# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Splish, Splash

Water balloons bounced off the pavement, bursting all around my friends and I. This was our usual walk to the local store on a Sunday afternoon in the Spring of 2002. At first, I did not think anything of it, I turned to my friends and said "I think they're throwing water balloons at them" as I motioned towards the other Caucasian students in the front yard. But then it happened… "Black Bitches!" Water balloons were firing our way as we attempted to dodge them.

"Niggers!" I could not believe what I was hearing. All I could think was how bold the racism had gotten on campus. I knew students were racist, I knew there was a lot of racial tension on campus, but never did I think we would be attacked in such a manner. Although they were men and we were women we stood our ground and yelled back at them. We pressed forward, while dodging balloons. Suddenly, I remembered stories told to me by my elders concerning the Civil Rights Movement, the water hoses and beatings. I wondered what new age movement my friends and I were about to embark.

## Context

In this chapter I discuss the literatures I will build on and speak back to the contradictory gaps present between my study and the literature. There are several literatures which help us to understand the African American experience and those are the literatures I focus on in this review. These literatures are helpful in many ways, but do not address some things and this is where I highlight these issues. I looked to higher education, law and psychology literatures to grapple with my research questions. Understanding the historical context of African American education, the influences of law/policy on African American education and the psychologies

behind self-motivation and success, helped me to better understand success, self-affirmation and self-determination.

**History of African Americans in Higher Education**

I began by turning to higher education literature to see what scholars have said concerning the history of African Americans and education. I focus primarily on the history of African Americans and higher education because my research focuses on the same. In order to understand why African Americans self-affirm in the manner which they do today, I felt it necessary to understand their journey with higher education. I argue the historical context greatly impacts and influences the experiences of African American students today.

Historically African Americans received an inferior K-12 education to their White counterparts as the educational system mimicked the overall inequalities in the larger society, (Brown, 2004). "Formal education did not exist for [African Americans] until after 1865 and to a limited degree most Blacks received approximately 4 months of elementary education for [a total of] 3 years in small towns and villages. In rural areas, there was rarely any" (Brown, 2004, p. 255).

As discussed later, pre-desegregation (1865-1964) African Americans were only admitted to PWIs on a case by case basis. For those African American students admitted to PWIs they quickly found themselves being segregated in every aspect of their education. For example, in *Sipuel v. University of Oklahoma* (1948), an African American woman was admitted to the University of Oklahoma law school but was legally segregated from her White peers in the classroom, library, and cafeteria. When expanding on this historical context of African Americans in education, I focus on African Americans in PWIs and HBCUs to gain a broader sense of the types of educational experiences of African American college students.

**The Historically Black College and University.** We can better understand the experiences of African Americans in higher education by looking at three things: how White Americans have constructed education for African Americans, the goals for HBCUs historically and contemporary views of HBCUs today. I begin this discussion of the history of African Americans in higher education by looking at the development of HBCUs by White architects and post-secondary education as intertwined. However, these institutions still offer its student body a cultural and social capital which can be gained at these institutions and not PWIs (Brown & Davis, 2001). HBCUs have an existence of one which is traditionally problematic in the sense of how and why the institutions were founded. Aboh and Lomotey (2009) argue the founding of HBCUs is based in appeasing African Americans on the forefront while keeping them mentally enslaved.

According to Aboh and Lomotey (2009) in *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Catalysts to Liberation*, HBCUs were placed in the educational system as a means to control, re-enslave, and alienate.[1] The major reasoning behind White financiers funding and support of HBCUs was to place African Americans in manual labor jobs by way of agriculture, industrialism, etc., creating a dual system of education (Aboh & Lomotey, 2009).

The beginning of two types of institutions (Black and White) began in June of 1898. Both the Northern and Southern states, respectively, began planning for this dual system of education of one White and one African American. As stated by M. Christopher Brown (2001) in *Collegiate Desegregation and the Public Black College: A New Policy Mandate*, "one black

[1] The six pillars of the HBCU are to maintain African American culture and tradition, provide leadership for African American community, Economic sustainability for African Americans, Role models with the ability to understand and convey the social, political, and economic societal aspects and their impacts on the African American community, produce African American intellects to be the liaison between society and the African American community, and African American researchers to help with the life environment of African Americans (Brown & Davis, 2001).

institution was planned or chartered every year between 1890 and 1899 in the 19 Southern or border states" (p. 49). Between 1860-1915 many missionaries put in place over thirty institutions which comprised of over 60% African American enrollment. Institutions such as Fisk University (TN), Clark University (GA), Spelman College (GA) and Morehouse College (GA) were funded by philanthropists/White financiers. These "philanthropists did not simply provide dollars but indeed offered a political and ideological platform. Their program was one of classic colonialism adapted to the Southern United States" (Watkins, 2001, p. 20). These financiers of education were able to control every facet of education and public policy regarding African Americans through monopolizing control over funding and projects (Watkins, 2001).

The training at these institutions followed the Hampton-Tuskegee (agricultural and manual training) model of separate and subordinate. The Programme for Social Study (1897) had great influence on the curriculum/vocational training for African American students. This civic education focused on producing "good citizenship, character, health sanitation, and benefits of labor" (Watkins, 2001, p. 16). The curriculum guided African Americans to seek employment in areas which their White counterparts deemed as acceptable for them to contribute economically, (Aboh & Lomotey, 2009).

As noted by Watkins (2001) in *White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, scientific racism played a central role into the education African Americans received. Based on the concept of African Americans being inferior and only capable for a certain level of intelligence capacity, scientific racism pigeon-holed African Americans into industrial education.

The curriculum being taught at HBCUs was to instill White beliefs and dominance in its African American students (Aboh & Lomotey, 2009). To an extent I agree with the authors,

however, the social and cultural capital gained by African Americans attending HBCUs today makes me believe there is still a benefit to the African American community from the existence of these institutions. The passing down of social/cultural capital at HBCUs to its students connects to the concept of the desire to better the African American community (Brown & Davis, 2001). As Howard (2001) found in a study conducted with African American elementary students, culturally relevant teaching (common practice at HBCUs) encouraged student classroom effort and engagement.

As two renowned leaders in the African American community, W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington were in agreement of the long-term goal of HBCUs as bettering the African American community (Brown & Ricard, 2007). Dubois' philosophy toward bettering the African American community was it should be achieved by an educated, elitist group of African Americans charged with leading and passing knowledge to the community. Washington took a vocational education/training approach to education, believing this education should be shared with all African Americans in the community (Brown & Ricard, 2007). Both Dubois' and Washington's educational philosophies became a part of the road map of higher education for African Americans at HBCUs. This possession of knowledge they gained at these institutions is being reproduced throughout the community via a cultural connection of struggle, race, and history. This overall six point goal for HBCUs, as stated by Brown and Ricard (2007) is

1.“ maintaining the Black [African American] historical and cultural tradition

2. providing leadership for the Black community through the important social role of college administrators, scholars, and students

3. providing an economic center in the Black community

4. encouraging Black role models

5. providing minority and majority populations

6. and producing Black graduates for specialized research, institutional training, and information dissemination for Black and other minority communities" (p. 120).

This is achieved through this very cultural connection embedded throughout the institutions make-up of student body, faculty, staff, traditions and historical context, and mission.

To sustain the history and culture of the African roots of African Americans, the HBCUs were charged with maintaining culture and tradition. They were expected to provide leadership for the African American community as a means of which to lead the masses not only intellectually, but also serve as a spokesperson, in a sense, for the African American race with other races. In being able to obtain financial wealth and contribute to the community's financial state, economics was also a part of the education HBCUs were providing its students. Lastly, to improve the health and well-being and overall quality of life for African Americans, HBCUs charged themselves with producing researchers to help African Americans in their daily lives (mental and physical health) (Brown & Davis, 2001).

While the idea of the goal of the HBCU sounds nice in theory, some feel the institutions are not living up to their charge of educating African Americans to better their communities or are self-segregating. Beginning with the idea these institutions are not living up to their charge, Carter G. Woodson, another prominent African American historian and leader and founder of Negro Week, and W.E.B. Dubois both stated several times their discontent and dissatisfaction with the educational system of the HBCU. Their main arguments were the education being given was not from an African American perspective, but a White one. While I do feel the social/cultural capital gained by African Americans at HBCUs is greatly beneficial, the alienation of African Americans at these institutions by White financiers was and can still be an

opportunity to de-Africanize, stripping African Americans from their African roots (Aboh & Lomotey, 2009). Changing the perspective from the way the curriculum is taught can combat the re-enslavement that has been engrained in this educational system since its inception.

This brainwashing and de-Africanizing of African Americans took place through the enrollment of leaders of the African American community at these respective institutions. HBCUs were seen as an opportunity to keep African Americans in their place by developing their leaders at the institutions to "helping the Negro to the sane and responsible leadership that the South wants him [sic] to have" (Anderson, 1988, p 267.).

As Aboh and Lomotey (2009) describe two major steps for HBCUs to take in order to achieve full potential of the HBCU for African Americans and the world. In order to achieve full potential of the HBCU for the African American community, the authors suggest a re-energizing of African American or Black studies (institutions offering a major and minor) and African-centered perspective built throughout the curriculum, history, and every subject matter taught at the institutions. These two major steps allow HBCUs to be the liberating, intellectual break-through institutions many have looked for them to be, but fell short.

The other argument against HBCUs is that they are segregating institutions, promoting self-segregation. For example, the 1992 *U.S. v. Fordice* case alone subjects HBCUs to a desegregation mandate. This mandate, which many HBCUs have fallen to, affects them because of the mission of the institutions being African American focused and arguments of duplication of curriculum of PWIs, both leading to school closures. Policymakers use the verdict in this case to justify an argument of HBCUs practicing in a dual educational system which many African Americans fought against (Brown, 2001 & *U.S. v. Fordice*). As a result of manipulation of the

ruling in this case, many HBCUs restructured the missions of their institutions, changing them from having such an Afrocentric mission (Brown, 2001).

While there are negative perspectives of HBCUs, I would argue many African Americans feel they hold relevancy today as they continue to enroll at these institutions.

**African Americans at White Institutions.** Unlike HBCUs, the African American perspective concerning education and learning was not considered at White institutions. This is part of the argument as to why African American continue to enroll at these institutions. As Lisa Delpit (1995) argues instructional methodologies in teaching is very important in this instance as she brings to the forefront the power struggle of "whose voices gets to be heard in determining what is best for… children of color" (p. 46). White financiers/philanthropists wanted African Americans to contribute economically to society by gaining a higher education, but within the constraints they deemed. White financiers/philanthropists found themselves facing conflicting goals, African American advancement and containment. This conflict experienced by the White financiers/philanthropists lead to six significant Supreme Court cases, all leading to substantial changes in the education of African Americans. These cases dealing with PWIs and the enrollment of African Americans occurred simultaneously to the development of HBCUs.

In 1908 *Berea College v. Kentucky* became the first Supreme Court case concerning higher education and African Americans. The Court upheld *Plessy v. Ferguson's separate but equal* clause after Berea College, a private institution, admitted an African American student (Hughes, 2007). The reasoning behind this decision was since Berea College was a private institution it was not covered under the Equal Protection Clause.

*Pearson v. Murray* (1936), one of four cases concerning African Americans and law school, allowed for the enrollment of one African American student into an all-White institution.

However, the Pearson ruling was not applied to all African Americans seeking an education. Pearson started a slow trend towards reversal of *separate but equal*. In *Missouri ex. rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), African Americans began to point out the fallacies with *separate and equal*. One of these fallacies being if White students are provided an in-state education in various academic disciplines the same must be provided for Black students as well (LaMorte, 2008). Twelve years later, the court ruling in *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) made it clear more aspects needed consideration beyond the surface of *separate and equal*. With this ruling the Court began to take into consideration "tangible factors between racially segregated law schools but also compared such intangible factors as prestige, faculty reputation, and experience of the administration" (LaMorte, 2008, p. 302). As hinted by the Court, things would soon change and four years later the historical case, *Brown v. Board* (1954) was heard.

In an unanimous 9-0 decision by the Court *separate but equal* was overturned with the decision in the Brown v. Board case. *Separate but equal* was overturned and ruled as unconstitutional as it was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment as stated in the Constitution. While this ruling is extremely significant it did not offer a remedy for which the states could use to desegregate the schools. A year later the Court considered this very issue, but still failed to offer a plan on how the act of desegregation was to be carried out (LaMorte, 2008).

All of these pivotal and historical law cases still resonate with education today. I argue in today's society, African American students still experience the effects of these cases in some form at PWIs (e.g., institutions push toward diversity and moving away from cultural centers, programs and departments) and it is these remnants of segregation which catapult African Americans students to self-affirm through culturally specific events/activities and environments.

After gaining knowledge of the legal and social challenges for African Americans seeking education, I looked to understand academic success. An understanding of academic success is imperative as I examine what self-motivates African Americans toward collegiate success. This is important for my dissertation as I looked to see if the value of what self motivates African Americans toward achieving collegiate success.

**African Americans and Academic Success**

After reading several pieces of education literature focusing on African American students and academic success, I quickly came to the realization there was no concrete definition of success offered. Success in the education literature is viewed from the perspective of predictors and hindrances only focusing on what African American students are lacking and why they are not successful. This deficit language in the education literature, in my opinion, has an effect not only on how administrators and policy makers view African Americans but also their non-African American peers. As Harper states "the disproportionate focus on Black underachievement in the literature not only distorts the image of the community of Black collegians, it creates… a lower set of expectations for Black student achievement" (Harper, 2005, p. 9).

In building a definition of success I looked to Kenneth Barron et al., (2002) TRIO (academic support service program) and three predictors of success from the higher education literature (social and cultural capital, experience at a HBCU, and non-cognitive factors) for African American college students. In compiling my own definition of success I take parts of each of these researchers' components of success to formulate my meaning of success.

Kenneth Barron et al. (2002) definition of success gives the most basic principles of high academic performance equating achievement. Barron et al. (2002) identified predictors of

collegiate academic success as primarily correlated with SAT or ACT scores and high school academic performance (class rank and G.P.A.). However, they also point out other indicators for academic success as “development of interest in a topic or discipline… [and] self-efficacy [as] related to academic performance” (Barron et al., 2002, p. 562). Self-efficacy is defined as achievement/motivational goals toward academic performance (Barron et al., 2002). In order to begin to build a definition from which to have a concrete definition of success, I began to look at academic support programs currently in use in institutions of higher education. For example, in TRIO, a national academic support program, success is defined as retention and graduation rates, (http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html). Because these definitions in the education literature are very limited, I turned to predictors of success in order to further develop a definition of success.

Higher education literature offers three predictors of collegiate success: social and cultural capital of African American students at PWIs and HBCUs, experience at a HBCU, and non-cognitive factors. In looking at social and cultural capital I used Laura Perna’s (2000) definitions of the terms from *Difference in the Decision to Attend College among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites*. Perna defines social capital as networks which allows for information dissemination and produces a set of values and behaviors (Perna, 2000). I also found her definition of cultural capital helpful as she defines it as a “system derived from ones parents that defines an individual’s class status” (Perna, 2000, p. 119). While her definition was helpful to me, it lacks other elements which can contribute to one’s culture such as their history, community, and daily societal interactions.

The social and cultural capital of African American students has a different impact when comparing PWIs and HBCUs. At PWIs the social and cultural capital is looked at as how

students are able to stand out and be successful despite the hostile campus environments in which they are learning. In two separate articles, Shaun Harper (2005, 2009) discusses the African American male and success at PWIs from an empowering perspective. As he noted from one of his studies, the social and cultural capital used by African American males to be successful at their institutions was motivated by the common oppression and racism they were experiencing. They used these negative aspects of their collegiate experience as a source of inspiration, pushing them to organize collectively within their own social networks and cultural (African American community) background to become successful and maintain success (Harper, 2009). Organizing collectively as a community is a form of self-determination by motivating each toward the common goal of success. I teased out these motivations and how they work collectively within the African American community at a PWI and HBCU.

In another study Harper (2005) gives an account of cultural capital not necessarily passed down from biological parents as Perna's (2000) definition suggested, but from collegiate "parents", those students which came before these African American males currently at the PWI. While Harper (2005) does not explicitly state this is an example of cultural capital, as stated previously, when Perna's (2000) definition of cultural capital is applied it mimics the definition she gave of cultural capital being that from "parents". I argue these parents do not have to be biological, but can also be those which students look up to and view in high regard or wish to model themselves after, those "parents" (students) which have influenced them in some regard in their academic careers. These collegiate "parents" left a legacy of education and persistence to overcome the racist stereotypes and discrimination African American males experienced within their institutions.

Social and cultural capital is viewed in a different way for African American students at HBCUs. The social and cultural capital for African Americans at HBCUs is different mainly because the institution itself fosters the growth and development of this capital for their students. The six goals of HBCUs previously mentioned were tied to each institution as it was “their historic responsibility as the primary providers of postsecondary education for African Americans in a social environment of racial discrimination” (Brown & Davis, 2001, p. 32). Not only were these institutions charged with educating African Americans to actively participate in society, but also to develop leaders for the African American society as well (Brown & Davis, 2001).

The six goals of HBCUs led to a gaining of social and cultural capital for African Americans as it was embedded in the HBCU educational system for them. According to Brown & Davis (2001), Solomon’s 1977 definition of the social contract as an agreement between the individual and all others of society that the laws should be adhered to for the greater good of the public interest and to sustain order. This is an ideal definition to describe the social contract formed with the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments. These amendments giving freedom from slavery, giving citizenship, and voting rights for African Americans when combined with the Freedman’s Bureau (financial support for and maintenance of schools for African Americans) and founding of Howard University formed this social contract. “All of these… government initiated, post-war activities focus on reconciling the tattered relation between America and the descendants of Africa” (Brown & Davis, 2001, p. 34). The social contract between the United States and African Americans became manifested in the form of the historical black college and university.

The cultural or social capital offered by HBCUs is defined as “a type of resources that is socially reproduced, such as the possession of knowledge, accomplishments, or formal and informal relations and networks” (Brown & Davis, 2001, p. 41). This cultural capital is based in the roots of W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington’s ideas of educating freed slaves. While they differed in opinion as to the type of education African Americans should receive, they both were in agreement of the long-term goal of bettering the African American community (Brown & Ricard, 2007).

This goal of betterment for the African American community was to be achieved either by an elite group of African Americans becoming educated and leading and passing this knowledge to the community or through a vocational education/training being provided to all African Americans in the community (Brown & Ricard, 2007). This possession of knowledge is being reproduced throughout the community via a cultural connection of struggle, race, and history. This overall goal for HBCUs of being designed to improve the societal state for African Americans is achieved through this very cultural connection embedded throughout the institutions make-up of student body, faculty, staff, traditions and historical context, and mission (Brown & Ricard, 2007).

The benefits of social and cultural capital are some of the reasons as to why African American students are drawn to HBCUs. According to Brown and Ricard, the experience students have at a HBCU, itself, is a predictor of success for African American students. “African American students are drawn to these [HBCUs] institutions because they desire a learning environment in which their identity is both appreciated and celebrated” (Brown & Ricard, 2007, p. 121). HBCUs, being charged with meeting the same curriculum standards as PWIs, do so while “providing African Americans with a culture-specific pedagogy” (Bertrand,

Brown, & Donahoo, 2001, p. 559). Although HBCUs were founded during a time of segregation, the literature states these institutions are still relevant today because of their role in the educational system. “Research shows that Black [African American] students at [PWIs] experience… lower academic achievement, lower persistence, poorer overall psychological development, less likelihood of enrolling in advanced… programs, and lower post graduation attainments and earnings” (Bertrand, Brown, & Donahoo, 2001, p. 566). The literature also states the reason for these differences among success for African Americans at HBCUs and PWIs is “HBCUs emphasize the development of Black [African American] consciousness and identity, Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions. They provide an African American culture and ambiance… students find essential to their social functioning and mental health” (Murty & Roebuck, 1993, p. 17). While I am not sure if HBCUs offer these predictors of success identified in the literature, this is something I explore as I proceed with my dissertation.

The final predictor of success I found in the literature was non-cognitive factors of academic achievement. In *Non-cognitive Predictors of Academic Achievement for African Americans across Cultural Contexts* the researchers look at academic success for African Americans at both PWIs and HBCUs (Harrell et al., 2005). The bridging of the literature in this fashion is something many other researchers fell short. Most of the literature looks at African Americans and their experiences separate from each other, and does not take into account how one may inform the other. This is an area which I saw opportunity for my dissertation to offer something new to the field, an area which lacked research.

The non-cognitive questionnaire was revised from Tracey and Sedlacek’s study proposed factors of non-cognitive predictors: positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, support academically, understanding and dealing with racism, long-term goals, academic familiarity and

interest, establishment of a community, and participation in leadership roles (Harrell et al., 2005). The researchers found all of these predictors are influenced by the various campus climate variables and social context. While I feel there is a definite connection of non-cognitive predictors of success between the literatures focused on African Americans at PWIs and HBCUs, this is something I explored further in my dissertation as well. Through this closer look at the non-cognitive predictors of success and other predictors of success I looked to see if there are similarities between the practices of African American students at HBCUs and PWIs. For example, by looking at self-affirmation as a form of self-determination I am looking to see if the practices executed daily by African Americans at HBCUs are the same as those done by African Americans who self-segregate within their institutions at PWIs and vice versa. As Joi Williamson (2003) states in her book entitled *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois 1965-1975,* self-segregation at PWIs is how African American students emulate the experience of an HBCU for themselves, which I argue is actually African American students' way of self-affirming. They use their culture, collectively as a group, as a means of which to create comfort in an environment which can be very confrontational, racist, and hostile.

After realizing the major predictors of success concerning African American students in higher education, an opposing theme emerged from the literature as well: the hindrances of success for African American students in higher education. Much of the higher education literature focused on the main hindrance of success for African American students as lack of access. Numerous factors such as high school academic achievement, socioeconomic disadvantage, cultural orientations, social segregation, and the limitations placed on African Americans from historical and continuous effects of policy, block the access needed to be academically successful for African Americans (Steele, 1997; and Allen & Comeaux, 2009).

There are three factors I explored further in my dissertation: influence of family, the current and historical effects of policies and media images. In *To Break Away or Strengthen Ties to Home: A Complex Issue for African American College Students Attending a Predominantly White Institution*, Douglas Guiffrida (2005) presents a very complex concept as influence of family as a hindrance to success. Using the intergenerational model he demonstrates, "the binding role, where parent interact with children in ways that keep them locked into the family" (p. 57). Guiffrida (2005) highlights the student departure theory by Tinto (1993) as a point of debate concerning African Americans and college academic achievement, retention/persistence, and the influence the family has on them. While Tinto's (1993) theory calls for an abandoning of family ties in a sense, Guiffrida (2005) found in his study this concept to be much more complex. In Guiffrida's (2005) study high achieving African American students had high family support and therefore, not an abandonment from their familial ties. On the other hand, those students who were low achievers had low family support. For many students family obligations and the "inability to break ties at home was manifested by frequent visits to help out the family, or to find a social connection that they lacked on campus" (Guiffrida, 2005, p. 56).

As Walter Allen and Eddie Comeaux (2009) discussed in their article the policy Proposition 209 (outlawed usage of racial identity as a means of consideration during an institutions admissions process) the current/historical effects policy can have on African American enrollment at public institutions can be detrimental. While California has the third largest African American population in the United States less than 4% were in the demographic pool of the University of California admissions process in 2006 (McDounough, Outcalt, Tobolowsky, 2005).

Another hindrance of success which emerged from the literature is the negative media images of African Americans in higher education. In many of the studies I read it seemed as if the negative portrayal of African Americans was always addressed. As will be discussed next in this paper in more detail, the negative portrayals of African American students amongst their peers, professors, and institutions as a whole forced them to go seek alternative forms and means of education (Whitmire, 2006). These negative portrayals constantly portrayed African Americans, particularly males, as less willing to learn or capable of learning and not as invested in their education (Harper 2005, 2009).

Taking from the previously mentioned researchers' definitions, predictors, and hindrances of success, I have comprised my own definition of success with the following components:

1. Interest/familiarity in a topic/discipline (Barron et al., 2002; and Harrell et al., 2005)
2. Self-motivation (Barron et al., 2002; and Harrell et al., 2005)

and predictors of success:

3. Retention (TRIO, http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html)
4. Social and cultural capital (Perna, 2000; Brown & Davis, 2001; Brown & Donahoo; Harrell et al., 2005; and Williamson, 2003)
    a. Development of a set of values/beliefs (Perna, 2000)
    b. Social networks (Brown & Davis, 2001)
    c. Cultural connection (Brown & Donahoo)
    d. Community/leadership/positive portrayals/support (Guiffrida, 2005; Harper, 2005; and Harrell et al., 2005)

e. Comfort/climate (Harrell et al., 2005; and Williamson, 2003)

I define collegiate success as self-motivation toward a goal which there is genuine interest or passion in a topic/discipline where social and cultural capital (community, culture, social networks, support, positive portrayals, and leadership) are celebrated and help develop a set of values or beliefs that place student's in a mindset of a level of comfort which they can operate in any environmental climate as they retain their interest and increase their persistence toward that goal.

Having developed a definition of success and looked at how it is discussed alongside African Americans, I turned to see what literatures discussed culturally specific events/activities, environments and social peer networks. In my search to conceptualize these African American events/activities, I looked to higher education, psychology, and law literatures. Much of the literature defines these culturally specific events/activities and social peer networks, as self-segregation/separatism. As I will explain further in this section self-segregation did not capture best what I want my research to focus, however, self-affirmation did.

**Self-segregation v. Self-affirmation**

Self-affirmation captures better what I want my research focused and that is the benefits, if any, of African American students participating in culturally specific events/activities, environments and social peer networks. Self-segregation offers three elements which do not allow for benefits, if any, to be recognized. These three elements are the negative connotations associated with the term self-segregation, rejection of the majority and pride separatism. In this section I will take a closer look at the definitions of self-segregation/separatism v. self-affirmation, their components/tenants, their similarities and differences, and the four implications of self-segregation.

**Self-segregation.** As previously mentioned many of the culturally specific events/activities, environments, and social peer networks African American students participate are deemed as self-segregation. Since, I could not find much on self-affirmation and African American college students in relation to academic achievement, I will began with the latter, self-segregation. After seeing this I turned to literature that discussed self-segregation and separatism in order to see the similarities and difference between self-segregation/self-separatism and self-affirmation. Throughout the remainder of the dissertation I will use the terms self-segregation and separatism as interchangeably. There are varying definitions of these two terms, but the way I use them in the dissertation allows them to be used interchangeably. Moreover, defining such events as self-segregation gives the impression that these African American students were and are isolating themselves solely based on race and viewing everyone non-African American as "other". In my search for a definition of self-segregation, the literature offers multiple definitions and in my dissertation these definitions are similar to how I define self-affirmation. However, I re-name self-segregation as self-affirmation to capture more than the racial connection that self-segregation suggests. The law and psychology literature offers two characteristics of self-segregation:

1. Groups separated based on extreme behavior (Hod and Nakar, 2002)
2. Grouping based on race (Tatum, 1997).

As stated by Wilkinson (1995) in *The Law of Civil Rights and the Dangers of Separatism in Multicultural America*, there are three main types of self-segregation:

1. Anglo separatism-"discrimination against racial minorities"
2. Self-segregation by racial minorities-"rejection of the integrative ideal" and

3. Multicultural conflict - “arise where specific minority groups attempt to separate themselves from other minority groups.” (p. 1000).

I feel scholars have looked at self-affirmation through the lens of self-segregation under the definition as “rejection of integrative ideal” and have mis-defined the phenomenon because of lack of understanding as to why these African American students were really participating.

Wilkinson (1995) also offers two types of motivation for self-segregating: *power separatism* (motivation to gain pertinent resources and political power) and *pride separatism* (motivation by racial identification). I focus on pride separatism as I feel it can be misleading as to why African American students participate in culturally specific events/activities, environments and social peer networks. *Pride separatism*, is the “ethnic or racial affiliation with an emphasis on cultural identity” (p. 1002).

While I am not arguing African American students are not separating from their peers, based on ethnic or racial affiliation, as I would agree partly they are. I am arguing this separation is not being done solely on this need for pride and to be around others of the same racial background, but as a need to reinforce positively the already self-image they have of themselves and be able to counteract the hostility they encounter in their campus climates. This self-affirmation builds a defense mechanism to use when their self-identity is attacked and it is this defense mechanism which allows them to self-determine collectively.

It is important to start with a working definition of self-segregation and the positive and negative arguments surrounding it in order to understand why I deem this phenomenon not as self-segregation but as self-affirmation.

There were several positive attributes in the psychology literature as to why African American students and/or people in general self-segregate. Focusing on the positive attributes,

Beverly Tatum (1997), in *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, offers four contributing factors as to why African American students seek to self-segregate: protection, support system, identity navigation, and the ability to thrive. These factors are all parts of the psychology of nigrescence (psychology of becoming Black) and its process leading to developing an African American identity. I argue these factors are not exhibiting self-segregation but self-affirmation. There are five aspects of self-affirmation which better suit my research focus over self-segregation. These aspects are engagement, celebration, self-consciousness, positive reinforcement, and psychological immune system. Throughout the remainder of this dissertation self-segregation is substituted by self-affirmation because of the misidentification of the phenomenon.

**Self-Affirmation.** As I turned to the psychology literature to learn more about self-affirmation, I quickly found self-affirmation and self-consciousness (psychological meanings of Black personality) similar in definition that they can be used interchangeably. Baldwin et al. (1990) found in *Some Socio-Behavioral Correlates of African Self-Consciousness in African American College Students*, discuss the Africentric (cultural framework where African culture is at the center) approach to African American personality in similar aspects as Bunyan et al. define self-affirmation.

The Africentric approach to Black personality is "derived from a cultural perspective in which Black peoples' natural sociocultural orientation… is used as the conceptual framework" (Baldwin et al., 1990, p. 2). This framework focusing on African culture, history, and philosophy, consists of two components to its framework: African self-extension orientation (genetically defined psychology all Blacks have in common) and African self-consciousness (part genetically and environmentally based survival instincts Blacks share). In looking at the

similarities between the self-affirmation and the Africentric approach to Black personality, I focus on the African self-consciousness. In using this Africentric approach in developing the African self-consciousness there is an experience determined factor.

The experience determined factor of the approach develops consciousness "through experience; therefore, it follows a developmental course in its expression. As African self-consciousness develops and matures, it guides and gives purpose… and it represents the conscious collective survival thrust of African people" (Baldwin et al., 1990, p. 3). The conscious collective survival thrust is a part of the psychological immune system developed during the self-affirmation process. Building up a high enough valued self-worth impacts the judgmental process when in stressful situations (Bunyan et al., 2009).

The five basic characteristics of the African self-consciousness (awareness of African identity, need for Black affirmation by institution/survival techniques, defends self-worth, ability to recognize racial opposition and make judgments to resist) mimic the positive psychological and sociological attributes of self-affirmation previously mentioned.

In *Peer Networks of African American Students in Independent Schools: Affirming Academic Success and Racial Identity*, Cooper and Datnow (1996) present research which directly relates to my research topic. In looking at African American peer groups at a predominantly white boarding school the authors concluded the students were self-affirming through their engagement in the peer groups. This self-affirmation through affiliation with these groups allowed them to handle the hostile environment which they were attending and living daily. It also allowed them a means of identification with one another to push each other toward academic success. While this research comes from the education literature, it differs from my own topic as it only looks at African American students in 6$^{th}$ through senior year of high school.

The institution is also an independent school and not public. However, as with similar reasons as to why I am conducting my study the authors felt there was a gap in the education field as to why African American students form cliques, social groups, clubs, etc. and as to what their function and benefit for African American students is. As the authors point out this separation and celebration of their culture was an allowance “for the development of an identity that was not oppositional and that promoted academic success” (Cooper & Datnow, 1996, p. 69). This idea of oppositional identity is one which is found in the self-segregation literature and is not an outcome of self-affirmation.

I point out the Africentric approach can easily have an African American approach when looking at the history of African Americans in the United States post-slavery as well. I do not wish to discuss them as if they are different but rather as inclusive of one another as the history and cultures of African Americans are based in that of their ancestors and their journey to the United States.

As found in the Baldwin et al. (1990) study the African self-consciousness is greatly impacted by the membership of parents in culturally specific events/activities, educational curricula, and racial encounters which all have an impact on the judgments of the African American students.

The judgments are the result of the process of being motivated to a sense of value/worth to be able to be constructed and reinforced. The self-segregation occurring during this process is not a rejection of the majority or because of pride, but for positive reinforcement for self-identification. Positive reinforcement for identity is exhibited through protection, support system, identity navigation, and the ability to thrive giving an outlet which to interpret and deal with the world which a person is currently operating daily. While going through this self-affirming

process, protection is offered from the all African American group. These students are protecting themselves from being offended based on their race by surrounding themselves with others from the same racial background. Tatum points out there are usually some events which occur to an African American child which makes them have a race realization (Tatum, 1997). Race realization is the process of developing awareness to being African American.

Not only are these students being protected from being racially offended, but they are also providing support to one another. This support system is formed by a level of understanding of what others in the group are going through. In this situation sympathy is provided rather than just the empathy they would be receiving from their White peers, if that. Many times there can be anger and resentment when dealing with daily racial offenses and this support system allows these students to work through those feelings and is also a means of which to obtain a break from the offenses (Tatum, 1997).

The next component of positive reinforcement in the self-affirmation process, identity navigation, is the main factor which leads African American students to self-affirm. As Tatum (1997) discusses, there is normally a series of events which have occurred leading these students to want to self-segregate. I argue these events lead students to subconsciously self-affirm by surrounding themselves with others who share similar values of self-worth. She offers an example of her son and his realization of being African American to describe this very process.

She begins by explaining how at a young age her son identifies himself as being tall for his age. He does this because everyone he meets someone for the first time reaffirms this for him. During his introduction to someone he begins with his name and then states his age and that he is tall for his age. Tatum (1997) then brings a futuristic example of her son and the racism he will encounter, as many others do on a daily basis. She describes him walking down the street as

a young man, dressed in attire as many young African American males dress currently. She paints the picture of a White woman approaching him and crossing the street as she gets closer to him while clutching on to her purse.

Tatum (1997) gives a very clear picture of this incident as an example of the daily racism which forces her son from identifying himself, as he once did, as tall to identifying himself as African American. She also states because of incidents like these African American students tend to self-segregate or as I have re-termed the phenomenon, self-affirm.

"Membership in valued social groups is often a major source of individuals' sense of self-integrity" (Cohen et al., 2006, p. 1307). For African American students self-affirmation is a means of which they are able to negotiate what their race means to them and not be subjected to the identifiers the majority of society gives them (Tatum, 1997). The global perception of themselves is re-negotiated in this space to a positive self-identification of who they are and deem themselves to be. This need and desire to self-affirm mimics that of Banks' (2004) ideas surrounding global citizenship in a diverse society. As stated by Banks (2004), "citizens in a diverse democratic society should be able to maintain attachments to their cultural communities as well as participate effectively in the shared national culture" (p. 291). Self-affirmation allows for the continual attachment to one's own culture while functioning in a diverse society.

Cohen et al. (2006) in a randomized, two-way blind experimental study with seventh graders found a self-affirmation intervention can reduce a psychological threat and increase academic performance. While this intervention was administered via the teachers who participated in the study, my study focuses on another demographic of students and what their interventions look like. As these written assignments were an intervention for these low-middle class African American students, the culturally specific events/activities, environments, and

social peer networks are examples of self-induced interventions by African American college students.

A two year follow-up was also conducted by Cohen et al. (2009) of the original study and the findings were consistent. While low-performing African American seventh/eighth graders were found to have had the most academically gained from the intervention, this study could offer implications for first-generation, bridge transition African American college students when the process of self-affirmation is welcomed, encouraged, and systematically put in place by collegiate administration.

The last positive attribute of self-affirmation comes from sociology literature. In their study of self-segregation versus clustering, Hod and Nakar (2002) state "a remarkable conclusion deduced from the Evolutionary Minority Game (EMG) is that a populations of competing agents tends to self segregate… it was realized that in order to flourish in such situations an agent should behave in an extreme way" (p. 1). As pointed out by the authors the competing agents or in terms of my research the competing races had to self-segregate in order to be successful. Again, I argue the success is not because they decided to self-segregate but because they, consciously or unconsciously, chose to self-affirm. The extreme manner in which they are acting is not to place themselves in an exclusive group, but to place themselves in a position where they can have a psychological immune system equipped to handle whatever comes their way.

**Four P's**

I identified four major points or reference of implication from the higher education, psychological and law literatures concerning self-segregation in support of why these culturally specific events/activities, environments and social peer networks are not acts of self-segregation. I refer to these four major points as the four P's: policy, perpetuation, preference, and

psychological effects. These four implications in the higher education literature all fail to take into consideration the minorities need to self-segregate. This gap alone, allows for once again a misrepresentation of the need for survival, but is viewed as a means of defiance. I identify these culturally specific events/activities, environments and social peer networks. African American students participate during their collegiate careers as self-affirmation.

**Policy.** I begin with the first of the four P's: policy. Many of the same trends of being 'hands-off' when it comes to desegregation continued to take place after desegregation was ordered in education. It is important to look at the trends post-desegregation as it offers a trend in policy and leads to this idea of resegregation. This resegregation occurring in the American public school system speaks to the self-segregation process. For example, until 1988 the number of African Americans attending White schools steadily increased, but then suddenly began to decrease (Cherminsky, 2002). Erwin Cherminsky (2002) notes, in *The Segregation and Resegregation of American Public Education: The Court's Rule*, two main causes for the trend of segregation to take place in America's public school system: lack of presidential attention and segregated housing.

In his article Cherminsky (2002) places special attention on the lack of involvement of the United States' presidents to segregation in America's schools. Following the advances toward desegregation which occurred until the 70's, former president's Reagan, Bush, and Clinton ignored the bigger problem within the educational system instead of focusing on the root of the issue: segregation. He continues with noting the other main issue, segregated housing, as a major contributor to segregation. In the American school system the neighborhood school is a part of the educational structure. Students tend to attend the schools in their areas, traveling short distances from home to school each day. Segregated housing has caused for segregated education

as well. The dual systems of education have reappeared by way of the neighborhood school (Cherminsky, 2002).

These two main issues have caused three problems to occur within desegregation. White flight, Northern states being segregated, and unequal funding quickly arose as feeders to the already resegregating educational system. Housing segregation was able to have an impact on a large scale because of White flight. “A racial separation of cities and suburbs result[ed] in[to] segregated school systems” (Cherminsky, 2002, p1605) leaving African Americans and other minorities to reside in the city and the Whites to their mono-racial refuge of the suburbs. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) focuses only on ending segregation within a district and does not consider interdistrict desegregation. Interdistrict desegregation would be necessary in order to achieve desegregation as White flight has allowed a means for which Whites can still segregate themselves despite the law (Cherminsky, 2002).

While White flight was occurring all over the United States another issue surfaced: Northern schools were segregated, but never participated in Jim Crow laws. In my opinion, this issue was one which was very great because it was difficult to combat legally. In the South *separate but equal* was no longer constitutional and could not be legally justified, but in the North where there was never a stated practice of *separate but equal* many were separate and unequal. “Northern school systems were generally segregated; the issue was what plaintiffs had to prove for courts to provide a remedy” (Cherminsky, 2002, p.1609). For example, in *Keyes v. School District, No. 1, Denver, CO* (1973) it was ruled “plaintiffs must prove intentional segregative acts affecting a substantial part of the school system” (Cherminsky, 2002, p.1609). According to this decision, plaintiffs had to prove a violation of the Equal Protection Clause was occurring.

The third and final problem which surfaced was unequal funding. Unequal funding in the school systems is based on "education [being] substantially funded by local property taxes. Wealthier suburbs have significantly larger tax bases than poor inner cities. The result is that suburbs can tax at a lower rate and still have a great deal to spend on education. Cities must tax at a higher rate and… have less to spend" (Cherminsky, 2002, p. 1611). The White students whose parents practiced White flight are receiving a better education via better textbooks and more money being spent on each student versus the African American students in the city. This very issue was argued in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973). It was found unequal funding in education was not a violation of the Equal Protection Clause as education is not a constitutional right and access to an education is still being granted (Cherminsky, 2002).

As cases continued to be heard before the courts such as *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), and *Kadrmas v. Dickinson Public Schools* (1988) upon reaching the 1990's resegregation took an even larger gain in the educational system. As with the *Board of Education v. Dowell* in 1991 the Court stated in its ruling once a unitary system of education has been reached desegregation mandates can be lifted. I find it very difficult to understand how one would know when a unitary system has been reached as the Court failed to provide a measure or definition of what that means or looks like in practice. Despite the suspicion that lifting the order would lead to resegregation the Court made the decision any way (*Board of Education v. Dowell*). Many cases followed and the same decision was granted and the lower courts followed the example set before them. Desegregation mandates across the United States have been lifted continuing through the new millennium (Brown, 2001). There are also several cases after 1991 which also demonstrate a resegregation in the U.S.: *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992), *Missouri v. Jenkins*

(1995), and *People Who Care v. Rockford Board of Education* (2001) (Brown, 2001, 2002 & Cherminsky, 2002).

If resegregation occurs completely, as it seems to be on its way, then I argue self-segregation will not be far off as students are currently being segregated involuntarily due to funding, White flight, and lack of involvement by the U.S. government to enforce desegregation. I argue this resegregation of education provides room for African American and other minorities to feel as self-segregation is the ideal situation for them. I feel this force of resegregation will promote minorities to self-segregate because of the daily opposition they face in a society which seems to want separate and unequal, bringing the perpetuation of segregation to foster.

**Perpetuation.** The second implication of self-segregation is the perpetuation theory, as defined by Braddock (1980) and Wells and Crain (1994), is a sociological theory that is both micro and macro. The micro aspects of the theory focus on the racial fear and distrust by isolated minorities towards Whites and society in general. The macro aspects look at the flow of information and opportunities occurring in interpersonal networks. As noted by Wells and Crain (1994), the theories main focus is "how individual agents adjust their behavior to accommodate, and thus perpetuate, these constraints, and how exposure to integrated settings can change this behavior" (p. 533). Wells and Crain found the results of twenty-one studies previously conducted on behavioral outcomes of segregation where the earlier a child is exposed to a desegregated educational setting the more likely they are to choose a desegregated college (Wells & Crain, 1994). As stated by LaVeist (2003) in his study, families, living in mono-racial neighborhoods will reside in those same neighborhoods and areas, passing down a perpetual segregation for generations.

Perpetual segregation also occurs in the academic realm as well, as explained by LaVeists' (2003) study of longevity and segregation when applied to the idea of behaviors and segregation to education. "Minority students who have not regularly experienced the realities of desegregation may overestimate the degree of overt hostility they will encounter or underestimate their skill at coping with strains in interracial situations… these students will make choices that maintain physical segregation when they become adults because they have never tested their racial belief" (Braddock, 1980, p. 181 as cited by Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533). Braddock finds "segregation tends to repeat itself across stages of the life cycle and across institutions when individuals have not had sustained experiences in desegregated settings earlier in life" (Braddock, 1980, p. 181 as cited by Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533). One thing which Braddock failed to consider is are these decisions to segregate conscious or unconscious and are they willingly done by African Americans. Wells and Crain (1994) touch on this gap in the literature a little but even point out their own limitations within their study. They state more research needs to be done at the local level in order to understand the various impacts the many desegregation plans have had on African American students.

**Preference.** While perpetuation of segregation can be passed down through generations, some feel this concept of self-segregation is as simple as preference to be in the company of one's own race. In two different studies Clark (1991) and Ihalanfedlt and Scafidi (2002) tested this concept of preference as a motivator for self-segregation in their study on African American self-segregation as a cause of housing segregation. Ihalanfedlt and Scafidi (2002) conducted a Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) focusing on Atlanta, Detroit, and Los Angeles. They used the Schelling segregation model (1971) which states "minor variations in nonrandom preferences (or choices) can lead in the aggregate to distinct patterns of segregation in society…

the notion of slight differences in preferences could lead to strikingly polarized results" (Clark, 1991, p. 1).

When the Schelling segregation model is applied to housing it means households move to neighborhoods which they prefer the racial composition, but when the make-up of the neighborhood begins to change, pushing their preference limits, they will move away (Clark, 1991; Ihalanfedlt & Scafidi, 2002).

Ihalanfedlt and Scafidi (2002) also use the Black self-segregation hypothesis as the foundation for which to base their study. This hypothesis states African Americans have a desire to live with people of their race only. The authors do point out there is "no direct evidence of the validity of the Black self-segregation hypothesis" (Ihalanfedlt & Scafidi, 2002, p. 2002). While I found this hypothesis interesting and never knew it existed before now, I question why the authors chose to use it in their research if they knowingly are aware it lacks validity. The authors also fail to offer a definition of self-segregation, as all others failed to do so as well.

In collecting data for the study the authors used the data to estimate models to explain racial composition of the neighborhoods which African Americans chose to live. A card test was administered to African Americans to measure their racial preferences for neighborhoods they would like to reside. The cards depicted different neighborhood racial compositions of African Americans and Whites. The authors found the African American participants in the study felt they resided in cities more segregated than they preferred. This finding "suggests that factors other than just Black self-segregation are contributing to housing segregation" and they offer six other factors which can contribute to all-African American neighborhoods (Ihlanfeldt & Scafidi, 2002, p. 380).

The authors also conducted another test for White participants in the study as well. The test administered here was slightly different from the one administered to African Americans. In this test Whites were given a proposed neighborhood racial composition to imagine they currently resided. Starting with showing the participants an all-White racial make-up of the neighborhood, the authors continued to show them different neighborhood compositions adding one African American household to each scenario, or card shown. The authors were trying to find at which point Whites begin to feel uncomfortable with the neighborhood composition and state they will choose to relocate. Results showed that some Whites would be uncomfortable with one African American family residing in the neighborhood and others would be comfortable living in a neighborhood one-third African American (Ihlanfeldt & Scafidi, 2002).

A major concern that needs to be discussed is the test conducted for the White participants is very different from the one for African Americans. While the authors do state the reason to be they are using data from MCSUI and that the data did not contain a measure preference for Whites was conducted with the card test, I feel this could have been the opportune time for them to replicate the study and offer something new to the field (Ihlanfeldt & Scafidi, 2002). I could not help but feel the study was biased in a way. Ultimately, the study asked White participants what their African American limit is in terms of neighborhood composition. I could not help but wonder if given the same card test given to African Americans if the results could have been different.

Overall, the results of the study demonstrate African American self-segregation plays a minor role in segregation in the housing market. I would have liked the study to offer a section on why the African Americans feel the segregated areas which they reside exist, especially since the results showed they felt they were living in more segregated areas then they liked. In addition

to that, I would have also found it interesting to know if the other six factors the authors stated as contributors to self-segregation were ones they felt were contributors as well: racial differences in the ability to afford housing, demographic differences between Blacks and Whites, occupational differences between Blacks and Whites, racial differences in preferences for housing and neighborhood attributes other than the racial composition of the neighborhood, housing and mortgage market discrimination, and hostility against Blacks in White neighborhoods. I feel this could have been extremely beneficial when trying to figure out why African Americans appear to be self-segregating in the housing market. The factors alone give implication the self-segregation could be forced and structurally in place in the housing market.

**Psychological.** The psychological implication of segregation toward self-segregation is one which focuses on identity. In *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race*, Beverly Tatum (1997) uses William Cross' psychology of nigrescence to explain the process of developing a Black identity. The psychology of nigrescence occurs in several stages: *pre-encounter*, *encounter*, *immersion/emersion*, *internalization*, and *internalization-commitment*. According to Tatum (1997), the process of exploring one's identity usually takes place in the adolescence phase. She also states that it can occur later in life throughout adulthood and African Americans may constantly go back and forth throughout the stages. She also points out that a person can get stuck in a stage and never advance to the other stages in this African American identity development. In this process of identity development different realizations happen to an African American person in each stage. In the pre-encounter stage a person has not yet gained a personal significance or social significance of their racial group's membership to larger society and their racial identity is still uncertain (Tatum, 1997). It is at this point that the African American adolescent or adult has not yet had an event or series of

events to push them toward identifying themselves with a racial concept. In the encounter stage, this series of events which force an adolescent to acknowledge their ‘Blackness’ occurs. African Americans self-segregate in this stage because of the personal out casting they have encountered constantly, possibly even the segregation they have witnessed or been subjected. The self-segregation occurs in this stage in order to protect oneself from further offense (Tatum, 1997).

Cross and Tatum differ in opinion on when African Americans typically go through the *pre-encounter* stage. Cross believes the encounter stage occurs in early adulthood, on the other hand, Tatum believes this stage can occur as early as junior high or high school (Tatum, 1997). I am in agreement with Tatum concerning when this stage takes place as I experienced the encounter stage in seventh grade after transferring schools when during a parent-teacher conference my parents and I were told my vocabulary was not up to par when I speak or write. I am aware Tatum and Cross both believe these stages occur throughout one’s life span and can be re-visited constantly, I agree with this as well as I constantly went through and continue to go through the encounter stage.

The next stage of nigrescence is *immersion/emersion*. In this stage African Americans tend to have a strong desire and/or motivation to surround themselves with symbols promoting African pride or African American pride. At this stage African Americans are empowering themselves through gaining history and knowledge about their culture. Self-segregation may occur in this stage as African Americans are empowering and building a sense of pride about their identity, they are only wanting to surround themselves with other African Americans negotiating their identities to help reinforce their own self-identity as well as sympathize with them. A sense of community and understanding is developed in this stage. As I have discussed earlier in my paper, it is in this stage which an oppositional social identity can be formed. A

disconnect with White peers or White people can begin to form as African Americans are unlearning the stereotypes which have been forced upon them and they have internalized. Self-segregation can also be a means of acting out this oppositional social identity. As pride and empowerment has been built so can a sense of anger and resentment. These feelings have been built inside of African Americans from the exclusion from participation in society. An example of these exclusions are racial profiling, tracking in educational systems, microaggressions and discrimination. (Tatum, 1997).

Moving from *immersion/emersion* to the next stage *internalization*, African Americans are now comfortable with their African American or Black identity. They can establish and re-build relationships with their White peers or White people they once felt completely disconnected and un-relatable. The cross-racial relationships can only be established when a common respect has been reached between the two concerning the African Americans self-defined identity.

The final stage of the psychology of nigrescence is *internalization/commitment*. In this stage African Americans have learned to bring their newly defined racial identity to their larger African American community. They devote themselves to the issues and concerns within the African American community and their place in society as whole (Tatum, 1997).

The stages which Cross and Tatum identify are ones, I myself, feel I have been going back and forth through my life to this point. It is the exploration of my own identity and commitment to community which have ultimately drawn me to my dissertation topic. While everything I have read in the literature has been extremely helpful in gaining more knowledge on self-segregation I feel there is much left to be explored.

When thinking about the psychology of nigrescence, I wondered about the spaces students self-affirm and this lead me to discover alternative learning spaces. Alternative learning became an option for African American students at PWIs due to the racism and discrimination they experienced on a daily basis. These students looked outside of their normal academic spaces and activities in search of another means of which to be educated and have their intellect appreciated. These alternative spaces or third places as discussed by Oldenburg (1991, 2001) are spaces where people can come and go as they please and be comfortable. Ethelene Whitmire (2006) conducted a study at a research one PWI in the Midwest to see if the library can be an alternative space or third space for African Americans. While I am in disagreement with her findings that the library is an alternative space for African Americans based strictly on their occupying the space for its function, I do feel the study speaks to my dissertation. The idea of the third space/alternative space itself can also be applied to students need or want to self-segregate. The definition itself of the third space/alternative space as a space where students feel comfortable can also relate to my dissertation in looking at self-segregation as a form of self-determination. While these are my ideas or hypotheses, this is something I am hoping to uncover in my dissertation.

Another form of alternative learning for African American students in higher education is their choice of extra-curricular activities. As was quoted by Harper (2005) in his article *Leading the Way: Inside the Experiences of High-Achieving African American Male Students*, an African American male student expresses this:

> "I began to see involvement as a process for learning, and I knew that if I got involved in this process I would be a better person than when I started college" (Harper, 2005, p. 11).

While there are many other benefits identified by Harper (2005) as to why African American males participate in extra-curricular or outside activities, he emphasizes Richard Light's work on "the powerful ways that out-of-class experiences affect undergraduate student learning and insists that those who enjoy the most profound and enduring outcomes are actively engaged inside and outside of the classroom" (p. 10).

As Harper (2005) expressed the importance of extra-curricular activities to the psychology of African American college students, as previously discussed, the higher education, law and psychology literatures also produced several other ideas and concepts regarding African American education, self-motivation and success. These literatures allowed me to tackle my research questions through four concepts/ideas:

1. the turmoil of the history of African American education
2. the HBCUs role/goal in African American education
3. complexities/legalities of African Americans at PWIs
4. self-segregation redefined as self-affirmation with influences of policy, perpetuation, preference and psychological effects.

In the next chapter I explain my methodological approach to my study.