioned by several school leaders that if there were any educators of color in their building they were most likely to be in a paraprofessional-type role.

It is no surprise that the teaching and support staff in these predominantly White school settings are also predominantly White, but it is the scarcity of administrative colleagues and teachers of color in these settings and the persistence of this scarcity over time that is notable. It seems these school leaders were the 'first" and "one and only" administrators of color and that the school settings were relatively unchanged in diversifying staff even with representation of leadership of color. This persistent scarcity is concerning, considering that research has shown that "the number of minorities in a setting has to be large enough to improve the contingencies of individual minorities" (Steele, 2011, p. 136). This persistent scarcity of colleagues of color is described by Dante and Miles; they speak to little change over 10 and 15 year intervals:

> I was very nervous about taking the position in this district but after three long interviews, turning it down three times, and with much persuasion from a friend and the superintendent, I accepted the position. I was the first and the one and only. During my six years in the district, there were no other administrators of color hired and almost ten years later there is still just one administrator of color [working in that district]. (Dante)
>
> There was one other administrator of color; he was also an assistant principal of a middle school. Actually, and then there was another gentleman who was a principal, nope, he was an assistant principal as well, so there were two assistant principals at that time in Westwood District, and with me, I was the third, who was African-American. Almost fifteen years later there is just one school leader of color working in the district. (Miles)

William speaks to coping with this lack of representation of color and how it was similar to his experience in the corporate world:

> As I started up the leadership ladder I was one of the only [school leaders of color]. There was a Black male that came in after me, but it was a White male, White

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female. But it's just one of those things, if it was just for me it was like, 'accept it' because that was all I saw in seven, eight years I had been in education. I wasn't a huge deal to me because even in the corporate world, I was one of the only Black males around; I just thought it was normal. I just needed to get in and do my job but it was weird that there was this thing like, 'where are all the Black folks here?" (William)

Samuel speaks to the concern that if there are persons of color in his building, they are usually in what are considered "lesser" positions; however there is still not a critical mass of persons of color:

I only know this district and we lack diversity within the teaching range. Our educational system is pretty diverse [student body] but unfortunately on the level of a teaching position or something higher it is not. For lack of better terms, it is a little easier for someone [of color] to get a position as an educational assistant or parallel [than a teacher or higher position]. You know if you walk into my building on a regular school day you see two Black female educational assistants, and I just hired a Hispanic cross categorical teacher, that's it. (Samuel)

Miles, who desires to advance to a superintendency also talks about the prevalence over time for the "one and only" effect in district leadership. Given the principalship is a gateway for the superintendency, the "one and only" effect has serious harmful consequences for leaders of color desiring to advance.

So, you know [it's not just the principalship] having been an educator for 24 years, there has not been in this state, more than three minority superintendents at one time, and most often there is only one or two in the state, and there's over 424 school districts in the state; so in my mind, the lack of leadership opportunities just either has not been attained,

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and I believe there exists barriers there that prevent those things from happening, and it's

not from the fact that there are individuals [of color] who are capable of leading and who

can successfully lead, and/or have successfully led in school roles. (Miles)

Sub-theme: "We're glad to have you here" (Marcus)

As these school leaders navigate these predominantly White settings as the first and one

and only, they encounter many different responses from others in their educational communities.

Most often their presence in the predominantly White setting is met with "surprise" by students

and parents, regardless of race. The surprise may be for different reasons. It is also interesting

that Samuel, Bukka, Marcus, and William all have narratives that express an unwillingness of

people in the predominantly White settings to get to know them. Others speak to the acceptance

of their students, who are African American and White, while adults in the environment respond

with more apprehension, if not with overt acts of racism. First Marcus tells a story that captures

the response of students who are African American as they encountered their first principal who

was African American in his office on an off school day.

> I will never forget this. I was working [in my office], and there's three African-American
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> kids who came into the building. And this was right before Columbine had happened. It
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> was after Columbine that we had all these locks and everything on doors, right. So there
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> were no locks, and these kids come in, and they come into the office, and they said,
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> "Hello, is anybody here?" And I peeked my head out, and I said, "Yeah, can I help you?"
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> And it was two girls and a boy, and they couldn't have been more than 12 or 10, or
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> something like that. So the girl said, "Our little brother has to use the bathroom. Can we
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> use the bathroom?" And I said sure. "Come with me." So I take them into my office and
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> I let him use my bathroom, but I'll never forget the look on their faces. They looked

around; they looked at me, they said, "You're the principal?" You know, and it was just

like they had never ... And I don't think they were ... I don't know if they were students at

my building, or at the middle school, but they just couldn't ... The way that they asked, it

led me to believe, like wow [they were surprised I was African American]. (Marcus)

And Simon tells a similar story with parent response:

Well I just think sometimes when they [parents of color] walk in and they see me in this

position there's a sense of shock. They weren't expecting to see a principal who's

African American and a doctor [of philosophy] stepping out of the office to meet them.

So I sometimes get a sense of relief [from parents who are African American]. (Simon)

Marcus has also felt this sense of relief from parents of color when encountering a

principal of color:

I was her son's principal, and she came in, and she and her husband said, "We're glad to

have you here. This is our son. This is our, you know. We fully support you." And they're

people of color, you know. And so I think that whereas there was always this feeling that

I've got to be one better because of all these eyes on me, I think for the people of color,

the eyes were ones of relief. Like, "Wow, someone who looks like us, you know, who

might have some similar kind of background." (Marcus)

Rashad and Samuel take their "one and only" observation a step further by offering

explanations for why school leaders of color may not want to pursue positions in predominantly

White schools. Samuel's comments imply there may be pressures from other people of color

about working in White spaces and that there is little opportunity to hire in these White spaces as

there is little turnover, while Rashad speaks to these White school spaces as not being safe for

people of color.

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There's a negative stereotype of people of color having an education or trying to be too White or boujee, that's out there too. I know our district has actively recruited and tried to bring people of color to work here but it's just not happening, not to the degree that I think we need. (Samuel)

Rashad speaks directly to the importance of having a critical mass of persons of color needed in the workplace that would allow for leaders of color to be comfortable in doing equity work (Steele, 2011).

In my professional career so far I have not felt completely comfortable to really do equity work because there's a cost to it. Without a critical mass of folks [like me] to do it with or without leadership that is conscious of it [race, equity] and understand it [race, equity] and two, know they need to protect you because you're a Black person in a majority White space doing things to level the playing field for children of color and to fight against opportunity hoarders, you do need a certain level of protection [from White dominant stakeholders]. (Rashad)

Theme Two: Why Am I Here?

This theme first captures the awareness on behalf of these school leaders regarding why they were hired to work in a predominantly White setting. School leader narratives include knowing they are hired with an expectation for them to "fix" or save students who are African American. In addition, this theme captures their experiences of encountering the ignorance of White educators that expect them to be a voice for all people who are African American.

The remaining sub-themes under this theme speak to the benefits and advantages of school leaders who are African American working in White space. Benefits include changing mindsets of students who are White about African Americans and operationalizing their cultural

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expertise to build relationships. Additionally, included is a sub-theme that highlights how school leaders who are African American think differently than their White peers. These asset based narratives are found under the "thinking outside the box" sub-theme.

Sub-Theme: "I can't be a Black knight in shining armor..." (Samuel)

Considering the challenges that may come with "being the first" and/or "one and only" school leader of color in these predominantly White settings, it is also useful to understand how these pioneers who are African American perceive why they were chosen for these leadership positions in these setting. In these narratives there are explanations that demonstrate an awareness on behalf of these school leaders who are African American that the White leaders in predominantly White settings have an intentional agenda when hiring a school leader of color, which is, hiring school leaders of color to address diversity in the changing demographics of the White suburban and rural schools. This diversity is often translated into dealing with the "behavior" of children of color and their parents. Samuel captures this dynamic and describes it this way, "I can't be a Black knight in shining armor that comes to save someplace [suburbs] even though I look at myself as a capable role model for all students with many benefits to my leadership."

Samuel's comment reflects his awareness that these White systems and the White people in authority in these systems have an expectation or interest in having him save their suburban school district. The implication here is that he would be saving them from the disparities in achievement and behavior referrals between students who are White and their African American peers. Critical race theorists refer to the dynamic of White elites having an ulterior motive, in this situation, hiring of persons of color, to serve their own interests as interest convergence (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This interest convergence is also reflected in other narratives from

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school leaders in this study who desire opportunities in predominantly White settings but express frustration at not being able to use all of their expertise and skills once employed in these settings. William speaks to this dynamic:

> As a Black man I've seen where there are school districts fighting to get more African American males so like anything is ok, right? So as opposed to either females or even some White counterparts [male], because I am Black I may be treated differently than some of my White counterparts in both a positive and negative way because it's like we are extinct in education so we are gonna have as many Black leaders, males, mentors, as possible. But that takes away from the true meaning of what it is and why and the purpose we are in these positions. We want to be heard and be role models and be uplifting to show that we [males who are African American] can do it [lead White schools] too. (William)

Dante's narrative below speaks to the privilege and ignorance of White administrators in his district that expect him to be a voice for all people of color in the district.

> At the time I accepted the position I was well aware of why I was being sought after. I don't think they really wanted to state it but they were looking for African American administrators. A lot of that had to do with an influx of African American students that were coming from an urban city into this community. The reality is they [White district administrators] wanted me to be the voice of the families that didn't have one...the person to connect with families of color. However there is a problem with this strategy, when I'm in a room with one hundred White people and every one of these White people in the room have a different voice about how something should work; but I'm expected to speak [with my one voice] for all families of color; that's impossible to do. (Dante)

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At the time Marcus was hired as a school leader in a predominately White district there was also an increasing population of students who were African American students. While he was excited for his first leadership opportunity and appreciated the increasing diversity, he later considers the district could have had a hidden agenda when they hired him:

> I think I probably was the youngest candidate, which could mean... Let's be honest right, financially to the district that's a savings. I think that was a positive and the superintendent is kind of a risk taker so here's a young African American kid and he's [the superintendent] thinking in two or three years our demographics are going to shift. Who knows? Who knows? (Marcus)

Additionally, Rashad's narrative further calls out an unspoken agenda of White systems and the White educators that work in them. He also illuminates the hypocrisy of this agenda, given that the White spaces they are expected to disrupt are not safe spaces for a person of color due to the lack of socially just leadership from White administrators and other Whites empowered in the system.

> Let's name that work. That work is disrupting microaggression, disrupting systems and practices, and procedures that benefit some kids and not all kids, interrupting systems that create and limit opportunities for kids, whether it's acceleration into higher level classes, scholarship opportunities, college exposure, things like that. Things we know help kids who are traditionally underserved. That work also looks like holding teachers accountable for overt and covert acts of racism and calling it out in a safe space, having critical conversations. The work is also teaching families how to navigate the system and not just assuming they navigate the system and on the flip side not abusing their trust in us. (Rashad)

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Sub-theme: "I know where the skeletons are buried" (Bukka)

Bukka's quote about skeletons is in reference to his knowledge of where his predominantly White school organization has hidden acts of racism. Bukka is expressing that while he may not talk about these skeletons it does not mean that he is not aware of how they influence his organization. We have just learned that one of those acts of racism found in these predominantly White settings is that of interest convergence. In spite of this privileged agenda, it is well documented in the research that predominantly White educational organizations benefit greatly from leaders of color (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). Each of the participant school leaders spoke extensively of the expertise and experiences they bring to White space that benefit the White system and those that work and go to school in it. These benefits are advantaged to both students who are African American and their White peers. Miles says:

> It was never an issue of me to be working in a predominantly White setting necessarily because I wanted to be a school leader. But I also knew that students, all students needed to have a different perspective about African Americans, so I knew I would be able to do that and do some good work. (Miles)

The advantages of school leaders who are African American in predominantly White settings are described in the narratives below. Four of the school leaders, Samuel, Dante, Miles, and Simon, speak to how their visibility as leaders in these White settings influences the mindsets of students who are both African American and White. This dynamic challenges the stereotypes of majoritarian stories that seek to marginalize the benefits of school leaders of color.

Samuel's narrative explains how his work in a predominantly White setting can be socially just even with the challenges of navigating White space:

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When one of my colleagues [of color] questioned my placement at a predominantly

White school, I agreed with him that I would be a benefit to a school with a large number

of students of color but I also argued that there were benefits to my presence in the

predominantly White school. I said, "think about it, where are the [White students]

getting their views or stereotypes [of people who are African American] from, their

parents and the media. If they don't have any positive encounters with people of color,

their perceptions are not going to be positive either but if they come to school...think

about the influence I have. I'm outside every morning rain, sleet, or snow greeting kids;

I'm outside every afternoon saying goodbye on the way out. Kids are getting hugs,

words of encouragement, high fives, and 'I can't wait to see you tomorrows.' When they

[the White kids] get that kind of experience from somebody that doesn't look like them

or maybe somebody that their parents are telling them whatever they say about me, then I

am proving them wrong with my actions." Their kids need that. From my perspective I

could have a bigger impact working someplace else but for right now this is working.

(Samuel)

Dante's narrative further supports the positive influence of having a school leader who is

African American in a predominantly White setting:

I've always said the biggest benefits of having adults of color in leadership roles in

education is important in many aspects. Most children in this country, especially African

American and Hispanic children, or any child of color, don't grow up seeing people of

color in leadership, period. I also believe it gives our [kids of color] a voice. It gives

kids a voice knowing someone is there to speak on their behalf every day. It gives

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families a voice to know someone is looking out for their child and they're "not going to throw my child in the gutter." (Dante)

Miles builds upon this same narrative of the benefits to his leadership to all students:

The biggest benefit would be that for 10 years to 14 years in that suburban community, students in the majority and students in the minority had an opportunity to see an African-American in a leadership role, something they don't see often. And to do it successfully, and the ability to interact with me in a positive way, which again breaks down stereotypes and comfort levels for individuals, even in the early grades having students who are White who will come and talk to you and hug you or run to you when they see you, or speak highly of you because you were their principal. (Miles)

Lastly, Simon reinforces the same narrative of the benefits of African American school leadership:

If students look at me, and who knows how many interactions they have with African American males or females in their life. I think they can see me as somebody who is not threatening, is not scary, even though I am a large [African American] man. They just see somebody different from them that loves them, is a leader... and just so happens to be a person of color too. (Simon)

Rashad and Miles speak to how their presence as leaders of color goes beyond role modeling for both students who are African American and White. Both of these leaders use their cultural expertise to offer a different way of working with students, Rashad says:

The greatest benefit I bring to a [White] space is my ability to build and sustain relationships and providing students [of color] the safety and comfort to make mistakes but also learn from those mistakes, and the safety and comfort to ask questions, to be

vulnerable. And I provide [White] teachers and other [White] folks in the building a lot

of support and encouragement while still holding them accountable to high expectations,

not only for themselves, but making sure they are maintaining high expectations for each

and every kid; not having high expectations for White kids and then mediocre

expectations for Black kids, but holding their feet to the fire while ensuring they [Black

students] won't get burned by the fire. I'm always the sense of reason and it's hard for

staff because my role traditionally is the Punisher, and I am not. I'm the empathizer. I'm

the one who's trying to find common ground. I'm the one who's trying to find that door of

opportunity so that that kid can walk back into your classroom and feel good about him

or herself. (Rashad)

Miles speaks to his expertise as an instructional leader as being a benefit:

Over the course of my tenure there [predominately White school] I demonstrated that

student achievement can improve with my leadership. So that's something I have been

proud of for a while. During my tenure I took a school that was Title I, bottom third of

the district to the top third of the district, that received recognition by the state for one of

the highest ratings the state provides, so I was proud of that after 10 years. (Miles)

Bukka is a seasoned administrator of color and has many years in a predominantly White

school setting under his belt. He speaks to the value of his expertise in these White spaces:

This is my 12th year. This is my 12th year. And so I think they benefit because, first of

all, I know the racial stuff. I know where the skeletons are buried. I know all the crap

from before me. And I'm a team player. I understand it. But I understand that people

[White people] are ignorant, and that they need some help [with diversity]. But with the

surge in diversity, I'll tell you, people are damn excited when they see me come out my

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office. "Oh, it's some African American. Oh my God, they have a Black principal." And they'll say it out loud like, "I didn't know you were Black." You know? (Bukka)

Lastly, William offers research that speaks to the strength of impression that having even one leader who is African American can have on students who are African American: "I read some place that a student who is Black that sees at least one Black male as a positive role model has a better chance of academic progress than seeing none. Think about that. If one has that impact…think about the differences 15-20 positive Black role models would make in a school setting."

Sub-theme: "Thinking outside the box" (Dante)

There are also benefits to having school leaders of color, as they bring a different perspective to their work, a race & cultural lens. These differences are often related to the knowledge and experience these school leaders who are African American have regarding the historical struggles of Americans who are African American, referenced earlier by Bukka, and how they influence American education today for a student who is African American. Their ability to see things differently is also the result of their asset-based understanding of at least two cultures, unlike the White educator in America, who typically is immersed in only one. Dante mirrors this when he says, "I can teeter totter either way, I can go hang out with my friends in the neighborhood where I grew up, I can still be that person, I'm not saying I do anything I shouldn't be doing, but I understand where they are coming from, I'm just me right? But I can also put on a shirt and tie and go have these same conversations and be able to speak with people who are in a very different space [White space]."

These differences allow these school leaders to "think outside the box" and are assets for the White spaces that are entrenched in ways of doing business reflective of the Eurocentric,

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White, middle class educator, and who desire meeting the needs of their students who are African American. Dante, who experienced the effects of a failed public school system in his own life, offers a powerful narrative about the American public school system and how it impacts the students who are African American. The following narrative sets the stage for "thinking outside the box" so that American education systems can be disrupted and disparities of differences between students who are African American and their White peers are eradicated.

> First, for survival, students of color [in these White systems] have to learn to code switch. If [a student of color] does not know how to code switch, some things may be appropriate in your neighborhood but are not appropriate in the K-12 White dominant system, then you are probably not going to be successful in it. The American public school is too focused on feeding students what we [White educators] want them to know and not on what they need to learn. It's a robotic system. Students can't "think outside the box" because we have put them in a box for 12 years. [Students who are African American] are also taught to speak out when we know things are wrong. When that is not tolerated or when it is not the cultural norm and the norm of the [White] folks teaching you [student who is African American] it is viewed as belligerent and disruptive and the next thing you know you have a special education label. And until public education tolerates students to be freer and be freethinkers it's always going to be an issue [student achievement] but more for students of color.

> White educators, who have the tools in their toolkit and the knowledge to leverage it, need to have the courage to use it. Lastly, we [people in White systems] have to recognize institutional racism and be willing to change it. We haven't changed in the way we address people of color in this country, we just change how we deal with it. In

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my view we [Americans who are African American] went from slavery to Jim Crow to incarceration and we [White society] don't admit how this affects Black families. The piece that is missing here is the outright admitting [by White educators] that there is something wrong with the system and now let's fix it...we need to communicate and conversate with each other about what is wrong. (Dante)

Theme Three: Leadership Beliefs, Practices, and Strategies

In this theme the narratives capture the leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies the participants employ when navigating their work in a predominantly White setting. The first sub-theme, "We are not going to make excuses" is dominated by narratives of the strategies these school leaders use to disrupt the status quo in their school settings.   The next sub-theme, "It's all about the code" has narratives regarding the beliefs that drive participant school leadership, and lastly, the theme, "I carry a light" has narratives regarding the type of leadership these school leaders practice. For example, servant, visionary, and instructional leadership were mentioned as leadership practices. Mostly, the narratives in this section, describe that each leader uses an eclectic approach, however social justice leadership is at the core of each participants practice and examples of this are provided.

Sub-theme "We're not going to make excuses" (Marcus)

When doing business differently, these school leaders shared some very practical strategies on how they work with students, parents, and the community. These strategies represent a "no excuses" expectation for removing barriers for students who are African American; they demonstrate their out of the box thinking and their perseverance. Often these strategies included encouraging changes in mindset on behalf of the educator who is White or the willingness to let go of the normal way of doing business. William says it this way,

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Administrators of color are different from [administrators who are White]. It's not that

we are better; we just have a different perspective. In education today, we need

different. If you can't adjust and change, you have to step aside. And if we want change

to happen we have got to promote African Americans and people of color in education.

(William)

More of these school leaders speak to how they respond to doing things differently for

students. Take Michael, for example, who started no less than three programs in different school

settings where he has led, that were designed to empower and give voice to young African

American students; they all have endured the test of time, with one program lasting easily over

20 years. Below is a summary of the "no excuses" strategies that these leaders of color employ.

These strategies are counter to strategies often used by White, middle class educators.

Teach Different. There are many things happening in the lives of these kids that we

don't think about. We [White educators] have this perfect little world of how our

classrooms are set up and the way we teach and it's usually based on how we were taught,

what we were taught and why we taught it that way at that time. This is problem for

students of color. (Malik)

Disrupt Negative Dialogue. So when you keep telling them [students who are African

American] they can't do that or that's this and that, you're [White teacher] not

connecting. You're not helping the learning. And that is the reason why they are in your

class. If [learning] is not happening, you're to blame for that. Not the kid. (William)

Disrupt Marginalization. I really wanted to get a handle on the over identification of

Black males and discipline. So that's when I started to look at things differently. Prior to

my arrival that some people [White teachers], who were looping, they had been allowed

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to dump their bad kids [males who were African American] in year two, and so we got rid of that practice, and I think that by me getting rid of that practice, it showed others. "Okay, he's not going to let it turn into this country club mentality." (Marcus)

Build Cultural Understanding. If you are White teacher and you have a classroom with Black student(s) you need to learn from those Black kids. White teachers see the nuances of students who are African American as distractions: the hairstyles, the clothes, headphones, baggy jeans, do-rags. We [educators who are African American] appreciate those nuances and know that is the kids way of identifying himself [to be] different from others. (William)

Use Cultural Lens for Behavior. The way we look at student behavior. The way we look at respect, how we look at insubordination, how we're interacting with kids, how we're looking at the opportunities that are provided to kid, how we're looking at inclusion of kids. What does respect look like for you? And the number of different things people [advise White educators give to students who are African American] said like shaking hands firmly, or look them in the eye, or when I ask you something you do it. Well, depending on the culture in which you are working, looking at someone in the eyes could be wrong, it's not what you do. Shaking hands may not be the thing for some cultures. Doing something the first time that they're asked may not be... in my culture it may be four or five times for my kids to get up and do what I told them to do. (Malik)

Re-conceptualize Discipline. I was in the mode of doing what is now called restorative practices in terms of how we [my school] dealt with student behaviors. I was trying to be proactive with behaviors and to build a positive culture to get parents in... to find ways to help support those families [of color] and to create a learning environment that was

positive, healthy and welcoming. That was always my focus and at the same time, issue appropriate discipline, but still with dignity. That was my lens, not crime and punishment, not to suspend or discipline without opportunities for the student to grow. (Miles)

Get a Different Perspective. Bad behavior is communication as well. We [educators] don't see this side. We see bad behavior as being bad behavior. Bad behavior is communication. (Bukka)

Adults, Who Are White, Lean In. Here's an example, so there was a second grade boy and he lived in an apartment complex and he was continually late for school and it was impacting everything. I don't remember all the details, but I remember he had a White female teacher. I had convened a team to talk about what we could do to get this kid to school and I thought it was huge that this White female teacher said, 'well you know I can change my route to school so that I can pick him up and get him to school.' And then you know what, 'I'll cover Fridays or whatever.' So it was just that kind of spirit. We are not going to make excuses. We are not going to say, 'oh you know it's mom's responsibility.' We are going to say what can we do to get this kid to school.' (Marcus)

With most teachers in American schooling being White, middle class, and Eurocentric it is quite likely that students, regardless of race, are experiencing an American History that is white dominant. An earlier shared narrative by Miles reflects this teaching when he spoke about learning in high school that "not all slave masters were mean to their slaves". Michael believes it is especially important that students who are African American know African American history as they navigate oppression and marginalization from teachers who are White in their schools:

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Teach African American History. We got to tell kids [kids who are African American] how important it is [to know where they are from]. We used to have a drill [for when] students who are African American would say '[White] man is stopping me from doing something'; we would say, Okay, name me five African American males of distinction who are not in sports or on TV. And they couldn't name five and I would say "do you know your own culture. You don't know anything about it so how can you say someone is stopping you from doing anything and you don't know your past - you don't know where you have been. How do you know where you're going, if you don't know where you've been?" (Michael)

Knowing the power of the early influence of music education in his life, Bukka sees a lot of potential for students who are African American in the music and art education programs in schools, to include extracurricular theater and performances. However, he explains big changes in these programs have to happen for students who are African American to truly benefit. In his interview he talks about how there is a push for students who are African American to be in Advanced Placement classes and yet there is no concern for how the arts could enrich the education for students who are African American and their White peers. Below he talks about this and then in the second paragraph he shares a story about how this happened in his school with the emphasis on the need to be culturally responsive all the time.

Reimagine the Arts as the New College Prep. I feel like the [music] programs [band, chorus] that are in this school ... They are White privilege programs. They sing and perform pieces that you have to ask, 'Why would a Black or Hispanic student be attracted to that? We have to step all of that up. Our programs are not designed for these students. We've got a good chorus. What we don't have, is the diverse music selection ... We

should be proud that we have kids of color here, and that music should reflect that. You know, we ain't doing the salsa and merengue. We should be bringing it ... That's what we should be doing. (Bukka)

Be Culturally Responsive All the Time. Here's what happened to me. So, I had a French teacher ... and she's like, "Well, I wanna bring the Florentine Opera to [our school]." I didn't know much about Florentine Opera. I was kind of listening, and kind of ... because I'm thinking, "okay, that's predominantly White stuff." Well, no it isn't. Three African Americans. This guy with a baritone voice that was absolutely stunning. I mean, and they did ... they did Marriage of Figaro. And then you had the African American female. She was a contralto. And they explained the ranges. And it was the most ... just right there [points at his heart]. Like, yes. You know, because the auditorium was packed with kids [of color] that wanted to sing. "Figaro." And then, he's behind the curtain. And then here he comes out, and he looks like a lot of them. And they were just like... Oh, that's so cool. Yeah. You know, and some kids wanted to ask, "How did you learn ...?" Because he's from New York, and he said, "Kids were doing hip-hop. This is what I liked. And I had a voice for it. And some teacher in high school told me, 'You could be great. But this is how you're gonna be great.'" He said, "Man, I had the tennis shoes, the pants, I did all the steps, I did break dancing, all that stuff. Until somebody heard me sing and stopped, because my voice has always been deep. Learned to sing. 'This is where you're going to be great.'" And so kids didn't understand. It was so powerful. And the singing was amazing. But it was the messages. (Bukka)

As these leaders "think outside the box", there are strategies for working with parents differently as well. Rashad and Malik give us an idea of how they look at parent involvement:

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[When talking to parents of color] don't say you're doing this. The first words out of your mouth should be, 'Mr. & Mrs. whomever, I need your help.' That does so much. It breaks down that wall, it empowers them, it creates a sense of partnership, it lets them know that you haven't decided on what you're going to do or that you're going to commit an act of punishment against their kid because you first want to see what the best course of action is with that parent, because that parent knows their child best. (Rashad)

So I created opportunities for parents to be in my school. Then there was this sense of knowing when there were behavior issues. I didn't want to suspend kids from school. So I would always say to the parents, 'here's the option. You can come sit in the class for an hour or you can come pick up your kid.' I would say 98% of the parents chose to sit in the class with their kids. I'm also a big home visit guy. I believe in the community. I believe in relationships and for me going to someone's door or going to someone's home or being in the kids community it changes the game. (Malik)

Sub-theme: "It's all about the code" (Michael)

Throughout the interviews, these school leaders speak to the philosophies, beliefs and passions which influence their leadership practice. At the core of their beliefs are strong desires to educate all children, but especially children or color, and/or those that are marginalized in their schools. But central to their beliefs is a desire for schools to be places where are students are welcome and safe and where equity and justice are at the core of the work every day.

Michael's narrative captures the essence of what is expressed by all participants at some time in their interview. You may remember that Michael's code is "adapt, adjust, overcome", which was his mother's code, which he intends to honor throughout his life.

It is all about your code, your belief, your belief system. People will follow what you

believe, not what you do. I tell my [students in my education leadership class], "you

better find a code, you better have something you believe in. "That's why you are here

and you and I are willing to sacrifice everything we're about so we can make a difference

in kids lives." In fact, that's why I didn't mind talking to you [for this interview]

because I do believe that. In the end it is not the job you hold, it is the legacy you leave

behind. (Michael)

Next Michael emphasizes the "fight" [social justice work] is something everyone [in the

school or district] has to do every day. It is not a staff development or training; it's daily

decision-making by everyone aligned to the "fight." His comments remind us that the system has

to be ready for the "fight" and be "all in" because "once you engage in this work there is no

turning back, not even for one day."

Every day/Everyone: You need to make sure you're prepared to fight the fight and let

everyone in [the conversation]. If we are going to promote equality that people have a

right to speak their minds without fear...then you better make sure you are prepared for

the fight and let everybody in it. If you get them [White people] cracking' eye about

what you are doing culturally then you've been successful in what you are trying to do

and that's where the 'fight' lies and again continues, it's not a one shot deal. This is

every day and as long as you keep fighting this fight everyday then you are going to

make sure you get there, you might get there slowly, but you'll get working where you

got to go. But you have to believe in the fight [injustice]. (Michael)

Samuel adds to this thinking by suggesting that actions are needed more than words.

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Actions: I believe that actions speak louder than words because people will provide lip service all the time but if they are not going to step up to the plate and do it [for kids] then what's the point. (Samuel)

Rashad speaks to the difficulty of keeping equity work front and center every day.

Challenge: I am positioned to operate from a place of hope because my personal philosophies and my passions are grounded in liberation; looking at education as a primary tool of liberation [from oppression]. Doing that work you can really get stuck in the mud and despair because you are being impacted by the disparities that exist and things that are out of your control in society. (Rashad)

Other school leaders speak to the students being at the core of their beliefs. Miles and Malik speak to schools needing to be welcoming and safe for students and that learning is the important work; Miles speaks to the commitment that is needed to do this work.

I'm a firm believer, and I still am, that all students deserve high quality schools, and I truly believe that my job as the leader is to make sure I deal with things that I can control, which is providing a learning environment where students feel safe, students feel a sense of pride, students feel that... a place where they can be enriched, and I think I've been able to keep that as a lens. In addition to that, by also focusing on high quality instruction, and making sure that that drove everything that we did and that we do, that by doing those things, really allowed us to close the achievement gap between students of color. High quality instruction with an equity focus, those are the things that I believe, if we continue to do those things, the gap would take care of itself, so that's obviously one of my mantras. (Miles)

Philosophically, because I'm a true believer in students, I'm a true believer and ...

that we, as the adults, have the ability to create positive environments and positive

situations for even the most challenging kids, and not everyone believes that, but I do and

I expect that. (Miles)

Malik echoes the belief that schools should be welcoming for all:

The other thing is I believe 100% that when you leave a school that I run, and I lead, that

when you walk out that door you're going to be looking back saying to yourself, "I can't

wait to come back." That's the message that I send to my staff and students every day.

When people visit this school we want them to walk out and say, "I can't wait to get back

there." "I can't wait to come back tomorrow." "Matter fact, I'll be back later on today."

(Malik)

Sub-theme: "I carry a light" (Rashad)

The social justice lens that is used by these school leaders when speaking about their

work is also present when they in discuss their leadership practices. Social justice leaders are

strong advocates for equitable schools and education (Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Gewitz,

1998; Theoharis, 2007). The actions that school leaders engage in are centered on disrupting

school and district practices that marginalize students by race, gender, language ability, sexual

identity, and/or social class (Theoharis, 2007; Frattura & Capper, 2009).

One of the most compelling narratives about social justice leadership was given by

Marcus when he presented two significant documents as examples of what he is fighting for in

his leadership practice. The first document was an article published in a recent issue of Atlantic

magazine titled "Being Black in America Can Be Hazardous to Your Health" (Karzan,

2018). The other was a published NAACP sponsored report card titled, "Fulfill the

Promise." This report card provides nine key statistics that are indicators of the "quest for equality and opportunity" that need to be eradicated to fulfill the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*. For example, the Midwestern state being tracked in this report card is listed as having the widest Black/White gap in the nation, in the following areas: achievement test scores, residential segregation, employment, incarceration, poverty, and well-being of Black children (NAACP, ACLU, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association and Communities United, n.d.). A quest for social justice is the work that sustains Marcus in his education practice. Like Marcus, other participants spoke indirectly of their social justice leadership as they narrated their lived experiences in their school leadership role. These narratives are found throughout the data when participants are speaking of their work to disrupt injustices and advocate for children of color across other themes. Miles's leadership resembles an eclectic approach to his work with social justice as the anchor. In his narration below he speaks of his instructional leadership in the context of closing achievement gaps and then later speaks to a visionary pragmatist leadership which centers his work on the future.

Social Justice Leadership. I think one of my strengths, in particular order was my ability to interact with all stakeholders, regardless of race and ethnicity. I believe my clear focus on ongoing improvement and improving outcomes for student's learning was noted [in my tenure] and has continued to be a focus of mine [throughout my career]. It's one of those things that I viewed as strengths of mine that allowed me, throughout my career, to be successful and to just be steadfast, focused on making improvements for all students. Definitely having an equity and social justice lens to it in terms of closing achievement gaps and opportunity gaps for students has always been a core piece of who I am and my mission. (Miles)

Visionary Pragmatist. I am a visionary pragmatist...this is someone who ... I truly believe that, at the end of the day, all kids are capable and deserving of high quality schools, and as a visionary, I'm always thinking about the future, their future, the future that they will experience, and trying to work towards making sure that they're prepared for that future. And so I'm always thinking about those things and trying to implement practices and strategies and give them that ability as they matriculate through the school. Focusing on restorative practices is an effort, in my mind, to implement social justice in a way, because, typically, there's suspensions, and the data already supports that marginalized students or students of color have disproportionality in suspension rates, which if they're suspended, they're not at school, it impacts their instruction. (Miles)

Rashad also made many statements throughout his interview that reflect his strong social justice leadership practices, but when asked directly about his leadership style, he describes himself as a servant leader.

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Servant Leadership. I am a servant leader. I carry a light, I think that light is probably

grounded in, light helps create hope, to create a sense of comfort, to help kids realize that

the stuff that's going on at home, it matters, we realize it. Socially, emotionally, you may

not be in a good place today, but this light that you see here, it will be on for you

tomorrow, and if you need it, it will be here and then for teachers and in leading teachers,

this is an incredibly difficult job. I think too often, I don't see teachers getting the social

and emotional support that they need, the adequate professional development that they

need, and going back to that funding question, did we really need to spend millions of

dollars on extra security guards in schools and metal detectors and protecting against

school shootings that might not occur?   I'm an introvert and am very service oriented, so

I don't like the spotlight; but I do like to lead causes, initiatives, bring people together

and then put people in the position to shine. "I thrive on that." I'm very much a servant

leader and so when I am giving opportunities or creating opportunities to do that, I think

my best qualities are put on display. (Rashad)

While all ten school leaders have evidence of being socially just leaders in their

narratives, an eclectic approach seems common in their school leadership practice. Like Miles,

Samuel's narrative demonstrates his approach to leadership at his school is dependent upon the

expectations of others and the daily demands his job requires. "I look at myself as an

instructional leader, obviously that is the number one job in our district. Unfortunately, we're

[principals in my district] more behavior managers than we are instructional leaders." Then he

demonstrates his shared leadership practice when he says, "my name is above the door, I'm the

principal but you guys [staff] are going to make or break me, I can't accomplish anything

without you [staff]. They work alongside me." And he speaks to being visionary, "I am

visionary that way, I saw the direction we're [the district] going but also solicited input from

staff too, 'what do you guys want?' If I'm able to provide or at least give you a resource for it

[the new initiative] I'll certainly do that too." (Samuel)

Simon also speaks to his work being influenced by instructional leadership,

Well the fact that student achievement is high, makes our [principals] instructional

leadership component huge. So making sure teachers are meeting standards in the

curricular expectations is a big part of our supervisory role, whether it is educator

effectiveness, formal observations, instructional team meetings, professional

development, or being sure teachers have the resources they need. (Simon)

Theme Four: Navigating White Space

This theme has narratives that include how participants navigate white dominant spaces

both in and out of the school setting. The first sub-theme, "Education has been the limelight for

White privilege" has a strong narrative by Malik that speaks about the hierarchical power

structure found in White organizations. There are also narratives in this sub-theme that speak to

encounters with teachers and parents who are White. Most interesting in this section is a

suggestion that White privilege may be more pronounced in predominantly White school settings

than in greater society. The second sub-theme, "He talks the talk and walks the walk" is another

strong narrative by Rashad that describes a socially just White school leader. While this was a

single narrative on this topic, it is a powerful counter story and therefore was important to be

included.

Sub-theme: "Education has been the limelight for White privilege…" (Malik)

The same conditions that are indicative of White privilege in American society are also

indicators in schooling, especially as school leaders of color navigate predominantly White

school space. These conditions are defined as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism (Young, 2000). Therefore, it is not a surprise that each of these leaders encountered White privilege in their settings and share narratives that illuminate these conditions. The prevalence of Whiteness in American schooling is a strong influencer, such that there are also narratives from these school leaders of color that indicate the prevalence of White socialization (Emdin, 2016).

Malik articulates this prevalence of Whiteness in both American society and in education; therefore I have included his entire narrative on this topic. He also talks about how it influences his own positional power and the work that he engages in as a school leader.

When I first became aware of White privilege, it was almost shell shocking because just the normal everyday things that people do and did, you didn't think that being White kinda caused people to be able to have and do and experience things differently than me as a Black man. But it wasn't until like I actually experienced it in terms of having something done that I may have compared to something that one of my White colleagues or counterparts did and to see the response that was there for them or the way they were treated compared to me. And you see a middle aged or older White male who thinks the rules don't apply to him, or his family, and you see it and you want to say something about it, but at the same time, I know I'm in a position of power myself, but I don't walk around with this badge on my chest or on my forehead to say "I'm in a position of leadership." I'm in a position of power but you see ultimately I'm still not in position of power because there's a White man that leads the district above me. Even above him, there's a White man who leads it above him on the school board. Even above the school

board president, there's a White man that leads our state department of public instruction and then even above him, there's another man that leads the state and I can go on and on.

White Society, the country is White. The country is ran by White people. The country is for White people. For every system that we're in, we develop a White people. So when you really think about Obama being in office, he still had his hands tied because the majority that voted in the house was Republican, so when you think about that, he didn't have as much power as people really thought he had. Education has been the limelight for White privilege to me because that as a Black man, number one there's not too many of us, but then at the same time when there have been issue or concern or challenges or ideas or thoughts that have been put on the table by like myself, there's been others who are White who put those same concerns, challenges, thoughts on the table and the response was totally different. And when I think about power, when you have power, it's taken away from you right away. And when you don't have power, it's really, really, really hard to get it. When I think about all the people who are around me, you think about every school district, you think about every university in the Midwest, or in our area, about businesses, you think about a lot of the structures that are in place, I would say the majority of them are ran by White men, right? With an increase of White women becoming business owners but then at the same times, you have businesses that have to offer their contracts to minority business because whatever quota, they have a quota that they have to meet. (Malik)

Other school leaders in the study also discuss encountering White privilege in the school setting as they deal with predominantly White staff, student, and parent populations; this is

especially noticeable around the issue of disciplining students. Malik points out that the system

is inherently privileged toward Whites by design,

> Then, you have White kids who, everybody's designed, the system is set up, the system is
>
> built to work, and do what it does for our White kids. But, the system is also built not to
>
> support our African American kids, or our Black students, the way that they need to be
>
> supported, differently at times. (Malik)

Miles talks about what it is like to encounter White privileged parents when dealing with

student behaviors. He describes two different situations; one of the situations, referencing

students with disabilities, was a complaint that went as far as a community meeting rallying to

remove the students with disabilities from the regular education classroom. The other situation

demonstrated how White parents expect discipline to play out differently for students who are

African American; this situation alludes to it being 'scarier" when a student of color commits an

offense. Here is how Miles describes the influence of privileged White parents in these

situations:

> They were mostly a handful of White parents, but the students who had challenges were
>
> White, but they were special needs students or students from different socioeconomic
>
> status than them who happened to be White also. I believe that race was being factored
>
> into it, because then there ... anytime there's a ... what was articulated is, for a couple of
>
> those parents, of being too soft on certain kids [students who are African American], and
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> that was articulated not only from the parents or maybe a couple staff members, they all
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> viewed that as being soft on kids if you are not strictly in punitive phases with kids or
>
> punishing kids or trying to help find ways to get rid of kids and to expel kids, and if

you're not in that camp, then those ... that small handful, and it was a very small handful

of parents with a lot of influence.

    When an African-American student did the same thing, no threats, no anything,

they had the knife, and he did pull it out, but he wasn't doing it in a attempt to do

anything, he was just showing it to the kids. Same thing, I handled it the same way I just

handled it with a White student, I had handled the other student, I handled it. But there

was a group of teachers and a couple parents [all White] who wanted the kid to be sent to

expulsion hearing. So that's ... you know, and it became a big deal, because of the ...

because I handled the situation the same way I handled the other situation, and then that

wasn't enough. (Miles)

School leaders also talked about teachers exercising their White privilege in other ways.

Bukka's, Rashad's, Simon's and William's narratives all speak to the underlying negative

perceptions White teachers have toward children who are African American.

    When dealing with teachers [who are White] there is this underlying like, "I'm in a ghetto

    ass school", these are "ghetto kids." Okay, really? Well they aren't raised like you or they

    didn't acquire the skills that you did or they didn't note take like you want or what...you

    know what I'm saying. (Bukka)

    Yeah, so some of that ordinary stuff with teachers is as simple as parent engagement.

    Based on how this child looks, their last name, how they speak, when issues arise in

    class, whether it's behavioral or academic, you don't make any contact home because

    your biases are preventing you from doing it because you're thinking, well, 'they come to

    school like this, they talk like this, obviously, no one is teaching them at home. Why

    should I even waste my time with a phone call or an email home?' No, because you

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wouldn't do that with the kid whose parent is a lawyer, and is in the honors trajectory. (Rashad)

If a teacher faces a challenge of a student that they don't have the toolbox to support, there's always a rush to 'this kid needs support or an IEP'; they don't dig deeper to find out 'okay what is inhibiting this child to learn, could it be me'. (Simon)

"We are doing a lot of equity stuff and it makes my blood boil when [White] staff say, 'well that's acceptable in the Black community'. I think [White] teachers see Black students differently." (William)

William talks about the impact of students who are African American normalizing the respect for White teachers at the expense of students respecting teachers who are African American:

I had students [in the schools where I have worked] that respected their White teachers more than they ever did their Black teachers; their White female teachers. It was just innate that 'White is right'. You [Black students] don't mess around. You [Black students] don't see; you [Black students] don't respect Black. I would say in most cases, Black males and some Black females [teachers] weren't respected because they didn't see them as positive role models [due to normalizing White]." When White females [teachers] came in that's all they saw, all the time, so they felt more comfortable." (William)

Miles and Malik talk about the "double standard" that exists between expectations for school leaders who are African American and their White colleagues.

I have colleagues who are White who go through very similar things, but they send ... they tend to enjoy more ... they tend to enjoy more readily support or ... for those kind of

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situations, whether it's from the parent community or whatever. So the answer is yeah, I think if it was a White principal who handled it, he would have received less ... not to say he still wouldn't have received it, because the politics of the parents were such that that wouldn't have changed, but I think it would've been less of a to-do, because there's always this tendency to, over my career, for White teachers and some White parents always try to connect race by saying you're trying to, again, be soft on "those students," so you're trying not to do X, Y or Z for those students. (Miles)

And I think the double standard has normally played out in a way of negative in that the double standard of being male or female, African American or White, has probably been the biggest and if you're a White male, that double standard plays out way better for you then it plays out for anybody else. And for me, I know I've encountered it and I've called it imperfect when that happens. I truly believe if we don't call it, then it's gonna continue to happen. (Malik)

Sub-theme: "He talks the talk and walks the talk" (Rashad)

Below is a narrative from Rashad who has had experience as an associate principal working with two different White principals, one who was not socially just and one that is. The principal he describes below, who is White, provides a counter story that demonstrates how a principal who is White can leverage their privilege to create schools that are social just and equitable:

The principal I'm working with now is unlike any person I've ever worked for, from a personality standpoint. He's a very type A; he's high energy. He's energetic. Most White high school principals I work for are kind of that way, and they have to be. They get up at four o'clock in the morning. They're working out. They enter a bunch of emails, get to

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work, they're super high energy, and you have to be. But he is different, because of how conscious he is. In his experience, he uses his privilege to promote equity, to implement equity and to put into practice. Race and equity are at the core of his leadership practice. Then he takes it a step further, because so far, when people talk about equity work, there's always the structures, the systems, the culture of equity and inequality but what's missing far too often is the accountability piece. In that sense, he is a dictator. As he likes to say, I am going to call your ass in if you are committing micro aggressions, and I tell you you're doing it, and you do nothing to change. Of our 30 middle school teachers, 20 have been replaced in the last two years. He talks the talk, walks the talk. He carries a big stick. He means it, and so we've brought people in, even if they are not at the level of consciousness that we need them to be with their own White racism, with their own sense of privilege and entitlement. They are on the journey and they want to be coached and you can feel the difference. He provides, he clears the path for me to do that work. (Rashad)

Theme Five: Experiencing Racism

All but one participant in this study described critical incidents regarding race and racism in both society and in their predominantly White settings. Some of the incidents described were memories from childhood, while others were microaggressions and overt acts of racism in the educational setting. The first sub-theme, "Is it the color of my skin' contains narratives describing racism experienced by the participants. The narratives in the next sub-theme, "I get it, I don't get it" are centered on how participants navigated racism in their settings. The next sub-theme, "You are more than" highlights narratives that emerged as a theme around socialy constructed feelings of inadequacy, less than, and not being enough. These narratives reflect a

feeling that school leaders who are African American have to work harder than their White peers. The last sub-theme in this section has narratives that represent the barriers these school leaders have encountered as they seek advancement or change in educational leadership.

Sub-theme: "Is it the color of my skin?" (Marcus)

With the exception of one school leader interviewed, across all other school leaders in the study each shared painful encounters with racism in their predominantly White settings. Some of these encounters were overt, while others were microaggressions. Dante says,

> It would be very difficult for anyone of color to say that they haven't dealt with some version of racism, some version of hardship in some area of their life. And I know as a male, I have certain privileges but I understand it being Black. I always tell my students that at some point in your life, people will remind you that you're Black, that you're a color. (Dante)

What makes Dante's narrative stand out so strongly is an emotional story that he shared about experiencing racism as a young man. Here is this story:

> I think I remember having my first instance of racism at like 12 years old, that I can actually remember. At 12 years old I'm walking across the street just trying to go home after school one day, or after practice or something I was coming from, I don't remember, and just having these White guys yell out of a truck window, "Go home, go back to Africa, you welfare recipient.' Unfortunately at the time, my mother was on welfare. It really touched me personally. (Dante)

Rashad recalls incidents from attending college in a predominantly White rural setting. Rashad was a Resident Assistant for his dorm and remembers this,

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I had a poster [out] on my door with the N word on it or they would put stuff like,

'colored only' over the water fountain on my floor, stuff like that. When those things

occurred I had a good foundation of friendships [White and African American] to help

me. (Rashad)

Malik and Rashad both tell stories of encountering racist individuals early in their educational

careers as teachers in predominantly White settings. Rashad encountered a teaching colleague

that was "found to have made racial comments about me, racial derogatory comments, created a

hostile working environment for me. But the outcome was one of the two of us would not be in

the building next year."

Exacerbating that decision was that Malik was placed in another building as an associate

principal. He had this to say about the outcome, "If the shoe was on the other foot, I lose my job.

If I create a hostile work environment for a female, if I were making racial sexist comments

about that individual and I'm not even going to throw in the fact that I'm African American, and

the statistics support, I lose my job." Rashad encountered a racist principal, here is his story:

My principal I had there [predominantly White school] was, he was racist. I'll just be

honest. I had a professor visiting from [a local university], he [the principal] was giving

the professor a tour and I was the only Black teacher [in this school] and I was the first

Black core academic teacher they ever had. That was a shock. He brought the professor

to my room in the middle of teaching, interrupts my teaching, goes, 'Professor, so and so,

this is Rashad. He's our token Black teacher,' he says this in front of a class of 28

kids. The professor was of color, and so she and I looked at each other and kind of gave

each other that 'this idiot and then I'm sorry look'. Without even talking to each other, we

communicated with our eyes on that. (Rashad)

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Samuel describes microaggressions that he experiences in his setting as "facial expressions, crossing of the arms, lack of eye contact, and engaging in other behaviors while he is talking." He also says: "When you are not getting that engagement from White people, I mean that is the sign [racism]. Bukka describes the subtleties of racism this way, "There's this questioning, "well we didn't do things like this before" or the big knock against me is "well he likes all the bad kids" …well that's code for, "he's real popular with the minority students. You know people talk in codes like that." Rashad describes microaggressions from parents:

It feels like it comes across in how they wrote emails to me or responded to me in emails, how they would leave messages on my phone. They would question my knowledge and actually from a few Jewish parents, because I'm not Arabic or Muslim but my first name is Arabic of origin, I was made to feel uncomfortable with some of our Jewish parents. (Rashad)

Bukka and Rashad also talked about the racism that is inherent in the White school systems. Bukka spoke to the inequities in a survey that is used to evaluate principals; these surveys are for both staff and the parent community to give feedback on how satisfied they are with the principal and the school. Bukka says,

Here's my problem with it. The way the questions are being asked invokes a certain kind of response. People get to make comments and stuff like that. And so people you confront, you know, there's racial stuff in there [the survey]. (Bukka)

Rashad speaks to the inequities in school funding that is representative of racist school systems.

Yes, there's lots of research that says that funding isn't the end all be all, I agree but when I walk into a school on 12th and Green and it doesn't have a gym, it doesn't have green space, their cafeteria is also their gym and they're short staffed, teachers are quitting

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every six weeks, but I go about 12 minutes north to my school and funding is $16,000,

$17,000 a kid, and the high school is $19,000 a kid and to see you can eat food off the

floor, there are several gyms, there's tons of green space, there are labs and machines and

iPads. Money does make a difference in terms of the opportunity to engage with 21st

century learning materials and having kids to learn material, process content and to create

content on a 21st century platform is critical, and especially when we talk about closing

some of the job gaps that exist, all these jobs that go unfulfilled because we don't have

enough kids prepared for them. (Rashad)

Sub-theme: "I get it. I don't get it." (William)

In Malik's story we learned that he was moved out of the building, instead of the

offender. The offender remained in her position for several years after. Even though the

associate principal position he was offered seemed to be a promotion it did not feel that

way. Malik left the school district and accepted a similar position in another school district.

Leaving by choice is one way these school leaders have responded to racism. There are real

consequences to navigating racism in these environments. For some, like Malik, his health was

jeopardized; others, like Samuel have had their voice marginalized, and others have experienced

emotions such as frustration and anger, and yet others like Marcus, Simon, and Michael have

found ways to assimilate for self-preservation.

What really forced me to do that [request an investigation] is because I had just turned 30

and my blood pressure was really high. So I go to the doctor, it was really high, he goes,

"wait 5 minutes," we check again and then it was even higher. So then he said, 'I'm

going to put you on this pill for the next 30 days. I need you to come in four times over

the next month to have your blood pressure checked." It never went down, so they upped

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the medication. At that point, I said, this is affecting my health, so then I went to the HR director and told her what's happening. (Malik)

There were consequences to Rashad's story as well. He soon after was moved into an instructional coach position and then an associate principal position in that same school. But there were was also more immediate harm for Rashad when he had to put aside his feelings to help his students understand.

Then I had to help them [the students] process it and kind of remove myself from the harm that was done towards me, so compartmentalize my feelings there and be open enough to have that conversation with them [the students] in that environment, in that safe space [for the students]. I was happy that they felt comfortable enough to have that conversation with me at that time. (Rashad)

Marcus also describes what it felt like to experience racism in his school setting.

When you are a person of color, and things happen to you, sometimes some of us tend to think, "Is it because of the color of my skin?" And especially being the first and only …That often got into my mind. [Regarding a parent complaint] I'm thinking, "Would she [White parent] have done this [filed a complaint] with a White [principal]." And you quickly go from shock and disbelief to anger, and so because I knew that my superintendent had my back, and I thanked this parent [who gave me a heads up], who by the way, this parent was a White parent too, that parent said, "This is how she [White parent] starts to stir the stuff [race] up." (Marcus)

Samuel, too, has been impacted by racism, "When I'm in places I am pretty dialed in these days. I used to be pretty extroverted, now I am relatively introverted. I would rather just sit back

and observe and take things in." Samuel's voice has been silenced. William exposes his anger and frustration after experiencing disrespectful behavior from his White teachers:

> I get it. I don't get it. Like for me being in this role is like, 'man do people [White teachers] realize I understand all these fucking nuances in the shit they are saying. It's fucking degrading, but do I care? No, I don't give a shit because they are not controlling my destiny. But how long do I let it go without me either just leaving or blowing up like the angry Black man. (William)

Dante speaks of the unconscious bias that White teachers have that could explain some of the reasons for why they respond to school leaders and students who are African American the way that William describes.

> It's one of those situations where, I always talk about and I look at and am knowledgeable about it now that it's a simplistic bias that happens in school where I don't think teachers [White] teachers necessarily go to school to become teachers and want to carry bias with them. I think the reality is that most don't even understand they have it [racial bias], don't understand that it can be passed down generationally, that it can be passed down through propaganda, through what you see in the media. It can be passed down through what you see in movies and what you see on TV, and what you see in reality and I think that it is very hard to be a Black person and at some point not experience that [racial bias]. (William)

In some situations these school leaders may navigate racism by engaging in denial, colorblindness or assimilating to White culture often as self-preservation. Simon, who works in a super-majority White school, had to think about any critical race incidents:

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I'm just trying to think back, if it happened, if there were any issues [about race] I know

they happened once kids stepped off the bus and were back in their apartment complex

and there were some issues there. Never necessarily spilled into school, but I was aware

of them happening. Once again, me being the face of this school, people and kids can

check it [race issues] at the door. (Simon)

Marcus describes a situation early in his career that at the time he did not think was an act of

racism but years later sees it differently:

A teacher comes to me "You know, obviously you don't really know me. You're new

here, but you have a meeting coming up that you call for all of us." She said, "I want to

tell you how that meeting is going to play out because there are some people that are

trying to undermine you." And she said, "I know that sounds crazy, and you can choose

to either think that I'm a crazy individual, or that I'm looking out for your good, but I

want you ... You're our leader, I want you to ... Okay." And I listened, and don't you

know that son of a gun, it played out exactly how she had told me. So that, again, three

months ago, I'm just playing with this. "Well, I would do this, and I would ..." And now

I'm having to actually live that and that was really surprising. At the time, I didn't think

about the race component to the scenario, but you know, I'm so many years removed

from it now. (Marcus)

Lastly, Michael shares a strategy he used to navigate his predominantly White college as one of

the first students who is African American on campus.

It was different but at the same time I had to adjust [to the predominantly White setting],

so I did something kind of crazy. I took the one guy [on TV] who I thought was funny

and the guy was named Hawkeye Pierce from MASH. So what I did was look at all the

MASH episodes, to see what Hawkeye Pierce does so I can emulate how to work with White people, so I said, "let me try that" it turned out that it was somewhat successful. (Michael)

Sub-theme: "You are more than" (Michael)

There are other consequences to working as a male who is African American in a predominantly White setting, even if you are in a leadership role. Most of the school leaders in this study shared stories or moments of self-doubt, having to prove themselves, feelings of inadequacy and less than. Michael spoke about it as a known theory:

It is a theory that some people possess and even in today's society are less than and it's one of the things we talk about in every school I've been in I want to make sure we tell people [students who are African American], "don't let anyone tell you what you're less than. You are more than." (Michael)

Just as race is socially constructed, so too, are the feelings of inadequacy that are genuinely felt by these proven accomplished school leaders who are African American.

For Rashad, his feelings of inadequacy started while he was a freshman in college. Rashad was the class valedictorian in high school, yet when he arrived at a predominantly White campus and received his first "D" grade ever, he struggled with these feelings:

That was my first struggle in getting over my insecurities and knowing I can compete with these smart White kids I'm in class with. They are having these discussions and talking about things that I didn't know about, literature I hadn't read in high school, because we only had two AP courses [in science]. I just felt defeated, really self-

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conscious." The professor that gave me the "D" built me back up and I finished the

course with a B. (Rashad)

For Marcus, he has difficulty describing what it feels like but knows how he responds,

To always be on guard. It's just. It's a hard feeling to describe, but you just never know.

So it forces you to take extra steps. It forces you to be that much better. It forces you to

be that much better. (Marcus)

Below he narrates a time when he was second-guessing himself:

And if I'm picturing the board, they were all White, some men, and some women.

Interesting enough, when I had to go to the board meeting, once they accepted my

resignation, one of the gentlemen who was in the community, said, "You know, I really

didn't think that you could do it. You were so young." It had nothing to do with being

young. He would be a fool to say it had to do with race. (Marcus)

Others, like Malik describes the enormity of having to prove himself in this way:

I think the bar is 15 to 20 times higher for me and I would say it better be perfect, as a

Black man, you have to be perfect. You have to do everything perfect. Although there's

that line that, "oh we all make mistakes," "nobody's perfect" I'll be honest with you, that's

BS if you are African American. You have to be the best. You have to be better than

everyone else around you. Better than those who look different than you, talk different

than you, write different than you, read different than you, whatever. You have to be

better than perfect. (Malik)

Malik also gives an example of how people respond to him in social settings that make

assumptions of "less than."

Yeah, I'll give you one that's not like actually in the building, but I will give you one that kind of takes the community or takes the, I want to say the world, by storm, almost. And that's when I was out and about and people kind of ask what I do. And I always say that I'm an educator, and then I try to continue to have a conversation with someone else that I was talking to or whatever, but then the person will say, "What do you teach?" And then I would say, "Well, I don't actually teach a class, I'm actually a principal." And then people would be like, "Whoa, oh. Wow, that's... wow." And to me I didn't initially, right away I would take that as a "Hmm, well what does that truly mean?" That "wow" and that "oh." Like the "oh" is what really got me more than the "wow." The "oh" made me feel like maybe I'm not supposed to be in that position because I'm Black. (Malik)

William talks about how his self-doubts and feelings of inadequacy showing up when he is in front of his predominantly White staff. He also points out that these doubts are not as present with students as they are with the adults.

We [Black males] were trained young to be better than everyone else, so we had to be more aware, more acute to the senses. It's weird, because for some strange reason I feel I'm still not good enough. With all that I have done and accomplished, I still feel like people [White teachers] look at me like I don't have a skill set." I've had teachers say, "he doesn't know x, y, z" and I have had students say the opposite, "man, Mr. Green, you should talk more and share your philosophies with teachers." Sometimes I doubt myself when I am in front of the staff; what do they see when they see me? "So for me to continue [in my leadership position] I gotta produce more than my counterparts [who are White]. Because if I don't, I can either be replaced - which I doubt, because there are not many of us [Black administrators]." (William)

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Sub-theme: "I believe [racial] barriers exist" (Miles)

As we know, White dominance perpetuates inequalities in American schooling even in the present day (Howard, 2002). As previously referenced, one of those inequities is the disparity between the number of educators in leadership roles who are Black. This is a consequence of the historical racism and inequities in American schooling that has dire consequences for leaders who are African American desiring to have control over their career path, which includes pursuing advancement. With only nine percent of school principals in American schooling identifying as Black or African American and the large number of school districts across America needing educational leadership, it would seem a leader of color would be highly sought after; yet there are very few persons of color leading school districts today in the role of the superintendency. Therefore, it is surprising in this study that there was so little interest on behalf of these school leaders to pursue that position. This is especially interesting since half of these school leaders either have a doctorate or are in some stage of working toward their doctorate. What is even more surprising is the challenges and barriers the one participant encountered when pursuing a superintendency across America as he did not have any restricting parameters as to where he would locate.

While one participant was actively pursuing superintendency, others in the study were expressing with certainty that they do not have aspirations for this position. One school leader talked about his desire to move from elementary education to a secondary principalship in a suburban setting, and how even with that desire was encountering challenges. Others like Simon, who has been in his position for over ten years, desires a change but not at the expense of giving up working with children.

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Samuel and Miles both tell stories that enable one to understand some of the barriers to their desired advancement; it is hard to ignore race as a factor in this pursuit. First Samuel talks about his interview process as he pursued a principalship in a suburban high school.

There's something that has always kind of been there when I've looked at different positions. I mean I've interviewed all over the suburbs across this part of the state. Sometimes it was financially motivated but until recently it has been to get closer to my home. When I look at districts, I interviewed a couple times this past summer and I don't know, one of them was in the country, a K-8 school, but again you know not necessarily a population that reflects my ethnicity. I got in the door and interviewed and I got a feeling shortly after sitting down... I mean I was thinking about the time I had left in the interview it [my race] was obvious to me because I've been trained in results coaching where I've learned about mindset. You know, "some of the beamers that people were putting up, the nonverbal face, body language, gestures, I knew they were interested in something else... that was fine because I was sharing some thoughts on things and they are asking my thoughts, like I knew already it was not going to work. I'm not looking for a job now but when I think about what would interest me, there's got to be a level of diversity [in the school population]. (Samuel)

Similar to Samuel, Miles too speaks of race as a possible factor in securing advancement. He also questions the lack of representation of minorities in superintendent positions across a state that he lives in, which is not unlike other states in America. Mile's has well over 20 years working in predominantly White settings as a school or other district level leader; he is currently an assistant superintendent. His extensive experience and proven success as an educational leader does support his need to question if his race is a barrier.

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There was a time I attempted to get an assistant superintendency... it might have been a directorship... and I didn't get that. I believe at that point in time, it was a result of ...there may be some factors that I believe may be race could have played a role in it because at that point in time I had many years of experience as a school leader and the individual [White] that was selected, I'm not sure why one individual was selected over the other but I felt that it always left a question mark in my mind in terms of why I was not given consideration [over the White candidate]. There have been two situations in two other school districts...where I was a finalist for the superintendency, so I made it to the last round in their process, both communities were predominantly White. So you know, having been an educator for 24 years having lived mostly in this [Midwestern] state, there has not been in this state more than three minority superintendents at any one time, and most often there is only one or two, and there are over 424 school districts in this state. So in my mind the lack of leadership opportunities just either has not been attained or I believe barriers exist that prevent those things [Black educators being hired as superintendents] from happening, and it's not that there are not individuals who are capable of leading and who can successfully lead and/or have successfully led in predominantly White settings. (Miles)

Marcus and Simon talk about their desire to work with children and do the "real work" as counter intuitive to taking a superintendent position. Since both of these individuals have their doctorate and have many years of successful experience in education leadership they are prepared for the next level of leadership. Simon also has experience leading state and national organizations and describes himself as "visionary" and "big picture."

Now the thing that's intriguing about the superintendent is that when I did do the

doctorate thing there is a point when you take the coursework that goes toward the

superintendent license and that's attractive. In hindsight, I go, "okay maybe I should

have just taken those two courses because I would have been in the flow." But let's be

honest with you, I have zero desire to run a school district. I have zero desire to be a

dean at a college because I think the higher you go up, you know the harder it is to stay

connected to the real work. I hate to say that but I just...yeah. (Marcus)

I've always had something to aspire to. If it hasn't been a job transition, it's been a

degree or certification and I've maxed out all my licenses. At no point am I getting

another doctorate or anything of that nature. I at one time aspired to be a superintendent

or a district level something. If I can't, and I know this more than ever now, if I can't be

with kids directly on a daily basis, I will not leave what I am doing now. (Simon)

Theme Six: Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a critical race tenet that considers how the examination of race,

gender, poverty, national origin, and sexual orientation play out in various settings (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2001). It also considers how the combination of these identifying variables may

further disadvantage individuals. Seven out of ten of the participants in this study spoke of being

children of poverty and shared narratives that described the impact of this condition in their lives.

The first sub-theme, "I always had to wait…" speaks specifically to the consequence of poverty

of having to wait or go without having to go without. This sub-theme also includes narratives

that reflect the combing effects of race and poverty and how this resulted in special education

placement for two of the participants.

Sub-theme: "I always had to wait…" (Bukka)

Critical race methodology challenges the separate discourses of race, poverty, and gender as this theoretical framework shows how these three elements intersect to affect the experience of persons of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). All of the participants in this study were male, which affords them some level of privilege but different from privilege ascribed to White males, as these individuals understand marginalization based on the intersection of race and poverty.

One of the most painful aspects of witnessing the narratives of these accomplished individuals was hearing their stories of poverty and how the ignorance from individuals and groups of individuals who are White sought to further marginalize and oppress. I've already shared Dante's story of experiencing racism as a child, which was especially painful as his mother was a recipient of welfare by no choice of her own. Other participants shared similar stories but also talked about how poverty and race also intersected with the behavior of males who are African American, which also made them vulnerable to special education placements in their schooling.

What made these stories bearable is that they are really stories of triumphant young men that fought a system of injustice for themselves and others to become the accomplished individuals they are today. At different times in their lives there were also heroes, mentors, and influencers that championed their struggle. Michael demonstrates this dichotomy when he first talks about how humbling poverty is and then tells a story of overcoming childhood barriers from living in the inner city:

I heard this comment once, "when you're poor there is a lot of nothing to go around and so when you have a lot of nothing to go around you don't have time to be arrogant. There ain't nothing to be arrogant about'." "[So when you are poor] you see

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the other side, so I am going to tell you a story about when I was a kid. When I was a kid [from the inner city], I remember going downtown [large American city] and I would actually walk by this place at certain times and I'd see White people lined up to go see a play. And they were all dressed up and I was down there wearing my clothes from inner city. I'd go back to my neighborhood and I said to myself, "you know, one day I'm going to be the guy going to that play" and when I could afford Phantom of the Opera tickets, I bought 8th row center aisle. I didn't give a damn what those tickets cost. And sure enough, I took my daughter and I said we are getting dressed to the nines. We had on shirts and ties and everything and I'm walking in there and would you believe I saw some minority kids out there, some Black kids and I looked at them and said, 'don't worry, in a few years you'll take my place [in this line]'. (Michael)

Bukka had a passion and gift for music in childhood that still exists today in his adult life as he is also a notable and accomplished musician. He describes a time in his life when he was desperate to play in the band at his school and how the "waiting" that comes from being poor impacted his life.

Because I was a welfare kid, right? So back in those days, you got lunch tickets. So every Monday, you'd get your lunch... So you already knew who the welfare kids because we got lunch tickets, and then, so... I wanted to be in band. And, but also, that I could not ... Mom didn't have money to rent the instrument at the beginning of school. So I had to wait for a couple of paychecks. Well, that's a month. And so I had to sit in the trumpet section for about six weeks until I could afford to pay the five dollars to get the instrument. And so he [my band director] understood my frustration. Because I hated being poor. That was something I didn't like. Because we talked about that. And so, I

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used to cry because I always had to wait. It wasn't that I didn't get it. But it was always, I

had to wait. And so I was upset about that. Because here's one more time, I'm in high

school, and I gotta wait. Because I used to be a poor kid. So my lens, it's much different.

Because I know what's out there for a kid that has potential, and that can stick with it.

(Bukka)

Miles talks about being a school leader and navigating the politics around families of White

privilege and families of poverty, as children from both socioeconomic status attended his

school.

Most often I had to navigate the politics mostly around socioeconomic status and, yes,

race as well. But because I live in this Midwestern state, and no disrespect to this

Midwestern state, it's been a part of my ongoing life. The racial piece has always just

been something that I've had to develop thick skin around and ways to navigate the

world. So that part wasn't the problem, it was the politics around affluent parents and

their perception even of students who looked like them, or families who looked like them,

because they weren't affluent. Poor White families were perceived just as poorly as

African-American families, or sometimes poorly treated. (Miles)

The following narratives are stories where poverty and race intersected to further the

marginalization of participants in their own educational programming. In these narratives some

participants talk about how they were misplaced in special education programs. We heard

Malik's story in the participant introduction section where he described being inappropriately

placed in a special education program for "mildly retarded" children in middle school but then

enrolled in a private high school at his mother's assistance and went on to college where he was

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on the Dean's List every semester. Dante tells a similar story about his [White] teachers trying

to place him in special education as they did not understand the effects of poverty.

> I can remember my brother being EBD [Emotional Behavioral Disability] or ED
>
> [Emotional Disability] at that time. I can remember in third grade they tried to label me
>
> special education because I was a boisterous kid. It was interrupted though because a
>
> teacher that did not even have me as a student named Mrs. B. Mrs. B. was the only
>
> African American teacher in my elementary school. Mrs. B. was like, "there's nothing
>
> wrong with Dante. This is a kid whose mother is on drugs, who's going through some
>
> things, and so when Dante comes to school he might have some issues. He hasn't eaten.
>
> He hasn't done this, he hasn't done that, he's wearing the same clothes he's had on for
>
> three days. These are issues he's going through in real life and you're taking those issues
>
> and turning them into behavioral issues, which he doesn't have. Look at this kid's test
>
> scores. Look at these things; this is a very intelligent young man and we're trying to put
>
> a label on him." (Dante)

 School leader participants also serve as advocates for children who have been marginalized in

their schools. Bukka calls for action as he speaks about children who are not given the

opportunity to read at grade level are at risk for being placed in special education programs.

> There's no sense of urgency in education that the majority of kids can't read. Where's the
>
> outrage? It's okay for my kid to go to school where nobody's proficient in reading?
>
> Because they don't have the information. It only comes out one a year in the newspaper,
>
> and then you can just say as a superintendent, "Well, we're working on making some
>
> change." Blah, blah, blah, blah. And it's gone. Right? It's been 30 years. Look at the
>
> highest incidence of African American males in special ed. (Bukka)

Dante speaks to the effect of children of color and poverty as possibly contributing to the inability of schools to have all children read at grade level. Like Bukka, his narrative calls for action to address marginalization and oppression in the American education system.

> Not that African Americans are poor people; we're some of the biggest spenders on the planet. But take away teachers, high quality teachers. When you think about it, most of our school buildings have a significant number of teachers who are working on ...who don't have degrees in education but are working towards it so you automatically have students who are getting instruction on the back end or they're already behind because the educators they have access to are already behind. (Dante)

Theme Seven: Champions, mentors, and heroes

Each participant spoke in some way about persons that influenced their lives in a positive way. Some of these influencers were family members, while others were educators in their own education background. Some of these individuals were mentors to the participants, others were those that championed them throughout their lives, and others were heroes for having help to uplift them out of disadvantaged circumstances. The sub-theme below provides narratives that describe these influencers. Included in these narratives are counter stories of educators who are White that made a difference in the lives of these participants.

Sub-theme: "Only one person I ever had that is a true champion was my mother"

(Michael)

The participants in this study spoke often and enthusiastically about individuals that championed them throughout their education career. Many of these champions are family members, such as mothers and wives, while others are teachers and other educators that were part of their early development as a child or later as they became an educator themselves. Yet

others had mentors that pushed them along their path. Regardless of who championed the school leaders in this study, today they are, each one, highly educated and accomplished individuals as evidenced by their education and leadership positions.

Almost all of the participants, at one time or another spoke to a White teacher, administrator, and in one situation, secretary, as having been influential in their being. Below are a couple narratives that reflect what these people, who are White, did to nurture these school leaders at various points in their development. The individual's Dante and Bukka speak about are both teachers from their elementary and high school years, respectively and even as retired educators still remain in their lives today. It should be noted that these are counter-stories to a traditional education where students who are African American are often left behind by their White, middle class teachers.

> Now what you hear teachers saying, it's poverty. Or it's the family. Or it's trauma. Or it's because the parents aren't reading to them at home. What I can tell you is I experienced every one of those things to some degree as a child, significantly, and I can read and write at grade level. And it's because of the teachers that I had in elementary school who I can name by name. Mrs. H. I love her to death, had her for fifth and sixth grade and Mrs. C. All these teachers that I had in elementary school refused to allow me to fail. (Dante)

Dante goes on to describe a specific teacher that championed him as a student. One characteristic he says that made her especially able to reach a classroom of students that did not look like her, was her willingness to cross over to their culture and way of doing; not expecting the students to adapt to White norms. He has maintained a relationship with Mrs. H. to this day; he had dinner with Mrs., H. the evening before our interview. He describes her this way:

She's a retired teacher, but she is one of the major reasons I am who I am today. What Mrs. H. was able to show me, in sixth grade was a teacher with one of the most blonde-haired blue-eyed women on this planet. She was able to be in a very diverse elementary classroom where you had Black, Hispanic and White students at about the same clip, and she was able to give us something of ourselves that crossed that ethnic boundary all the time. She never left anybody out and it made you feel a part of her class. (Dante)

Similarly, Bukka had a teacher in high school champion him, his band teacher who he spent a lot of time with and went above and beyond to nurture Bukka's desire to play and compose music. Mr. W. was also a White male and here is Bukka's narrative on how he made a difference:

He pulled me out of class. "Bukka ..." You know, because I'm a senior, and I'm playing around. "Get in the hallway. You think you something special?" Big afro. Just wait, you're gonna go to college, man. You're gonna be nothing, you keep playing around. Big man on campus." You know. Getting in my shit. For real. And I'm like, "Man, I'm sorry." He says, "You're going away to school. You don't know what's coming. You know, it's all these White people up here, that's going to be looking at you." And you know he went into this whole thing. Like, "because they care for you, and you're a great guy, and I want people to see that. They're not going to think you're a great guy if you're in there fooling around in class." I still remind him of it to this day. Because he still comes to my shows. "Remember when ..." You know? "It's because I love you, man." We're still friends. (Bukka)

Simon was mentored by three different superintendents on his leadership journey. They were all White and two out of three were female. Simon describes these individuals as, "very,

very strong superintendents that had the trust of their school boards" and as "protecting him" and, "giving him autonomy." He credits their "networking" and connections" with his success in education today.

Michael also credits White administrators for giving him the opportunities to lead schools. "These were the administrators that hired me as the first Black educator in their building, they took a risk. Michael also says, "one thing [White administrators] can do is open doors and trust the person of color to do what you hired them to do. I had administrators that allowed me to run, allowed me to play and create [organizations for students who are African American]."

Samuel says that his secretary is someone he can always count on to champion the work of him and his school. "She's been here since the school opened. We get along fantastically. It's amazing. She would champion 98% of the staff with parents, local police community; we've got partnerships with a local church, all different kinds of things because of her.

Yet others, such as Rashad and Michael, told stories of how family members of color inspired and championed them throughout their lives and work as an educator.

Yeah, so I will start with someone I know and it's my granny. This is her [he shows a picture of his granny to interviewer]. She is 86 years old. She grew up in the south, was born in 1932, maybe 33, she has experienced a lot of sexism, racism, loss of family; she lost her mother when she was nine and had to raise kids. She lives on the far side of [large urban city] in a gang infested environment where because of who she is, her house is seen as a neutral zone, and so when people are there, like kids from the neighborhood, they know they are safe. Every time I go home I say to her, ""you are a blessing to them. You are serving a purpose, whether it's God or whomever we believe in the universe,

whoever, you are serving a purpose and you have for so many people for so long.' She's

my number one inspiration. (Rashad)

Only one person I ever had that is a true champion was my mother. My dad left us. My

mother was a fighter. My code is based on my mother. Based on the things she told me.

So that was my true champion. (Michael)

Malik credits his wife with being where he is at today, "I wouldn't be here today without her. I

wouldn't be here today without her being that teacher she was, and I got to see that. I didn't want

anything to do with kids. I didn't want anything to do with education, until I went into her

classroom. She not only made me a believer in education but she made me a believer that all

kids can learn."

Theme Eight: Influence of a White Interviewer

One of my research questions was, "Would you answer these questions differently if I,

the interviewer, were not a White person?" This simple question proves to be quite complex and

might be best answered first by understanding how these school leaders of color came to

participate in my study. While I started with a sample size that included participants from across

three states, emails and phone calls were not sufficient. Rather, it was apparent very early in my

recruitment that my insider status as an educational leader and my relationships with school

leaders of color were going to be important to recruiting participants of color to my study. As it

turned out, it was only through relationships and networks that allowed me the privilege of

having ten participants of color participate in my study. There was no extrinsic incentive to

participate in my study; my anecdotal notes reflect my own inner conflict and guilt for asking

these participants of color to entrust me, a White person, with their stories and counter-stories.

It is a very humbling experience to be a White interviewer, asking persons of color to be vulnerable and honest with me, knowing the study ultimately was of benefit to me. Simon responded, "It wouldn't matter if you were male, female, Black, White, no. Because it is my story, it's my viewpoint, and it doesn't matter who'd be sitting there, I'd say the same." However, Miles took it a bit further and explains why it was important that he knew of me as a socially just educator. He also speaks to his desire to help others, including people who are White, to develop a socially just lens:

No, but I have a relationship with you, I know that you have an equity lens so it makes it easier to discuss it. Would I be more careful with my words if it were not you, maybe not but I might be more selective with words. I would not have opened up with someone I did not know as well. But I'm at the age and place in my career that I think about how I can help others; then if this helps a social justice journey, then I want to share my experience as a leader and others can draw the appropriate conclusions. If you don't have an equity lens it could put me in a vulnerable position; you could use my words against me or in a way that could damage. Some stories and truths can be viewed as weakness if they don't understand. So there has to be trust and yes, I am trusting you in this conversation because I know you have a socially just lens. (Miles)

Similar to Miles, Michael also felt his conversation with me was honest based on knowing we were in the "fight" [social justice work] together. He also spoke to my guilt for asking school leaders of color to trust me in this work:

Well let's just say this, if you just use this interview to get your paper written and get a degree then yeah you are like most of those White people but if you do something with

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this for the "fight" and I see you again and you are doing this work, then I know you are

not one of those White people." (Michael)

Samuel speaks to how his experience navigating White culture his whole life makes it difficult to

know:

Yes, perhaps I may have answered some of the questions differently if you were a person

of color. It's difficult to say as I have towed the White/Black line my entire life. I was

comfortable with you so I answered freely and honestly. (Samuel)

My insider status as an educational leader with years of experience in the field of

education was helpful to gaining access to participants. However; equally as important was that

other educators that these individual participants trusted could speak on my behalf that earned

me the interview and their trust in speaking. As mentioned in the methodology section, I began

each interview presenting a concept map of the study which included an explanation of the use of

a critical race lens for the study, which was also intended to earn the trust of participants.

Summary

This chapter was centered on presenting the narrative data gathered from interviews with

ten school leaders who identified as African American or Black and are working or have worked

in a predominately White school setting. The chapter opened with an introduction of each

participant that included their journey as education leaders and a description of their

predominantly White school settings. Next the chapter presented the analysis of the scripted data

in 8 common themes that ran across the ten participant narratives. The analysis of this data was

conducted by coding data while keeping issues of race and racism in the forefront as necessary

for a study using a critical race methodology.

Overall, the presentation of the data in this chapter was to capture the lived experiences of these school leaders of color as they navigate their White school spaces. In all aspects of this chapter the intention was to elevate the voices of the ten school leaders of color by allowing their powerful narratives to tell their stories and counter-stories. While the data in this chapter was organized around common themes, the research questions were considered throughout the data analysis and will spearhead the discussion of findings in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

It seems prudent that district and school leaders, who are White, would be wise to first do

an honest and critical examination of school cultures and systemic processes in order to

develop the trust, support, and collegial working environments needed to support the

expertise of teachers and school leaders of color. (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Ladson-

Billings, 2006)

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the lived experiences of school

leaders who are African American working in predominantly White school settings by listening

to their stories and counter-stories. Also significant to this study is my acknowledgement that I

am a White researcher hearing the stories and counter-stories of these school leaders who are

African American. Therefore it has been important to this study that I have used a critical race

lens and have consciously exercised caution in not using my voice to speak for the participants of

color.

In this chapter the major findings related to the lived experiences of these school leaders

who are African American will be discussed using a critical race lens. These findings are first

aligned to the main research question and the supporting sub-questions. Therefore, this chapter

opens with an overview that specifically addresses the main research question and each of the

sub-questions for the study, which are: What are the lived experiences of school leaders who

identify as African American or Black working in predominantly White settings; How do school

leaders who are African American make sense of their experiences working in a predominantly

White school setting; What unique leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies do these leaders

employ when working in a predominantly White setting; How would you answer these questions differently if I (the interviewer) were not White?

In the second part of this chapter, I will present the major findings from the study and discuss each finding through the lens of critical race theory. The common themes that have emerged will serve as both catalysts and evidentiary support for the findings. These findings will also be informed by the significance of this study, which is to uplift the voices of school leaders who are African American such that district administrators, who are mostly White and male, leading in these predominantly White settings, can be called to action to disrupt their organizations so that all children receive an equitable education and adults of color working in their organizations have a safe space to do their work. The final part of this chapter will include the recommendations and limitations of the study.

Rationale for Significance

By listening to the stories and counter-stories of the participants in this study, these White district leaders can move beyond superficial management of the increasing diversity in their schools and district to doing the imperative work of disrupting implicit and explicit barriers in their organizations that perpetuate racial inequities (Diamond, 2006; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2006; Madsen & Mabokela, 2002; Vidal-Ortiz, 2017). These district leaders who are White are targeted, as it is their hierarchical authority that is connected to the management of resources, which unless disrupted, often are differential to advantaged racial groups (Ray, 2019). The authority of the superintendent is largely responsible for the hiring, evaluation, and retention of school leaders. Ultimately, all persons at the district level of administration should be capable of absolving their power and disrupting their White dominant educational systems so that all students who are African American can truly receive the equitable

education they deserve. As educational leader Gutierrez says in an interview for *The Atlantic*, "When the superintendent says, 'I believe in equity,' we're going to talk about race... we're going to name it, we're not going to be afraid of it… [that] sets the stage for [others] on the ground to do the same" (Anderson, 2016, n.p.).

Interpretation of Findings

As mentioned previously, the entirety of this study encompasses the main research question regarding the lived experiences of these school leaders who are African American. The research sub-questions related to how these leaders make sense of their work, are challenged, and lead when working in these predominantly White settings, is as expected, a subset of the larger lived experiences. Therefore, as the discussion of the sub questions unfold, so too does the answer to the main research question.

Overview of Research Question Findings

The lived experiences of these ten school leaders who are African American working in predominantly White schools have many parallels to what they experience as members of a White dominant society. The narratives of these school leader participants reveals the experiences of being the first or one and only person to enter into White dominant school spaces. In doing so, they have experienced having "all eyes on me" as they work in an environment with few other adults who look like them. The experience of this "watching" often leads them to an existence that becomes normalized for them, which is that of overcompensating for an environment that perpetuates the feeling of being "less than." These feelings of "less than' are reflective of majoritarian stories that are intended to keep minorities in their place in White hierarchical organizations. And as in society, they, too, experience overt acts of racism in these predominantly White school settings that bring experiences of harm such as: being questioned

by teachers who are White, having to prove self to others who are White, being overlooked for advancement, having their voiced silenced, and having to leave to protect personal well-being.

Fortunately these school leaders have expertise in navigating dominant White spaces; therefore they are skilled in making sense of these experiences so that what could have been construed as a barrier or challenge becomes an asset or a benefit to the White space they are working in. These individuals make sense of the predominantly White school setting by knowing when and how to use their cultural capital to navigate between both the White culture and their own race. Often times, this navigating required these African American school leaders to assimilate into their predominantly White cultures and accept the normalization of the way these White spaces do business. Then, other times, these school leaders very consciously engage in code switching so that they may be able to use their racial identities to work with parents and students of color, and yet continue to engage with the Eurocentric, White teaching staff and a dominant White parent community. In addition, these leaders make sense of their work by knowing how to leverage their positional power as role models to break down racial stereotypes for both children who are White and African American.

Another way they make sense of their work is through their pilgrimage of social justice. These school leaders view their leadership practice as visionary, servant based, instructional, and/or pragmatic, or some combination thereof; however at the core of their work, they are socially just leaders. They are also empathetic leaders who have been influenced by the intersectionality of race and poverty in their own childhoods, which has manifested for them a strong advocacy for inclusion of all students in general education settings, recognition of marginalization in access to educational opportunities between students who are African American, and a fierce sense of urgency for closing achievement gaps for students who are

African American and their White peers. Social justice leadership for these leaders is an unrelenting fight every day and all day on behalf of students who previously have been denied an equitable education. Social justice leadership is defined by these leaders as being different from their White peers. This difference is qualified by the numerous examples school leaders who are African American in this study provided of how they "think outside the box" as an instrument for deconstructing the barriers of White dominant schooling.

In addition, these school leaders are empathetic risk takers. Each of these leaders made themselves available and vulnerable to this interviewer who is White and female. They entrusted that I, as a White person representing the dominant group, would not do further harm to them or their professional careers as they spoke their truths. They did this largely because they wanted a more socially just world for all, but especially for children who are African American. Miles, said, "I'm at the age and place in my career that I think about how I can help others; then if this helps a social justice journey, then I want to share my experience as a leader and others can draw the appropriate conclusions."   To say yes to an interview meant that these participants were once again allowing an advantaged person an opportunity, without any assurances, to benefit from their expertise. It was Michael who put forth this challenge: "Well let's just say this, if you just use this interview to get your paper written and get a degree, then, yeah, you are like most of those White people but if you do something with this for the "fight" and I see you again and you are doing this work, then I know you are not one of those White people."   This White researcher's 36 years as an educator, 16 as a district level director of curriculum and instruction in predominantly White suburban school districts, and personal social justice journey, were necessary to securing the trust of these participants. In the next section of this chapter, each of the six findings will be discussed in detail.

Finding One: Persistent Scarcity

Finding One: There is an unrelenting and persistent scarcity of school leaders who are African American and working in predominantly White school settings.

As the school leaders who are African American in this study made sense of their work in predominantly White schools, it is an expected but still notable finding that sixty-five years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, these predominantly White schools still remain unsuccessfully integrated and persistently entrenched in White dominant practices present day. As found in the literature, an outcome of the failed history of integration was that teachers and school leaders who were African American were not integrated all those years ago and remain relatively poorly integrated and included in predominantly White settings present day (Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Thandeka, 1999). This failure to integrate teachers and school leaders who are African American continues to be pronounced in suburban schools all across America that are predominantly White, but especially in the Midwest. It should be noted that many educators who were African America lost their jobs during this time.

This finding was particularly apparent as participants were first pursued for the study. As school leaders who are African American working in a predominantly White settings were identified and then recruited for the study, the number of potential candidates eligible for the study was quite small. To expand the participant pool, participants from three different Midwestern states were pursued. In addition, to widen the candidate pool, candidates were considered that may not be presently employed in a predominantly White setting but had worked in this setting in the past. However, the participant pool for the study remained a challenge that was only overcome by the use of purposeful and snowballing sampling techniques which included networking among educational leaders to gain access.

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The explanation of this persistent scarcity is best explained by the historical marginalization of educators who are African American and the "White is right" mentality that permeates American schooling. Ray (2019), when speaking of racialized organizations, acknowledges that the "hiring of minorities can provide actors with a moral credential" (p. 20). If we follow his narrative, it implies that once White administrators in a school and/or district have hired a school leader who is African American, they may think they have fulfilled their moral responsibility, thus making it less likely they will hire more African American leaders.

This lack of a critical mass of school leaders who are African American in these settings is also the result of colorblind district leaders, who are mostly White and largely charged with recruiting and hiring school leaders for their respective organizations. To be colorblind is to be race neutral, which is a strategy used, by the White dominant class, to absolve them of being racist (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This may show up in the hiring practices of a school district when they explain why they are not hiring educators of color by saying "we hire the best candidate". When district leaders, who are mostly White and not socially just are responsible for hiring school leaders, race and racism are allowed to operate in subconscious ways through implicit bias, such as being colorblind (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013). The problem is that as long as the control of resources, including hiring and otherwise, is in the power of an individual or a few individuals, cultural and racial capital will be jeopardized. Resources controlled by individualism allows for leaders to engage in unconscious bias and colorblindness as a way of protecting their White dominant organizations, which by design allows for the advantaged organization to remain so at the expense of the few school leaders who are African American working in their organizations (Ray, 2019).

Finding Two: Need for Critical Mass

The second finding: A critical mass of school leaders who are African American are needed to preserve the racial identity of the school leaders who are African American working in predominantly White settings.

The school leaders in this study make sense of being the first, one and only, and being closely watched ("all eyes on me") by normalizing the marginalization. It is apparent from this study that the narratives of students and parents who are African American are also normalizing the Whiteness of school leadership; they respond with surprise when seeing a principal that is African American in their school. Bukka acknowledges this normalized isolation in his predominantly White setting when he said:

> I think that African American teachers and administrators, we've lived that. I know what it's like to be the first person of color in a setting. Most of us have lived that. I know what it's like to be the first one to go. And I think that's a perspective that a lot of ...Non-African American people don't know, they don't know that struggle." (Bukka)

When he says, "most of us have lived that" it speaks again to the normalization of being the "one and only" in White space; their narratives also reflect how they cope with this isolation by accepting it as an ambassadorship, code switching, and "adjusting, adapting, and overcoming".

Coates (2015) when reflecting on an incident as a child where he observed another young Black boy being outnumbered by others, speaks to the normalcy of being the "one and only": "That he was outnumbered did not matter because the whole world had outnumbered him long ago, and what do numbers matter? This was a war for the possession of his body and would be the war his whole life" (Coates, 2015, p. 18). School leaders who are African American working

in predominantly White settings as the "one and only" are in a daily setting that at any moment can jeopardize their physical and emotional safety. When predominantly White schools and their affiliated districts do not have a critical mass of leaders who are African American it compromises the identity of the school leader who is African American (Steele, 2010). If no powerful person in these predominantly White settings are African American or a school leader who is African American is the "one and only" it is a powerful cue about the marginalization you will experience (Steele, 2010).

Steele (2010) finds it difficult to put a "number" on how many "like minorities" in an organization are needed to counter the effects of the dominant White culture. However, one of the participants, William, put a number on what might be needed when he said, "I read some place that a student who is Black that sees at least one Black male as a positive role model has a better chance of academic progress than seeing none. Think about that. If one has that impact… think about the differences 15-20 positive Black role models would make in a school setting."

Finding Three: Benefits of African American Leaders

Third finding: There are benefits for predominantly White schools to have school leaders who are African American.

American suburban schools that are predominantly White organizations are experiencing an increase in student populations of children who are African American and Hispanic (Holme & Welton, 2014; Wilson, Singer, Berube, & Frey, 2009). As these organizations that are entrenched in race and racism have struggled with achievement and behavior disparities between students who are African American and their White peers, for whom they are held accountable by state organizations, they have looked for leaders who are African American to "fix" the

problems with children who are African American (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Lassiter & Niedt, 2013; NAEP, 2015).

In theory this desire to recruit school leaders who are African American to "fix" racial disparities seems plausible as educational research substantiates that there are many benefits to African American school leaders working in predominantly White organizations (Goldhaber, Theobald, and Tien , 2015; Wells et al., 2016). In addition, the school leaders who are African American in this study also speak to the many benefits they bring to their respective predominantly White organizations; such as: building and sustaining relationships with children of color; holding high expectations for children of color; race and cultural capital; allowing for children of color to have a voice; providing relief for parents who are African American; being able to change the mindsets of students who are White about African Americans; providing strong advocacy for students who are traditionally marginalized; and being positive role models for both students who are of color and White.

Additionally, early education research supports further benefits of school leaders who are African American with more measurable outcomes, such as the presence of principals who are African American reduced the number of special education placements, increased promotion rates, and lowered dropout rates – all of which are indicators of student achievement (Meier & Stewart, 1992). In addition, there was a positive correlation between the presence of principals who are African American and their positive influence on school policies and practices, which have implications for improved student achievement outcomes (Meier & Stewart, 1992).

While there are undeniable advantages for predominantly White districts and schools to hire and retain school leaders who are African American it must be noted that this may not always be equally advantageous to the school leader who is African American. When White

elites at the top of organizations hire school leaders who are African American to serve their interests over the interests of the African American school leader, it is not socially just. When the self-interest of elite Whites are served over the desire to help Blacks it is known as interest convergence, which is a basic tenet of critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The construct of interest convergence is reflected in participant narratives as they make sense of their work in the predominantly White setting. As Marcus reflects on why he may have been hired in a predominantly White setting he suspects there may have been a financial gain due to his young age and lack of administrative experience and a cultural gain as they were experiencing an increase in students who were African American. Dante reflects also reflects this in his narrative:

> At the time I accepted the position I was well aware of why I was being sought after. I don't think they really wanted to state it but they were looking for African American administrators. A lot of that had to do with an influx of African American students that were coming from an urban city into this community. (Dante)

Regardless of the benefits these leaders who are African American can bring to predominantly White organizations, they are still racialized organizations where Whiteness is still a credential; the agency of racial groups are diminished and the unequal distribution of resources favors the advantaged racial group (Ray, 2019). As long as these organizations are left undisrupted and unled by socially just leaders, the benefits that school leaders who are African American can leverage will largely be for the benefit of the White elite to whom the organization is indebted.

However, in spite of interest convergence on behalf of these organizations, school leaders who are African American should be allowed to advantage themselves, and this may be a reason

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why advantaged organizations are sought after by these school leaders; however the study did not uncover this. Possibly they are looking for a respite from the weight of working in less advantaged schools that are long suffering from the unequal distribution of resources that have continued to advantage some over others (Ray, 2019).

Finding Four: White Space Should Be Safe Space

Finding Four: School leaders who are African American and working in predominantly White school settings need to have a safe space to do their work.

The acknowledgement that issues of race and racism are normalized in American schooling is a core tenet of critical race methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, it is an assumption of this study that school leaders who are working in predominantly White settings are working in spaces where race and racism is normalized. Further, it is found in educational research that when educators who are White encounter leaders of color, they are unable to break free of their privilege so as to trust the leadership of African Americans or other leaders of color (Allen, 2004). It is this absence of trust that creates an unsafe emotional space for school leaders who are African American working in a predominantly White space.

Several of the participant narratives spoke to experiences of racism in predominantly White school settings. These narratives also revealed how the White spaces they were working in responded to the racism. Malik encountered a White racist teacher, which resulted in him choosing to leave, even with the offer of a promotion, in order to preserve his health and well-being, while the racist teacher was allowed to stay. Samuel and Dante both talked about having their voices marginalized; Samuel became more of a listener and an observer, while Dante left his position after realizing he was expected to speak for all students and families who were African American in a community that was not able to provide him any support. Rashad spoke

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of how a school leader who was White brought harm to him as a teacher when in front of his students with a racist comment and how the attempt by the school leader, who was White, to fix it resulted in even more harm.

The harm that Rashad speaks is important to understand as it is a reflection of the harm American society has inflicted on Black males throughout history to present day. In his book, *Between the World and Me,* Ta-Nehisi Coates describes the vulnerability of a Black male in White society: "it is to be naked before the elements of the world, before all the guns, fists, knives, crack, rape, and disease" (2015, p. 17).

Important to the need to create a safe space for school leaders who are African American, especially in the absence of a critical mass of school leaders of color, it is important that district and school leaders, who are mostly White, be socially just leaders. Socially just leaders are activists who leave nothing to chance: they demand, disrupt, ensure, and bravely make explicit decisions to remove barriers of entitlement and systemic privilege in schools (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 2003). Unfortunately the school leaders in this study encountered organizational leadership that allowed for teachers and parents who are White to be empowered resulting in a double standard in how decisions were made regarding situations between children and adults who are African American and their White peers. These incidents are further evidence that the normalization of race in predominantly White school settings is harmful to the adults and children of color who by necessity are navigating these settings. One participant suggested that the normalization of racism in schools may be even more entrenched than it is in society as a whole.

However, important to this finding is also a counter story told by Rashad that describes how a socially just leader who is White is able to provide a safe space for him, as a school leader who is African American, to do his work:

The principal I'm working with now is unlike any person I've ever worked for, from a personality standpoint. He's a very type A; he's high energy. He's energetic. Most White high school principals I work for are kind of that way, and they have to be. They get up at four o'clock in the morning. They're working out. They enter a bunch of emails, get to work, they're super high energy, and you have to be. But he is different, because of how conscious he is. In his experience, he uses his privilege to promote equity, to implement equity and to put it into practice. Race and equity are at the core of his leadership practice. Then he takes it a step further, because so far, when people talk about equity work, there's always the structures, the systems, the culture of equity and inequality, but what's missing far too often is the accountability piece. In that sense, he is a dictator. As he likes to say, I am going to call your ass in if you are committing micro aggressions, and I tell you you're doing it, and you do nothing to change. Of our 30 middle school teachers, 20 have been replaced in the last two years. He talks the talk, walks the talk. He carries a big stick. He means it, and so we've brought people in, even if they are not at the level of consciousness that we need them to be with their own White racism, with their own sense of privilege and entitlement. They are on the journey and they want to be coached and you can feel the difference. He provides, he clears the path for me to do that work. (Rashad)

Finding Five: Tempered Radicals

Finding Five: These school leaders who are African American and working in predominantly White settings are tempered radicals.

Tempered radicals are "individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, a community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organizations (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 586).

These school leaders who are African American are working in school settings where the race power differentials are great between their often "one and only" leadership and the predominantly White population of students, staff, and parents they are navigating each day. Even with the tensions and stressors of leading in this setting, they persisted to make change in their schools with a "no excuses" approach. One of the most robust areas of evidence to support this claim is the many different examples of how these leaders "think outside the box." When thinking outside the box these leaders are engaging in counterstories that are intended to disrupt the status quo in their predominantly White settings.

For example, these school leaders speak of the need to disrupt the teaching practices of teachers who are White, to include how they speak to students who are African American. In addition, these leaders talk about the necessity for these Eurocentric teachers to be challenged to learn the culture of students who are African American. These leaders also spoke of disrupting discipline and behavior practices in their settings by asking educators who are White to become culturally competent in understanding the behaviors of students who are African American and to accept responsibility for their responses to student behavior. They also spoke of disrupting curriculum where students who are African American are marginalized; this included the over

identification of students who are African American in special education programs and the lack

of enrollment of these students in Advanced Placement courses. The leaders also spoke about

the need for teaching African American history, and emphasizing the arts, which are curricular

areas often marginalized in predominantly White schools but are assets for students who are

African American. These examples of change and transformation in their schools are indicative

of their unwillingness to accept the status quo found in dominant White culture; they are indeed

activists for change in their predominantly White school settings.

There was also acknowledgement on behalf of the school leaders in this study that when they

engaged in work that challenged the dominant system it indeed created tension. William says:

> Administrators of color are different from [administrators who are White]. It's not that
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> we are better; we just have a different perspective. In education today, we need
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> different. If you can't adjust and change, you have to step aside. And if we want change
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> to happen we have got to promote African Americans and other people of color in
>
> education. (William)

And yet Michael reminds us he is quite capable of "adjusting, adapting, and overcoming"

when confronted with challenges and obstacles to change in these racialized organizations.

Tempered radicals understand that sometimes they "go along to get along" but this does not

mean they have compromised their own identity (Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

It is these counterstories of transformation in schools, and the stories of these school

leaders willing to leverage their cultural and race expertise to challenge the status quo that these

leaders resemble that of tempered radicals (Meyerson & Scully, 2009). Tempered radicals

experience tensions between the status quo and alternatives, and use that to fuel organizational

transformations (Myerson & Scully, 1995; Alston, 2005). It is when educational leadership can

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confront racial differences, rather than avoid it for fear of conflict, that organizations can be transformed into socially just and equitable learning communities (Rusch & Horsford, 2009).

Finding Six: Barriers to Advancement

Finding Six: There are significant barriers to advancement for school leaders who are African American.

The ten school leaders who are African American in this study are well credentialed, well educated, and have positional power in their predominantly White organizations. The principalship is usually a tradition route for the superintendency. Yet, in their narratives they express feelings of inadequacy, defeat, not being good enough, and self-doubt, both in their current roles and when considering advancement. These narratives include experiencing expectations that are different than their White peers, such as having a higher bar for performance, working harder to prove themselves, and being on guard and having to defend their work. Malik captures this phenomenon with this narrative:

> I think the bar is 15 to 20 times higher for me and I would say it better be perfect; as a Black man, you have to be perfect. You have to do everything perfect. Although there's that line that, "oh we all make mistakes," "nobody's perfect". I'll be honest with you, that's BS if you are African American. You have to be the best. You have to be better than everyone else around you. Better than those who look different than you, talk different than you, write different than you, and read different than you, whatever. You have to be better than perfect. (Malik)

Critical race theory helps us to understand that these feelings of inadequacy are socially constructed and are the outcomes of predominantly White organizations that have sought to oppress and marginalize educators who are African American throughout the history of

American schooling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). "Rarely, however do Whites ever depict people of color as ingenious survivors of 500 years of White supremacy and, as a result, the upholders of true humanity" (Allen, 2004, p. 127). These feelings of inadequacy are so powerfully upheld by White dominant racialized organizations that they become part of the majoritarian stories the African American school leaders in this study tell themselves (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Ray, 2019). These majoritarian stories are grounded in narratives that say they are staying in their positions because they want to work with children or they can make more of a difference where they are at as a school leader.

These socially constructed feelings of inadequacy have been found in previous studies of leaders who are African American. Chemers and Murphy (1995) noted that when persons who are African American enter into a leadership position in a mostly homogeneous organization, they often face misinterpretations by followers who are also likely to question their expertise. Additionally in a study by Madsen and Mabokela (2005) school leaders of color identified frustration with the constant fight to prove themselves as a professional to their European-American administrative peers and followers.

Further evidence of barriers to advancement are reflected in the narratives described by participants when participating in the interview process in suburban settings. School leader participants described interviewing in suburban settings as dismissive and often reflective of cues that were threatening to their race identity (Steele, 2010). Interview teams in suburban settings were made up of White administrators and teachers who are very likely, without being disrupted, to hire someone that looks like them. These racialized organizations are quite skilled at ensuring candidates who are African American stay in their place (Collins, 1997; Ray, 2019). White elites in charge of hiring often use colorblindness, race neutrality, meritocracy and adherence to White

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socialization as strategies to ensure maintenance of their own advantage (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Bell (1980) long ago asserted that with Whites as gatekeepers, they have given more privilege to those people of color who assimilate to the White model but only as long as they are able to serve at the interest of the White elite (Allen, 2004).

Further, we know from research that when minorities are being promoted, rising in numbers in the workforce, or there is a threat of affirmative action, White's begin to feel threatened and fight back so that they can maintain their dominance (Ray, 2019). In one study of Black corporate mobility it was found that White corporate elites are strategic in how they bring minorities into their organizations. They look for a way to incorporate protected minority groups into their organizations but at the same time minimize their impact on the organizational culture and structure (Collins, 1997). It is their intent to protect the White dominant space that advantages their own leadership. Given this understanding it is then no surprise to find that these school leaders who are African American and well-credentialed for upward mobility are either not interested, unsure, or desiring but experiencing barriers to the superintendency or other desired positions.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study is to allow for the voices of school leaders who are African American, working in predominantly White schools, to tell their stories and counter-stories. The audience for these stories and counter-stories is district and school leaders, who are White and leading in predominantly White settings that are experiencing an increase in diversity in their student populations. These predominantly White organizations are hiring leaders who are African American to work in their districts but have not disrupted their organizations such that these leaders have voice and safe space to do their work.

It is a tenet of critical race theory that people of color are the only ones who are able to say with certainty the various ways Whiteness operates [in their schools and districts] (Allen, 2004). As district and school leaders who are White bear witness to these stories they need to accept these narratives as truth; administrators who are White are the new listeners and observers. "Listening is an important strategy for [people who are White] overcoming being defensive" (Rusch & Horsford, 2009, p. 309). It is a moral imperative for district leaders who are White to surrender their hierarchical power and disrupt their White dominate settings so that they are the deserved socially just spaces for students and adults who are African American to learn and work. Therefore, the recommendations that follow are directed at the audience of educational leaders who are White and leading in these predominantly White settings.

District and school leaders who are White can learn from the voices of school leaders who are African American. Silence on issues of race and racism in organizations is very destructive and allows for false consciousness of White privilege to prevail (Rush & Horsford, 2009). White educators in American schooling need to unlearn, relearn and confront issues of race in their organizations (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). To unmask racism, educational leaders who are White need to relinquish their privilege and travel to a different worldview. One way for these White leaders to learn divergent standpoints is to listen to stories and counter-stories of people of color (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). Therefore, the narratives from this study can contribute to the growth of White elite educational leaders such that they can learn about matters of race that they are unlikely to know (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Another implication from this study is that district and school leadership can greatly benefit from being trained and retrained to be socially just leaders. This also speaks to the importance of educational leadership programs having social justice leadership at the forefront of

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all learning and preparation. It would also seem prudent to be discretionary about what practicing school leaders are allowed to be mentors or supervisors for aspiring leaders as to not perpetuate traditional leadership practices.

Race is often an undiscussed issue in educational administration and handled poorly in educational leadership preparation programs (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). Therefore for White leaders to become socially just they must be skilled at cross race dialogue that involves meaningful conflict and tension (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). The work of a socially just leader was described by Rashad in his counter story of the principal that provides safe space for his work. Education leader, Nancy Gutierrez in an interview for *The Atlantic* says: "When a superintendent says, 'I believe in equity,' we're going to talk about race …we're going to name it, we're not going to be afraid of it…[that] sets the stage for [others] on the ground to do the same" (Anderson, 2019). Therefore, superintendents and other district level leadership must be retrained as warriors of social justice leadership that are skilled in cross racial dialogue, willing to confront and are intolerant of racists and racism in their organizations, and willing to put their own advantaged career on the line such that those that have been marginalized in their organizations can be uplifted, heard and supported. They must unlearn a lifetime of problematic White subjectivity, ideology, and behavior that reveal the complexities and problems of Whiteness (Allen, 2004). If they are not willing or able to do this work, administrators who are African American should be elevated to top levels of the hierarchy so that they can lead these organizations as experts in navigating both White and African American culture.

Another implication of this study is the need for disruption of hiring practices that perpetuate the scarcity of school leaders who are African American working in predominantly White settings. White elite strategies for hiring that are race neutral, colorblind, and practice

meritocracy need to be eradicated such that tokenism is no longer present in these organizations; environments where school leaders who are African American are "one and only" and have "all eyes on me" do not exist. This is important as minorities in a workplace need to have a sufficient number of minorities that look like them so that they no longer feel uncomfortable (Steele, 2010). When school leaders who are African American feel safe in their work environments they can engage in socially just work which allows for children typically marginalized in white dominant settings to have access and opportunity needed to eradicate inequities in their education.

There are also implications for the district leaders of White spaces to audit their hiring practices using an equity lens. For example, the process for hiring of school leadership should be free of individualism, color blindness, and meritocracy. These strategies are found to be obstacles to the advancement of school leaders who are African American (Allen, 2004). In the narratives of the lived experiences of these school leaders it was revealed that suburban school district interview practices are designed to maintain the status quo. There is a need for interview teams to be trained in cross race dialogue and be carefully selected based on their own racial identity development and social justness. For example, Samuel spoke of how interview team members gave unconscious signals that are microaggressions: no eye contact, crossing of arms, and not engaging in dialogue as evidence of not listening. Ray (2019) cautions that as these systems reevaluate their hiring practices they must be careful to not develop new biases to replace the old. "When people are creative in the face of new problems, they may generate new mechanisms. But this creativity is not entirely random; it is often constrained by habitually enacted schemas that are transportable or easily applied to new circumstances" (Ray, 2019).

In the absence of a critical mass of minorities to make the environment more comfortable, Steele (2010) does concur with a finding that policy can sometimes create safe spaces. Therefore, predominantly White districts would be prudent to have explicit board policies around hiring practices that ensures that race neutral, color blind, individualism, and meritocracy hiring practices are not allowed.

Again, it is important to change the mindsets of those with hierarchal power in these dominant White environments, superintendents and school boards, or lest history will continue to allow for excuses to mask racism in the hiring process. District leadership can't be effective in hiring and supporting school leaders who are African American if they themselves can't confront racism in their organization (Rusch & Horsford, 2009).

This study also has implications that all educators and students in American schooling can greatly benefit from knowing African American history. No social or economic change will occur unless Whites are willing to deal directly with how their own racism prevents cross-racial solidarity (Allen, 2004). Therefore educators and students, regardless of race, can benefit from knowing the history of oppression and harm in this country and the understanding that race is socially constructed. As Michael told the young African American students he was working with, "…and I tell kids this, how do you know where you are going, if you don't know where you have been?" Courses in African American history should be required in K-12 education and post-secondary education and most certainly for preservice teachers and Eurocentric White teachers present day teaching in schools. These courses should be taught by highly trained, socially just educators capable of engaging in cross racial dialogue themselves (Rusch & Horsford, 2009).

Lastly, this study confirms that there has been little change in American schooling; race and racism are as prevalent in American schooling today as it has been in the past (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, education leaders need to be more vigilant in the pursuit of transforming their educational organizations to be socially just. The narratives of the participants in this study reinforced this prevalence and the lack of response to racism in American schooling. This work can no longer be done in isolation in classroom, schools, districts, or states. More must be done now. Educational leaders who are White could better transform their own organizations if they work strategically and in solidarity with their peers who are African American to transform the White dominate conception of schooling (Allen, 2004).

In solidarity, the racism embedded in American schooling must be called out and progress toward a system of socially just schooling should be the new measure of accountability for educational organizations. Local schools and districts can be more empowered to do socially just work if they collectively unite with others around the cause of disrupting harmful White dominant practices in all school organizations.

In solidarity these leaders should call for acknowledgement that the achievement and behavioral gaps found in their schools are socially constructed and cannot be eradicated unless Whites are able to surrender their investment and power for staying advantaged. These leaders should also demand that test scores should no longer be used to publicly reward advantaged schools at the expense of disadvantaged schools; standardized tests socially construct the racial achievement gaps. In addition, these leaders should collectively call for the restructuring of federal, state, and local resources to be distributed using a socially just lens.

Implications for Research

There are implications for further research based on the findings from this study. Given that I am a White researcher this study could benefit from having a researcher that is African American analyzing the data. This would be important to further validating the findings of this study. This study also has implications for research that would assess the racial identity stage of development of predominantly White educational organizations in comparison to the racial identity development of individuals of color working in the organization. This research could be based on the work of Chrobot-Mason, Thomas (2002). The public identification and labeling of school districts based on racial identify levels has the potential to create change, similar to the intent of the accountability system which publicizes school achievement disparities. What if the racial identity of the educational organization was publicly reported instead of test scores? And what if a criterion for this scoring was how safe the space is for students and adults who are African American in the organization? It may also be prudent to conduct further research audits on hiring practices in these settings, using a critical race lens. The intent of these audits would be to identify and disrupt racial barriers to employment for persons who are African American or Black and/or other minorities.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are largely founded in the acknowledgement that I am a White researcher and the participants in this study are school leaders who are African American. As a White person doing this research, I brought a collective group history of harm with me to the interviews with these school leaders (DiAngelo, 2012). It is well supported in the research that mistrust across racial lines has a long history and that trust was important to my

participants (Rusch & Horsford, 2009). It is very difficult to determine how my Whiteness may have impacted the narratives and the analysis of the data.

Another limitation of this study was that there were no participants who were female. This lack of female representation in the study was not by design, but the lack of potential candidates for the study from the onset put up barriers to recruiting female school leaders who were African American. With the our nation's long history of marginalizing and oppressing educators who are African American it is apparent that educators who are female and African American are twice victims of this history of harm. During the feminist movement White women left out women who were African American and gave little attention to their concerns and issues (Rusch & Horsford, 2009).

There were ten participants in this study that engaged in interview sessions of one to two hours. While these interviews generated a considerable amount of data, the sample size is still considered small. Therefore, it is important that these results are not generalized to all school leaders who identify as African American or Black working in predominantly White settings. While these participants have similarities they have an individual voice when speaking to their experiences in their respective settings. In addition, while this study generated a large amount of narrative data, the lack of follow up, in-depth interviews regarding the findings is a limitation.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to hear the stories and counter-stories of school leaders who are African American working in predominantly school settings. To ensure that the voices of these school leaders were elevated a critical race methodology was used throughout the study. Ten school leaders who identified as African American or Black provided narrative interviews

that result in common themes to describe their lived experiences working in these White spaces. The significance of this study is to have district administrators who are White to hear their stories and counter stories so that they can be challenged to disrupt their White dominant organizations so that all students and adults who are African American in these White settings can learn and work in a socially just space.

Most important to the findings of this study is the persistence of scarcity of school leaders who are African American working in predominantly White settings. This speaks to the prevalence of race and racism in American schooling as relatively unchanged 65 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. This study also illuminates the many assets and benefits that these school leaders who are African American bring to these predominantly White spaces. One of these benefits is the competency of the school leaders in this study to successfully navigate dual cultures, much like tempered radical leaders described in the work of Meyerson & Scully (1995). The voices of these school leaders are powerful narratives that are worthy contributions to both educational literature and the practices of school and district leadership. This study is a call for more socially just leaders in American schooling, especially leaders who identify as African American or Black.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of Study

Overview of Study
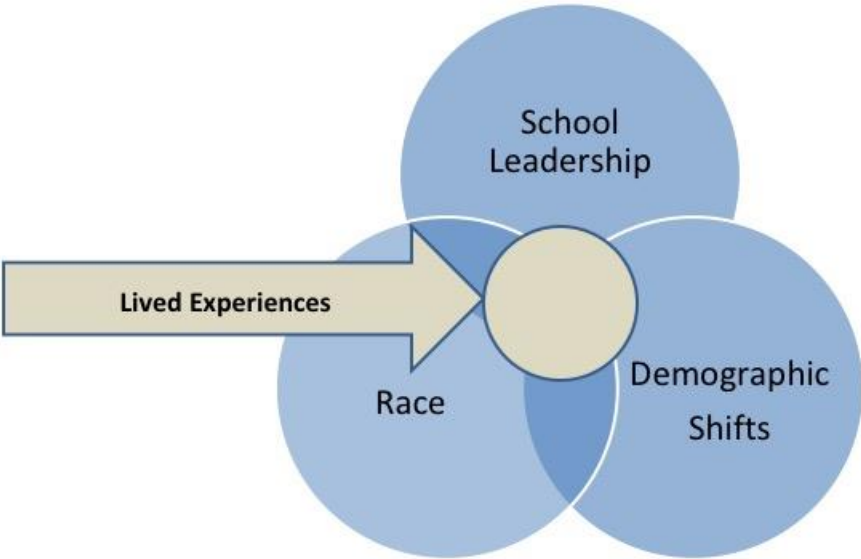
Critical Race Theory Tenets
(Delgado & Stefancic, 2001)

- Ordinariness: Racism is difficult to cure or address; usual way of doing business in society
- Interest convergence: Racism advances whites; little incentive to eradicate it
- Social construction: Race is socially constructed – not a biological fixed trait
- Differential racialization: Dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times based on dominant need- identity is not unitary
- Voice of color significance: Voices of color are able to communicate to their white counterparts matters and experiences that whites are unlikely to know; counterstories
- Colorblindness: Race does not matter; refusing to acknowledge that race exists
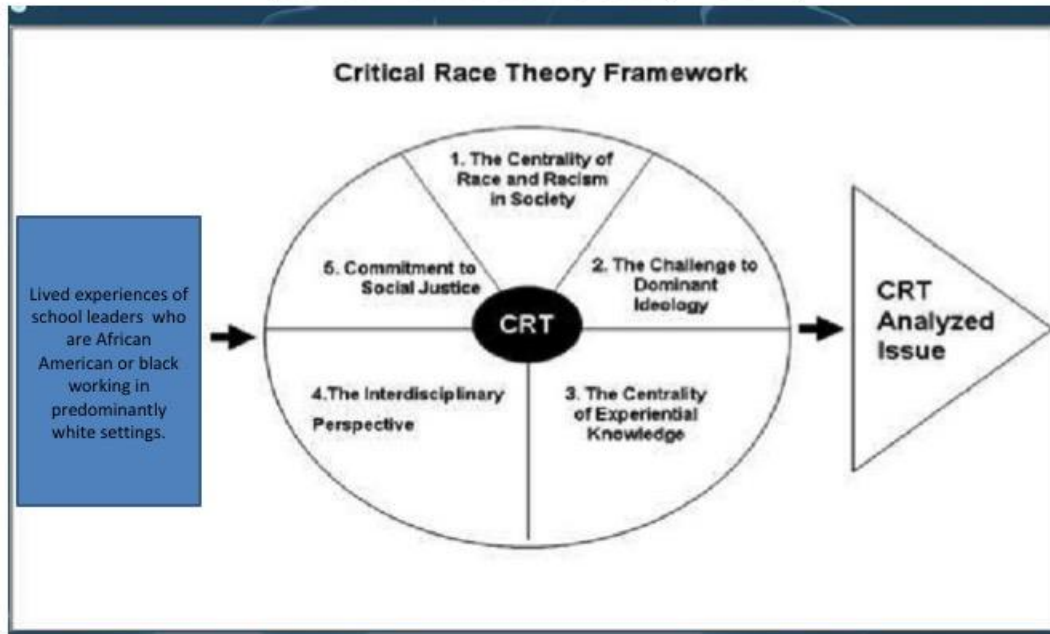
Research Questions

Main Research Question:

As a school leader who identifies as African American or black, what are your lived experiences working in a predominantly white school setting?

Sub Questions

- What opportunities and challenges have influenced your experiences working in a predominantly white school setting?
- How do school leaders who are African American or black make sense of their experiences working in a predominantly white school setting?
- What unique leadership beliefs and practices do you employ when working in a predominantly white setting?
- How would you answer these questions differently if I (the interviewer) were not white?

CRITICAL RACE METHODOLOGY
(Solorzano & Yosso, 2002)

Critical Race Theory Framework

Lived experiences of school leaders who are African American or black working in predominantly white settings.

1. The Centrality of Race and Racism in Society

5. Commitment to Social Justice

2. The Challenge to Dominant Ideology

CRT

4. The Interdisciplinary Perspective

3. The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

CRT Analyzed Issue

Appendix B: IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN

UWMILWAUKEE

Department of University Safety & Assurances

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 229-7455 *phone*
(414) 229-6729 *fax*

http://www.irb.uwm.edu
lstoiber@uwm.edu

New Study - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

Date: May 16, 2018

To: Elise Frattura, PhD
Dept: School of Education

CC: Elizabeth Erenberger

IRB#: 18.219
Title: Taking Heed: Principals Who Identify as African American or Black Working in Predominantly White School Settings

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been approved as minimal risk Expedited under Category 6 and 7 as governed by 45 CFR 46.110. Your protocol has also been granted approval to waive documentation of informed consent as governed by 45 CFR 46.117 (c).

This protocol has been approved on May 16, 2018 for one year. IRB approval will expire on May 15, 2019. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a continuation for IRB approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form found in IRBManager.

This study may be selected for a post approval review by the IRB. The review will include an in person meeting with members of the IRB to verify that study activities are consistent with the approved protocol and to review signed consent forms and other study related records.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintain proper documentation of study records and promptly report to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is also your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,

Leah Stoiber

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator

Appendix C: E-Mail Phone Recruitment

Date:

Dear XXXX,

Are you a school principal, associate principal, or work in a similar school leadership position? Do you identify as African American or Black? Are you working, or have you worked, as a school leader in a predominantly White school setting? If so, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study regarding your lived experiences in this type of setting.

I am doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the Urban Education Administrative Leadership program. I am actively recruiting participants in the Midwest for my study of school principals who identify as African American or Black who are working in a predominantly White school.

Your participation in this study will give voice to your experiences, which is presently lacking in education literature. In addition, your contributions will inform those with positional power in predominantly White school settings on how to best recruit, retain, and support leaders of color. This data will be gathered through 2-3 audio recorded interviews of approximately 1- 1.5 hours in length.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of participating in my study. If you are interested in learning more about the study or would be willing to participate please reply to this email. I will then contact you to provide more information and answer your questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth (Beth) Erenberger, Co-Principal Investigator
eae@uwm.edu
Cell phone: 414-403-9723

Elise Frattura, PhD, Faculty Advisor and Co-Principal Investigator
Email: Frattura@uwm.edu

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee IRB [18-219]

Appendix D: Interview Script

Script prior to interview:
I'd like to thank you again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned in the recruitment email and follow up conversation, this study seeks to understand and gain insights into the lived experiences of principals who are African American or Black working in predominantly White school settings. Our interview today will last approximately one hour during which I will be asking you questions about your journey to becoming an educational leader, the context and nature of your leadership work, and unique aspects of your work that may be the result of you being a school leader who is African American or Black working in a predominantly White context. [At this time I will give a brief overview of the study using the four power point slides. It will be explained that critical race theory is the lens for the study].

Now I will review all aspects of the consent form and obtain verbal permission from you to participate and conduct the interview.

I will be taping our interview using a Rev recording app on my phone. If at any time you do not want to answer a question or you prefer to stop the interview you may do so. Interviews will be transcribed. I will take precautions to protect your identity in the study to include assigning pseudonyms and not naming locations. In addition, I obtained a waiver from my IRB committee for signing a consent form. This too, was to protect your identity.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? If any further questions arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Note: Interview questions are not in any particular order as their use will be dependent upon prior dialogue. Not all questions may be asked in all interviews depending on the willingness of the participant and the time allotment. To elevate the voices of my participants I will allow participant narratives to take priority over my desire to get questions asked.

 Main Research Question

As a school leader who is African American or Black, what are your experiences working in a predominantly White school setting? (Stories and counterstories)

- Describe a typical day for you working in this job and in this setting.

- Tell me about a time when you perceived your race was a benefit to the school or district where you work?

- Tell me about a time when you felt your race influenced how others may have responded or treated you either a positive and/or negative way?

- As a leader of this school, have you had any critical incidents that you felt were racially motivated either regarding you, the students that go to school here, the parents and/or the community? If so, please describe them.

- Describe any reoccurring experiences (and/or critical incidents) you have as a school principal that you think are motivated by your race?

- What are your future aspirations? If this district/school wants to keep you, what will it take? Who will be of the most help in you reaching those goals? What or who will be your obstacles? Explain.

Sub Questions:

As a school leader who is African American or Black, how did you come to work in a predominantly White school setting?

(Journey as educator- current setting- major influencers to career)

Becoming an educational leader

- Tell me about your journey to work in education? Where did you go to school?

 Who or what influenced you? Where have you worked?

- Tell me about the major influences that motivated your decision to be an educational leader.

- Tell me about this job. How did you come to work here?

- What was the primary reason for you taking this job, in this setting?

- Have you ever felt you were passed over for a job you desired?

- Tell me about a job you desired to apply for but did not feel qualified or were discouraged from applying.

Context of Work
- Why do you think you were hired for this job over other candidates? Is this different than for other jobs you have been hired for?

- Describe your current work setting? Demographics, achievement data, etc.

- What are our major duties and responsibilities? Who assigns this work, evaluates you, and monitors your progress?

- What aspects of this job do you enjoy the most? What are your greatest challenges? What goes well in this job? What are your frustrations?

- What most influenced your decision to work in this school/district?

- Talk about any advantages or disadvantages you have found to working in this school setting.

How do school leaders who are African American or Black make sense of their experiences working in a predominantly White school setting?
Perceptions of Work
- What impact, if any do you have on achievement in this school?

- What are your greatest assets that you bring to this school?

- In this district/school what are the major initiatives? What is expected of you in regard to these initiatives?

- Are issues of equity or social justice part of this work? If so, what role, if any are you expected to play in this work?

- Considering all stakeholder groups, who do you spend the most time interacting and why?

Perception of Others
- When you are sought out for advice, what types of concerns are brought to you? By who?

- As the leader of this school, what do you think is expected of you?

- What kind of feedback do you get from your supervisor, colleagues, teachers, students, and/or parents about your ability to do this job?

Network/Support System
- When you are confused or challenged in this job, how do you go about resolving this? Who do you seek for support or clarification? Give me an example.

- When you are feeling stressed, how do you cope? Who or what are your primary support systems?

- In this job, who champions your work and helps you to grow your leadership practice?

Race Issues
- What role, if any do you think your race plays, in your daily work as a school principal in this setting?

- If you had a concern about race in this school, who would you work with to resolve the concern? Explain.

- Do you feel that your administrative team, staff, students, parent, and/or community treat you any differently in this position than other positions you have held?

- What advice would you give a person of color desiring to work in a predominantly White context?

- Leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies

- What unique leadership beliefs, practices, and strategies do you employ when working in a predominantly White setting?

- What core beliefs guide your leadership practice- what would you not compromise?

- Describe your leadership style? How would your staff describe your leadership style? Your students? Parents?

- What education, leadership theory, or other staff development has most influenced your leadership practice?

- Are there any strategies you use in this school to work with the key stakeholders that you did not use in other settings?

How would you answer these questions differently if I (the interviewer) were not White?

- Is there anything you would like to tell me or any questions you have about our interview today?

- After thought and reflection upon our previous interviews, is there anything that you would like to revisit, clarify, or correct?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Elizabeth Erenberger

Place of birth: Iowa City, Iowa

Education

   B.A., University of Iowa, May 1981
   Major: Psychology; Education

   M.A., University of Iowa, August 1986
   Major: Counseling for Human Development

   Ph. D., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2019
   Major: Urban Education

Dissertation Title: Taking Heed: The Lived Experiences of Principals Who Identify as
              African American or Black Working in Predominantly White Settings

Teaching Experience

   Adjunct Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Department of
          Administrative Leadership, 2017-Present

   Adjunct Professor, Alverno College, Department of Education, 2017-Present

   Director of Teaching and Learning, Wauwatosa School District, 2008-2017

   Director of Student Services and Assessment, West Allis School District, 2001-08

   High School Counselor, Elmbrook School District, 1992-2001

   High School Counselor, Oak Creek-Franklin School District, 1990-1992

   High School Counselor, Davenport School District, 1986-1990

   High School Social Studies Teacher, Iowa City School District, 1981-1986