EXPLORING PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN LATE ADOLESCENTS TRANSITIONING BETWEEN THE HOME AND UNIVERSITY CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN LATE ADOLESCENTS TRANSITIONING BETWEEN THE HOME AND UNIVERSITY CONTEXTS

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the transitions that second year African American college students make as they move from home to a university context where they are underrepresented. It also focused on how ethnic-racial socialization processes and biculturalism served as buffers in the university context. The proposed study had two main goals. The first goal was to examine their perspectives as late adolescents on cultural differences between their home and university experiences, focusing on whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. The second goal was to explore how African Americans in late adolescence may understand messages about race in the home context and how these messages may affect transitions to college.

In-depth individual interviews were conducted and used as the primary method of data collection for this study. In addition, a focus group session provided member checking opportunity and served to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study. The focus group was also used as a secondary data source to corroborate the key findings from the individual interviews.

The Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory and the Multiple Worlds Typology were utilized as theoretical foundations for this research. For studies involving African American youth, it is essential to utilize cultural ecological perspectives to account for cultural variances. By integrating aspects of both theories, cultural features in protective factors that may

serve as buffers for African American youth in these home-university transitions could be explored.

Results revealed a number of challenges posed by cultural differences and protective factors for African American college students when transitioning to an institution where students of color were underrepresented. The risk factors that African American students were exposed to in the university context were highlighted, along with the coping strategies used to combat risk factors and promote successful transitions from the home to the university. The implications addressed factors that influence university policy through programmatic implementations. Results have implications for faculty, staff, and universities to create culturally inclusive educational environments for African American college students.

To
My Beloved Mother

Words are not enough to express the unconditional love that exists between a mother and a daughter – Author Unknown. Thank you so much for setting the foundation for me to excel academically. You postponed your dreams so that I could pursue mine and for that I am forever grateful. I am the woman I am because of you. I love and miss you more and more each day. Until we meet again…Rest in Heaven.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There have been an increasing number of scholars researching culturally relevant child socialization practices (Hughes and Chen, 1997; Murry et al., 2005; Spencer, 1995). The Census Bureau estimates that in 2010, the ethnic minority population represented 28% of the total population; it estimates that by 2025, this will increase to 42% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As the United States continues to become more diverse, researchers and policymakers have become increasingly interested in understanding the mechanisms and processes that help shape how youth make meaning of their identities as it relates to their racialized experiences within educational contexts. In particular, research on ethnic-racial socialization practices in African American families has been growing tremendously (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Miller, 1999; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; McHale et al., 2006). Messages transmitted from parents to youth about race, ethnicity, and culture are critical elements of Black parental socialization practices (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Lesane, 2002).

Ethnic-racial socialization contributes to the strength and resilience of Black youth through messages, behaviors, and attitudes transmitted by ethnic minority parents (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Lesane, 2002). The messages transmitted to Black youth from their parents are intended to buffer against the negative effects of racial inequalities on youth of color, particularly when navigating between multiple contexts (i.e. home and university contexts). With an increasing number of Black youth attending predominantly White institutions, there is a greater need for protective factors that may combat distal factors that cause harmful effects on them in the university context.

Research indicates that Black youth successfully navigate between their own culture and the dominant culture when protective factors are used to resist racial inequalities across home

and school contexts (Carter, 2005; Carter, 2008). Black youth become aware of the reality of racism and discrimination through personal experiences and through their families (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999).

The constructs of racial identity development and ethnic-racial socialization have become essential for understanding the psychological, social, and educational experiences of Black[1] youth. These youth are faced with integrating into the mainstream by immersing themselves in the beliefs and values of the dominant culture, while creating a separate sense of self and connecting with their own cultural community as a shield against racism. As a result, it is important to promote culturally relevant protective factors in Black youth to promote resilience when transitioning between contexts (Myers & Taylor, 1998).

This study expanded past research by exploring how ethnic-racial socialization processes are connected to bicultural identities (i.e. the construction of adaptive identities used to aid in successful navigation from the home to the university context, and how they may provide influential protective buffering for African Americans during late adolescence when transitioning between multiple contexts (i.e. home and university). It also focused on late adolescent perspectives of ethnic-racial socialization messages within Black families and how these processes engender agency across both contexts. By addressing protective strategies that promote academic success in Black youth, this research offers an important contribution to the field.

Statement of the Problem and Significance of Study

Mainstream research has failed to acknowledge the importance of culturally relevant parenting practices in African American families[2] (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003). Majority of mainstream research is based on the expectations and perspectives of middle-class,

[1] Black and African American will be used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.
[2] In this thesis, family is defined as parents, siblings, and/or other relatives (grandparents, cousins, aunts, or uncles) residing in the home context. Parents are defined as the adult caregivers in the home.

European American youth and families (Lerner et. al, 2003). When exploring the role of context in development in ethnic minorities, it is important to examine the dynamic interplay between context and development, the interplay between and across contexts, and the nature of developmental change and trajectory through a culturally relevant lens. This research study addressed this limitation by focusing on the identity construction of African Americans during late adolescence across home and university contexts. It also explored their experiences surrounding the protective messages they received about race from their families when transitioning from the home to the university context.

Research on African Americans has historically focused on deficit, dysfunction, and disparity related to single-parent households (Cherlin, 2010; Hoover, 2007; Thomson & McLanahan, 2012), lack of academic achievements (Casanova, Garcia-Linares, De La Torre, & De La Villa Corpio, 2005), and youth involvement within the criminal justice system (Pardini & Loeber, 2008). However, it fails to highlight the processes, behaviors, and attitudes transmitted by parents that contribute to the strength and resilience of Black youth transitioning between contexts (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999). This study countered deficit research in the field by focusing on strength-based protective processes that promote resilience within Black families.

Research that has been conducted on culturally relevant parenting practices and racial identities of African American families has been primarily quantitative in nature (Bennett, 2006; Brown, Linver, Evans, & DeGannaro, 2009; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001). Qualitative exploration is necessary to examine the complex nature of bicultural identity construction experiences and the impact of ethnic-racial socialization messages on the lives of Black youth. This research study addresses gaps in the literature by utilizing a qualitative approach with a focus on the experiences of the participants.

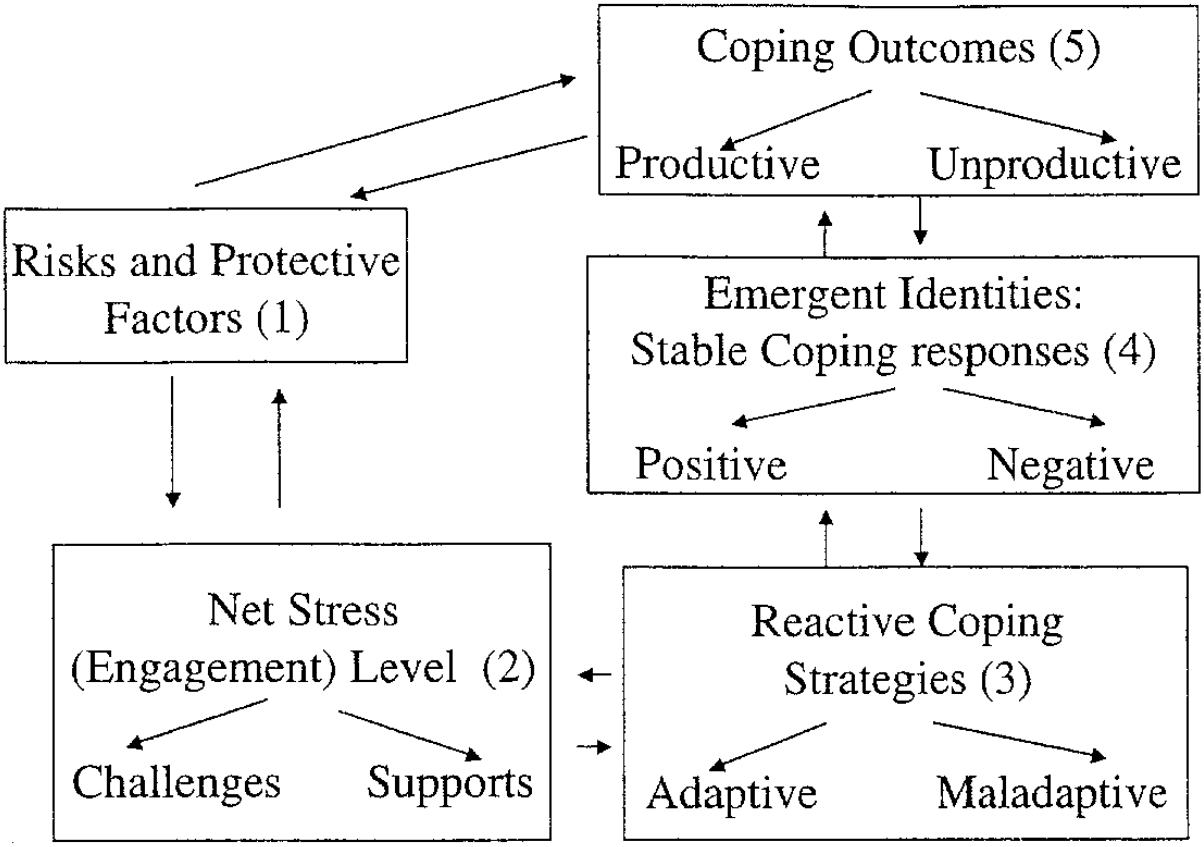
Past research focuses on the quantitative relations between racial variables and academic outcomes (Bennett, 2006; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellars, 2006; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), which is beneficial for implications for education as it pertains to Black youth. However, the literature has failed to explore the qualitative experiences that Black youth have had with ethnic-racial socialization messages and whether these messages are linked to their abilities to adapt in multiple contexts. This study focuses on Black youth having the agency to resist the effects of racism and discrimination by constructing bicultural identities while transitioning to the university context. It also focuses on how these identities may have been shaped by home centered ethnic-racial socialization messages.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that utilized in this study were the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (Spencer, 1995) and the Multiple Worlds Typology (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). When assessing African American youth, it is essential to utilize cultural ecological perspectives to account for cultural variances. By integrating aspects of both theories, cultural variances were addressed by exploring the protective factors promoted within the African American family context that may serve as strategies for African American youth navigating between the home and university contexts.

Phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory. Spencer's (1995) Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) is based on an identity focused cultural ecological perspective. Designed to foster healthy development in ethnic minority youth, this perspective intricately connects culture, social context, and developmental trajectories (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1: PVEST Theoretical Model (Spencer, 1995)

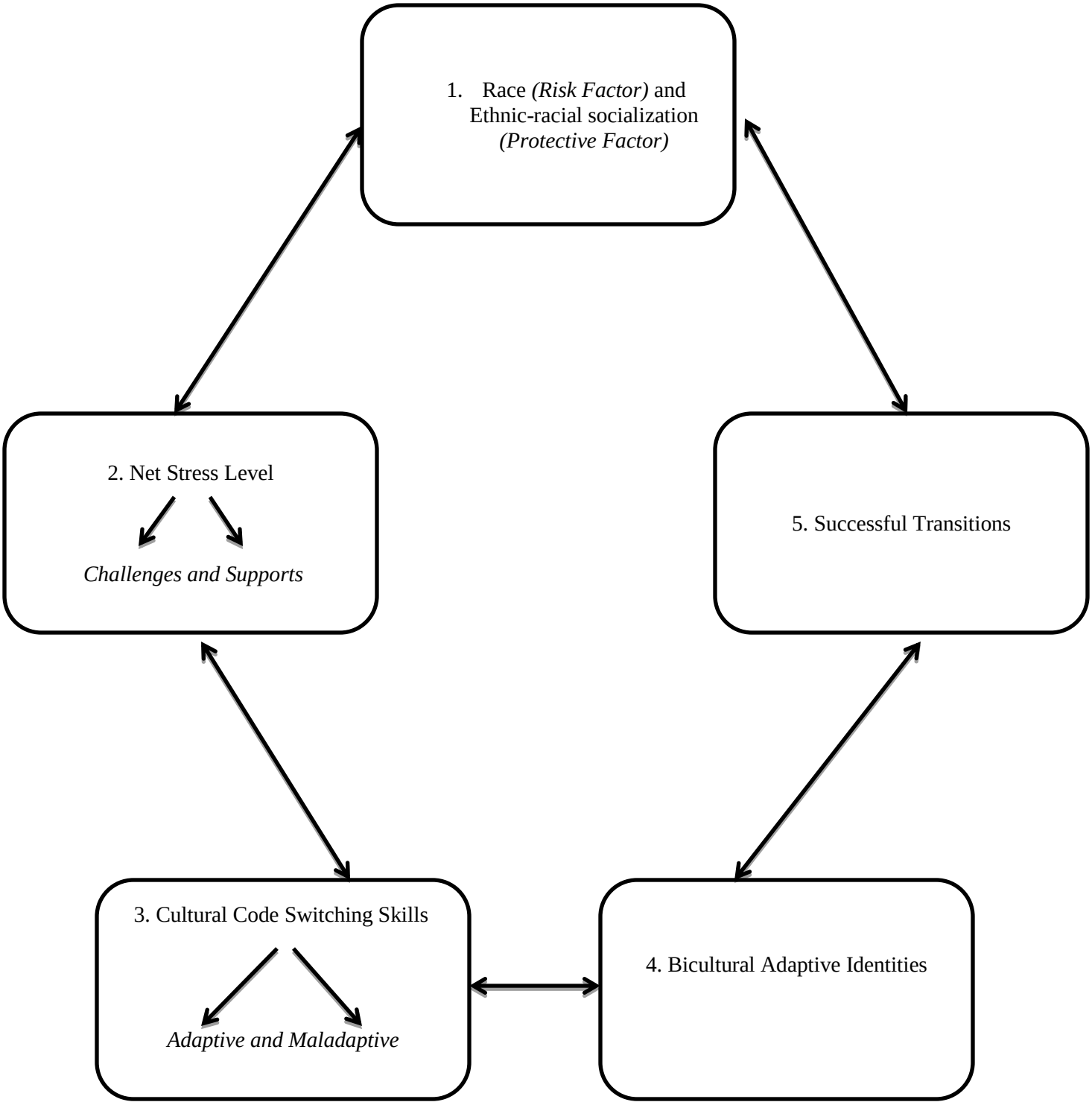


The PVEST invokes Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1992) combined with the self-organization and phenomenological perspectives, and connects context with identity formation in ethnic minority youth. This framework is a continuous and cyclical process across the lifespan as individuals redefine their identities, transition through various contexts, and come into contact with new stressors, risks, and reactive coping strategies. This framework was useful to the present study in examining the connection between ethnic-racial socialization messages and bicultural identity construction that yields successful navigation between contexts within the microsystem. A cultural lens was utilized to examine how proximal processes impact developmental outcomes for ethnic minority youth and focuses on how ethnic minority youth adapt and construct identities within and between various contexts. These identities serve as

protective factors that buffer against environmental stressors. The construction of adaptive identities is important when examining how macro-level distal factors impact coping outcomes in ethnic minorities.

PVEST refers to a multilayered system that consists of five components dynamically interconnected in a cyclic bidirectional model used to explore the construction of identity across contexts (Spencer, 1995; Spencer, Harpalani, Fegley, Dell'Angelo, & Seaton, 2002). The home and university contexts are both embedded within this multilayered system; however, the five components of the PVEST may differ across contexts. For this study, the researcher has developed a conceptual model framed by the PVEST (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: PVEST Conceptual Model



The first component includes risks and protective factors. Risk factors, such as race and/or socioeconomic status, may be detrimental to African American youth across contexts causing them to be more vulnerable. In the university context, African American students are at risk for experiencing racial inequalities that may contribute to academic underachievement. Protective factors such as ethnic-racial socialization messages transmitted within the family context, buffer against these risk factors.

The second component in the PVEST model is the net stress level. This component refers to the events and experiences within the microsystem that may be detrimental to the well-being of an African American and the supports accessible to deal with these challenges. For example, racial inequalities may be challenging for African American youth within the school context, but having the bicultural skills to adapt in multiple contexts where there may be cultural discontinuity between these contexts may help to combat these barriers. Ethnic-racial socialization messages and support systems within the context of family are utilized to help buffer these risk factors as well.

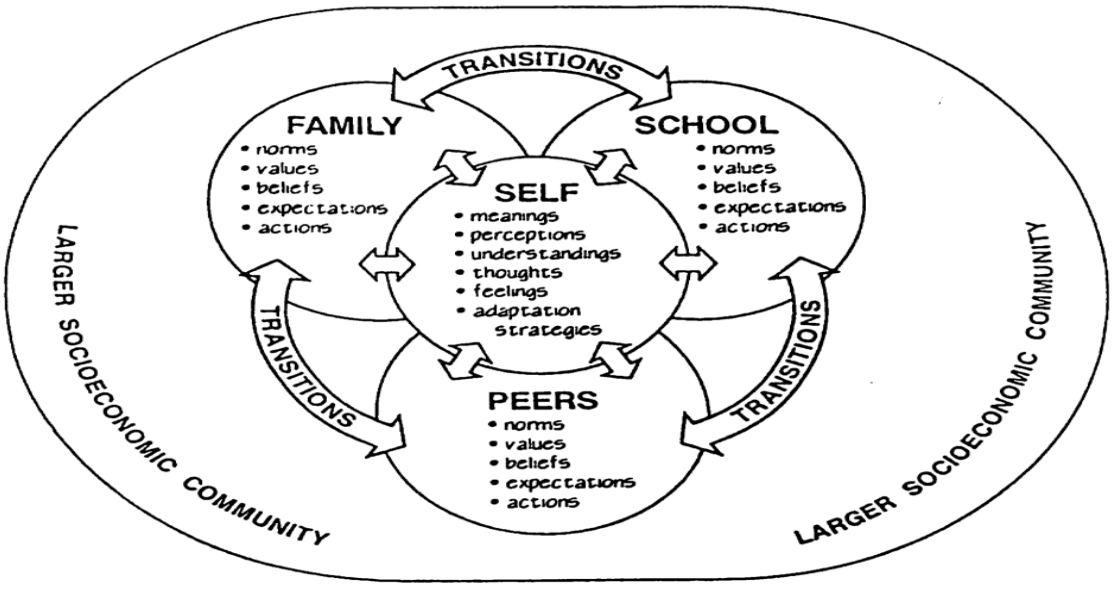
The third component of the PVEST model is defined by reactive coping strategies. According to Spencer (1995), stressful experiences are necessary for youth to learn reactive coping strategies to use during events or experiences that may cause dissonance. These problem solving strategies include solutions that may be adaptive and maladaptive depending upon the context. An example of reactive coping strategies may include African American students obtaining the bicultural, adaptive skills needed to be able to successfully navigate between the home and school contexts. A set of skills may serve as a maladaptive reactive coping strategy in one context, and later serve as an adaptive reactive coping strategy in another context. For example, obtaining the bicultural, adaptive skills to gain access to Black communities may serve

as an adaptive reactive coping strategy in the home context, but may be maladaptive in the school context.

The fourth component in the PVEST model refers to emergent identities. This is based on the perceptions that Black youth have of their identities within and between contexts in the microsystem. These identities may be constructed based on socialization messages about the cultural codes and adaptive skills deemed as appropriate when transitioning between contexts. If Black youth are able to construct bicultural, adaptive identities, which may also be used as protective factors, they will be able to obtain healthy, productive coping outcomes manifested across contexts. Successful transitions would be linked to productive coping outcomes. This makes up the fifth component of the model.

Multiple worlds typology. In addition to the PVEST, the Multiple Worlds Typology was also utilized in this study. The Multiple Worlds Typology examines the transitions of youth navigating between multiple worlds such as the home context, the school context, and the peer context (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Multiple Worlds Typology Theoretical Model (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998)



This framework posits that transitions across multiple contexts affect the way individuals construct their sense of self. The Multiple Worlds Typology was created based on aspects of the Cultural Compatibility Theory to highlight contextual factors that may inhibit ethnic minority students from optimally connecting with the school context. The Cultural Compatibility Theory states that most ethnic minority students struggle with the pressures of having incongruent home and school contexts, which contributes to them having negative academic outcomes. The cultural differences in values, beliefs, language, and/or appropriate behaviors in the home may differ from what is deemed as appropriate in the school context. Conflicts may arise when ethnic minority students are required to act in ways in the school that may be incongruent with the home. In contrast, Phelan et al. (1998) believed that although many ethnic minority students struggled with discontinuity between the home and school contexts, many of them were able to successfully transition and navigate across these contexts. These transitions are influenced by borders and boundaries faced by these individuals.

Borders are encountered when the cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors used in one context are more highly valued than those used in another context (Phelan et al., 1998). When boundaries are present, adapting one set of cultural standards is not valued over another set of cultural standards. Boundaries are neutral, but can be transformed into borders when it becomes a privilege to adapt one set of cultural standards over another. When borders exist, it may be difficult for students to adapt across contexts if there is cultural discontinuity, which could hinder academic success.

Borders that may impede success for students within the school context include sociocultural borders, socioeconomic borders, psychosocial borders, linguistic borders, gender borders, heterosexist borders, and structural borders (Phelan et al., 1998). Socio-cultural borders

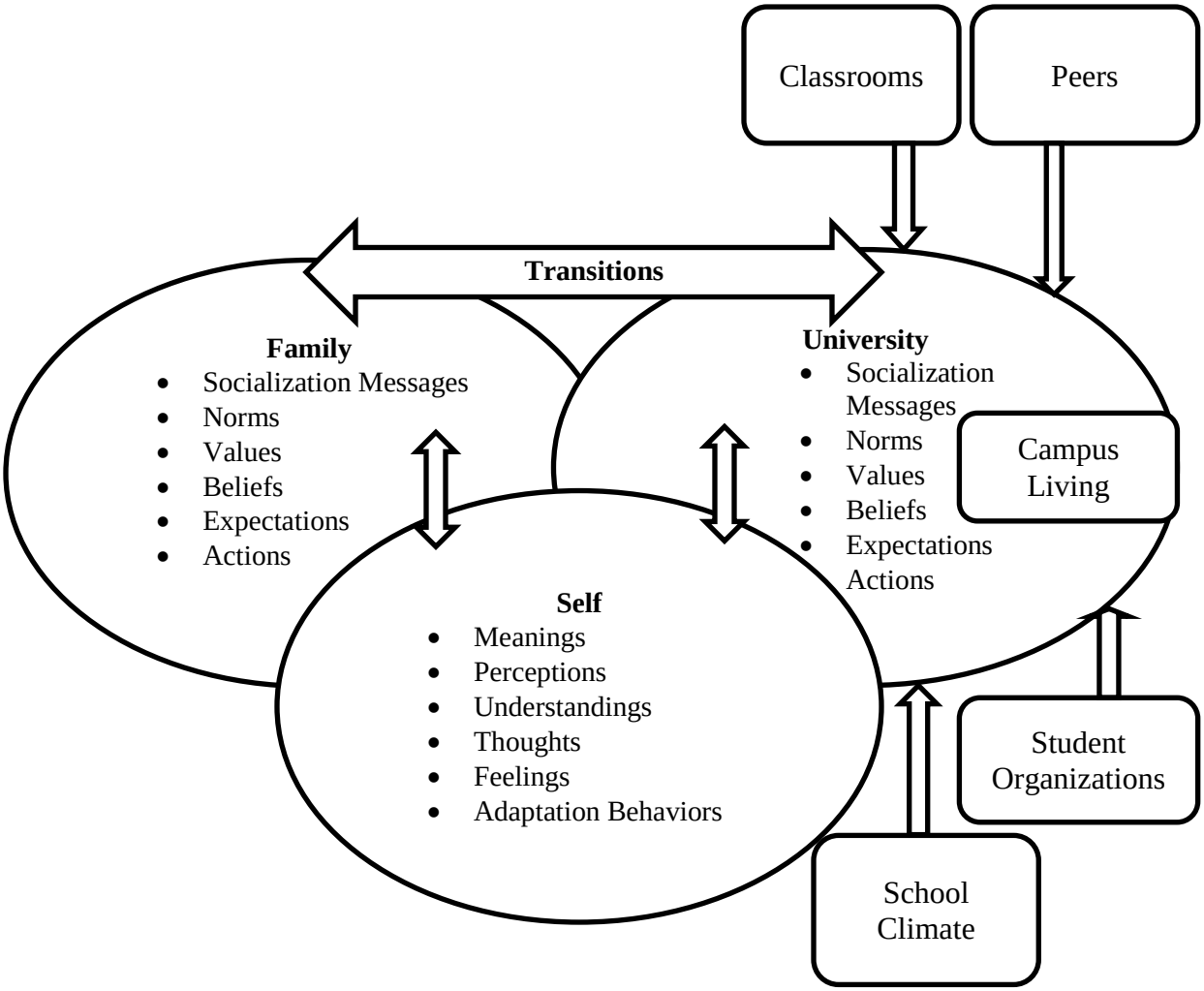
occur when an individual's culture is deemed as inferior to the dominant culture. Socioeconomic borders exist when an individual comes from a family having lower levels of financial security. There may be a difference between individuals having lower levels of financial resources versus the levels of financial resources of their peers.

Psychosocial borders exist when a student has a psychological issue that may contribute to underachievement in the school context. Linguistic borders exist when an individual speaks a different language other than the dominant language taught within the school context. The language may be viewed as inferior to the Standard English language spoken in the school context. Gender borders exist when one gender is valued over another. Heterosexual borders exist when one kind of sexuality is valued over another. Structural borders exist in the school as a result of contextual factors and inequalities that impact a student's ability to achieve academic success. Perceived borders and boundaries are intricately connected to transition patterns.

Transitions are navigating patterns that a student exhibits when moving between contexts. As youth transition between multiple worlds or contexts, there are six different transition patterns that they may exhibit. Transition patterns include congruent worlds/smooth transitions, congruent worlds/resisted transitions, different worlds/managed transitions, different worlds/smooth transitions, different worlds/difficult transitions, and different worlds/resisted transitions (Phelan et al., 1998). Youth with congruent worlds/smooth transitions have cultural codes that are similar and continuous when navigating between contexts. An individual having congruent worlds/smooth transitions will have similar cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors between the home and school contexts. Youth with congruent worlds/resisted transitions have cultural similarities across multiple contexts but lack the motivation to successfully transition and display resistance as a result. Youth with different worlds/ managed transitions are able to

successfully manage differences between contexts by utilizing bicultural adaptive behaviors when navigating between contexts. They are able to manage their transitions, because they can identify when one cultural mode is valued over another and can behave appropriately based on the cultural mode deemed most valuable in a given context. Youth with different worlds/smooth transitions are able to successfully navigate between multiple contexts effortlessly, although their home and school contexts are different. They blend aspects of each context, which enables them to navigate between contexts with ease. Youth with different worlds/ difficult transitions have trouble navigating between multiple contexts due to the lack of congruency. They tend to struggle with transitioning between contexts because of the discontinuity between contexts. Youth with different worlds/resisted transitions refuse to engage in the school context, as a result of the lack of cultural compatibility between their worlds. The transition pattern most relevant to this study is the different worlds/managed transitions due to the bicultural adaptive behaviors used when navigating between contexts. For this study, the researcher has developed a conceptual model framed by the Multiple Worlds Typology to examine the kinds of transitions late adolescents make between the home and university contexts (see figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Multiple Worlds Typology Conceptual Model



The Multiple Worlds Typology is underexplored in ethnic-racial socialization and bicultural literature. The relation between ethnic-racial socialization messages and the nature of the transitions that late adolescents make between the home and university contexts based on whether there is continuity or discontinuity across both contexts has yet to be analyzed using this framework. A conceptual model was created to address how ethnic-racial socialization messages and the development of bicultural adaptive behaviors by late adolescents may serve as buffers against barriers inhibiting transitions and how these messages may promote successful transitions between the home and university contexts. The university context consists of multiple

worlds embedded within the broader context (i.e. classrooms, peers, campus living, school climate, and student organizations), which may impact the kinds of transitions that late adolescents make from the home to the university context.

Integrating the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory and the multiple worlds typology. The PVEST and the Multiple Worlds Typology provide the theoretical lens for examining experiences of African American late adolescents transitioning between contexts. Both are culturally relevant ecological models that highlight the experiences and challenges that African American late adolescents undergo when navigating between the home and university contexts.

PVEST is an identity focused cultural ecological model that is very useful when examining the connection between culture and context as it relates to African American late adolescents (Spencer, 1995). This theory illustrates the proximal processes (i.e. risk and protective factors, net stress levels, reactive coping strategies, emergent identities) that influence developmental outcomes in African American late adolescents. These proximal processes are present within the home and university, but may differ between the two contexts. The PVEST framework accentuates that African American late adolescents must learn to transition between contexts, while integrating their experiences into the construction of their identities (Spencer, 1995). PVEST theorists argue that during adolescence, youth make meaning of their social worlds through messages transmitted about their ethnic group membership and their place in society through their beliefs (Spencer, 1995; Spencer et al., 1997). Because adolescence is a crucial period of time for youth to construct their identities, this is also a key period to explore the impact of ethnic-racial socialization messages on the identity construction in African American late adolescents transitioning between the home and university contexts.

The Multiple Worlds Typology was used in tandem with PVEST to examine the borders and transitions African American late adolescents are faced with when navigating between the home and university contexts. The PVEST was used to assess the bicultural, adaptive identities that emerge as a result of proximal processes (i.e. risk factors that contribute to increased net stress levels) within the home or school context. Together, both theories examined how ethnic-racial socialization messages serve as protective factors for African American late adolescents against risk factors that increase stress levels within the university context. The construction of bicultural identities as reactive coping strategies in the successful transitions between multiple contexts was also explored.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the transitions that African American late adolescents make when navigating from the home to a predominantly White university context. It also focused on how ethnic-racial socialization processes and biculturalism served as buffers in the university context. This study had two main goals. The first goal was to examine late adolescent perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. The second goal was to explore how African American late adolescents may understand messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context.

Research Question

The following research question was addressed in this study:

Primary Question: How do ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American late adolescents transitioning between the home and university contexts?

Sub-Research Questions:

1. How do African Americans in late adolescence describe and understand cultural beliefs, cultural values, and cultural behaviors of home and university contexts?
2. Based on these understandings, how do African American late adolescents describe their adaptive behaviors between home and university contexts?
3. What kinds of messages about race do African American late adolescents receive from the home context and how might these messages impact transitions made to the university context?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives an overview of the literature surrounding ethnic-racial socialization processes in the homes of African American families. It then provides an overview of the literature regarding the interrelatedness of race and academic outcomes among African American youth. Next, it will describe the African American student experience in predominantly White universities. Lastly, it will discuss biculturalism as it relates to African American late adolescents transitioning between the home and school contexts, and the bicultural protective factors that foster academic success.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization Processes in African American Families

Ethnic-racial socialization has been defined as intergenerational transmission of implicit or explicit messages regarding race and ethnicity from a parent to a child (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes, 2003; Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2009; Miller, 1999; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Scholars have noted that ethnic-racial socialization is a complex, multi-dimensional construct (Coard & Sellers, 2005; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Lesane, 2002). The family is the main source of socialization in African American homes (Garmezy, 1991). Although ethnic-racial socialization is a process that occurs in all families, it is especially applicable to African American families because of the negative stereotypes and discrimination faced by these families.

In a study conducted by Bowman and Howard (1985), African American youth indicated that resiliency was promoted by family ethnic-racial socialization processes. These high achieving youth were aware of racial barriers and had a positive sense of self within their own ethnic community and within mainstream society. The family prepares the child to adapt to a mainstream society by implementing values, norms, and beliefs needed by future generations to survive in a racist environment (Garmezy, 1991). Many of these family members experience

discrimination and want to protect their children from experiencing such negative environmental conditions. Parents that have experienced discrimination in their lifetimes are more likely to engage in ethnic-racial socialization processes with their children (Berkel et al., 2009; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). This research is important because it explains why African American parents choose to engage in ethnic-racial socialization processes within their homes. Having the knowledge about why parents participate in the transmission of these messages will allow researchers to make a connection between ethnic-racial socialization processes and future developmental outcomes of Black college students.

Ethnic-racial socialization cuts across age groups and serves as a protective factor at all ages, from childhood through adulthood (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes, 2003). Ethnic-racial socialization in African American families begins in childhood where messages are transmitted from African American parents to African American children in a bidirectional process (Hughes, 2003). Research indicates that parents differ in the frequency and content of racial socialization messages (McHale et al., 2006). As the child grows up, their questions and experiences may influence parents to transmit certain messages about race, ethnicity, and culture that were prompted by their children. The children grow up to be adults who transmit messages to their own children about race and ethnicity. This cyclical process could foster positive development in ethnic minority children and families across the lifespan (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997).

Although scholars have proposed that ethnic-racial socialization is beneficial for African American families (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997), more empirical research needs to be conducted on how messages regarding ethnic-racial socialization serve as protective factors for African American students navigating between the home and university context. Whether ethnic-racial socialization is explored explicitly or implicitly, there is a great deal of research that links

ethnic-racial socialization with ethnic beliefs, values, behaviors, and attitudes of African Americans (Bennett, 2006; Brown, Linver, Evans, & DeGannaro, 2009). For example, African American children whose parents transmit messages about the culture and ethnic heritage, have indicated increased knowledge about their group (Brown et al., 2009), positive attitudes within the group (Bennett, 2006), and favorable self-concepts (Phinney & Chavira, 1995). This research highlights the importance of ethnic-racial socialization in cultivating healthy ethnic or racial group membership and the promotion of positive development among Black youth.

Ethnic-racial socialization literature focuses on promoting positive developmental outcomes in ethnic minority youth and families. Positive development is fostered through a variety of developmental outcomes (Lerner et al., 2003). For example, research has shown that Black youth exposed to ethnic-racial socialization messages from Black parents have increased levels of self-esteem (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Stevenson et al. 1997), decreased depression levels (Rumbaut, 1994), and increased levels of coping with discrimination and prejudice (Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; Szalka et al., 2003). The messages transmitted to Black late adolescents from their parents may buffer against more distal factors in society such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Although majority of the ethnic-racial socialization research focuses on adolescents in the high school context, a small body of research indicates that ethnic-racial socialization messages serve as protective factors that foster resilience for African American college students in the university context (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Bynum, Burton, Best, 2007; White-Johnson, 2015). The current study expands the literature in this field.

Operationalizing ethnic-racial socialization. While researchers are consistent with the definition of ethnic-racial socialization; however, there is a lack of consistency in the way this construct is operationalized and measured throughout the literature (Hughes et al., 2006). Current

conceptualizations of ethnic-racial socialization have similar and distinct components. Many scholars have described the processes that African American parents use to help children make sense of their race or ethnicity with their racial and/or ethnic group in various ways. Much of the early research conducted on socialization processes within African American families was labelled racial socialization (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1997); however, the term ethnic socialization has also been used (Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Research conducted on racial socialization focused on socialization messages transmitted from parents to children about race, which was intended to help to prepare them for future experiences with prejudice and discrimination (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1997).

Many researchers used merged models of ethnic socialization and racial socialization in their studies, which embeds aspects of cultural socialization such as cultural practices, cultural heritage, and ethnic pride into the broader concept of racial socialization. For example, Boykin and Toms (1985) argued that African American parents were faced with three socialization agendas to ensure positive development in minority children which were: (a) ensuring that minority children learn about their heritage and culture (cultural socialization); (b) ensuring that minority children were aware and prepared to live in an oppressive environment (minority socialization); and (c) ensuring that children are able to successfully integrate into mainstream society (mainstream socialization). Bowman and Howard (1985) examined themes related to racial pride, racial barrier orientations, egalitarian views, and self-development orientations to conceptualize racial socialization. Similarly, Phinney and Chavira (1995) explored themes related to pride, culture, prejudice, adaptation, and achievement. Hughes and Chen (1997) conceptualized ethnic-racial socialization based on three components which were: cultural socialization, or teaching children about cultural history, preparation for bias or preparing

children for racial discrimination or oppression in the future, and promotion of mistrust. Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, and Davis (2002) examined messages transmitted between parents to their children about embracing their own cultural heritage and interacting with the mainstream culture.

In contrast, while many researchers use merged models of racial socialization and ethnic-socialization, some researchers conceptualized racial socialization and ethnic socialization as two separate constructs measuring similar themes (Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007; Murray et al., 2009; Paasch-Anderson & Lamborn, 2014). These researchers argue that defining both constructs separately is beneficial in addressing the influence of messages related to intragroup protocol (ethnic socialization) and intergroup protocol (racial socialization). They also believe that defining them separately is important because each may have a different impact on developmental outcomes. Each form of socialization may contribute greatly to developmental outcomes in African American youth. As noted previously, researchers are consistent with the definition of ethnic-racial socialization; but the way the construct is operationalized tends to be inconsistent across the literature. This could create methodological issues in analyses, which could also cause difficulty when replicating future studies. These differences may lead to various outcomes. Because ethnic-racial socialization has not existed in the literature as long as other theories have, there is a lack of consistency in the way the construct is measured across the literature. The present study addressed gaps in the literature by using qualitative methodology with a focus on the voices of African American late adolescents attending college. By including the voices of the participants, ethnic-racial socialization was conceptualized based on the themes that emerged in relation to their experiences.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Academic Outcomes

A limited number of studies have examined the association between ethnic-racial socialization and academic outcomes in African American students. Findings indicate positive academic outcomes when examining cultural socialization messages; however, mixed academic outcomes were found when assessing the frequency of ethnic-racial socialization messages. Specifically, cultural socialization messages have decreased the effects of teacher and peer discrimination on students' grade point averages (Wang & Huguley, 2012), increased levels of school engagement (Cooper & Smalls, 2010; Smalls, 2009), increased reading comprehension scores (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2010), and increased academic grades (Brown et al., 2009). Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellars (2006) indicated that ethnic-racial socialization messages from parents were predictors of academic outcomes (i.e. academic curiosity, persistence, and student self-reported grades). Past research illustrates the use of ethnic-racial socialization messages as protective factors that promote academic success in African American students in the high school context. However, the utility of ethnic-racial socialization messages as buffers against more distal factors for African American students in the university context has been underexplored in the literature.

In contrast, research has demonstrated that large amounts of ethnic-racial socialization in African American children could lead to negative outcomes such as lower levels of academic achievement (Brown et al., 2009; Brown, Tanner-Smith, & Lesane-Brown, 2009). This may be due to the ages of the children and the kinds of messages children are receiving from their parents (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997). Research posits that some ethnic-racial socialization messages may be inappropriate for younger children, which causes stress and can be detrimental to child developmental outcomes (Hughes, 2003; Hughes & Chen, 1997).

Gender differences have also been associated with the frequency of ethnic-racial socialization messages and academic outcomes. Friend, Hunter, and Fletcher (2011) demonstrated that a higher frequency of ethnic-racial socialization preparation for bias messages (i.e. messages preparing children for racial discrimination in the future) increased grade point averages for boys and decreased grade point averages for girls. This research contributes to the ethnic-racial socialization literature by highlighting how both age and gender may influence the impact of ethnic-racial socialization messages on developmental outcomes in African American youth. The present study expanded past research by considering how ethnic-racial socialization messages impacted the abilities of African American second year students to acquire academic success by obtaining the cultural codes necessary to navigate successfully from the home to the university context.

African American Students, Academic Outcomes, and the School Context

A great deal of research focuses on the achievement gap between African American students and other racial groups (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Taylor, 1996). Scholars in the past have suggested that this academic achievement gap is related to the macro-level racism and discrimination faced by African Americans (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987; Steele, 1997). Research conducted by Claude Steele (1997) focuses on stereotype threats and African American students. His work posits that negative stereotypes depicted about academic performance across racial groups may be detrimental to achievement outcomes in African American students. These students internalize negative stereotypes, which causes fear and frustration that they will live up to the low expectations of society. This leads to lower levels of academic performance. Much of this work focuses on the challenges faced by African American adolescents in the high school context but fails to examine protective factors that may

serve as buffers for African American late adolescents transitioning to a racially bias university context.

Ogbu (1993; 1998) also indicates that schools contribute to the lack of academic success in ethnic minority children deliberately and inadvertently by aligning with societal norms. Expanding on some of his earlier work (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987), Ogbu (1993) argues that in the context of work, the job ceiling prevents ethnic minorities who are qualified and educated from gaining jobs and wages that they should be rewarded based on their credentials and qualifications. This trickles down to the younger generations and perpetuates the belief that education is not a pathway to upward mobility, which can foster resistance and maladaptive behaviors within educational contexts (Ogbu, 1993; 1998). In contrast, research shows that African American students aspire to be academically successful (Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Ogbu's theory fails to acknowledge African American students striving to obtain academic success, as opposed to those displaying resistance in the school context. This theory brings little awareness to racialized variables that may act as protective factors for African American late adolescents navigating to the university context.

A growing body of literature examines relations between race related variables and academic outcomes for African American students (Bennett, 2006; Neblett et al., 2006). Specifically, researchers have examined the effects of racial identity on school engagement and motivation in African Americans adolescents (Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Chavous et al., 2003; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001). This literature posits that African American adolescents with positive racial group identities have higher levels of school engagement and motivation due to their positive academic values. Positive racial group identity serves as a protective factor against racial barriers in the school context. A study conducted by Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff

(2003), found that African American students' experiences with school based discrimination were related to academic outcomes and academic attitudes about schools. Oyserman, Harrison, and Bybee (2001), indicated that positive racial identity served as a buffer against decreasing academic efficacy in African American adolescent boys and girls. Past research focuses on the relation between racial identity and academic outcomes, which is beneficial for implications for education as it pertains to African American high school students. However, what is underexplored in the educational literature is how racial and academic messages transmitted to African American late adolescents contribute to their abilities to construct bicultural adaptive identities when navigating between the home and university contexts. The present study addresses gaps in the literature by focusing on African American late adolescents having the agency to construct bicultural identities that resist the effects of racism and discrimination when transitioning from the home context to the university context.

The African American Student Experience in a Predominantly White University

How does race and racism shape the academic beliefs of African American students in predominantly White institutions of higher learning? Are African American students equipped to handle racism in the university context? How might this affect their school behaviors? Research in the past has assessed similar questions in regards to African American students (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Cole & Arriola, 2007). Answers to these questions have varied, but what we know is that African American youth undergo racialized experiences with racism and discrimination in the university context, which shape their academic beliefs and behaviors. However, what is underexplored in existing literature is a qualitative assessment of the construction of dual identities and ethnic-racial socialization processes in African American students transitioning from the home to the university. Because this study addresses how parental

messages and identities function as protective strategies for African American students attending a predominantly White university, this research contributes greatly to the literature.

African American students on predominately White campuses tend to have different schooling experiences than their White counterparts. Due to the underrepresentation of African American students on predominantly White campuses, they must learn to adjust quickly to campus living and they must learn to overcome many of the challenges they may have (Woldoff, Wiggins, & Washington, 2011). African American college students often describe experiencing a lack of institutional and faculty support in predominantly White institutions (Rankin & Reason, 2005), negative school climate with increased levels of racial conflict on campus (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000), and a lack of culturally responsive interventions to support the increase in diversity (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Many African American students experience alienation and isolation on predominantly White campuses with racism being an inhibiting factor (Woldoff et al., 2011). As a result, African American students are challenged with learning to navigate and integrate themselves into the university context. This study expands past literature by exploring how home based ethnic-racial socialization messages and bicultural adaptive identities may serve as buffers against the challenges faced by African Americans transitioning from the home to the university context.

Racial micro-aggressions in predominantly White institutions. African American students experienced subtle forms of racism described as intentional or unintentional racial micro-aggressions in predominantly White institutions (Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2009). Solorzano and his colleagues (2000) found that African American students experience racial micro-aggressions in academic spaces and in social spaces at predominantly White institutions. Findings from the literature also

indicate that racial micro-aggressions are perpetuated by White faculty and White students, which fosters a negative school climate. Harwood and her colleagues (2012) suggest that students of color experience various forms of racial micro-aggressions in residence halls at predominantly White universities. These racial micro-aggressions include: racial jokes and verbal comments, racial slurs written in shared spaces, segregated spaces and unequal treatment, and denial and minimization of racism. Both studies indicate that racial micro-aggressions contribute to the negative school climate encountered by African American students at predominantly White institutions.

Pierce (1978) conducted early work on racial micro-aggressions about the relations between Blacks and Whites during the civil rights era. Much of the recent work on racial micro-aggressions has been conducted by Sue and his colleagues (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2009). Sue's research expands on Pierce's earlier work. Sue and his colleagues created a taxonomy that described three different forms of racial micro-aggressions: micro-insults, micro-assaults, and micro-invalidations (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Sue et al., 2008; Sue et al., 2009). Micro-insults focus on subtle messages conveyed with underlying meanings that are unintentionally insulting and demeaning to the racial heritage of an individual (Sue et al., 2007). An example of a micro-insult is when a White individual says, "You're very articulate for a Black person." Micro-insults are broken down into four categories: ascription of intelligence, second class citizen, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, and assumption of criminal status. Micro-assaults are verbal or nonverbal subtle or overt forms of racism intentionally used to disrespect or degrade an individual. An example of a micro-assault would be a White individual directing a racial slur at a Black individual. Micro-invalidations are forms of racism that unintentionally negate or diminish

a person of color's feelings, thought processes, or experiences. An example of a micro-invalidation would be a White individual saying, "Racism no longer exists because we have a Black president." Micro-invalidations are also broken down into four categories: alien in own land, color blindness, myth of meritocracy, and denial of individual racism. Racial micro-aggressions may cause cognitive and emotional turmoil for individuals forced to cope with these experiences (Sue et al., 2007). As a result, racial micro-aggressions can be detrimental to the successful transitions of African American students in predominantly White institutions.

Adjustment to college life for African American students. Existing literature proposes that adjustment to college life is more likely when students are integrated socially and academically into their postsecondary institution (Tinto, 1993). According to Tinto (1993), in order to achieve such integration, students must separate from their families of origin. Sullivan and Sullivan (1980) provided evidence that separation from parents is associated with the student's continued growth and adjustment. Tinto (1993) asserts that separation from the family is important in order for college students to be able to successfully integrate into campus life. Students who are not integrated or who are integrated only at a marginal level, as opposed to being integrated at a central level, are less likely to be academically and developmentally successful. Although family is an important factor when discussing the well-beings of college students, many students struggle with separating completely from their families to create their own identities; however, Tinto (1993) indicates that it may be necessary to successfully integrate into their postsecondary institutions. However, some researchers argue that Tinto's theory (1993) fails to accurately describe the experiences of students of color (Cabrera et al., 1999; Guiffrida, 2005; Tierney, 1992).

Given that the cultural backgrounds and campus life experiences of African American students tend to differ from the cultural norms and values of predominantly White universities, separation from supportive familial relationships may be detrimental for African American students (Guiffrida, 2005; Tierney, 1992; Thompson, Anderson, & Bakeman, 2000). Research indicates that family support is an important asset for ethnic minority students in the university context, because families provide them with a solid connection to their own cultural backgrounds, provide strategies to help buffer against discrimination, and they provide encouragement (Guiffrida, 2005; Rosa, 2002; Tierney, 1992). The present study expands past literature by addressing how ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for late adolescents navigating from the home to a predominantly White university. It also examined how ethnic-racial socialization messages received within the home context helps to shape bicultural adaptive identities for African American college students.

African American Late Adolescents and the Construction of Bicultural Identities

As the U.S. becomes increasingly more globalized and diverse, it is important to examine the prevalence of cultural discontinuity and power imbalance for ethnic minorities navigating between the home and university contexts. Although the diversity in the U.S. continues to increase, the dominant culture remains in power and structural inequalities remain intact. According to Vescio, Gervais, Heiphetz, and Bloodhart (2009), power is the ability to control rewards and punishments. Although what is defined as rewards or punishments varies across contexts, groups having higher levels of power are more likely to control rewards or punishments provided to groups having less power. Power and social status are often confounded due to the desire of the dominant group to maintain structural relations and reinforce the status quo. The

dominant group holds power over the minority groups, which support inequalities within the social system. These groups often have more incentive to psychologically accept group-based hierarchy than groups having less power (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011). The dominant group maintains power by taking full control over resources (Platow & Hunter, 2001). The status structure is upheld through cultural socialization and the influential ideologies of powerful, high status groups.

As a result of the imbalance of power between minority and dominant groups, ethnic minorities (i.e. African Americans) struggle with racial and structural inequalities when navigating between multiple contexts. Protective factors transmitted to African American late adolescents within the home context may help to combat these inequalities. In addition to ethnic-racial socialization processes, bicultural identities may also serve as protective factors used to successfully transition between the home and university contexts.

Biculturalism defined. Biculturalism research stems from early immigrant research conducted on acculturation (Berry, 1990; Berry, 1997; Birman, 1994; Birman, 1998). Immigrant researchers conceptualized acculturation as a process that is based on the negotiation of two issues: the desire for acculturating individuals to maintain strong identifications with their ethnic cultures, and the extent to which acculturating individuals are willing to accept or reject the cultural norms of the dominant culture (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Berry, 1990; Berry, 1997; Birman, 1994; Birman, 1998; Lu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Although biculturalism is intricately connected to acculturation conceptually, it is important to examine biculturalism as an independent construct from acculturation when examining a domesticated ethnic minority group.

The acculturation literature reflects the immigrant experience after migrating to the U.S. by exploring how immigrants negotiate their home country culture and American culture. Acculturation is not widely used when exploring African Americans transitioning between their own ethnic group culture and the mainstream culture because the concept is heavily focused on negotiating international and American cultural differences. Research posits that many African Americans are faced with the struggle of having to learn to successfully navigate between their ethnic group culture and the dominant culture by obtaining the appropriate cultural codes (Valentine, 1971; Rashid, 1981). Scholars conceptualize biculturalism as a bi-dimensional, bi-directional process formulated for ethnic minority groups based on the construction of adaptive identities through the use of cultural codes enacted within and/or across contexts (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009 Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Trimble, 2003). As a result, this developmental process has been used as a construct separate from acculturation when examining African American youth in the literature (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Rashid, 1981; Rust, Jackson, Ponterotto, & Blumberg, 2011; Valentine, 1971).

Due to the complexities and the multi-dimensional nature of the construct, researchers operationalize biculturalism in many ways. Some scholars define biculturalism in terms of demographics, while others focus on cultural identifications (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Trimble, 2003). Bicultural individuals may include immigrants (Awokoya, 2012; Birman, 1998; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), multiracial individuals (Shih & Sanchez, 2005) and/or ethnic minorities (Valentine, 1971; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Rashid, 1981; Rust et al., 2011).

Early conceptual assessments of biculturalism in domesticated groups attempted to explore variations of the construct through the use of multiple categories. Lafromboise,

Coleman, and Gerton (1993) examined biculturalism using two categories: alternation and fusion. Alternating individuals are able to navigate multiple contexts by changing behaviors in response to the cultural norms of a specific context. Fused individuals integrate both cultures so that a third space is created where behaviors for both cultures are blended. This third space is distinct from both cultures, because it is blend of both cultures.

Expanding on the work of Lafromboise et al. (1993), Birman (1994) increased the number of categories used to assess biculturalism. These four categories include: blended individuals, instrumental individuals, integrated individuals, and explorers. Blended individuals fuse both cultures together. Instrumental individuals behave based on cultural norms relative to the context but choose not to identify with either culture. Integrated individuals are able to successfully navigate between the dominant culture and their ethnic culture but choose only to identify with their ethnic culture. Explorers are able to behave based on the social norms of the dominant culture but choose to identify with their own ethnic culture. Although Birman's earlier work focused primarily on immigrants, her conceptualization of biculturalism is an expansion of bicultural categories created for domesticated ethnic minority groups.

In their study, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) examined the conceptual perspectives of Lafromboise et al. (1993) and Birman (1994). Similarly, these researchers categorized biculturalism in two ways: blended individuals and fused individuals. Blended individuals have positive feelings and feel connected to both cultures. Fused individuals identify with both cultures; however, they struggle with the conflicting nature of these cultures.

Although these scholars helped to advance bicultural research, there is controversy over whether there is a conceptual limitation in the bicultural categories as a result of them being confounded. According to Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2007), the bicultural categories

illustrated in the research conducted by Lafromboise et al. (1993) and Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) focus on different aspects of the bicultural experience as opposed to describing different types of bicultural individuals. For instance, the blended and fused categories focus on the identities of the individuals, and the alternating category highlights the behaviors of bicultural individuals. Identity based bicultural categories are confounded with the behavior based bicultural category. For example, a Mexican American may feel a positive connection towards both cultures (fusion), but may also behave in ways based on the cultural norms of a specific context (alternation). The overlapping nature of the identity based categories (i.e. blended and fusion) and the behavior based category (i.e. alternation) does not conceptually differentiate between bicultural individuals.

To address the gaps in the literature, Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) created the bicultural identity integration framework to examine individual differences amongst bicultural individuals. This framework assesses whether bicultural individuals believe they are able to equally balance dual identities that are compatible versus whether these dual identities are conflicting. By examining the ways bicultural individuals manage dual identities, the intersections and overlaps of these identities can also be addressed.

Other scholars assert that the definition of biculturalism should be expanded to include cultural identifications, cultural practices, and cultural values instead of primarily focusing on the cultural behaviors of bicultural individuals (Swartz & Unger, 2010). They argue that bicultural individuals combine their ethnic heritages with mainstream cultural influences, practices and values to create a blended identity where they illustrate cultural norms from both cultures regardless of the context. For example, a Mexican American may have collective family values, but may also believe in having individualistic American values such as the belief to work hard to

achieve success. The bicultural individual is able to successfully navigate between multiple contexts as a result of having dual identities, while combining the cultural norms of both cultures across contexts. Much of the research focuses on biculturalism as it relates to individuals negotiating the cultural influences of their ethnic groups with those of the dominant group (Berry, 1997; Birman, 1998; Moran, Fleming, Somervell, & Manson, 1999; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 1997; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Rust et al., 2011). The lack of consistency in the way the construct is operationalized is displayed throughout the literature. The present study addressed the shortcomings in the literature by examining the various individual processes that African American late adolescents undergo when constructing adaptive bicultural identities based on cultural codes deemed appropriate for use within and between the home and university. By exploring whether there are differing cultural beliefs, cultural values, and cultural behaviors when transitioning between contexts, the researcher conceptually differentiated between bicultural individuals and assessed how they managed conflicting identities.

Biculturalism: navigating multiple worlds as an African American student. Research indicates that some African American students are able to achieve academic success by utilizing protective factors to buffer structural inequalities within the school context (Carter, 2005; Carter, 2008; Chimizie, 1985). Scholars believe that African Americans must learn to be bicultural (Bowman & Howard, 1985), because they are faced with integrating into the mainstream culture, while remaining connected to their own cultural community and having a strong sense of self (Phinney, 1990; Rashid, 1981; Valentine, 1971). By obtaining the cultural codes necessary to successfully navigate between the home and school contexts, many African American students are able to acquire academic success (Carter, 2005; Carter, 2008; Chimizie, 1985).

Accruing dominant cultural capital affords African American students the opportunity to gain access to resources that lead to academic and professional success, by speaking, behaving, and dressing in ways that are accepted by the mainstream culture (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2005). Black cultural capital allows access into Black communities based upon ethnicity/race and similar interests in dress, music, foods, etc. (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2005). Obtaining dominant cultural capital may serve as a resistance strategy for African American late adolescents attending predominantly White universities. Resistance strategies are protective approaches used to respond to racist and discriminatory stressors within the environment (Carter, 2012; Ward 1999). Because individual experiences with racism and discrimination may be detrimental for academic success and the successful transitions between the home and university contexts, it is important to examine strategies (i.e. ethnic-racial socialization and biculturalism) that may act as buffers for negative experiences (i.e. racism and discrimination) in the university context.

Scholars in the past have asserted that there could be negative effects for biculturalism (navigating between the home and university environments) among African American students (D'Amato, 1993; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1993). Ogbu (1993) indicated that ethnic minorities risk losing their membership within their own cultures if they assimilate to the dominant culture in an educational context. This process of assimilation results in resistance to academic norms that perpetuate academic success.

According to research conducted by Fordham and Ogbu (1986), Black students who obtained dominant cultural capital to promote academic success are at risk for being perceived as "acting White" by their peers. The term "acting White" refers to Black students who adapt behaviors, preferences, and language that are consistent with White cultural norms (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005). Obtaining dominant cultural capital can be

perceived as a threat to the Black culture. As a result, Black students may opt to obtain Black cultural capital or adapt behaviors deemed as "Black" to be accepted amongst their peers at the risk of having lower levels of academic success. This research fails to acknowledge the benefits of acquiring dominant cultural capital to gain access to resources within the school context while maintaining Black cultural capital, which may give African American students the ability to successfully transition from the home to the university context. This research also does not take into account ethnic-racial socialization messages transmitted to children from parents that serve to reassure membership within their ethnic/racial groups.

Similarly, D'Amato (1993) explores the cultural difference theory which posits that ethnic minority children behave based on a set of norms at home. He indicates that ethnic minorities are unable to adapt to the characteristics of the dominant culture and should not, because they are socialized to behave based on their own cultural norms. If forced to assimilate, minority students will adapt maladaptive school behaviors to resist the dominant culture, which will lead to poor academic outcomes. Resistance in the school context by Black youth is perpetuated by the burden of being viewed by peers as "acting White" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 2008). Displaying loyalty to the Black community by engaging in culturally "Black" behaviors becomes more important, which impedes academic success. These arguments give a narrow view of African American students and academic achievement and ignore research that indicates that academic outcomes vary across African youth (Byrd & Chavous, 2011; Chavous et al., 2003; Oyserman et al., 2001; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). This further supports and perpetuates academic deficiency as a model among these students. Many African American students excel academically, and these arguments fall short in considering how ethnic-racial socialization

processes and biculturalism may serve as buffers for African American students in the school context.

Constructing bicultural identities based on cultural codes may serve as a protective factor when navigating between contexts. A common adaptive bicultural skill employed by many African Americans is termed code switching. Code switching is a cultural skill used to shift interaction and behavior patterns based on situational appropriateness (DeBose, 1992; Carter, 2003; McDermott, 1987). Many scholars have examined code switching as a skill used by African American students navigating between the home and school contexts (Carter, 2003; DeBose, 1992; Smitherman, 2000). Generally, code switching has been explored as a linguistic cultural skill. African American students linguistically shift between speaking Black Standard English in the presence of their African American peers and/or in the home context, and Standard English when sharing a context with Whites (Carter, 2003; Smitherman, 2000). Research indicates that many Black students employ cultural code switching skills in the educational context to help foster academic success (Debose, 1992; Carter, 2003; Smitherman, 2000). The cultural code switching literature is central to the framing of the present study, because it informs the researcher about how African American students negotiate multiple behaviors and interaction patterns when transitioning between the home and university contexts without rejecting their own culture.

African Americans develop strategies that help them to adapt to a hostile environment (Myers & Taylor, 1998). According to Carter (2008), "Black students learn to navigate Black cultural styles, white cultural styles, cultural styles required for school success, and other cultural styles in their daily school lives" (p. 487). This strategy acts as a buffer against the detrimental effects that racial inequities have on students of color in an educational context. The experiences

and struggles faced by African American students on a daily basis in the university context can be damaging to their developmental trajectories. They must develop the competence to battle stressors while also being able to successfully adapt in multiple social contexts. This adaptation can be fostered through ethnic-racial socialization processes in the homes of African American families (Hughes and Chen, 1997). In sum, it is important to promote culturally relevant protective factors, such as biculturalism and ethnic-racial socialization messages, in African American students to foster resilience in the educational context (Myers & Taylor, 1998). The present study expanded on the literature by examining how ethnic-racial socialization processes and biculturalism may serve as buffers for African American youth transitioning between the home and university contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of the literature surrounding ethnic-racial socialization processes in the homes of African American and the interrelatedness of race and academic outcomes in African American youth. It also examines the experiences that African Americans have at predominantly White universities, and it explores the literature surrounding biculturalism.

Research indicates that ethnic-racial socialization contributes to the strength and resilience of African American youth through messages, behaviors, and attitudes transmitted by ethnic minority parents about race and ethnicity (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Lesane, 2002). Research also posits that having the ability to culturally code switch gives African American students access to resources that foster academic and professional success (Debose, 1992; Carter, 2003; Smitherman, 2000). Obtaining dominant cultural capital may serve as a buffer for African American late adolescents attending predominantly White universities.

Although previous studies have focused on the relation between race-related variables and academic outcomes, what was underexplored in the literature was research that examined the utility of ethnic-racial socialization messages and biculturalism as resistance strategies for African American college students navigating between the home and university contexts. The present study addressed gaps in the literature by utilizing the PVEST framework and the Multiple Worlds Typology to explore how these constructs may serve as protective factors that buffer against distal factors when transitioning across contexts.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

Using the modified grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), this study describes the experiences of African American late adolescents as they navigate from the home to the university context. This study focuses on how ethnic-racial socialization processes within African American families and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American late adolescents transitioning between the home and university contexts. This chapter describes the research methodology and includes the following sections: rationale for qualitative research design, researcher positionality, data collection and procedures, data analysis, and trustworthiness of data.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Much of the research conducted on biculturalism has been quantitative (Birman, 1998; Romero, Caravajal, Valle, & Orduna, 2007; Stroink & Lalonde, 2009). Biculturalism has been inconsistently operationalized using a range of measurement types across studies. One-dimensional scales, bi-dimensional scales, bicultural identification questions, and demographic information, such as questions about language or generational status, have also been used to measure biculturalism across the literature.

Early assessments of biculturalism were measured using surveys containing one-dimensional scales of acculturation (Bautista, Crawford, & De Wolfe, 1994; Rotheram-Borus, 1990; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). Individuals were considered to be separated if their scores were low and assimilated if their scores fell towards the higher end of the scale. Individuals were considered bicultural if their scores fell towards the middle of the scale (Bautista et al., 1994; Rotheram-Borus, 1990; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil,

1987). For example, a scale item may be *"Are the majority of your friends from your own ethnic group or from the dominant group"?* Selections for the response may include: *1) mostly my ethnic own group 2) equal number of friends in both groups 3) mostly from the dominant group.* This approach is problematic in scaling the bicultural construct because it is assumed that individuals identifying with one culture are rejecting of an opposing culture.

One-dimensional scales should also be avoided because they fail to differentiate between individuals that identify as being bicultural versus individuals that do not identify as being bicultural and/or marginalized (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007). An individual that chooses not to identify with any culture or an individual that is marginalized may select the number "2" on a one dimensional scale because they may not have any friends in either group. An individual that identifies as bicultural may also select the number "2" on a one dimensional scale because they may have an equal number of friends in both their ethnic group and the dominant group. Biculturalism measured in this way yields a unidirectional view of the results because it is an oversimplified view of cultures, cultural exposure, and cultural pluralism in the U.S. In addition, these scales often have low reliability due to the inaccuracy in measurement (Birman, 1998). The lack of reliability may result in random measurement error, which can lead to underestimates statistically significant and false positive findings (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002; Miller, 2007).

When using bi-dimensional scales to measure biculturalism, identification with an ethnic group and identification with the dominant group has often been assessed using two individual scales. For example, biculturalism might be examined using a scale that measures involvement in ethnic minority group culture and a scale that measures involvement in American culture. Bicultural individuals are defined by whether these individuals scored higher than the median on

both scales (Birman, 1998; Moran, Fleming, Somervell, & Manson, 1999; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Rust et al., 2011). Although this kind of measurement helps to differentiate bicultural individuals from other categories, a limitation is that a biculturalism score is not provided, which fails to give an accurate measurement of biculturalism.

Alternatively, biculturalism has been measured bi-dimensionally by adding the scores of two or more sub-scales (Moran et al., 1999; Wei et al., 2010). Interaction terms have also been created when using scores from two scales to examine biculturalism in a bi-dimensional way (Birman, 1998; Romero, Caravajal, Valle, & Orduna, 2007; Stroink & Lalonde, 2009). A limitation for using computed scores as methods of measurement is the inability for researchers to distinguish among individuals having scores that fall towards the middle of both scales versus individuals that score higher on one scale and lower on the other scale. As a result, researchers are unable to distinguish which category an individual fits into according to the scales.

Biculturalism has also been measured using one or two bicultural identification questions to accommodate for lack of time and/or lower reading levels (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007). For example, bicultural individuals are those that score at the higher end of the scale when asked to answer two items: *"I identify as a/an Black/African American"* and *"I identify as an American".* One caveat for using this method of measurement is that the items on the measure may not assess biculturalism and this brings validity into question. These questions focus on identifying with a race or identifying with being an American with little emphasis on biculturalism. This measure may lack construct validity, which means it may not adequately capture the construct that the researcher is trying to measure (Shadish et al., 2002; Miller, 2007), because it may not describe biculturalism in an accurate manner.

Lastly, demographic variables have also been used to explore biculturalism. Demographic variables include race/ethnicity, language preference, citizenship, and generational status (Buriel, Calzada, & Vasquez, 1982). A limitation associated with using demographic variables to examine biculturalism is that they are often used as predictor variables. As predictor variables, they do not account for individuals who may identify as bicultural at different stages of their lives. Demographic variables as predictors fail to explore the changes and processes that individuals may undergo when exploring bicultural identities.

Although there have been a limited number of qualitative research studies conducted on biculturalism ((Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Diemer, 2007; Lu, 2010; Shi & Lu, 2007), qualitative exploration is necessary to examine the complex nature of bicultural experiences and behaviors. Biculturalism is a nonlinear, bi-dimensional, and bi-directional construct that is ideal for qualitative exploration. An overemphasis on quantitative research fails to highlight how and why individuals choose to pursue a bicultural identity, along with the processes that individuals undergo when forming dual identities.

Utilizing a qualitative approach enables the researcher to determine more about the participants' perceptions of their process of change, along with conflicts or uncertainty in those processes. This research study addresses gaps in the literature by utilizing a qualitative approach with a focus on the experiences of the participants. In using this approach, the voices of bicultural African American college students were included and emphasized. Through the use of qualitative methodology, rich accounts on how the environment influences the construction of dual identities and navigation between the home and university were addressed. Participants were also able to demonstrate how ethnic-racial socialization messages and biculturalism serve as protective factors in the university context through detailed descriptions.

The present study utilized modified grounded theory because it is beneficial in exploring the racialized experiences of African American students in the university context. Less is known about the experiences and transitions of African American second year students attending a predominantly White institution, so these in-depth experiences contribute to the literature. By utilizing modified grounded theory for this study, this allowed the researcher to determine whether a new theory was generated as a result of the themes and patterns that emerged from data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory also helps to expand current theories used to frame the study.

Researcher Positionality

Grounded theory analysis requires the researcher to be an active participant in the research (Charmaz, 2006). As such, it is important that I address my role as a researcher and biases related to the study. I grew up in an African American family constructing my identity as an African American female. I attended a historically Black university during my undergraduate tenure, but attended predominantly White institutions to obtain my graduate degrees. My experiences attending a historically Black university differ from the undergraduate experiences of my participants. Prior to conducting the study, I felt that my racialized experiences during my graduate tenure at predominantly White institutions may have been similar to their racialized undergraduate experiences of my participants. It was my responsibility to ensure that my experiences did not impact their perspectives.

I share similar characteristics and social positions to the participants in this study, so it was important that I recognized my own experiences, knowledge, and perspectives throughout the data collection process and analysis. As a result of my similarities, it was important that I captured the experiences and voices of my participants, while keeping my own biases separate.

To address my personal biases, I reflected through the use of memos by documenting my feelings and thoughts about each interview and after the focus group. Journaling helped me to better understand my own reactions to each interview, along with my feelings and reactions to the follow-up focus group.

I acknowledged my role as a researcher through my reflective memos. I was able to distance myself from the experiences of my participants because my past undergraduate experiences differed from their current undergraduate experiences. Although there were minor similarities across my graduate experiences with predominantly White institutions and their undergraduate experiences, I was able to share their perspectives because their experiences were not my experiences. Their stories reflected experiences of African American students attending predominantly White institutions, and they were able to share with me eye opening information that I had not considered prior to the onset of this study. I had not been exposed to many of the experiences they encountered, which made it easier to tell their stories.

Being an insider was advantageous because the participants were comfortable sharing their experiences with me as a result of our shared backgrounds and social positions. They felt that they lacked opportunities to share their racialized experiences encountered in the university context with people. This made them more open to sharing their perspectives with me.

The disadvantage in being an insider was that some participants were not as explicit when discussing their experiences. They assumed I was familiar with their perspectives as a result of the similarities with our backgrounds and social positions. To combat this, I probe a little deeper to gather information during the individual interviews. Overall, I was able to capture the perspectives of my participants and share their truths.

Data Collection and Procedures

Sampling. Data was collected using two distinct methods: semi-structured interviews (n = 20) and one focus group (n = 8). Participants for the focus group had to participate in the interview portion of the study prior to participating in the focus group portion of the study. Participants inclusion criteria is as follows: (a) African American/Black students (b) enrolled at a predominantly white university in the Midwest, (c) between ages 18-20 years old, (d) second year status, (e) non-transfer student, (f) raised in biological families (non-foster care), and (g) 2.0 or greater grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

Second year non-transfer students were considered to be better able to speak about their racialized experiences transitioning from the home to a predominantly White university context, because they were better adjusted than they were during their first year. They were also able to speak more in-depth about their experiences after having a year to reflect on their transitions to the university. Participants were required to be raised in biological families to allow the researcher to examine ethnic-racial socialization messages transmitted within the family, without the complexities of foster families. Participants were also required to have a minimum cumulative 2.0 grade point average to eliminate students who have not maintained good standing at their university.

Recruitment. Criterion sampling was utilized to build the participant pool for this study. Criterion sampling involves selecting participants based on a criterion predetermined by the researcher (Patton, 2001). A request to recruit second year African American students was made through the university registrar's office. Potential participants were emailed through the university registrar's office and asked to complete an initial survey to screen for eligibility to participate in the study based on the predetermined criterion listed previously. An initial email

was sent out followed by two additional reminder emails until the desired sample size was achieved. Approximately 300-400 students were contacted to participate in the study based on the criteria each time the email was sent out. There were a total of 44 students who completed the initial screening survey within the timeframe of one month. The initial screening survey was created and administered using Survey Monkey (see Appendix B). The survey link was included in the email sent through the university registrar's office. After the survey was administered, potential participants were selected from the resulting pool of eligible students. Eligible students were emailed to participate in the larger study. These students were able to participate on a first come first served basis. However, once I reached a total of 10 female participants, I gave preference to male participants to increase the number of males in the study. Once male participation began to decline, female students received the opportunity to participate. The majority of students interested in participating in the study were females. After the desired sample size of 20 participants was reached, students were no longer allowed to participate in the study. There were a total of 11 ineligible students that filled out the initial screening survey. Students who did not fit the criterion were not contacted to participate in the larger study.

Sample description. There were a total of sixteen females and four males recruited for this study. Each participant identified as African American/Black attending a predominantly White institution in the Midwest. All participants were second year non-transfer students. The age of the participants ranged from 18-20, with an average age of 19 years old. All participants were raised in biological families (non-foster care). The grade point average of the participants ranged from 2.0 -3.8, with a 3.0 being the average. Nine participants grew up in predominantly Black home communities, while four participants grew up in predominantly White home communities. Seven participants grew up in multiracial home communities. There were a total of

eleven participants raised in two parent intact families. Eight participants were raised in single-parent families residing with their mothers. One participant was co-parented by divorced parents who lived separately. This participant resided with both parents. Table 1 displays the demographic information for the participants in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Description of Participants

Pseudonym	**Age**	**Gender**	**College GPA**	**Racial Composition of Home Community**	**Childhood Family Structure (Birth-Age 18)**
Nicole	18	Female	2.8	Predominantly Black	Two Parent Household
Steve	19	Male	3.2	Predominantly Black	Single Parent Household (Mother)
Denise	19	Female	2.8	Predominantly Black	Single Parent Household (Mother)
Rachel	19	Female	3.2	Multiracial	Two Parent Household
Michelle	19	Female	3.84	Predominantly White	Single Parent Household (Mother)
Alex	19	Female	2.97	Predominantly White	Two Parent Household
Kelsey	19	Female	3.5	Predominantly White	Two Parent Household
Carmen	19	Female	3.7	Predominantly White	Two Parent Household
Layla	19	Female	3.2	Predominantly Black	Two Parent Household
Lisa	19	Female	3.3	Multiracial	Two Parent Household
Ashley	19	Female	3.12	Multiracial	Single Parent (Mother)
Bruce	19	Male	2.6	Predominantly Black	Two Parent Household
Tim	19	Male	3.67	Multiracial	Co-Parented (Mother and Father)
Isabella	19	Female	2.4	Multiracial	Two Parent

Table 1 (cont'd)

Danielle	19	Female	3.3	Multiracial	Household Single Parent (Mother)
Tiffany	19	Female	2.9	Predominantly Black	Single Parent (Mother)
Gerald	19	Male	3.1	Predominantly Black	Two Parent Household
Violet	19	Female	2.0	Predominantly Black	Single Parent (Mother)
Rayden	20	Female	2.8	Multiracial	Two Parent Household
Camille	20	Female	3.2	Predominantly Black	Single Parent (Mother)

Consent. Participants were required to fill out a consent form prior to participating in each segment of the study. They first filled out an online consent form before completing the online screening survey. They also filled out a consent form when participating in the interview and the focus group. All consent forms described the nature of the research study; the rights of the participants, the risks and benefits, and the confidentiality of the research study (see Appendix A).

Incentives. Participants received a $20 gift card for participating in the interview portion of the study. Participation in the focus group yielded an additional $10 gift card. Incentives were received at the conclusion of the interview and focus group session. Participants were informed about incentives prior to the study.

Semi-structured interviews. Twenty individual semi-structured interviews were conducted and used as the primary method of data collection. Each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed verbatim using a transcriptionist company called Verbalink. Students gave detailed accounts about their experiences with ethnic-racial socialization messages and their abilities to construct bicultural identities as they navigate from the home to the university context. Table 2

displays the primary research question along with the connection between the theories, the sub-research questions, and the interview protocol questions. The interview protocol questions were constructed based on the theories utilized in this study (see Appendix D). These theoretically driven questions were created to foster discussions that aided in providing answers for the research question and sub-research questions in this study. Participants were asked about a range of topics to gather a variety of perspectives and experiences from them which included: background information about their families and home communities, messages transmitted within their families, experiences in the university context, and transitions to the university context.

Prior to conducting the interview, demographic information was collected from each participant (see Appendix C). Participants were asked their ages, current school levels, grade point averages, racial composition of their home communities, and family structures. Interviews were conducted in a private room located at the university. After the interview, participants were given a handout with a list of helpful resources for them to use if needed (see Appendix F).

Table 2

Connections between Theories, Sub-Research Questions, and Interview Protocol Questions

Primary Research Question: How do ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American late adolescents transitioning between the home and university contexts?		
Theory	Sub-Research Questions	Interview Protocol Questions
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, Multiple Worlds Typology	How do African American late adolescents describe and understand cultural beliefs, cultural values, and cultural behaviors between the home and university contexts?	How would you describe your family context? • What would you describe as core values in your family or home? • How have those been communicated to you growing up? • What are important messages from your family about

Table 2 (cont'd)

		succeeding at school and how to behave in school? • About being African American and going to college What is your home community like? • What is it like to live there? • How would you describe it? • How would you characterize interactions between the neighbors? What was it like to start school at MSU? How would you describe your university context? • Campus Life? • School Climate? How do you feel in your school environment? • Racial Composition of students and faculty
		How would you describe your transition to MSU? • Was it an easy transition like being at home or very different from home? • If it was different, can you tell me how it was different? Are your home and university contexts different with respect to culture and expectations? • If so, please provide some examples of these differences. Are there differences in what is acceptable within your family context versus the university context?
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, Multiple Worlds Typology	Based on these understandings, how do African American late adolescents describe their adaptive behaviors across the home and university contexts?	Do you feel that your behaviors change between home and the university contexts? • Can you describe some of the ways in which you feel there are changes or alterations? • The way you speak? • The way you behave? • Preferences in food or music?

Table 2 (cont'd)

		• Your interactions with others in your home context versus the university context? • Do you think your behaviors have changed since coming to MSU? • Do your friends and/or family think you have changed since coming to MSU? How do you feel when you are in class? • Are there other African American students in your classes? • When you are in a class where there are no other African American students, do you ever think about being comfortable, smart or fitting in? • Do you feel you have to adjust your typical behavior while in class when African American students are present or if they are not? • What about around your peers?
		• Which adjustment is more like when you are at home? (Do feel like you are being yourself in the classroom context?) Describe your experience with living in the dormitory/residence halls? How would you describe your college peers to the peers you had in high school? How would you compare your interactions with University peers vs. high school or community peers?
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory,	What kinds of messages about race, if any, do African American late adolescents receive from the home context and how might	Did your parents talk about being African American at home? • How was it talked about? What types of messages, if any, have

Table 2 (cont'd)

Multiple Worlds Typology	these messages impact transitions made to the university context?	your parents given you to help prepare you for experiences with racism in college? • Have you experienced prejudice or racism in college? • What was that experience, how did you cope with it? • How have parental messages helped you if you have experienced racism in college? Do you think racism can be a barrier to your success? Explain. • Do you think racism can be a barrier to the success for Blacks in general? • Do you know of others who have experienced racism in your school? How do you think African Americans are treated at your university? • How would you describe race relations between faculty and students at your school?

Focus groups. A 60 minute focus group (n = 8) was conducted for males (n = 1) and females (n = 7). Participants for the focus group had to first participate in the interview portion of the study before being asked to participate in the focus group portion of the study. The focus group was utilized for member checking purposes after the completion of individual interviews (Creswell, 2007). The focus group questions were created based on open coding data analysis of the individual interviews (see Appendix E). The focus group was analyzed for themes as a second data source. Due to the sensitive nature of participants' experiences, the focus group was beneficial in stimulating rich responses, providing new insights, and clarifying themes that may

be unclear. Data from the individual interviews was cross-checked with focus group data for validation of themes. The focus group was conducted in a private room located at the university.

Field notes. Field notes were used to document detailed descriptions of observed behaviors (i.e. body language and emotions) during the interviews. Field notes were written immediately after each interview was conducted, as well as after the completion of the focus group. These field notes also included the researcher's personal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors experienced during the interviews (Creswell, 2007). Key phrases, quotes, and emerging themes were documented to assist with data analysis. Data from the individual interviews and the focus group were cross checked with field notes for validation of themes.

Data Analysis

Modified grounded theory analysis was utilized in this study. Constant comparative method helped to enhance the theoretical frameworks utilized in the study and develop theory based on the themes that emerged (Creswell, 2007). This approach is accomplished through a three step approach: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 2007). I engaged in multiple readings of the individual interview transcripts, the focus group transcript, and the field notes to identify themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data. I first used line by line coding or open coding to begin to interpret and develop codes from the interview data (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once this was completed, the focus group was conducted. After initial open coding and the completion of the focus group, I made connections across these codes by creating categories. These connections, also known as axial coding, helped me to better understand how the categories relate to each other (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After axial coding, selective coding was used to generate emerging themes based on the categories created. Qualitative data from the individual interviews and the focus group were

coded and examined for emerging themes inductively. Qualitative data analysis software (Dedoose) was used to organize, code, and manage the data.

Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure trustworthiness of the data, multiple strategies were used to enhance the validity and credibility of the study. Strengthening the trustworthiness of the study ensures that the findings are authentic and potential biases were eliminated so that the voices of the participants are captured. Trustworthiness of the data was established through triangulation, peer debriefing, and researcher subjectivity documentation.

Triangulation was used to validate and strengthen the rationale of the findings (Creswell, 2007). The interview protocol and data analysis was conceptualized through theory triangulation. The interview protocol was also shared with the dissertation committee to ensure that the questions are credible and driven by theory. In-depth interviews and the focus group served as multiple data sources that can be triangulated (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Peer debriefing was conducted with my dissertation chairperson to ensure trustworthiness of the study and to cross check data analysis. The dissertation chairperson read two transcripts and collaboratively worked with the researcher on coding. Once coding agreement was met, the researcher then completed the remainder of the analyses. Major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes that emerged through data analyses were reviewed and discussed with the dissertation chairperson.

Researcher subjectivity was documented to eliminate potential biases that the researcher may have brought to the study. As previously mentioned, memos were utilized as a tool to reflect these biases. Memos included the researcher's personal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors experienced during the interviews and the focus group.

Ethical Considerations

This study was determined to be exempt by the Internal Revenue Board (IRB). Guidelines for the protection of human subjects for this study were followed based on the regulations of the Internal Revenue Board (IRB). Audio recordings and transcriptions are kept in a password-protected server and/or locked in a filing cabinet located at the university address of the primary researcher. The data for this project is identified with a code number. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy and ensured that all information is confidential.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: CULTURAL EXPERIENCES BETWEEN THE HOME AND UNIVERSITY CONTEXTS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the transitions that 20 African American late adolescent college students made when navigating from the home to a predominantly White university context. It also explored how ethnic-racial socialization processes and biculturalism served as protective factors across both contexts. Chapters 4-6 present the key findings based on analyses from 20 individual interviews. The focus group (n = 8) served as a way to provide member checking to strengthen trustworthiness of the study and was analyzed for themes as a second data source to corroborate the key findings from the individual interviews. There were ten major themes that emerged through modified grounded theory data analyses. The major themes found were: (1) comparison of home and university cultural expectations, (2) selecting a PWI versus a HBCU, (3) experiences with racial micro-aggressions within the university context, (4) experiences with racial aggressions within the university context, (5) resources and supports for Black students, (6) racial experiences within the Black university community, (7) reactive coping strategies for racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions, (8) protective factors across the home and university contexts, (9) lack of experiences with racial issues, and (10) transitional experiences. Examples of quotations from individual interviews and the focus group are presented throughout the next three chapters to describe the major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes.

Key findings are organized according to sub-research questions in chapters 4-6. A detailed list of the major themes, along with the sub-themes and sub-codes are presented in Tables 3-5. These tables show the connections between the theories, sub-research questions, major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes that emerged from the data. The first column reiterates

the theories used to frame the study. The second column displays the sub-research questions that guided the study. The third column displays the major themes that emerged during the constant comparative grounded theory analyses. The fourth and fifth columns are the sub-themes and sub-codes emerged as a result of axial and selective coding.

The next section presents the findings using quotations selected from the individual interviews and the focus group data to describe and support the major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes for the first sub-research question. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy and ensure confidentiality for the participants in the study.

Cultural Experiences between the Home and University Contexts

When exploring the cultural dynamics across the home and university contexts, it was evident that the participants had a variety of cultural experiences as they transitioned from their home communities to the university context. Participants had an array of responses describing similarities and differences of culture between the home and university contexts and how this influenced their college experiences. They also described racialized experiences that they encountered within the home and/or the university. There were six major themes that emerged when participants discussed their cultural experiences across contexts: (1) comparison of home and university cultural expectations, (2) selecting a PWI versus a HBCU, (3) experiences with racial micro-aggressions within the university context, (4) experiences with racial aggressions within the university context, (5) resources and supports for Black students, and (6) racial experiences within the Black university community. Table 3 illustrates a breakdown of the major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes associated with the first sub-question.

Table 3

Connections between Theories, Sub-Research Question #1, and Findings

Primary Research Question: How do ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American youth transitioning between the home and university contexts?				
Theory	Sub-Research Question	Major Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-codes
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, Multiple Worlds Typology	**Cultural Experiences between the Home and University Contexts** (1) How do African American late adolescents describe and understand cultural beliefs, cultural values, and cultural behaviors between the home and university contexts?	Comparison of Home and University Cultural Expectations	Cultural Discontinuity Cultural Continuity	
		Selecting a PWI versus a HBCU		
		Experiences with Racial Micro-aggressions within the University context	Experiences with Racial Disregard	Ascription of Intelligence Second Class Citizenship White Expertise on Black Experiences Color-blindness
			Experiences with Racial Spotlighting	Assumed Universality of the Black Experience Assumption of Criminality Assumption of Intellectual Inferiority Standing Alone as a Black Student

Table 3 (cont'd)

			Perceived Racial Stereotypes	Stereotypes of Blacks Stereotype Threat
			Ambiguous Racist Experiences	
		Experiences with Racial Aggressions within the University Context		
		Resources and Supports for Black Students	Resources for Black Students Support from Faculty of Color Lack of Black Faculty Lack of Support from White Faculty	
		Racial Experiences within the Black University Community	Experiences with Intra-group Racial Attitudes	Colorism Not Black Enough Perceptions of Black Women and Sexuality

Comparison of Home and University Cultural Expectations. Participants were first asked to describe the cultural similarities and differences between their home communities and university contexts. Two sub-themes emerged from the analyses: (1) cultural discontinuity and (2) cultural continuity. Participants discussed their experiences managing cultural differences

and expectations when navigating between the home and university contexts. They also described the shared cultural congruence across the home and university contexts.

Cultural discontinuity. Participants described their cultural experiences shifting from the home to the university context which included: leaving the predominantly Black home community or a multiracial community and entering a predominantly White institutional context, differing social norms between the family and the university, and differing expectations between the home community and the university. Participants described their experiences with attending a predominantly White institution for the first time compared to being raised in urban contexts with predominantly Black populations. One participant stated, "I didn't see that many people of color here. I see very few, but I usually see more when I'm at home." Another participant described her experiences at a predominantly White university: "When I'm at home I'm normally around Black people like all the time. And then here I'm not." After growing up in predominantly Black communities, now immersed in a predominantly White context, these participants experienced culture shock. They described these experiences as different from their experiences in their home communities because of the racialized experiences they encountered as minorities in the university context.

Connecting with students in a predominantly White context represented a challenge to these participants, given the limited number of Black students on campus. They felt they had an easier time connecting with individuals at home because of the cultural similarities. Ashley indicated, "Uh, it was more easier at home. It was moreso of a challenge here. But I've overcome that. Yeah, just 'cause we (Black community) relate more. So that's probably why it was more easier (at home)." Although some students struggled with navigating to a predominantly White institution, other participants embraced the experience.

Camille described a different experience being a Black student attending a predominantly White institution. She was born and raised in a predominantly Black urban context, but was able to use her experiences at the university as a learning experience. Being able to connect with individuals coming from varying cultural and economic backgrounds was something she welcomed.

> So I, like – I, like – I get a lot of diversity. It's just very different coming here (university) and we, in the city, don't really get to interact with that many people. But up here, you get to immerse in different cultural events as well and learn and just being around different teachers and just seeing different faces.

Tim opted to attend a predominantly White institution because it differed from his home community. He valued being exposed to a new environment while engaging in new experiences. Tim stated, "It was kinda me just wanting to get away from it all and experience new cultures, like here, the snow, the cold, and, yeah, just kind of get away from everything."

Some participants described benefits and receptive attitudes toward attending a predominantly White institution. Many participants described the social norms deemed acceptable in the university context as unacceptable in their home communities and by their families. Kelsey discussed some of the social norms that happened within the university context but were considered inappropriate based on the standards within her own family.

> Um, I just think that drinking, things like that, it's not acceptable in my family at all — but, here, it's like that's how it is. Being crazy and running around at night and not being safe, I guess – those things happen here all the time.

Gerald had a similar experience in which the social norms in the university context

differed from his family social norms. His family was more reserved and restricted in nature and enforced conservative perspectives in the home. This contrasted with the liberal views and lifestyle norms he observed in the university context.

> I feel like – I grew up in a very conservative home and I have two very strict parents – that's the biggest thing and I feel like every university campus is pretty much full of a lot liberals. It's just a thing – when you're a kid just to like open your mind and be open to – new stuff which is more liberal than conservative, but – uh, that's the – pretty much the biggest difference – in the culture that I see. I guess like you're – there – there's more of a like party aspect and – party atmosphere and like at home where I live in the suburbs so like people go to sleep around 10:00.

Participants also discussed the differences in cultural expectations in their home communities and the university communities. They described varying expectations in educational goals and advancement within their home communities versus expectations at the university. Denise stated, "We're (college students) more serious like about our future whereas they're (home community) kind of I mean trying to do stuff on their own but it's not like advancement." The expectations in educational goals and advancement in their home communities were lower than the expectations at the university level. Participants associated this difference with the lower socio-economic statuses within the home community for these participants. Many of the participants grew up in predominantly Black urban communities where lack of resources and financial constraints made attending college a remote option.

Layla commented:

> A lot of the people in my community because of the community we come from, they don't value education as much. And if they do, we're in a financial position where

> college just isn't really an option, especially a four-year university. So a lot of them are still at home at community college.

These participants reflected on their experiences navigating from their predominantly Black communities or multiracial communities to a predominantly White institution. Many of them experienced cultural discontinuity between the home and university contexts as a result of racialized experiences, differing social norms, and differing cultural expectations. Although this came as a challenge for some, others embraced the experience.

Cultural continuity. Participants described the cultural congruency of academic achievement between their home and the university contexts. Participants emphasized the importance placed on academic success by their families, a value that was also consistent with the university's educational demands and standards. They described similar educational expectations between their home and the university contexts. Rachel indicated, "In the school and home, they both expect me to do well academically… to be involved." Steve had a similar response:

> Home is basically, uh, you can try and if you fail then it's kind of a big deal but at the university if you do fail it's kind of a big deal in a way. But, uh, they're the same as – for me they're the same with the expectations and the goals and stuff like that.

These described experiences illustrate the cultural congruence of educational expectations between home and university contexts. Participants were expected by their families to achieve academic success, but they also felt the same expectation within the university context as a result of the university's educational standards. The educational values in the home extended to the university context in familiar and anticipated ways making the adjustment easier as a result of the consistency across both contexts.

Selecting a PWI versus a HBCU. Participants discussed their reasons for selecting a predominantly White institution (PWI) as opposed to a selecting a historically Black college or university (HBCU). Having chosen a PWI, some participants explained their choice as identifying a university more aligned with the racialized experiences they expected to encounter in a real world context. During the focus group, one participant stated:

> I feel like I wouldn't be as culturally diverse if I had not gone to a PWI, like I was choosing between a HBCU and a PWI, and a lot of my family was like pushing the HBCU thing just because of the fact that it would be place of comfort, I guess. But I think although we're not as diverse, I'm happy with the choice that I made not to go to an HBCU just because then I don't think I would be out of my comfort zone at all.

Carmen talked about a similar experience with choosing a PWI over a HBCU. She discussed selecting an environment that would mirror the predominantly White context she may be faced with once she entered the workforce.

> I think so, in a way. That's why I was kinda geared towards HBCU. But then in, in the back of my mind, I'm thinking like I live in America where the majority of the people are white. Like right now, like the most, most of the people especially in the workforce where I wanna go are Caucasian, so I wanted to get like a glimpse of a real world here. In my opinion – I don't know necessarily if it's true, but it might be. I just thought that I should set myself up for how it's really gonna be. And that's why I really chose to come here.

These participants desired to attend a PWI because they felt that gaining this experience at the collegiate level would prepare them for the racialized experiences that they may encounter in the future. As students, these participants would learn to deal with racialized issues at the

university level. Dealing with these issues would help them to build resistance against some of these same kinds of experiences across contexts.

Other participants talked about selecting a PWI because they were influenced by their families, but would have preferred to attend a HBCU. Ashley selected a PWI because it was within close proximity to the city where her family resided; however, she felt as if she would have had a better college experience attending a HBCU. She wanted to attend a university where she would have more opportunities to learn about and be immersed in Black culture.

> That's the reason – and that's probably the reason why I didn't wanna, like, come here (PWI). Like, I – I like culture. I like learning about my culture. And it's not like that we're not supposed to learn about other cultures, but nine times out of ten, sometimes, I've always been learning about other cultures. So I actually wanted to gravitate and learn about mine as more as getting my degree as well and pursuing my career. So, yeah, culture – culture is not the same.

Similarly, Alex also wanted to attend a HBCU, but opted to attend a PWI to be closer to her family. She commented about being faced with real world challenges of becoming an adult at a PWI, which she believes may have been easier to deal with at an HBCU.

> Um, well, I would say before, actually, like s-, signing up to come to here — I wanted to go to a HBCU. And, um, that – I feel like that would have, that would have been easier – – for my parents to, you know, I guess show that like, you know, African Americans are like important in this society — or whatever. But then, you know, coming to PWI — you have to – it's kinda like a different lesson, – like I feel like if you go to a HBCU, you learn your role in society, but it's like a — kinda like…This is how things are.. and then here, it's kind of more like cold.

One participant from the focus group commented about how her experience would have differed had she selected a HBCU instead of a PWI. She discussed the cultural connections that she would have had the opportunity to make with other students of color at a HBCU.

> I actually, I think it would have been a lot different had I went to like an HBCU because I mean for the most part we kind of all think along the same lines and we're kind of the same, or we came from the same place and neighborhoods and stuff. So I think it would be different with that aspect, and people could relate more.

These participants reflected on how their college experiences may have differed if they had chosen to attend a HBCU over a PWI. They talked about having the opportunity to be exposed to various culturally Black experiences, gradually entering the adult world as opposed to feeling pushed into it, and being in a context where their peers are more relatable. Attending a HBCU would have better aligned with the cultural experiences they were accustomed to in their home communities. However, other objectives for their educational and professional goals prevailed. In addition, proximity to family also prevailed given that few had ventured far from home previously. For these reasons, participants opted to attend a PWI as opposed to a HBCU.

Experiences with Racial Micro-aggressions within the University Context.

Participants described various incidents of racial micro-aggressions in the university context. Racial micro-aggressions were coded as subtle and insulting unintentional racist behaviors displayed towards students in the university context as a result of their race. Several sub-themes emerged within this theme: (1) experiences with racial disregard, (2) experiences with racial spotlighting, (3) perceived racial stereotypes, and (4) ambiguous racist experiences.

Experiences with racial disregard. Experiences with racial disregard were defined as instances where Black participants felt ignored by White faculty and/or White peers in a variety

of university settings, such as the classroom, the dorm, and/or other locations on campus. There were four sub-codes that emerged in the analyses: ascription of intelligence, second class citizenship, White expertise on Black experiences, and colorblindness.

Ascription of intelligence. Participants described instances where they felt their opinions and contributions were dismissed in the classroom setting based on their race. These interactions were described as insulting and discouraging because their thoughts and opinions were diminished and perceived as insignificant. Their academic abilities were questioned in the classroom context because of their race.

Carmen experienced being devalued by her peers in the classroom setting when asked to participate in a group activity where she was the only student of color. She described feeling as if her intelligence and knowledge was being questioned by her White peers. This behavior was only displayed towards her, which is why she attributed this experience to the fact that she was a Black student in a predominantly White setting.

> I personally get really discouraged by stuff like that — especially in like my bio labs where it's group work. A lot of people seem like they're shocked that I can be intelligent — or they'll question my ability. Like they'll go over something I did, especially in my groups now. Like if I look at a microscope they'll make sure that what I did was right. And I noticed that they wouldn't do that with my other peers. So sometimes it's discouraging and frustrating.

Another participant from the focus group having a similar experience stated, "We have to take each other's opinions into consideration and I feel like that doesn't happen. I hate to comment on race but sometimes they value us less than who we are."

Second class citizenship. Participants described being treated like an afterthought and being treated as if they did not exist in the university context. One participant from the focus group reflected on an incident where she attempted to participate in a class discussion but was ignored by her White peers. Her contribution to the discussion was overlooked by her White counterparts. However, when one of her White peers repeated the same comment she had tried to contribute to the discussion, it was accepted and the other student was validated for the response. The participant was ignored when she tried to participate and her contributions failed to be acknowledged by her White peers. This was an incident she experienced frequently attending a predominantly White institution.

> I think it's not really about – okay, not really about ignoring what you say but when you ignore what I said when I try to contribute to like a discussion and then someone else says it, and then you're like, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, and then try to – like no, I just said that. That's what really makes me mad is like I'm sitting here and discussing something with you, and trying to give you my opinion, and I feel like you know, it's valid and then you ignore me and then give the credit to someone else, like that's not fair. That's the only issue I have, like with that. I just don't like that. It happens very often for me, I swear.

Isabella reflected on a similar experience where she felt overlooked by her White peers in the classroom setting. She was treated as if she was an outsider who did not fit in with the rest of her peers as a result of her race. Her White peers preferred to work with other White students in the class as opposed to working with her.

> Usually if you get in a group - and there's four people. Maybe one boy, two girls -and they both white and I'm the only black person, you would see the white girl interact with

the white girl, and they will talk about the project or talk about the assignment and no one will talk to me- and then they will act like I'm not even there.

Carmen spoke about an instance at the university where she felt like Blacks were overlooked during Black history month, which is a month she felt should have been a celebration of Black history and culture.

> Like a lot of stuff is geared towards white people in my opinion. Like even with Black History Month, like what we me and my friends thought last year, we really thought that they would say a little more –or bring something up. But I don't, I don't feel like they recognized African Americans as much.

These participants described feeling like outsiders who were unacknowledged by their White peers in the university context. These incidents were isolating for the participants, particularly because they were often encountering these experiences in classroom settings where they were the only students of color. Experiencing issues with being overlooked brings to light the level of seclusion the participants were faced with at a predominantly White institution.

White expertise on Black experiences. In addition to feeling dismissed and overlooked, participants also described instances where White students acted as experts when it came to the experiences of Black students. These occurrences were described as racialized experiences where White students spoke out about issues only knowledgeable to Black students who have firsthand experiences with these issues. Denise described an experience where her White peers were making offensive and judgmental comments about issues pertaining to Black students without asking the Black students for their input on these issues.

> Um, I feel like I do. I don't know if it's very – you know it's kind of like in general like what I was saying I have conversations in class sometimes and you know the comments

> they (White peers) make sometimes are very rude and I don't understand why they would say it because I'm thinking like, I'm here. Maybe you don't think it's offensive but it's very offensive, you know just some of the comments that are being made. Like they feel like they know how – like who you are and what you're about but they really don't and it's kind of based off that judgment so it's a lot of judgment I think.

One participant from the focus group discussed how her White peers often chose to answer questions that focused on racialized experiences of Black students. She described feeling upset that her White peers opted to answer questions as opposed to letting the Black students speak about these experiences. She believed that her White peers wanted to show that they were able to relate to the racialized issues that Black students encountered and wanted to display this through their responses to the questions.

> I don't know, because I just – I think white people are so – want to answer that question for us and for the most part I feel like they always raise their hand when a black question comes up that might – "oh, I think it's really wrong that, you know, they feel this way, they really did a lot of harsh things." They always, I guess they kinda want to put it out there that they're probably not racist or whatever.

Having their racialized experiences voiced by White individuals who have never gone through these experiences made them feel as if their stories were unimportant. These occurrences devalued and demoralized them. This was another way to silence Black students in the university context.

Colorblindness. Some participants described experiences where their White peers failed to acknowledge the racist ideologies that existed and were perpetuated by society. Carmen described an experience when she was having a discussion with her White peers about the

existence of racism during the present. Her White peers diminished her experiences with racism by stating that racism no longer existed.

> We had a group projects and we were talking about African American history, 'cause that was the basis of my writing class – And I was trying to tell them like people do still go through racism, and I mean we still are – we're still affected by even today. And they were like, "No, it's over. Look at Obama," and stuff like that. And I'm like, "No, like people still judge us on our color," and he was saying like racism is dead and it's not here anymore. Like no one's racist.

The participants described experiencing subtle instances of racism which conveyed a message that their voices were inferior to the voices of their White peers. Their experiences were invalidated because their White peers believed that race was unimportant.

Experiences with racial spotlighting. Participants described instances where they were made the center of attention by their White peers in multiple university settings, such as the classroom and the dorm. They described being made the focal point in a variety of situations taking place at the university due in large part to their race. Several sub-codes emerged within this sub-theme: (1) assumed universality of the Black experience, (2) assumption of criminality, (3) assumption of intellectual inferiority, and (4) standing alone as a Black student.

Assumed universality of the Black experience. Participants described instances when they felt they were expected to be the spokesperson for topics relating to Blacks. Their White peers relied on them to inform them about Black cultural experiences and/or issues pertaining to Black individuals. Denise described feeling like she had to contribute to a classroom discussion that focused on cultural issues in a classroom setting where she was the only Black student in the class. The expectation of having to contribute to an in-class discussion as the Black

representative made her feel as if she had to give responses that were deemed as appropriate and acceptable to her White peers.

> Yeah. I always think like I have to fit in or I have to like try to conform to what they're doing rather than what I would actually do or how I actually see things, especially on certain topics like in a lot of my classes being criminal justice we always talk about culture and we talk about – we kind of talk about Africa a lot and you know we get their perspectives on things but it's kind of like I'm the Black person in here so maybe I should answer a question on how you think Black people feel at the university so you know it's different. I feel like I always kind of adjust my answers to accommodate other people and feelings so I do that a lot actually.

Layla spoke about a similar experience when she felt compelled to be the Black representative on topics relating to Black culture in a classroom full of her White peers. She expressed feeling intimidated as the only Black student in a predominantly White classroom which unearthed memories of her past experiences as one of the few Blacks in her high school. She also felt pressure to be the Black informant for Black cultural topics during classroom discussions.

> I've been in a few classes where I've been the only black student, and it was not my first experience with it because I've done it in high school. But my experiences in high school with being the only black student kind of made me intimidated for the college setting because I was always like the token black girl, and I was always – it usually was history classes and I was always chosen to speak for the black people. And then whenever something was said that was wrong from someone else, they kind of all looked at me like, "Oh, is she gonna say something? Oh, she's not gonna say nothing."

Participants reflected on experiences where they were categorized as having the same kinds of experiences and knowledge as other Black individuals by their White peers. As a result, they were expected to speak on behalf of all Black people in a classroom setting. Their White peers failed to acknowledge that these participants have their own individual experiences as Black students, and one experience does not generalize to all Black individuals. This reflects the lack of value placed on individuality of Black students within a predominantly White institution.

Assumption of criminality. Participants described experiences when Black students were blamed for negative incidents because of their race. Many of these incidents involved theft or vandalism in the dormitories in which Black students were accused of committing these crimes by their White peers. White students automatically assumed that the Black students were at fault based on negative depictions that they held regarding the Black students. Ashley commented about an instance in her dormitory when her friends and she were wrongfully accused of vandalism in their dormitory. Their White peers made an assumption about them prior to knowing the accurate story based on racial judgments.

> And every time we would try to, like, come and, you know, interact or engage with dorm hall meetings or anything, it was always we were looked at with this weird stare, or, you know – or, um, I remember a situation this year that, I believe, someone got in trouble about writing something. And the first thing that they looked at was that it was us. The black girls, like, are bullying or something like that. But we didn't know anything about what happened or anything like that. It was, like, some guys from upstairs, but the first thing that they're looking at us. We were like, Um, no.

Layla witnessed a relative being accused of stealing something from a White peer's room in the dormitory. Unfortunately, this accusation led to a violent interaction between the Black

student and the White student. The White student assumed that the Black student had committed a crime without investigating the truth, which was due to the preconceived view that the White student held of the Black student.

> Um, I definitely do know of one where there was a situation with, um, a group of students and there was – one of my brothers was the only black kid in the situation. And I think it was – I want to say it was a situation with theft or something. And they (White peers) came to his door and knocked on his door because he had been a part of like – I guess he had been in the room playing video games with someone and they came to his door and like tried to fight him or started to fight him with two of their friends saying he stole their game or something. And someone comes down the hallway and sees it and tries to like break it up and help him and he realizes – or the kid realizes later like it was under his bed or something.

Participants reflected on experiences where Black students were perceived as guilty of committing crimes that they had no part in because they were Black. The negative depictions that their White peers held of them contributed to their feelings of anger and frustration and in some cases led to volatile situations. These participants were not given the benefit of the doubt as their White peers had been and were discriminated against by virtue of their racial membership as African American.

Assumption of intellectual inferiority. Participants described receiving backhanded racial compliments about their intellectual abilities from their White counterparts. These are defined as underlying racist comments that are disguised as compliments but are offensive to Black students. These comments are based on the assumption that Black students are inarticulate and intellectually inferior to their White peers.

Alex spoke about receiving backhanded racial compliments from her White peers regarding her intelligence, the way she behaved, and the way she spoke. They did not believe that she should have these characteristics due to her racial status.

> I just feel like - there'll be like underlying like – backhanded compliments sometimes. Like, "oh, you're really smart for a black person, dah, dah, dah. Or, you're really eloquent" or something like that. You know, but it'll be like, "I expected you to be differently, so that's why I'm giving you this compliment." Or are something like that, or, "You're not from the inner city, or something like that."

Danielle described a similar experience with her White peers commenting on the way she spoke and how it differed from their perceptions of how Black students are supposed to speak. This encounter made her feel as if she was only accepted by her White peers because she did not fit the misconceptions of how they viewed Black students.

> I feel like when I finally speak, like let's say I'm on the bus – and when I finally speak or say somethin' I, I feel like they're (White peers) like oh, oh she's not ghetto. Oh, okay. Maybe she's – maybe she – what is the word? An oreo."

Black participants were classified by their White counterparts based on preconceived depictions of how they were viewed by Whites. These behaviors were made toward Black participants to acknowledge them as exceptions to the negative views White students held about Black people generally. This conveyed the message that in order to be accepted by Whites at a predominantly White institution, Black students must hold characteristics deemed as appropriate by their White counterparts.

Standing alone as a Black student. Participants commented about standing alone as Black students at a predominantly White institution. Some participants enjoyed standing alone due to

their racial statuses, because they liked being one of few Black students in their classes. They enjoyed getting the recognition and being perceived as unique. Other students dreaded standing out based on their racial status, because it was intimidating and isolating. Some participants did not feel any level of discomfort; however, they did express feeling very aware of their racial statuses in a predominantly White institution.

Tim described his experience standing out as a Black student. He was a high achieving student, so he believed that his White peers accepted him and commended him for being a Black male in the Engineering program. He took pride in standing alone as a minority in a predominantly White Engineering program.

> It's not too discomforting, but I – but I do feel like some people look at me, not different, but, like, look at me like, oh, yeah. There's a black guy in here. That's cool, or they look at me differently than they would your – your average engineer. And that isn't intimidating, but it's just, um, it almost makes me feel a little special, because I know people look at me differently because – because I'm a black engineer. But I also feel like people are more accepting because, you know, like, they might look at me and say, "oh, hey, a black engineer. Like, he must be cool. Like – you don't see a lot of those. Like, He must be a really cool guy." It's almost – it's almost welcoming, 'cause I – I take pride in being a black engineer, 'cause there's not that many.

Carmen expressed her concern with standing alone as a Black student and not having any peers to connect with in the classroom setting because there was a lack of Black students in her classes. She struggled with building relationships with her White peers because of her racial status. This was an isolating experience, which further made her feel disconnected as a Black student.

> Like when I'm in study groups, like most of my study groups have nobody that looks like me. So it's not – study groups aren't just about studying. Like you build foundations and relationships — and network. But it there's no one who ever looks like me — sometimes, especially, again, 'cause I feel like none of them understand like what I might go through.

Standing alone as a Black student, Violet described feeling a sense of discomfort when attending smaller classes at a predominantly White institution. This experience made her feel like an outsider because she did not fit in with White peers.

> It depends on like where I am. Like if I'm in class – the bigger lecture hall, I'm pretty comfortable in them. But the smaller classes are kind of uncomfortable because a lot of times I'm like the only black girl in here or I'm the only black person or it'll be like I'm the only black girl. It's like oh my gosh.

Contrary to Tim's perception about being the only Black student, these participants often felt as if they were outsiders in a classroom full of predominantly White peers. Standing alone as a Black student was burdensome for them because they were unable to develop relationships with their White peers due to racial differences. Their White counterparts treated them as outsiders in the classroom setting. Participants wanted to fit in and be accepted by their White peers. One participant from the focus group stated, "It would be nice to just feel like I don't stick out for the wrong reasons, like I don't stick out because I'm black. I stick out because I'm me."

Perceived racial stereotypes. Racial stereotypes were defined as generalized racial views held by White peers about Black students. Participants described experiences where they felt threatened inside and outside of the classroom about racial stereotypes that they thought White

peers and faculty had of them. Two sub-codes emerged from this sub-theme: stereotypes of Blacks and stereotype threat.

Stereotypes of Blacks. Participants described instances when their White peers displayed racial stereotypes of Black individuals. Rayden commented about her White peers treating her differently based on stereotypes, "It's just when people wanna go to the stereotypes that we're treated differently." Danielle expressed wanting to be accepted by her White peers without them holding stereotypes of Black students. She feared that the racial depictions displayed in the media could impact their perceptions about Blacks. She stated, "And that was the hard – that's somethin' that even now I struggle with – bein' accepted – just because I don't like when people stereotype me based on what they see on TV."

A participant from the focus group described having her White peers ask her inappropriate questions about Black individuals based on stereotypes perpetuated by society.

> And there is a thin line between just being curious and just being ignorant, like "I hear black people eat chicken. I hear you eat chicken like," yes, I do. What kind – it's just certain questions you just don't know. Sometimes it's like oh wow, she was really interested and it's something that's like you know, it will benefit her in some way or give her that knowledge but if it's something like I can't even think but it's those – it's some questions where you just like – why would you even ask that.

Participants reflected on experiences in which they were viewed negatively by their White peers in the university context. The stereotypes were typically based on racial perceptions promoted in the media and perpetuated by hegemonic racist ideologies. Participants described feeling frustrated with how they were perceived by their White peers, because many of them were forced to constantly express why they differed from the stereotypes. Participants were clear

that the racial stereotype that Black students were inferior to White students was a common perception at their university.

Stereotype threat. Participants were able to talk explicitly about the stereotypes held against them in the university context. Some participants internalized the racial stereotypes held by their White peers in regards to their intellectual abilities. This caused them to question their own academic performances because they feared they would confirm these commonly held stereotypes. This posed a threat to the academic success of the participants. Alex expressed feeling a sense of defeat when she internalized the racial intellectual stereotypes that her White peers had of Black students. Giving in to the stereotype was used as a way to cope with the internalized negative depictions of Black students.

> Um, actually, I feel as though since like they kinda set the expectation for you that you're probably not going to be, you know, as smart as them, like sometimes it's easier to just like fall into that stereotype like – Oh, whatever. So – you already – They already probably think this way about me, so what does it matter? But I mean like for anything, you know, if you want to do well, you'll just do well because you want to.

Lisa felt intimidated by the stereotypes that White peers had of Black students. She thought about the negative depictions held of Black students regularly expressed or implied in the classroom setting, particularly because she was one of few Black students. By distancing herself from it, she created a space where she felt more comfortable sharing a classroom setting with her White peers.

> If it's something that I feel like it's really hard for me to understand, then I'll kind of feel a little intimidated because they might think "Oh, she's a dumb black girl" but most of the time I don't really care.

A participant from the focus group commented:

> And it's like really kinda discouraging when you don't know and people are expecting you to know, and everybody's looking at you and then they feel like maybe a little less of you because they – then they answer and they know stuff about it but you probably didn't learn that much about it or that in-depth.

Participants expressed experiencing stereotype threat at a predominantly White institution consistently by comparison to their home community experience. Feelings of intimidation and frustration plagued the participants, and this influenced their perceptions of their own intellectual abilities. Racist perceptions of Black students can be disruptive for the academic experiences of Black students at predominantly White institutions.

Ambiguous racist experiences. Participants discussed instances where they experienced subtle forms of racism in the university context but were unsure if it the experiences could be attributed to racist behaviors. Steve stated, "Like there's racism, like I'm not going to say it's not there, it's there, but it's to the point where it's not like obvious it's there." This intangible form of racism made it difficult for participants to process their feelings, because they were unsure of the intent behind these subtle behaviors displayed by their White peers. Isabella commented, "I mean sometimes you don't know if they don't like you or - is it the color of your skin and that is what I'm trying to understand."

Violet recalled an instance trying to determine whether she had experienced racism from a White female peer. As a Black student, she was constantly aware that she could encounter racist behaviors from her White peers. At times, she had difficulty determining whether an experience could be attributed to racist intent.

> There are sometimes like if I'm walking behind – and maybe this is just people being rude. Like it'll be a girl in front of me and she's white and she'll just let the door close on me. But then it'll be a white guy and he'll hold the door open. So I don't know if it's just rude or if that's like low key racist. I have no idea.

Nicole described feeling uncertain about a potential racist behavior displayed by a White peer. She knew experiences with racism happened frequently at predominantly White institutions, which made her cautious about her own encounters with her White peers.

> Sometimes it seems like – like if I'm on the bus or something, someone might not want to – they'd rather like stand up than like sit down next to me but I don't know if that's just like – just me over-thinking -- or like stuff like that. But I haven't experienced anything like open.

Participants expressed being uncertain about the racist intent behind behaviors displayed to them by their White counterparts. Rachel commented, "That's the other thing. You never really know if it's direct racism. Which can be difficult. Because you can't really pinpoint it. So that can be also difficult." Racism is endemic on predominantly White campuses. As a result, Black students frequently questioned whether interactions with their White counterparts were embedded in racism.

Experiences with Racial Aggressions within the University Context. Participants described instances where they witnessed racist derogatory statements intentionally being made about Black students and Black faculty by White students. These experiences were demeaning and degrading for the Black students. Racism was perpetuated in this predominantly White institution where Blacks were already being misrepresented and depicted in a negative light by their White counterparts. Layla spoke about a time when she was with a group of friends and

overheard her White peers making racist statements about them after a bus ride on campus. This racist experience was very eye opening for her because it was a clear indication that racist ideologies still existed. Some of them are antiquated in nature and continue to be flagrant on campus.

> Um, okay, I was getting off of the bus one day and there was a lot of African-American students at the back of the bus, um, and they were playing on their phones or showing each other videos or something. And we were getting off at the stop and so they (White students) get off the bus first and I'm sort of in the middle of the bus. So there's another group of kids before me and they were mostly white and they're male, um, and I get off behind them. And I hear like, "you n*ggers need to get in back. That's why they need to say in the back of the bus where they belong." I was like oh and then they kept going so we walk in like separate directions but I'm still behind the white group and so I hear them. Then they're still laughing and playing and throwing stuff at each other and they're like, "they need to go back to where they came from. I don't understand why they made it on this campus and da, da, da, da. They're probably all athletes. They can't do anything but run, and I was like okay, all right."

Carmen described an experience where her White peers would make racial remarks to her about a Black professor on campus. The Black professor was not respected by his students because his teaching abilities were constantly being criticized. The White students were more vocal about their opinions about this professor and felt the need to share their opinions with Carmen. As a Black student, Carmen was offended because their comments focused more on the race of the professor as opposed to his teaching abilities.

> I actually have one African American professor so far. But he wasn't like a really good professor, so a lot of people would talk about him. So like I had a study group with – white counterparts – –and they would, I don't know, they would say stuff like, "this is why we don't have a lot of African American professors here."

These participants witnessed overt racism being displayed toward them because of their racial status. This form of racism conveyed a message that Black students did not belong on a predominantly White campus and Black professors were not equipped to teach at predominantly White institutions.

Resources and Supports for Black Students. Participants described the resources and supports available for Black students in the university context. Some students voiced their concerns with having a lack of resources accessible to them on campus. Other students found that the resources for Black students were beneficial if you were aware that they existed. Participants also described having the support of Black faculty on campus, while others were concerned with the lack of Black faculty on campus. Others discussed the lack of support from White faculty. Four sub-themes emerged from this theme: (1) resources for Black students, (2) support from faculty of color, (3) lack of Black faculty, and (4) lack of support from White faculty.

Resources for Black students. Participants described having a lack of resources for Black students in the university context. Violet talked about the lack of resources accessible for Black students and the abundance of resources for other racial groups. She felt that the resources available to Black students on campus were limited to Black student organizations, but that there was nothing available to help the advancement of Black students.

> We are kind of put at the bottom 'cause I did not know they had a high school equivalency program here. And I was like, "Okay, that's really nice." And one of my best friends, she didn't finish high school. So I'm like, "Okay, you can come up here and get it." But they only do that for the Hispanic people. So I was like – okay. The Asian kids have all this international stuff. And then the Hispanic people have all this international stuff. And then black people only have black caucus, black leaders – stuff like that. But we don't have like stuff that could really help in the betterment of us.

Although some participants expressed their concerns for the lack of resources on campus for Black students, other students believed that there were an adequate amount of resources available in the university context. One participant from the focus group commented, "Um, I think it's just really encouraging that they do have black organizations around campus just because when I went to a black pride rally that was like really cool."

Lisa indicated that there were plenty of resources available to Black students on campus, particularly for those who were proactive about becoming involved. She also discussed the supportive professors present at the university.

> Uh, I like it so far. Like there's a lot of help and resources. You just have to be the one willing to go out there and get it. You have like a great support team, great professors like you as well.

Some participants described feeling undervalued on campus because of the lack of resources made available to them. Some participants talked about not being privy to the resources that did exist on campus because they had no knowledge of them. The lack of resources for Black students demonstrated that Black students were the inferior racial group on

campus. Other participants felt that there were a variety of resources on campus. Students who were more proactive about looking for them were better able to gain access to these resources.

Support from faculty of color. Participants described building supportive relationships with the Black professors at the university. Participants felt more comfortable connecting with professors sharing similar experiences and backgrounds with them. Black professors made the effort to foster relationships with the participants to aid in the success of the participants in the university context.

Nicole commented about the connection she made to a Black professor on campus. She had a stronger relationship with the Black professor than she had with any of her White professors.

> I think that most of them are supportive. I think that like for me last year I had a black teacher for a class and she – me and her like really connected and I was like the only black person in that class. So I feel like if it's like a faculty of color, like students of color, they might like connect more or be able to relate to each other more.

Ashley spoke about the Black faculty on campus that were supportive of all students, but tended to give more attention to Black students because they felt they would benefit from the relationships.

> And then you have some – well, you have the African Americans who always are gonna step out and help their people as well as helping everybody else. So they don't see any color really anyway, but they're also still gonna gravitate more so, 'cause they want us to do well.

Participants were better able to relate to Black professors than White professors. As a result, the relationships established with Black faculty helped them to successfully navigate a predominantly White university context.

Lack of Black faculty. Although participants discussed the supportive relationships they had with Black faculty on campus, they also discussed the underrepresentation of Black faculty on campus to serve as mentors for Black students. Lisa expressed her concerns with the underrepresentation of Black faculty on campus.

She commented:

> I don't think I have one this semester, no. I don't know. I don't see a lot of black professors. I see a couple of them. But I don't see the out in the open. But I'll see them and have class with them. I feel like we should add a little bit more to that, you know.

Carmen described the experiences of her African American friends on campus majoring in the pre-medical field. They lacked support from Black faculty because there was an underrepresentation of Black faculty in the pre-medical department. These students had to rely on their connections with White faculty, even though they preferred support from Black faculty.

> But like for other students – 'cause I have a couple of, couple of my African American friends – who are going into pre-med, but they are in a program like that. So they – they don't really have that support – from someone who looks like them, they have to go to an advisor.

Participants voiced the need for Black faculty to be hired at the university because they wanted guidance and mentorship from Black faculty. Participants also described the need for more Black professors on campus because they were able to build strong relationships with

them. The lack of Black faculty employed by the institution conveyed the message that Black faculty were not as valued as White faculty.

Lack of support from White professors. Participants discussed the lack of support they received from their White professors. They avoided asking them for help when needed, because they felt uncomfortable approaching their White professors. Participants also felt that their White professors questioned their intellectual abilities and were willing to support their White peers more than them. Kelsey commented, "But sometimes the – a professor or whoever will offer a white student an opportunity that they won't offer to a black student."

Steve talked about Black students feeling more at ease with reaching out to Black professors for help. He indicated that Black students did not believe that they would receive the help they needed from White professors, because they were less supportive.

> I feel like with African-American students they're like – they're less likely to go to a White or some other race's professor to ask for help. I feel like if they had a – because I only have like one Black professor currently here, so if they were to have a Black professor, they would like go to them more and ask for help more but, um, if they had any other racial professor or teacher or whatever they'd likely be less hesitant to go to them because they feel like now I'm going to get the right help.

Carmen described a similar experience that she had with a White female professor. Her professor assumed that she was failing the class when she reached out to her for help. She lacked confidence in Carmen's intellectual abilities because she was a Black student. Carmen felt that she lacked support from her professor as indicated by her lack of confidence in Carmen's academic performance during class.

> Like one of my professors told me in my org-, not my organic chemistry – my inorganic chemistry class, my professor, she's really nice, but she told me about these people drop this – I mean – fail this class. "So you need to do this and this and that." I'm like, "I have a 4.0 in your class right now. Like why are you talking to me like this?" "So you need to do this and this and that." I'm like, "I have a 4.0 in your class right now. And she was like, "Well, I'm just making sure." Like you don't have to make sure just because –and I felt like it was because I'm black. 'Cause I highly doubt she told that to a whole bunch of other people.

Participants described a lack in support from their White professors because their White professors held them to lower standards than their White peers. They felt uncomfortable requesting help from their White professors because they were not receiving the help they needed due to their racial status. Black students were not supported in the same way that White students were supported because the White professors viewed them as intellectually more inferior than their White peers.

Racial Experiences within the Black University Community. In addition to having racialized experiences with their White peers on campus, Participants described their racial experiences within the Black community in the university context. Participants particularly focused on their experiences with intra-group racial attitudes.

Experiences with intra-group racial attitudes. Participants discussed their experiences with racism within the Black campus community. Participants also discussed how they were perceived in regards to their sexuality on campus by their Black peers. Three sub-codes emerged from the data: (1) colorism, (2) not Black enough, and (3) perceptions of Black women and sexuality.

Colorism. Participants described experiences with racism within the Black community on campus based on skin complexion. Colorism was mainly experienced by the Black females on campus. Some darker toned participants expressed feeling as if they were treated differently from their lighter toned peers. Being compared to their lighter toned peers, they felt like they were viewed as less attractive. Participants experienced colorism from other Black male students on campus.

Carmen described her experience with colorism in the university context. She expressed feelings of frustration because she was viewed as "the dark skinned friend" by her Black male peers. Her frustration came from their strong focus on her physical attributes. Many of them commented on her beauty, but the compliments made her feel inferior to her lighter toned peers, which caused frustration.

> My best friend is really yellow. So we always get the – every light skinned girl needs a dark skinned best friend thing (from Black guys), and it really drives me crazy. But so she's – like I told her about that, how it's frustrating 'cause every guy, "Oh, you're pretty for a dark-skinned girl," and all that stuff, when they will compare me to my best friend. The colorism, I don't know. It kinda gets to me, even the, you know, they always say, "Black is beautiful." – but I usually get the colorism from guys who are black. So one of my closest friends last year when I first met him on my floor, he said, "Those can't be your real eyes. You're dark-skinned." Colorism it's really frustrating.

Participants were made aware of the fact that their skin tones were darker than lighter toned peers by their Black male peers. These images are perpetuated by the media with lighter toned Blacks often being defined as the standard of beauty. Participants struggled with colorism

on campus because it made them feel unattractive. They expressed having to deal with various forms of racism from their White and Black peers based on their physical characteristics.

Not Black enough. Some participants described instances when they feared rejection from their Black peers because they were not Black enough. They were concerned about not being accepted by their Black peers for lacking Black culture based on their behaviors and/or their home communities. Others described experiences where they were ridiculed for not conforming to the image or expectations of what some Black peers would deem authentically Black. These perceptions lead to their treatment as outsiders.

Danielle expressed how she felt in a classroom setting where the majority of the students are Black. She was self-conscious about whether her Black peers would accept her or reject her because she's dealt with not fitting in with her Black peers in the past. She grew up in a middle class predominantly White community where she had different experiences than some of her Black peers. As a result, she was sometimes viewed as lacking Black cultural experiences.

> But I still feel like sometimes I'm not completely accepted even though that might not even be the case. That's probably just my mind going crazy but it's like okay, I hope what I say doesn't make them think a certain way about me. Or think I'm less black than, less black than what they are.

Carmen described an experience when she was ridiculed by her Black peers for not being Black enough because of where and how she grew up. She was called an "oreo" multiple times, which is an offensive statement that means Black on the outside and White on the inside in reference to Blacks who are deemed to be not Black enough. This is a cultural or identity orientation that is not consistent with Black racial membership.

> I don't see it, but they say stuff like, "Oh, you think you come from money," or whatever. Like they'll be joking, but I keep saying like everybody – um, under every joke there's some truth. And then I've even heard, "you're not really black," or the Oreo thing. What's, what's to be called Oreo, but I've been called Oreo so many times this year alone.

Perceived as not being Black enough made participants feel unaccepted within the Black community. Struggling to fit in with Black peers and White peers engendered feelings of frustration. Acceptance from their Black peers was important to the participants, because they feared being treated as outsiders within their own racial community.

Perceptions of Black women and sexuality. Some participants were viewed as highly sexual women based on their interactions with male peers. Participants were judged and reprimanded by their Black peers if they were perceived to be overly sexual in the university setting. These behaviors were overlooked and ignored by Black students if White female students were engaging in these behaviors.

Rayden commented about her experience with being depicted as a highly sexual Black woman on campus by her Black peers because majority of her friends were males.

> And then the black guys, like, sometimes they would be disrespectful and call me names. Whereas, if I talked to one of my white guy friends, they don't really care. So I would actually say most racism from black people comes other black people. Yes, because I remember there was this one time freshman year. I had – I – I was single, so I would talk to a lot of guys. And it was the other black girls who judged me more than the white kids. Well, I mean, I think as a black woman, you really can't do anything without people saying something. Like, something might make me annoyed or mad, and, all of a sudden, I'm the mad, black woman that can't control herself.

Some female participants were degraded and disrespected by their Black male peers and judged by their Black female peers because they disapproved of their interactions with other males on campus. Black peers passed judgment because they were Black women. They were ridiculed for behaviors that are deemed as acceptable for White peers. Female participants expressed feeling frustrated with being ridiculed within the Black community about their interactions with male peers. They were subjected to judgment by their Black peers, which made them feel like they were being rejected within the Black community. Excessive sexualized depictions of Black females are perpetuated by society.

CHAPTER 5 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: DESCRIPTION OF REACTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Participants described adaptive behaviors used when navigating across the home and university contexts. One major theme emerged from the data: reactive coping strategies. Reactive coping strategies were used to combat and resist racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions experienced in the university context. Table 4 illustrates a breakdown of the major theme, sub-themes, and sub-codes associated with the second sub-question.

Table 4

Connections between Theories, Sub-Research Question #2, and Findings

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Primary Research Question: How do ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American youth transitioning between the home and university contexts?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Theory</td><td>Sub-Research Question</td><td>Major Themes</td><td>Sub-themes</td><td>Sub-codes</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, Multiple Worlds Typology</td><td rowspan="4">Description of Reactive Coping Strategies

(2) Based on these understandings, how do African American late adolescents describe their adaptive behaviors across the home and university contexts?</td><td rowspan="4">Reactive Coping Strategies for Racial Micro-aggressions and Racial Aggressions</td><td>Assertion of Voice</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Cultural Code Switching Behaviors</td><td>Shift in Language Usage

Shift in Behaviors</td></tr>
<tr><td>Affiliation with other Black Students</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Avoidance Behaviors</td><td>Distancing

Choosing Silence</td></tr>
</table>

Reactive Coping Strategies for Racial Micro-Aggressions and Racial Aggressions. Reactive coping strategies were defined as behavioral strategies used to resist racist experiences in the university context. Participants described multiple strategies used to adapt to a predominantly White environment. Several sub-themes emerged from the data: (1) assertion of voice, (2) cultural code switching behaviors, (3) affiliation with other Black students, and (4) avoidance behaviors.

Assertion of voice. Participants described experiences having to be outspoken in order to be acknowledged by their White peers in the classroom setting. Participants' voices were undervalued by their White peers, which was a racial micro-aggression displayed at the predominantly White institution. Participants combatted this subtle form of racism by asserting their voices and displaying resistance towards the racial micro-aggression, which forced their peers to acknowledge them.

One participant from the focus group discussed having to force her White peers to listen to her in a classroom setting consisting of predominantly White students. Her White peers devalued her views and treated her as if she was invisible. Asserting her voice was a strategy she used to combat this.

> Because like let's say somebody ignored me, you are not going to ignore me. I will make you listen to me. You ain't got no damn choice, okay, and like if you don't wanna talk to me, well forget you. I'll talk to you and make you sit there and listen. How about that? So it's like, even though their initial reaction is- like they will continue on doing it, if you let them. So I'm just saying like at first it's them but if you just let them continue doing it then it turns out to be you, which is not an excuse for anybody. Like that doesn't mean just be rude to people but I'm just saying, you can change it.

Isabella described a similar experience asserting her voice in a predominantly White classroom setting. By demanding respect, she was able to make her White peers aware that her voice was just as valuable as their voices. She was often frustrated with trying to make herself visible to her White peers.

> It kind of sucks because I have to force authority in order to get it, because people (White peers) won't give it to me. You know. And I have to - I have to get what I - I have to push myself. I have to take advantage of what I want. People sometimes people wouldn't give it to you.

Participants described having to force their White peers to acknowledge their views in the classroom setting. Their White peers had the privilege of having their voices heard without having to demand authority. Black students were overlooked in the university context, which made them feel undervalued and inferior to White students. The assertion of voice strategy was used to demand respect and combat racial micro-aggressions displayed by their White peers.

Cultural code switching behaviors. Participants engaged in bicultural behaviors by negotiating cultural codes to help them successfully navigate between the home and university contexts. Participants discussed using different language based on the context. They also indicated shifting modes of interactions and behavioral patterns as a result of situational appropriateness. Culture code switching behaviors was broke down into two sub-codes: (1) shift in language usage, and (2) shift in behaviors.

Shift in language usage. Participants opted to speak in certain ways based on situational appropriateness. They shifted the kind of language they used and were selective of what they said across the home, university, and peer contexts. Participants indicated feeling the same level of comfort with their friends and family when speaking, but feeling as if the university was a

more formal context. Carmen stated, “It's kind of bad. I don't wanna seem fake, but sometimes I might change the way I speak a little – enunciate my words a little more than I do with my friends.”

They often spoke in a formal way when speaking in the university context, particularly in the classroom setting with professors and White peers. Participants felt that being able to shift language usage based on contextual circumstances was a skill that all Black students were required to have. Alex stated, “Well, um, obviously, like just being black in general, like code switching is just a thing –like you have to know how to do.”

Kelsey was selective about her language usage when navigating between the home and university contexts. She was more comfortable speaking with her family because she did not have to filter her thoughts and opinions. She was able to express herself more freely in the home context. In the classroom setting, she was more restrained.

> Um, yeah, I'd say I'm definitely more comfortable at home – and I don't have – I guess I don't have to really watch what I say in terms of, yeah, when speaking about my opinions. I don't have to censor it and –rethink that, "Oh, these people aren't gonna agree with what I'm saying."

Denise had a similar experience. She was less guarded speaking with her family than she was with her White peers and faculty. Because the university context was more formal than the home context, there was more pressure to speak in a manner that was deemed to be acceptable and appropriate.

> Um, yeah definitely. I don’t – when I have conversations with people up here or professors or like emailing, I would never do that at home. I wouldn’t talk like that. I wouldn’t address situations the same way that I address them here. I’m more you know

comfortable there, more like ready to learn. Here it's very formal and so I don't know, I'm just free.

Michelle described an instance when she was more conscientious about what she said in a predominantly Black classroom setting versus a predominantly White classroom setting. Her Black peers were able to relate to her, because they shared similar backgrounds. She was more particular about what she contributed to a predominantly White classroom discussion due to perceived cultural barriers.

There's some things I feel like I, uh – and I'm trying to think of an example of some – like there's certain things I would say in my history class I wouldn't say in other classes, just because I feel like everyone else, because it's predominantly African American they know what I'm saying. They understand where I'm coming from, whereas if I was just like talking to my white friends, there's certain things that they don't get.

Danielle shifted the language she used according to situational appropriateness. She spoke in a different manner with her family and Black peers than with her White peers and professors. She used language to decrease the risk of discomfort when navigating between the home and university contexts. She changed the way she spoke based on her audience.

I talk how I talk. It's just it's kinda shifted just a little bit just enough to make them comfortable. And I'm still comfortable. I just want to make sure you guys don't feel uncomfortable in way. So it's not so much bein' a different person with each one. It's like, um, just changin' it, just tweakin' it just a little bit.

Camille was selective about the language she used in a predominantly White

classroom setting. She was more mindful of how she spoke around her White peers, which was heavily influenced by her mother. She did not want her White peers to view her as unintelligent or ignorant as a result of the way she spoke.

> I mean, not really, 'cause I try – you know, I always try to work on my speech and everything, but I feel, like, if I'm in, like, an only black student in an all-white class, I feel like, um, I don't know. If I speak, I make sure I'm a little extra, uh, making sure I'm extra careful how I talk, 'cause my mom always been on me about my speech and not to use certain words or slang.

Participants formalized their language and were also guarded in the content they used when in predominantly White classroom settings. Participants did not want to be viewed by their White peers as if they were intellectually inferior to them. Shifting their language based on cultural norms across contexts was a coping strategy because they were able to successfully navigate between the home and university contexts.

Shift in behaviors. In addition to shifting language usage, participants also shifted their behaviors when navigating between the home and university. Participants indicated that they displayed different mannerisms, managed their voice tones, and presented themselves based on contextual appropriateness. Their behaviors and interactions varied accordingly. Layla commented, "I have the same interactions but different approaches depending on who it is."

Tim talked about changing his behaviors in a formal setting in the university context or if he was spending time with his family or friends. He felt more at ease when interacting with family and friends than in a more formal setting.

> Um, it depends on basically where I'm at. So if I'm, um, if I'm in the engineering college, I try to act more professional just to get the hang of things, 'cause, you know, I'm gonna

be a professional pretty soon. So I'm just trying to get used to, but, yeah, um, I try to act more professional. Whenever I'm around my friends, I can, you know, kinda breathe and just – can just hang out and chill. But, uh, back home, it's – it's really laid back like it is with my friends. So I'll just, you know – when I'm with my family and friends, you know, everything's not a big deal. It's kinda like a vacation for me, 'cause I'm – I'm not at college, so I definitely don't take anything too serious. When I go back to school, it's – I'm in that serious mindset, especially if I'm in class or, you know, laboratory, I have that professionalism.

Violet discussed a similar experience. She interacted with her family and friends in an informal manner, while presenting herself more formally in the university context through her interactions with others.

Again, it depends on who. My friends that are up here – I kind of interact with them the way I would with my family. And then up here, students, professors, TAs – I think the more professional interaction rather than a laid back.

Denise presented herself in a way that would be acceptable by her White peers in the classroom setting. She wanted to combat racial stereotypes that they may hold about Black students. By managing her voice tone and her modes of interaction in the classroom setting, she was better able to fit in with her White peers.

Yeah, I definitely feel like I have to act a certain way in the classroom so people don't see me in a certain way because I feel like because I am African-American they expect a certain just you know I guess they expect me to act a certain way, maybe loud or just come looking you know – and so I definitely change that. I'm not a loud person or – but

> I kind of calm down. That's where I'm more like introverted. I'd just rather see my environment before I act in some way definitely.

Layla shifted the way she behaved when attending a predominantly Black classroom setting so she would not feel like an outsider amongst her Black peers. In the predominantly Black classroom setting, she used louder tones and was extroverted. In the predominantly White classroom setting, she was more restrained and introverted.

> Um, I don't feel like I change up my behaviors but I can see, um, I do remember a few instances where I know it's happened. Like I don't do it anymore but I know when I first transitioned into come into MSU, I realized like I was trying to fit in as a black student when there were more of us in a classroom. I kind of wanted to be a part, so if they were being loud or doing something crazy, something I'm used to when I'm at home, like I would want to be a part of it … even though in a classroom setting, most of the time that's not me anyway … versus when I was in a class of predominantly white students and I'd just sit.

Participants described experiences when they shifted their behaviors to successfully navigate between the home and university contexts. They wanted to behave in ways that were viewed as appropriate in each context. This strategy helped combat racial stereotypes, while allowing them to fit in with their peers. They were also able remain connected to their families.

Affiliation with other Black students. Participants built relationships with other Black students to form a united front in the university context. Affiliating with other Black students served as a coping strategy in a predominantly White institution because Black students felt supported by their Black peers. Connecting to Black students having similar interests and experiences helped to buffer against isolating experiences in predominantly White classroom

settings. Carmen stated, “But, I mean for me, I'm in the minority program so I have them (Black peers) as my backbone.”

Gerald felt more comfortable when there were other Black students in a predominantly White classroom setting. He felt that he could better relate to his Black peers. Being a minority in a predominantly White classroom setting became a shared experience.

> Um, I always feel like I’m drawn to other African-Americans in classes where it’s just one or two of us – where it’s easier for me to become friends with you ‘cause it’s more – I’m more relatable to you where I know how it feels to be a African-American – in a class full of, uh, 30 where I’m the only one and you feel and you know the same thing, so it’s just easier for us to like connect.

Michelle described her experience in a predominantly Black African American History class. She preferred attending this class over others, because this class provided her with the opportunity to connect with other Black students. There are few classroom settings in the university where Black students can gather.

> I’m taking an African-American History class right now -- and we’re predominant – the class is predominantly African-American. And there’s like three or four Caucasians but basically in almost all my other classes I’m definitely the minority, like maybe only a handful of us. I’m pretty much used to it though but -- I mean like I feel more comfortable in my history class than I do in the other ones.

Participants connected with other Black students to cope with racialized experiences in the university context. Establishing a support system within the Black university community provided strength in numbers, and the positive image of Blacks supporting Blacks. Relating to Black students having similar backgrounds helped to strengthen their confidence levels. One

participant from the focus group indicated, “That has been positive seeing just a whole group of African-Americans just here trying to do something in life, supporting each other.”

Avoidance behaviors. Some participants evaded racial issues pertaining to racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions displayed by White peers in the university context. Avoidance behaviors were used as a strategy to help Black students resist uncomfortable racial situations with their White peers. Two sub-codes emerged from the data: (1) distancing and (2) choosing silence.

Distancing. Participants combatted racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions by ignoring the situations. By failing to acknowledge racial issues that arose in the university context, participants were able to move forward without internalizing negative experiences. Physical and psychological distance was used to avoid conflict. Participants exited potential racist situations to avoid negative interactions with their White peers. Danielle commented, “Yeah, I just don’t affiliate myself with those kind of people at all. I try to, um, avoid them at all costs.”

Layla described an experience after attending a game with her Black peers. A group of White peers directed racial aggressions to her group. She chose to physically distance her group of friends from their White peers to diffuse the situation. She was able to prevent the situation from escalating.

> So we get out and I’m like okay, guys. We just need to take it in. Like it’s game night. People are drunk. And they're like, “No, it’s fine.” And I’m like no, got to take it in. If you heard what I heard … they started badgering me in the car like, “Why didn’t you tell me when we were in there?” Like no, not, not gonna do that. I wasn’t gonna be a fuel to the fire. Let’s go home, guys.

Carmen shared how she dealt with racial disregard in a predominantly White classroom setting. She often felt frustrated and discouraged because her opinions were devalued and she felt invisible. Physically distancing herself from the situation was the strategy she used to resist racial micro-aggressions displayed by her White peers in the classroom setting.

> Yeah. I don't think it would be as discouraging, 'cause sometimes me being discouraged, especially last year in chemistry. It will take a toll on my grades. Like I just – I would get so frustrated and just walk out of a class. Like I've done it twice. I remember last year that I missed a whole lecture. So, of course, that would be like, I don't know – That's an impact.

Alex coped with racial micro-aggressions by ignoring them. Because she was able to psychologically distance herself from the incidents, she was also able to avoid internalizing these situations. She understood that by attending a predominantly White institution she would be exposed to racial micro-aggressions.

> Um, I just feel like I'm kind of used to it. I mean I don't – like sometimes I'll brush it off because, you know — um, it is what it is. But, you know – You can't really like change their minds – about stuff.

By distancing themselves from racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions, participants were able to avoid situations that might hinder their academic success. Distancing also helped participants deal with the feelings caused by racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions experienced in the university context.

Choosing silence. Participants chose not to engage in classroom discussions as a way to resist racial micro-aggressions. By choosing not to respond, participants were able to have more control over the situation. In their view, these were strategies to prevent against negative racial

stereotypes perceived to be held by their White peers. Participants also chose silence in predominantly White class settings where they were racially spotlighted or expected to be the Black representative. Denise commented, "Yeah, I'll check out because I don't want to raise my hand and kind of form a debate with a class full of students you know."

Layla chose to refrain from engaging in classroom discussions as a strategy to avoid having to participate in discussions that focus on her racial status. She was selective about when she participated in class discussions to resist racial spotlighting in a predominantly White classroom setting.

> So now when I'm in like lecture halls that are predominantly white, I kind of just – I don't really – I sit in the front in a lot of my classes but I don't really say anything unless it's a direct like TA or professor to student conversation. And I kind of really don't show input unless it's like a subject that's not going to affect the fact that I have color.

Tiffany chose silence during classroom discussions because she wanted to avoid giving the wrong response in front of her White peers. She feared being stereotyped intellectually inferior to her White peers. Stereotype threat was a major factor in her decision not to engage in classroom discussions.

> I know sometimes I'll think that I'll know an answer, but I won't want to answer it 'cause I wouldn't want to be wrong. Like - and I think I do it like subconsciously. Like I - n - like now that I'm thinking about it, I'll like know an answer, but I won't answer it just because I don't want to get it wrong.

Participants chose silence as a way to avoid uncomfortable racial experiences with their White peers. They wanted to stay under the radar so that they would not be racially spotlighted in a predominantly White classroom setting. Participants also wanted to evade the risk of stereotype

threat inhibiting their academic abilities. Choosing silence was a strategy used to empower Black students in predominantly White classroom settings.

CHAPTER 6 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: MESSAGES AND TRANSITIONS

Participants described protective factors used to help them successfully transition from the home and to the university contexts. Protective messages transmitted within the family were discussed. They also described the lack of racialized experiences and racial messages received from family and in university contexts. Participants talked about the kinds of transitions they made when navigating from homogenous Black home contexts, predominantly White home contexts, or diverse home contexts to a predominantly White institution. Three major themes emerged from the data: (1) protective factors across the home and university contexts, (2) lack of experiences with racial issues, and (3) transitional experiences. Table 5 illustrates a breakdown of the major themes, sub-themes, and sub-codes associated with the third sub-question.

Table 5

Connections between Theories, Sub-Research Question #3, and Findings

Primary Research Question: How do ethnic-racial socialization processes and bicultural adaptive identities serve as protective factors for African American youth transitioning between the home and university contexts?				
Theory	Sub-Research Question	Major Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-codes
Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory, Multiple Worlds Typology	**Messages and Transitions** (3) What kinds of messages about race, if any, do African American late adolescents receive from the home context and	Protective Factors across the Home and University Contexts	Ethnic-racial socialization Messages	Cultural Socialization Egalitarianism Preparation for Bias Racial Pride Promotion of Mistrust
			Ties to Family	Close Knit Families Family

Table 5 (cont'd)

	how might these messages impact transitions made to the university context?			Support
			Core Family Values	Educational Achievement Morality Religiosity
		Lack of Experiences with Racial Issues	Lack of Experience with Racism Lack of Preparation in the Home for Racial Issues in the University Context	
		Transitional Experiences	Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transitions Congruent Worlds/Difficult Transitions Different Worlds/Smooth Transitions Different Worlds/ Managed Transitions Different Worlds/Difficult Transitions	

Protective Factors across the Home and University Contexts. Participants described protective factors that act as buffers when navigating from the home to the university. These factors were messages transmitted to the participants from their families regarding race, the

importance of familial relationships, and the importance of values instilled by the family. Three sub-themes emerged from the data: (1) ethnic-racial socialization messages, (2) ties to family, and (3) core family values.

Ethnic-racial socialization messages. Participants described ethnic-racial socialization messages transmitted in their families that served as protective factors across contexts. Parents conveyed messages about race and ethnicity to their children to help buffer against racial barriers across multiple contexts, particularly the university context. Ethnic-racial socialization messages were defined as messages received from the family about race, race relations, discrimination, and cultural affiliation. Several sub-codes emerged from the data: (1) cultural socialization, (2) egalitarianism, (3) preparation for bias, (4) racial pride, and (5) promotion of mistrust.

Cultural socialization. Participants described the cultural messages they received from their families about being Black. These messages were conveyed by exposure to museums, culturally centered celebrations, Black History, and other cultural events. The examples below describe similar experiences with cultural socialization across multiple participants.

Rachel was raised in a predominantly White suburban community. Her parents wanted to expose her to Black culture by interacting and connecting with other Blacks in a Black environment. They accomplished this aspect of her socialization by involving her in regular activities and events using the resources of the nearby predominantly Black city.

> So we lived in a predominantly white area, but everything we did was outside. So like, we went to a church in a predominantly Black city. I played tennis in a predominantly Black city. Swimming lessons, played piano, um, had like the African-American family group that we were in was in a predominantly Black city. We did – when we got older we had like black history, um like -- It was like a game, like black history questions.

Kelsey also described a similar experience in family's cultural socialization process. She learned about Black History by attending yearly Black History events and celebrations for Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday. She also attended religious events with her family.

> Yeah. Um, I'm trying to think about some examples. I know during Black History Month and for the Martin Luther King Day every year — we always went to like, ah, see a speaker or — or a celebration or something. Um, and then went to my church, too.

Isabella discussed Black history with her family during family reunions. She was also exposed to her family history.

> Um, they did talk - they kind of make sure that, um, I got a lot of my, um, history - you know my back history. Um, for family reunions, you know when you go to a family reunion with my family we talk about, um, our history, so our heritage and our ancestors. So we always - every year for our family reunion, we make sure we tell that you know - half of my grandparents were slaves.

Students reported that their families ensured awareness of their cultural and ethnic heritage a variety of activities, celebration, rituals and family connections. These implicit and explicit messages instilled the value of Black culture experientially. Participants sought out cultural activities in the university context because they had learned the importance of these cultural events at home.

Egalitarianism. In addition to cultural socialization, some participants received messages from their families promoting colorblind perspectives. People of color don't have the luxury of living in a society that is not centered on race. These colorblind perspectives were transmitted to the participants so they would not focus on racial issues but would concentrate on equality amongst all people. Parents might have felt that they were being protective by shielding their

children from issues regarding race. Isabel stated, “My parents tried to make sure that I didn't focus too much on color, because that would affect my mindset.” Their families did not want to emphasize race and racism because they did not want these components to be barriers to the academic success of the participants. They wanted the participants to be open to having exposure to cross cultural relationships in the university context.

Bruce talked about the egalitarianism messages he received from his mother on building relationships at college. She wanted him to interact with different kinds of students as opposed to just befriending Black students. His mother did not want him to be influenced by racial ideologies. He commented, “And my mom tells me, you know, "Be friends with whoever you want, regardless of race, regardless of sexuality, or anything like that." It's important to, you know, be diverse.”

Lisa described the egalitarianism messages she received from her family. She was given these messages to protect her from potential experiences with racism in the university context. Her mother perceived the focus of race as potentially being harmful to her. She wanted to highlight the importance of the human race as opposed to racial status.

> Like don’t kind of let that color thing get in your head because sometimes it’ll make you think oh, you know, you’ll kind of get discouraged here and there. You kind of just have to like think I’m a human. This is what I have to do. Let people judge. Oh well. Like that’s their problem. They're just messed up.

Ashley described the messages transmitted by her mother about interacting and accepting diverse peers. Her mother also encourages her to interact with a broad range of students on campus because she did not want her to focus on race. She commented, “See, my mom, she kind

of – more so preached to me about that, too. But she was just like, "Love everybody." "Love everybody." Embrace everybody." And, yeah, my mom's all over the place."

Racism fails to be placed at the forefront by these families, which produces a watered down ideology of colorblindness and neutrality within the educational system. Students of color experience racial inequities in the educational context, even though some are taught to ignore the impact race and racism has on their experiences. It is this ignorance that perpetuates racism and maintains structural inequalities in education institutions.

Preparation for bias. Participants described messages they received from their families to help prepare them for potential experiences with racism, prejudice, or discrimination in various contexts. The content of preparation for bias messages focused on the promotion of strong work ethics, avoiding conflicts on campus, and increased awareness of racial issues. Many of the messages transmitted were based on the past experiences of the participants' parents.

Ashley described the preparation for bias messages she received from her family. She was encouraged to always display a strong work ethic as a Black student. Family racial socialization messages anticipated that she would be faced with potential risk factors that might impede her academic success. Ashley stated:

> Like, you can't take no breaks. You can't – you always have to work ten times harder, so especially being an African American student at a predominantly white school. So, yeah, yeah, you have to always work ten times harder.

Tim's parents conveyed messages promoting the importance of hard work as a Black student. The messages also prepared him for racialized experiences he may be faced with dealing with as a Black student in a predominantly White context.

> So my mom and dad, from the start, they always told me it's gonna be harder for me because of the society we live in. Uh, yeah, my mom and – well, my mom and dad until my – my dad passed away, they always emphasized, um, how – you know, how hard the struggle would be for me sometimes. And they also emphasized that because it'll be much harder for me than – than my, you know, uh, my white peers. But, um, but other than that, they understand that I'm a really hard worker.

Bruce's family encouraged him to avoid conflicts in a predominantly White institution to minimize the unfair treatment he may receive as a Black student. By avoiding conflicts and presenting himself in a professional manner, he would be able to successfully navigate the university context.

> They said pretty much, uh, you know, avoid getting into conflicts because, you know, just be – yeah, avoid getting into conflicts, because, being black, you may not get that benefit of, say, a white man or woman. Mostly just always keep a calm appearance, because, for one thing– one thing I learned about racists is that – racism is that people aren't born racists. People have been influenced either by the media or their parents mostly. So it's not really a point to, you know, get angry or anything like that. Just let it go, move on with your life. Just stick to, you know, your goals.

Participants believed the university context was structured in a way that supported their inability to excel academically. Participants received messages from their families enabling them to live in a potentially oppressive environment. Structural inequalities within universities may promote feelings of inferiority because of racial differences within the university. These intergenerational messages served as protective factors for Black students on campus.

Racial pride. Participants received parental socialization messages on pride and self-love regarding their race and cultural background. Racial pride messages were protective messages used to empower Black students when navigating a majority university context.

Kelsey described the racial pride messages she received from her mother. Her mother believed she should be proud of the opportunities available to her as a Black woman.

> But my mom definitely tries to keep me grounded in the sense that like you are – you have a lot of opportunities that a lot of people don't have. Um, "you're a young Black woman and you need to be proud of that." That was – it's a lot of emphasis on – being proud of being black.

Similarly, Carmen also received messages from her mother emphasizing racial pride. Her mother encouraged her to have self-love for her physical attributes. She wanted Carmen to take pride in her racial status, as opposed to feeling inferior to her White peers. These messages served as a buffer in the university context.

> While she (mom) talks to me about like being Black and beautiful and loving yourself and loving my color, 'cause I get it a lot – like, you know, light skin, dark skin – Like she, she tells me to love my color and love myself.

Isabella received messages from her family regarding self-love and taking pride in the racial heritage of Blacks.

> And - and at the same time, do focus and don't forget where you - where your-background is from - and where you're from. uh, my family taught me always never to change - ne - never, ever - never change yourself. And don't let nobody speak down - of your culture or of you period.

Racial pride messages helped the participants to develop a positive sense of self, which fosters higher levels of commitment to their racial group. Because they felt positively connected to their own racial group, these processes promote academic success on campus.

Promotion of mistrust. Participants received messages from their parents emphasizing wariness and distrust about interacting with their White peers. Participants' parents transmitted these messages as a result of their past experiences interacting with the White community.

Gerald's circle of friends primarily consists of White peers. His parents warned him to be aware of the people he selected as friends because he interacts with White peers regularly. His family wanted to protect him from the challenges that he may be faced with attending a predominantly White institution and interacting primarily with White peers.

> Oh just like you're not like everyone else that you will see so just keep that in mind. Keep the way like you carry yourself. Keep the, like who your – keep in mind who you're around and who you trust. Make sure like you make true friends. They try to get that message across – you're different from them.

Danielle described the distrust that her mother held for White individuals. Her mother's distrust was reinforced through the promotion of mistrust messages transmitted to her about her White peers.

> She doesn't trust 'em, either. Different things she was like they, they rape and – um, they, they murder, and the way that they murder is insane. The way they talk to their parents is crazy – and different things, so she's not a big fan of them and she'd be like this is what – this is – you got to be careful. Watch out for white boys that are like this.

Promotion of mistrust messages served as protective factors for Black students in the university context. Participants had increased levels of awareness when interacting with their White peers as a result of their parents' messages.

Ties to Family. Participants described having strong links to their families. Family cohesion is broken down into two sub-codes: (1) close knit families and (2) family support. Having a close knit family and having family support served as protective factors in the university.

Close knit families. Participants described having strong bonds with their families. These connections helped participants to better adjust when transitioning to the university. Participants selected this university because it was within close proximity to their families. They wanted enough distance from their families so they could learn to be independent adults; however, they also wanted to be close enough to continue to maintain the connections with their families. Participants maintained strong relationships with their families through frequent interactions and regular contact.

Michelle described the strong bond she had with her family. Her family lived within close proximity of one another to ensure that they had frequent contact. She visited her family often to maintain the strong relationships that she had while attending college. Frequent visits to her family helped her to remain connected to them, which helped her to feel as if she had a support system in an environment that can feel isolating.

> It's me, my mom and my sister but as a family, even not just our immediate family, like our whole family, we're very close, like we spend a lot of time with each other, even though like my cousins and my aunt, they live like 45 minutes out but so – like I see them when I'm at home at least once a week.

Living away from home was a challenge for Gerald because he spent less time with his family. Having strong ties to his family served as a protective factor in the university context because it gave him a sense of stability. Although he missed his family, the strong connection he had with them made him feel secure, which helped him to excel academically.

> Uh, the biggest thing about coming here for me was being away from my family – because I never really been away from my family for a long stretch of time with being like a week for like spring break and what not – the hardest thing was just like being away from home because – my family is very close and – like everyone always called me a momma's boy, but I guess like – I just miss my parents and miss my family, which I still do now.

Participants described having close knit families with strong relationships that they maintained and nurtured while attending college. Families provided them with a connection to their cultural backgrounds and provided them with protective coping strategies to resist racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions on campus. Close knit families served as a protective factor for Black students.

Family support. In addition to close knit families, participants described having high levels of family support. Family support included financial stability, emotional support, encouragement, and parental guidance. Participants needed support from their families to help them successfully navigate the university context. Ashley commented about receiving guidance from her family, "Oh, they're supportive. They're there no matter what. They're my biggest critics. But they're also my biggest supporters. Um, and they never – they never seem to judge."

Denise received support from her family throughout her lifespan, but received increased levels of support when she entered college. Her parents gave her financial stability to ensure that

she was economically secure. She also received emotional support, encouragement, and guidance from her family.

> Well they're happy. I'm a first generation so they're really happy that I'm still here because of course people go but it's just the matter of finishing so they're really happy and they always like call me to make sure I'm you know okay, like how's school, if anything's going wrong financially they're like, "We're not letting you get put out of school so just let us figure it out. We'll take care of it." So like they're really proud of that like achievement so they always tell me, always let me know, like even when I tell them I'm kind of struggling they'll be like, "Well you're intelligent. You'll figure it out. I know you can. You've always done it," so they just always give me motivation.

Tim received a great deal of family support. His parents made sure that he was well taken care of as a child and continued to support him while he attended college. As a result of his family support, Tim excelled academically in the university context.

> My dad gave me everything. My mom gave me everything. So I owe everything to them. They constantly instilled those values through just their actions and my mom, especially, she's been, uh, very supportive of me, especially now that I'm all the way in another state. But she, um, my parents have definitely set me up to do well.

Participants described having support from their families. Family support served as an important asset for Black students in the university context. Financial stability, emotional support, encouragement, and parental guidance helped to protect participants when transitioning to the university.

Core family values. Participants described core family values transmitted to them by their families. These values served as protective factors in the university context. Three core

family values emerged from the data: (1) educational achievement, (2) morality, and (3) religiosity.

Educational achievement. Participants expressed the importance of educational values in their families. Some participants came from families where multiple generations have completed college degrees. With these participants, education was highly valued and obtaining a higher institutional degree was a requirement. Other participants came from families where they were the first to attend college or where members of their family attended college without completing a degree. Education was highly valued in these families to ensure that they secured a better future than other members of their families. Danielle stated, "Um, well, my mom and dad take education very seriously. Because you know, um, that's the - I want to say that's the only way you can succeed in life."

Alex talked about the importance of education across multiple generations in her family. Many members in her family had obtained a college education, so she was expected to complete a degree at an institution of higher learning as well. Educational advancement was a requirement in her family.

> I mean I feel like it's something that I wanted to do and then the – like both of my parents went to college so – it's like kind of in my family. Like all of my family members, like my aunts – uncles, grandparents, they went to college. I think it's just, "You're going to college."

Violet had family members who obtained college degrees and family members who started but did not complete their degrees. She was encouraged by her family to finish her degree because of the impact it would have on her future.

> Oh, my family was don't act up in school or you will be answering to us. They did not play. School is a really, really, really, really big thing. Two of my aunts been to college and graduated and have degrees. Some of them went and dropped out. So I think they just do it because they know what it's like to not go or to go and not finish.

In Rayden's family, education was promoted as a way to resist negative racial experiences across various contexts. She commented, "But they said education is the best thing you can have to fight, like, other people's ignorance and other people trying to put you down and stuff."

Participants learned the importance of education in the family context. Carrying educational values with them into the university context, participants were able to excel in their academics. Having a college degree would provide them with greater opportunity than many of their family members.

Morality. Participants received messages from their families pertaining to moral values. Moral values included respecting others and self-respect, right versus wrong, honesty, trust, forgiveness, and perseverance in adverse situations. These values were instilled in the participants so they would maintain them as they navigated across contexts.

Isabella's family instilled moral values in her that she was able to display when transitioning from her home to the university. These morals helped her to gain respect from her peers and faculty.

> Um, well, we - we believe in, um - um, morals like respect others as you would like to be respected. So my - you know my family always taught me to challenge myself and never give up. And always learn from your mistakes. Like teaching us how to be a lady - and,

> um, learn how - know how to be treated. And also make sure you treat others with that same respect.

Tim's father encouraged him to become involved in martial arts because of the moral values he would be exposed to when participating in this extra-curricular activity. Tim gained values that served as protective factors when navigating between the home and university contexts. These moral values helped to shape him into a well-rounded individual.

> You know, it was – I learned from them a lot. And, uh, like my dad, um, he basically – he really pushed martial arts on to us, uh, just to instill a lot of the values, like just determination and just perseverance and honesty and – and just everything like that

Steve described the moral values he learned from his family. He was encouraged to present himself in a professional manner across contexts. He was also taught to base his decisions on what is morally right over wrong. Steve commented, "Um, like the moral thing, what's right, what's wrong, uh, knowing, uh, what to do in certain situations, knowing how to conduct yourself in a positive way and just being the best person you could be, yeah."

The participants embraced the moral values passed on to them by their families. Once these values were instilled, they became instinctual for the participants. These values served as protective factors across contexts because they gave the participants standards to live by within the home and university contexts.

Religiosity. Participants described religion as being a core family value. Participants grew up in households where religious values were transmitted between generations. Religion often serves as a protective factor for the Black community against stressors. Participants described using their faith as a guide in their daily decision making. They remained linked to their families through their religious values. Yeah. Alex commented, "Well, um, going to church with like my

grandparents and – going to church with my parents and sometimes going together like as a big family, um, I feel it's just kind of expected – you know, of us."

Denise speaks to her brother on the phone regularly. Together they pray so that she maintains religion as a core family value while making her way through college. Religion also served to maintain strong ties to her family.

> Um, just making sure everyone's okay, like you know – like if we ever need anything that we can help each other out and just like religion, like that's strong, like my brother is really into church and we always pray every week, every other day, like he calls us and we pray on the phone and you know just making sure we're on the right path just each other as a family.

Carmen's family placed religion at the forefront of their lives and encouraged her to do the same. Being connected to a religious based faith influenced the kinds of decisions she made as a college student. Her religious values protected her in the university context because she was able to resist making detrimental decisions. Although she lived away from home, she found opportunities on campus that allowed her to continue to nurture and maintain her connection to her religious faith.

> Like my family has been going to church. Like my, like my family is saved. So I would say God. Um, church, for one. I go to church a lot. Even here, like I go to Bible study when I can't go to church at home. And like just morals. Like being in college, especially as a freshman, a lotta stuff was thrown at me. Like, I'm not gonna say I'm perfect, but like being growing up in church made you – made me second guess a lotta stuff before I did it.

Participants described religion as being a core family value that aided them in dealing

with adversity in the home and the university . Religious participation gave their families a sense of belonging within the Black community. Participants found it beneficial to continue to maintain their religious faith within the university context because it helped them to combat everyday stressors.

Lack of Experiences with Racial Issues. Lack of racial socialization has been known to have consequences for academic achievement and well-being. Some participants have indicated that they never experienced racism in any capacity during their lives. Other participants had never discussed racial issues with their families. These participants lacked experiences with racial issues within the home and university contexts. Two sub-themes emerged from the data: (1) lack of experience with racism and (2) lack of preparation in the home for racial issues in the university context.

Lack of experience with racism. Some participants stated they had never experienced racism or discrimination in their lifetimes. They had not encountered racist experiences in any context. Participants were aware that racism existed, but were unable to speak about personal experiences with it. Tiffany stated, "I haven't. A lot of my friends say that they have, but I - I honestly haven't experienced anything."

Similarly, Tim had rarely had any experiences with racism or discrimination. He is a high achieving student who had always been accepted by his White peers and faculty. His academic achievements made him more approachable to his White peers. His parents discussed issues of race with him during his early years. Because he was rarely confronted with racial tensions, the conversations regarding racial issues with his family decreased.

> Um, to be honest, I really haven't even had too many racial encounters growing up. So I – I would never, like, run to my mom and dad and tell them like, "Hey, so-and-so did

this, 'cause I'm black," or anything like that. So – so after – after a certain age, my mom and dad stopped emphasizing just racial tensions, because I never experienced them like my mom and dad did growing up.

Steve believed that being a high achieving student shielded him from racist experiences on campus. Because he excelled academically, he was able to avoid racial encounters with White peers and faculty on campus.

Not me personally. Um, the fact that I'm pretty much a, you know like smart and what not kind of a student, uh, does probably not make it seem like I have been involved in a prejudiced past or something like that, but if I wasn't like the student that I am probably. Probably I might get portrayed as that or not being – or somebody being prejudiced to me but none of that, no.

Participants had not been exposed to racist behaviors but were aware of the racist ideologies that existed in regards to Blacks. These participants were high achieving students. The intellectual abilities of the participants served as buffers against racism and discrimination because these participants were accepted by their White peers. Participants were not treated as outsiders as a result of their abilities to excel academically.

Lack of preparation in the home for racial issues in the university context. Some participants felt that their parents had not acknowledged or prepared them for racialized experiences at the university. Some participants felt unprepared when entering a predominantly White university context, while others felt that they had to prepare themselves. Some parents chose not to discuss racial matters with their children, and others were unaware that there was a need to discuss this topic. Rayden commented, "I can't really say they've said anything probably just because none of us knew what to expect."

Denise believed she lacked preparation for racial issues she may be faced with at the university. Growing up in a predominantly Black city, she did not have racialized encounters with her Black peers within the school context. Denise stated, “They really didn’t prepare me for anything. I think I kind of prepared myself, just you know you can handle it.”

Carmen’s mother chose not to acknowledge or discuss racial issues with her because she was not fond of the historical past and racist ideologies of Blacks. Her mother encountered negative racialized experiences in the past, and wanted to refrain from speaking about race related topics. Carmen encouraged her mom to speak about racial issues but her mom was unwilling to engage in these kinds of conversations. As a result, she had a lack of preparation for racial issues.

> Like African American history and the stuff that went on, she just doesn't like to discuss. Even with the Mike Brown situation, like she – supports like, you know, 'cause she hates police brutality and all that stuff, but she just don't wanna hear it. My mom likes to brush over it– because she was born in the '60s and she's always like, "I hate that time. I hate talking about African American stuff." But I personally love it. So it's, it's a fight. Like I tried to go get her to see Selma with me, and she didn't wanna go see it. She was born in '62, so – she was still young. But she said she remembers, and she hates it.

Some participants were not socialized by their parents on how to deal with racial issues in the university context. These participants were forced to learn how to deal with racialized experiences on their own.

Transitional Experiences. Participants described their transitional patterns navigating from the home to the university (see table 6). Five sub-themes emerged from the data (1) congruent worlds/smooth transitions, (2) congruent worlds/difficult transitions, (3) different

worlds/smooth transitions, (4) different worlds/managed transitions, and (5) different worlds/ difficult transitions.

Congruent worlds/smooth transitions. A few participants described having congruent worlds/smooth transitions. Participants having congruent worlds/smooth transitions had similar cultural codes across the home and university contexts. Cultural codes included similar cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors between both contexts. As a result, participants were able to transition with ease.

Kelsey described her transition from her home to the university context as smooth. She attributes this to the continuity between these contexts. She grew up in a predominantly White community and was accustomed to being a minority in White majority contexts or settings.

> I'd say my transition was pretty smooth, but I think the transition was fairly easy for me because I had a lot of friends from high school, like all of my best friends went here. Well, except one. She went to another university. But for the most part, all of my really good close friends went here. I made friends with a girl who lived next door to me. We became really close. I got lucky with that. So I've never really felt homesick or anything. Um, I'd say it's almost exactly the same – because my – well, like I said, my hometown is predominantly white. And my brother and I were probably the two of five black kids that went through high school.

Similarly, Michelle described her smooth transition as a college student. She knew her roommate prior to attending college, so having some familiarity helped her to better adjust to the university.

> Uh, my adjustment, it wasn't too difficult. I think it was – I mean it was pretty easy to move. And I knew my roommate which I think which made like -- Yeah, which made it a little bit better and made it easier but yeah, my adjustment, it was – it was pretty easy.

Participants having congruent worlds transitioned to the university with ease. The cultural continuity made the adjustment smooth because they were not inhibited by contextual differences. Participants with congruent worlds/smooth transitions were often the highest achieving students, which was supported by cultural compatibility.

Congruent worlds/difficult transitions. One participant described having cultural congruence across the home and university context, while having difficulties adjusting to the university. The participant discussed her concern with not having her family nearby to help her deal with the adjusting to living in a new environment. Alex commented, "Um, I, I would say the transition was definitely difficult for me. It was, it was an adjustment, for sure, because I definitely was very close to my family."

She lacked the support system that she was accustomed to relying on regularly in the home context. Growing up in a predominantly White home community, she was able to deal with stressors because she had access to the emotional and financial support of her family because they were within close proximity. The distance from her family impacted her ability to successfully transition to the university.

Different worlds/smooth transitions. Some participants were raised in homes that differed from the White university context, but were still able to adjust to the university with ease. A majority of participants with different worlds/smooth transitions grew up in predominantly Black home communities. Others grew up in multiracial communities. Participants were able to successfully navigate between the home and university by blending

aspects of both contexts. Steve commented, "It wasn't as hard as people like – as I thought it would be or people thought it would be, but it was sort of an easy transition because people just made it easy on me."

Violet described her transition to the university as smooth. She grew up in a predominantly Black city and attended schools where the students were predominantly Black, so attending a predominantly White institution was a different experience for her. Her family visited regularly and she had frequent contact with them, which helped her to adjust to life as a college student.

> I was kind of nervous. It was weird living at school. That was a thing I had to get over. It wasn't too bad being away from my mom and stuff because they come up here kind of often with church and stuff and I have family up here too. And it was like – at first I thought it was going to be way, way more black people than I thought. And on the first day of class I'm like, "There are no black people." Like you pass a black person and you're like [gasps] "She's black too!" It (the transition) was easy. It was really easy. I didn't really have anything to make it too hard. Everybody made it smooth.

Participants having different worlds/smooth transitions were able to successfully navigate the university context. By combining aspects from both contexts, participants better adjusted to campus life. Frequent visitation from families and connecting with old friends on campus helped them to transition to a new and different environment.

Different worlds/managed transitions. Many participants described having cultural discontinuity between their homes and the university context. They were able to manage these differences by utilizing cultural code switching behaviors. Negotiating cultural codes based on situational appropriateness helped the participants to successfully navigate the college campus.

Nicole was able to successfully manage the differences between her home and the university. She had to adjust to the absence of daily contact with her parents, though she was able to build relationships with her peers. By negotiating cultural codes, she was able to identify and connect with her family and her peers. This allowed her to be a part of a group, which helped her to successfully navigate the university.

> It was different from being at home but it was – like I was okay with it. Like when my parents first left, obviously I was kinda sad. But after that like I made friends really quickly and it was fine.

Lisa described her transition as a college student. Her multiracial home community differed from the predominantly White university she attended, but she was able to manage these differences by knowing when to culturally code switch. She knew how to behave in the university context, which supported her work ethic and allowed her to excel academically.

> Well, I was kind of nervous but it seemed like I kind of managed. It's just like high school. You just kind of like have to like – well, it's more different than high school but you kind of have to just go in knowing you're gonna work hard to get what you want.

Participants described having cultural incongruences between their home and the university. They learned to manage these differences by engaging in bicultural code switching behaviors, which helped them to successfully navigate from their homes to the university. This reactive coping strategy also combatted racial micro-aggressions displayed on campus.

Different worlds/difficult transitions. Some participants struggled with successfully navigating between their home contexts and the university context. Participants described facing challenges with transitioning to life as a college student because of the cultural discontinuity between both contexts. Layla described her transition to a predominantly White institution. Her

predominantly Black home community was very different from the university context, so she had difficulty adjusting to this environment. Being a Black student attending a predominantly White institution, she experienced racial micro-aggressions by her White peers. Because this was not something she was accustomed to dealing with in her home community, she found it challenging to adjust to life as a Black student at a predominantly White institution.

> Um, my transition was rough. I guess I would use "rough" to describe it. It wasn't necessarily hard. It was something I was prepared to do. It just – it didn't go as smoothly as I thought it was gonna be. The transition was a lot different than what I expected. Um, I think it's mostly because it's different from being home. Because I'm very comfortable in new situations. I just think I have been so used to what I have seen in my community and my household that once I was given the freedom and gotten wings unclipped, I was kind of like okay, I kind of want to flutter back to where I came from.

Similarly, Tiffany described having a difficult transition when she entered the university. Her view of the university was influenced by the racialized perceptions the media perpetuated to society about attending a predominantly White institution. As a result, she was apprehensive about becoming a student in an environment that culturally differed from what she was accustomed to at home.

> I was really intimidated, um, just because of a lot of things that I would hear, like not necessarily from like family members - but just like media stereotypes and stuff. So I was kinda - just because I had never been around like a lot of - a different culture than - you know being around black people so - I was kind of intimidated when if first got here.

Participants described having difficulties transitioning to the university context because

of the cultural variations between their homes and the university. These incompatibilities were contextual factors that inhibited participants from optimally connecting with the university context as Black students.

Table 6 describes the breakdown of the transitions, the grade point averages, and the racial compositions of the home communities for each participant. This table connects the home communities the participants lived in prior to attending college to their transitions and academic performances.

Table 6

Connections between Transitional Experiences, Grade Point Averages, and Racial Compositions of Home Communities

Pseudonym	College GPA	Transition to University Context	Racial Composition of Home Community
Kelsey	3.5	Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly White
Carmen	3.7	Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly White
Michelle	3.84	Congruent Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly White
Alex	2.97	Congruent Worlds/Difficult Transition	Predominantly White
Gerald	3.1	Different Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly Black
Violet	2.0	Different Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly Black

Table 6 (cont'd)

Steve	3.2	Different Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly Black
Camille	3.2	Different Worlds/Smooth Transition	Predominantly Black
Tim	3.67	Different Worlds/Smooth Transition	Multiracial
Denise	2.8	Different Worlds/Managed Transition	Predominantly Black
Nicole	2.8	Different Worlds/Managed Transition	Predominantly Black
Rachel	3.2	Different Worlds/Managed Transition	Multiracial
Lisa	3.3	Different Worlds/Managed Transition	Multiracial

Table 6 (cont'd)

Danielle	3.3	Different Worlds/Managed Transition	Multiracial
Layla	3.2	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Predominantly Black
Ashley	3.12	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Multiracial
Rayden	2.8	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Multiracial
Bruce	2.6	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Predominantly Black
Isabella	2.4	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Multiracial
Tiffany	2.9	Different Worlds/Difficult Transition	Predominantly Black

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

This study focused on the cultural differences faced by Black students transitioning to a predominantly White institution and the protective factors that aided them with these transitions. A focus group session was used as a second data source and for member checking purposes to corroborate findings from the interviews. Analysis revealed participants were exposed to a number of risk factors in the university context. Students developed coping strategies to combat these risk factors and promote successful transitions from the home to the university.

. Many of the participants experienced cultural discontinuity between the home and university contexts based on cultural norms and expectations; this was challenging for some and effortless for others. Others experienced cultural continuity between both contexts in regards to having high educational expectations. Some participants wanted to attend a historically Black college or university to avoid cultural incongruence between the home and university. Others selected a predominantly White institution to be exposed to cultural differences.

Participants were also exposed to racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions displayed by their White peers in the university context. They were disregarded and undervalued by their White peers. There were also instances when participants were racially spotlighted and made the focal point in multiple settings in the university, such as the classroom and the dormitory. Students were exposed to derogatory racist comments made by their White peers. Racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions silenced the voices of many participants and promoted the perception that they were intellectually inferior to their White counterparts.

In addition to experiencing racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions from White peers, some participants dealt with intra-group racial attitudes from their Black peers as well.

Participants were sometimes ridiculed by their Black peers based on their physical characteristics and/or their backgrounds. Some struggled to fit in with heir Black peers and feared being rejected by the Black community in the university context.

Some participants expressed their concerns with the lack of resources made available to Black students along with the underrepresentation of Black faculty on campus. Other participants believed there were a variety of resources accessible to Black students. They often built strong relationships with the existing Black faculty on campus, but felt they lacked support from White faculty.

Participants utilized coping strategies to combat and resist experiences with racism displayed by their White peers in the university context. In some instances, participants used assertion when trying to have a commanding presence in settings where they were overlooked by their White peers. In other cases, participants avoided racialized experiences all together. However, participants also connected with other Black students as a strategy to combat potential experiences with racism. In addition, participants engaged in bicultural behaviors to successfully navigate between the home and university contexts.

Along with reactive coping strategies, protective factors were also used as buffers for Black students transitioning to the university. These factors were protective messages transmitted to the participants from their families about race, the importance of the connection to family, and core family values. However, some participants had never received protective messages about race from their families, while others had never had experiences with racism. The transitional patterns of Black students were affected by the reactive coping strategies and the protective messages utilized when navigating between the home and university. Both helped to combat against risk factors detrimental to them in the university.

Discussion

Research indicates that Black students can successfully navigate between cultures when protective factors are used to resist racial inequities between the home and school contexts (Carter, 2005; Carter, 2008). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the transitions that Black late adolescent college students make when navigating from the home to a predominantly White university. It also examined how ethnic-racial socialization processes and biculturalism served as protective buffers within the university context. The overall goal was to examine protective factors and reactive coping strategies used to aid in transitions Black students make to a predominantly White institution. Risk factors prohibiting successful transitions were also examined.

This study utilized data from twenty individual interviews and one focus group. The individual interviews were conducted with African American second year college students attending a predominantly White institution. A focus group was used as a second data source and for member checking purposes to support the findings from the individual interviews. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data.

Original conceptualization. The PVEST and the Multiple Worlds Typology provide the theoretical lens for examining racialized experiences of Black second year college students transitioning from the home to a predominantly White institution. These cultural ecological models illuminate the experiences and challenges that Black students face when traversing both contexts. By combining facets of both theories, cultural variances were addressed and protective factors fostered by Black families explored.

Overall, the findings from this study support the conceptual models framed by the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory and the Multiple Worlds Typology.

Participants were vulnerable to stress caused potential events associated with their racial status. In the original conceptualization of this study, race was implicated as a risk factor in the transition from the home to the university. Participants discussed experiences with racial micro-aggressions within the university context, experiences with racial aggressions within the university context, and racial experiences within the Black university community. These experiences caused increased levels of stress in the university context. Novel findings in this research indicate that participants lacking experiences with racism believed they were protected in the university environment because they were high academic achievers. A majority of the participants lacking experiences with racism were males. Females reported being exposed to higher levels of racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions than males.

Protective factors helped to buffer risk factors and other negative experiences. As indicated in the original model, findings suggest that ethnic-racial socialization messages received within the home were protective factors for Black students attending a predominantly White institution. However, new findings that arose from this study suggest that some participants did not receive racial messages from their families. These families were not aware that they needed to socialize their children about racial issues, while others wanted to protect their children from issues regarding race. Other new findings highlight the impact of core family values and ties to the family. Having strong links to the family provided participants with family values, cultural backgrounds, and protective buffers needed to successfully navigate the university.

Participants also described reactive coping strategies used to resist risk factors in the university. As indicated in the original model, cultural code switching behaviors served as a strategy used to successfully transition to the university. Participants were able to construct

identities by negotiating cultural codes based on situational appropriateness. New findings from the study suggest that participants asserted their voices in classroom settings where they experienced racial micro-aggressions from White peers. They also avoided situations and affiliated with other Black students in order to combat racial micro-aggressions and explicit acts of prejudice on campus.

As indicated in the original model, protective factors and reactive coping strategies aided with the transitional patterns of participants. Participants described various kinds of transitions based on cultural congruence and incongruence between the home and university contexts. Transitions included: congruent worlds/smooth transitions, congruent worlds/difficult transitions, different worlds/smooth transitions, different worlds/managed transitions, and different worlds/difficult transitions. The transitions support the Multiple Worlds Typology (Phelan et al., 1998). However, the congruent worlds/difficult transition category is a new finding and is not an original component of the Multiple Worlds Typology.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss and interpret findings drawing upon the literature examine its importance for the field. The discussion is organized by the study's research questions. Integrating the findings gives a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the participants. The limitations of the study are discussed. The implications address factors that influence university policy through programmatic implementations. Future directions and conclusions are also discussed.

Cultural experiences between the home and university contexts. Participants' cultural experiences varied as they transitioned from their home communities to a predominantly White university context. Participants described congruent and incongruent cultural characteristics between home and university contexts in their college experiences. Recent research suggests that

Black students are more likely to have cultural discontinuity when transitioning to predominantly White institutions (Greer & Brown, 2011; Rose & Firmin, 2012). My findings support the idea that Black students sometimes struggle with cultural incongruence between the home and university contexts; however, the findings also indicate that some participants had cultural continuity of academic achievement between their home and university contexts. The cultural aspects between the home and university contexts also impacted the university selections and/or preferences of participants in regards to selecting predominantly White institutions versus historically Black universities or colleges.

Evidence suggests that Black students who select historically Black colleges or universities because they have higher levels of satisfaction and higher levels of academic success (Allen 1992; Kim, 2002). Similarly, findings from the current study indicate that some participants desired to attend a historically Black college or university because they felt they would be more satisfied in predominantly Black environments. However, participants ultimately chose to attend predominantly White institutions to remain close to their families and to gain exposure to racialized experiences that they may encounter in the future.

Participants also discussed the resources and supports available for Black students in a predominantly White university context. Some participants were concerned with the lack of resources made available for Black students on campus. This finding was consistent with past literature indicating that majority institutions are tailored to benefit White students and lack resources for Black students, including a lack of support from White faculty (Benton, 2001; Guiffrida, 2005; Harper, 2009; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). Similar to the literature, participants in the current study stated that they felt overlooked by White faculty, which made

them hesitant to approach them for help. Some participants also felt undervalued at the university, as a result of there being a lack of resources for Black students.

Conversely, some participants found that the resources and supports available for Black students were advantageous if they had knowledge of them. Because there are a limited number of resources for Black students on campus, participants were not always able to gain access to them. Participants in this study were unaware that they were available. Participants who had knowledge of them were able to obtain better resources. The lack of Black faculty on campus confirmed previous research indicating that Black students prefer to nurture relationships with Black faculty because they are more supportive and open to building relationships with Black students (Allen 1992; Benton, 2001; Guiffrida, 2005; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010).

Participants were exposed to various racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions in their transactions with White peers. Because racism on college campuses is more commonly displayed through micro-aggressions, participants described various incidents where subtle forms of racism were directed towards them (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso; 2000). Their White peers would knowingly and unknowingly participate in racist behaviors in the university context without thinking about the intent or the impact of their actions.

Much of the research conducted on racial micro-aggressions has been published by Sue and his colleagues (Sue, 2010; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, Torino, 2008). They provide a detailed taxonomy of racial micro-aggressions, which includes unintentional forms of racism. My findings support components of the taxonomy created by Sue and his colleagues. Findings indicate that participants had experiences with racial disregard, racial spotlighting, and racial stereotypes, which all fall under the umbrella of an unintentional micro-insult racial micro-aggression, as defined by Sue and his colleagues (Sue, 2010; Sue &

Capodilupo, 2008; Sue et al., 2008). A new finding in the experiences with racial disregard sub-theme indicates that Black students felt as if their White peers spoke on behalf of Black students about Black experiences. White students felt comfortable engaging in conversations about the racialized experiences of Blacks. They did not give their Black peers an opportunity to speak about their own racialized experiences. This racial micro-aggression has not been discussed in the literature. Participants also described racial aggression experiences as blatant forms of racism. Sue and his colleagues labeled overt forms of racism as micro-assaults within the racial micro-aggression taxonomy (Sue, 2010; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Sue et al., 2008). Minikel-Lacocque (2013) challenged the work of Sue and his colleagues by indicating that placing overt forms of racism under the category of "micro" diminishes the severity of blatant intentional acts of racism. "As a result of the ideologies, beliefs and values embedded in the use of language, lumping together overt and subtle forms of racism has the ability to maintain power dynamics with respect to racism " (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013, p. 455). Similar to arguments made by Minikel-Lacocque (2013), I placed racial aggressions or micro-assaults in a separate category because these overt and intentional forms of racism are more blatant than racial micro-aggressions. Racial aggressions should not be placed under the umbrella of "micro" because this minimizes the racist act. By labeling this form of racism as racial aggressions, it brings clarity to the terms we use to describe racism. Findings indicate that participants experienced higher amounts of racial micro-aggressions than racial aggressions in the university context. Participants were also exposed to ambiguous racist experiences where they were uncertain if the subtle forms of racism experienced in the university context could be attributed to racist intent.

In addition to racial micro-aggressions and racial aggressions displayed by White peers in the university context, participants experienced intra-group racism with the Black peers on

campus. Some participants were exposed to colorism as exhibited by their Black peers on campus. Consistent with past literature and historical experiences, colorism was displayed through preferences shown for lighter skinned Black people over darker skinned Black people as it relates to economic privileges and relationships (Hill, 2000; Hunter, 2007; Rondilla & Spickard, 2007). According to Hunter (2007), discrimination experiences vary by race but also by skin color. Discrimination and prejudice towards Blacks based on race is a consequence of systemic inequalities perpetuated by Whites. However, Blacks with darker complexions may experience discrimination more frequently and with more intensity within and between racial groups. Colorism is rooted in European slavery which is linked to White supremacy and racist ideologies about lighter skinned individuals being superior to darker skinned individuals (Feagin, 2000; Hunter, 2007). The preference for lighter skin is displayed throughout society by holding lighter skinned Blacks to a higher standard than darker skinned Blacks, which is displayed at the university.

Findings from the current study indicate that some participants were denied access to the Black campus community because they did not culturally align with what their Black peers. Consistent with literature, some participants were rejected by their Black peers for not living up to the cultural expectations of their Black peers and because of their home communities (Austen-Smith & Fryer, 2005; Clark, 2004; Harris & Khanna, 2010; Johnson & Kaiser, 2013). Participants feared being ostracized by their Black peers for being deemed as not Black enough.

Some female participants were ridiculed by their Black peers if they were perceived to be highly sexual in the university setting. They were judged for frequent interactions and relationships fostered with males because of the underlying expectations for women to behave in reserved ways. These perceptions were deeply entrenched at the intersections of race and gender

perpetuated by the derogatory representation of Black women internalized by society (Collins, 2000; .Davis & Tucker-Brown, 2013; Medina, 2011; Rose, 2000). Similar to colorism at the intersection of race and gender, perceptions of Black women and sexuality are rooted in slavery and based on the idea that the body of a Black woman is uncontrollable and primitive (Davis & Tucker-Brown, 2013; Hammonds, 1995). Participants feared being rejected by the Black community on campus based on judgment about their sexuality from their Black peers. Their reputations were at risk, in addition to their acceptance by the Black campus community. Participants were faced with coping with racialized experiences with Black and White peers at the university.

Description of reactive coping strategies. Reactive coping strategies are behavioral strategies used by Black students to resist racial micro-aggressions displayed by their White peers on campus. Participants described multiple strategies used to adapt to a predominantly White environment. My findings reinforce other research studies emphasizing the importance of creating social networks and connecting with other Black students on predominantly White campuses (Allen, 1992; Carter, 2007, Museus, Lambe, & Ryan, 2015; Sanders Thompson, 2006). Combating racism was aided by strong affiliations with other Black students in the university who had similar experiences.

As indicated earlier, Black college students use avoidance behaviors as coping strategies to resist and refrain from internalizing or engaging in negative experiences with race (Flemming 1981, Cooper, Mahler, & Whitt, 1994; Greer & Chwalisz, 2007; Museus, Lambe, & Ryan,2015). Participants were able to avoid situations that may hinder their intellectual abilities in the university context by psychologically and emotionally distancing themselves from racial micro-aggressions. Findings also indicate that participants were able take control over the situation by

choosing to remain silent in the classroom setting. This protected them from fitting the negative racial perceptions held by their White peers in the university context. Similar to research conducted by Steele (1997), participants were faced with dealing with stereotype threat in the classroom setting. By choosing silence, participants refrained from living up to the perceived negative racial stereotypes held by their White peers in the classroom setting.

Constructing bicultural identities based on cultural code switching served as a reactive coping strategy when navigating between contexts. Consistent with past literature, cultural code switching was used to shift interaction, behavior patterns, and cultural codes a based on situational appropriateness (DeBose, 1992; Carter, 2003; McDermott, 1987; Smitherman, 2000). Obtaining the cultural codes needed to successfully transition between the home and educational contexts allows Black students to be able to achieve academic success (Carter, 2005; Carter, 2008; Chimizie, 1985).

Participants varied in the language they used and the behaviors they displayed based on the given context. Cultural code switching allowed Black students the opportunity to construct an identity that is accepted by mainstream culture, which would help them to gain access to resources that foster success (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2005). Participants were also able to culturally code switch in their use of language and behaviors to gain acceptance by Black communities (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2005). Findings from my study suggest that participants use cultural code switching behaviors to aid in successful transitions from the home to the university.

Messages and transitions. Protective factors helped the participants to successfully transition from the home to the university context. Protective messages were instilled within the family context. Consistent with literature, findings indicate that ethnic-racial socialization messages served as protective factors for participants in the university context (Anglin & Wade,

2007; Barr & Neville, 2014; Bynum et al., 2007; White-Johnson, 2015). Ethnic-racial socialization messages focused on race, race relations, discrimination, and cultural affiliation. Similar to research on ethnic-racial socialization, my findings suggest that parents conveyed messages about cultural socialization, egalitarianism, preparation for bias, racial pride, and promotional mistrust to their children to help buffer against racial barriers across multiple contexts (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Barr & Neville, 2014; Bynum et al., 2007; Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009; Neblett et al., 2006; White-Johnson, 2015).

My findings indicate that some participants never had discussions about race with their families. Participants were knowledgeable about the endemic nature of racism, but had not endured any personal experiences with it. Some participants were unprepared for potential experiences with racism when entering a predominantly White university context. Their parents opted not to have discussions with them about racial matters. Other parents were oblivious to the importance of discussing racial matters with their children.

My findings suggest that some participants had rarely been exposed to racism within any context. For these participants, high achievement served as a buffer against racial micro-aggressions in the university context. This finding differed from research conducted by Fries-Britt and Griffin (2007), which indicated that Black high achieving students, felt that they were still judged by their White peers based on negative racial academic stereotypes regardless of their intellectual abilities. Participants believed they were able to fit in with their White peers because they did not fit the negative racial stereotypes of Blacks being academically inferior to them.

Although some participants lacked preparation in their homes for racial issues in the university context, all participants in the current study described having strong ties to their families. Similar to past literature, findings indicate that having a close knit family and having

family support served as protective factors in the university context (Herndon & Hirt, 2004; Guiffrida, 2005; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). According to Herdon and Hirt (2004), Black students at predominantly White institutions rely heavily on their connections to their families to successfully navigate the university context. The emotional, financial, and academic supports from families are important assets that contribute to the success of Black students. Findings also indicate that families are important to Black students because of the core family values transmitted to them, which help to protect them in the university context.

Tinto (1993) asserts that separation from the family is required for college students to integrate into campus life successfully. However, my findings are consistent with past research indicating that having a strong connection to family is imperative for Black students in the university context, because families help them to stay connected to their cultural backgrounds and they provide strategies to help combat potential experiences with racism when transitioning across contexts (Guiffrida, 2005; Rosa, 2002; Tierney, 1992).

The protective messages transmitted from families to their children aided participants' transitions to the university context. Participants described the kinds of transitions they encountered when navigating from the home to a predominantly White institution. Findings support the Multiple Worlds Typology framework utilized in this study. Consistent with many of the transition patterns suggested by Phelan, Davidson, and Yu's (1998), my findings indicate five transition patterns described by the participants. Transitions include: congruent worlds/smooth transitions, congruent worlds/ difficult transitions, different worlds/smooth transitions, different worlds/ managed transitions, and different worlds/ difficult transitions.

Borders were faced by many of the participants in the current study because cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors used in the university context were valued more than those used in

the home context. When boundaries are existent, adapting one set of cultural standards based on the context is not valued over another set of cultural standards. In the current study, participants encountered boundaries when transitioning from the home to the university. Participants were faced with learning to navigate the university context with sociocultural borders, linguistic borders, and structural borders. Socio-cultural borders existed for many participants because the home culture of the participants was deemed as inferior to the university culture. Many of the participants were faced with linguistic borders because they spoke in a different manner with their families than what was deemed as appropriate in the university. Structural borders exist in the university as a result of contextual factors and inequalities that impact the participants' abilities to achieve academic success. Protective factors and coping strategies were used to combat these borders, which also aided with their transitions.

For a few participants, the home and university contexts were culturally congruent allowing them to have smooth transitions. One participant had cultural continuity across the home and university contexts, but had difficulty adjusting to living away from her family. This transition is a new finding that emerged from the data. For most participants, the cultural differences in values, beliefs, language, and appropriate behaviors in the home differed from the cultural aspects deemed as appropriate in the university context. This caused cultural incongruence between both contexts. The cultural incongruence forced the participants to learn to manage cultural differences when transitioning, while some had difficulty transitioning to the university context as a result of cultural differences. Although many ethnic participants were challenged dealing with discontinuity between the home and university contexts, many of them were able to successfully transition between both contexts (Phelan et al., 1998).

Limitations of Study

Sample Size. The sample size of 20 was adequate for the scope of this qualitative study due to the exploratory nature of the research questions. However, future research should include a larger sample size to include a broader range of Black participants to represent a multitude of ideas and patterns.

Overrepresentation of Females. The study intended to explore the racialized experiences of second year Black college students; however, there was an overrepresentation of female participants. The overrepresentation of females gave a strong view of Black female experiences in the university context. Because there was a lack of male participants, increased efforts should include more second-year male participants to gain a broader perspective of male racialized experiences in a predominantly White context.

Diversity within Sample. All participants attended one predominantly White mid-western university, which restricts the range of responses. Future work should include Black students from a variety of predominantly White institutions across the nation to get a range of perspectives from students within various regions.

Lack of Perspectives. For this study, only one perspective was included in the findings. This work focused solely on the perspectives of the students. Future work should include perspectives from the parents of the participants. This would allow the researcher to find out more about the kinds protective messages they transmitted to their children to serve as protective factors when transitioning to predominantly White university contexts. This would also help to validate the responses of the participants, which would strengthen the findings.

Implications

Transitioning to a predominantly White institution can be a challenge for Blacks students, as a result of cultural incongruences. Findings in this study indicate that protective factors and coping strategies are beneficial for Black students navigating between the home and university contexts. Findings also have implications for faculty, staff, and universities to create culturally inclusive educational environments for Black students.

Many educational contexts are depicted as culturally neutral institutions, but are strongly influenced by the dominant culture (Carter, 2005). Because mainstream multicultural education fails to place racial inequities at the forefront through the use of faculty and staff trained to be multicultural navigators, racism is perpetuated within the university. Based on the findings, cultural competence training programs should be implemented to enhance the responsiveness and sensitivity of faculty and staff seeking to become multicultural navigators. These efforts might enhance sense of cultural continuity Black students feel a across home and university contexts. Protective factors transmitted to students within the home can be mirrored within the university, with the help of trained multicultural navigators. These trainings would also help Black students to feel increased levels of support from White faculty.

Findings reveal the need to increase hiring of additional Black faculty at predominantly White institutions; the value added for Black students is immeasurable. Research indicates that Black students tend to have increased levels of academic success at predominantly White institutions when they have strong connections to Black faculty who serve as mentors (Allen 1992; Benton, 2001). The further expansion of Black faculty on the campus would contribute to Black students successfully navigating the university context.

University counseling centers can aid in the successful transition of Black students by implementing programs that address racism to increase the kinds of resources available for Black students on campus. These programs can bring awareness to racism and/ or racial micro-aggressions displayed in a predominantly White university context, while helping students to learn the right kinds of language to use when discussing racism. These programs will also provide a safe space for Black students to share and express their personal experiences with racism with other Black students by utilizing mental health services to combat stressors. Students might also share their personal experiences with intra-group discrimination and be able to confront those issues in guided discussion with other Black students. Black students will also have the opportunity to discuss and build reactive coping strategies used to help combat negative racial experiences in the university context.

Findings indicate that connecting with other Black students serves as a protective factor for Black students attending a predominantly White institution. This program would also give the students increased opportunities to socialize and connect with students sharing similar experiences. Each student has a different experience so it is important to tailor services based on the needs of the students. If the university context serves as a safe and protective environment to these students, it would also function as a buffer against structural inequalities within society.

Services should also be provided at the university to encourage families to continue to discuss issues of race with their children so that students are prepared to deal with racial encounters at the university. By receiving protective messages across both contexts, participants might have greater chances of successfully navigating the university context.

Future Directions and Conclusions

Despite a few limitations, this study explored the transitions that Black second year college students make when navigating from the home to a predominantly White institution. This research study makes an important contribution by using qualitative methodology to examine the racialized experiences of the participants. In using this approach, their voices are emphasized and heard through their detailed accounts of their personal experiences. Students coming from different cultural communities offered varying perspectives of the Black experience on a predominantly White campus.

This study utilized the PVEST framework and the Multiple Worlds Typology, which has never been used jointly in prior research. The findings of this study make an important contribution to the field by highlighting the protective factors that serve as buffers for Black students in the university context. The findings also illuminate Black late adolescent college student perspectives of the cultural differences between the home and university contexts and how these differences foster reactive coping strategies when transitioning between these contexts. This study adds to the extension of work that focuses on strength-based protective processes that promote resilience within Black families and with Black students attending predominantly White institutions.

Future directions for research should expand to include the diverse perspectives of Black students attending predominantly White institutions across the country. Having an even broader representation of Black participants from a range of experiences and backgrounds will provide more clarity with the findings. Increasing the sample size will also be beneficial when expanding the participant pool to other predominantly White universities.

Future research should also expand the representation among Black males to include an even representation of Black males and females in the study. Including an equal number of both male and female voices will highlight perspectives from both, so that the findings are not heavily influenced by one particular group.

Protective factors, risk factors, and reactive coping strategies should be explored to confirm or enhance the findings from this study. Future research should also include parental perspectives to gain additional perceptions about the protective messages transmitted within Black families to serve as buffers in the university context. This work will have direct implications for predominantly White institutions to become culturally inclusive contexts for Black students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Demographic Online Survey Screening Informed Consent
Exploring Protective Factors for African American Late Adolescents Transitioning between the Home and University Contexts

Dear Participants,

Thank you for considering participation in this study. We are asking you to be a part of a study that explores the experiences and transitional challenges that African American college students may be faced with when navigating to the university context. We are particularly interested in how these challenges are buffered by the racialized messages you received in your home context prior to attending college. To be a part of the larger study, you must first complete an online screening survey which will be used to determine eligibility. If you are determined to be eligible, you will be contacted.

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore African American college students' perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. It will also examine how African American college students may perceive messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context. We are really interested in your experience as an African American student and the transitions you've made from your home context. Your participation is extremely important and your shared experiences are valuable to the study.

If you would like the chance to be selected to participate in this research, you will go on to complete the online screening survey which will take about 10 minutes of your time. In the online screening survey, you will be asked briefly about your demographic background.

Risks /discomforts and Benefits:
The potential for risk to you is minimal. Although highly confidential, some psychological discomfort could be experienced from sharing personal information or thinking about things that are related to your past or current experiences. You are able to take a break at any point during the survey process; and of course, you are also free to discontinue participating at any time.

There are some benefits to you from participation in this study. However, potentially you may experience indirect benefits from your participation as it may contribute to the larger community having a better understanding of the experiences African American students undergo when transitioning to the university context.

Confidentiality:
Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The data for this project will be identified with a code number. A list linking your name to the code will be kept in a password-protected server. Once all the data are collected and analyzed, the list linking the names to the code numbers will be destroyed. The online screening survey will be kept in a password-protected server at the university, and access to the information will be limited to the

researcher, the research team members and the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Michigan State University may review your research record. All other research data for this study will be kept in password-protected files and/or in locked filing cabinets at the primary researcher's Michigan State University address for a minimum of 3 years after the conclusion of the project. Information from your screening survey will be used to select potential participants for the larger study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from this study. Your individual responses to questions will not be shared with other participants in the study.

Your Rights to Participate, Say No, or Withdraw

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary and **confidential**. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Compensation:

You will **NOT** receive any compensation for completing the online screening survey. However, if you are selected to participate in the larger study, you will receive a $20 gift card for completing the interview. You will also have a chance to receive an additional $10 gift card if you are asked to participate in the focus group conducted after completion of the interview. We really appreciate your time and participation.

Rights and Complaints: If you have any concerns or questions about this study, or if you believe, you have been harmed because of the research, please contact the researcher:

Deborah J. Johnson, Ph.D.
Sherrell Hicklen House, M.S.
Department of Human Development and Family Studies
Michigan State University
7 Human Ecology Building
East Lansing, MI 48824
hicklens@msu.edu or john1442@hdfs.msu.edu
517-432-9115

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Consent to participate: By clicking "Yes" below, you indicate that you have read and understand that:

- Your participation in this survey is voluntary.
- You have given consent to be a subject of this research.
- Your questions have been answered.
- You certify that you are 18 or older.

- ❑ Yes, I want to participate
- ❑ No, I do not want to participate

Individual Interview Informed Consent
Exploring Protective Factors for African American Late Adolescents Transitioning between the Home and University Contexts

Dear Participants,

Thank you for considering participation in the individual interview portion of the study. We are asking you to be a part of a study that explores the experiences and transitional challenges that African American college students may be faced with when navigating to the university context. We are particularly interested in how these challenges are buffered by the racialized messages you received in your home context prior to attending college.

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore African American college students' perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. It will also examine how African American college students may perceive messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context. We are really interested in your experience as an African American student and the transitions you've made from your home context. Your participation is extremely important and your shared experiences are valuable to the study.

Risks /discomforts and Benefits:
The potential for risk to you is minimal. Although highly confidential, some psychological discomfort could be experienced from sharing personal information or thinking about things that are related to your past or current experiences. You are able to take a break at any point during the interview process; and of course, you are also free to discontinue participating at any time.

There are some benefits to you from participation in this study. However, potentially you may experience indirect benefits from your participation as it may contribute to the larger community having a better understanding of the experiences African American students undergo when transitioning to the university context.

Confidentiality:
Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. All individual interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. As audio recordings are transcribed, any identifying information will be de-identified. The data for this project will be identified with a code number. A list linking your name to the code will be kept in a password-protected server. Once all the data are collected and analyzed, the list linking the names to the code numbers will be destroyed. Audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a password-protected server, and access to the information will be limited to the researcher, the research team members and the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Michigan State University may review your research record. All other research data for this study will be kept in a password-protected server and/or locked in a filing cabinet at the primary researcher's Michigan State University address for a minimum of 3 years after the conclusion of the project. Transcriptions of

the interviews may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products related to the study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from this study. Your individual responses to questions will not be shared with other participants in the study.

Your Rights to Participate, Say No, or Withdraw

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary and **confidential**. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Compensation:

Upon completion of the research interview, you will receive a $20 gift card. We really appreciate your time and participation.

Rights and Complaints: If you have any concerns or questions about this study, or if you believe, you have been harmed because of the research, please contact the researcher:

Deborah J. Johnson, Ph.D.
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Consent to participate:

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature_____ **Date**_____

I agree to allow audio taping of the interview.

☐ Yes ☐ No **Initials**_____

Focus Group Informed Consent
Exploring Protective Factors for African American Late Adolescents Transitioning between the Home and University Contexts

Dear Participants,

Thank you for considering participation in the focus group portion of the study. You have been invited to participate in the focus group because of your participation in the individual interview portion of the study. We are asking you to be a part of a study that explores the experiences and transitional challenges that African American college students may be faced with when navigating to the university context. We are particularly interested in how these challenges are buffered by the racialized messages you received in your home context prior to attending college. The focus group will be used as a follow-up to the individual interview portion of the study.

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore African American college students' perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. It will also examine how African American college students may perceive messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context. We are really interested in your experience as an African American student and the transitions you've made from your home context. Your participation is extremely important and your shared experiences are valuable to the study.

Risks /discomforts and Benefits:
The potential for risk to you is minimal. Although highly confidential, some psychological discomfort could be experienced from sharing personal information or thinking about things that are related to your past or current experiences. You are able to take a break at any point during the focus group; and of course, you are also free to discontinue participating at any time.

There are some benefits to you from participation in this study. However, potentially you may experience indirect benefits from your participation as it may contribute to the larger community having a better understanding of the experiences African American students undergo when transitioning to the university context.

Confidentiality:
Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The focus group will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. As audio recordings are transcribed, any identifying information will be de-identified. The data for this project will be identified with a code number. A list linking your name to the code will be kept in a password-protected server. Once all the data are collected and analyzed, the list linking the names to the code numbers will be destroyed. Audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a password-protected server, and access to the information will be limited to the researcher, the research team members and the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Michigan State University may

review your research record. All other research data for this study will be kept in a password-protected server and/or a locked filing cabinet at the primary researcher's Michigan State University address for a minimum of 3 years after the conclusion of the project. Transcriptions of the focus groups may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products related to the study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from this study. Your individual responses to questions will not be shared with other participants in the larger study.

Your Rights to Participate, Say No, or Withdraw

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary and **confidential**. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Compensation:

Upon completion of the focus group, you will receive a $10 gift card. We really appreciate your time and participation.

Rights and Complaints: If you have any concerns or questions about this study, or if you believe, you have been harmed because of the research, please contact the researcher:

Deborah J. Johnson, Ph.D.
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If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Consent to participate:

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature_____ **Date**_____

I agree to allow audio taping of the focus group.

☐ Yes ☐ No **Initials**_____

APPENDIX B

Demographic Online Survey Screening

Demographic Online Survey Screening

1. How would you describe yourself?

❍	Caucasian, White American, or of European descent
❍	Black, African American, or of African descent
❍	Hispanic/Latina
❍	Asian/ Indian Subcontinent
❍	Native Hawiian/Pacific Islander
❍	Two or more races (please specify) _____
❍	Other:_____

2. What is your sex?

❍	Male
❍	Female

3. What is your age in years?

4. What is your current year in school?

❍	Freshman (1st year)
❍	Sophomore (2nd year)
❍	Junior (3rd year)
❍	Senior (4th + year)
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

5. Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend a 4 year university (first generation college student)?

❍	No
❍	Yes

6. Are you a transfer student from another college or university?

❍	No
❍	Yes

7. Did you grow up in the foster care system?

❍	No
❍	Yes

8. How would you describe the racial composition of your high school?

❍	Predominantly White
❍	Predominantly Black/African American
❍	Predominantly Black and Latino
❍	Predominantly Latino
❍	Predominantly Asian/Asian American
❍	Multiracial
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

9. How would you describe the racial composition of your home community?

❍	Predominantly White
❍	Predominantly Black/African American
❍	Predominantly Black and Latino
❍	Predominantly Latino
❍	Predominantly Asian/Asian American
❍	Multiracial
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

10. What is your family's total annual income currently?

❍	Under $10,0000
❍	$10,000 to $19,999
❍	$20,000 to $29,999
❍	$30,000 to $39,999
❍	$40,000 to $49,999
❍	$50,000 to $59,999
❍	$60,000 to $69,999
❍	$70,000 to $79,999
❍	$80,000 to $89,999
❍	$90,000 or more

11. What is the highest level of schooling completed by your mother?

❍	Grade school (1-8)
❍	Some high school
❍	High School Graduate or Equivalent (GED)
❍	Some College
❍	Associate degree
❍	Bachelor's Degree
❍	Some Graduate School
❍	Master's Degree
❍	Professional Degree
❍	Doctoral Degree
❍	Other:_____
❍	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
❍	Prefer not to answer/ Refuse to answer

12. What is the highest level of schooling completed by your father?

❍	Grade school (1-8)
❍	Some high school
❍	High School Graduate or Equivalent (GED)
❍	Some College
❍	Associate degree
❍	Bachelor's Degree
❍	Some Graduate School
❍	Master's Degree
❍	Professional Degree
❍	Doctoral Degree
❍	Other:_____
❍	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
❍	Prefer not to answer/ Refuse to answer

We'd like to be able to contact you if you are eligible to participate in our study. Please provide us with your full name and a current email address so we can contact you.

13. What is your full name?

14. What is your email address?

APPENDIX C

Demographic Survey

Date: _____
Code Number: _____

Demographic Survey

Please answer the following questions. For open ended questions, please fill in a written response.

1. What is your current year in school?

❍	Freshman (1st year)
❍	Sophomore (2nd year)

2. What is your enrollment status

❍	Part time (1-11 credits)
❍	Full time (12+ credits)

3. What is your major?

4. What is your current overall grade point average?

5. What kind of place best describes where you currently live?

❍	Residence Hall/Dorm
❍	House/Apartment
❍	Fraternity or Sorority
❍	Other (please specify):_____

6. What is your marital status?

❍	Never Married
❍	In a committed relationship
❍	Divorced
❍	Separated
❍	Widowed
❍	Married

7. How many children do you have?

8. With whom do you currently live with (choose all that apply)?

❍	Alone
❍	Roommate(s)
❍	Parent(s)
❍	Partner (Boyfriend or Husband/Girlfriend or Wife)
❍	Child(ren)
❍	Other (please specify):_____

9. What was your overall high school grade point average?

❍	Do Not Remember

10. What best describes the family structure you grew up in (from birth to age 17)?

❍	Two Parent Household
❍	Single Parent – Mother
❍	Single Parent – Father
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

11. What best describes your current family structure?

❍	Two Parent Household
❍	Single Parent – Mother
❍	Single Parent – Father
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

12. When you were growing up (birth to age 17), who lived with you? Please, check all that apply.

❍	Father
❍	Mother
❍	Sibling(s)
❍	Uncles/Aunts
❍	Cousins
❍	Grandparents
❍	Nonrelatives
❍	Step-parents/mother or father's partner
❍	Other: (please specify)_____

APPENDIX D

Individual Interview Protocol

Individual Interview Protocol
Exploring Protective Factors for African American Late Adolescents Transitioning between the Home and University Contexts

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to explore African American college students' perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. It will also examine how African American college students may perceive messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context. We are really interested in your experience as an African American student and the transitions you've made from your home context. Your participation is extremely important and your shared experiences are valuable to the study.

We are extremely grateful for your willingness to participate and your time. Each person will receive a $20 gift card at the end of the session. The interview will take about a 60-90 minutes to complete and will be audio recorded for analytical purposes. All information will remain confidential. If at any moment you would like to stop the interview feel free to do so.

Face to Face Interview Instructions
Before we begin, I'd like you to fill out this consent form to confirm your voluntary participation in the study. Please read over the consent form and provide your signature if you choose to participate. There is a demographic survey I will give to you now, before conducting the interview.

Online Skype/Zoom Interview Instructions
Before we begin, I'd like to review the consent form I emailed to you prior to this interview. By completing the interview, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research study. By indicating yes or no, you are agreeing or not agreeing to be audiotaped. Please respond yes or no. Thank you for emailing your demographic survey to me prior to conducting the interview.

Do we have any questions before we begin? If no questions, proceed.

First I'd like to start by asking you a couple of questions about yourself.
<u>Introduction</u>

1. How would you describe yourself?
    a. How would you describe yourself as a student?
        a. High achieving, Average, Low Achieving

2. Why did you decide to come to MSU?
    b. Who or what influenced your decision?

Now I'd like to talk about your own family.
<u>Family</u>

3. How would you describe your family context?
    a. What would you describe as core values in your family or home?
    b. How have those been communicated to you growing up?

c. What are important messages from your family about succeeding at school and how to behave in school?
    a. About being African American and going to college

Let's talk a little bit about your home community.

Home Community

4. What is your home community like?
    a. What is it like to live there?
    a. How would you describe it?
    b. How would you characterize interactions between the neighbors?

Next, I'd like to talk about your transition to becoming a college student here at MSU.

University

5. What was it like to start school at MSU?

6. How would you describe your university context?
    a. Campus Life?
    b. School Climate? How do you feel in your school environment?
    c. Racial Composition of students and faculty

7. How would you describe your transition to MSU?
    a. Was it an easy transition like being at home or very different from home?
    b. If it was different, can you tell me how it was different?

8. Are your home and university contexts different with respect to culture and expectations?
    a. If so, please provide some examples of these differences.
    b. Are there differences in what is acceptable within your family context versus the university context?

I'd like to discuss your behaviors when transitioning between the home and university contexts.

Adaptive Behaviors

9. Do you feel that your behaviors change between home and the university contexts?
    a. Can you describe some of the ways in which you feel there are changes or alterations?
    b. The way you speak?
    c. The way you behave?
    d. Preferences in food or music?
    e. Your interactions with others in your home context versus the university context?
    f. Do you think your behaviors have changed since coming to MSU?
    g. Do your friends and/or family think you have changed since coming to MSU?

10. How do you feel when you are in class?
    a. Are there other African American students in your classes?
    b. When you are in a class where there are no other African American students, do you ever think about being comfortable, smart or fitting in?

c. Do you feel you have to adjust your typical behavior while in class when African American students are present or if they are not?
d. What about around your peers?
e. Which adjustment is more like when you are at home? (Do feel like you are being yourself in the classroom context?)

11. Describe your experience with living in the dormitory/residence halls?

12. How would you describe your college peers to the peers you had in high school?
    a. How would you compare your interactions with University peers vs. high school or community peers?

Now we'll switch gears to talk about messages you may have received in your home about your race.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization

13. Did your parents talk about being African American at home?
    a. How was it talked about?

14. What types of messages, if any, have your parents given you to help prepare you for experiences with racism in college?
    a. Have you experienced prejudice or racism in college?
    b. What was that experience, how did you cope with it?
    c. How have parental messages helped you if you have experienced racism in college?

15. Do you think racism can be a barrier to your success? Explain.
    a. Do you think racism can be a barrier to the success for Blacks in general?
    b. Do you know of others who have experienced racism in your school?

16. How do you think African Americans are treated at your university?
    a. How would you describe race relations between faculty and students at your school?

Wrap-up

17. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap-up?
18. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX E

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol
Exploring Protective Factors for African American Late Adolescents Transitioning between the Home and University Contexts

Participants will be asked at the end of the individual interview if they would be interested in participating in the focus group portion of the study. Demographic surveys for each participant will already be on file as a result of participation in the individual interview portion of the study. ****Note: Additional questions will be asked based on emerging themes from the individual interviews.**

Thank you for participating in the focus group portion of the research study. The focus group is being conducted to follow-up with the individual interviews conducted previously. As you already know, the purpose of this study is to explore African American college students' perspectives of the cultural differences between their home and university contexts and whether these differences promote bicultural adaptive identities when transitioning between these contexts. It will also examine how African American college students may perceive messages about race in the home context and how these messages may impact transitions to the university context. We are really interested in your experience as an African American student and the transitions you've made from your home context. Your participation is extremely important and your shared experiences are valuable to the study.

We are extremely grateful for your willingness to participate and your time. Each person will receive a $10 gift card at the end of the session. The focus group will take about an hour to complete and will be audio recorded for analytical purposes. All information will remain confidential. If at any moment you would like to stop the focus group feel free to do so.

Before we begin, I'd like you to fill out this consent form to confirm your voluntary participation in the study. Please read over the consent form and provide your signature if you choose to participate.

Do we have any questions before we begin? If no questions, proceed.

1. What has been the most positive and/or discouraging about your experience here at MSU?
2. How has the racial composition of your school been a factor in your school experience?
    a. Do you think your experience would have been different if you went to another university with more people with similar racial backgrounds?
3. During the individual interviews, several themes about racialized experiences on campus came up. Themes include *Black Representative, Racial Stares in Classroom, Guilty by Association, Racial Slurs and Behaviors, Devaluing Views, Invisible.* To what extent do you agree with these themes? Is there anything else you'd add?
4. There were some themes that came up about how you cope with some of these racialized experiences on campus. Themes included *distancing and silencing* to cope with these experiences. Are there other coping strategies that you use when encountered by racial experiences?

5. Many of you talked about being socialized about race in terms of learning about your *ethnic heritage, preparation for potential racist experiences based on past experiences that your family members may have had with racism, and encouraging you to have racial pride while having strong work ethics*. What is your opinion about these areas? Are there other themes that need to be identified?
6. There was also a lot of focus on the use of *cultural code switching*, when interacting with family versus having interactions in the university context. Many of you indicated that you speak differently depending on who you are speaking to in a specific context. How, if at all, have the cultural differences in your school been a factor in how you choose to behave in the university context? What influences these behaviors?
    a. Probes: faculty perceptions and expectations, peer perceptions and expectations
7. During the individual interviews, several themes came up about the kinds of transitions you had when coming to MSU. Themes included individuals having smooth transitions because the home and university contexts were congruent, individuals having a smooth transition although the home and university contexts were very different, individuals who are able to successfully navigate and adapt (manage transitions) between the home university contexts although both are different, and individuals who having difficult transitions as a result of the home and university contexts being different. How might your ability to transition or adjust to the university context impact your success here at MSU?
8. What suggestions do you have for other African American students who are trying to successfully navigate this school environment?

<u>Wrap-Up</u>

9. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap-up?
10. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX F

Helpful Resources

Helpful Resources

Counseling Center
Address: 556 E. Circle Dr. Room 207, East Lansing, MI. 48824
Website: http://www.counseling.msu.edu/
Phone: 517. 355. 8270
Regular walk-in hours are:

- 10am - Noon, 1pm - 6pm Monday & Tuesday. 10am - Noon, 1pm - 4pm Wednesday - Friday
- Crisis walk-ins are seen throughout our open office hours: 8am - 7pm Monday & Tuesday and 8am - 5pm Wednesday - Friday

MSU Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives
Website: http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/
Email: inclusion@msu.edu
Phone: 517-353-3922

Center for Gender in Global Context
Address: International Center, 427 N. Shaw Lane, Room 206, East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: 517-353-5040
Email: gencen@msu.edu

Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions
"*Connecting Diverse Peoples, Programs, and Ideas to Enhance Student Success*"
Website: http://ocat.msu.edu/
Address: Student Services Building, 556 E. Circle Drive, Rm #339, East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: (517) 353-7745

Multicultural Center (MCC) of MSU
Website: http://ocat.msu.edu/multicultural-center-mcc
Address: MSU Union Building, East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: (517) 432-7153
Hours of Operation: Mon-Thurs. (9am-11pm), Fri (9am-7pm), Sat. (12noon-6pm), Sun. (12noon-11pm)
[Note: The Multicultural Center is located on the lower level of the MSU Union by the study area.]

Black Student Alliance
Website: https://www.msu.edu/~bsaemail/

MSU Counseling and Mental Health Resources
http://www.mentalhealthresources.msu.edu/

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