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The Perceptions and Effects of Schools' Names on Black Professional Educators and Their Students

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THE PERCEPTIONS AND EFFECTS OF SCHOOLS' NAMES ON BLACK PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND THEIR STUDENTS

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Approved by
Dr. Barbara Nicholson, Committee Chairperson
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APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION

We, the faculty supervising the work of **Gregg Ferguson**, affirm that the dissertation, *The perceptions and effects of schools' names on black professional educators and their students.* , meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the EdD Program in **Leadership Studies** and the College of Education and Professional Development. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

Dr. Bobbi Nicholson Leadership Studies	Committee Chairperson Major	4-17-19 Date
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ABSTRACT

It is obvious that there is a variety of perspectives that the educational environment needs to sensitively reflect to serve a diverse society equitably. In Southern communities, in particular, distortions of heritage are conflated with local governance that control public money, public memory, public value, public health, and public landscape, including the public school environment and marginalizes further historically marginalized groups. This qualitative study was grounded in critical race and cultural geography theories that examined dominant paradigms in the educational environment which shape identity. This dissertation explored the effect(s) of race and racism in the educational environment from the perspective of Black educators, including me. It paid particular attention to our perceptions of the effects of school names on our experience as students and educators. The purpose of this study was to discover how Black educators, as professionals and students, experience(d) what they perceive(d) to be symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and/or symbolic violence through schools named after individuals, in particular those sympathetic to the Confederacy and slavery, or prominent Blacks, and whether they have found ways to manage the impact of schools' names for themselves and their students. The findings of the study were related to tenets of critical race theory and themes of cultural geography. Black educators perceived and experienced schools named for prominent Blacks as symbolic capital and a catalyst to create critical race curricula that highlighted the achievements of Blacks despite racism in America. Schools named for prominent Blacks were instrumental in challenging the dominant perspectives about Black inferiority by dispelling stereotypes and emphasizing social justice. The findings were that Black educators perceived and experienced schools named for White supremacists and Confederates as symbolic violence that could not be used to enhance curricula, or create a positive school culture around the ideals of the namesakes.

As a trifecta for White supremacy, the names simultaneously solidified the permanence of racism, amplified the systemic racism that produced inequitable educational outcomes for Black students, and were racial microaggressions causing socio-emotional disruption for Black teachers and their students who grappled with educational leadership's decisions to maintain the names.

Chapter One

The details and symbols of your life have been deliberately constructed to make

you believe what White people say about you. Please try to remember that what

they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure, does not testify to

your inferiority but to their inhumanity and fear . . . They are, in effect, still

trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it,

they cannot be released from it. They have had to believe for many years, and for

innumerable reasons, that Black men are inferior to White men. Many of them

indeed know better, but as you will discover, people find it very difficult to act on

what they know. To act is to be committed and to be committed is to be in danger.

In this case the danger in the minds and hearts of most White Americans is the

loss of their identity . . . (Baldwin, 1962)

The words of James Baldwin seem as relevant now as they were at the height of the Civil

Rights movement when he wrote as a witness to the world around him; a world in which he bore

responsibility to act, in an effort to create the world in which he could fit (Villarreal, 2017). "To

act is to be committed and to be committed is to be in danger" and in terms of the American

struggle for equality, a commitment to challenging the perceptions upon which others' identity is

built presents a crisis that not only poses psychological danger, but often certain death. It seems

that for some time and in some places Blacks have been engaged in a fight for survival that does

not afford the luxury to contest their own oblivion, much less the oblivion of others who are

"trapped in a history they do not understand" (Baldwin, 1962). While minorities and women

have successfully demanded participation in all facets of American society, the public

educational system fails to close the achievement gap academically for its Black and Latino

students measured by outcomes on standardized tests; and the system has become increasingly

reluctant to recognize the role race and racism may play in equalizing resources, addressing poverty, combating segregation and discrimination, or guaranteeing all children an opportunity to learn (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013).

An often overlooked component of the role of race and racism includes the evaluation of the subtleties of school names and culture in shaping the identities of students, teachers and their communities. In 2007 as an African American educator serving a southern school district, I recall facing this dilemma going to work at Stonewall Jackson Middle School in the heart of the Black community on the West Side of Charleston, West Virginia. As I entered, I glanced throughout the walls of the great foyer for artifacts of the namesake, Stonewall Jackson, or his claim to fame, and saw nothing that would explain to the community who he was or why the school is named after him. That explanation seemed conspicuously absent, yet was ironically a relief to me. Still, my heart sank every time I entered the building for work, went to a sporting event or passed its curbside marquee which emphasized "Respect and Responsibility." The question then became "respect for whom and responsibility for what?"

When it opened in 1940, the school was touted as the state's most modern high school (Proud name, 1940, p. A1). The city's newspaper headline read, "A proud name given to school," and a May celebration was planned which boasted General Stonewall Jackson's battles "more than once turned defeat into victory for the Confederacy." His defense of the bastion of White supremacy in the region was so essential, that his death was reported to have "disarmed the South's hope of ultimate victory" (Proud name, 1940, p. A1). The Confederacy, of course, in its own words, was established to maintain slavery in the southern states and expand it to new territories westward (Stephens, 1861). The state of West Virginia emerged from that humanitarian crisis.

According to the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History (n.d.), West

Virginia was initially formed as the Restored Government of Virginia to replace the Virginia

seats which were vacated when that state seceded from the Union to join the Confederacy. After

several conventions in Wheeling, Virginia, the 30 or so delegates from the northwestern Virginia

counties decided the territory would be loyal to the Union and had President Lincoln's assurance

of protection against its eastern counties. The new state was eventually ratified as West Virginia

and its statehood bill before the U.S. Senate included the Willey Amendment as a compromise

between sharp divisions, including whether to allow slavery of Africans, abolish it, or exclude

Blacks (free or slave) altogether from the state. The Willey Amendment was adopted allowing

the slavery of Africans, with a gradual emancipation of them after July 4, 1863. As with other

southern states however, the end of the slavery of Africans, as well as their civil and voting

rights, came only after federal pressure was applied (Mann, 2010, para 4).

Would Jackson have approved of the formation of a state which seceded from the ideals

for which he and his confederates were willing to kill and die? Would Jackson have supported

the forced integration of his namesake school, almost a century later in 1954? Those few Black

students who dodged the verbal bullets and hostilities in 1954 now have become 51% of the

school's enrollment, and one need not be an historian to suppose that the generals of the

Confederacy, fervent opponents of freedom for those students' forbearers, would not have been

likely advocates for their education (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). The middle

school sits on the rise of a hill overlooking the "flats" of Charleston's West Side, where its

current non-White enrollment far exceeds the state's average of 7% and the population of

Whites, at a little over 50%, falls well below the state's average of 94% (Charleston, West

Virginia, n.d.). The school named after Stonewall Jackson is now second highest in Black

enrollment in Kanawha County — a county which is the seat of state government and where only 10 of its 66 schools have Black enrollments over 20% (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.).

Yet in the Jim Crow era, the school was named to mollify the swath of White segregationists who lived in the big houses of former plantations which dotted the area along the Kanawha River. Throughout the reconstructed South, a huge effort by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to grow Southern pride beginning at the turn of the 20th century resulted in a swell in their membership by World War I to roughly 100,000 (Savage,1990). While UDC chapters were eventually established throughout the country, they remained most influential in the South, where they organized Decoration Day ceremonies, monument dedications, and raised money to support veterans in their old age (Savage, 1990). The most important function of the UDC, however, was the overseeing of how history was taught to the next generation on the high school and college levels, since students were expected to assume the responsibility of defending their ancestors once the generation that lived through the Civil War had died (Zimmerman, 2002). The UDC did this primarily by authorizing textbooks for classroom use and rejecting those they deemed to be a threat to the memory of the Confederate soldier; and by erecting statues lionizing heroes of the Confederacy (Zimmerman, 2002; Savage, 1990). In West Virginia these memorial efforts included the statue of Stonewall Jackson on the Capitol grounds and his ideals as inspiration for the newest public high school students of 1940 (Savage, 1990).

Over 60 years later, even as our U.S. Constitution was progressing to create a more perfect union, the painful cultural lag in this southern community was made even more evident when a Black student athlete attending Stonewall Jackson gave me a sweatshirt as a gift. It was cool and fashionable – in red and gray, the school colors. The back featured a high and

impenetrable "stone wall" which was a merciful double entendre adopted as a resistance slogan by some of the high school's Black radicals in the 1970s who tired of having the Confederate favorite, "Dixie," played at every event (personal communication, C. Smith, September 14, 2016). Comprehending the new millennial mascot emblazoned on the front of the shirt, however, stirred up an even more discomfiting mix of emotions. The "general" was outfitted in a gray medaled uniform, his head topped with a Hardee style hat on which was embroidered the Confederate crossed-sword emblem. He was buff and intimidating staring down the opponent with a football player's ferocity – serious dark eyes, flared nose and proud full lips – surrounded by the brown skin and coiled locks of . . . a Black man. I felt humiliated for him and the teams of predominantly Black athletes, cheerleaders, and scholars who unwittingly upheld the honor of a rebel who killed to keep their kin shackled and whose devotees, even after defeat of his vile cause, forced them to sanctify his name with their talents. I could not consider the contemporary educational leaders to have been incognizant in their decision to allow such a travesty. To me, a deliberate mockery was encoded which was much more than a hapless effrontery. The decision of educational leadership in this instance reflected the larger systemic apathy to the life and death struggles of Blacks in this society – struggles which would be the center of the 21st century revival of a Black national consciousness fighting to end police brutality; environmental racism; the prison industrial complex (including the school pipeline) and educational inequities.

Stirred by righteous indignation and using the mascot as a rally point I had hopes of reawakening that consciousness in Appalachia. I created a petition to change the name of the school which I circulated throughout the community and at all the Democratic events for an election which would ultimately result in the first Black president of the United States. On the street corners of Charleston's West Side, Blacks I talked with looked at the mascot and asked

what the problem was, as though there was none. Invariably, as I read the petition statement

describing Jackson's acclaim, I saw their amusement morph into embarrassment, shame, and

then anger. Some were embarrassed that they were not taught history in a manner that might

have made the mockery apparent to them; some were ashamed that they could do nothing more

than an illegible scribble on the petition because they had chosen a livelihood that required their

anonymity; but all were angry that their worst fears were confirmed: the system could not care

less about them. To many of my Black colleagues in education, the damage done by their

miseducation was the "bigger fish to fry." Still, I persisted with my "low hanging fruit" issue and

at one political meeting, after confronting the then governor and his ilk with the image, they

shook their heads wistfully while muttering what they had always felt: "They should be ashamed

of themselves." To me it raised the question, "Aren't you '*they'?*" Before the answer was clear

Obama won the White House, and I drove by Washington Street – the dividing line between the

historic *hills* of White supremacy and the Flats they oversaw – and noticed that a majestic tree

had fallen in the front yard of Stonewall Jackson Middle School. That event inspired me to write

an essay that would be published in the local newspaper a few days later which I called, "The

Tree Has Spoken." It was the physical representation of the figurative tree so intricately tied to

Black oppression in the South – from the stump of the auction block to those bearing strange

fruit which now, on the lawn of this former all-White high school, came crashing down on the

name of an oppressor.

Soon after that, the acquittal of the man responsible for the death of an unarmed Black

teen named Trayvon Martin and the fatal outcomes for other unarmed Blacks across the nation

who were confronted by police, such as Eric Harris, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland,

Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and 12-year-old Tamir Rice, not only mobilized the Black Lives

Matter campaign, but foreshadowed a terrorist attack by an avowed White supremacist who walked into a Charleston, South Carolina church and prayed before slaying nine innocent Black people (Hafner, 2018). On social media, he often donned a Confederate flag like the one which hung on the capitol grounds of their state, and his deadly act finally sparked a national debate about how that blatant symbol of American pathology is allowed to thrive in our public square; worse, through our public tax dollars, and worse yet with the sanction of our seats of government, our institutions of higher education, and our public school systems as if confirming to Black Americans that Black lives will never matter (Ghansah, 2017).

I revived my "Change the Name" petition online and within a few days there were over 100 signatures, which was not bad for a state which is less than 4% Black (Mothers, 2015). News coverage contrasted my opinion with others in the community, and exposed our all-White county school board members to be stupefied that the name of a school would offend its Black citizens. One longstanding member pointed out the perceived lack of knowledge I possessed about who Jackson was and reminded a journalist of the general's support of his slaves' learning to read in Sunday school, as though his pro-slavery stance was but a minor character flaw (Quinn, 2015). A counter petition was created which garnered 1,000 signatures in its first two days online. By the end of two months there were almost 3,000 to keep his name on the school, several hundred racists who knew *my* name, and a school board which dropped the matter "in the name of peace." As I settled back into anonymity as a researcher, I was relieved that the bigger fish to be fried were not charring in the fire of a cross on my lawn.

Meanwhile, in the same West Side neighborhood another naming battle was waged for the new consolidated elementary school. At the heart of the battle was Mary C. Snow, the first African American principal for an integrated county school, who had worked tirelessly in a

community with unique racial, political and socio-economic challenges. Many of those challenges required diverse and culturally sensitive solutions, and the naming of the new community elementary school became chief among them.

To many, naming the school after Snow would represent the county and community support of a woman of color as a cultural symbol and educational role model. In 2009, two years before the school opened, the initial rejection of naming the school after her came by way of a pending legislative bill prohibiting schools in West Virginia to be named after living people (Marra, 2012). Ironically, it seemed to be a bill more relevant to another name in nomination: that of the current U.S. President Barack Obama. The battle over the new school's name was divisive with the proponents making two strong arguments. The first was that the naming after a Black person in a Black community would help to compensate for all of the schools formerly named after local Blacks in the Charleston area which had been torn down or changed when the demographics of the neighborhood which they had once served changed, such as Carter G. Woodson, a former president of West Virginia State College (now University) and the creator of our national Black History Month, and Sam Cabell, one of the first county educators of color (Marra, 2012). The other pro-consideration was her deservedness: Snow had been a pioneer in education, she had served on the Human Rights Commission, had been the recipient of both the governor's Living the Dream Award and the Distinguished Mountaineer Award, and had won a spot in an exchange program that sent her to Cardiff, Wales, where she eventually had tea with the queen of England (Marra, 2012). Yet many opposed her name for various reasons and felt that the students and faculty who had voted, selecting West Side Elementary after their first choice, Barack Obama Elementary, had been disqualified by the pending legislative bill (a bill that eventually was not passed), should make the decision.

There were a couple of early elections at which the names West Side and Cabell had been on the ballot; yet some complained that turn-out was so small (and comprised significantly of prospective school faculty, most of whom were White and nonlocal) that it did not reflect the West Side community (personal communication, F. Davis, August 22, 2018). I was encouraged, however, that at the very least, there would possibly be a school named in contrast to the racialized Confederate and White supremacy symbolism on the West Side, including Stonewall Jackson, Littlepage Terrace (a formerly "Whites only" housing development named after Adam Littlepage, who was noted as having owned the most slaves in Kanawha County), and the Glenwood Estates (once the lavish Big House of a plantation, now converted to a prominent landmark hosting elite galas) (Peyton, 2013).

In January of 2011, Mary C. Snow passed away, but the school, nonetheless, honored the vote of that initial handful of people and opened in July as West Side Elementary. The new faculty, still primarily White, held the Mary C. Snow naming honor hostage to their demands that the primarily Black community they were hired to serve also serve the school with ramped up volunteerism (Boucher, 2013). The community rallied around cries of local Black ministers to fight for Mary C. Snow's name on the "community" school marquee, and in the midst of confrontations with teachers, protests and marches, made themselves available as volunteers at the school. The community's service appeased the faculty and they reconsidered, sending a letter to the board and superintendent to that effect. The board rescinded its original decision, citing the small turn-out at the initial vote and the staff's change of heart, and voted 4-1 to change the name to Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary in 2012 – a year after she could have enjoyed it (the only dissent being the same man who had wanted me to think about Stonewall Jackson as a benevolent slave master). In the case of the Snow controversy, one of those local ministers

stated, "If we really want to honor [Snow], not only do we put her name on the school, we take on her spirit" (Boucher, 2013, para.4). The mayor of Charleston during that time had been an ardent supporter of naming the school after Snow and hoped the new name would give people a reason to ask about Snow's history and discover what her presence meant to education in Charleston (Boucher, 2013).

Mary C. Snow's history did represent a collective triumph for Black Charleston. She was one of the "firsts" who are often touted by oppressed communities. We often marvel that they excelled in the face of violent persecution or institutional discrimination. Like Katherine Johnson who calculated the trajectories for the first manned space travel for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in the 1960s and recently spoke at the unveiling of her long overdue statue at West Virginia State University, the Historically Black College/University where she received her undergraduate degree, many of these heroes felt that they "were just doin' their jobs" as they endured the prejudices of their everyday experience in order to ascend a professional or spiritual ladder (personal communication, K. Johnson, August 25, 2018). Many of their experiences overcoming the flaws of the American system continue to inspire activism and vigilance in society. The individual ability of those Black achievers to prove the system wrong by succeeding was not a political calling, however, but a measure of their integrity which placed value on gaining knowledge and using their skill to provide for themselves and family.

Maintaining integrity and focus in those racially hostile environs is essential, yet as difficult as the military feat of "finding true north in a crooked room," a phrase which in *Sister Citizen* (2013) Melissa Harris-Perry uses to describe the exercise that trains Blacks to be mentally agile when compensating for the false reality created by the American construction of inferiority among people of color. As in the Air Force, failing at this exercise has deadly

consequences: accepting the moral compass of off-tilt systems is not only a betrayal of the soul, but as in the Stockholm syndrome, where a captive begins to identify closely with her captors (as well as with their agenda and demands). Blacks become unconscious accomplices to their own subjugation and demise.

Statement of the Problem

To move forward in this American experiment under the premise that our nation is healed from the effects of having existed longer as an oppressed society than egalitarian one is faulty and unjust. Although I applaud the aspiration of those from many walks of life, including me, who are striving for a post-racial society where colorblindness is universal and innate, it is apparent that more work needs to be done to revisit the unconscious bias encoded in our social hierarchy by centuries of dehumanization of Black people. The educational environment, where the American codes are downloaded daily into the psyches of millions of children, is the most important landscape to be scanned for racial bias in both its open and hidden curricula, its leaders, and lingering in the disguises of nostalgia, heritage or neutrality.

It is important to accept that the inevitable changes in our country's demographics will require our educational programs and the leaders they produce to be cognizant of both subliminal and overt racism. *The Handbook of Research on Educational Leadership for Equity and Diversity* (*The Handbook*) (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013) was developed to examine and guide educational leaders and urges them to be accountable for providing an equitable and excellent education for traditionally marginalized students of color who, by 2042, will become the majority. Data from the U. S. Department of Education pointed out that in 2016, 80% of teachers and principals were White, while White students were only 49% of the K-12 population and Black and Hispanic students were 16% and 26% respectively (Taie & Goldring, 2018);

furthermore 73% of students pursuing undergraduate education degrees and 71% of students pursuing graduate education majors were White; and 84% of full-time professors and 79% of instructional faculty were White (Lynch, 2016).

Tillman and Scheurich (2013) asserted that "any question of how to lead should be coupled with the notion of leadership to what end, which should be high quality educational performance and outcomes for a diverse population of children" (p. 6). They suggested that educational leadership programs have an ethical responsibility to interrogate systems, organizational frameworks and leadership theories. Simultaneously, our educational systems will need to de-center White perspectives and dismantle power, privilege and racially unconscious school leaders and systems by preparing future educational leaders to accommodate race and culture in our increasingly diverse student population (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013).

Tillman and Scheurich's (2013) handbook is framed around four premises to which this study can contribute: 1) that the persistent failures of schools to close academic gaps coexists with the increasing rise in diversity; 2) that diversity is an asset that calls for an assets-based approach; 3) that bias and discrimination are still pervasive in education and have a persistent and destructive effect; and 4) that schools can become equitable and inclusive. Many Black educators, like me, when pointing out the pervasiveness of White privilege and subtle racism like microaggression in the school environment, have found ourselves vulnerable not only to psychological and social endangerment, but often certain professional death. We can examine Tillman and Scheurich's (2013) assertion that "the undertone for educational leadership is that race and racism are topics typically silenced, muted and/or reframed toward a discussion of colorblindness in a post-racial society, even while the experience for a majority of the students of

color continues to be mired in inequity and lack of educational opportunity" (p. 23) by examining the experiences of a larger field of Black educators in this study.

Rationale

Given the demographic changes in the country, it is clear there is a variety of perspectives the educational environment of our diverse nation needs to sensitively reflect. Unfortunately, in many communities, distortions of heritage are conflated with local governance that controls public money, public memory, public value, public health, and public landscape – including the public school environment – with many of their decisions linked to a racist version of history. This study paid attention to the effects of the honorary naming of public schools for Black heroes and for White supremacists, most notably in southern communities, because they can be physical and symbolic manifestations of those systemic, institutional values and priorities. We can draw strength from the hundreds of independent movements across the country that are attempting to eradicate racist links to the education of Americans. We can also be empowered by the families of White supremacist leaders, like the great-great grandsons of Stonewall Jackson who have become vocal allies in addressing the perpetuation of racism through names and statues and who recently wrote an open letter to the mayor of Richmond, Virginia which in part states:

> As two of the closest living relatives to Stonewall, we are writing today to ask for the removal of his statue, as well as the removal of all Confederate statues from Monument Avenue. They are overt symbols of racism and white supremacy, and the time is long overdue for them to depart from public display. Overnight, Baltimore has seen fit to take this action. Richmond should, too. In making this request, we wish to express our respect and admiration for Mayor Stoney's leadership while also strongly disagreeing with his claim that 'removal of

symbols does [nothing] for telling the actual truth [nor] changes the state and

culture of racism in this country today.' In our view, the removal of the Jackson

statue and others will necessarily further difficult conversations about racial

justice. It will begin to tell the truth of us all coming to our senses … Confederate

monuments like the Jackson statue were never intended as benign symbols.

Rather, they were the clearly articulated artwork of white supremacy …Ongoing

racial disparities in incarceration, educational attainment, police brutality, hiring

practices, access to health care, and, perhaps most starkly, wealth, make it clear

that these monuments do not stand somehow outside of history. Racism and white

supremacy, which undoubtedly continue today, are neither natural nor inevitable.

Rather, they were created in order to justify the unjustifiable, in particular slavery.

(in Christian & Christian, 2017)

Our teachers are also in the position to not only articulate, but inculcate a particular

consciousness that they themselves have internalized which can either cultivate tolerance and

acceptance or wither them. Because of that influence, the educational system should reflect the

enlightenment and advancement which has painstakingly been made at great human cost through

activism, advocacy and socio-cultural research. Racist practices and policies in schools and our

systems of government should be examined and eradicated. Unconscious bias and White

privilege should be acknowledged as accessories to racism and to the perpetuation of inequity.

Posthumously, "The Teacher" (Youngren, 2015) was produced locally to pay tribute to

the daily struggles of Mary C. Snow. In "The Teacher" (2015), Mary C. Snow's interview

challenges us:

I was the chairman for the reading committee for the Board of Education and the

committee was tired and said, 'Let's go down and get some Cokes from the

drugstore there on the corner of Capital and Quarrier.' They could go, but I

couldn't, and I'm working on the books to make the whole system better readers,

and I remember that kinda' got to me. I said, 'You all go on' and they said, 'Come

on, go with us. We need a break from the work that we are doing.' I could have

gone, but I couldn't sit down. I mean, I could have bought the Coke, but I

couldn't sit down and drink it, and I thought that was ironic. I'm helping all

children to have more success in reading, improving the reading program, but I

couldn't have a Coke.

The paradox Ms. Snow faced on a daily basis is obvious to us in hindsight. In a timelier

manner, with this research we had an opportunity to let our Black educators tell their stories

about finding true north in the classroom while overcoming obstacles they face based on their

race within the context of the complexities of contemporary American culture. Building on the

research of social scientists, educators, cultural geographers, and legal scholars about racism,

racial microaggressions and racialized educational environments, we uncovered vestiges of the

past or discovered new, contemporary expressions of racism related to school naming which

afflict our Black teachers and potentially their students. The difference for us now is that we can

enjoy a Coke together at the counter for Mary and those like her "just doing their jobs."

Significance of the Study

The study has implications for all educational leadership programs, educators and staff in

public schools. In addition, Tillman and Scheurich (2013) also pointed to outcomes for students

of color in public k-12 education with respect to their overrepresentation in disciplinary referrals;

their underrepresentation in gifted, honors and advanced placement courses; their teachers being less experienced, less educated and more transient; and the likelihood of their schools having inadequate facilities and equipment. They pointed to a dearth of materials published by the American Educational Research Association on educational leadership which were focused on diversity or written by diverse authors to highlight that the onus should be placed on educational leadership to become equity focused and reflect the increasing diversity of U.S. society.

This study provided data to help guide educational leadership programs regarding the perils of ignoring race and other aspects of diversity in teaching, learning and leading which, according to Tillman and Scheurich (2013), all take place through a "complex web of interactions, beliefs about people (including oneself) and what they can and cannot achieve, and actions and inactions based on those beliefs" (p. 5). The study provided data specifically related to the perceptions of Black educators on the effects of schools named for individuals who have cultural and racial significance; as role models, what we learned from these educators can affect the education of *all* children and contribute to our understanding of continued education failures or future successes for rapidly growing racial and ethnic groups in our society.

The primary focus of this study was the perceptions of Black educators working in racialized landscapes – particularly schools which have a significant Black student enrollment and which are named for individuals who serve as cultural and political icons for various populations. By inviting Black educators to tell their own stories, we heard them in a way that examined whether educational leadership overlooks organizational context, politics and minority voices. Their stories were analyzed in a way that highlights leadership deficits in schools populated by poor and minority students – deficits which often create and exacerbate education inequity (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013, p. 6). Despite the racism they have faced, some Black

educators are able to create supportive learning environments that challenge all students to succeed. Equally important, all educational leaders need to develop a critical consciousness in order to understand the sociocultural context of schools and to provide sociopolitical interventions that demonstrate, consistent with the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards, "the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2018, p. 5). A commitment to advocacy, political resistance, care and confidence in Black students and faculty can lead to equitable transformations in the larger society (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013). Tillman and Scheurich describe the potential of stories from Black educators to the future: "By understanding how politics and policy have historically shaped education we get a better sense of where education is headed" (p. 23).

Theoretical Framework

In the next chapter the review of literature summarized relevant articles written from 2002 to 2017 related to critical race theory in education and cultural geography which form the basis for the study of teacher perceptions. The data was examined and framed through aspects of those two theories. The first, the critical race theory framework, was designed to acknowledge race and examine its intersection with racism as the first step to combating the daily oppression of racial injustice. As critical race theory in education, it was expanded to focus on those issues particularly in the educational environment starting in the 1990s (Capper, 2015). The second, cultural geography framework, was pioneered by Carl Sauer's (1925) approach of "reading landscapes" through cultural filters, and has been expanded to focus upon the patterns and interactions of human culture, both material and non-material, in relation to the natural

environment and the human organization of space which ascribes political, social and cultural agendas to the siting and naming of landmarks (Cosgrove, 1994).

The purpose of this study was to discover how Black educators, as professionals and students, experience(d) what they perceive(d) to be symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and/or symbolic violence through schools named after individuals, in particular those sympathetic to the Confederacy and slavery, or prominent Blacks and whether they have found ways to manage the impact of schools' names for themselves and their students.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study.

1. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

2. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

3. How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

4. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Definition of Terms

African American or Descendent of Slavery (DOS): An African American or DOS is an American having Black African slave ancestors.

Black: Black is belonging to or denoting any human group having dark-colored skin, especially Black African physical characteristics [including African Americans] (*The Oxford Dictionary of English*, n.d.).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): CRT arose to combat the subtler forms of racism that were gaining ground by studying and transforming the relationships among race, racism and power which includes economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and unconsciousness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Cultural Geography: Cultural geography is the study of the relationship between culture and place. It examines the cultural values, practices, discursive and material expressions and artifacts of people, the cultural diversity and plurality of society, how cultures are distributed over space, how places and identities are produced, how people make sense of places and build senses of place, and how people produce and communicate knowledge and meaning (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013).

Educator: An educator is any person trained and licensed and/or certified to work in public school as a teacher, student support service provider (e.g., counselor, psychologist, speech therapist, social worker), administrator, athletic coach, or educational consultant.

Internalized Racism: Internalized racism is both the conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy in which Whites are consistently ranked above people of color; not only the internalization of stereotypes imposed by the White majority about people of color, but also the internalization of the beliefs, values, and worldviews inherent in White supremacy (Kohli, 2008).

Microaggression: A brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignity, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color (Sue et. al., 2007).

Research Design

This qualitative study was grounded in critical race and socio-cultural geography theories which attempt to challenge dominant paradigms intersecting cultural identity and the educational environment. This study explored the effect(s) of race and racism in the educational environment from the perspective of Black professional educators, including me, working at schools in the Kanawha County, West Virginia neighborhood which has schools that are named after two individuals with ties to the state who served as symbols of race, culture and identity. The study was also expanded to include members of the Black professional teaching organization, the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, and a focus group of Black professionals in education from the National Education Association's Black Caucus who attended the 2018 Annual Issues Conference which focused on White supremacy and Black Lives Matter. I analyzed their perceptions of schools' names and any effects the names have on them or their students thematically, and focused on ideological symbolism of those names in educational settings.

Limitations

Within the broader context of education, race is a footnote. However, for Black educators in this study race was not a footnote, but the broader context – all of the participants had centered race and all had accepted the permanent effects of racism (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Capper, 2015). Participants of the West Side group chose to teach in schools in the predominantly Black and poor community of the capital city of a state with a Black population of 4%. Participants of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa were members of a race centered professional and student support group in the same manner of the Pan-Hellenic Greek sorority organizations created in the Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) system. Participants of the

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National Education Association (NEA) Black Caucus were members of a sub group of the NEA dedicated to addressing issues that are relevant for Black students and educators in the United States. Although the participants of the three groups had made race centered professional decisions, they are a viable sample from the wider population of Black educators and their views can be representative of other Black educators who do not have opportunities to center race in a practical way, but who still share the concerns articulated by these educators. Spotlighting these concerns can contribute to the growing field of educational research attempting to explain the phenomenological perspective of Black educators and Black students. However, these findings may not represent Black educators or Black students who do not center race in their professional identities or work.

Chapter Two

As educators, our ability to root out inequity and racism in schools will help to promote

the measures of academic achievement we envision for all of our students, but especially our

Black and Latinos who have historically been targets of discrimination and who have lagged

behind. Whether school names are a factor in the development of identity and other social,

culture or psychological perspectives is important to discover. The risk of continued exposure to

the veneration of racist ideologues through school names, especially for Black students, is

unacceptable and contradicts the published mission of the U. S. education system which

emphasizes equal access (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). Although there may be

disagreement over who deserves to have a school named for them in a society of increasingly

more diverse and multicultural student body, we can narrow the field through a process of

elimination guided by an unflinching commitment to the expansion of equality and the

denouncement of prejudice, discrimination and human bondage.

Narrowing the field through the prism of social science theory was the focus of this

chapter. The research literature presented in this chapter is comprised of two sections; critical

race theory in education and cultural geography, which spans a period between 2002 and 2017

with a few exceptions which are used when referring to the foundational theories on which the

articles are predicated. Critical race theory (CRT) sprung up in the 1970s after many scholars,

most notably, Dr. Derrick Bell, realized the advances of the Civil Rights Movement were stalled

and began to question the foundations of liberalism, such as equality theory, legal reasoning,

Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic,

2017). CRT arose to combat the subtler forms of racism that were gaining ground by studying

and transforming the relationships among race, racism and power which includes economics,

history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and unconsciousness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Critical race theory in education engages with the material, structural and ideological mechanisms of White supremacy and analyzes how race and racism manifest themselves throughout the K-12 and higher education pipelines (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). This analysis occurs in the classroom, in the context of policy, and in community work by examining issues, such as pedagogy, curriculum, leadership, policy, school politics, colorblindness, selective admissions policy and campus racial climate to highlight the persistence of racism across education (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015).

Cultural geography examines culture from a geographical perspective to uncover how culture works in practice and is embedded in real-life situations as locatable, specific phenomena. It explores the experience of place and how power and meaning are written on the landscape that can be used to bind people together, to stress common interest, or to promote group solidarity through various territorial symbols including naming, which often presents struggles over defining who belongs in a place (Crang, 1998).

Critical Race Theory in Education

The article "Critical Race Theory 20 Years Later," by Howard and Navarro (2016), gave background on the development of critical race theory (CRT) in the 1970s as an outgrowth from critical legal studies which extended across fields, including education, over decades. They explained that the inception of the CRT framework was designed to acknowledge race and examine its intersection with racism as the first step to combating the daily oppression of racial injustice. The authors attributed the application of CRT in the field of education to Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate and Daniel Solórzano, academics who, in the 1990s, proposed

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that it was not only necessary to provide equal treatment to minorities, but also to redress past inequalities in order to help African Americans "catch up" with their White counterparts. Howard and Navarro contended that because CRT is situated in legal literature, the racism which is exposed in education has to couple with radical solutions for addressing it; those solutions extend to a radical approach to democracy that challenges precedents set in law and that seriously undermine the privilege of those who have skillfully carved that privilege into the foundation of the nation.

Howard and Navarro (2016) referred to disparities in student achievements, especially for students of color, noting the continual underachievement of students of color in light of systemic and policy efforts, and were led to examine the role of race and racism in school policy, pedagogies and practices. The authors described school as a place where students of color are expected to learn in the midst of racially hostile and exclusionary content, instruction, school culture and assessment. They reiterated Ladson-Billings and Tate's 1995 assertion that "the reason race continues to be significant in explaining inequity in the United States is that class- and gender-based explanations are not powerful enough to explain all of the difference (or variance) in school experience and performance" (1995, p. 256) Although they agreed that the goal of multicultural education was to be a scholarly lens through which to examine race in schools, the authors conceded that it served only to acknowledge the experience that racially diverse students endured via the exclusion of their histories and perspectives from school curriculum and learning opportunities. The authors surmised that those limitations warranted the development of a different way to think about educating students of color. This new way, they suggested, should move away from deficit and pathology-based notions of the past to include students' robust sets of cultural practices, experiences and knowledge that are essential for

learning and understanding. The authors explained that CRT pioneers concluded that

multicultural education paradigms did not address the *systems* of oppression, such as racism and

capitalism, and therefore created a gap which overlooked structural inequality. The gap was

filled by critical race theory which allows scholars to ask the important questions of what racism

has to do with inequities in education through the scrutiny of the insights, concerns and questions

people of color have about their educational experiences.

Howard and Navarro's (2016) contention is that CRT calls for an analysis of racism and

its intersection with other forms of oppression, particularly on five tenets relating to education

which they attributed to Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's work (2001) and which can be applied

to my research.

1. Centering Race and Racism: All CRT research within education must

prioritize race and racism, including the intersections with other forms of

subordination such as gender, class and citizenship. My research

questions will focus on an examination of race, and racism.

2. Challenging the Dominant Perspective: CRT research works to challenge

dominant narratives and re-center marginalized perspectives. This

dissertation challenges the dominant perspective that racism is of the

past, and that African Americans are a monolithic group with homogenous

experiences and expertise.

3. Committing to Social Justice: CRT research must always be motivated

by a social justice agenda, and in this case educational justice will help to

transform the experience for educators of color and their students by

valuing the diversity of perspective and addressing the needs of African

American educators. An equitable professional experience can arise

from the elimination of racism in public educational settings, which will also

mitigate the psychological, emotional and cognitive damage caused by racism.

4. <u>Valuing Experiential Knowledge</u>: CRT builds on the oral traditions of many

indigenous peoples who have historically had limited access to physical and

material archives. CRT research centers the narratives of people of color which

may be counter to the traditional interpretations of social inequality. All

data in this study are qualitative. Through individual and focus group interviews,

the research study centers the experiential knowledge of the African American

educators involved in the study.

5. <u>Being Interdisciplinary</u>: CRT scholars believe that research about the world should

reflect multiple perspectives. Utilizing history and current research about internalized racism

and microaggressions within education as a central framework, this project is interdisciplinary

in nature. It draws from the fields of cultural geography, psychology, sociology, history, and

education.

Howard and Navarro (2016) also recommended that educational equity scholars make

critical race theory an integral part of all educational discussions where practices and policies in

higher education and K-12 schools are mindful of larger social discourses around race.

Ledesma and Calderon (2015) reviewed two areas of critical race theory (CRT) in

education, K-12 and higher education, through examination of journal articles, books and book

chapters that included education and CRT published after 2006. In the article "Critical Race

Theory in Education: A Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future" (2015) they pointed

out that early pioneers of CRT found the theory's foundation in law and ethnic studies to be

beneficial for its application to education. Ledesma and Calderon (2015) identified four themes in K-12 (i.e., curriculum and pedagogy, teaching and learning, schooling, and policy and community engagement) and three themes in higher education (i.e., colorblindness, selective admissions policy, and campus racial climate).

According to Ledesma and Calderon's review (2015), critical race pedagogies (CRP) which center race and racism in the classroom cause discomfort and pain as the majority narratives and tropes of colorblindness, meritocracy, integrationism, or postracialism are challenged by emancipatory epistemologies that deconstruct and center White supremacy (p.209). The success of CRP is reliant on critical educators who critically engage White supremacist ideology through not only using counternarratives to engage in meaning-making for their students, but also for themselves as educators. CRP also demands a process of re-educating White students in K-12 and preservice teachers via a "raced" curriculum from which they begin a renewed process of identity development, and can understand themselves through the history of the other in much the same way many communities of color understand themselves in relationship to Whites (p. 209).

Key features of critical race curriculum (CRC) require key pieces of history in social studies and other fields to be contextualized and historicized to provide students a more concrete grasp of race and racism today. The authors also pointed to Taliaferro Baszile (2009) who insists that ethnic culture such as Hip Hop is often seen as the cause of student disengagement from school, but should be utilized through CRC as a counternnarrative to majoritarian notions of official knowledge.

For schooling and culture, Ledesma and Calderon (2015) used the interviews of teachers in Vaught and Castagno's (2008) work to reveal that the majority of White teachers minimized

the impact of racism by regarding racism as an "exclusively individual issue," which denied it as a manifestation of the structural and ideological tenets of White supremacy in American culture (Vaught and Castagno, 2008, p 101). Ledesma and Calderon (2015) stress the importance of teacher education programs to continue to do social justice, equity-oriented work which dismantles the dominant ideologies of White supremacy in order to prepare teachers and administrators to create and maintain equitable school cultures once they are at their sites. The authors explore how race and racism inform school culture and climate and manifest broader social ideological forms of White supremacy. They point to the work of Mitchell (2013), which analyzed 100 studies regarding multilingual learners that repeated majoritarian stories that there is no story about race, difference is deficit, meritocracy is appropriate, and English-is-all-that-matters, and Pérez Huber (2011) to show how White supremacy and English dominance shape school culture and maintain hostile climates for Spanish speakers. Moving to a discussion of policy and community engagement, Ledesma and Calderon (2015) pointed to pro-gentrification policies of schools in Chicago through a study by Stovall (2013) that revealed such a phenomenon makes it harder for minority residents to attend in a variety of ways, such as pushing them out through fines for disciplinary behavior. The authors concluded the K-12 area examination with the topic of inequitable school financing in Texas which manifested itself in racism against Mexican Americans.

In the area of higher education, Ledesma and Calderon (2015) emphasized that assessment cannot be made without historicizing and contextualizing policy and decision-making. They highlighted the work of Harper (2012), which analyzed 255 articles in peer-reviewed journals for the reluctance to attribute differences of experiences by students of color to race or racism. The diversity action plans of 20 land-grant institutions were examined by Iverson

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(2007), who found that the universities use discursive framing of diversity with tropes such as "at risk, disadvantaged, unprepared," which casts people of color as defective. Ledesma and Calderon (2015) made the observation that critical race scholars who seek educational justice and equitable treatment within postsecondary institutions must refer to the context, history and sociocultural realities that produce the inequities and disparities in the first place.

Sleeter's article, "Critical Race Theory and the Whiteness of Teacher Education" (2017), further examined how the perspectives of White educators can be complemented by Black voices. Using critical race theory (CRT) and its premise of interest convergence, color blindness and experiential knowledge, Sleeter analyzed the ways in which White perspectives dominate the education of American teachers who are teaching a population of public school students who are becoming increasingly diverse, while the teaching candidates and teacher education faculty remain majority White.

In the context of social justice and culturally responsive teaching as an announced orientation of teacher education programs, Sleeter (2017) drew on enrollment data of teacher education programs and the racial composition of teaching candidates and their students to discuss the incongruity which will affect the perspectives and interests of those programs. She used data from the U. S. Department of Education to point out that 80% of teaching cohorts are White even though White students are less than half of the K-12 population (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Sleeter pointed out that specifically, in 2012, 82% of the teaching force was White, prospective teachers enrolled in programs were 74% White, and those enrolled in alternative university based programs were 65% White. She used those same data to point out that the completion rates of White students in those programs are higher than those of students of

color and that the students in those predominantly White cohorts take only a course or two on multicultural education while preparing to teach a majority multicultural student population.

Sleeter (2017) found that the race of teacher education faculty, multicultural education courses, and relationships between teacher education and the university solidified interest convergence by reflecting White sensibilities, marginalizing diversity work, and keeping personal beliefs unchallenged while simultaneously helping the university make money by providing low-cost teacher education programs with professional pathways for other humanities majors.

Sleeter (2017) also used CRT's perspectives on color blindness to posit that educational policies related to teacher certification and accreditation are ambiguous and continue to support the Whiteness of teacher education. She argued that programs like Teach for America market to elite colleges where the proportion of students of color is low and that accreditation and certification tests are Eurocentric and support White dominance. Sleeter stated that fewer low-income students (a population which historically is comprised of a disproportionately high number of Blacks) are enrolled in teacher education programs, in part, because those programs are designed for traditional undergraduate students who do not work, whereas the enrollment of students who have to work while in school is limited. Sleeter relied on CRT's emphasis on "experiential knowledge" to cultivate the counterstories of people of color that challenge White dominant ideologies which deny or mask racism, using the narratives of Black teacher candidates to reveal their feelings of isolation, otherness, being ignored or being silenced.

The implication of Sleeter's (2017) findings was that Whiteness in teacher education has become normalized and taken for granted. She suggested that it can be confronted by strengthening pipelines for students of color from the communities they serve and disrupted by

the development of a conceptual convergence among social justice advocates in education. Despite their different issue foci, they can work as a unified collective which utilizes the voices of those in the schools and other professionals to confront the authority of the university which denies the importance of race, and consequently guide some of the research of White faculty toward race.

Kohli's doctoral dissertation, "Breaking the Cycle of Racism in the Classroom: Critical Race Reflections of Women of Color Educators" (2008), was later published in *Teacher Education Quarterly* as an article which studies the inherent value-laden decisions of educators which minimize the perspectives and concerns of minorities. Kohli examined the social and experiential dynamics of race from the perspective of Black pre-service teachers from a southern California teacher education program which specifically focused on social justice. Kohli discussed the overt and subtle forms of racism that are connected to earlier practices of racial exclusion and hegemony using the frameworks of CRT and internalized racism. Through interviews she investigated their past experiences with racism in schools; the impact that racism had on their self-perceptions and worldviews; their observations of racism in schools today; the impact racism had on their students' self-perceptions and worldviews; and the value or impact of the dialogue of the study on the participants.

Kohli's 12 participants were all women from different minority groups. Her interviews and focus groups revealed that these teachers were very adept at recognizing unconscious racial microaggressions by their colleagues. The research described that the teachers in the study were not a monolithic group, and that they gained valuable insight and validation through the cross-cultural and critical dialogues. Kohli (2008) felt that conversations should be incorporated into teacher education programs to provide a space for student dialogue which rejuvenates them.

Kohli also used the five tenets of critical race theory in education to guide the design and analysis of her study (Kohli, p. 12). Her finding suggested that simply increasing the numbers of minority teachers as a way of making minority students' education more culturally relevant and meaningful will not be a panacea (Kohli, p. 5). She pointed out that the presence alone of minority teachers does not indicate an awareness of way(s) in which racism permeates our educational system. Kohli commented that the way racism is recognized by Black teachers, who have been its direct target, will be different from that of White teachers who often have to learn about racism second-hand (Kohli, p. 6). Moreover, Kohli also pointed out that because Black teachers have been educated by an oppressive system, they may see the world with a perspective that privileges White culture, internalizing racism, and perpetuating it in their classrooms and lives (Kohli, p. 6).

Her work (Kohli, p. 120) revamped the teacher education program at University of Southern California to consider the exploration of race through the creation of the class "Race, Racism and K-12 Education," which situates today's educational inequity into a historic perspective while encouraging a connection between theory and practice as well as personal experience and classroom teaching. Additionally, there were implications for theoretical contributions to the fields of ethnic studies, critical race theory and internalized racism. One recommendation Kohli made for future research was that current teachers need to also share their experiences with racism in different settings (Kohli, p. 129), which was the catalyst for my study. I examined many of the same issues among practicing Black educators (as opposed to pre-service teachers) including teachers, administrators and student support staff such as counselors, principals and therapists.

Unlike Kohli's focus on teachers, "The 20th-Year Anniversary of Critical Race Theory in Education: Implications for Leading to Eliminate Racism" by Capper (2015) used a meta-analysis to introduce six CRT-related elements applicable to educational leadership programs: 1) permanence of racism; 2) Whiteness as property; 3) counternarratives and acknowledgement of majoritarian narratives; 4) interest convergence; 5) critique of liberalism: color blindness and critique of equity policies and practices; and 6) intersectionality. Capper derived these elements from an analysis of literature focusing on pre K-12 leadership programs' references to various critical race theories and ethnic studies such as Crenshaw and Race (1988), Bell (1992), Delgado (1995), Matsuda (1995), Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), and Solorzano and Yosso (2001).

Capper (2015) determined that school leaders addressing the permanence of racism should directly grapple with and against the endemic nature of racism and the concept of Whiteness as property, remaining mindful that because Whiteness is valuable it is protected even within well-intentioned diversity celebrations which often mute and sanitize minority history while more insidious forms of racism continue to exist (e.g., biased curricula, school culture). In examining counternarratives, she discussed the importance of helping teachers of color thrive by countering majoritarian narratives and seeking reflective representation of people from communities they serve. To address interest convergence, she revealed the nuanced ways that minority-focused initiatives have been executed which revolve around appealing to and serving some majority interest, while slowing incremental equity gains for minorities. Those gains themselves, she suggested, rely on notions of meritocracy without critiquing the power differentials that remain intact, such as school leadership that does not confront the structures and systems of racism.

Next, the critique of liberalism suggested that denying that race matters with notions of color blindness, meritocracy and neutrality of the law, denies the atrocity of racial inequities in the past and the pervasive racial microaggression, societal racism, and systemic racism that individuals of color continue to experience on a daily basis. Finally, acknowledging intersectionality recognized that teachers and their leaders should work across student differences and the intersection of identities as minorities.

Capper (2015) provided a CRT Inventory for Leading the Elimination of Racism (p. 823) that can help leaders assess the legitimacy and effectiveness of racial policies, practices, initiatives, and equity change efforts to help ensure that these efforts do not perpetuate racial inequities and racism. She suggested that faculty in leadership preparation programs can use this to interrogate their own practices and programs.

Black parents who are in the middle class were the subject of Reynolds' study, "We've Been Post-Raced: An Examination of Negotiations Between Race, Agency and School Structures Black Families Experience Within 'Post-Racial' Schools'" (2015). Reynolds was aware of the frustrations of teachers and the challenges of communicating with parents who are culturally different and may not share the same values and protocols of exchange. Reynolds further pointed out that the effects of race and racism within a rhetorical post-racial context further exacerbate the experiences and frustrations of parents of color, especially where their children are in the minority racially, but the majority socioeconomically.

One anecdote described Reynold's own disappointment that the White administration and staff at her daughter's school could not comprehend the value she and her family placed on having her daughter enrolled in the class of the only Black teacher at her school, who was also qualified to teach the gifted program in which her daughter was participating. Reynolds felt that

the staff perceived her as racializing a decision they had made that should not have been about race, even after she supported her request with data about the positive attitudes toward academic excellence transferred to students by teachers who are phenotypically and culturally similar to them. She felt the principal flinched when she used the term Black, and finally the matter was settled with the White teacher declaring that her daughter had the best Black role model there was in the person of President Obama. Reynolds used this anecdote as an example of how anything concerning itself with race in our allegedly post-racial schools was deemed "reverse racism." The Whites in the anecdote were not able to articulate why race was an issue, nor in fact could the Black teacher who wanted only to be a great teacher, not a great *Black* teacher.

Reynolds used critical race theory with the ecologies of parent engagement. She asked two questions of Black middle class parents in the qualitative study: 1) What do Black middle class parents report as their experiences with school officials? and 2) Do race and class influence parent engagement in schools? If so, how? If not, why? Although the 14 parents chosen for the study were middle class and lived in a suburb of a major metropolitan area where the median family income was $87,000, the majority of their children struggled academically and socially. Narratives and counter-storytelling were used as a mode of inquiry. Reynolds' study revealed that most of the parents were very reluctant to describe their experiences as race related, even though race was the only significant difference between them and others who were treated differently. Analyzed through the lens of CRT, which disrupts notions of fairness, meritocracy, color blindness and neutrality, the non-racial attributions of the middle class Blacks were problematic. Reynolds suggested that the parents believed the tropes around post-racial color blindness even though their own children suffered harsher consequences than their White counterparts, missed important information regarding college qualifications, and were denied

rigorous coursework. Reynolds' study revealed that they internalized the experiences and outcomes they could otherwise attribute to racism, because racism in a post-racial context takes on a different shape or feel and is not easily recognized; therefore, all the forces at play are obfuscated. Reynolds suggested that the parents wanted to believe in a place free of suppression where their class supersedes their race, but the study's data demonstrated that race was the more potent of the two; consequently, the Black parents had internalized their children's failures and refused to look at systemic school structures (Reynolds, 2015, p. 165). Reynolds concluded that without a dialogue around race, power and agency the disparities that befall middle class students of color and all the rest will persist.

On a promising note, many social justice groups are working in a collaborative way to inform the public school system about the perils of ignoring race and racism. The educational website Teaching Tolerance, developed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, defines racism for the classrooms who use their curriculum as a doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that does three things: first, it claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence; second, it asserts the superiority of one race over another or others; and finally, it seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, use of language and policies (Holladay, 2000). Their website provides classroom resources and professional development opportunities for teachers that explore issues of race, religion, class, sexual identity and immigration for classroom discussion.

The National Education Association (NEA) has collaborated with Teaching Tolerance to further champion this cause in teacher training workshops by creating online kits for teachers to discuss issues of race, quoting a teacher on their opening page, "We may be uncomfortable talking about race, but we can no longer afford to be silent. We have chosen a profession that—

like parenting—requires us to put our comforts second to those of children." (Pitts, 2016). The two organizations heralded a day long summit at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education to build racial and cultural competency among educators who because they don't share their student's cultural background often do not see the landmines which leave many students wounded and confused because their teachers lacked the skills and awareness to foster positive racial identities in their students of color (Anderson, 2014).

More specifically, in 2018, the NEA's Black Caucus went further during a three-day Current Issues Conference in Baltimore where they focused on White supremacy and the Black Lives Matter movement and the impact of these issues on students of color in public schools across the nation. Emerging from that were resolutions which they successfully lobbied to have passed at the Annual NEA meeting in Minneapolis that same year. First the New Resolution on White supremacy:

> The National Education Association believes that, in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of White supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and White privilege. Additionally, the Association believes that the norms, standards, and organizational structures manifested in White supremacy culture perpetually exploit and oppress people of color and serve as detriments to racial justice. Further, the invisible racial benefits of White privilege, which are automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender, and other factors, severely limit opportunities for people of color and impede full achievement of racial and social justice. Therefore, the Association actively advocates for social and

educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and White

privilege perpetuated by White supremacy culture. (NEA Black Caucus, 2018)

The second was the New Business Item for the Teaching of Black Lives Matter:

The NEA will promote the Black Lives Matter Week of Action in schools

during Black History Month in 2019, using existing communications resources,

specifically calling for clear efforts to demonstrate support for the three demands

of the BLM Week of Action in schools:

1) ending zero-tolerance policies and replacing them with Restorative

Justice Practices,

2) hiring and mentoring Black educators, and

3) mandating that Ethnic Studies be taught in PK-12 schools in age-

appropriate ways. (NEA Black Caucus, 2018)

Cultural Geography

Cultural geography is the study of the relationship between culture and place. It examines

the cultural values, practices, discursive and material expressions and artifacts of people, the

cultural diversity and plurality of society, how cultures are distributed over space, how places

and identities are produced, how people make sense of places and build senses of place, and how

people produce and communicate knowledge and meaning (Castree, et al., 2013). Cultural

geographers do not see landscape simply as a material artifact that reflects culture in

straightforward ways, because it is laden with symbolic meaning that needs to be decoded with

respect to social and historical context that is sensitive to the workings of difference and power

in relation to the everyday life of people (Castree, Kitchin & Rogers, 2013).

After the mass shooting of members of a Black South Carolina church by a racist fanatic, a fight ensued for the removal of the symbol of the assassin's ideology from the grounds of their state capitol and many began to reflect upon the tacit acceptance of discriminatory and downright hateful ideologies that were implied by racist symbols across the nation (Thomsen, 2015). By extension, the people whose names adorned public buildings would also become subject to a racial-ideology litmus test. Some of the most notable outcomes from those tests were the college protests which were especially accurate in measuring the racist complicity of those honored above the thresholds of libraries, stadiums, laboratories, and classroom and administrative buildings. Many activists staged sit-ins and rallies around buildings and monuments honoring known White supremacists to leverage civic interest and institutional shame (Wang & Svrluga, 2017). With the attempts of colleges and universities to reevaluate the proper commemoration of historic figures whose ideologies reflected a less evolved common culture than what we prize for our present or for the future, how can we avoid those pitfalls of those misalignments for K-12 schools (Ojalvo, 2017; Rosen, 2016)?

Most public schools are the hubs of their communities, not only for educational engagement, but also civic and political events – hosting town halls and polling places. They are a sacred public trust where Americans become socialized and develop their sense of belonging, identity and purpose. Many public schools have become battlegrounds for struggles against discrimination which have led to advances in our society's access and equity for religious and racial minorities, women, homosexuals and the disabled; however, many public schools are named for historic figures who upheld much more narrow views for those segments of the population – views which were reflections of prejudices in their era's intellectual, emotional and social understanding.

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Because of that potential to offend, it is not surprising that trends in naming public

schools are attempting to avoid the pitfall of obsolescence. In the report "What's in a Name: The

Decline in the Civic Mission of School Names" by Greene, Kisida, and Butcher (2007), the

authors' data suggested that public schools are being named for innocuous industry, animals and

places more often than individuals who carry personal and public idiosyncrasies. By 2007 when

the study was published, the numbers of schools named after presidents had declined to fewer

than five percent. This cautionary measure is taken because of the ideological controversy that

can arise within communities whose diverse sociological, racial, or political views are not shared

by whoever is chosen to be honored by the school naming, and by association the aspiration and

achievement of the school's students during their formative years. According to the authors,

naming schools after someone or something provides an implicit endorsement of the values that

the name represents that may cause a debate of their worthiness.

The Greene, Kisida and Butcher study (2007) analyzed trends in public school names in

seven states from a variety of regions that comprised 20 percent of all public schools in the

United States. Using data that are kept for building maintenance, the authors were able to

examine the names chronologically to uncover the trends, revealing that there was a significant

move away from naming schools after historical figures or people in general and an increase in

naming schools after nature. The study was limited to revealing the naming trends, but offered

broad speculation about the reasons these trends are occurring, including cultural ones such as

skepticism of inherited wisdom, revisionist history, increased interest in the environment, and

also their narrow focus on policy and school employee relations.

"Place, Naming and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes" by Alderman (2008)

suggested that as a cultural practice, naming is a powerful vehicle for promoting identification

with the past and locating oneself within a wider network of memory, not only because of its ability to create a sense of continuity over time but also through its capacity for changing and challenging lines of identity.

Alderman described the experiences of African American slaves who were stripped of their culture and naming practices, assumed the names Whites gave them, and carried them forward after emancipation even to this day. He asserted that the cultural landscape also resonates with that violation of dignity which used power and politics in place names to distinguish and identify one place from another in a single word. The names evoke powerful images and connotations contributing to the development of a sense of place in geography, history and society, and even reflect larger social disputes about who has the authority to create, define, interpret and represent collective pasts through place.

Alderman used the term "toponyms" synonymously with "place names" as a defining feature of cultural landscape which imbues space with meaning, orientation and identity, and further may have political significance when the names chosen are taken from a person, an ideal, or an event that a particular society seeks to venerate through a conscious, deliberate and social process of agreement. He also noted that the names inscribe the ideological messages about the past into the many practices and texts of everyday life. Alderman (2008) included the theory of cultural symbolism by Pierre Bourdieu (1991): in the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly of legitimate *naming* as the official (i.e., explicit and public) imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, agents bring into play the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles. In this article, Alderman asserted that because it shapes public consciousness, naming has been an area of research for cultural geographers to understand landscape and the people who create it, and by extending

Bourdieu's idea, he contributed a concept of three place-naming frameworks for the construction of heritage and identity through the practice of place naming: symbolic capital, symbolic resistance, or symbolic violence, by which landscape naming can reflect commonly held values and ideals for a specific location.

Alderman (2008) suggested that symbolic capital in general can convert as economic capital, establish as social capital, or consolidate as cultural capital. He drew from the African American experience to suggest that "place naming" is part of the commodification of heritage in the United Sates, where *symbolic capital* recognizes how place names bring distinction and status to landscapes and people associated with them and are selected through an exclusive historical representation that can simultaneously function as a form of *symbolic violence* for stakeholders who remember the past differently. In order to counter this symbolic violence, Alderman suggested that naming as *symbolic resistance* has served as a strategy for racial and ethnic minorities to challenge the dominance of White-controlled commemoration and assert the legitimacy of their own historical achievements. Alderman stressed the ubiquitous declarations on architecture and other socially constructed domains, where place names materially and symbolically use their power to privilege one world view over another, commodifying the past and reinforcing unequal power relations that can serve a symbolic violence, aggression and exclusion for African Americans.

In "School Names as Cultural Arenas: The Naming of U.S. Public Schools After Martin Luther King, Jr." (2002), Alderman turned his lens on school names and focused sharply on racialized landscapes and the proper interpretation of cultural landscapes. He paid specific attention to the naming of public schools after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., noting that even the undisputed hero of American Civil Rights has controversy swirling around having schools

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named after him. Alderman focused on Riverside, California where a predominantly White school was to be named after the leader, as opponents made it clear that his movement, albeit Nobel Peace Prize worthy, was not one to which they ascribed. Alderman stated that the debate could be reduced to a question of whether every group identifies with King and wants his memory embedded physically into the ordinary settings of their lives.

Alderman's study was motivated by parent opposition to the naming of their majority White school after King, where their argument was against the unanimous decision made by their school board. In this case these White, middle-class parents saw little connection (and, in fact, feared the creation of one) in identifying their students with an African American historical figure and further feared that with the King name, the perception of the school by college admissions could hurt their children's chances of getting in. Alderman's study showed a glimpse of how Americans imagine themselves historically and culturally. Alderman (2002) developed a framework for understanding the ideological importance of school naming where he positions the name as a cultural arena for debating student and community identity as a social construct, much like race, itself; and he examined school names as powerful and contested memorial spaces which illuminate the changing and contentious nature of American collective memory. Alderman pointed out that schools themselves transmit a dominant culture to a multicultural population who are being socialized and whose conceptions are shaped indirectly through commemorative school activities that define a set of heroes through legitimizing them into the natural order of things.

In this study Alderman (2002) posed several questions for further research about the academic performance of all students in schools named after positive identity role models like Martin Luther King: What effect, if any, do King schools (or any named school for that matter)

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have on the social, moral, and intellectual development of their students? Do schools named for King connect students with a more integrated and equitable vision of America or do these named schools – because of the opposition, negative perceptions, and debate they sometimes draw – simply reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Although Alderman's 2002 study is not focused on teachers directly, these questions can be applied to the state of the social and moral development of our professional staff, such as asking what effect, if any, schools' names representing symbolic violence to African Americans have on the professional public service experience of African American educators. What effect, if any, do schools' names representing symbolic capital to African Americans have on the professional public service experience of African American educators? In light of more recent protests, confrontations and deaths, Alderman's research stresses the affective power of place names, not just as passive artifacts of social order, but as active and dynamic statements which should drive memory work through critical place name and race studies (D. Alderman, personal communication, November 10, 2017).

Agosto, Kyobe and Elam (2017) contended that race and place matter ontologically, epistemologically, geographically and socially, and converge to shape a historical and cultural narrative involving struggles amid places and races which awaken the public out of social amnesia. In the article, "Namesake Schools: Vulnerable Places and Cultural Narratives of the South" (2017), the authors situated schools and churches as places where Blacks congregate to study to also occupy territorial and political space and function as places of actual racial violence in cultural memory. They recounted the Edmund Pettis Bridge incidents during the 1960s, the "stand your ground" killing of Trayvon Martin in a gated community in 2012, and the church shooting in South Carolina in 2015 as examples of sites of unrest. They pointed out that struggles

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over places and names extend even to cyberspace, where one White supremacist group has registered domain names like martinlutherking.org which directs inquirers toward extremist attitudes and activities they had not intended to encounter.

With their study of one namesake school in the South, Agosto et al. (2017) considered the name's relevance to the broader conversations about racial justice that wax and wane in national discourse. They asked what would happen to the school's culture and curriculum if names were changed; whether changes and variations of a school's name may signal their increasing vulnerability or risk of erasure; and whether local school naming policy can mediate political might when it hinges on racial and economic power and privilege. The authors asserted that racial and spatial justice are linked in ways that provide insight when explored in the context of social issues, and that researching namesake schools can not only inform academic literature, educational leadership, and curriculum studies, but can be perceived as a struggle to preserve cultural memory as well.

The framework for Agosto et al. (2017) was critical social geography, which – like cultural geography – involves issues of spatial justice and injustice to inform a collective cultural memory. Agosto et al. submitted that memories are enmeshed in the production of racialized cultural landscapes. Their study intersected place and race in education across the United States in order to provide lessons on how youth resist White supremacy and learn from the historical narrative of other racial identities. The authors suggested that accounts of naming schools after Blacks, however, are still uncommon in academic literature in education and no accounts have examined school and community leadership tied to school curriculum and commemoration. The authors contended that disputes have been hashed out by local entities that ignore the role of policy, curriculum and school leadership. Agosto et al. (2017) put forth that school and street

place naming is a practice through which social groups debate their understandings of the past

and can contribute to storytelling about the histories of policy, buildings and curriculum. They

offer this observation:

> The vulnerability of names is entwined with the vulnerability of the cultural
>
> narratives that shape what African and/or American history is taught in schools.
>
> In other words, the degree of standardization or variability of school names
>
> depends on the political activity among members of community, school, and
>
> school district, namely the actors who shape policy, guiding the commemoration
>
> of buildings. The naming of school buildings, we suggest, can contribute to
>
> storytelling about the histories of policy, buildings, and curriculum. (2017, p. 6)

The authors chose Charlie Walker Middle Magnet School as their subject because of its

cultural narrative in the face of demographic change, desegregation and curriculum development.

The school's name had various iterations which resulted in a weakened connection to the original

person; therefore, the authors suggested that curriculum leadership be engaged in the

development of commemoration policies (in this case for Charlie Walker, a Black school bus

driver) that are explicit about the importance of diversity, culture and public image and that

embody socio-political consciousness about how commercialization, commodification and

exchange can (and should) influence a district's policy on naming.

Clowney began his article, "Landscape Fairness: Removing Discrimination from the

Built Environment" (2013), from the position that racism is still experienced by African

Americans despite their gains politically and economically, evidenced by the fact that Blacks

suffer inequalities in hospital treatment, in bank loans, in environmental racism and in prison

sentencing which create disadvantages that affect their quality of life. Clowney (2013) referred to

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the everyday landscape as one of the most significant instruments of modern day racism and aimed to use procedural fairness to redress absences, inclusions and marginalization currently buried in the landscape which reinforce racial hierarchies. Clowney refuted opponents who suggest that tributes were/are objective or that changing them would change history by pointing out that the landscape was never neutral in the first place, so changing the composition of a tribute does not erode any universal, objective truth in the name of political correctness and will not erase history. Clowney introduced scholarship in the social sciences which demonstrated that landscape operates like a "tectonic fault; where although its presence is seldom scrutinized, its impact remains powerful" (p. 3); and he added that "if the landscape is read as a text, then, like artifacts, it tells stories about memory, identity and history" (p. 17). Clowney suggested that because the built environment is shaped by human tastes, it teaches a power dynamic to the public which tends to either exclude the heritage and memories of the less powerful or appropriate their stories for dominant-class purposes. By scrutinizing Lexington, Kentucky's landscape-marginalization of African Americans, he revealed the power struggle between Blacks and wealthier Whites which parallels the political dynamics of the United States and is significant because of the city's location at the crossroads of four distinct political/historical regions – the North, South, Mid-west and Appalachian mid-Atlantic (p. 9).

Clowney (2013) analyzed Lexington's Confederate tributes in the Courthouse Square through three sections: 1) a landscape of White supremacy; 2) Black history, concealed; and 3) physical exclusion. Clowney revealed that the grandeur and expense of the statues infuse the landscape with a luster of civic authority and cultural legitimacy, which encode the landscape with a racialized presence – a perpetual reminder that public space belongs to the White majority, both now and into the future. He pointed out that in 2010 city officials upgraded the

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square and made a conscious decision to retain the Confederate symbols, implying a contemporary connection with the ideals of an era that modern politicians contend has passed. Clowney also examined Lexington's Thoroughbred Park for both White presence/Black absence and physical exclusion. Pointing out that the park is devoid of any tribute to the Blacks and Hispanics that built it, still train the horses, or work as stable hands and barn foremen essential to the industry's survival, he noted that the park's manmade topographical barrier from the Black section of town normalizes and cements borders between socially constructed racial zones.

Clowney (2013) found signals of the denigration of African Americans in the preservation of area names known for slave auctioning, like "Cheapside," and pointed out that some Blacks avoided the Courthouse because it is neither inviting nor comfortable. He suggested that the unmitigated veneration of slavery proponents sends a loud message of insensitivity and that many Blacks across the country feel shutout, constrained, traumatized and frozen when confronted with mainstream civic landscapes, requiring them to employ strategies to avoid "the indignities of racialized space" (2013, p. 16).

Clowney asserted that the built environment either physically excluded African Americans or presented a weaponized version of history that symbolically annihilated their accomplishments. He noted the monuments across the South honoring White domination, the Klan and the Confederacy, including schools. Clowney contended that although geographers have suggested that minority groups should alter the landscape by building their own counternarratives that would do nothing to grapple with the political decisions that allow these places to exist.

Reforming landscape unfairness is another goal of Clowney's article in which he suggested that the most obvious targets of widespread landscape reform would be those that

celebrate the Confederacy. He pointed out, however, that in some areas anti-Confederate enforcement would go against the will of the White Southerners who live there, as revealed in a 2001 survey by John Cohen in which residents reported they felt it appropriate for public officials to acclaim Confederate leaders and a Slate article (Weigel, 2011) pointing out that many of them still wish the South had emerged victorious from the war. After factoring in U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding the banning of racialized spaces and violent backlash during the Civil Rights era, Clowney (2013) then suggested the removal of the taint of racialized spaces in a principled way which focuses on what they impose on Black communities.

As a professor of law, Clowney discovered that no legal scholarship had analyzed the interaction between landscapes and race or suggested practical tools to disrupt the ongoing process of racialization, so he focused on creating a more incremental approach to achieving environmental fairness called the "Landscape Impact Assessment" (LIA), as a way to operationalize the process of naming and renaming (p. 44). The LIA is a comprehensive procedural strategy that integrates consideration of the built environment into the municipal process. The goal is for municipalities to stop the production of discriminatory spaces by considering the racial effects through three core tasks: 1) drafting an impact assessment which analyzes how the project would affect the meaning of the landscape; 2) making the report available for review and comment by the citizenry; and 3) creating a final report that reflects on the information gleaned during the public intervention. Clowney promoted this process because it empowers Black communities, changes government behaviors, and undoes the violence of memory. The LIA includes sunset provisions that sets a destruction date for existing monuments deemed racist unless local government deliberates over the meaning of the space and votes to reaffirm its value to the landscape. Clowney predicted that those procedures would have long

lasting benefits of improving decision-making and improving oversight and accountability of local politicians. Clowney recently suggested that the LIA be modified to examine public school naming policy also (Clowney, personal conversation, 11/14/17).

In "Applying Critical Race and Memory Studies to University Place Naming Controversies: Toward a Responsible Landscape Policy" (2017), Brasher, Alderman and Inwood collaborated to discuss how to advance public policy around socio-spatial issues at colleges and universities which are inherently steeped in policymaking and administrative procedure. Their contention was that institutions of higher education are constantly weighing political issues when it comes to their landscape narratives where belonging is materialized and negotiated, and which is under-analyzed by geographers of race. The authors delved into the university memorial landscape which valorizes, disenfranchises and serves as hidden curriculum. The authors referred to the "oppositional politics of belonging" (p. 2), where antiracist struggles ensue around racist artifacts which provide opportunities for spatially oriented scholars and geographers to inform the treatment of race and racial difference that ensures the perspectives of people of color are included in landscape decisions.

Brasher et al. (2017) applied recent innovations in race and memory studies, reviewed several universities' attempts to address their controversies, and applied an approach to policymaking that they view as fair with regard to racial power with recommendations by Clowney (2013). Brasher et al. described universities as having "wounded places," because of the longevity and social authority ascribed to the university and its role in creating racialized landscapes which normalize the symbolic violence perpetrated by their historical and geographic connection to White supremacy. Brasher et al. (2017) suggested that the stain of slavery can be found from presidents and faculty ownership of slaves to slave labor which built institutions

which remind the public of the civil rights battles fought on their grounds. They contended that the complicity of structural violence also affects the physical and emotional welfare of people of color in terms of admission policies, faculty recruitment and tenure, and cultural insensitivity that reproduce structural inequalities and perpetuate geographies of White supremacy.

The authors pointed out how slowly universities have come to grips with their White supremacy legacies and that those wounds have been left to fester and inflict psychosocial harm through the commemoration of the Confederacy, Ku Klux Klan, segregationists and slave owners. Brasher et al. (2017) further suggested that the presence of these memorials contradicts the discrediting of their ideologies by those colleges in their curricula and serve as points of unresolved and unreconciled racial tension. The authors cited several instances where students of color have felt acrimony and hostility on their campuses as they confront the pain and struggle of racism personified by the university's commemoration decisions, providing insight through brief case studies at Oklahoma State University, the University of North Carolina, Middle Tennessee State University, Yale, and Georgetown.

Brasher et al. (2017) highlighted Georgetown in particular because of the university's establishment of the "Working Group on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation," which uses memory work to deal with traumatic pasts that require physical, intellectual, emotional and political labor. These memories are then parlayed into administrative procedure and university policy that can consistently transform the university from wounded to just. The authors suggested the "Landscape Impact Assessment" created by Clowney (2013) as a way to operationalize the process of naming and renaming. Brasher et al. (2017) discussed the opportunities on college campuses to halt the production of discriminatory spaces; for administrators to consider and take responsibility for names and meanings; to provide written

assessment of students faculty and public feedback; to empower African Americans on campus and in the community; to provide race-conscious information in the age of colorblindness; and to mitigate the psychological harm or violence that discriminatory public spaces impose on African Americans in the college community (p. 13). The authors concluded by noting the irony of university faculty, including geographers, traveling around the world to study inequity but ignoring that outside their windows.

These bodies of work have articulated a framework for a study of the perceptions and effects of namesake schools on Black professional educators in the American public school system. Through an analysis of their experiences related to namesake schools that draws on the tenets of critical race theory in education and focuses on how cultural geography gives rise to symbolic perspectives that shape our identities in subtle and overt ways, we can gain valuable insights that can contribute to a more equitable experience for all school employees and the students they serve.

Chapter 3

My research explored the ways Black professional educators recognize and respond to symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and symbolic violence, which are themes of cultural geography, through the filter of critical race theory during their contact with public educational systems as students and teachers. My research examined where public school naming fits into the contemporary cultural landscape of critical race theory in education. Using Kohli's discussion of the overt and subtle forms of racism as they are connected to earlier practices of racial exclusion and hegemony, the study used the frameworks of critical race theory and cultural geography, using a general discussion about Black educators' past experiences with racism in schools in terms of school names; the impact that racism had on their self-perceptions and worldviews; their observations of racism in schools today; and the impact racism may have on their students' self-perceptions and worldviews (Kohli, 2008, p. 14).

Our discussions focused on question of namesake schools and whether they thought naming and (renaming) of schools in the United States involves power, privilege, history and geography, and, as Alderman (2008) suggests, is tied to the promulgation of White supremacist views which undergird the veneration of Confederates and others in diverse communities just as colonization and imperialism have. The discussion encouraged examination of Agosto's, et al. (2017) assertion that memories are enmeshed in the production of racialized cultural landscapes that intersect place and race in education across the US. These counternarratives revealed the potency of what Clowney (2013) discussed, where the landscape inscribes selective and misleading versions of the past in solid, material forms and the narratives intended by those naming decisions ultimately marginalize certain communities — particularly African American

communities – and transmit ideas about racial power across generations to these educators and the larger population (p. 3).

Sample

The focus of the dissertation was the perceptions of Black educational professionals, including six from Kanawha County, West Virginia (WV), with up to four of them from schools named for Mary C. Snow and Stonewall Jackson – schools which evoke strong cultural values on the West Side of Charleston, West Virginia; eight educational professionals affiliated with the WV chapter of the professional organization for Black female educators, the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa; and an interactive remote roundtable of five Black educators who were members of the National Education Association's Black Caucus who attended the 2018 Annual Issues Conference which focused on White Supremacy and Black Lives Matter.

Because of the unique demographic shifts in the West Side community of Charleston, WV and the existence of a more diverse student population than can be found in other parts of the city and state, Black educators working in the two schools named after polarizing icons had a perspective which is shaped by unique, local political and cultural forces. The participants from the West Virginia chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa collectively offered broader experiences in Kanawha county as well as other counties in West Virginia, and on a regional level affiliates with seven eastern states and Washington, DC and added a different context to their perceptions. The participants from across the Black Caucus of the National Education Association were actively engaged in creating policy and practices which dismantle White supremacy and racism in public education across the country and offered insights related to combating critical race issues which have emerged in their national campaigns. The purpose of this study was to discover how Black educators, as professionals and students, experience(d)

what they perceive(d) to be symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and/or symbolic violence through schools named after individuals, in particular those sympathetic to the Confederacy and slavery, or prominent Blacks and whether they have found ways to manage the impact of schools' names for themselves and their students.

Research Questions

1. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

2. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

3. How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

4. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Research Method

This study was qualitative and utilized the processes of ethnography, and autoethnography through interactive interviews and community autoethnography. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) described autoethnography as an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno). Ellis et al. (2011) suggested it is a method that not only challenges canonical ways of conducting research and making representation(s), but also of treating research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act which is tied to the vocabularies and paradigms scientists use to represent facts and truths they find in social science inquiry (p.1).

Ellis et al. regarded autoethnography as a way of producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience that would sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us (p. 2). They suggested the ways personal experience already influence research processes, such as when a researcher decides who, what, where, when and how to research, or when a researcher changes names for protection, compresses years of research, or constructs a study in a pre-determined way; and that autoethnography acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist (p. 2). They also emphasize the differences that stem from race, gender, sex, sexuality, age, ability, class, education, or religion which, if ignored, rely on canonical forms which are narrow, limiting and parochial (p. 2). Autoethnography opens a wider lens on the world, Ellis et al. (2011) contended, which helps us understand how the identity of the researcher influences what we study, how we study it, and what we say about our topic (p. 2). Aspects of this qualitative approach are transformative in nature with the potential to create an agenda for change or reform (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Collection

The form of autoethnography that I used was a series of interactive interviews with three focus groups that will have the potential to evolve into wider participation of community autoethnographies from outside the field of professional educators, such as community leaders, parents, and students in later studies. Ellis et al. (2011) described interactive interviews as collaborative endeavors between researchers and participants who probe together about issues that transpire, in conversation, about particular topics which are situated within the context of

emerging and well-established relationships among participants and interviewer where the emphasis is on what can be learned from the interaction as well as from the stories that each person brings (p. 5). The authors describe community autoethnographies as using the personal experience of researchers-in-collaboration with community to illustrate how a community manifests particular social/cultural issues which facilitate community-building research practices that make opportunities for "cultural and social intervention" possible (p.5).

The participants were asked questions about their years of experience and degree levels. With each group social science work related to Black identity was introduced to the participants to form background for the study's four research questions (Appendix B).

Chapter Four

Chapter Four is organized into three sections according to each focus group: West Side Educators, Members of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa and Members of the National Education Association Black Caucus. Each focus group section is organized according to research question and the responses for research questions are sorted according to the themes that emerged specific to the frameworks of cultural geography or critical race theory.

The purpose of this study was to discover how Black educators, as professionals and students, experience(d) what they perceive(d) to be cultural symbolism, cultural resistance and/or cultural violence through schools named after individuals, in particular those sympathetic to the Confederacy and slavery, or prominent Blacks and whether they have found ways to manage the impact of schools' names for themselves and their students.

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4. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Data Collection

Upon completion of the focus group discussion, I transcribed the recorded discussion into electronic format. In the process of transcription, I removed all remarks which could reveal the specific identities of the participants, such as their references to themselves or others by name, references to the numbers of years they had worked at named schools, and the chronology of their employment experience.

The first two focus groups met face-to-face and each educator was assigned a nametag and table tent. For the West Side group they were labeled Educator A through Educator H, and seats for Educator D and Educator F remained empty, and for the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa group they were labeled Educator A through H; the seat for Educator A remained empty. For the third group, the National Education Association (NEA) Black Caucus which met remotely, the co-investigator coordinated a time that would be convenient for all the participants based on their time zones, and asked them to use only their code names, Educator A through E, that were assigned to them when identifying themselves once they joined the conference. The participants joined an interactive remote conference one at a time announcing themselves with their code names. Educator D entered the discussion late because of confusion with the time and his comments were incorporated within the research question to which they responded.

The co-investigator served as both the interviewer and a participant in the three focus groups in this autoethnographic study. The co-investigator read the consent forms, which emphasized the exclusive use of code names they were assigned and in-group confidentiality during the discussion, and invited questions. There were no questions and each participant initialed and signed their consent forms, which were collected by the co-investigator for storage in the locked office of the primary investigator. For the NEA Black Caucus the co-investigator

had previously invited them through individual emails and phone calls, and after they agreed, the co-investigator sent the abstract and informed consent for them to review. Before the discussion, the co-investigator reviewed the information with them individually and then the participants initialed, signed and returned the consent forms via email.

The co-investigator read the abstract of the study to the participants and invited questions. There were no questions. The co-investigator informed them they could write notes as we proceeded in the discussion and that if they provided their email they could request information from the co-investigator about any of the information which was presented or emerged in the discussion.

Data Analysis

For the three focus groups, I organized the data according to the four research questions. In vivo coding was accomplished by classifying the responses to each research question conceptually by phrases and terms representative of specific themes from either or both theoretical frameworks: critical race theory in education and cultural geography.

From the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) permanence of race and CRT in education tenets, the centrality of race and racism, challenging dominant perspectives, and committing to social justice themes emerged which were related to comments on 1) the role of race or culture in the interactions of Black students and educators with White educators or students; 2) the role of race or culture in the quality of the experience as Black educators and students, such as how they perceive their value to schools and communities; 3) the role of race or culture in the quality of life for communities, such as comments referring to resources, cultural pride, or cultural history; and 4) creating curricula focusing on race or culture, such as using racially or culturally

relevant themes for classroom instruction or schoolwide programs or adopting pedagogy specific to race or culture, such as discussions of the effects of racism on the achievements of Blacks.

Cultural geography themes of symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and symbolic violence were related to comments on participants' perceptions of 1) the community or student value of schools named after individuals in general; 2) the community or student value of schools named after prominent Blacks; 3) utilization of names of schools to support community interest based on race or culture; and 4) utilization of names of schools to promote student engagement and achievement. A comparative analysis of each theme was completed to form the discussion in Chapter Five.

West Side Educators

The first of three focus groups convened at a centrally located hotel meeting room near the West Side of Charleston, West Virginia (WV) in Kanawha County. This group of Black educators were invited because they were life-long residents of the West Side or taught at either Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary or Stonewall Jackson Middle School. Seven educators were invited and five of them in addition to me participated. Two of the invited could not attend because of inclement weather. There were six Black educators.

The cover of the book, *Teaching While Black* (Lewis, 2016), was shown to the participants which depicted a photograph of a White doll being selected by a Black child in the groundbreaking social science experiment by Mamie and David Clark (Clark & Clark, 1939). The co-investigator explained the Clark Doll Experiment, which was commissioned by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (Brown v. the Board of Education)* (Clark, Chein & Cook, 2004)**.** The results of the test indicated that Black children preferred the

attributes of the White doll over those resembling their own. The doll test revealed the Black children's perceptions of feeling inferior to Whites. The co-investigator explained that the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision represented the first time social science was used to inform a Supreme Court decision, and this particular decision resulted in the integration of U.S. public schools (Clark, Chein & Cook, 2004)**.** The co-investigator indicated that the study in which they were involved could have similar impact on equity issues for Black educators and Black students in the future. Brief discussion about the backgrounds of the group revealed the educators' highest degree levels and years of experience as educators.

Table 1

Participants' Degree Levels and Years of Experience

Participant	Degree Level	Years of Experience
Educator A	BA in Education	25 years
Educator B	MA + 45 in Education	35 years
Educator C	BA in Education	10 years
Educator E	BA in Education	15 years
Educator G	MA + 45 in Education	21 years
Educator H	MA + 45 in Education	27 years

The discussion also revealed the level and type of contact the educators had as students or professionals in schools named for prominent Blacks or notable White supremacists. Educator A worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary; Educator B worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, and attended Stonewall Jackson High School and Woodrow Wilson Junior High School in WV; Educator C worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary in WV; Educator E attended Stonewall Jackson High School and worked at Stonewall Jackson Middle School in WV; Educator G worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, and Stonewall Jackson

Middle School in WV, and P.S. 125: The Ralph Bunche School in Harlem, NY (named for a Nobel Prize winning African American); and Educator H worked at Stonewall Jackson Middle School in WV.

Research Question (RQ) 1: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

The themes of symbolic capital and symbolic resistance that emerged in relationship to RQ1 will be explored through the participants' responses to Interview Question (IQ) 1: Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of the schools you've attended or taught in? Several educators in this group who worked at Mary C. Snow Elementary were proud to work at a school named for an African American woman from the community the school serves and considered the name symbolic capital. They realized, however, that many in the community would continue to use another name, West Side Elementary, as symbolic resistance to using the name of Ms. Snow.

> Educator A: My enjoyment is teaching, but I feel a sense of defeat when I know I teach in a school named after a very prominent Black, Mary C. Snow, and we've had to fight to maintain that name and 90% of the students don't even know why. That gives me a feeling of being defeated.
>
> Educator H: I think that's where leadership comes in because of the battle they went through to get the school named Mary C. Snow. They should have an assembly every year or something where they talk about who this person was and have pride. That's a sense of pride.
>
> Educator A: And that has been lost around here. Pride of school has been lost.

Educator C: I am very proud to work at a school named after Mary C. Snow. I spoke to many members of the community and school board. What was the motive to change the name? I am happy we have school named after a wonderful woman.

Some tenets consistent with critical race theory, permanence of racism and challenging dominant perspectives, emerged in relationship to RQ 1 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 1: Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of the schools you've attended or taught in? Responses revealed that effects of attending or working at Stonewall Jackson High School, now Stonewall Jackson Middle School, in most cases were not directly related to the name of the school, but to the overarching experience of individual and systemic racism and discrimination in American society.

Educator H: I knew who Stonewall Jackson was, but I never made it an issue for me. It was a name that was there before I got there. And I teach for a reason, but I never made an issue of the name because we know who's running the system. And after a while you know how the system's run, you know what it is, you know who gets privileges and you know who doesn't. You know the old saying: 'You have to work twice as hard as a Black American.'

Educator A: Three times …

Educator H: School names do have a purpose and sends messages and I think it's up to the individuals what they get from it. But when you know what's happening, it does send messages. He was a Confederate and wasn't fighting for us. I know lately this has been an issue – statues – and I think they should be removed, but it's ingrained in the system. They been doing it for so long.

Educator B: As a teenager I went to Stonewall Jackson High School; went from Woodrow Wilson Junior High then to Stonewall Jackson High School. And when I look at the stuff that went on then to now – my daughter went to the middle school, it's almost like the same stuff. Like, we didn't know the meaning like Educator H said, it was already named before we ever got there. But you could see the difference; because if you were NOT Black you got away with murder. Let it be someone like me and it was a different outcome. We see that, and for my daughter to go through the same thing and for me to say, 'I went through that when I was in high school' is a shame.

Other reported incidents are consistent with the idea of microaggression, implicit or unconscious bias as opposed to overt acts of racism. A growing field of research supports the idea that contemporary forms of racism have evolved from overt actions, including racial violence and hate crimes to those which are described as implicit or unconscious bias, and are more exclusively psychological and emotional in nature. Harvard psychologist Dr. Chester Pierce coined a term to describe the effects on the recipient as "racial microaggression" (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Over 20 years later researchers extended Pierce's definition of racial microaggression to describe them as "[b]rief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273).

Because of their ambiguity, microaggressive acts can be explained to the recipient with ostensibly nonbiased and valid reasons making it difficult for recipients to confirm racist intent (Sue et. al., 2007). Consequently, the power of racial microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and, oftentimes, the recipient (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Black educators who

questioned experiences with colleagues in which they felt racially stereotyped, ignored, devalued, and/or excluded were describing racial microaggressions about which they did not want to make an issue with White peers. Research points out that the ambiguities of racial microaggression create more cognitive disruption in its recognition and processing for Blacks, but that Whites have a higher threshold before attributing ambiguous acts to prejudice, making them relatively insensitive to and less disrupted, if at all (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007).

> Educator H: I had the opportunity to work at Stonewall Jackson Middle School – had a large population of African American students and the principal was African American, so I thought it was a good opportunity to go and be a role model. But I found the Whites at the school didn't make me feel comfortable. One of the White educators said, 'We made a bet when you were gonna stop wearing ties.' I didn't really think about it until he left and it sunk in. I thought to myself, 'They should have better things to think about then what I'm wearing to school.' You know, for me as a Black man, I wanted the image to sink in for the kids that I'm from the projects just like you are and if I can get out so can you. So, trying to be a role model or a stand up African American man in the school system they didn't appreciate that. It was almost like a negative …. They don't even know what they been doing.
>
> Educator G: Did you take it as they thought you'd eventually get 'hood?'
>
> Educator H: You know, I thought they felt I was just like a 'fraud' hiding behind something, but that's who I am, and for them to try to denigrate or slow me down, it sends a message like what are they really thinking about me.

The theme of symbolic capital and a tenet consistent with CRT, challenging dominant perspectives, emerged in relationship to RQ 1 and will be explored through the participants'

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responses to IQ 1: Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of schools you've attended or taught in? The name of the school for one educator who attended Stonewall Jackson High School was a source of pride because student enrollment had a high percentage of Blacks who had transformed the school's name to the symbolic capital of dominance in sports and lifelong camaraderie, while they simultaneously experienced racist discrimination by the administration.

> Educator E: My experience with Stonewall Jackson was the same as what Educator A was saying. The knowledge of it … When he found out my brother and I would be attending Stonewall Jackson High School, he let me know off the top, 'Understand – get your knowledge, understand what school you're going to,' because he knew off the top. 'Yo, I understand where you're going to.' As for me, I was just ready to have a good time in high school and we called it, 'The Wall, The Wall, The Wall will never fall,' and dominated in sports. But I did go back and start reading about who this guy was and so it wasn't until I was a senior getting ready to get out of high school and the principal took the power they had – you know running a school named after a racist guy, a Confederate.

> Educator G: Like a dog whistle?

> Educator E: Yeah, we had two Caucasian male principals and they ran [the school] like, if you wasn't a big time athlete and you were Black, you were a piece of you know what. As long as you were running, jumping – you was that good dude.

> Educator A: As long as you could potentially hurt yourself.

> Educator E: Yeah and I saw it.

Research Question (RQ) 2: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

A tenet consistent with critical race theory, centering race and racism, emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2: Have you seen students experience any effects, positive or negative, from the names of their school(s)? One common theme was that the students must be taught about the people for whom their school is named through a critical race curriculum before they can experience any effects from the name, positive or negative (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015).

> Educator G: I know growing up in New York, the schools were numbers, P.S. 200 and P.S. 46, but in my neighborhood, Harlem, they taught Black history. The first school I taught at when I returned almost 20 years later was P.S. 125.

> Educator A: The name of the school is important, but only if the students are taught why the name is what it's named, it's not going to do the students any good. For instance, when you talked about Stonewall Jackson, it's important for the students to know who Stonewall Jackson was. Now why would they attend a school if they didn't know why the name is important? Mary C. Snow – many of those students don't even know who Mary C. Snow was … It's not going to do any good otherwise.

> Educator H: I think that is good insight because if they don't know the reason the school is named after the person and who that person was, that's a lot of information and that can give them a sense of pride in themselves – like, that's a Black woman!

> Educator B: [N]ow at Mary C. Snow the kids are wondering who is she? We have to take the time out to teach the kids, and we had THE BEST Black History Month program which gave them an insight on who Ms. Snow was. The students came back with 'Wow – she really went through all of that?' And it gave them the understanding that she has paved the way for us to be here … We have to really give our kids information on all the

people that were before us and their accomplishments. I'm reading the book, *What Color is My World?* to the students now and I tell them that this book is about different Blacks who have patented things but weren't given credit. I say, 'You all need to know this,' and we discussed the obstacles that they had to overcome, but yet and still they kept at it until they reached their goals. So until our young people are taught that Mary C. Snow was this person and if she did this, then I know I can. We miss an opportunity to give them the sense of pride. Our students need to know they have to work …

Research Question (RQ) 3: How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

and

Research Question (RQ) 4: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

The cultural geography themes of symbolic resistance and symbolic capital in addition to the tenet of critical race theory in education, committing to social justice, emerged in relationship to RQs 3 and 4 which will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 3: Have you ever had an opportunity to address with students how schools' names can affect the community in terms of being either more integrated and equitable or more divisive and biased? They will also be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 4: Do you feel schools' names can reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries? If so, how? Because of the fluid exchanges in the conversation between the participants who knew one another and may have been personally involved in the naming controversy for the school Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, the responses to the questions were consolidated. As alluded to in RQ 1, the

discussion suggested there was resistance to the use of Mary C. Snow by some staff, community members and students, which may be categorized as resistance to the use of her name as symbolic capital.

> Educator A: I have worked at a school named after a prominent Black woman from the community that the school serves: Mary C. Snow or West Side Elementary.
>
> Educator H: They don't call it Mary C. Snow?
>
> Educator A and C: No, they call it West Side.
>
> Educator A: You have to say Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary.
>
> Educator C: When we first got there, we called it West Side Elementary. See the kids voted for the name West Side.
>
> Educator H: Because they didn't know who she was. Like the history. They pump it in you so you don't even think about calling it Mary C. Snow even if you work there. You say West Side, cause they done pumped it in your brain. So it's up to the people to say Mary C. Snow – keep saying Mary C. Snow, and there's a reason that it's not, because they don't want – look – look – we live in a society that don't respect us.
>
> Educator B: People in the world don't respect us.
>
> Educator H: Yeah they don't. And when we go along with their plan, they done snowed us and what do you think will happen to our children?

Educator C suggests that the equity policies at face value alone are not enough if the school system is not poised to add resources to promote the academic achievement of students of color (Capper, 2015).

> Educator C: [A]nd I'm still torn today because I see this as an issue that needs to be really addressed and there can be so much power put in this, but my concern is motives …

What are your motives for this? Because you can do wonders or you can do irreparable harm. Because once again when students don't know, as most don't at Mary C. Snow – and ours is the only school named after a minority in the entire state, we've lost an opportunity … The reason that we heard and talked to people who make policy and we were saying since the school has been changed now you can change certain things by just changing certain documents … but you have that dynamic where certain people have that mentality that it is not going to be recognized as Mary C. Snow … people who fought for the name change for the marquee, but not the internal workings, not only on a micro level, but what is going on the inside. How is this school being run? How are children's lives being impacted? Not just for a day, not just for a week, and surely not just for a month, but for the 180 days that every child needs to get the type of education that Mary Snow was saying she wanted all children to have.

Responses pertaining specifically to the usage of names as symbolism for racial identity closely adhered with the definition of symbolic capital and toponyms (Alderman, 2008):

Educator C: Schools' names without question can reinforce boundaries and shape identities. I'm named after my father and that could be a label, but I'm named after my dad and there's a sense of connection. When you go to a facility anywhere – office building, stadium – people pay a lot of money so they can attach a name to any type of structure … even military bases are known for leaders that fought against the Union. It sends a message to keep them; it reinforces racism – disguised as heritage and not hate.

Another segment regarding an evaluation of the Confederacy and racism aligned with points made in critical race theory that suggest the perspectives and concerns of minority educators are

minimized and the impact that racism has had on their self-perceptions and worldviews underestimated (Kohli, 2008).

> Educator A: What I don't understand about Stonewall and the Confederacy is since the Confederates lost the war, how can their flags be put up in a country in which they lost? Really! We would not glorify Germany's flag or the Japanese flag, but yet we glorify the Confederate flag, and I don't understand why …

> Educator H: I can't believe there's a statue still at the Capitol. As a Black man in America we know what's happening. It's no surprise to us as a people, we see it every day – shootings, nobody getting convicted, this is the country we live in; this is the system that we're a part of.

> Educator G: [I] once asked a group of middle school students in the gifted program who were mostly White about the name of the schools they went to. They knew the irony of Stonewall Jackson being an all-Black school. I expect that their parents know it too. And about Littlepage [housing development] and Glenwood [estates] … and it seems that White parents would want to be the ones to check these policies, unless they believe in the ideals of Jackson.

> Educator B: They never think any Black students can be gifted. I had bright students in my classes and their former teachers who were mostly White were asking me if they were still excelling, and I was like why weren't they in gifted before they almost graduated when I recommended them? Four of my students left Mary C. Snow as gifted.

> Educator E: Educate the kids and have some type of parenting because they don't know – the parents don't know. You gotta go back to the tree. We gotta get parents involved.

Educator H: I just feel that White society is afraid of what would happen if they gave us our freedom …. They're afraid of us. Why do they fear Black men? We supposed to be the bad guys …. Black women are powerful. They're going to try to keep their system intact and we have to maneuver around them. It's kinda funny when you work with most Whites, and I've been working with them ever since I've been in the state, and just lately I'm the only Black in the building and it's like I stay in my room. I don't want to mingle. I can remember when I first got there one of the teachers came in the room and started saying a light sexual joke … I think a lot of times Black male educators are targeted and Black kids are treated differently. Children are smart – don't let them be articulate. My grandson said something about his teacher like, "She makes all the other kids feel like they're part of the family, but not me" …. We know we get treated differently.

Educator B: They're gonna down Blacks because we're not supposed to get anywhere. Just like Teacher of the Year – I know someone of color who was supposed to win by popular vote and they didn't because of the color of their skin. People wrote letters in support of that person and they gave it to a White teacher.

Educator H: I look at certain things that happen, like seniority, now they don't do that. They change that and it becomes committee. So if the educators are White in [sic] the committee they can say we don't want that person. Now it's back to the principal and couple teachers hire who they like … they try to discourage you.

Educator G: Should we just take it? Desensitize ourselves to racism … White students of conscience in Virginia just changed the name from a White supremacist, Jeb Stuart, to Justice High School because they didn't want to be connected to it when they went off to their good colleges. Unfortunately, for some of our students, the high school diploma

may be the only recognition or accomplishment they earn … I was shocked to see a Stonewall Jackson Middle School in the middle of the most heavily African American neighborhood in the state. It was a culture shock for sure. I wondered why it wasn't in Chelyan or somewhere more people might appreciate his viewpoint.

Another theme regarding the tenets of critical race theory, centering race and racism and challenging dominant perspectives, emerged where the educators themselves have been forced to create their own critical race curriculum that highlights the contributions of Blacks in society to build pride for Black children they educate. Many of the educators signify that they assume a critical race pedagogical style, which appeals to all children (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Moreover, for children of all races they are the role models of symbolic capital for them and the symbolic resistance that defies the stereotypes that plague the community they serve.

Educator A: One of the great misconceptions we as Black people have been given is integration. That was a great deception, because as long as there was segregation, we taught our own what they needed to know about who we are, but when integration came along, teaching was different. And we didn't learn anymore about who we are. Let us teach our children. Let us teach our class children and let us teach our blood children. Let us do what Blacks have done throughout history. We have to begin by teaching our own.

Educator B: [W]e don't have enough Black educators in schools, so the ones that we do have, we have to show them a sense of pride. I tell them, 'I grew up on the West Side. I grew up two blocks from this school and yeah, I had to work hard to get where I am now; and that goes to show that you all can do the same thing. It doesn't matter because most of us aren't born with silver spoons in our mouths its what's here [brain] that will get us there.'

Educator C: My grandfather was a custodian at G. Carter Woodson [segregated school named for the creator of Black History Month], my mother's side of the family grew up there, and I was told by people who experienced segregation under the law how it was … and as an African American educator, I don't wait until February to celebrate Black history. There are little things that you can say and do all school year because if it's important to you, you have to make it important to young people in that investment. But back to the naming of schools, I witnessed it and what fueled my frustration was that I saw motives. I saw people – there were certain things that were troubling.

Educator E: But then we gotta be there for those kids. A lot of my partners left, went to other cities, and when they come back home they say, "Dag, you still here?" And I say, "Yeah, WV needs me!" I could leave, but they need me. If I leave, who else is gonna take over what I do in the school and community to help the kids out? So we can't just up and uproot. And we ain't helping to teach the White kids either. Because they don't know, they need our help too. If we don't teach them, you know their parents darn sure ain't gonna teach them. They gonna teach them the way they want to teach them, but not our side – even though they wanna be like us, their parents don't really know about us.

Educator H: Honestly, I think the White students love us more than they love the White Educators.

Educator B: I was gonna say the same thing — because the White students really give us that respect.

Educator H: As a Black man we have different flavor, we come from a different environment and the flavor that we bring with us, no one can take that from us and the kids gravitate to us more than others.

Educator B: Our discipline style is completely different. There's some that come to us and say, 'How can you say that to a kid and they don't say anything back to you, but if I say it to them they get smart?' I tell them because I'm from the right side of the fence, I've been them, and I know what they're going through and I know how to deal with it. Nothing against you, but that's just what it is …

Educator G: You're valuable assets.

Educator B: They need us and even the other students look up to us. They want what only we can give them.

Educator H: If it's not us, who? That's why I felt when I went to Stonewall Jackson; I could push up the kids – give 'em motivation [and] if they need anything, I'm here. That's why we do what we do. We want to push our people up. It is what it is – God's gonna take care of us. It's hard to sit back and not say anything. I gotta issue when they don't want to do anything for Black History [Month]. I'm gonna put my Black history display in the front hallway – not around the corner – and see what he says.

Educator C: We're standing on the shoulders of giants and I can't remember who it was – Fannie Lou Hamer? But they're talking about this time in history, we should not just concern ourselves with standing on the shoulders – we've got to realize we've got students standing on our shoulders. The story gotta be told.

Members of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.

The second of three focus groups convened at a restaurant meeting room in downtown Charleston, WV in Kanawha County. This group of Black educators were invited through membership in the West Virginia or Epsilon chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa (NSPDK). NSPDK is a 501c3 non-profit, professional organization of women in the field of

education. The members are dedicated teachers and career educators who support programs for youth, educational development, community involvement and sisterhood activities, and are dedicated to perpetuating high quality academics and promoting the teaching career as an honorable profession (NSPDK, n.d.). This group collectively offers a wider range of experiences within a broader timeframe in Kanawha County as well as other counties in West Virginia, and on a regional level, affiliates with seven eastern states and Washington, DC adding different contexts to the focus group discussion. Seven educators were invited and were all present in addition to me. This group, like the previous one was introduced to the potential influence of their contribution by recalling the impact of the Clark Doll Experiment (pg. 61).

We had a brief discussion about the backgrounds of the educators that revealed degree levels and years of experience in education. The educators in this group had the largest differences in years of experience as educators of the three focus groups.

Table 2

Participants' Degree Levels and Years of Experience

Participant	Degree Level	Years of Experience
Educator B	MA in Education	10 years
Educator C	MA in Education	50 years
Educator D	MA + 45 in Education	50 years
Educator E	MA + 45 in Education	36 years
Educator F	MA + 15 in Education	4 years
Educator G	BA in Education	4 years
Educator H	MA in Education	7 years
Educator I	MA + 45 in Education	21 years

The discussion also revealed the level and type of contact the educators had as students or professionals in schools named for prominent Blacks or notable White supremacists. Educator B

worked at Stonewall Jackson Middle School and Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary in WV;

Educator C worked at Cabell Alternative School in WV (named after the first African American

Educator in Kanawha County); Educator D attended segregated schools which were all named

after Blacks, such as David Howard Elementary in Atlanta, GA (named after a former slave who

started the first bank for Blacks in Atlanta); Educator E attended P.S. 111: Malcolm X School,

Betty Shabazz Afterschool, and Martin Luther King Summer School in Harlem, NY; Educator F

worked at Stonewall Jackson Middle School and Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary; Educator

G worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary; Educator H worked at Mary C. Snow West

Side Elementary, and Educator I worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, and Stonewall

Jackson Middle School in WV, and P.S. 125: The Ralph Bunche School in Harlem, NY (named

for a Nobel Prize winning African American).

Research Question 1: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

The tenet of critical race theory, centering race and racism, emerged in relationship to RQ

1 and will be explored through the participants' responses to the interview question 1: Have you

personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of schools you've

attended or taught in? Educators stressed that Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary and

Stonewall Jackson Middle School had a majority of Black and socio-economically

disadvantaged populations that required educators who were responsive to those factors.

Regardless of being the minority, as Black educators they emphasized the agency they have in

reaching children of color with critical race curriculums (Sleeter, 2017).

> Educator B: I have taught at Stonewall Jackson Middle School on the West Side named
>
> after the Confederate general. Experiences are pretty amazing as one of only a few

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African American Educators where there were mostly Caucasians educators teaching

Black or African American students that didn't have a clue how to deal with these lives –

these individuals – and the diverse issues that they face. However, many of us had a true

love for children and no matter the color or whatever, we made provisions for those

students that needed help: developing clothes closets and seeing to the needs of those

kids. I believe there were some White teachers there that loved being in that community,

just like one of us loved being in that community … I think it takes a special kind of

person to be in that community and teach in a community where you have troubled

children … I did not notice … negativity, but there was not a lot of positive either … And

I did not notice a big deal about the name or any special emphasis because they really …

use the initials more than they did the whole name, but they did call themselves, The

Generals … There have been negative effects because of the lack of resources … in terms

of the name Mary C. Snow and there are some negative connotations behind it because of

the area it sits in … I noticed that we have children still starting at a low level, children in

pre-k and kindergarten that are pretty troubled. The name is after Mary C. Snow, who

was important at that school, so teaching there is important and the number of Blacks that

we do have there, although we are still in the minority – try to keep her spirit alive during

the year with various activities … are positive effects in the school but it takes a lot of

work …

Educators C and D expressed similar agency having attended or worked at schools during the

segregated era in the South. Educator C had experiences which were empowering as a Black

educator working with Black students in schools named after prominent Blacks and rebuilding

trust of the education system in students who had struggled with racism.

Educator C: I'm a vocational educator and during the years I worked in Kanawha County I worked at Cabell which is the present location of Mary C. Snow, and Cabell was named after Sam Cabell who was the first Black teacher in the county. I had Black students who were put out of Stonewall Jackson High School at the time who were referred to Cabell because Cabell was the alternative school …. It was our primary responsibility to help them get their GED and/or refer them to Carver, named after George Washington Carver, another vocational school …. So as we worked with them to help them complete high school and get their GED and/or return to school it was our primary responsibility to prepare them for the world of work to be productive citizens.

Educator D, who worked in White majority schools in WV, eventually experienced inclusion from colleagues, but also endured feelings of tokenism, racial isolation and racism which were dismissed or neutralized in order to educate White students in predominantly White schools, similar to the Black teacher in Reynold's study (2015).

Educator D: I'm a WV transplant, so in my K-12 schools I was in a segregated situation until I graduated. Actually, I was in college before I was in a desegregated situation, so all Black schools were named after Blacks and I don't know what the White schools were called because we never had contact with them … I have never attended a school named after a Confederate, but my children have … it really wasn't a thought it was the name of the school and just kinda thinking about it, my thought is if you erase that you erase your history because it's part of history … went back to Chandler Elementary, although the population was predominantly White, because there was a White housing development nearby. In both instances the things I found there was that people were sensitive to the kids … I found if you don't know where you come from, you don't have any idea what

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you're doing with them … I've had 10 years in a private Catholic school setting where I

was the only Black in the school, and my experience in all the positions I've held – even

non-teaching – is that you meet the wall – when you come into an area and you do your

job, and people realize that if we have their children's well-being at heart, then the

interesting part is, 'you become one of us, now' and I don't know … I don't think it had

anything to do with names of schools, because for the most part it's not discussed. For the

most part things that I ran into had more to do with people's core beliefs and how they've

been raised and how they raise their kids …

A tenet of consistent with CRT, centering race and racism emerged and combined with

the theme of symbolic capital in relationship to RQ 1 and will be explored through the

participants' responses to IQ 1: Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or

negative, from the names of schools you've attended or taught in? Responses from several

educators emphasized the important role that educators have to create critical race curricula that

publicly acknowledge the achievements of the prominent Blacks who have schools named for

them, like Mary C. Snow, and in so doing use them and others as symbolic capital for the school

and the community.

> Educator E: I was raised in Harlem and a lot of our schools were by numbers. But in the
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> community, even though I went to P.S. 111, it was on Malcolm X Boulevard. and the
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> school acknowledged Malcolm X and called it Malcolm X School. Even though it wasn't
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> technically named Malcolm X School, that's the spirit that the community and
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> administration adopted and infused over to the children. I grew up in Harlem and we
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> went to the Malcolm X after school program or the Betty Shabazz dance program or the

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Martin Luther King summer program, so when we attended these programs, and it was the people that facilitated them that infused that pride in us.

Educator F: At Mary C. Snow I have an overwhelming responsibility on myself to educate our students not only on Mary C. Snow, but the positive effects that our African Americans have laid the foundation for us. So I do feel an overwhelming sense of having to do something because we're supposed to do it. I'm hard working wherever the school is, but I'm going to go the extra mile because I'm doing it for my people. I grew up in a predominantly White area and I can count how many African Americans attended my school, and I always felt inferior and I still feel inferior, [although] I'm educationally superior to a lot of my peers. So I have sit back and identify myself with who I am and how far I've come.

Educator G: I've worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary for a while and it wasn't until this year that I was really even focused on Mary C. Snow and what is being incorporated this year about her.

Educator H: I've never attended a school named after prominent Blacks or notable White supremacists. At Mary C. Snow we have recently decided to put more emphasis on her name and who she was.

Research question 2: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

A theme of symbolic capital emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2: Have you seen students experience any effects, positive or negative, from the names of their school(s)? Educators who had experiences at schools named for prominent Blacks found it necessary to use the namesake school as symbolic

capital to frame their school's culture and their students' aspirations. The educators agreed that

for schools named after White supremacists, the name cannot be symbolic capital.

Educator F: So this Black History Month we memorialized Mary C. Snow with a portrait

and African American greats all around her and our program centered around her and it

was phenomenal. The students were so well-behaved and engaged.

Educator G: I believe if we put more emphasis on things like who Mary C. Snow was and

give them more leadership roles, that will help them in a lot of ways. They were proud

that we gave them wax museum identities who were people of color and they had to

know about those people.

Educator H: I wouldn't say that there's a negative effect at Mary C. Snow because of the

name of the school; it's more the location that gets the stigma. We have a ton of behavior

issues, but when we showed them who she was and incorporated who she was and

incorporated OUR music and OUR culture into the curriculum, the students behaved and

wanted to learn and wanted to sing our music and it was very powerful. The WHOLE

school behaved – they didn't know who she was at first. During our Black History Month

program, they sang 'Man in the Mirror' and a lot of times they're in music that's when I

get a lot of write-ups; and I think if they incorporate more music that WE like, we

wouldn't get so many write-ups, but the curriculum isn't for US.

Educator E: I think Educator G said something very interesting. She said she had been at

the school for four years and had never seen the impact that the name could have on the

school until this year. So I think that the name's impact is something we can grow on, but

it needs that action and that spirit behind it, and without that the name doesn't do us as

much good as it should. It could generate power within us.

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A theme consistent with the tenet of CRT, challenging the dominant perspective, also emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2. There were comments which suggested the school named after Stonewall Jackson amplified the racial tension of the era after forced integration.

> Educator C: Well, having students coming from Stonewall to Cabell Alternative School [for discipline] was for many of them a blessing. As a result of having that experience, those students came from Stonewall Jackson High School with low self-esteem, no type of drive, it was like they were in an oppressed state and this was because of the times in the 1960s where they experienced constant overt racism after forced integration of the school. Once they came to us and we introduced them to the vocational arena, things began to change …. We, as counselors, had to make a decision that the ultimate goal is for this student to succeed and how do we help them succeed? So we made a lot of home visits. We had to get them out of places that they'd spent the night where they had no business being, but yet they knew we cared about them and as a result, they began to care about themselves. They needed affirmation, but the one thing that they all had a problem with was trust. Coming out of Stonewall Jackson they didn't have trust for anything or anybody, so we had to gain their trust. So even though Cabell was an alternative school, it became a positive source of pride and achievement for them.

Another theme in critical race theory emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2. Many felt that socio-economic disadvantages and lack of cultural knowledge in the Black community had more significant negative effects on their Black students' educational experiences than schools' names, because

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they could not recognize the symbolic violence of the name if they were not learning about history through a critical race pedagogy that emphasized their culture.

> Educator E: Being here in WV, even though I have seen the different names of the schools, I haven't seen a real infusion of culture, so it's more of how we infuse the school with the spirit of the name – even at Mary C. Snow or any other school, how do we portray the culture of it? I've been to Stonewall, having children there, and I didn't even know who Stonewall was and the way the children are treated – with less respect there – is more because of the spirit and culture of the school and may not necessarily be because of the name of the school, but because of the way it is run. I think in WV – I didn't know the different schools and Confederates until someone actually told me and I read about it – but the things that are going on in the school really was infused by the administrators – their philosophies, like Educator D said, and what they believed regardless of the color they were.

Another critical race theory theme emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2. Implications for the role of critical race pedagogy and curricula in teacher education are also emphasized as with the other focus groups.

> Educator H: You cannot instill culture if you don't have it. Our children are not going to church and it's not happening at church – you can name the school Tiddly Winks and it's good, bad or indifferent. So being at Stonewall is not a negative thing, because even White kids at Stonewall don't know who he was, half the teachers don't know who he was – they took a job to get paid. You don't go in when you get interviewed for a job and say, 'Oh no, I can't work at Stonewall cause it's named after a Confederate general.' You say, 'What days do I get paid? The 10th and the 25th.' I show up. I do my thing. If I'm

going to name the top three things I'm going to prepare for when going for a job, the name of the school is not on the list. What makes a difference in the school is you bringing pride to the school. I can relate to what Educator F said about feeling inferior. I never spent any significant time with White people until I was 21. I transferred to an all-White college. My thought was, 'Am I prepared?' I was coming in at the beginning of my junior year. It took me no longer than a week to discover that my teachers had done a damn good job. That inferiority isn't coming from the school. Whatever you got, you got when you walked in. I don't care what you name the school. If you don't have the frame of reference for the kids you teach, you have nothing to offer them. The only thing for you to do is regroup as the teacher. Children cannot change. All they know is what they do. But you're the grown person and you took the job, took the training, take the money. Straighten out your act and do the best you can – Black, White, polka dot or whatever.

Educator H: I grew up in a predominantly White school and me and my sister were the only two African Americans and my mom was the only African American teacher; however, she made sure every year she taught Black history. We watched *Roots* in 4th grade and did research projects and papers, we acted like the slaves on a ship. My mom went above and beyond not only to let me and my sister know, but White students and they still come back and say, 'I remember when we did this person.' Just because I was in a predominantly White area and I went to middle and high school, and I was the first Black homecoming queen. I still came back to my people and want to be around Black people where I am now … so it's because my mom instilled the culture in me that I am who I am today.

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Educator C: I was in the same situation as Educator H; however, I went to Institute Elementary it was K-5 then. After integration I went to [another school named after a location] where I was the only Black in my class from 6-12th grade. I was the first Black to graduate from that high school that Educator H graduated from and I remember that I have classmates that can stand in my face and say that I didn't know I was Black because I wasn't intimidated. But there is no way I didn't know I was Black because the experience at the all-White school was totally different than at the all Black school because it was a different time.

Educator B: I feel very strongly that our children don't have a sense of culture and because they don't know who they are they don't know who they're supposed to be or that they're supposed to have a sense of pride. Our children today don't know who they are, so how can they have pride in a school's name? They know they go to Stonewall Jackson but many of them probably don't know who he was or what he did, so it doesn't matter to them. So they don't have culture instilled in them. When I was 20 I had never been taught African American studies at [school] … and I didn't know what it was to be Black … I didn't know about Black history anything. My mother couldn't believe that we didn't learn it in school …

Educator D: There is no Black community in the Valley. There is no Black culture in Kanawha Valley. If you take our children out and take them somewhere with Black culture, it's just like dropping a Japanese kid off on Malcolm X Boulevard. Personally in my house … when they removed 'The Block' which was downtown where the Post Office is now … that was the Black community. When they got moved out, the culture got moved out.

Educator I: Was that because of gentrification or integration?

Educator D: That was not gentrification – they just took it. It was not integrated either. It was desegregated. Integrated is like homogenized milk where everything is blended. We are desegregated, which means we have the right by law to go most of the places we want to go … I guess we got integrated out, because now there is no Black culture. It doesn't matter what you name the school, because in the homes if the momma does not know she's Black, she can't help her kids be Black.

Educator B: Thank goodness, I ain't start having kids till I was 34! Because of the type of area we came from, I didn't come from a home that had books. The only books we had I brought from school to do my homework. I didn't have a parent that graduated or was a teacher. I am a first generation graduate – the only one in my line of family members who has graduated with a higher education degree. I didn't have access to knowing this information. I found out my mom assumed the school was teaching me. And this is what's happening today. Parents that don't read to their children are doing them an injustice and so that's what's happening to our community, and unfortunately my mom didn't know any better. My dad only went to the 6th grade. That's a difference. I come from a lower class, non-educated household that we deal with every day, so that's why I had a big gap, but once I learned, I ran with it, and today I will not allow a child not to learn who they are. That's why I push them. So names are important, so they can understand how to tie it into THEIR lives. We been beaten down and trodden so long we deserve to understand who we are through all the inventions and things. We been held down long enough.

Research question 3: How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

The themes of symbolic capital and symbolic violence blended with tenets of CRT, centering race and racism, challenging dominant perspectives and committing to social justice which will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 3: Have you ever had an opportunity to address with students how schools' names can affect the community in terms of being either more integrated and equitable or more divisive and biased? There is an opportunity for civic engagement when the school's name can be a unifying factor. Schools named after prominent Blacks are perceived as symbolic capital and are a source of pride for Black teachers and their students. Several educators could not envision how the racism of White supremacy could be perceived as symbolic capital, because the ideology was divisive and represented symbolical violence for Blacks. One educator, however, felt White supremacy needed to be recognized as a part of history which shaped experience for Black people, and had internalized racism as a result of the American social construct.

> Educator F: Because of the inspiration of Mary C. Snow, in the last part of the Black history curriculum we incorporated Ruby Bridges and the point of how brave and courageous she was during integration. She was responsible for them to be able to sit here and offered a curriculum and resources that they have because she was a pioneer. She left them the legacy that allowed them to succeed and most of the students were left with the feeling that 'she did that for me?' I think there are positive effects now in memorializing her name and Mary C. Snow.

Educator H: I don't think they could have incorporated the name of Stonewall Jackson in the same way.

Educator D: Why not? It's still a part of your history.

Educator I: But even though it was a painful part of our history?

Educator D: Why not? Because had it not happened, other things wouldn't have happened. Everything has a domino effect – even the bad stuff. Slavery wasn't necessarily a bad thing – it was an economic thing.

Educator I: It was a bad thing for my great grandmother.

Educator D: Because you can't go one place – you make your own. We had Black doctors, lawyers, dentists … When we desegregated out we lost our business.

Educator I: Stonewall Jackson predates that.

Educator D: But that is where we come from.

Educator I: From a man who didn't want us to be free? It's a teachable moment for sure, but is it a moment with which you want them to identify necessarily?

Educator E: I don't see how White supremacists – they stand for others being less than them, and hate for others that aren't their race – they can't be incorporated the same way, especially for Blacks who come from slavery. I think names of prominent Blacks can be a source of pride for Black students only if action is put to the name though.

Educator F: I think prominent Blacks can help a community have pride and help improve student engagement, but a school named after anyone who pushed hate, Black or White, can't do that.

Educator G: White supremacy divides; prominent Blacks helps our community see what is possible.

Educator H: Really, schools named after positive people who helped build pride for all people, and especially for their own can bring us together … Now the sad part is that there are not enough men in lower grades for our boys. We do a job on our boys primarily because women expect different things. They don't necessarily want to sit in a chair for 15 minutes – you gotta plan your day around the kids you get, and if the child is a problem because he doesn't sit still or know all the words or is fidgeting, their lives are different and they're different from the lives of people who teach them …

Educator B: Prominent Blacks show Black students and Whites that no matter how much is stacked against you, you can achieve. The racism of White supremacy put a barrier in the way of Blacks, and they are still being affected by it. With prison and so on. I find myself being in the position I'm in – especially with the young men – and I find that if you can impact the young men you can also reach the women … I ask, 'You do know about slavery? Yeah, we were slave then, but the weakest died and were sick, but who do you think survived? The strongest.' And I made sure they could tie that in as African American men that the strongest survived and your DNA is a part of the strongest survivors, so you can survive! You can make it! …. And we need them to be reminded of this every day they come to school, not about those that hated them.

Research question 4: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

The themes of symbolic capital and symbolic resistance emerged in relationship to RQ 4 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 4: Do you feel schools' names can reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries? If so, how? The participants with over 50 years of experience have historical memory regarding segregated communities in WV where

school names were symbolic capital for those whom they served and reinforced racial boundaries of that era. Participants reiterated that the symbolic use of prominent people as icons for their culture has been a historical public tradition where namesake schools responded to demographic shifts:

> Educator C: I remember we had G. Carter Woodson School – who had been the President of WVSU – and that name used to be The Colored Collegiate Institute. Well, they named a school after him in St. Albans across from Institute, because that's where Black people lived when they went across the river to State High School that was on the campus of WVSU. When they opened up the road … the neighborhood changed from Black to White and they renamed it McKinley. But now each year during Black History Month, the former students of G. Carter Woodson who still live nearby, they go there to educate the teachers and children and this has been a very successful program of interaction. Let's talk about Garnet. Now its name changed to John Adams and the kids from the hill were bused down the hill to a Black school, and the name was changed from Garnet to John Adams because there were White kids coming in. When they finally built John Adams up on the hill, Garnet's name changed back to Garnet, because it was a Black school and had that identity. So the pride and the experience and the education that those Garnet students received at Garnet High School still goes on the graduates who are up in age. They still have that pride. They have that pride of Ruth Norman being their teacher …. They have that pride that they went to school with Leon Sullivan. I remember when we had Ferguson Elementary … it was located in West Dunbar, an all-Black area … in 1956 they closed it and reopened it as West Dunbar Elementary, then it became Shawnee and now it is Bill Raglin Community Center … but the community never changed so … school

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names can definitely be seen as reinforcement of racial boundaries, and even economic ones.

The National Education Association Black Caucus

The third of the three focus groups were invited because of their membership and affiliation with the Black Caucus of the National Education Association. The founders of the Caucus felt that Black members of many predominantly White institutions must occasionally come together to define themselves and cannot depend on others to see that their views are properly aired (NEA Black Caucus, n.d.). These participants are actively engaged in creating policy and practices which dismantle White supremacy and racism in public education across the country and offered insights related to combatting critical race issues which have emerged in their local and national campaigns. Six educators were invited and five participated, including me. This group, like the previous ones was introduced to the potential influence of their contribution by recalling the impact of the Clark Doll Experiment (pg. 61).

A brief discussion with the participants about their background revealed their highest degree levels and their years of experience in education.

Table 3

Participants' Degree Levels and Years of Experience

Participant	Degree Level	Years of Experience
Educator A	BS in Education	18 years
Educator B	H.S. + 3 years in Education	35 years
Educator C	MA in Education	39 years
Educator D	AA in Business	21 years
Educator E	MA + 45 in Education	21 years

The discussion also revealed the levels and types of contact the educators had as students or professionals in schools named for prominent Blacks or notable White supremacists. Educator A worked at Burnett Elementary (Gov. Peter Hardeman Burnett was a White supremacist), Washington High School (1st U.S. President and prominent slave owner), Leola Havard Elementary (the first African American female principal in San Francisco), Malcolm X Elementary, and Martin Luther King Middle, all in the San Francisco Bay area. Educator B neither attended nor worked at a school named after a prominent Black or notable White supremacist to their knowledge; Educator C did not attend or work at a school named after a prominent Black or notable White supremacist; Educator D attended Stonewall Jackson High School in WV; Educator E worked at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, Stonewall Jackson Middle School in WV, and P.S. 125: The Ralph Bunche School in Harlem, NY (Nobel Prize winning African American).

Research question 1: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

Themes of cultural geography emerged in relationship to RQ 1 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 1: Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of schools you've attended or taught in? Many educators who had attended schools named after White supremacists were ignorant of the cultural symbolism.

> Educator D: I never had the privilege to go to a school where the people I honored were namesakes, but I did go to a school named after a Confederate, Stonewall Jackson, and my cousin went to one [named] after Nathan Forrest. Back then you never knew. I was naïve to the facts about the South and the Confederacy and who were leaders in White

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supremacy. We used to watch the 'Dukes of Hazard' and we would try to imitate them, not realizing they were racist – not knowing what their flag symbolized. When I got older and saw the emblem at the school, I thought about the show I grew up watching and it never dawned on me that that flag glorified slavery. The pride we had was about it being OUR school; it was all we had. I feel like I was tricked because I didn't know my true history. I didn't know the true history of Stonewall Jackson, my cousin didn't know Nathan Forrest. We were 'The Wall,' and 'The Mustangs,' man! And so proud of that! Our schools were known for Blacks, for sports, for dominance.

One educator reflected on the resistance movements by student groups in his area.

Educator B: [I]n high school we had a school in our area who we competed against who had as their theme song, 'Dixie,' and a number of the Black students at our school joined with a number of Black students at that school to stage a protest in the '70s in an attempt to get the school song changed.

Another educator discussed how the names of schools named after Blacks becomes part of a growing movement of symbolic resistance to gentrification and integration.

Educator C: I attended John M. Gandy Elementary and it was a predominantly Black school back in the '70s. When integration came about I moved to Henry Clay Elementary, where I was one of two African American students in the school. To date, we still have those two schools; however, the plan is to demolish Clay and bring it into the Gandy School and bring those two bodies together. Of course, you have African Americans and Hispanics now and the population has changed, and the concern is when we bring those two schools together what would the name be? Gandy who was an African American and once president of Virginia State University or Clay …. We don't

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want the name changed because you are actually bringing students into a school which is already named after an African American. We are watching closely to see what happens, although we have been told during meetings that it would remain Gandy; however, I don't trust it and anything could happen.

Preserving the school names which are being considered for removal or renaming as demographic and cultural shifts occur is symbolic capital for the African American community and the students it once educated, especially those during the era of segregation.

Educator C: [T]he community where Gandy is located is predominantly Black and Gandy School was the ONLY school for African Americans at one time in the whole county. So, we want to keep that name because it was the only school we had from the first to the 12th grade. Now it's just an elementary school, but when I was growing up we were all housed there, so it means something to us – when we didn't have anywhere else to go.

A theme consistent with the CRT tenet, centering race and racism, emerged where one educator revealed the irony of having personal Black militancy and Black pride that confronted the use of racial epithets by White students; yet he had no frame of reference about the White supremacist ideals of the schools' namesake to recognize the symbolic violence of the name.

Educator D: Most White teachers always had stereotypes about Black people when I was in school. I didn't know much about who my school was named after because they didn't teach me in school and my parents didn't teach me about political things or the Civil War. As long as they were winning state championships in football and basketball – giving our good talent – there was pride. We have to educate people on what these guys stood for and if they would've won, where Blacks would be right now. I know some of the students came from rural places where they might have known who he was

[Stonewall Jackson]… We would have kicked butt if we heard them say, 'Nigger,' but

didn't know what our school song 'Dixie' meant or what the Confederates stood for.

Educator E: What was the race of most of the educators?

Educator D: There were about five Black educators at the time.

Educator E: It seems that if the White educators … had the best interest of the Blacks

they served at heart, they would have banded together to change the name, at least since

the Charleston massacre. To me that is disappointing. Like King said, 'In the end, we

won't remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.'

 Other themes consistent with critical race theory emerged in relationship to RQ 1, such

as how critical race curricula facilitated by other educators teaching Black history contrasts with

the lack of cultural, race and ethnic studies that was available in many schools**.**

Educator D: Educators' views matter for sure. I also stayed with an aunt for a year and

went to an all-Black high school in North Carolina, named Hillside, where there were just

four Whites including the educators in the school. It was basically segregated in a Black

neighborhood. That's the point where I got self-knowledge and self-worth instead of

thinking we were jungle bunnies in Africa. Instead of singing the National Anthem in the

mornings, we sang the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." We started

studying the true history of America where African Americans were concerned – how we

were chattel and treated as less than human beings, and that's what the Confederacy was

about.

Educator E: I remember singing that every morning in my elementary school, P.S. 46 in

Harlem, NY. And I also learned all the countries in Africa, and this was before Black

History Month was created …

Research question 2: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

The theme of symbolic capital emerged in relationship to RQ 2 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 2: Have you seen students experience any effects, positive or negative, from the names of their school(s)? The educators suggested that opportunities for students to engage with the school namesake as symbolic capital is positive for the students.

Educator A: At Malcolm X Elementary they speak about who he was and what he's known for and try to have that educational piece with the kids – and I say try to, because it is a K-5 elementary – but every year around his birthday the students are doing essays based on the knowledge they have about him. At Martin Luther King, very similar, and also we have Carver Elementary and Dr. Charles Drew Preparatory Elementary, so these are the conversations we are having.

Educator D: What's the saying, 'A good name is worth more than gold?' If you had a Harriet Tubman School or Martin Luther King School or a Malcolm X School where the school was related to the higher ideals of these African American people, you'd have more thriving and creative Black people to go in the school and say, 'Hey, this name means something to me. This person played a pivotal moment in history for the uplifting of ALL people, or OUR people who were mistreated for 400 years and counting' … It's like having ownership in the neighborhood, where homeowners take better care of the community than renters. Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. Dubois – those names mean something. It puts you in the mindset of asking what he did. Not like at a school named

after Stonewall Jackson, where they don't promote who he is and nobody seems to ask. His whole style was foul. They have him on a horse holding his flag.

Research question 3: How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

Themes of symbolic capital and symbolic violence emerged in relationship to RQ 3 and will be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 3: Have you ever had an opportunity to address with students how schools' names can affect the community in terms of being either more integrated and equitable or more divisive and biased? Schools named for prominent Blacks, or any person with whom the community could identify successfully, represented more social equity and inclusion and were depicted as symbolic capital for diverse communities. Schools named for individuals whose ideals promoted inequity or injustice for any people, but especially people of the community they serve, were perceived to be harmful and serve as symbolic violence, if not confronted and rectified.

Educator A: Yes, the conversations you talk about, Educator E, involving all races of educators, at least in the Bay area, are happening in the building, from leadership down, and we have a very strong San Francisco Alliance of Black School Teachers chapter … making sure the students not only attend those schools, but make sure they know who the school is named after and why.

Educator C: Answering your question, no, not from the school's standpoint. You might get some conversation from the NAACP youth group in the county, but as far as coming from the school, definitely not. They didn't even want to celebrate Black History Month. I called each school to find out what Black History Month activities were being presented

in my Virginia county, and if they were doing anything at all, it was a morning announcement highlighting an African American; and some schools had bulletin boards, but not one school had something schoolwide. I live in a district that is predominantly White and Republican, and White supremacy is promoted on the down-low, so no, it doesn't come from the school.

Educator A: The names of the schools were changed to reflect and respect the communities they served better. San Francisco's changed a lot of names over the last 21 years. The earliest one I can remember was one changed after Mayor Marsconi and Harvey Milk were shot and killed. The school in the Castro district, which has a heavy population of gay residents, was named Harvey Milk Elementary because he was the first gay city supervisor. Another one is Rosa Parks Elementary, and where it's located, the population there I would suggest would be majority Latino, but there is also a large African American presence. Malcolm X Academy is in the Bayview area, which is heavily populated with African Americans, and definitely uses his ideals as a foundation for lifelong learning and self-advocacy. Caesar Chavez Elementary school was named about 15 years ago and that school is in a Latino community. There have been a number of schools whose name has been changed mainly to uplift the communities and also to bring in pride. If they have schools that represent negative connotations for the quality of life of a certain people, why would you want a school to be named that? What value would it have for students? There is some concerns from outside organizations like the NAACP that the mascots for MLK Middle School and Willie Brown Middle School – and Willie Brown is still alive and he's present and shows up at the school periodically – but the mascot is still a mascot that doesn't complement who the person is.

Educator E: I would love to do a workshop on school naming policy and use an analogy between lung cancer and racism to see if they [decision makers] get it better. Let's say a school is named after the tobacco industry and they called it the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Industry High School – because smoking tobacco was legal, profitable and socially acceptable – and you had the football mascot 'The Cigars' and the cheerleaders, 'The Cigarettes' … scientists found out smoking tobacco was wrong to do – it was addictive, caused cancer and painful death, but more importantly, caused death even if you didn't smoke, but were just exposed to the smoke of the smoker. Millions died from smoking and millions from the second hand smoke in that part of the country. But you still make the kids whose parents died of second hand smoke go to a school named the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Industry High School and be known as the 'Cigars' and 'Cigarettes'? Talk about public outcry! … In this analogy, the tobacco industry is the slavery of Africans; smoking is racism – which you can still do in private or around like-minded individuals; and those kids and educators who got cancer from second-hand smoke, or whose loved ones got sick or died from second-hand smoke are the majority of African Americans in this country.

Educator D: That's on point. We wouldn't even let the tobacco industry off the hook, much less insist that the foulness of slavery seem fair to some people?

Another theme consistent with critical race theory tenets, centering race and racism and committing to social justice, emerged in relationship to RQ 3 regarding the importance of a critical race curriculum for students of all backgrounds as important to the development of critical thinking, civic engagement and social justice.

Educator A: Amen. You can't ignore or minimize the pain and legacy of slavery to avoid guilt. Schools named after people who are a positive representative of the community they serve can absolutely have a positive effect on the students and community and teachers who are teaching in that community. If the school is named after someone who, like I said, represents negative connotations for the people in the community it serves, it cannot. However, that's a loaded question, because if the students are not aware of the history of the person and not aware that they were a slave owner or a Nazi or some human rights violator, or on the down-low supported those things like White supremacy, then the students are blind to that and we can't hold them accountable. But once our students know – and they are very critical thinkers and they have a way of looking at things and saying, 'Wait a minute. That's not the way it's supposed to be or why does it have to be that way? Isn't there a way we can change this?' Once they gain the knowledge and the space to be involved with social justice, they're going to step forward with what they feel – what they understand … So it's on us to educate them about who these people were and that should be happening in English and history and social studies and ethnic studies and Black studies. That's where those conversations should be coming up – so students understand what these people did to deserve their name on the building.

Educator E: I agree. And in particular, as a Black public servant, that assignment at a school named after a Confederate in my county is one of only a handful where you can impact the lives of Black students in a Black community, and it feels unjust and an undue burden. Thinking nationally with 200 schools named that way, it feels humiliating …

A critical race theory theme emerged in RQ3 regarding multicultural teacher education is also emphasized, as with the other focus groups.

Educator A: Educators don't know either – they're coming to a building to teach. But if they are socially conscious they understand and might look into the history of the person to see who was this person, what did they stand for. And that's a maybe – that's not guaranteed. But if you have the community support, like in our area we have the African American Achievers in Leadership initiative and part of the things we do is hold the school accountable for celebrating Black history …. They are asked not just by members of the initiative team but also superintendents to notify us so we can put it on the main district's calendar who is celebrating where and when so that others can attend. So we've had schools say, 'We're not doing anything,' and we say, 'Well, it's time to change that and here's why.' It's a lot of work – don't get me wrong, I heard the pain from the sister, Educator C, and I was saying to myself, well, I need to go out there to go rush and help. I heard her.

Educator C: Some of the battles that have taken place over changing school names were that there was one in Alexandria to get rid of the Lee portion of the Washington Lee High School. Guess what they wanted to replace it with? The Loving High School after the Supreme Court petitioners against miscegenation laws. So there can be some positive conversations, education and illumination going through the process of changing the name – who Robert E. Lee was and who the Loving couple were. I think a school named after a Confederate could only be used as a negative role model for Black students, or any students for that matter of what NOT to do.

A theme of cultural geography emerges from RQ 3 which combines with the CRT tenet, committing to social justice, that suggests through school naming discussions, the opportunity to

engage students and communities in a national conversation about social change and individual transformation can occur in a reconciliatory manner.

Educator E: They let the name of the school named after Robert Byrd in WV stay after he renounced the KKK. Even Blacks felt they could forgive his previous idiocy.

Educator B: I think it is a tricky issue – even Marshall's med school is named after him. I would say that at some point it's important for us to be able to have a conversation about grace or truth and reconciliation, or truth and transformation process, similar to the one used in South Africa. But that it's going to be really hard for us, especially in this generation, to deal with historical figures that don't have some aspect of White supremacy culture or bigotry or bad actions in their lives or their families' lives or ancestry whether it was owning slaves or benefitting from Jim Crow or other practices. So I do think that we need to have a conversation on how to have a truth and reconciliation process that at least allows for some redemption of some folks so that we have the capacity to come together and unite around things without being foolish about it at the same time.

Educator C: I concur with other things that have been stated.

Educator A: Educator B, are you saying schools named after White supremacists can be used as a teaching tool in our community?

Educator B: I'm not suggesting we should abandon the eradication of schools named after White supremacists. I'm not saying that at all. It is not necessary to retain those names to make it teachable. What I am saying is that for many places around our country, there are still schools named after White supremacists and the battle that many students, educators and community members then take on to get those names removed can be a

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teachable or learnable moment of actually who those White supremacists were and are

and why the name should be removed, and lift up some unsung heroes in the community

who get lifted up.

Educator A: Yes, I'm glad you said that. I get that. If you're talking about the name

changing process, schools that are named after White supremacists and why we are

changing it, I totally agree.

Research question 4: How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to

reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Several themes representative of critical race theory tenets, centering race and racism and

symbolic capital emerged in relationship to RQ 4 and will be explored through the participants'

responses to IQ 4: Do you feel schools' names can reinforce traditional racial and economic

boundaries? If so, how? Many comments about the effects of naming and renaming in ways that

promoted social justice and reflected the communities' ideals were viewed as important in

revising racial and economic boundaries.

Educator A: Growing up I attended elementary school and then worked in schools named

after prominent people where I've also been a part of the renaming of schools in the Bay

area. One was named Burnett Elementary School – and he had unfavorable views about

Native Americans and Blacks – and it is now named Leola Havard, who was the first

female African American principal in the San Francisco unified school district; currently

Willie Brown Middle School, named after the first Black mayor of San Francisco, used to

be called Prescott Middle School; Malcolm X Elementary School … the current Martin

Luther King Middle School had a different original name; and there is talk right now

about changing the name of Washington High School to a different name … primarily because Washington had so many slaves.

Educator C: I would say the only thing is that one of the schools in my county has a mascot we want to change. The name of the mascot was 'the Confederates' and we are actually in the process of this now; where it has been voted on and the vote failed … The school is Lee Davis High School.

Educator A: Willie Brown Middle School was just revamped and made a STEM Tech school and it was marketed to the communities that this middle school was going to be an exceptional place for children to get involved with STEM curriculum. Parents were very excited because it was in their community and they still value the school. Other communities were interested too because of what they brought into the school and the redesign and the technology focus. It became an issue of who was really going to own that school, that community? …. Not only that we put on various events like Black Family Day, which we do at Willie Brown to bring families into that space who are not normally there. Their kids may be in preschool or high school, but here's an opportunity for them to come in and get a feel for what a solid middle school community is with those students. It's also within walking distance from their homes – it's not across town and they don't have to be bussed. I've watched that with that school and also with Malcolm X and the parents were just very proud at Malcolm X and whatever activities were planned, they always had parent voice in it. Parents were a part of the plan; parents were always available to support the school and their children.

Educator B: I definitely think the names of schools can reinforce some cultural divisions and boundaries at times, particularly when they're named after White supremacists or

Confederates or soldiers long after those people have passed away. It certainly sows

division and reinforces some hateful practices, but depending on how the battles are

waged around those crises, there can be opportunities and positive outcomes on the other

side. By that I mean correcting some of the ignorance that Educator A alluded to among

the educators and parents, where people are supposedly passing on cultural traditions, but

in essence are passing along hate from one generation to the next … It could lead to

enhanced student achievement.

The theme of symbolic violence and resistance was further emphasized in RQ 4 and will

be explored through the participants' responses to IQ 4. Educator B continued to expound on the

renaming controversies to reveal the true ideals of policymakers who may see White

supremacists' names as symbolic capital.

Educator B: It can be revealing on the other hand. Where there may have been some

people giving lip service to equity and doing things in a more inclusive way and … when

these battles take place round the need to change a school name, some of the folks who

have been alleging a commitment to equity and inclusivity … they have to reveal their

biases and support of discriminatory practices as they stand up for some school names

that are problematic, while others try to make the name less burdensome for the students.

I think a school named after a Confederate could only be used as a negative role model

for Black students or any students for that matter of what NOT to do.

One educator suggested that illuminating the symbolic violence enmeshed in White supremacist

names may reinforce traditional racial boundaries of the past.

Educator D: I don't want our kids now to go through what we went through in terms of

being exposed to how harsh and insensitively we've been treated. I don't think this

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generation needs to bear that burden or even ponder on that. So, in my opinion, they need

to just wipe the names out with no explanation. Just take them out and replace them with

something else. I don't care if they rename it after a plant or an animal. If Whites want us

to forget about our contributions, and how they treated us and then give reparations to

everyone but us – even the slave owners got reparations for losing their property when

they freed us.

Educator E: I agree … Why should we give our talents to a school and have our Educator

of the Year Award, athletic championship or a student diploma forever tie us to the

Confederacy? As a nation, it sends the wrong message to yet another generation who we

are supposed to teach to think critically … but I guess not too critically.

Educator D: So America needs to just take those reminders away – we gotta ask, who

they're reminding anyway? Us or Whites? If you keep reminding me and another

generation, it's like poking a bear.

Conclusions, implications and recommendations from the data will be made in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

I've known rivers: I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow

of human blood in human veins. My soul has grown deep like rivers. (Hughes,

1921/1994)

After the Civil War, African slaves were emancipated into a liberation that was full of

bitter Whites. The discrimination that Blacks faced was meted out not only institutionally, but

also in isolation in localities that turned a blind eye to racism and terroristic White supremacy

militias like the Ku Klux Klan, which banded around the ideals of the Confederacy's Lost Cause.

Psychologists like Joy DeGruy (2005) have found that African Americans suffer psychological,

behavioral and functional residuals, called Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS), from the

effects of multigenerational oppression and trauma which had their genesis in the diabolic

intricacies of dehumanizing Africans in America. The continuum of racism through Jim Crow

prohibited *de jure* discrimination, yet racism persisted under *de facto* codes that continued to

intimidate, indoctrinate and terrorize Black citizens and purposefully deprive them of concerted

mental and emotional rehabilitation, and even medical care (DeGruy, 2005).

Once out of shackles, Black survival dictated psychological accommodation and

normalization of abuse and humiliation in order to keep their families fed and out of the

crosshairs and nooses of vigilantes. Especially in the South, Blacks continued to tend their own

wounds until the television news presented the tortured, mangled and irrefutable truth, named

Emmett Till, to its viewers, spurring widespread condemnation that galvanized the Civil Rights

movement (Miller, 2016). Unlike the predictions of Bob Marley, the revolution was indeed

televised and in pockets of the Jim Crow South, White supremacy played dead, keeping its ears

pricked for the whistles of their leaders. The pitch of that frequency has now been lowered for all

to hear – at St. Emmanuel in Charleston, South Carolina, in Charlottesville, Virginia, and in

Christchurch, New Zealand – with an inglorious resurrection awaited for almost a century by nearly two hundred American schools that bear the names of their heroes.

With these events serving as a backdrop, I will discuss the findings of the focus groups from the West Side, National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa (NSPDK) and National Education Association Black Caucus (NEA/BC). The findings will be discussed first through the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT) in education and second through the theoretical framework of cultural geography. Following this discussion of findings will be an implications section and the chapter will conclude with recommendations for further research.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Howard and Navarro (2016) explained that critical race theory (CRT) was designed to acknowledge race and examine its intersection with racism as the first step to combating the daily oppression of racial injustice in the education system. As critical race theory in education, it was expanded to focus on those issues particularly in the educational environment starting in the 1990s (Capper, 2015). The CRT themes which emerged pertain to centering race and racism, challenging the dominant perspective, and committing to social justice (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001)

Centering Race and Racism

There were four findings within the theme of centering race and racism to emerge from this study: that Black communities suffer from a lack of racial and cultural history and knowledge; that additional hurdles prevent Black students' ability to thrive; that integration of schools contributed to reversals in Black cultural awareness; and that Black educators have to consistently create and incorporate critical race pedagogies and curricula which center race and

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racism to engage Black students. Each of these findings will be discussed in the sections which follow.

Lack of racial and cultural history and knowledge. The first finding to emerge from this research within the theme of centering race and racism is that Black educators perceived Black communities to suffer from a lack of racial and cultural history and knowledge; therefore, they become responsible for imparting that literacy to their Black students. On the West Side, regardless of the schools' names, the Black educators in the study noted a lack of cultural knowledge and cultural pride that they perceived to be pervasive in their students, their parents and the community at large. They ranked the socio-economic disadvantages of their community as the primary factor impeding their students' academic, social and cultural progress. Studies indicate that Blacks in particular are significantly more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods that are characterized by poor schools and limited access to healthcare, jobs, and beneficial social networks than other Americans (Firebaugh & Acciai, 2016). Many of the participants discussed the attention they gave to building up pride and self-esteem in their students first through providing necessities, such as food and clean clothes that reduced the effects of poverty on their ability to succeed in school.

> Educator B-West Side: [A]nd if she did this, then I know I can't miss an opportunity to give them the sense of pride. Our students need to know they have to work … We don't have enough Black educators in schools, so the ones that we do have we have to show them a sense of pride …
>
> Educator B-NSPDK: [H]owever, many of us had a true love for children and no matter the color or whatever, we made provisions for those students that needed help – developing clothes closets and seeing to the needs of those kids ... I think it

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takes a special kind of person to be in that community and teach in a community

where you have troubled children and that's what I saw at that school.

Educator H-NSPDK: I think that's where leadership comes in, because of the

battle they went through to get the school named Mary C. Snow, they should have

an assembly every year or something where they talk about who this person was

and have pride. That's a sense of pride.

Educator A: [A]nd that has been lost around here. Pride of school has been lost.

Across the three focus groups, most of the educators working in schools recounted

experiences and perceptions that confirmed the permanence of racism and revealed the

oversights in education that did not address the *systems* of oppression, such as intergenerational

poverty and crime (Howard & Navarro, 2016) which diminish community strength. The

discussion for the Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, where the group was comprised of participants

with the most years of experience of the three focus groups, referred to the failures in the home

and community for transmitting intergenerational history and culture to Black students. Several

of the educators felt that most parents of their students were not equipped with the knowledge to

teach their children about their culture because neither their own parents nor the schools had

taught them.

Educator E-West Side: Educate the kids and have some type of parenting because

they don't know – the parents don't know. You gotta go back to the tree. We gotta

get parents involved.

Educator E-NSPDK: Being here in WV, even though I have seen the different

names of the schools, I haven't seen a real infusion of culture, so it's more of how

we infuse the school with the spirit of the name …

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Educator H-NSPDK: You cannot instill culture if you don't have it. Our children

are not going to church and it's not happening at church – you can name the

school Tiddlywinks and it's good, bad or indifferent.

Educator B-NSPDK: [I] found out my mom assumed the school was teaching me.

And this is what's happening today. Parents that don't read to their children are

doing them an injustice and so that's what's happening to our community, and

unfortunately my mom didn't know any better.

Additional hurdles. The second finding to emerge from this research within the theme of

centering race and racism is that Black educators perceived additional educational hurdles based

on their race that hampered Black students' ability to succeed. In line with the research of

Howard and Navarro (2016), the Black educators, as students, described predominantly White

schools as places where students of color were expected to learn in the midst of racially hostile

and exclusionary content, instruction, school culture and assessment.

Educator E-West Side: [B]ut I did go back and start reading about who this guy

was and so it wasn't until I was a senior getting ready to get out of high school

and the principal took the power they had – you know running a school named

after a racist guy – a Confederate.

Educator G-West Side: Like a dog whistle?

Educator E-West Side: Yeah, we had two Caucasian male principals and they ran

[the school] like, if you wasn't a big time athlete and you were Black, you were a

piece of you know what. As long as you were running, jumping – you was that

good dude.

Educator A-West Side: As long as you could potentially hurt yourself.

Educator E-West Side: Yeah and I saw it.

Educator B-West Side: As a teenager I went to Stonewall Jackson High School went from Woodrow Wilson Junior High then to Stonewall Jackson High School. And when I look at the stuff that went on then to now – my daughter went to the middle school, it's almost like the same stuff. Like, we didn't know the meaning like Educator H said, it was already named before we ever got there. But you could see the difference because if you were NOT Black you got away with murder. Let it be someone like me and it was a different outcome. We see that, and for my daughter to go through the same thing and for me to say, I went through that when I was in high school is a shame.

Educator C-NSPDK: [W]ell, having students coming from Stonewall to Cabell Alternative School [for discipline] was for many of them a blessing. As a result of having that experience those students came from Stonewall Jackson High School with low self-esteem, no type of drive. It was like they were in an oppressed state and this was because of the times in the 1960s where they experienced constant overt racism after forced integration of the school …

Educator B-NSPDK: [I] didn't have access to knowing this information. I found out my mom assumed the school was teaching me. And this is what's happening today … We been beaten down and trodden so long we deserve to understand who we are through all the inventions and things. We been held down long enough.

Educator E-NSPDK: I've been to Stonewall, having children there, and I didn't even know who Stonewall was; and the way the children are treated with less

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respect there is more because of the spirit and culture of the school and may not

necessarily be because of the name of the school, but because of the way it is run.

Integration and cultural awareness. The third finding to emerge from this research

within the theme of centering race and racism is that many Black educators questioned or blamed

the integration of schools for reversals in Black cultural awareness where supposed

colorblindness denied racial inequalities existed and the White dominant ideologies were

allowed to thrive (Capper, 2015; Sleeter, 2017).

> Educator A-West Side: One of the great misconceptions we as Black people have
>
> been given is integration. That was a great deception, because as long as there was
>
> segregation, we taught our own what they needed to know about who we are; but
>
> when integration came along, teaching was different.
>
> Educator D-NSPDK: That was not gentrification – they just took it. It was not
>
> integrated either. It was desegregated. Integrated is like homogenized milk where
>
> everything is blended. We are desegregated, which means we have the right by
>
> law to go most of the places we want to go ... There is no Black community in the
>
> Valley. There is no Black culture in Kanawha Valley. If you take our children out
>
> and take them somewhere with Black culture, it's just like dropping a Japanese
>
> kid off on Malcolm X Boulevard.

Critical race pedagogies. The fourth finding within the theme of centering race and

racism is that Black educators had to consistently create and incorporate critical race pedagogies

and curricula which center race and racism to engage Black students. This relates to the

symbolism and culture that are infused into the school environment often referred to as a "hidden

curriculum." Hidden curriculum is defined as the unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended

lessons, values, and perspectives that students learn which are conveyed through the educators'

own dispositions, attitudes, behaviors, words and actions (Alsubaie, 2015). These messages are

generally unspoken or implicit academic, social or cultural norms. Educators in this study were

determined to create a different hidden curriculum – one that celebrates the race and culture of

students in their schools. They used this hidden curriculum to supplement the White curricula

that Black students were taught after integrating into White schools, which imposed a White

worldview similar to the findings in Capper (2015).

Through a critical race curriculum, Black educators created programs throughout the

school year and for special occasions, such as Black History Month that served to deconstruct

White supremacy by focusing on counter-narratives, such as the perspectives of other oppressed

societies and relevant ethnic culture, such as hip-hop and popular music that is familiar to their

students (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Black educators felt that diversity work was marginalized

and complained of a lack of focus on cultural diversity and the absence of any focus on diversity

other than Black History Month (Sleeter, 2017; Capper, 2015).

> Educator C- West Side: I don't wait until February to celebrate Black History.
> There are little things that you can say and do all school year because if it's
> important to you, you have to make it important to young people in that
> investment …
>
> Educator H-NSPDK: [D]uring our Black History Month program, they sang 'Man
> in the Mirror' and a lot of times [when] they're in music [class], that's when I get
> a lot of write-ups and I think if they incorporate more music that WE like we
> wouldn't get so many write-ups, but the curriculum isn't for US.

Educator H- West Side: I gotta issue when they don't want to do anything for Black History. I'm gonna put my Black History display in the front hallway – not around the corner and see what [the principal] says.

Educator C-NEABC: Answering your question, no, not from the school's standpoint. You might get some conversation from the NAACP youth group in the county, but as far as coming from the school, definitely not. They didn't even want to celebrate Black History Month. I called each school to find out what Black History Month activities were being presented in my Virginia county and if they were doing anything at all, it was a morning announcement highlighting an African American and some schools had bulletin boards ...

Many of the educators who incorporated critical race pedagogy perceived fewer classroom management issues and felt that it resonated more strongly with all races of students in low-income communities of the West Side than the pedagogies of their White teachers. They helped both Black and White students begin a process of re-education through understanding themselves and each other and by seeing things through the eyes of other races, which allowed them to develop critical thinking skills about their races and the poverty they all shared (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). They felt that White and Black students' perceptions of them to be more authentic and relatable was because they discussed and shared culture, focused on resilience and had higher expectations for their students than many of their White peers.

Educator H-West Side: Honestly, I think the White students love us more than they love the White Educators.

Educator B-West Side: I was gonna say the same thing – because the White students really give us that respect.

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Educator H-West Side: As a Black man we have different flavor, we come from a

different environment and the flavor that we bring with us, no one can take that

from us and the kids gravitate to us more than others.

Educator B-West Side: Our discipline style is completely different. There's some

that come to us and say, 'How can you say that to a kid and they don't say

anything back to you, but if I say it to them they get smart?' I tell them because

I'm from the right side of the fence, I've been them, and I know what they're

going through and I know how to deal with it. Nothing against you, but that's just

what it is. There's things I can say [that] you can't.

Educator E-West Side: But then we gotta be there for those kids. A lot of my

partners left, went to other cities, and when they come back home they say, 'Dag,

you still here?' And I say, "Yeah, WV needs me!" I could leave, but they need

me. If I leave, who else is gonna take over what I do in the school and community

to help the kids out…

Educator B-West Side: I tell them, I grew up on the West Side I grew up two

blocks from this school and yeah I had to work hard to get where I am now and

that goes to show that you all can do the same thing. It doesn't matter because

most of us aren't born with silver spoons in our mouths its what's here (brain) that

will get us there.

Challenging the Dominant Perspective

There were two findings within the theme of challenging the dominant perspective to

emerge from this study: that Black educators used prominent Blacks as role models to dispel

negative stereotypes; and Black educators used themselves as role models to dispel negative stereotypes. Each of these findings will be discussed in the sections which follow.

Using prominent Blacks as role models. The first finding to emerge from this research within the theme of challenging the dominant perspective is that Black educators used prominent Blacks, and especially ones who have schools named after them, as role models to counter or dispel negative stereotypes about Blacks and poverty. They created and developed critical race curricula to contextualize the achievements of local and national Black leaders within American racism (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Unanimously, Black educators affirmed the value of schools' named after prominent Blacks as touchstones for Black students, and there was overwhelming agreement that students and their communities have the opportunity to learn about the accomplishments of namesakes in order to connect with American values and appreciate the intricate pluralism of American society.

Educator F-NSPDK: So, this Black History Month we memorialized Mary C. Snow with a portrait and African American greats all around her, and our program centered around her and it was phenomenal. The students were so well-behaved and engaged.

Educator B-West Side: They need us and even the other students look up to us. They want what only we can give them …

Educator C-West Side: We're standing on the shoulders of giants and I can't remember who it was – Fannie Lou Hamer? – but they're talking about this time in history, we should not just concern ourselves with standing on the shoulders. We've got to realize we've got students standing on our shoulders. The story gotta be told.

Educator F-West Side: Because of the inspiration of Mary C. Snow, the last part of the Black History curriculum we incorporated Ruby Bridges and the point of how brave and courageous she was during integration.

Educator B-West Side: Now at Mary C. Snow the kids are wondering who is she? We have to take the time out to teach the kids – and we had THE BEST Black History month program which gave them an insight on who Ms. Snow was. The students came back with 'Wow – she really went through all of that?' And it gave them the understanding that she has paved the way for us to be here ... We have to really give our kids information on all the people that were before us and their accomplishments …

Educator G-West Side: [T]he Ralph Bunche Elementary School, who was an African American who won The Nobel Peace Prize. Around his birthday, we used him as an example …

Teacher E-NEABC: Even though it wasn't technically named Malcolm X School, that's the spirit that the community and administration adopted and infused over to the children. I grew up in, we went to the Malcolm X after school program or the Betty Shabazz dance program or the Martin Luther King summer program, so when we attend these programs, and it was the people that facilitated them that infused that pride in us.

Educator B-NSPDK: The name is after Mary C. Snow, who was important at that school, so teaching there is important and the number of Blacks that we do have there – although we are still in the minority – the counselors and others do try to

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keep her spirit alive during the year with various activities with pictures and

posters and things like that ...

Several of the educators with over 20 years of experience had gone to all-Black schools

named after Blacks in the segregated South. The experience in a segregated institution, however,

provided them with examples of excellence in the Black community that dispelled racist

stereotypes.

Educator C-NSPDK: I had forgotten about this, but Mary Crozier Young Snow

taught at Institute Elementary and I went to Institute Elementary … and the pride

of all those who attended and went on to do great things with their lives all started

right there in Institute Elementary and Mary C. Snow was the integral part of our

lives and who we are today ...

Using themselves as role models. The second finding to emerge from this research

within the theme of challenging the dominant perspective is that Black educators used

themselves as role models to counter or dispel negative stereotypes about Blacks and poverty.

Across all focus groups, their shared racial and socio-economic background was a primary tool

of engagement with their students to illustrate their potential to succeed. They also perceived

their own professional success to be instrumental in dispelling stereotypes and felt their presence

in the classroom was valuable, and provided perspectives that would recognize racism in a

different way than White educators would (Kohli, 2008).

Educator E-West Side: [S]o we can't just up and uproot. And we ain't helping to

teach the White kids either. Because they don't know, they need our help too. If

we don't teach them, you know their parents darn sure ain't gonna teach them …

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Educator B-West Side: [W]e don't have enough Black educators in schools so the ones that we do have we have to show them a sense of pride. I tell them, I grew up on the West Side I grew up two blocks from this school and yeah I had to work hard to get where I am now and that goes to show that you all can do the same thing …

Educator H-West Side: [I]f it's not us, who? That's why I felt when I went to Stonewall Jackson I could push up the kids …

Educator B-West Side: [T]hey need us and even the other students look up to us. They want what only we can give them.

Educator H-West Side: I had the opportunity to work at Stonewall Jackson Middle School – had a large population of African American students and the principal was African American so I thought it was a good opportunity to go and be a role model … So, trying to be a role model or a stand up African American man in the school system they didn't appreciate that – it was almost like a negative.

Educator B-NSPDK: [I] come from a lower class, non-educated household that we deal with every day, so that's why I had a big gap. But once I learned I ran with it, and today I will not allow a child not to learn who they are. That's why I push them …

Educator F-NSPDK: [S]o I do feel an overwhelming sense of having to do something because we're supposed to do it. I'm hard working wherever the school is but I'm going to go the extra mile because I'm doing it for my people. I grew up in a predominantly White area and I can count how many African

American attended my school and I always felt inferior and I still feel inferior and

I'm educationally superior to a lot of my peers. So I have sit back and identify

myself with who I am and how far I've come.

Educator H-NSPDK: [J]ust because I was in a predominantly White area, and I

went to middle and high school, and I was the first Black homecoming queen. I

still came back to my people and want to be around Black people where I am

now.

Committing to Social Justice

There was one finding within the theme of committing to social justice to emerge from

this study: the permanence of racism should be addressed. This finding will be discussed in the

section which follows.

Addressing the permanence of racism. The primary finding that emerged from this

research within the theme of committing to social justice is that Black educators felt that racism

is a permanent feature in America that should be addressed to ensure social justice for all

students and teachers. However, many participants did not feel empowered as professionals to

confront the systems of oppression in society and have differences related to the value or

mechanisms by which Black students confront them (Capper, 2015). Statements made by several

Black educators that "the school was named after a Confederate before I got there" suggested

they were absolving themselves from any responsibility for the naming outcome. Educators from

all three groups who attended or worked at schools named after White supremacists had

experiences of overt and unconscious racism that were amplified by the school's name and

which debunked notions of colorblindness in society (Capper, 2015). Those who attended

schools named after White supremacists as teenagers, seemed reconciled to the experience of

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insidious forms of racism as a condition of life for Blacks in America, but confronted the personal racism they faced in the midst of institutional racism. They resented exposure to the devaluing of the suffering of Blacks in slavery, and as critically thinking adults, grappled with emotional and psychological conflicts that emerged when reminiscing on their high school experience.

> Educator E-West Side: When he found out my brother and I would be attending Stonewall Jackson High School, he let me know off the top, 'Understand – get your knowledge, understand what school you're going to,' because he knew off the top. 'Yo, I understand where you're going to' ... As for me, I was just ready to have a good time in high school and we called it, 'The Wall, The Wall, The Wall will never fall' and dominated in sports...

> Educator D-NEABC: We would have kicked butt if we heard them say, 'Nigger,' but didn't know what our school song, 'Dixie' meant or what the Confederates stood for ... The pride we had was about it being OUR school, it was all we had. I didn't know the true history of Stonewall Jackson, my cousin didn't know Nathan Forrest. We were the "The Wall," and "the Mustangs," man!! And so proud of that! Our schools were known for Blacks, for sports, for dominance.

One educator theorized that the benefit of open public discourse focusing on the appropriateness of White supremacists to serve as namesakes for our public education system would have an important consequence of uncovering the covert alliances of local leaders to White supremacy ideals, which is especially significant in light of recent worldwide terrorism. Reports indicate that ongoing White supremacy violence, which comprised 71% of all extremist fatalities in the United States between 2008 and 2017, means that our public schools named to

honor those ideals should be critically evaluated (Anti-Defamation League, 2017). Consequently,

local reconciliation in race relations could occur which could serve to create a more unified,

honest narrative about White supremacy.

> Educator C-NEA/BC: [P]eople giving lip service to equity and doing things in a
>
> more inclusive way – and I'm talking about even within the school system – but
>
> sometimes when these battles take place round the need to change a school name
>
> some of the folks ... reveal their biases and support of discriminatory practices ...

However, one educator who had attended a high school named for a Confederate general insisted

from a socio-emotional perspective that the costs to the socio-emotional well-being of Black

children and adolescents embroiled in a debate over White supremacy would saddle them with a

problem that should have been addressed before them.

> Educator D-NEA/BC: I don't want our kids now to go through what we went
>
> through in terms of being exposed to how harsh and insensitively we've been
>
> treated. I don't think this generation needs to bear that burden or even ponder on
>
> that. So in my opinion, they need to just wipe the names out with no explanation
>
> …

His inference was that they would be distracted from focusing on their academic achievement

and enlightenment and any ensuing debate would further illustrate that they are targets of another

racist government system, such as the police killings of unarmed Blacks, White citizen murders

of Blacks under "Stand Your Ground" laws, and disproportionate numbers of incarcerated Black

youth. Adding this debate to a growing list of grievances could alienate many of them

irretrievably, therefore, policy makers should remove the names without discussion or fanfare. It

would seem with the "Heritage Not Hate" movement that the discussion about the Confederate

stance on Black people must be put in proper perspective alongside the purported states'

sovereignty issue. This confusion simply amplifies the failures of our school systems, and the

clever manipulation of historical fact calls for a long overdue examination of our national

conscience and our own complicity and compliance with racist ideals. School names can

function as a way to clarify which truth the American education system holds to be self-evident.

Cultural Geography

The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names. (Chinese proverb)

Across cultures and millennia, naming is among the primary acts of communities. As a

cultural practice, naming is a powerful vehicle for promoting identification with the past and

locating oneself within a wider network of memory, not only because of its ability to create a

sense of continuity over time but also through its capacity for changing and challenging lines of

identity (Alderman, 2008). The Egyptian god, Ptah, is said to have called things into existence by

naming them first. Jewish tradition teaches that God asked Adam, "And you, what shall be your

name?" He answered, "Adam," and God asked "Why?" Adam then explained himself, "Because

I have been created from the ground." Wiccans believe when you choose your name, the

universe shifts to help you be the person you have chosen to be. Muslims have 99 names for

Allah. In Christianity, salvation comes in the name of God.

Several educators mentioned the power of Alex Haley's Pulitzer Prize winning book

Roots: The Saga of an American Family (1976). In it, Haley describes the sacredness of the

Juffure peoples' naming ritual: Omoro lifting up his infant in front of the villagers and

whispering his son's name to him first to ensure the child was the first to know who he is. Later

in the story, Kinte is kidnapped and tortured until he relents to the changing of his name, which

alludes to the African proverb, "It is not what they call you, but what you answer to" (Haley,

1976). As Alderman (2008) pointed out, African Americans were stripped of our culture and naming practices and centuries later, African Americans have consciously aligned with the practice of renaming themselves as an act of liberation from slavery, the slave master, and the oppression of racism. In the 1930s, ex-slave Martin Jackson explained why he chose his last name after Emancipation:

> [W]e had to register as someone, so we could be citizens. Well, I got to thinking about all us slaves that was going to take the name Fitzpatrick. I made up my mind I'd find me a different one. One of my grandfathers in Africa was called Jeaceo, and so I decided to be Jackson (Changing Names, n.d.).

Because naming is such a powerful vehicle for promoting identity, during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, Malcolm X's critical race analysis of the name he inherited from slavery, Malcolm Little, required him to rename himself:

> The real names of our people were destroyed during slavery. The last name of my forefathers was taken from them when they were brought to America and made slaves, and then the name of the slave master was given, which we refuse, we reject that name today and refuse it. I never acknowledge it whatsoever (Malcolm X, n.d.).

Names have power; so much so, that in Black communities someone "calling you out your name" can have dire consequences (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). Alderman (2008) asserted that the cultural landscape can resonate with this same violation of dignity, and cultural geography can be described as reading landscapes through cultural filters. Place names are a defining feature of cultural landscape: imbuing space with meaning, orientation and identity, and potentially achieving political significance when the names chosen are taken from a person, an

ideal, or an event that a particular society seeks to venerate through a conscious, deliberate and social process of agreement (Alderman, 2008). This section thematically analyzed the findings of Black educators' perceptions through the cultural geography concept of three place-naming frameworks through the practice of place naming: symbolic capital, symbolic resistance, or symbolic violence, by which landscape naming can reflect commonly held values and ideals for a specific location, as well as, construct heritage and identity (Alderman, 2008).

Symbolic Capital

There were three findings within the theme of symbolic capital to emerge from this study: schools named for prominent Blacks functioned as a springboard for a myriad of positive cultural and educational activities; Black educators capitalized on the momentum that is created when a school is named for a prominent Black; and Black educators had difficulty convincing decision-makers of the value of names as symbolic capital. These findings will be discussed in the sections which follow.

Springboard for positive cultural and educational activities. As Alderman suggested, place naming is part of the commodification of heritage in the United States (2008). Symbolic capital recognizes how place names bring distinction and status to landscapes and people associated with them, and are selected through an exclusive historical representation. The first finding to emerge from this research within the theme of symbolic capital was Black educators' perception that schools named for prominent Blacks functioned as symbolic capital that was the springboard for a myriad of positive cultural and educational activities.

Although, Black educators with fewer than 20 years of experience in the system did not have the same experiences of segregation or overt racism which had served as the backdrop for many of the more seasoned educators, there was unanimous consensus that schools named after

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prominent Blacks were used as potent symbolic capital for Black students. Black educators

across the country explained in detail and with great enthusiasm how schools named after

prominent Blacks gave them the opportunity to unify and honor the Black communities they

serve and their culture. Those Black educators who were taught at schools named for prominent

Blacks during segregation had a sense of pride for the achievements of the namesakes, which

evolved into self- esteem that ran counter to the hostilities against them in the greater society,

especially in the South. Those Black educators who more recently taught at schools named for

prominent Blacks recounted numerous opportunities to use the namesake as a springboard to

engage with students about the achievements of both other historical Black role models and

current examples of Black excellence in society. Black educators reported that student

engagement was improved, because as students identified with those examples they were able to

set similar goals for themselves. They reported that the experience for them as Black educators

was rewarding and energizing as they deal with the adversities in the communities that poverty

brings. As Black educators, the examples of other Black achievers reminded them to persevere.

> Educator A-West Side: My enjoyment is teaching, but I feel a sense of defeat
>
> when I know I teach in a school named after a very prominent Black, Mary C.
>
> Snow ... Mary C. Snow – many of those students don't even know who Mary C.
>
> Snow was. So I think it's just as important that when we name a school, to let the
>
> students know every year why that name is important. It's not going to do any
>
> good otherwise.
>
> Educator C-West Side: I am very proud to work at a school named after Mary C.
>
> Snow. I spoke to many members of the community and school board …

Educator B-NSPDK: The name is after Mary C. Snow, who was important at that

school, so teaching there is important and the number of Blacks that we do have

there – although we are still in the minority – the counselors and others do try to

keep her spirit alive during the year with various activities with pictures and

posters and things like that ...

Educator A-NEA/BC: At Malcolm X Elementary they speak about who he was

and what he's known for and try to have that educational piece with the kids …

Educator D: What's the saying, 'A good name is worth more than gold?' If you

had a Harriet Tubman School or Martin Luther King School or a Malcolm X

School where the school was related to the higher ideals of these African

American people, you'd have more thriving and creative Black people to go in the

school and say, 'Hey, this name means something to me.'

Capitalizing on the momentum. The second finding to emerge from this research within

the theme of symbolic capital was that Black educators capitalized on the momentum that is

created when a school is named for a prominent Black. Black educators expressed that cultural

knowledge and pride are difficult to maintain, and that all students need to recognize the

achievements and contributions of Black Americans to American greatness. As Alderman (2002)

suggested, it is apparent that school names can serve as arenas for debating student and

community identity as a social construct. Although Black students are the obvious and primary

recipients of the benefits of schools named for prominent Blacks, White teachers and students

can benefit from narratives that counter White supremacy culture as well, especially as our

nation becomes more diverse and our political and social discourse becomes more divisive.

Educator E-West Side: And we ain't helping to teach the White kids either.

Because they don't know, they need our help too. If we don't teach them, you

know their parents darn sure ain't gonna teach them. They gonna teach them the

way they want to teach them, but not our side – even though they wanna be like

us, their parents don't really know about us.

Difficulty convincing decision makers. The third finding to emerge from this research within the theme of symbolic capital was that Black educators had difficulty convincing decision makers of the value of names as symbolic capital. As Alderman (2008) suggested, the names of prominent Black Americans do not always resonate across racial and cultural lines, as evidenced by the resistance of some to use the name Mary C. Snow as part of the school name and the changing of names from prominent Blacks to Whites.

Educator H-West Side: They don't call it Mary C. Snow?

Educator A and C-West Side: No, they call it West Side.

Educator A-West Side: You have to say Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary.

Educator C-West Side: When we first got there, we called it West Side.

Elementary. See the kids voted for the name West Side.

Educator H-West Side: Because they didn't know who she was.

Black educators had been involved in campaigns to retain the names of prominent Blacks on schools that have undergone multiple cultural shifts in student enrollment, especially after integration. Black educators involved in those campaigns have tried to persuade decision-makers that prominent Blacks can have universal appeal across racial lines that should be recognized by all Americans.

Educator C-NEA/BC: [W]e are watching closely to see what happens [keeping a

school named for prominent Black], although we have been told during meetings

that it would remain Gandy; however, I don't trust it and anything could happen.

Symbolic Resistance

There were three findings within the theme of symbolic resistance to emerge from this

study: renaming schools with shifting demographics was an act of community resistance;

renaming schools in the South was based on shifting racial populations; and renaming schools is

related to national condemnation of slavery and White supremacy. These findings will be

discussed in the sections which follow.

Renaming is resistance. Alderman (2008) suggested that naming as symbolic resistance

has served as a strategy for racial and ethnic minorities to challenge the dominance of White-

controlled commemoration and assert the legitimacy of their own historical achievements. The

first finding from this research within the theme of symbolic resistance was the perceptions of

participants that renaming schools with shifting demographics was an act of community

resistance to honoring individuals who either have no cultural relevance, served as a source of

animosity to the new population, or held beliefs contrary to evolving American values. Schools

define communities, but when community identity or ideals changed, schools were renamed to

reflect those changes. Many schools in major cities with cultural diversity exemplified the

premise espoused by Clowney (2013) to use procedural fairness to redress racial (and other)

hierarchies buried in the landscape. Through social justice task forces they have renamed schools

to challenge antiquated notions of who should be honored in diverse communities, renaming

schools to honor Black political leaders, Black educators, gay men and women, civil rights

leaders, and various people of color, religion and sexual orientation to align with community composition.

> Educator A-NEA/BC: The names of the schools were changed to reflect and respect the communities they served better. San Francisco's changed a lot of names over the last 21 years. The earliest one I can remember was one changed after Mayor Marsconi and Harvey Milk were shot and killed. The school in the Castro district, which has a heavy population of gay residents, was named Harvey Milk Elementary because he was the first gay city supervisor. Another one is Rosa Parks Elementary and where it's located, the population there I would suggest would be majority Latino, but there is also a large African American presence. Malcolm X Academy is in the Bayview area, which is heavily populated with African Americans, and definitely uses his ideals as a foundation for lifelong learning and self-advocacy. Caesar Chavez Elementary school was named about 15 years ago and that school is in a Latino community. There have been a number of schools whose name has been changed mainly to uplift the communities and also to bring in pride.

One participant pointed out the level of scrutiny required to achieve consistent messaging for all aspects of renaming.

> Educator A-NEA/BC: [B]ut the mascot is still a mascot that doesn't complement who the person is – it's like "six in one hand/half a dozen in the other" – mixed messages. Martin Luther King mascot is a snake. Why would you name the school after Martin Luther King and keep the mascot a snake? We not only need

to change the names, but also change the mascots to uplift and build those communities.

Renaming schools based on shifting racial populations. The second finding from this research within the theme of symbolic resistance was the perception of Black educators that renaming schools in the South was based on shifting racial populations. In West Virginia, those shifts primarily occurred following segregation when schools formerly named after prominent Blacks in formerly Black communities became White communities, and a reverse use of symbolic resistance occurred which restored symbolic capital for the White community. The schools' names were changed to reflect the new racial makeup and there was little Black symbolic resistance unless the communities reverted to Black again.

Educator C-NSPDK: I remember we had G. Carter Woodson School – who had been the President of West Virginia State – and that name used to be The Colored Collegiate Institute. Well, they named a school after him in St. Albans across from Institute because that's where Black people lived when they went across the river to State High School that was on the campus of WVSU. When they opened up the road on Rte. 25, they shut down the ferry to cross the river and the neighborhood changed from Black to White and they renamed it McKinley. But now each year during Black History Month, the former students of G. Carter Woodson who still live nearby, they go there to educate the teachers and children and this has been a very successful program of interaction.

Educator C-NEA/BC: I attended John M. Gandy Elementary and it was a predominantly Black school back in the '70s. When integration came about I moved to Henry Clay Elementary, where I was one of two African American

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students in the school. To date, we still have those two schools; however, the plan

is to demolish Clay and bring it into the Gandy School and bring those two bodies

together. Of course you have African Americans and Hispanics now and the

population has changed, and the concern is when we bring those two schools

together what would the name be? Gandy, who was an African American and

once president of Virginia State University, or Clay? The concern is we don't

want the name changed because you are actually bringing students into a school

which is already named after an African American. We are watching closely to

see what happens, although we have been told during meetings that it would

remain Gandy.

This case is similar to that of Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary, where a school adopted a

name after a prominent Black in a Black neighborhood and there was debate and resistance

primarily from the predominantly White staff and school board to the renaming (Boucher, 2013).

In both cases, the schools' names and the battles against renaming them serve as symbolic

resistance for both sides – White and Black – respectively.

Renaming schools is condemnation of slavery and White supremacy. The third

finding from this research within the theme of symbolic resistance was the perceptions of Black

educators that renaming schools is related to national condemnation of slavery and White

supremacy.

Educator A-NEA/BC: Amen. You can't ignore or minimize the pain and legacy

of slavery to avoid guilt. Schools named after people who are a positive

representative of the community they serve can absolutely have a positive effect

on the students and community and teachers who are teaching in that community.

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If the school is named after someone who, like I said, represents negative

connotations for the people in the community it serves, it cannot.

One major exception that participants discussed has been schools such as Stonewall

Jackson Middle School in West Virginia which remain named after a White supremacist after the

community's racial composition, as well as our supposed national stance on White supremacy,

shifted. From news reports, those schools remained named after Confederates because of White

resistance, even if their ideals held animus for the Black community (Quinn, 2018).

Symbolic Violence

If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it. (Ward,

2017)

There were five findings within the theme of symbolic violence to emerge from this

study: Black educators were disturbed by schools named for White supremacists, and especially

Confederates; schools named for White supremacists and Confederates were a part of a

persistent pattern of American racism for which they had to develop coping strategies; schools

named after White supremacists did not provide an opportunity to build pride in Black students;

Black educators had concerns for the effects of school naming controversies on the psyche of

Black students; and there was the ongoing and insidious presence of racial microaggressions

against Black educators. These findings will be discussed in the sections which follow.

Disturbed by schools named for White supremacists. Because place naming is part of

the commodification of heritage in the United Sates, symbolic capital recognizes how place

names bring distinction and status to landscapes and people associated with them and are

selected through an exclusive historical representation that can simultaneously function as a form

of symbolic violence for stakeholders who remember the past differently (Alderman, 2008).

While functioning as symbolic capital for White supremacists and Confederate devotees, schools named after their White supremacy heroes function as symbolic violence for those who were oppressed by them. The first finding of the research within the theme of symbolic violence is that Black educators were disturbed by schools named for White supremacists, and especially Confederates.

> Educator C-NEA/BC: I think a school named after a Confederate could only be used as a negative role model for Black students, or any students for that matter, of what NOT to do.

> Educator B-NEA/BC: I definitely think the names of schools can reinforce some cultural divisions and boundaries at times, particularly when they're named after White supremacists or Confederates or soldiers long after those people have passed away. It certainly sows division and reinforces some hateful practices …

> Educator A-NEA/BC: [One] was named Burnett Elementary School – and he had unfavorable views about Native Americans and Blacks – and it is now named Leola Havard who was the first female African American … the current Martin Luther King Middle School had a different original name; and there is talk right now about changing the name of Washington High School to a different name. . . primarily because Washington had so many slaves.

Black educators also questioned the appropriateness of Confederate memorials based on their loss of the Civil War, with one participant comparing the Confederacy's loss to that of the Nazis in World War II.

> Educator H-West Side: He was a Confederate and wasn't fighting for us. I know lately this has been an issue – statues – and I think they should be removed, but

it's ingrained in the system ... I can't believe there's a statue still at the Capitol.

As a Black man in America we know what's happening. It's no surprise to us as a

people, we see it every day – shootings, nobody getting convicted, this is the

country we live in; this is what we live in; this is the system that we're a part of.

Educator A-West Side: What I don't understand about Stonewall and the

Confederacy is since the Confederates lost the war, how can their flags be put up

in a country in which they lost?

Another Black educator thought that naming schools for White supremacists and making Blacks

go to them was analogous to naming schools for tobacco companies and making people with

lung cancer go to them, and suggested that public opposition should be equivalent.

Educator E-NEA/BC: [B]ut you still make the kids whose parents died of lung

cancer from second hand smoke go to a school named the RJ Reynolds Tobacco

Industry High School and be known as the 'Cigars' and 'Cigarettes'? ...

Racism and coping. The second finding of this research within the theme of symbolic

violence was the perceptions of Black educators that schools named for White supremacists and

Confederates was a part of a persistent pattern of American racism for which they had to develop

coping strategies. Across all three focus groups, educators who had attended or worked at

schools named after White supremacists found ways to accommodate or downplay the impact of

that symbol of racism being part of their everyday experience through a utilitarian approach.

Those who worked at the schools focused on the needs of the predominantly Black student body,

which lacked Black role models who understood their cultural perspective, and could transfer the

insights from coping with racism to their Black students and children. The names and mascots of

schools which honored the Confederacy were endured for the possibility of something good

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coming from the school because of their presence. They accommodated the symbols of overt

racism because they still had a job to do, just as their predecessors had in the face of slavery and

White supremacy terror and intimidation.

> Educator D-NSPDK: You don't go in when you get interviewed for a job and say,
>
> 'Oh no, I can't work at Stonewall cause it's named after a Confederate general.'
>
> You say, 'what days do I get paid? The 10th and the 25th.' I show up. I do my
>
> thing.
>
> Educator H-West Side: If it's not us who? That's why I felt when I went to
>
> Stonewall Jackson I could push up the kid – give 'em motivation if they need
>
> anything I'm here. That's why we do what we do. We want to push our people up.
>
> It is what it is – God's gonna take care of us. It's hard to sit back and not say
>
> anything ...
>
> Educator E-West Side: [A]nd I say, "Yeah, WV needs me!" I could leave
>
> [Stonewall Jackson], but they need me. If I leave, who else is gonna take over
>
> what I do in the school and community to help the kids out …
>
> Educator E-NEA/BC: I agree. And in particular, as a Black public servant, that
>
> assignment at a school named after a Confederate in my county is one of only a
>
> handful where you can impact the lives of Black students in a Black community
>
> and it feels unjust and an undue burden. Thinking nationally with 200 schools
>
> named that way, it feels humiliating …

Those attending the schools focused on experiences of high school camaraderie and nurturing

community and school pride through sports and social dominance.

Educator A-West Side: [A]s for me, I was just ready to have a good time in high school and we called it, 'The Wall, The Wall, The Wall will never fall' and dominated in sports. But I did go back and start reading about who this guy was and so it wasn't until I was a senior getting ready to get out of high school …

Educator D- NEA/BC: [I] got older and saw the emblem at the school, I thought about the show I grew up watching and it never dawned on me that that flag glorified slavery … We were the 'The Wall,' and 'the Mustangs,' man!! And so proud of that! Our schools were known for Blacks, for sports, for dominance.

White Supremacy and Black pride. The third finding of the research within the theme of symbolic violence was the perceptions of Black educators that schools named after White supremacists did not provide an opportunity to build pride in Black students. Black educators felt that if Black students knew the goals of the Confederacy, they would be confused, bewildered, alienated and offended. From the discussions, building Black pride in their students and the community is a cornerstone of Black educators' philosophies. The vast majority of educators felt that schools named after White supremacists deprived them of that opportunity, whether teaching Black or White students.

Educator E-NSPDK: I think in WV I didn't know the different schools and Confederates until someone actually told me and I read about it …

Educator B- West Side: Just think about all the diplomas with the names of African American students hanging up that have a Confederate general attached to it.

Educator E-NSPDK: I don't see how White supremacists – they stand for others being less than them, and hate for others that aren't their race – they can't be

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incorporated the same way [through school programs], especially for Blacks who

come from slavery.

Educator B-NEA/BC: I'm not suggesting we should abandon the eradication of

schools named after White supremacists. I'm not saying that at all. It is not

necessary to retain those names to make it teachable.

Effects of names on Black students. The fourth finding of the research within the theme

of symbolic violence was that Black educators had concerns for the effects of school naming

controversies on the psyche of Black students. There were differences regarding the value of

exploring the ideology of White supremacists with Black students who attend schools named for

them. Some educators felt there was an opportunity for students (and teachers) to refine critical

thinking skills by engaging with the critical race analysis of racialized landscapes from a socio-

historical perspective (Clowney, 2013). There, the students and community could evaluate the

legacy of the Confederacy and confront White supremacy infrastructures within a contemporary

context. The issue of how to address themes of cultural geography within a critical race

theoretical framework emerged.

Educator A-NEA/BC: That's where those conversations should be coming up – so

students understand what these people did to deserve their name on the building.

Educators don't know either – they're coming to a building to teach. But if they

are socially conscious, they understand and might look into the history of the

person to see who was this person, what did they stand for. And that's a maybe –

that's not guaranteed.

Educator B-NEA/BC: I think it is a tricky issue – even Marshall's med school is

named after him [Robert Byrd]. I would say that at some point it's important for

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us to be able to have a conversation about grace or truth and reconciliation or truth and transformation process similar to the one used in South Africa ...

Because school-naming debates would be hashed out by local entities that are not grounded in psychological theory (Agosto, 2017), there is the possibility of damaging another generation of Blacks who may already have issues with trust. Similar to the issue of *how* we address cultural geography within a critical race theory in education theoretical framework, was the issue of, *if,* the symbolisms should be addressed with Black students.

Educator C-West Side: [W]hat are your motives for this [naming], because you can do wonders or you can do irreparable harm? Because once again when students don't know, as most don't at Mary C. Snow – and ours is the only school named after a minority in the entire state …

Educator H-NSPDK: [S]o, being at Stonewall is not a negative thing because even White kids at Stonewall don't know who he was, half the teachers don't know who he was – they took a job to get paid …

Educator A-West Side: [O]nly happen if it's taught to the community. Some will ask and some won't, so if it's named after a person it should be taught to them.

Educator G-West Side: [B]eing an educator at a school named after a White supremacist?

Educator A-West Side: Same thing – they need to know.

Educator D-NEA/BC: [W]e have to educate people on what these guys stood for and if they would've won, where Blacks would be right now. I know some of the students came from rural places where they might have known who he was …

All but one of the Black educators explained that the tolerance for schools named for White supremacists does not suggest that their names remain a part of the public school arena for any American community, but especially Black communities.

Educator B-NEA/BC: [S]o there can be some positive conversations, education and illumination going through the process of changing the name …

Educator B-NEA/BC: [B]y that I mean, correcting some of the ignorance that Educator A alluded to among the educators and parents where people are supposedly passing on cultural traditions, but in essence are passing along hate from one generation to the next … It could lead to enhanced student achievement.

One of the educators with 50 years of experience and having gone through the ordeal of the Jim Crow South considered a school named for a White supremacist or Confederate could be used to punctuate the deep divisions in our country that were overcome. The exchange had shades of the "positive good" theory of slavery espoused by Whites in the Deep South (Calhoun, 1837). From the mouth of an African American, however, it was sadly reminiscent of the Stockholm Syndrome. Her response hinted at internalized racism, a damaging and insidious psychological vestige of White supremacy.

Educator H-NSPDK: I don't think they could have incorporated the name of Stonewall Jackson in the same way.

Educator D-NSPDK: Why not? It's still a part of your history.

Educator I-NSPDK: But even though it was a painful part of our history?

Educator D-NSPDK: Why not? Because had it not happened, other things wouldn't have happened. Everything has a domino effect – even the bad stuff. Slavery wasn't necessarily a bad thing – it was an economic thing.

Educator I-NSPDK: It was a bad thing for my great grandmother.

Educator D-NSPDK: Because you can't go one place – you make your own. We had Black doctors, lawyers, dentists ... When we desegregated out, we lost our business.

Educator I-NSPDK: Stonewall Jackson predates that.

Educator D-NSPDK: But that is where we come from.

Educator I-NSPDK: From a man who didn't want us to be free?

Microaggressions. The fifth finding to emerge within the theme of symbolic violence was the ongoing and insidious presence of racial microaggressions against Black educators, which are generally prevalent because the perpetrators are not aware they are harming the recipients. Black educators who questioned experiences with colleagues in which they felt racially stereotyped, ignored, devalued, and/or excluded were describing racial microaggressions which that they did not want to make an issue with White peers.

Educator H-West Side: I had the opportunity to work at Stonewall Jackson Middle School – had a large population of African American students and the principal was African American, so I thought it was a good opportunity to go and be a role model. But I found the Whites at the school didn't make me feel comfortable. One of the White educators said, 'We made a bet when you were gonna stop wearing ties.' I didn't really think about it until he left and it sunk in. I thought to myself, 'They should have better things to think about than what I'm wearing to school.' You know, for me as a Black man, I wanted the image to sink in for the kids that 'I'm from the projects just like you are and if I can get out so

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can you.' So, trying to be a role model or a stand up African American man in the school system they didn't appreciate that – it was almost like a negative.

Educator G-West Side: Did you ever stop wearing a tie?

Educator H-West Side: Eventually after I left there, but not while I was there.

Educator G-West Side: Did you take it as they thought you'd eventually get 'hood?'

Educator H-West Side: You know, I thought they felt I was just like a fraud hiding behind something, but that's who I am, and for them to try to denigrate or slow me down, it sends a message like 'What are they really thinking about me?'

Black educators felt as students, and for their Black students, there are pervasive racial stereotypes that lower teachers' expectations for them academically, while exploiting athletic prowess and cultural style.

Educator B-West Side: They never think any Black students can be gifted. I had bright students in my classes and their former teachers who were mostly White were asking me if they were still excelling, and I was like why weren't they in gifted before they almost graduate when I recommended them? Four of my students left Mary C. Snow as gifted.

Educator E-West Side: Yeah, we had two Caucasian male principals and they ran it [Stonewall Jackson High School] like, if you wasn't a big time athlete and you were Black, you were a piece of you know what. As long as you were running, jumping – you was that good dude.

Educator A-West Side: As long as you could potentially hurt yourself.

Educator E-West Side: Yeah and I saw it.

Educator D-NEA/BC: Most White teachers always had stereotypes about Black

people when I was in school … As long as they were winning state

championships in football and basketball – giving our good talent – there was

pride.

In America's allegedly post-racial environment, research points out that the ambiguities of racial microaggression create *more* cognitive disruption in its recognition and processing for Blacks, but that Whites have a higher threshold before attributing ambiguous acts to prejudice making them relatively insensitive to and *less* disrupted, if at all (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). This difference could explain why most of the Black educators as students or professionals could perceive incidents of racial microaggressions committed by Whites in their personal interactions that the White majority overlooked. Many of these ambiguous acts, however, have cumulatively become prevailing systemic complaints against our educational systems, such as overrepresentation of Black students for discipline or special education, and the underrepresentation of Black students in gifted programs, Blacks in administrative leadership, or Black male teachers.

Environmental racial microaggressions are described as macro-level microaggression which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels (Sue, et.al, 2007). Examples include all-White teachers or administrators in a school or department; mascots that use stereotypes of people of color; school environments devoid of the likenesses or perspectives of Blacks or other minorities in curricula, programming or environment; and the topic of this study: schools bearing names, symbols, flags and mascots of White supremacy (Sue, et.al., 2007).

Teacher C-NEA/BC: [T]hey didn't even want to celebrate Black History Month

…

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Teacher H-West Side: [I] gotta issue when they don't want to do anything for

Black History …

Educator A-NEA/BC: [W]e have the African American Achievers in Leadership

initiative and part of the things we do is hold the school accountable for

celebrating Black History …

Educator E-NEA/BC: It seems that if the White educators … had the best interest

of the Blacks … they would have banded together to change the name [Stonewall

Jackson], at least since the Charleston massacre …. Like King said, 'In the end,

we won't remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.'

Educator D-NEA/BC: [S]o America needs to just take those reminders away …

Moreover, the work of Salvatore and Shelton (2007) confirms that when prejudice is

ambiguous as in the case of racial microaggressions, its result for the recipient is "not a benign

psychological state" but rather "is often highly distressing" and "consumes cognitive resources"

(p. 811).

Yet, the current conservative discourse reveals a backlash against the "political

correctness" of calling out microaggressions – diminishing the viewpoints of recipients as petty

and frivolous – where addressing them is mischaracterized as an obsession with the creation of

victims (Runyowa, 2015). However, the effects that insensitivities have on the recipient and

perpetrator suggest that downplaying them is to underestimate the more potentially powerful

effect of sanctioning them (Runyowa, 2015). Failing to bring awareness to microaggressions

prevents educators from engaging with difference in more intelligent and nuanced ways and train

our minds to entertain more complex views of the world (Runyowa, 2015, para 11).

Furthermore, as the pool of American educators continues to be predominantly White while our students are increasingly diverse, Black educators who struggle beside them must raise our collective consciousness to the realities of racism in America. Sue et al. (2007) suggest that for White educators, the damage done from denying racial microaggressions is similar to that of denying White privilege. For White educators there is a missed opportunity for personal and professional development because "the invisible nature of acts prevents perpetrators from realizing and confronting (a) their own complicity in creating psychological dilemmas for minorities and (b) their role in creating disparities in employment, health care, and education" (pg. 14).

Implications

The results of this study provide important implications in the body of knowledge relevant to positioning cultural geography within the context of critical race theory in education. In addition, this study was important in terms of implications for teacher education and educational leadership programs. From the perspective of Black educators, the results of this study revealed that they center their race as a primary feature of their professional identity. The findings drew attention to their shared practice of centering the Black experience in America to inspire students of color to become critically engaged in their communities and engaged in their school's hidden curricula and school culture. Centering race also gave the Black educators and their students an opportunity for all people to identify with the resilience that defines Black excellence.

The most salient implications of this study can inform educational leadership about the significance of examining the cultural symbolism of school names through a critical race framework that develops a more nuanced perspective, which leads to equalizing and improving

experiences and outcomes for Black educators and students in the American public school system. This critical race analysis of cultural symbolism begins with an implication for utilizing symbolic capital and ends with an implication for eliminating symbolic violence and racial microaggressions.

The first implication from the study is that cultural symbolism of schools named for prominent Blacks operates as symbolic capital that enhances both hidden and critical race curricula, and that solidifies a positive school culture. Schools named for prominent Blacks are leverage that becomes empowering, especially for Black educators, Black students and their families who live in a society in which they may still feel assailed. As symbolic capital, schools named for prominent Blacks who reflect the highest national values and core beliefs have the ability to strengthen community engagement and pride, thereby transforming those communities. Schools named for prominent Blacks encourage Black educators to confront historic and recent social issues that are barriers to the success of Blacks with their students in the classroom, which contributes to the development of critical race curricula and pedagogy. The practice of naming schools after prominent Blacks is also a catalyst for honest conversations that help to reveal and reconcile differences in the perspectives and priorities of decision-makers in the schools, the school systems and communities. Engagement then becomes a mechanism to adhere to the original goals of public education, "uniting the American population by instilling common moral and political values" (Spring, 2018, p. 5) and establishing consensus throughout the nation regarding those common moral and political values.

The disagreement over how those original goals of public education are reflected through the criteria for naming schools after White supremacists or Confederates is the second implication from the study. The cultural symbolism of schools named for White supremacists or

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Confederates operates as symbolic violence for Black educators and students and is not

conducive to enhancing hidden, critical race or general curricula or solidifying a positive school

culture. The Black educators in this study stress that schools named for White supremacists and

Confederates are anathema to the Black community and imply the tacit acceptance of the

premise of Black inferiority that is the cornerstone of White supremacy ideology. This

perception further alienates Black educators and Black students from the educational system and

the promise of American equality. Because White supremacists held racist ideals, they cannot be

role models for students nor can they function as a touchstone or beacon for diverse

communities.

Furthermore, public schools named for White supremacists and Confederates are a

wasted opportunity for the educational system to connect students with the highest ideals of our

nation – those that unify Americans around equality. Public debate for why public schools

named for White supremacists and Confederates still have prestige in our cultural or educational

landscape is an opportunity to expose contradictions that affect African Americans in the public

educational system (Drum, 2017). The findings imply that the continued existence of public

schools named for White supremacists and Confederates counteracts social justice and equity

programs within the American public educational system and sends confusing messages to all of

America's students and educators about the repute of racists.

The third implication emerging from this research is that we ensure the protection and

expansion of civil rights of historically oppressed groups through vigilant and thorough scrutiny

of the socially constructed world that frames our collective experience. As our society evolves,

so should the social justice lens through which we evaluate our policies and laws. This

recommendation involves applying the precedent set for public education that protected Black

students and expanding it for the protection of Black educators. In 1954 the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (Brown v. the Board of Education)* decision struck at the heart of our nation in part because it focused on the daily experience of a segment of American youth who were negatively affected by *de jure* segregation in public education in both tangible and psychological ways. The *Brown v. the Board of Education* court reversed the course of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) on the basis of the psychology of state-sanctioned segregation by using empirically tested claims about the psychological effects of segregation on Black children (Krieger & Fiske, 2006).

The Supreme Court relied heavily on its interpretation of the Equal Protections Clause of the 14th Amendment which states that no state may "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (U.S. Const. amend. XIV). A two-pronged test is used to maintain any claim under the Equal Protections Clause that 1) the government's undertaking produces disproportionate effects along racial lines; and 2) that racial discrimination was a substantial or motivating factor behind the act. The findings of this study satisfy the first prong revealing that there are disproportionate effects that still exist for Black students and educators forced to confront painful contradictions at schools named after White supremacist and Confederates. The second prong is satisfied by the Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens' speech:

> Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations
> are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to
> the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior race – is his natural
> and normal condition … With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich
> or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is
> his place. (Stephens, 1861)

The fourth implication from the study is that educational systems and educational leadership programs, especially those serving Black or minority communities, students and educators, would benefit from workshops which focus on implicit and unconscious bias. Implicit bias leads to discriminatory experiences for Black educators, called racial microaggressions, which become more insidious because while Whites do not intend harm, they may harbor implicit bias that is part of a White supremacy culture and worldview, thereby inflicting harm unconsciously. The findings of this study revealed that Black educators are burdened by racism and racial microaggressions and spend considerable time discerning the intent of ambiguous acts perpetrated by White educators and the educational system. Educational leadership programs that marginalize the concerns of Black educators deprive their candidates of discovering implicit bias and employing appropriate interventions to avoid perpetuating racial microaggressions. Educational systems that disregard the concerns of their Black employees are creating disparate employment practices that result in inequitable professional experiences for Black educators and inequitable educational experiences for Black students.

The final implication from the study is the need for local education systems to require and support enrichment activities at every school that focus on providing critical race curricula that highlight the resiliency of historically oppressed African Americans and individuals of other cultures, as well as people from poverty who made significant contributions to local communities and society. Because many of the Black educators felt isolated in the process of creating critical race curricula, efforts by the local educational system need to stipulate that diverse teams provide material and financial support for the persistent acknowledgement of American diversity. In this way the local public education system will contribute to raising the social justice bar for all of its communities.

As Black educators, we are gracious enough to understand that the Civil War was a trauma for White culture, but healing from it through naming schools after Confederate heroes decades later should not have taken place at the expense of the Black culture, whose own wounds still go unnoticed (Savage, 1990). Four years of White trauma cannot compare to 400 years of African American trauma. We also understand that many in our country believe that the election of a Black president signified a post-racial America, but the truth is that as Black public educators, we are combatting a resurgence of overt White supremacy rectifying institutional racism and absorbing daily environment racial microaggressions lurking in our fellow citizens, our policies and our public spaces. American public schools named for White supremacists represents a stunning trifecta. The United States Department of Education and American educational leadership and teacher education programs must develop a rampant intolerance for the way White supremacy has asserted itself in the cultural educational landscape of public schools. That work can inform federal guidelines that rectify this disparity first in schools and districts serving Black students and employing Black educators, then systematically moving to those whose communities are less disturbed by the names. The "Sunset Clause" of Clowney's (2013) Landscape Impact Assessment can be adapted to ensure equitable and consistent processes provide all Americans an unambiguously, warm welcome when they go to school.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to discover how Black educators, as professionals and students, experience(d) what they perceive(d) to be symbolic capital, symbolic resistance and/or symbolic violence through schools named after individuals, in particular those sympathetic to the Confederacy and slavery, or prominent Blacks, and whether they have found ways to manage the impact of schools' names for themselves and their students. Because Black educators were the

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exclusive sample selected for this study, recommendations for expansion could be made for a number of populations.

1) As American diversity increases, future studies could apply to public educators from various other ethnic groups to discover whether they perceive(d) themes of symbolic capital, symbolic resistance or symbolic violence in their educational experience. Public educators are also becoming increasingly organized around political agendas; therefore, studies such as this one could reveal their perceptions and experiences of school names in relationship to a variety of characteristics protected by civil rights law besides race (e.g., sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, etc.).

2) Students, parents and community members have become increasingly vocal about the cultural symbolism implicit in memorializing White supremacy on both public and private university campuses and in K-12 settings (Klein, 2015). Across the country individuals and school boards have addressed the issue through local processes. Future studies could include these sectors of the community to determine a more general public perception of schools named after polarizing icons, thereby contributing to more consistent naming criteria and experiences that are more equitable for educators and students across the country.

3) Future projects could follow up on the findings of this study to launch work groups that develop landscape fairness assessments that intend to minimize the negative effects of racialized spaces, especially where children are educated. Community groups can develop strategies for open, social justice discourse that leads to reconciliation and a more inclusive collective national memory and daily experience, the success of which could be measured using standard program evaluation instruments.

4) Future studies could also utilize the findings to create a quantitative instrument for evaluation of other professional educational organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA), or the full membership of the NEA Black Caucus, members of the United Negro College Fund or the American Federation of Teachers. The results of the quantitative data could assist in determining whether the results of this study can be generalized to larger educational communities.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

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Office of Research Integrity	FWA 00002704
Institutional Review Board	
One John Marshall Drive	IRB1 #00002205
Huntington, WV 25755	IRB2 #00003206

February 22, 2019

Barbara Nicholson, PhD
Leadership Studies, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 1398438-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Nicholson:

Protocol Title:	[1398438-1] The Perceptions and Effects of Schools' Names on Black Professional Educators and their Students	
Site Location:	MUGC	
Submission Type:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Expedited Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.110(a)(6)&(7), the above study was granted Expedited approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair. An annual update will be required on February 22, 2020 for administrative review and approval. The update must include the Annual Update Form and current educational certificates for all investigators involved in the study. All amendments must be submitted for approval by the IRB Chair prior to implementation and a closure request is required upon completion of the study.

This study is for student Gregg McAllister.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director, Office of Research Integrity

Generated on IRBNet

Appendix B

Research Questions

1. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on them as students and professionals?

2. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to have an effect on their students?

3. How have Black professional educators used schools' names to invite students and educators to conversations regarding a more integrated and equitable, or divisive and biased vision of America?

4. How have Black professional educators perceived schools' names to reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries?

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What is your highest degree level?

2. How many years of experience do you have as an educator?

3. Have you attended or taught in schools named after prominent Blacks or notable White supremacists or Confederates?

4. Have you personally experienced any effects, positive or negative, from the names of schools you've attended or taught in?

5. Have you seen students experience any effects, positive or negative, from the names of their school(s)?

6. Have you ever had an opportunity to address with students how schools' names can affect the community in terms of being either more integrated and equitable or more divisive and biased?

7. Do you feel schools' names can reinforce traditional racial and economic boundaries? If so, how?