August 2021

A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Educational Spaces and Black Identity Development

Kala Burrell-Craft
Old Dominion University, knburrel@odu.edu

Danielle R. Eugene
University of Texas Arlington, danielle.eugene@uta.edu

A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Educational Spaces and Black Identity Development

Kala Burrell-Craft & Danielle R. Eugene

Introduction

A significant body of literature has examined how racial identity attitudes predict academic achievement of Black students attending predominately White institutions (e.g., Leath et al., 2019) and how racial identity beliefs predicts attitudes towards counseling utilization (Constantine et al., 2005; Helms & Carter, 1991; Nickerson et al., 1994). Racial identity studies have also sought to predict student attitudes about race, psychological adjustment, and coping (Miller-Cotto & Brynes, 2016). Cross (1971) sought to trace the Black journey from self-hate to self-healing through his Nigrescence theory. As complicated as Blackness is, no one study in isolation will ever unpack its brilliance, excellence, resilience, nastiness, and multi-facetedness. This mixed-methods analysis is one of many attempts to explore more critically the associations between educational spaces, places, and Black identity development.

Literature Review

Educational Spaces and Black Identity Development

Educational spaces and experiences have continued to shape identity development for many individuals who encounter this contextual setting (Clayton, 2020; Leath et al., 2019). These spaces may strengthen or disrupt existing identi-

Kala Burell-Craft is a lecturer in the Darden College of Education and Professional Studies at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. Danielle R. Eugene is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington. Email addresses: knburrel@odu.edu & danielle.eugene@uta.edu

ties, with implications for academic and social well-being (Renn & Shang, 2008). For people of color, racial identity development is a critical part of psychosocial development and is associated with social adjustment, mental health, and academic achievement (Miller-Cotto & Brynes, 2016). Leath et al. (2019) examined the associations between racial identity beliefs and academic engagement outcomes among 1,659 African American youth in diverse school contexts. Researchers found that Black youth draw on their racial identity beliefs as a cultural resource to remain academically engaged even in settings where they experience negative race-related treatment (Leath et al., 2019). Clayton (2020) used a qualitative approach to explore the relationship between biracial identity development and college context and how racial identities changed over time. Findings revealed that most participants experienced racial identity change over the course of the study, and this change was most often in the direction of a strengthened Black identity for participants attending both historically black colleges and historically white colleges (Clayton, 2019). The literature presents a continued need for and deeper exploration of research on the effects of educational spaces and experiences on racial identity development.

Theoretical Frameworks

Black Identity Development. The concept of identity and identity development was initially presented by Sigmund Freud, who referred to identity or "inner identity…as an individual's link with the unique values, fostered by a unique history of his people" (Erikson, 1959, p. 102). Prior to the 1970s, there were no available models specific to the identity development of African Americans (Helms, 1990). Models that existed prior to 1970 were focused on deficit model analysis which sought to explain the deficiencies inherent in the Black "personality" or identity (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990a). Black identity development research has significantly increased over time because of the contribution and development of Nigrescence models of racial identity development theory by Cross (1991, 1971). Prior to this development, the experience of African Americans was viewed through the lens of the dominant culture that resulted in consistent misdiagnosis or distorted interpretation of the African American experience (Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Cross, 1995, 1991; Hauser & Kasendorf, 1983; Helms, 1990a; Hilliard, 1992; Semaj, 1981). Nigrescence can be defined as the developmental process by which a person "becomes Black", where Blackness is defined as a psychological connection with one's race rather than mere identification of the color of one's skin.

In his famous work, *The Souls of Black Folks*, DuBois (1903) described the experience of being an African American as "hindered in their natural movement, expression, and development" (pp. 130-131). DuBois introduced the concept of "dual consciousness" when expressing how the African Americans often have a split or counterpart identity as a survival tool:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self- conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of White Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. (p. 4)

Like DuBois' dual consciousness, Cross (1995, 1991, 1978, 1971) understood the complexity of Black identity development and designed the Nigrescence model that describes the Black American process of self-actualization. According to Cross, Black identity is developed within a transformative paradigm within which Blacks go through four stages. A description of each of these stages follows.

Pre-Encounter. The first theme is described as pre-discovery of one's racial identity. Pre-encounter attitudes are pro-White and anti-Black. In is this stage, Blacks identify with the dominant White culture and reject their own culture. The person lacks the awareness of the sociopolitical implications of being Black in America and prefers to think in terms of a colorblind society (Cross, 1991).

Encounter. The second theme is characterized by explorations of one's Black identity as result of some critical moment or incident regarding race. This stage has two steps, encounter and personalize. In the encounter step, an event happens that shapes how one views their race. Personalize occurs when the individual takes action as a result of the personal impact the event evoked on that person's world view (Cross, 1991).

Immersion-Emersion. This theme marks the transition between the old and the emerging Black identity. The immersion-emersion stage of Nigrescence addresses the most sensational aspect of Black identity development, for it represents the vortex of psychological Nigrescence (Cross, 1991).The individual becomes immersed in Black culture during this stage.

Internalization. The fourth theme depicts individual comfort in terms of racial identity. The individual has a heightened awareness of what being Black means and is able to have effective cross-cultural interactions. "Black identity functions to fulfill the self-protection, social anchorage, and bridging needs of the individual" (Cross, 1991, p. 220). Internalization-commitment focuses on the long-term interest of Black affairs over an extended amount of time (Cross, 1991). The highest level of Black identity development is a stage in which the individual reaches a level of self-concept and is comfortable with their identity and committed to transcending racism and in confronting all forms of cultural oppression.

Nigrescence has its merits in illustrating issues related to Black identity de-

velopment. A number of historical, social, economical, and anthropological issues still need exploration and representation. No development models are available to interpret or clarify the numerous factors that have impacted and influenced Black identity development. "Social scientists argue that assessment in the various areas of African American life and functioning must be culturally specific to the social/ cultural reality of African American people" (Baldwin & Bell, 1985, p. 62).

Racial Space Theory. Since 2000, a growing number of scholars have begun to explore how spatial analysis of racial processes "teaches us things about race we cannot know by other means" (Knowles, 2003, p. 78). Empirical studies scattered across the disciplinary landscape contribute to what could be considered a growing body of research into the links between race and space (e.g., Anderson, 1995; Feld & Basso, 1996; Pulido, 2000; Delaney, 2002; Razack, 2002; Knowles, 2003; Bullard, 2007; Lipsitz, 2007; Woods & McKittrick, 2007; Nelson, 2008; Bullard & Wright, 2009).

Extending the exploration of the Black experience in school by examining both the impact of race and its various changes over time and space has provided a core basis for the theory of racial space (Neely & Samura, 2011). Neely and Samura (2011) built upon the analysis of CRT by including the lens of space. Their work built upon Knowles' (2003) theoretical underpinnings that suggested, "the social constructions of space illuminate the social constructions of race and vice versa" (p. 78).

Neely and Samura's (2011) theory of racial space outlined four ways that racial and spatial processes intersect: (1) Both race and space are contested; (2) Race and space are fluid and historical; (3) Race and space are interactional and relational; and (4) Race and space are defined by inequality and difference (p. 1938). Neely and Samura (2011) suggested that examining race and racism within any milieu must be conducted within a sociohistorical context because the way in which race and racism have been defined and experienced by people changes over time and space. Knowles (2003) stated racism is encountered and reworked in place and over time. Embedded in spaces of domination are layers of racialized social histories and experiences, lived and remembered archives that provide the gist for community building, organizing, and action. Neely and Samura (2011) suggested that within any locale the lived experiences of Black people in the U.S. have been influenced by social structures, spatial arrangements, and institutions, which change over time as historical conditions have changed and disappeared. Spatial perspective on race may provide a useful lens for understanding racism and provide language for explaining its persistence in educational settings.

Current Study

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the associations between educational spaces/places and Black identity development. This approach was chosen to obtain the most comprehensive results as possible (Plano Clark &

Ivankova, 2016). The quantitative component examined the relationship between space/place as categorical variables alongside the continuous variable, Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale (BRIAS). The qualitative component explored the educational experiences of Black professionals to make sense of their journey, as it related to their identity development. Black professionals were utilized as it was common for them to have had college experiences which denotes the developmental stage of emerging adulthood. Characteristic of this developmental stage is extended identity exploration where youth explore their possible selves (Arnett, 2000; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Conceptual models like the Nigrescence theory attempt to outline mechanisms to explain shifts in one's racial identity attitudes. The current study was designed to address the gaps in the literature by gathering data on the educational experiences of Black professional adults to explore whether a relationship exists between spaces/places and Black identity development.

This call for a more purposeful theorization of how race is implicated in Black educational experiences and outcomes is consistent with that of critical race scholars. As budding critical race theorists, we sought to examine how racism shapes educational experiences and outcomes by studying (a) how the discourses that emerge in an around schools and students are not neutral but, are "embedded in values and practices that normalize racism" (Duncan, 2002, p. 131; Rousseau & Tate, 2003); (b) how the historical legacy of racism structures group advantage and disadvantage in school (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995); and (c) how the narratives of people of color are central to analyzing and understanding these phenomena (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Research Questions

RQ1: Does the space and place where Black professionals grew up and received their formal and post-secondary education have an association with their scores on the Black racial identity attitude scale? (Quantitative)

RQ2: How do Black professionals perceive their educational experiences as they relate to the process of Nigrescence? (Qualitative)

Methodology

Participants in this mixed-methods study consisted of 40 Black professionals throughout the U. S. Using phenomenology for the qualitative component, the investigation focused on understanding the meaning or "universal essence" (Creswell, 2007, p.58) of the lived experiences of people who shared that experience. Oral history interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Thompson & Bornat, 2000) was used to collect narrative data from participants. In addition, participants completed an online survey with an open-ended response component that consisted of the Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale (BRIAS, formerly RIAS-B,

Helms, 1990) questionnaire which measured Black Americans' attitudes about race as tracked through the stages of Nigrescence. The quantitative correlational analysis was performed to examine relationships between spacce/place and identity development. Space consisted of All Black, mostly Black, all White, mostly White, equally diverse, Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU), and/or predominately White institutions (PWI). Place consisted of rural, suburban, or urban geographical locations.

The engagement of the Black educational experience will be situated within the context of the lived experiences of the participants (Yull, 2014). Oral history methods will illuminate how individuals experience, create, and make sense of the rules and roles of the social worlds they live in (Janesick, 2007), along with the narrative questionnaire responses. Cruz (2001) stated that scholars of color have to "create and develop alternative spaces and methodologies for the study of their communities" (p. 658) to more fully and appropriately capture and represent lived experiences among populations of color. Oral history is a subjective and personal form of evidence—but this is also one of its great strengths. In the words of Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli (1981), oral sources 'tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did… Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible "facts"…'. General interview methods allow the researcher to gather data that is specific to research questions that are asked (Seidman, 2006).

Participants

Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling approach. Participants were solicited through social media sites, recommendations from colleagues, and a Black graduate organization at a large PWI in the South. Participants were those individuals who self- identified as descendants of slaves. The criterion of slave ancestry is important because as Ogbu and Simons (1998) suggested, Black people who are descendants of slaves respond to issues of Blackness and Whiteness differently than those in other Black communities. According to Ogbu and Simons (1998), the historical and sociocultural adaptation of a minority group into U.S. society is linked to "their response to their own history within the society and their subsequent treatment or mistreatment by White Americans."

Participants included 40 Black professionals, American born, from across geographic regions in the United States. Regions where participants were raised were 50% rural, 22.5% urban, and 27.5% suburban. Participants educational spaces in which they grew up were 7.5% in all Black space, 20% mostly Black, 2.5% all White, 37.5% mostly White, and 30% equally diverse. Of the participants who attended college for undergraduate studies, 47.5% attended a HBCU and 50% attended a PWI. Ninety percent of the participants identified their race as Black, 2.5% mixed race, and 7.5% as other.

Procedures

Participants were informed of the purpose and general nature of the study, which was to investigate the associations between educational spaces and Black identity development. Participants were not asked to include their names or any other identifying information on the online survey, but were asked to self-identify their race, educational space where they grew up, type of college they attended for undergraduate studies, and to complete the BRIAS. Participants were also provided numerous opportunities to share open-ended responses based on their various educational experiences as they completed the BRIAS.

A Qualtrics electronic survey link was sent to Black professionals via email, GroupMe account for a Black college graduate group, and social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). Three oral history interviews were conducted for participants who were over the age of 85. Of the 40 surveys that were returned, one was missing data for several variables and open-ended responses; therefore, thirty-nine (n=39) were used in the analyses. The study was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board for human subjects' protection protocols.

Measures

Geographical location was a categorical variable that measured the location where participants grew up (Place). This variable consisted of three categories: 1 for rural, 2 for urban, and 3 for suburban. Space was a categorical variable that measured the racial composition of the educational space in which participants received their education. This categorical variable consisted of seven categories: 1 for All Black, 2 for mostly Black, 3 for All White, 4 for mostly White, 5 for equally diverse, 6 for HBCU, and 7 for PWI.

The Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (Helms, 1990; Helms & Parham, 1996; Parham & Helms, 1981) was developed based on Cross's (1978) assumption that, as African Americans move from a position of degrading their racial identity to feeling secure with their racial identity, they progress through four identifiable stages: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion, Internalization, and Internalization/Commitment. The BRIAS assesses Black persons' attitudes about themselves; the long form of the BRIAS consists of 50 attitude statements with a corresponding 5-point Likert-type response format (1-*strongly agree* to 5-*strongly disagree*). The BRIAS was scored by averaging rating for the appropriate keyed items assigned to each of the five subscales. Averaged subscale scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of the attitudes represented by each subscale.

The original version of the racial identity attitude scale was derived from the responses of 54 college students attending a predominately White Midwestern university. Normative samples were drawn from both predominately White

and historically Black universities (Pyrant & Yanico, 1991). Internal consistency reliability estimates for the BRIAS are reported for each stage of racial identity: Pre-encounter .69, Encounter .50, Immersion .67, and Internalization .79 (Helms & Parham, 1985).

Data Analysis

The survey data with open-ended responses were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Data analytic strategies for the quantitative data included the use of descriptive and bivariate techniques. Descriptive statistics (means and standard error of means for continuous variables and percentages for categorical variables) were used to delineate all the variables included in the analysis. Next, bivariate correlations (e.g., Eta) among study variables were assessed. Quantitative analyses were performed using SPSS software. The Qualtrics survey platform allowed for survey data and open-ended response to be easily downloaded to SPSS. The narrative responses were extracted from SPSS and loaded into Atlas.ti software, along with the three oral history interview transcripts. The Atlas.ti software made coding more efficient and effective. Data were coded and analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative data was first engaged by noting ideas about meaningful patterns. The second step involved identifying preliminary codes and then sorting codes by similarities to generate categories and subcategories. The next step included generating overarching themes, 3 total. The final step involved ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme.

Researcher Positionality

The researchers' primary role was to capture the educational experiences of Black people and how those experiences have shaped their lives and their identity. The positionality of the researchers is an important component in the process of qualitative research. As Jones et al. (2006) suggested, the positionality of the researcher influences how the data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted for meaning. Patton (2013) stated that the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study.

This study considered the perceptions and experiences that Black people have of and with the educational system in the U.S. As Black women who have navigated through school systems in many parts of the U.S., we have a strong interest in and opinion about how schools affect the lives of Black people. We have seen first-hand how important an educational space is for Black people. It can set one on a path of optimal outcomes such as meaningful employment and social connections while simultaneously directing others down a cascade of disadvantage which negatively influence life circumstances.

As Black women engaging in research about Black people, we bring strength,

credibility, and control to our study in our ability to understand the racialized identities of Black people. Our experience and knowledge of the educational system as both educators and students strengthened our position as researchers. Hatchett and Schuman (1975) stated that "the race of the interviewer is significant when assessing subject's responses to topics such as education" (p. 525). The goal of the researchers was to study the phenomenon called the Black educational experience and arrive at some "truth" representative of the researchers' and the participants' voices, perspectives, and narratives, while not privileging our voice. According to Nieto (1994) researchers can acquire this "truth" in research when they value and listen to the self, to others, and to the self in relation to others.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Geographical regions across the U.S. were represented in this study as participants were scattered from Louisiana to Upstate New York to California. The categorical variable of "place" yielded 50% of self-reported participants growing up in a rural area, 22.5 % in an urban area, and 27.5% in a suburban area. The educational "spaces" in which they grew up and received their formal education were self-reported as 7.5% attending school in an all-Black space, 20% in spaces that were mostly Black, 2.5% all White, 37.5% mostly White, and 30% equally diverse.

BRIAS was used in this study to measure racial identity development. The total mean score for the measurement was ($M = 138.24$; $SD = 12.6$). There were no outliers contained in the data and a histogram revealed that the data was normally distributed.

The results for the correlation analysis between the categorical variables of space/place and the continuous variable of the BRIAS scale was calculated using Eta, a coefficient of nonlinear associations. The relationship between space and Black racial identity measured with the BRIAS was $n=.393$, representing a significant yet small correlation. The relationship between place and Black racial identity measured with the BRIAS was $n=.039$, representing a significant yet little to no correlational effect.

Qualitative Themes

Three themes were identified: (1) educational spaces, (2) HBCU versus PWI debate, and (3) stages of Black identity development. Each theme provided more depth of understanding of how educational spaces influence Black identity development.

Theme 1: Educational Spaces. The 39 Black professionals who participated in this study have successfully navigated the educational spaces of their formal learning years and continued on to successfully navigate and graduate 35% at the bachelor's degree level, 30% at the master's level, 17.5% at the post- graduate

degree or certification level, and 12.5% at a doctoral level. Forty-seven percent of the participants attended HBCUs and 50% attended PWIs as an undergraduate (Note: One response was missing in the analysis of this question). Fifty-two percent reported that their mother attended college and 42.11% reported their father attended college, with both parents representing HBCU and PWI spaces.

When asked about the post-secondary choices to which the participants thought they had or did not have access, replies ranged from few options due to low American College Testing (ACT) scores to not going to college was "*not an option due to college being a rite of passage to prosperity*." Some participants thought the military was the only way they could access college due to lack of scholarships, opportunities, and counseling support from their high schools; once in the military they seized the opportunity to pursue a college education. Two additional participants stated in their narrative responses having the opportunity to attend college through the receipt of scholarships.

Four out of 39 participants thought that the educational system had failed them at some point in their journey. Personal experiences of not being allowed to fully participate in educational activities because of race or challenges experienced in attending mostly White schools in their formal years or at their PWI in college were common threads throughout the narrative responses.

> *One of my disappointments was with the lack of help for Black students' transition to college. When it came to hearing about college options, careers, scholarships, financial aid, and the how-to's to get into college, I was clueless. I had to figure it out and leaned heavily on family, teachers and the church to help navigate the process. It seemed this was a common experience among other Black students at the school.*

Over 50% participants stated that the lack of having a diverse teaching staff had a negative impact on their development or experience. Many who grew up in mostly White schools recalled having a teacher at some point who either believed they were incapable of learning, did not support them when they struggled with concepts in the class, or did not expose them to rigor or advanced concepts. "*Not exposing me to more Black scholarship in middle and high school lead me down a weird path with my identity*." One participant who appeared to have switched educational spaces at some point recalled, "*The mix of city and suburban students wasn't necessarily the best for me socially. I struggled with my 'Blackness' due to bullying. I guess it was due to how I didn't act, dress, or talk 'Black' according to a lot of my peers who were Black.*" Reading through the narrative responses, some experiences seem to be race related, however, most participants did not see the role race played in their experience. Instead, they cited other systems of oppression like location and lack of opportunity.

Theme 2: HBCU versus PWI Debate. The debate of an HBCU versus a PWI education has been a frequent conversation in the media, in state funding, and

Black homes and communities. When participants were asked about this debate, the responses were varied– some expected, and some hurtful. Some participants stated that the choice of attending a HBCU was the only option they had. They were not educated on the PWIs in the area and their high schools gave them no information nor set up visits for them to explore this as a possibility. One person said, "*PWI was best and HBCUs are not respected.*" Another participant said that the HBCUs in their state "*were horrible. PWI or die.*" Participants stated having parents, community role models, and/or family who had attended a Black college were the reasons they chose to attend a HBCU. "*Black colleges were comfortable, familiar, accessible, and fun.*"

If one educational space must close, which one should it be and why? A third of the respondents, 28.57%, believed that HBCUs should close and 71.43% believed that the closures should occur at PWIs. Even though the participants more equally attended both educational spaces, the majority chose to keep HBCUs in business. "*PWIs do not serve me or my people. Not a fan!*" and "*PWIs are more welcoming to White students as where HBCUs truly welcome all races*" were two responses received. A majority of the respondents referenced the lack of support and resources that Black colleges and universities receive and would keep them open because they survive with constant limitations. Some especially said that they would not be college graduates today if it had not been for a Black institution. Black institutions give all students the opportunity to achieve whereas PWIs do not. One respondent indicated:

> *The systematic racism in this country is why I would choose to keep HBCUs open. If more resources were available to HBCUs, then these institutions could help bridge the gaps in educating people of all colors of foundational knowledge such as history. This knowledge will make for a better country.*

Despite the personal experiences of many of the participants, the majority of them had the racial awakening to rationalize the importance and purpose of maintaining Black educational spaces for the growth and development all people. Black educational spaces "*culturally are needed because the truth of our history is coming to light. PWIs cover up the contributions made by minorities*," said one participant.

Theme 3: Stages of Black Identity Development. The stages of Black identity development can better be explored and identified through the participants' narratives. Study participants took BRIAS to explore and to identify where they were in their current stage of development as Black professionals. In the Pre-Encounter stage people do not acknowledge race as something that has affected their lives. The Pre-Encounter stage can be seen in some of the narrative responses:

> *I have had no negative educational experiences. I have completed every goal I've set out to accomplish both in high school and college.*

The system never failed me because I would not allow it. Rules are just that and sometimes they were stringent and difficult to live with. I learned very early in life thateverybody has to obey somebody and that alone was a powerful asset in my personal educational victories.

The Encounter stage can be seen through responses that were impactful to a person's worldview.

I grew up watching A Different World. I always dreamed of being Black and successful while learning all the things I felt I missed growing up in a predominately White community.

I grew up in a town of educators and farmers within one of two Black communities in the town. At the time, the Whites had the medical degrees; juris degrees. The town was predominately White with a 5 to 1 ratio. School integration was difficult but the strengthand resiliency of the Black community not only prevailed, it triumphed.

Powerful experiences like these serve as a catalyst to spur change in thinking during theEncounter stage.

The Immersion-Emersion stage of Nigrescence addresses the most sensational aspect of Black identity development. Statements like "*PWIs do not serve me or my people*" and "*I love the Black culture*" represent the "vortex of psychological Nigrescence" (Cross, 1991). Cross saidthat "immersion is a strong powerful dominating sensation that is constantly energized by rage atWhite people and culture, guilt at having once been tricked into thinking Black ideas and developing a sense of pride in one's Black self, Black people, and Black culture" (p. 203).

In the Internalization stage "Black identity functions to fulfill the self-protection, social anchorage, and bridging needs of the individual" (Cross, 1991, p. 220). One participant stated, "*Ibelieve that, as Blacks representing our culture, we should simply know that there will be roadblocks and that we must strategically navigate and overcome them with intellect and not emotional immaturity! We must also collectively begin to see each other as worthy and if not help other to obtain that worthiness.*" Another participant in the Internalization-Commitment stage stated the place where they grew up influenced their career choices. "*There was a lot of subtle racism that I encountered by older White people that influenced me to become an educatorin urban areas.*"

Discussion and Implications

There is a general lack of research exploring the influence of space/place on racial identity. Due to the history and current incidents of racism in research, schools, and in broader settings, filling gaps in this area is important. A heightened understanding is needed to unpack the complexities of Blackness to better understand and make sense of the multiple variables that intersect with identity development. The purpose of this study was to examine the associations between

educational spaces/places and Black identity development in a sample of Black professionals.

The mixed-methods approach incorporated survey items and open-ended questions as an important step toward better understanding of how educational spaces function for Blacks. The quantitative component consisted of correlation analysis and the use of qualitative inquiries was a pragmatic decision to allow participants to share their experiences and to dig deeper into the influence educational space has on Black identity development. Consistent with Cross' (1991, 1995) revised Nigrescence theory, the participants in this study shared their experiences openly and, in follow-up correspondence, shared how their participation in the survey caused them to reflect on many of the questions as they related to their personal experiences. Participants shared how some questions made them uncomfortable and how they were embarrassed by some of their viewpoints and answers. The survey led to increased insights and (re)interpretations of the meaning of race in society, schools, and in their lives. Although the survey may not have led to a change in one's social identity, the participants gained a better understanding and respect for the value of Blackness.

This racial awareness and awakening in Black people had not been shared, discussed, explored, or explained in the educational spaces in which the Black professional participants grew up. While Nigrescence demands more attention and exploration, it has been suppressed in all areas outside of psychology and some fields of higher education. Exploring the complexities of Blackness in educational spaces will lead Black students and people to develop racial pride and acceptance of themselves as a people and community. It is believed that the study of Blackness will also lead to an increase in one's commitment to challenge racial oppression at the personal level. A greater impact of this study would allow people of all ethnicities to have a better understanding and point of reference for how identity development influences the paths we take in life, how we think, and our decision processes. Similar to McDonald's (2008) findings in his narrative inquiry, personal (re)interpretations increase the clarity and awareness of race, encourage greater meaning-making about racial issues, and have a lasting influence on a person's identity and life course. This experience and interpretation are consistent with Cross' (1991) conceptualization of the encounter stage of Nigrescence. Understanding these findings in a context of a shortage of literature suggests that the importance of consistent, gradual, and intentional sharing of knowledge about the understanding of Blackness is imperative in all educational spaces. Additional research examining the underlying developmental mechanisms to the creation and maintenance of racial identity attitudes is required (Burrow, Tubman, & Montgomery, 2006) and would enhance understanding of this construct in relation to intersectionality of educational spaces and identity development.

Quantitative findings revealed that the relationship between space and racial identity was significant yet small and the relationship between place and racial

identity was significant, but yielded little to no correlational effect. These findings do not reflect the influence of educational spaces and place on Black identity development as indicated by qualitative findings. The qualitative findings from this study contribute to the literature by offering more detail about racial identity formation or development through the lived experiences of Black professionals from all disciplines and geographical regions. This study affords readers the opportunity to relate, interpret, and unpack the experiences of the participants and, in turn, (re)flect upon and (re)interpret their own experiences as they relate to their awareness of Blackness and its impact on their lives. How Blackness packs and (un)packs itself in the lives of Black people is complicated at best.

The meaning-making about one's identity is relevant for Black people to understand how they navigate spaces, process decisions and information, and just "be" in peace and power with their Blackness in every capacity and sense of the word regardless of socioeconomic status, age, space, and place. Conclusive findings indicate that family, and often their spirituality, were central factors that contributed to the success of these Black professionals as they navigated through various experiences and spaces along their journey. As one participant shared,

> In no small way parental teaching was the greatest impact upon my development. However, first-hand knowledge of Ku Klux Klan, racist police officers, great educators and pastors all share in making/molding me into who I am today. In retrospect some of the experiences were great indeed and others best in my opinion to have never existed.

Limitations

Although the findings from this exploratory investigation offer insights about how Black professionals process and make sense of their Black identity development through educational spaces, there were limitations. Qualitative research can be useful in enriching the complex data regarding racial consciousness. The quantitative methodology of this study may have restricted the ability to explore results in more depth; in addition to, the small sample size limiting generalizability of the results. Including more qualitative measures in this study would allow the additional flexibility needed to open up dialogue with people whose voices have so often been silenced in scholarship (Cox, 2004; Pinro & McKay, 2006). In depth examination of the participants' responses would have led to more rich data relative to their experiences within the educational spaces. It would be beneficial to place a greater emphasis on administering future surveys in-person or via phone to capture more detail and promote a greater experience with the questions that were asked. The data collected was captured essentially through the Qualtrics program survey that consisted of close and open-ended questions. Participant responses may have been restricted or limited to time constraints of the participant at the time of survey completion, or the participant not wanting to

type full responses. A few follow-up conversations occurred by phone and three oral history interviews were conducted, but more one-on-one interviews and focus groups would lead to a richer study.

References

Anderson, K. J. (1995). *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial discourse in Canada*. Montreal, QE:McGill-Queen's University Press.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*, 469-480. doi: 10.1037//0003-066X.55.5.469

Baldwin, J. A., & Bell, Y. R. (1982). *The African Self-Consciousness Scale manual*. Unpublished Manuscript, Florida AM University, Tallahassee, FL.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3,* 77-101.

Bullard, R. D. & Wright, B. (2009). *Race, place, and environmental justice after Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to reclaim, rebuild, and revitalize New Orleans and theGulf Coast*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Bullard, R. D. (2007). *The Black metropolis in the twenty-first century: Race, power, andthe politics of place*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Burrow, A. L., Tubman, J. G., & Montgomery, M. J. (2006). Racial identity: Towards an integrated developmental psychological literature. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *6*(4), 317-339.

Clayton, K. A. (2020). Biracial identity development at historically White and historically Black colleges and universities. *Sociology of Education, 93*(3), 238-255. Doi: 10.1177/0038040720926163

Constantine, M. G., Warren, A. K., & Miville, M. L. (2005). White racial identity dyadic interactions in supervision: Implications for supervisees' multicultural counseling competence. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(4), 490-496.

Cox, T. C., Jr. (2004). Problems with research by organizational scholars on issues of race and ethnicity. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *40*(2), 124-145.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among fiveapproaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1971). The Negro-to-Black conversion experience: Toward apsychology of Black liberation. *Black World*, *20*, 13-27.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1978). The Cross and Thomas models of psychological nigrescence. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *5*, 13-19.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1995). The psychology of nigresence: Revising the Cross model. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook ofmulticultural counseling* (pp. 93-122). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Delaney, D. (2002). The space that race makes. *The Professional Geographer*, *54*(1), 6-14. doi: 10.1111/0033-0124.00309

Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociologicalmethods*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theoryin education ten years later. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 7-27.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University

Press.

Duncan, G. A. (2002). Beyond love: A critical race ethnography of schooling of adolescent Black males. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *35*(2), 131-143.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

Feld, S., & Basso, K. H. (1996). *Senses of place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Ford, D. Y., Harris, D., III, & Schuerger, J. M. (1993). Racial identity development among gifted Black students: Counseling issues and concerns. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *71*, 409-417.

Hatchett, S., & Schuman, H. (1975). White respondents and race-of-interviewer effects. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 39*(4), 523-528.

Hauser, S. T., & Kasendorf, E. (1983). *Black and White identity formation* (2nd ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Helms, J. E. (Ed.). (1990). *African American and White racial identity*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Helms, J. E. (1990). *Black and White racial identity*: *Theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Helms, J. E. (l990a). Introduction: Review of racial identity. In E. Helms (Ed.), *Black and White racial identity: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-8). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Helms, J. E. (1995). An update of Helm's White and people of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 181-198). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Helms, J. E. (1996). Toward a methodology for measuring and assessing "racial" as distinguished from "ethnic" identity. In G.R. Sodowsky, & J. Impara (Eds.), *Multicultural assessment in counseling and clinical psychology* (pp. 143-192). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Helms, J. E., & Carter, R. T. (1991). Relationships of White and Black identity attitudes and demographic similarity to counselor preferences. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *38*(4), 446-457.

Helms, J. E., & Parham, T. A. (1996). The development of the Racial Identity Attitude Scale. In R.L. Jones (Ed.), *Handbook of tests and measurements for Black populations* (Vol. 2) (pp. 167-174). Hampton, VA: Cobb & Henry.

Hilliard, A. G. (1992). Behavioral style, culture, and teaching and learning. *Journal of Negro Education, 61*(3), 370-377. doi.org/10.2307/2295254.

Janesick, V. J. (2007). Peer debriefing. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, G. Ritzer (Ed.). doi:10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosp014

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2014). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Knowles, C. (2003). *Race and Social Analysis*. London, UK: Sage

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F., IV (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47-68.

Lipsitz, G. (2007). The racialization of space and the spatialization of race. *Landscape Journal*, *26*(1), 10-23.

McDonald, M.G. (2008). The nature of epiphanic experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *48*, 89-115. doi.org/10.1177/0022167807311878

Miller-Cotto, D. , & Brynes, P. (2016). Ethnic/racial identity and academic achievement: A

meta-analytic review. *Developmental Review, 41*, 51-70.

Neely, B., & Samura, M. (2011). Social geographies of race: Connecting race and space. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *34*(11), 1933-1952. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.559262

Nelson, J. (2008). *Razing Africville: A geography of racism*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Nickerson, K. J., Helms, J. E., & Terrell, F. (1994). Cultural mistrust, opinions about mental illness, and Black students' attitudes toward seeking psychological help from White counselors. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *41*(3), 378-385.

Nieto, S. (1994). Lessons from students on creating a chance to dream. *Harvard Educational Review*, *64*(4), 392-427.

Ogbu, J. U., & Simons, H. D. (1998). Voluntary and involuntary minorities: A cultural-ecological theory of school performance with some implications for education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *29*, 155-188. doi:10.1525/aeq.1998.29.2.155

Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1981). The influence of Black students' racial identity attitudes on preference for counselor's race. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *28*, 250-258.

Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1985). Attitudes of racial identity and self-esteem: An Exploratory investigation. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, *26*, 143-146.

Pinro, R. M., & McKay, M. M. (2006). A mixed-methods analysis of African-American women's Attendance at an HIV prevention intervention. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *34*(5), 601-616.

Plano Clark, V., & Ivankova, N. (2016). *Mixed methods research: A guide to the field.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pope-Davis, D. B., Lie, W. M., Ledesma-Jones, S., & Nevitt, J. (2000). African American acculturation and Black racial identity: A preliminary investigation. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *28*(2), 98-112.

Portelli, A. (1981). The peculiarities of oral history. *History Workshop Journal*, *12*(1), 96–107. doi.org/10.1093/hwj/12.1.96

Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *90*(1), pp. 12-40.

Pyrant, C. T., & Yanico, B. J. (1991). Relationship of racial identity and gender-role attitudes to Black women's psychological well-being. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *38*, 315-322.

Razack, S. (2002). *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a White settler society*. Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.

Renn, K. A., & Shang, P. (2008). Biracial and multiracial students: New directions for student services. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Richardson, T., & Helms, J. E. (1994). The relationship of the racial identity attitudes of Black men to perceptions of "parallel" counseling dysads. *Journal of counseling and development*, *78*(2), 172-177.

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Rousseau, C., & Tate, W. (2003). No time like the present: Reflecting on equity in school mathematics. *Theory into Practice*, *42*(3), 210-216.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in Education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Semaj, L. T. (1981). The Black self, identity, and models for a psychology of Black liberation. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, *5*, 158-171.

Solorzao, D. G., & Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counterstorytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23-44.

Syed, M., & Mitchell, L. L. (2013). Race, ethnicity, and emerging adulthood: Retrospect and prospects. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*, 83–95. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2167696813480503

Thompson, P. R., & Bornat, J. (2017). *The voice of the past: Oral history*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Woods, C., & McKittrick, K. (2007). *Black geographies and the politics of place*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Yull, D. G. (2014). Race has always mattered: An intergenerational look at race, space, place, and educational experiences of blacks. *Education Research International 2014* (Article ID:683035):1-13. doi: 10.1155/2014/683035. Retrieved September 24, 2017.