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AFRICAN AMERICANS' PERSPECTIVES ON RACIAL SOLIDARITY

By

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Thesis

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"I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."

African Proverb

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the fundamental formulations that shape perspectives on racial solidarity among one group of African Americans. The perspectives gained in this study aid in understanding the existence, origin, and views toward the concept. In-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with individuals from two generational cohorts: ages 18 to 30 (post-Civil Rights era) and ages 50 and older (Civil Rights era).

This study describes a process by which racial solidarity appears to have diminished among some African Americans. This transition seems to have occurred as a result of the deterioration of the traditional African American community, the acceptance of externally imposed beliefs about the racial group, and in-group sabotaging behaviors that create numerous problems within the younger generation. Reports from participants within the post-Civil Rights generational cohort provide some insight into the magnitude of these problems. Strategies African Americans can use to improve racial solidarity are offered.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Egalitarian ideals such as equal opportunity, universal access, and individual freedoms have historically been deeply engrained in American society. These ideals have an incongruous heritage within the American sociopolitical milieu in that they exist amid discrimination, racism and abject poverty (Flax 1998; Gans 1974; Kramer 1973; Myrdal 1944; Seetharam 1987). Moreover, these ideals imply that all Americans possess an equal opportunity in determining their social and economic fate as a result of their individual effort and perseverance (Brooks 1990; Franklin 1966; Myrdal 1944; Parent 1985; Torrance, 1990; Zangrando and Zangrando 1970).

Using this guiding premise, it would follow that equal opportunity would also apply to African Americans. Nonetheless, racial inequalities have limited the advancement of many African Americans in multiple areas by weakening their social positions through denied access to certain employment sectors, neighborhoods, educational opportunities, and voting, all of which are basic requirements for social and economic mobility (Blackwell 1985, Brown, 1939; Feagin and Sikes 1994, George 2001; Massey 1990; Walton 1985, 2001). Because African Americans are restricted to the poorest congested neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated and criminal activity permeates the streets, it is not surprising social problems are widespread (Massey 1990). Many African American neighborhoods are characterized by welfare dependency, high infant immortality rates, high unemployment, substandard education, credit barriers, immobility, below average life spans, and an over-representation of residents who ultimately end up in prison and on death row (Adam 1973;

Austin et al., 2001; Blackwell 1985, Drake 1966; Feagin 1986; Jones 1973; Knowles and Prewitt, 1969; Massey 1990; Mauer 1994; Torrence 1990; U.S. Census Bureau 2003).

There are those who believe African Americans are to blame for their disadvantaged social position and therefore are solely responsible for grappling with existing problems on their own (Blauner 1972; Epps 1995; Gilens 1995; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Parent 1985; Torrence 1990; Ryan 1972). This view can be summarized as the "just world phenomenon," which posits that the world is just and fair. Therefore, people in due course get what they deserve as a result of their individual efforts or lack thereof (Lerner 1980). This perspective, of course, ignores the fact that many of the problems African Americans are confronted with are not always self-inflicted but are often a direct consequence of discrimination, racism, and oppression (Battle and Bennett 1997; Brown 1939; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Jones 1973; Knowles and Prewitt 1969; Myrdal 1944).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Racial solidarity is often the outcome of a combination of several contextual factors: racial consciousness, racial pride, racial identity, loyalty, awareness of racial discrimination, and a willingness to engage in social action on behalf of the racial group (Durant and Sparrow 1997; Ferguson 1938; Turner 1967).

The purpose of this study was to identify the thoughts, beliefs, and formulations that shape African Americans' perspectives on racial solidarity. These perspectives will aid in understanding the participants' views about racial solidarity, the extent to which they possess racial solidarity, and what they understand racial solidarity to be. By gaining this understanding, I hoped to determine the extent to which the group of African Americans

under study did in fact possess racial solidarity, their views toward using solidarity as a mechanism for mitigating the group's social problems, and, finally, the social process by which African Americans may become a more racially solidified group.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will extend the research on racial solidarity in that many of the previous studies on this particular topic among African Americans have focused on racial solidarity for the specific purpose of political mobilization or have simply used pre-established criteria for determining whether it exists (e.g., quantitative surveys). Previous studies have also failed to explain empirically what gives rise to the phenomenon of racial solidarity or study it for the purpose of racial uplift (Bledsoe et al. 1995; Shelby 2005).

1.4 Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. First, some of the participants may have felt compelled to provide an "appropriate" or "correct" answer or make comments they believed would be best received rather than what they truly believed in an effort not to appear disassociated with the group due to "social desirability bias" (Kenrick, Neuberg and Cialdini 2002:20). Secondly, my presence as an African American woman may have resulted in "interviewer effect" by either influencing or causing some bias in how the participants responded to the questions (Adler and Clark 2003:287). Finally, because of the controlled method of recruitment for this research, the generalizability of the study is limited to an examination of a social process, which may not be exhaustive. Although the participants were diverse in terms of gender, age, economic status, and educational level, the small

sample size cannot represent the attitudes and opinions proportionate to the population of

African Americans.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

African Americans have struggled tenaciously against great odds and against all forms of discrimination and persecution to obtain both civil and human rights. This struggle persists because the liberation of African Americans has been in direct opposition to the interests of the dominant group within American society (Adam 1978; Jones 1973; Marable 2000; Massey and Denton 1993; Reuter 1939; Thomas and Hughes 1986; Thompson 1974; Willhelm 1973; Willhelm 1983). The social, economic, political, residential, and employment oppression imposed upon African Americans are interconnecting social forces that have all presented far-reaching consequences (Bowser 1985; Christian 2002; Feagin 1986; Marable 2000).

This continual opposition has persisted despite ongoing institutional arrangements and contemporary individual actions, which systematically undermine the social and economic well-being of African Americans by reducing their opportunities for social, educational, and economic mobility (Blauner 1972; Bowser 1985; Cable and Mix 2003; Jones 1973; Marable 2000; Myrdal 1944; Omi and Winant 1994; Staples 1975; Stone 1973; Thompson 1974; Wallace 1990). This opposition must be viewed within a relative framework, having at its core disparities in access to privilege, opportunity, social power, and valuable resources (Brooks 1990; Cable and Mix 2003; Christian 2002; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Loury 2002; McDermott 2001; Myrdal 1944).

The elusive application and limitations in enforcement of Civil Rights legislation have contributed to the stagnation of eradicating these social problems (Brooks 1990). Civil Rights legislation of the 1950s and 1960s (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act,

National Voter Registration Act, Fair Housing Act, Affirmative Action, and the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) addressed social liberty and equality issues, yet were not fully successful in eliminating discriminatory policies and ensuring equal access to benefits and opportunities in employment, housing, health care, and education (especially among the lower class) because of the ability to legally and illegally circumvent these directives (Baker 2001; Bell 2000; Brooks 1990; Hudson 1999; Kluger 1977; Moses 2006; Sitkoff 1993). Moreover, advances as a result of Civil Rights legislation did not significantly change the disadvantaged economic status of African Americans nor considerably dismantle the racially inequitable social structure (Barker 1994; Bell 2000; Fairclough 2001; Hudson 1999; Sitkoff 1993).

In addition, a proportion of the impediment to eradicating many of the social problems of African Americans may also be attributed to a possible shift from a collective to an individual focus (Barker 1994, Cruse 1987; Schiele 2005; Welch and Combs 1985). Several scholars have found that collective action has been one of the most effective methods for challenging racial inequality and oppression in America (Barker, Jones and Tate 1999; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Fairclough 2001; Morris 1999; Zangrando and Zangrando 1970). Many believe that African Americans have given increasingly less attention to their overall collective status in America and more to their individual status and that until the African American collective condition is improved, many of the social problems that currently plague the African American population will continue to flourish (Barker 1994, Cruse 1987; Schiele 2005). One possible strategy for achieving racial equality is to increase racial solidarity among African Americans.

Essentially, racial solidarity has been conceptualized as an ability to identify with members of the group, a willingness to sacrifice personal interests for the group arising from a union of interests, responsibilities, or objectives that are reflective of one's group loyalty (Bledsoe et al. 1995; Turner 1967). Racial solidarity within family lineages is supported by many aspects of socialization; the transmission of values across generations, moral and religious upbringing, role modeling, and the continuous flow of information among members of different age groups (Gill 2002). Racial solidarity has also been closely linked to racial consciousness because of strong similarities in conceptual definitions (Aschenbrenner 1978; Boykin 1983; Boykin et al., 1997; Durant and Sparrow 1997).

In a similar vain, racial consciousness is a collective sentiment that considers race as an object of loyalty, devotion, and pride and develops most coherently in societies permeated by racial stratification (Brown 1935; Ferguson 1938; Pitts 1974). Those with this characteristic take pride in group members' achievements, possess a feeling of solidarity with group members, and take action to eliminate inequalities in status, privilege, and power between racial groups (Brown 1939; Drake and Cayton [1945] 1993; Durant and Sparrow 1997; Ferguson 1938; Woldemikael 1989). Brown (1935) postulated that "a racially conscious group is more than a mere aggregation of individuals zoologically distinguishable from other ethnic groups….It is a social unit struggling for status in society" (Brown 1935:569). According to Ferguson (1938), discrimination is the "most potent factor in the development of group solidarity" (Ferguson 1938:35). Notwithstanding social distinctions, discrimination is a shared experience for most African Americans, which stimulates a race consciousness among the group as a whole.

Racial solidarity is a term often used to collectively frame these concepts, as it offers a more substantive meaning than exploring them individually. Racial solidarity is central to a variety of other beliefs and behaviors. It impacts how African Americans view themselves as a group, even whether African Americans view themselves as a group, and how they approach the White-dominated society (Bledsoe et al. 1995). Racial solidarity is not only African Americans' connection to their race, but also the rejection of the institutions of White America (Bledsoe et al. 1995). According to Wilson, Turner, and Darity (1973), racial solidarity manifests itself when minority members have become frustrated because of unfulfilled expectations. Additionally, those with a greater sense of solidarity are more likely to see themselves as personal victims of discrimination, to perceive widespread discrimination against African Americans as a group, to belong to an organization intended to improve the status of African Americans, and to work in developing the African American community rather than pursuing integration (Bledsoe et al. 1995).

Sampson and Milam (1975) studied the interest in (racial) group solidarity of middle-class African Americans and found that this group exhibited a fairly strong sense of group solidarity. They also found that middle-class African Americans were conscious of their Blackness and expressed feelings of obligation to the race because of their more privileged position. Sampson and Milam also stressed how social changes (or social movements) affect the perceptions of individuals toward group solidarity (Sampson and Milam 1975).

A framework that provides a useful backdrop for understanding the nexus of racial solidarity between the individual and the group is Brown's (1979) inner- and outer-directed voluntary group associations. He used this framework to uncover the reasons for the significant decline in *associational behavior* of African Americans. He proposed that inner-

directed associations tended to foster a sense of solidarity and consciousness within the group through folkways, mores, rituals, traditions, and glorification of the group's history (Brown 1979). Such associations are exemplified by the Black Muslims and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The focus of this type of association is on the relationship between the individual and the group and how through various modalities one is able to develop a sense of connection to the group.

Brown further asserted that outer-directed associations are accompanied by the desire to attain societal goals as a group, often exhibited through social action (Brown 1979). This type of association explains the relationship between the group and the larger society in that it highlights the concept of power in numbers. It also explains how the group's interactions with society can be modified as a consequence of its solidarity (Brown 1979). Examples of outer-directed associations could include the NAACP, National Urban League, or Congressional Black Caucus. This framework provides an explanation of various types of collective behavior among African Americans and how solidarity can be used by a group to fuel social change.

Racial solidarity among African Americans has been most prolific during periods of extremely socially oppressive conditions, only to lose much of its momentum upon signs of improvement (Barker 1994, Brown 1979; Feagin 1986; McDermott 2001; Rogers 2002*; Schiele 2005; Zangrando and Zangrando 1970). Most of the social gains for African Americans have come as a result of the solidarity exhibited by the group. Efforts such as the abolition of slavery, the unionization of the sleeping car porters, the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, and the Voting Rights Act, are several examples of how African Americans have used solidarity to move toward achieving equal access and opportunity and the basic

rights of U.S. citizenship (Gibson 1977; Neal 1970; Welch and Combs 1985; Young 1974).

Conversely, the absence of racial solidarity directly impedes the group's ability to participate

in activities that foster favorable social change.

Several periods in history have witnessed heightened racial solidarity among African

Americans. Such periods began with the slavery abolitionist movement in the 1800s, then

reappeared in the Niagara Movement of the early 1900s and Marcus Garvey's Universal

Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the 1920s (Adam 1978; Bledsoe et al. 1995).

Bledsoe et al. proposed that the thematically charged slogans *Black Power* and *Black is

Beautiful* did much to rejuvenate solidarity to a renewed public awareness; however, these

themes have virtually lain dormant since the Civil Rights and Black Consciousness

Movements that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s (Bledsoe et al. 1995). Not only did

solidarity aid the political conditions of African Americans as a group, it also helped

individuals cope with their personal situations (Rogers 2002).

Amid the ongoing disputes regarding poverty among African Americans rests the

reality that many of these families have exhibited resiliency and perseverance despite their

economic conditions (Billingsley 1968; Stack 1974). These families, notwithstanding their

composition, have faced hostile environments, inadequate housing, unemployment, and

limited opportunities. Studies conducted focusing on African American families from

slavery through the mid-1980s found these families did not partake in individualistic

behaviors but worked collectively through delayed gratification, extended family support,

self-sacrifice, and social exchange (Billingsley 1968; Hill 1999; Moses 1985; Stack 1974).

There has been a long-standing argument that African Americans possess no ethnic

culture other than American, and essentially, Black culture is simply a modified version of

American culture (Frazier [1939] 1997; Glazer and Moynihan 1970). There are many scholars who have argued to the contrary, that there are indeed African cultural survivals, manifested primarily in the areas of music, folklore, social connectedness, language, dance, art, and spirituality, which have created a unique African American (sub)culture (Billingsley 1968; Blassingame 1979; Blauner, 1970; Boykin and Toms 1985, Foster 1983; Gibson 1977; Herskovits 1941, Holloway 1991; McAdoo 1988).

These cultural survivals are essential to racial solidarity in that they provide historical and cultural underpinnings upon which a sense of connectedness and consciousness among African Americans is developed. Although the existence of *Africanisms* has been well documented, scholars further suggest many of these folkways have been diluted through slavery, socialization techniques, generational shifts, assimilation, and integration (Billingsley 1968; Gibson 1977; Holloway 1991; McAdoo 1988).

African Americans have a long history of solidarity and collectivism expressed through extended family, fictive kin, social bonds, and communal support (Chatters, Taylor and Jayakody 1994; Foster 1983; Taylor, et al. 2001; Young 1974). According to Allen and Boykin (1992), many of these ideals and mores have their historical foundations in West African traditions. The African American (sub)culture has been described as more collectivist in nature than the European culture of North America (Allen and Bagozzi 2001; Kernahan, Bettencourt and Dorr 2000; Torrence 1990).

Triandis (1995) defined collectivism as a "social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms and duties imposed by those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and

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emphasize their connectedness to members of these collectives" (Triandis 1995:2).

Additionally, collectivists see themselves as "links in a long chain of ancestors and

descendants, carry out their obligations and perform what is expected of them as specified by

in-group norms, and are often socialized to enjoy doing their duty, even if it requires some

sacrifices" (Triandis 1995:10-11).

Alternatively, individualism is defined as a "social pattern that consists of loosely

linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives" and "are primarily

motivated by their own preferences" (Triandis 1995:2). Individualists view themselves as

individuals, not in terms of roles or members of particular groups, and one is not expected to

become involved in the business of the group members (Triandis 1995). Additionally,

Triandis (1995) has been able to identify the many factors that contribute to individualist and

collectivist orientations: social class, child rearing, self-perception, identity and emotion, and

cognitions about their in-groups (Triandis 1995).

Addressing the ideal of self-perception, Allen and Bagazzi (2001) examined African

American adults' sense of self, which they found to be related to a collective focus. Their

results revealed a strong negative relationship between African self-consciousness and

individualism and a positive relationship between Black identity and collectivism. They

conceptualized African self-consciousness as

> [b]eing at the conscious level of the African survival thrusts and is reflective of such
>
> attitudes and behaviors as one's African identity, recognition of African survival and
>
> positive development as a major preoccupation, respect for and active perpetuation of
>
> things African, and unequivocal, uncompromising resistance to all things anti-
>
> African. (Allen and Bagazzi 2001:11)

Boykin and Toms (1985) contended that racial socialization prepares children to cope with racism through the development of a positive racial identity and is the process of raising children to be physically and emotionally healthy in an oppressive environment. Other scholars have suggested that the collectivist nature of the African American worldview may positively buffer African Americans from the negative consequences of the individualistic emphasis of the dominant culture (Adam 1978; Evans 1980; Ferguson 1938; Kernahan, Bettencourt and Dorr 2000; Nobles 1981; Taylor 1979).

Over the past several decades, multiple factors have contributed to the fragmentation of racial solidarity among African Americans, such as social mobility (Blackwell 1985; Demo and Hughes 1990; Hwang, Fitzpatrick and Helms 1998), affluence (McDermott 2001; Schiele 2005), educational attainment (Blackwell 1985; Tyler et al., 2005; Ferguson 1938; Allen and Boykin 1992), social class (Blackwell 1985; Boykin and Toms 1985; Frazier 1962; Hwang, Fitzpatrick and Helms 1998; Taylor 1979; Welch and Combs 1985), racial identification (Cross et al. 1991), and socialization styles (Boykin and Toms 1985; Lareau 2002; Thomas and Speight 1999). These factors suggest some level of intra-group variation in racial experiences among individuals and that mere group membership does not necessarily translate into a sense of loyalty to the group (Brewer and Gardner 1996; McLoyd 2004). Moreover, a study by McDermott (2001) revealed that as members of a minority ethnic group became more integrated into the larger society, they often shed their strong identification with the minority group and instead adopt the values of the majority group.

Allen, Dawson, and Brown (1989) used data derived from the National Survey on Black Americans to study racial belief systems associated with socioeconomic status,

religiosity, and exposure to African American media. They found that "as Blacks move up

the social structure and become more affluent, they are less likely to adopt a view of black

identity centered on separation from white society" (Allen, Dawson and Brown 1989:435).

For those with less status, the African American autonomy construct was associated with

how close they felt to African Americans as a whole (Allen, Dawson and Brown 1989).

Allen, Dawson and Brown (1989) linked solidarity with socioeconomic status and religiosity.

They also found solidarity negatively related to socioeconomic status, unrelated to

religiosity, and positively associated with aspects of African American media (print and

television) usage that provide images and information about African Americans.

In a study conducted by Tyler et al. (2005) on the socialization patterns of low-

income African American households, parents reported communal-based household

socialization activities significantly more than individualistic activities. These communal-

based activities included working together, spending leisure time together, sharing of

resources, and helping behaviors. Bowman and Howard (1985) studied specific socialization

messages in four categorical areas: (1) racial identity, to focus on racial pride, African

heritage, and familial and cultural history; (2) self-development, to emphasize the importance

of education, achievement, and hard work; (3) racial barriers, to provide an awareness of

racism and prejudice and the importance of treating others fairly despite not being treated

fairly by European Americans; and (4) egalitarian messages, to focus on human universals

that do not emphasize racial differences (Bowman and Howard 1985). This study revealed

that youths whose parents transmitted a consciousness of racial barriers or the importance of

interracial protocol were able to attain better grades than those who were taught nothing

about their racial status. Bowman and Howard (1985) further argued that the personal

efficacy, academic performance, and upward mobility of African American youths could be promoted through intervention that considers parental socialization messages.

The theoretical framework used in this exploration is based on previous research that has explored racial solidarity using the concepts of loyalty, consciousness, identity, and sacrifice (social action) as key indicators (Allen, Dawson and Brown 1989; Bledsoe et al. 1995; Turner 1967). As previously discussed, racial consciousness is an integral component to understanding racial solidarity, and therefore, two concepts, pride and discrimination, were included in this exploration because they have been shown to be factors central to examining consciousness (Ferguson 1938).

This exploration was framed around the theoretical contributions of Allen, Dawson, and Brown (1989), Bledsoe et al. (1995), Turner (1967), and Ferguson (1938). These authors argued for the importance of using the concepts of loyalty, racial consciousness, identity, sacrifice [to achieve social action] (Allen, Dawson and Brown 1989; Bledsoe et al. 1995; Turner 1967), pride (Ferguson 1938), and either an awareness of or experience with discrimination (Ferguson 1938) in examining racial solidarity.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

Phenomenological inquiry seeks to differentiate the ways in which a phenomenon has been experienced (Moustakas 1994). It is based on a grounded and inductive approach that focuses on describing, rather than explaining, the meaning of lived experiences through the lens of the participants. Phenomenological studies are not driven by preconceived theoretical constructs and research hypotheses but, rather, by the desire to understand how a given phenomenon is experienced (Creswell 2003).

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of racial solidarity through the lived experiences of African Americans. In order to gain depth and clarity on this topic, I used the inductive qualitative method of semi-structured, in-depth interviewing to conduct this study. The semi-structured interview technique allowed participants to respond to direct questions while offering their unique perspectives and bridging the participants' lived experiences with the research purpose. During the interviews, I deliberately bracketed my own opinions and experiences so as not to influence the participants or my interpretation of their comments (Moustakas 1994). I also maintained flexibility regarding the structure of the interview in order to record the context of their responses. I used probing follow-up questions to elicit detailed descriptions and to capture new or missing information.

3.2 Defining the Population and the Sample

There were only two criteria required for participation in this research study: (1) the participant's self-identify as an African American and (2) the participant's being between the ages of 18 and 30 or 50 and above. Participants aged 18 to 30 represent the post-Civil Rights era cohort and participants aged 50 and above represent the Civil Rights era cohort.

Previous research has found age groups to be best divided from a socio-historical context; therefore, I have used the Civil Rights Movement and the personal awareness of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., at the time it occurred in 1968 as the defining social event to divide the age cohorts (Demo and Hughes 1990; Hwang, Fitzpatrick and Helms 1998; Schuman and Scott 1989).

3.3 Data Collection Techniques and Instrument

I solicited participants for the project, using a purposive, non-probability sampling method. The sampling method was purposive in that I targeted two specific age cohorts within one racial group and was non-probable in that I did not randomly select from the general population but, rather, through specified locations.

I contacted representatives from various organizations (educational, community, religious, and civic) to obtain permission and assistance in recruiting participants. I also solicited participants from local beauty and barbershops. Participants were ultimately recruited from one university, one community college, one local church, one barbershop, one senior citizens facility, and one local chapter of a national African American civic organization.

The interviews were conducted during the period of July 2006 through September 2006. Each of the 21 interviews lasted approximately between 45 minutes and one and a half hours. The interviews with participants from the university and community college occurred on their respective campuses. Interviews with the participants recruited from the local church occurred in their homes. With regard to the participants from the social organization, one occurred in a home, one at an office, and another at my home. The participants from the senior citizen center were interviewed at that facility. The one participant recruited from the barbershop was interviewed in a separate room at the barbershop. All participants who made contact with me were interviewed with the exception of one person who did not meet the study criteria for participation because of her age.

Each participant was informed that this research was being conducted as part of the thesis requirement for a Master of Arts degree at Eastern Michigan University and would be published through public libraries. It was explained that there were no known risks associated with this project. It was also made clear that their participation was strictly voluntary, and should they decide to participate, they were able to withdraw at any time. The participants were also informed that they were not required to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form approved by the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Michigan University.

Using an interview guide, I focused on several areas that were central to the research question. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding racial loyalty to establish if the participants had in fact developed a sense of loyalty to the racial group and to determine the origin. Participants were also asked questions related to racial pride and consciousness in

order to understand the meaning the participant associated with his/her racial identity and to gauge the participant's perspective of his/her group as an observer. Questions were asked to establish participants' sense of how their racial group was perceived by those outside the group. Questions were also asked on the topic of racial solidarity to determine the extent to which the participant was familiar with this concept. The purpose of these questions was to determine how participants viewed any form of racial unity among African Americans.

Questions related to social action were asked to ascertain the participants' beliefs about the effectiveness of past, and the potential of future, social protest activities, as well as their willingness to participate in them. These questions were also asked to understand the participant's knowledge of historical social action by African Americans and their preferred methods for social action. Questions regarding discrimination were asked to determine whether they believed African Americans continued to be discriminated against and to get an account of their personal experiences, if any, with discrimination. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their racial self-identification, their parents' and their childhood experiences, and their demographics as a means for better understanding the process by which their ideas about racial solidarity may have originated (Durant and Sparrow 1997; Drake and Cayton [1945] 1993; Ferguson 1938).

I used the grounded theory analytical approach to analyze the data in this study. The grounded theory method provided a systematic strategy for analyzing the qualitative data that allowed for the "discovery of concepts and relationship in the data" and the organization of the data "into a theoretical explanatory theme" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:11). The use of the grounded theory method was appropriate for this study because it allowed for "theories to be

drawn from data, which are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12).

Each interview was fully transcribed and then read critically for relevance to the study's research question. I then assigned a code to all the data units within each transcript for easy reference. I used the open code method to analyze the transcripts to classify events, experiences, and responses (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As I open-coded the transcripts, I generated a master list of concepts and themes, adding new ones as each transcript was read. Each concept and theme was then assigned a code. These data units were then put into a qualitative software program, NVIVO©, to help with data management. Using NVIVO©, I then placed the data units into as many relevant codes as possible. This allowed me to (1) further analyze the data units within each code and (2) review each data unit within each code organized by participant.

Once the coding structure was completed, the consistent concepts and themes that were directly linked to the research question were extracted. The codes were analyzed in order to extrapolate common elements that created their experiences in an effort to ensure that an explanatory model could be developed that would provide a detailed account of the phenomenon. The codes were then sorted by participant, age cohort, and age cohort/gender group, which provided a lucid picture of similarity and variation according to these categories. This also allowed me to analyze codes to determine the themes that were present in the older cohort experiences that were absent from the younger cohort experiences and vice versa.

Seven key and interrelated themes emerged from the interviews: the traditional African American community (its characteristics and survival strategies), acceptance of

externally imposed beliefs, in-group sabotaging behaviors, emergence of the new African

American community, adversities among the younger generation, dispute of the younger

generation, and using solidarity to improve the social condition of African Americans. These

themes and the theoretical foundation on which they were based will be discussed and

analyzed in the upcoming pages.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Six key concepts provided the theoretical framework for this study: racial identity, an awareness of or experience with discrimination, racial consciousness, pride, loyalty, and a willingness to sacrifice. Each of these concepts was identified, either directly or indirectly, within the emergent themes.

The thematic analysis of this data suggested that the traditional African American community was a location that consisted of racial consciousness, pride, loyalty, racial identity, willingness to sacrifice, and an awareness of and experience with discrimination. Racial solidarity appeared to be most resilient in this environment. Nevertheless, as the traditional African American community and its associating values and behaviors dissolved, so did the prevalence of many of these key concepts.

Acquiescence of externally imposed beliefs appears to have impacted both racial consciousness and racial identity among African Americans as many have become consumed with social perceptions to the degree of conformity in order to gain acceptance or success. Moreover, acceptance of these externally imposed beliefs may contribute to in-group sabotaging behaviors as they appear to directly affect the sense of loyalty, racial pride, and willingness to sacrifice among African Americans. The in-group sabotaging behaviors, as delineated below, illuminate how the absence of racial solidarity can result in pejorative consequences (i.e., lack of in-group support, decreased familiarity that would otherwise promote empathy, and increased destructive social conditions) and impedes the group's ability to stimulate active movement toward improving its social condition.

Participants in this study provided a clear picture of what is described as the emergence of a new African American community, which is void of all of the concepts identified in the traditional African American community with the exception of an awareness of discrimination. The absence of racial solidarity and its related characteristics appears to have created a situation in which many African Americans in the younger generation experience significant adversities. As these struggles were described, participants emphasized how the behaviors of African Americans in the younger generation were in opposition to the concepts of racial consciousness, pride, racial identity, and willingness to sacrifice. Similarly, the dispute of those in the younger generation further suggested that through their experiences and perspectives of others, there is behavioral opposition to the concepts of loyalty, pride, racial consciousness, and racial identity. The characteristics outlined in these final three themes further indicate how the absence of racial solidarity can negatively impact subsequent generations of African Americans.

4.1 Introduction to the Participants

The sample comprised 21 participants, 11 males and 10 females, with ages ranging from 18 to 83. Nine participants were recruited from a community college (two students and seven employees), three were recruited from a local church, three from a senior citizens facility, three from a social organization, two from a university (one graduate student and one physician-educator), and one from a local barbershop.

Four economic class categories were represented in the sample: unemployed, working class (unskilled or semiskilled occupations), middle class (professional occupations or highly skilled laborers), and upper middle class (educated professionals with graduate degrees).

There were five education levels: did not complete high school or equivalent, completed high school or GED, some college or Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, and graduate-level degree. Family size was divided into three categories: small (1-4 members), medium (5-8 members), and large (9 or more members). There were two geographical birth regions: South and North. Finally, there were two categories for the participants' parents' relationships: married or divorced/never married.

There were eight participants in the post-Civil Rights era cohort, with ages ranging from 18 to 30. The group was evenly divided by gender. All eight of the participants in the post-Civil Rights era cohort were born in the North. Four of the participants came from medium-sized families and three from small families, and family-size data on one participant was not obtained. Of the eight participants in this cohort, one possessed either a high school diploma or GED; six had some college or an Associate's degree; and one had a Bachelor's degree. There were three participants who considered themselves to be working class, and one was unemployed. Four of the participants were currently students, and therefore, their economic status was not documented.

I also considered the participant's parents' information as it provided further insight on the participant's background. In this cohort, six of their parents were born in the North and two were born in the South. Six of the participants had parents who were either divorced or never married, and two had parents that were married. Finally, five of their parents had middle-class occupations, two had working-class occupations, and one participant's parents were unemployed.

The Civil Rights era cohort consisted of 13 participants between the ages of 51and 83, six males and seven females. Of the 13 participants, eight were born in the South and

five were born in the North. Seven participants in this cohort came from large families, three from medium-size families, and three from small families. In this cohort only one participant did not complete high school, two had a high school diploma or GED, three had some college or an Associate's degree, one had a Bachelor's degree, and six had a graduate-level degree. The economic status of this cohort was represented as follows, five were upper-middle class, four were middle class, and four were working class.

As with the post-Civil Rights era cohort, I also considered their parent's information. In this group, 10 had parents that were born in the South and three had parents who were born in the North. Ten of the participants in the group had parents that were considered working class, two that were middle class, and one upper-middle class. Of the 13 participants, 10 had parents who were married and three had parents that were either divorced or never married.

Comparison of these two cohorts, using these variables, showed that the Civil Rights era cohort had a higher level of education, a higher economic class, and was mostly Southern born. The majority of their parents were Southern born and were mostly married and working class. The post-Civil Rights era cohort had a lower level of education, were generally working class, and had Northern born with parents who were also Northern born, mostly middle class, and mostly divorced or never married (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. Participants' Personal Demographics

Generational Cohort	Birth Region	Education	Economic Class	Gender		TOTAL
				Male	Female	
Post-Civil Rights Era Cohort	North	HS/GED	Working Class	1		1
		Some College/Associate's Degree	Unemployed		1	1
			Working Class Currently Enrolled	1	1	2
			College Student	2	2	4
Civil Rights Era Cohort	North	Some College/Associate's Degree	Working Class		2	2
			Middle Class		1	1
		Graduate Degree	Upper Middle Class	1	1	2
	South	Did Not Complete High School	Working Class	1		1
		HS/GED	Working Class	1		1
			Middle Class		1	1
		Bachelor's Degree	Middle Class	1		1
		Graduate Degree	Middle Class		1	1
			Upper Middle Class	2	1	3
			TOTAL	**10**	**11**	**21**

Table 2. Participants' Parents' Demographics

Generational Cohort	Parents' Birth Region	Parents' Relationship	Parents' Economic Status	Gender		TOTAL
				Male	Female	
Post-Civil Rights Era Cohort	North	Divorced/Separated	Unemployed/Stay at home		1	1
			Middle Class	2	1	3
		Married	Working Class	1		1
			Middle Class	1		1
	South	Divorced/Separated	Working Class		1	1
			Middle Class		1	1
Civil Rights Era Cohort	North	Married	Working Class		2	2
			Middle Class		1	1
	South	Divorced/Separated	Working Class	2		2
			Middle Class		1	1
		Married	Working Class	3	3	6
			Upper Middle Class	1		1
			TOTAL	**10**	**11**	**21**

4.2 Traditional African American Community

The traditional African American communities that were constructed during the period of legalized segregation and overt racial discrimination provide a historical framework for the social environment in which most of the participants from the Civil Rights era cohort lived during their adolescence. This framework offered a description of how racial solidarity operated in these communities. Participants from the Civil Rights era cohort relied heavily on intra-community resources to meet their needs because external support was either limited or nonexistent. Because of their experiences in these restricted communities, African Americans were extremely interdependent and developed a certain level of distrust for Whites. Furthermore, because the members of these communities were similarly situated economically, many were unaware that they were considered poor by external measures. This created an environment with minimal competition for material possessions.

4.2.1 Characteristics of the Traditional African American Community

Because the traditional African American community existed during the period of racial segregation, those in the Civil Rights era cohort had personal experiences with restricted social boundaries, which confined them geographically. These experiences provided them with an awareness of how the color of their skin would subsequently determine their position in society. In spite of this perception, participants from the Civil Rights era cohort did not describe their experiences within these boundaries with a sense of bitterness or anger but rather simply acknowledged the social climate of the time.

> I traveled during a time, because we owned a Lincoln, we had two truck drivers to try to kill us. Our car broke down in Kentucky and there was a sign, "No Blacks Out After Six." I was upset about this, I'm from Detroit. For the men to fix my car we had to sit in a garage all night.

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We had the federal sheriff coming to my house daily. They shot my windows out. They beat my kids up. They would put grinded glass and nails in my driveway. It was because of who I was…the color of me. (*Female, 65*)

We were raised that way. This is your place over here. We were told you don't go to the bowling alleys. I don't swim to this day…we were not allowed in the city pools. We were told, my parents just told us, where we couldn't go. And if we went to the movies, we had to sit up in the balcony. (*Female, 60*)

I recall incidents when we were in school that we were told there were certain places that we could not go after a certain point in time because we knew that it was dangerous. And there were certain places that you would go in Georgia, or Alabama, and Mississippi and people would just tell you that they did not want you there and you were not welcome there. (*Male, 52*)

Segregation and stuff…the city ordinances and all that, that's what had us held down. (*Male, 70*)

I went there one day with my White girlfriend and they turned us away and Daddy came and it was a big ole stink. I was at the Pizzeria. That's were I was. I felt rejected that I wasn't good enough. I cried and Daddy and Momma sat down and spoke with me about that because they called me the "N" word. They said anybody could be a n**** so you just keep your head up and do the best that you can. You say your prayers and God is just and what goes around comes around. Now back in the day, I guess that's the best that they could tell us. But they have endured so much and I saw the pain and the hurt in their eyes as well. (*Female, 51*)

The Civil Rights era cohort participants described their communities as places that provided an environment in which they were able to escape the harsh realities of society. They also expressed how their families depended upon one another for support and how this support was extended to residents in their communities. The intra-dependence they shared in part was the result of a high level of familiarity and common experiences among the community residents.

[We were] very close. Everyone knew everybody. Everyone looked out for everybody. What one had was shared with others.
(*Male, 61*)

All your friends lived in the same neighborhood. Everybody went to Perry School which was an African American school taught by African American teachers who cared about their kids. We got a great education. There wasn't a lot of disruption in the classrooms. Everybody was there to learn, they were being nurtured. The Black businesses that we had at the time, they were all being supported. Segregation is not bad…it's not bad at all. As long as it's equal. It can be very, very good.
(*Female, 51*)

During that time, parents and teachers and everybody went to the same churches and to the same functions.
(*Female, 60*)

In part because of the historical racial tensions between Whites and African Americans, as well as their individual experiences with overt discrimination outside of their communities, those in the Civil Rights era cohort spoke of how they were either explicitly instructed to distrust Whites or developed distrust through personal experiences. This distrust caused a great number of African Americans to retreat to their enclaves and rely upon one another for support. These sentiments were not so much the result of the racial segregation as the result of the many attempts to make African Americans feel inferior (Cruse 1987).

All they [her parents] knew was they were from a generation that had to fight for the rights that I had. When they talked to me they always used to say be careful. You know you got to take care of yourself. Their thing was they just did not trust White people. They just did not trust them because they always felt that back in slavery and whenever, you get too close [to them] then they'll renege on you if a certain person found out that they were friends with them.
(*Female, 58*)

You have to learn these things because they will try to intimidate you, make you feel less than.
(*Female, 56*)

I know those folks' background. I know their history. I know what
they're capable of.
(*Male, 56*)

I walked in this restaurant and nobody would wait on me. So I walked up
to the counter and said we'd like to eat. And the lady looked at me, she
walked off, then she came back. My husband said, go to the table and sit
down. The lady that was mopping the floor, they said something to her
and she walked over to the table and asked me what would you like to eat?
Now the implication was, Blacks didn't come in that restaurant unless they
were sweeping or mopping. But how would I know this? And I asked her
to go get the manager, so he came. [I said] she didn't wash her hands and
she's mopping your floor. I want that waitress. My husband wanted to
leave. [I said] no, I'm hungry. We finally got our food. I gave the lady
that was mopping the floor the tip.   And when I left, I threw the food out
because I might not be here today if I ate it.
(*Female, 65*)

Whites have been ruling so many things for so many years and have
always considered Blacks beneath them.
(*Female, 83*)

Participants in the Civil Rights era cohort indicated that their neighbors were

similarly situated economically despite the occupation variation. The similarity in economic

level among community residents appeared to have minimized the presence of competition

for material possessions. The absence of competition also allowed community residents to

aid each other in their times of need. Succumbing to materialism was not a luxury those in

these communities could afford, but, rather, they effectively managed their meager resources

through the delay of gratification and the exhibition of self-sacrifice.

I think most of the people who lived around us owned their own homes or they appeared to own their own homes. They could have been renting. But most people that I knew lived in single family homes and most people I knew owned those homes. I didn't see us being any different from them. There were other families that had more family members and so the income that your parents had didn't go as far. I think that during the time that I was coming along, the schoolteachers and factory workers probably made about the same. I didn't think we were any better off.
(*Female, 51*)

I've always been fortunate and blessed enough to have more than what I needed, even my sister and brothers, even though they came up much earlier than I did. My father was always a provider and so my sister would say sometimes that we didn't realize we were poor, somebody else had to tell us.
(*Female, 60*)

We didn't have an abundance of anything, but we were never lacking of anything. You know ordinary things. Everybody on my street was all about on the same level.
(*Female, 83*)

We didn't know we were poor. Because what we had was just shared with everyone around us and our boundaries were basically there. That was basically what we knew.
(*Male, 61*)

You know we were poor and we didn't even know we were poor. Because we didn't have, but what we had we took care of it. We had pride in what we had. It didn't have to be a name brand. We would go to something like a K-Mart, but it wasn't K-Mart then.
(*Female, 58*)

4.2.2 Survival Strategies in the Traditional African American Community

The participants from the Civil Rights era cohort who were raised in the traditional

African American community asserted that it was necessary for family and neighbors to

establish unique survival strategies in order to counter the callousness of society. To them

the community represented more than just a neighborhood; it was a place where residents

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established family-like relationships and a genuine trust and concern for the well-being of

each other.

> My mother helped everybody. Oh yes. [She] helped them any way she
> could help them, she'd help them. Go to they house see about them if
> necessary. If they needed food cooked, she'd cook for them. She'd wash
> they clothes, stuff like that. Help clean their house up and stuff like that.
> My mother always did that. Yeah because our people couldn't help they
> self….a lot of the people. My mom didn't have much either, but whatever
> she had she didn't mind sharing it with other people that didn't have as
> much as she had.
> (*Male, 68*)

> But even for those who may not have had a mother or father in the house,
> I look at African Americans as always being close-knit, in that if there was
> not a mother or father there was a grandmother or there was a grandfather.
> Or we always knew that there was a Big Mama or if not there was always
> someone in your neighborhood or on your block who served as that
> surrogate and who looked out for other people in the neighborhood.
> (*Male, 52*)

> They [her parents] were very well thought of by our neighborhood's kids,
> which kind of surprised me. I didn't really realize until after I was grown
> the things they did for the neighborhood kids. I never knew my mother
> used to bring back…we used to take trips during the summer…go on
> vacations…and I didn't know…the kids…we would tell them when we
> were coming back and they were always waiting for us when we got back
> during the day or the evening. They would be looking out for us when we
> returned from a vacation. I didn't realize why they were doing that…it
> was because my mother always had souvenirs for all of them and I didn't
> know she did that.
> (*Female, 51*)

> My mom was...the store that she ran…we had what you called tickets for
> people when you came to get stuff. But the tickets were never enforced
> because she just had the record, but she never insisted on anyone paying.
> And to me that was looking out for somebody else, to help. And I think
> that my feeling for helping comes from her for that. She was a foster
> mother and our home was one in which the neighborhood flocked to and
> she was kind to everyone.
> (*Male, 61*)

Many of the Civil Rights era cohort participants also expressed experiences with what can be described as neighborhood parenting. These experiences were described as a means of extending parental guidance to neighborhood children. When neighborhood children were away from the watchful eyes of their parents, neighbors frequently served as surrogates. This strategy operated under the auspices of the community network and proved to be very effective in helping parents monitor and discipline their children. It was effective because (1) it was universal among the adults in the community and (2) the children were very much aware of this implicit arrangement, and it often motivated them to resist the temptation to engage in mischievous behavior.

> Back when I was growing up, if I was somewhere and word got back that someone had reprimanded me, my parents were not going to go and want to beat someone up, which happens today. You touch someone's kid and the whole world has come to an end. Each one took care of the other one. And when word got back to your parents that you had done something wrong, it was not a question if that adult was right or wrong, they were always right. That kind of kept you on the straight and narrow.
> (*Male, 61*)

> I can remember when we didn't have to lock our doors; the neighbors looked out for one another. If Ms. [name] saw you doing something, she whooped you, then when you got home you got another whooping.
> (*Female, 51*)

> Whatever Ms. [name] or anybody said over there you better step in line and if not, you got a beating. And it was just like with our family. If my Aunt [name] had to whoop me, my mother was going to kill me. That was just the norm.
> (*Female, 56*)

> If I did something in my day, the lady down there hollered at me and by the time I got home, oh my God, then I didn't do that anymore.
> (*Female, 64*)

Partly because of the isolation of these traditional African American communities from mainstream society, residents developed their own set of social norms that made their

lives intrinsically different from those raised after these communities dissolved. Those in the Civil Rights era cohort acknowledged the presence of a common value system, which strengthened their network and was reinforced by both family and neighbors. They spoke of experiences in which immediate family members and fictive kin emphasized key values, such as the importance of family, respect, helping others, religion, and the significance of education.

> She [his mother] always taught me to be a respected young man. Carry yourself with respect. If you do, people will always respect you. I've been doing that every since I was a child.
> (*Male, 68*)

> We had a strict moral code of ethics. We dressed a certain way, we acted a certain way. And if we went to your house or somebody else's house, the rules were the same. So therefore it meant for a family unit.
> (*Female, 60*)

> To be honest. To be truthful. To try to treat people the way that you want to be treated. To work hard. To be a good citizen. To try to give back to help those who have helped you. To try to be a positive example for your friends and family and to try to do something to help your community. I think those are the things that my parents tried to show us.
> (*Male, 52*)

> I used to see my mom and her friends just sitting on the front porch humming and singing. They didn't hardly have enough money to pay the bills or whatever, but you talk about solidarity. That brought them together when they could sit and praise the Lord and somehow be grateful and thankful for what he's done and the hope that it's going to get better.
> (*Female, 56*)

Members of the Civil Rights era cohort described witnessing families supporting each other. During this time, many families had strong kinship bonds and an unyielding religious orientation and worked together to ensure family members' needs were met. According to participants of the Civil Rights era cohort, supporting endeavors, lending their assistance

when other members were in need, and absorbing additional family members in their homes

were common actions in traditional African American communities.

> I don't know if you know anything about Southern roots, Southern Black roots. But there is a thing about family members take care of family members. My biological mother died when I was two, and she knew that she was dying. My father was there, but she did not want him [to raise me]. She wanted me to have a mother and a father. Her brother and his wife could not have children, so before she died she told him she wanted them to raise me. And they raised me as their daughter.
> (*Female, 56*)

> She [his grandmother] had some kind of disease that affected your limbs and they kept having to amputate stuff until finally it killed her. She lost all of her fingers and both legs above the knee and it was just progressive. She died from poisoning, I forgot what the name of it was, but it's when your flesh literally rots. So that's why she was with us. She took care of my mother when my mother was coming up, so when she got [sick] we took care of her. Families did that then, I don't think they know about that today.
> (*Male, 56*)

> Family unity and I guess that was one of the things that my parents told us. We had to stick together and when we're like that [fingers intertwined] it's hard to break us apart.
> (*Male, 61*)

> There was another family member that my parents raised and they wanted her to go to school too and she decided not to. I guess my father was kind of looked at as the extended family bread winner because at his funeral one of my cousins got up and he said oh we loved to see Uncle [name] coming 'cause we knew if he was coming we was going to get a quarter or 15 cents or something.
> (*Female, 60*)

The Civil Rights era cohort's exposure to how others in the community prevailed

over various social and economic obstacles provided them with a great appreciation for how

their parents and community members were able to prevail. Additionally, the observation of

hardship and struggle appeared to be important motivators for their future success, as many

of those from the Civil Rights era cohort admitted being inspired to achieve as a result of

seeing their parents marginalized by society.

> My parents worked so I didn't have to do the same kinds of things. So
> that was incentive enough, when I saw what they had to do. I didn't even
> want to clean my own bedroom at that time, much less clean somebody
> else's house. And when I saw how hard they worked to make a living for
> us, I was going to college.
> (*Female, 60*)

> My dad told me about when he went to work at Henry Ford and when they
> first started hiring Blacks. I think when he started he made 17 cents a day.
> Men got together and bought one car and they stuffed men in the car so
> when the guys stopped them, they weren't prepared for five or six men
> jumping out. Whooping butt and then going to work. If you talk to older
> people that lived in Southern states, that is how the Black male survived.
> He couldn't be caught out there by himself and it sounds like a bad movie
> or something. But what we've experienced…going over it, in it, or under
> it.
> (*Female, 65*)

> The Marine Corps base at Quantico started to hire civilian employees and
> my dad got training as a seaman finisher and that gave him a skilled trade.
> But Quantico was about a half an hour or more away from where most of
> the Black workers they were hiring lived. And many of them did not have
> cars and there definitely was no such thing as a commuter anything for
> Black folks. You get to work the best way you can, pat your foot and turn
> the corner. So my dad took a pick up truck, built a cover over it, put
> benches along the side, and added an old stove, and he transported
> workers back and forth.
> (*Female, 60*)

During the first half of the twentieth century, African Americans encountered limited

educational opportunities and were restricted to menial occupations and confined to housing

in certain neighborhoods (Battle and Bennett 1997; Marable 2000). For the Civil Rights era

cohort, education was considered a means of rising above the drudgery of agricultural and

domestic labor. Moreover, many viewed obtaining an education not only as a tool for self-

improvement, but also as a means of encouraging their families and improving their

neighborhoods. Those in the Civil Rights era cohort were well aware that access to

education had been previously denied to African Americans, and once education became

available, their parents were determined that their children would take advantage of the

opportunity.

> Oh, it was not even a question. It was not even a thought that I was not
> going to go to college. No, that wasn't even…I couldn't even entertain
> that. It was always known that each one of the generations was going to
> do better than the other. All my cousins and everything they always told
> me you're going to go to college. I call it a generational curse…if you
> don't have anyone that has gone, not like us, they didn't go but you were
> going. It's not even a question, you're going.
> (*Female, 58*)

> My dad stressed education. That has always and will probably always be
> our saving grace. That was what he tried to drill in us, to get an education
> or White people will always have their feet on your neck.
> (*Male, 56*)

> I think that as a young child it was instilled in us that education was the
> key in order for you to progress in this world. You had to have an
> education.
> (*Male, 52*)

> Education was always a priority in my family. For me it was not a
> question of if I was going to college it's when you go. That's just how I
> was raised. This was not a debatable issue.
> (*Female, 60*)

The Civil Rights era cohort expressed a great deal of pride in the achievements of

other African Americans. Unlike those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort, they had the

explicit experience and historical background of the difficulties African Americans

encountered in order to achieve. They also had personal experiences with being previously

prohibited from opportunities, which may have added some degree of significance to the

accomplishments of other African Americans.

The achievements that they've come so far and all the things that they've done. And if I want to include some of my Black…I'll include my son and daughter. They've accomplished quite a bit and I am very proud of them. What the Black person has achieved through their lifetime, my lifetime, is enormous really. It doesn't mean that…I'm not singling out the Martin Luther Kings or whoever it is like that, but as a whole, as a group. We've accomplished quite a bit and they've come quite…to have come over all the obstacles that they've had to come through.
(*Female, 83*)

I'm proud of the accomplishments. When you see many African Americans in positions that we would not have been able to achieve in the past [or] had the opportunity to do because of discrimination. I'm proud to see African Americans in elected positions. I'm proud to see African Americans as heads of Fortune 500 companies. I'm proud to see African Americans in leadership positions in education; where as many years ago we may not have even been able to attend those particular institutions. So in some respects I think the doors have opened, but they just have not opened far enough.
(*Male, 52*)

That doesn't mean that we will accept things lying down. But, instead of going through the front door, we may have to go through the side door or the roof, but we'll get through the door. And we're not going to cry at the adversities.
(*Female, 60*)

I have a very rich Black heritage that I'm very proud of and I know that we've done a lot for this country. I know we've done a lot… a lot of people who have done…in fighting for our Civil Rights and all that.
(*Male, 61*)

These traditional African American communities, by their restrictive nature, were also inclusive of positive role models. Those from the Civil Rights era cohort described how community role models provided a direct illustration that individual goals were attainable. They also served as accessible resources by providing guidance and instruction. Additionally, these individuals, as a result of their contributions and accomplishments, were held in very high regard.

They [his parents] grew up in a society where you had an established African American community; you had respected leaders in that community. They may not have been elected officials but they were like the physicians, the dentists, the teachers, the blue collar workers, the agricultural workers, the farmers. But they all made up the community, they were all respected.
(*Male, 51*)

One kid told me about how my father was advising him about college and kind of telling him what he should do and giving him advice on applying for college and that kind of stuff which I never knew he did.
(*Female, 51*)

I had a cousin that spent time talking to us about that [education]. She probably was the first of my immediate cousins, first or second cousins, that graduated from college. She was a teacher and she emphasized education to us and the importance that it would have in the development of ourselves and helping other Blacks, or Negroes, as we were called back then, to be successful.
(*Male, 61*)

The participants in the Civil Rights era cohort conveyed the presence of a strong work ethic they witnessed in their communities. They described numerous situations in which their parents and relatives had to creatively devise sources of income, when employment was not easily accessible, in order to provide for their families. Witnessing these behaviors instilled the belief that hard work was one of the key elements to ensuring some level of comfort in life. It also instilled the value and importance of providing for your family.

He [her father] worked hard. He took the skills that he had and put them to use. I can remember him coming home and sometimes something would be wrong with the bus and they would have to work on it all night long. But by the time 5:30 the next morning came to get the workers to work, it was ready to go. If it wasn't ready to go…I don't think I remember over once or twice, I remember I had to drive a car to Quantico, my sister had to drive a car to Quantico and somebody else…you know to pick up the workers. He provided.
(*Female, 60*)

He did transfer work at first you know. He was a transfer person from the train station hauling baggage and whatnot. From there he did work for a hardware company for a while. Then he created his own jobs after the owner told him that he had to lay off someone. He had a janitor and my dad installed the linoleum and he installed the gas stoves and the heaters and all of that. That was his job. So when the owner told him he had to lay somebody off, he was going to lay the janitor off, but he would have to start doing the janitor's work. And my dad said he wouldn't mind sweeping and dusting. But they had spittoons, and my dad said I am not emptying that spittoon. I'm not emptying that spit. And he says well if you can't empty that then we'll have to lay you off. He said well you do that and he walked away. And this was during the Depression. He walked away and he made up his own jobs. He decided folks are going to be cold in the winter and hot in the summer. So he decided he would make his job in the winter he would sell wood for heat because they had wood stoves. And in the summer he would haul ice and be the ice man. That's what he did a long time, even when I was growing up that's what he did. From there he opened up his own grocery store. He worked for a while, he went to California during the war and he worked out there as a spray painter. He didn't know anything about spray painting, but he said whenever anybody asked him about could he do [it], they said can you spray paint? [He said] oh yes, I can do that too. He said he had sense enough to learn. He would watch other people and say how do you turn this hose on or how do you do so and so? He would learn from that. He worked out there a long time and then he came home to Arkansas and opened his own grocery store. He stayed in that grocery store until he died.
(*Female, 83*)

I drove that truck, back in the late 50s, early 60s, a buck 13 an hour [was] all I could get. The minimum wage at that time was ninety cents, so I was getting a little more than minimum wage. I did that [for] 10 years. I was trying to raise a family. But see I would work 80 and 90 hours a week for that buck 13. I'd go out on the truck and deliver and come back and work in the plant and load box cars and grits.
(*Male, 70*)

You have to work for what you get. You will be rewarded. You'll be rewarded in ways that I'm rewarded. You know I don't drive an expensive car, don't live in an expense house, and I never got over extended on credit. That's my ethic here. There's no substitute for hard work. The other side is if you don't work hard, if you don't achieve, you're not entitled to anything. So I have a pretty strong worth ethic. It started with education.
(*Male, 51*)

4.3 Acceptance of Externally Imposed Beliefs

As most of these traditional African American communities dissolved, primarily as a result of desegregation legislation, many African Americans began to integrate into White communities. Amid their transition, they adopted new survival strategies in order to exist within a newly integrated society. Consequently, participants from both cohorts contended that African Americans began to internalize unsubstantiated myths, treated as truths, about what was necessary to compete and succeed in an integrated society and how they believed society perceived them.

> We've become acculturated and bought into, I think, the perceptions of our oppressors, so to speak. We're beginning to think like White folks. That's their thing. Rugged individualism…I don't need anybody but me…don't touch my kids…I don't care how many people they mass murder. That's their thing. Get away from me. That kind of stuff. Keep people at a distance. Shake hands instead of hugging. These are all European customs and traditions. That's how they were raised.
> (*Male, 56*)

Notwithstanding their abilities and hard work, some participants acknowledged how the color of their skin had in some way impacted their feelings of legitimacy in gaining access to their current environments. Their comments alluded to some level of uncertainty as to whether their access was genuinely earned or simply granted.

> Just coming to [school name] and everybody assuming that you got in strictly based on the fact that you are Black. When my GPA, test scores, all that good stuff were good enough to be considered, compared to any racial identification. So that kind of stuck with me for a while. I had to make sure that I always did really well, so that no one would be able to say that I got in because I was Black.
> (*Male, 25*)

I struggle with the issue of whether or not I was granted an opportunity as a part of tokenism or whether I legitimately earned it. So the first part of my adulthood I struggled with this idea of am I worthy of this? Then I realized 20 years later after going to college, I'm just as worthy, if not more worthy, of what I've got because I worked hard at it.
(*Male, 51*)

This concern of legitimacy places an additional internal pressure on many African Americans in that they feel they must always overachieve in order to satisfy their self-doubt and prove their worthiness (Semmes 1985). Some of the participants from both generational cohorts strongly insisted that African Americans must work twice as hard as their White counterparts in order to receive similar recognition. Some participants contended that even when African Americans work twice as hard as others and are able to validate their presence, barriers still arise that prevent them from progressing at the same pace and receiving the same rewards as individuals from other racial groups.

I think the most important thing is to realize that a lot of things in this world are not even. You have to work as hard [as] or harder than the next person in order to be considered as an equal. And I think that has been reinforced in pretty much everything I've done academically.
(*Male, 25*)

You know you have to do that next step no matter what. You always have to do that extra step, that extra mile no matter what. And it's frustrating sometimes.
(*Female, 56*)

You still have to produce 120% more than your White counterpart. And we go to school [and] we get our degrees, only to be told now that we're over-qualified.
(*Female, 60*)

You have to work twice as hard…it's true…to get the same recognition as your White counterpart.
(*Female, 51*)

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I think being an African American in American society you're instilled
with the fact that you have to be better than anyone else. Just because of
the fact of who you are. I think there is a stigma that people still look at
you as being less than. So you have to always strive for perfection if
you're an African American.
(*Male, 52*)

Additionally, as African Americans began to function regularly in predominantly

White environments, they became increasingly cognizant of their behavior and racial

presence while in these environments. These beliefs were not limited to the Civil Rights era

cohort; those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort also expressed a similar awareness while in

White environments, which suggests the continuation of this belief.

It depends on the status of that person, you know. With the negative,
anybody can do something negative and other races will categorize all
Black people like that. But the positive things, it's less likely to be
categorized as a group. Because this Black person is successful it doesn't
mean the rest of them are going to be. So it's not equal.
(*Female, 28*)

We can see that when anything negative is done by Blacks, others will
take all of us and put us in the same category. Instances where I've had,
and you've probably heard this, where you go into a store and Black
people steal and they got their eye on you from the time you walk in the
store until the time you leave. You walk on the elevator, and people of
other persuasions cower in the corner, grab their purse, or what have you.
Hey, I'm just like you. I don't want anything that you got. I don't want to
take it. I think they do and I think [when] they see people of color do
certain things they feel that's the way all of us are.
(*Male, 61*)

If it's positive then it's, oh, that's the exception. Oh, she's an exception or
he's an exception. I can't have a group of them like that. But the negative
stuff, they're all like that.
(*Female, 51*)

I have a consciousness when I'm around other races. I feel like…I can
just feel this tension coming on and I can turn my head and can see
someone looking like this and I don't know why that is. Maybe it is all
behind, but I really strongly doubt it.
(*Female, 18*)

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Participants from both cohorts believed that as African Americans circumvent discriminatory barriers, they feel compelled to portray a social image that would facilitate their acceptance by mainstream society. They maintained that the desire for acceptance often forces African Americans to deviate from their in-group behavioral tendencies. They also contended that acting "too Black" certainly failed to project the best racial image. Several participants acknowledged that although an integrated society is indicative of a coalescence of groups, the onus to adjust rests upon African Americans.

> I used to teach him [her son] about his slang. And I know that we did it,
> and I said you getting it a little bit too thick…bring it back…bring it back.
> You don't want them to think that's your norm.
> (*Female, 56*)

> From society's standpoint as well in the sense that you always have to be
> wary of who is watching because you might be fitting somebody else's
> stereotype. So you really have to be hyper-vigilant in the persona that you
> portray. You have to put on a completely different persona, a completely
> different face when you are here mainly because of the fact that you don't
> want to reinforce stereotypes A and B. Because you want to be treated
> seriously and for the most part it's sad because you can't be yourself.
> (*Male, 25*)

> On the phone they don't want per se a Black voice. They want you to
> sound professional and proper-speaking.
> (*Female, 28*)

In spite of the elapse of time and passing of legislation, participants felt that although overt discrimination had subsided, exclusionary barriers are still present, albeit more subtle ones. Although both cohorts described experiences with discrimination, those from the Civil Rights era cohort possessed a frame of reference with which to differentiate between overt and covert discrimination.

Racism is as prevalent today as it was when I was growing up. The difference is when I was growing up you knew it, you were told. You knew your place so to speak. Now, it's a hidden undercover kind of thing. So you constantly have to be on your guard. Yeah you can go to EEOC and you can sue and you can do all of these things, and they tell you that those are avenues available to you. But what they don't tell you is that if you utilize them then you're kind of blackballed.
(*Female, 60*)

Now I like to think of it as being an "institutionalized" type of racism. Whereas some people say now they have taken off the white robes and now they have blue suits. So it's more institutionalized.
(*Male, 52*)

It's never going to go away. It's in conversations. If you really listen to some of the things that's on TV, they've become more intelligent.
(*Female, 65*)

It's just taken on a different cover. Instead of being under the white hoods down South, now it's the execs sitting in the front office.
(*Male, 61*)

The water hoses are not literally being turned on us, but they are subtly being turned on us. Therefore we can't afford…as race of people, we can't afford to forget. Nothing has changed; it just wears a different hat and a different dress.
(*Female 60*)

I couldn't necessarily give you examples of where I've experienced it [discrimination] personally, but that's the great thing about being covert…it's happening and I don't know it. That's what makes it covert, I know what they're up to but I just ain't sure who they are.
(*Male, 56*)

[I]t's still kind of undercover…it's still there, it really is.
(*Female, 58*)

Participants from the Civil Rights era cohort asserted that as African Americans continued to integrate into racially mixed areas, there was a collective divergence from the common value system that existed within the boundaries of the traditional African American community. Subsequently, those from both cohorts contended that this shift has negatively

impacted the universally accepted child-rearing practices among African Americans, as well

as the behaviors of the younger generation. Many claimed the customary forms of discipline

have been overturned by new legal systems, which some participants felt have crippled

parents' ability to adequately raise their children.

> Now, with the mixing of the races we send mixed messages to our kids. Now you may be raising your son and then he will go over to [name]'s house and [name]'s momma says it's ok. Now, here we are, because there's not that same follow through, it was not going to be the kind of thing when I was growing up. If you had a difficulty with your parents, you can go to [name]'s house if you want to, but [name] was going to say you better go home and make it right with your momma. You can't be staying here.
> (*Female, 60*)

> We were in Florida and she [her mother] had my children with her. And I don't know if it was because she was Black or I don't know, maybe something was going on out there, but I have three children and they were fighting in the back seat. She pulled over and popped them with her hand. A White guy walked by her and told her don't hit those kids. And my mom said mind your business and he called the police. And the police literally came up there because she hit the kids. I think that was being discriminated against. What's the problem? You know she wasn't beating them. She popped them.
> (*Female, 28*)

> The judicial system is set up against us. I think the things that Blacks have traditionally used… Our parents weren't that abusive when you really look back over it. None of us are seeing psychiatrists now because we were so traumatized by the way that we were raised. But it was a universal kind of thing. But now all of a sudden that somebody has decided that that's not appropriate. And you can't do this and you can't do that and the kids have rights and they have this, that and the other. And parents have given up their control more and more.
> (*Female, 60*)

The law. Don't holler at that child. My mother could look at me and I knew that I had did….it made me a better person. When the law can tell you how to raise your child. Why are you working? Why are you paying taxes? And the majority of them don't have children. There are circumstances. Do I believe in beating? No. But I will take me a newspaper and smack your legs and get your attention. If you send your child to the room, they can call Children Services on you and they will bring charges. For going to your room?
(*Female, 64*)

One of our parishioners had gotten locked up for really just dealing with her child and he [her Pastor] lobbied a protest in terms of this woman is out here trying to deal with taking care of her children and you are going to lock her up for dealing with that?
(*Female, 51*)

Many of those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort shared concerns over the consequences of the pejorative images of African Americans shown by the media. They claimed that the media often portray images of African Americans, especially males, who are depicted as deviant, dangerous, and inherently dysfunctional. They maintained that these images serve to perpetuate negative stereotypes of African Americans. Participants also expressed how these images affect the interactions between African Americans and other racial groups in their daily lives. The media has a wide audience, reaching large numbers of people, and is often believed to be an accurate source of information. The participants' feelings could be the result of racial hypersensitivity when there is any negative portrayal of African Americans or simply the legacy of centuries of discrimination.

A perfect example is like going into a mall. You go into a mall with a group of four Black guys, look at how people look at us. What are they thinking automatically? Oh, them are some thugs or some hustlers or whatever. Those are some bad people right there. Don't even stand close to them. People move out of your way, like they don't even want to touch you and that's all because of probably of what they done saw on the news that morning.
(*Male, 26*)

But a lot times when something bad is going on you rarely see other
cultures or races. On TV it's always the Black people that's cutting up.
(*Female, 18*)

[The] media plays a big part. Like one thing [that] is a big discrimination
is most of the time you see crimes and stuff and what not on TV it's in the
city. They never really talk about the crimes that's done in the suburbs
and it's mostly the Black people. Or anytime a dumb comment is made
it's a Black person on there. They never show the dumb comments the
White person makes.
(*Female, 28*)

I hate when people make assumptions or say something derogatory about
ethnic groups especially African Americans…generalizations. Oh, they're
always late or they don't do this or they don't believe in this or….It's
interesting when a group of us are together, I think people get nervous.
You can see like we'll go to the golf course and people [will] say well it's
four Black men in the parking lot getting out of the same car. Yeah well,
we drove together.
(*Male, 51*)

4.4 In-Group Sabotaging Behaviors

In an effort to adjust to society and gain acceptance, African Americans began to

engage in in-group sabotaging behaviors that over time have had an increasingly negative

effect on the group's cohesiveness. Examples of these behaviors include such actions as

reinforcing negative racial stereotypes, individualistic behaviors, rejection by other African

Americans for "acting White," or trying to achieve or improve themselves, and forgetting

their heritage and racial history. The pursuit of acceptance was often accompanied by a quest

for validation, causing many to suppress their true feelings.

Some Civil Rights era cohort participants believed that many of the more affluent

took advantage of desegregation by fleeing African American communities. This pattern of

distancing themselves from their former communities occurred as African Americans gained

both freedom of mobility and economic security. This trend of community abandonment is often coupled with a decrease in racial solidarity and communal ties.

> Let's say before we as Blacks had "freedom to taste the other side" or get influenced by the other side, and by the other side I mean integration, I think we were more of a unified…unified in our battles and our fights for what we thought was right. But then those who may have gotten a little further ahead than others sort of used that against us even more so than White people did.
> (*Male, 61*)

> I think when integration happened a lot of this community broke down a little bit because people were moving out of the geographical community into the integrated areas.
> (*Male, 51*)

In addition to the physical distance described above, participants from both cohorts held that those who leave the African American community also tend to disassociate themselves from those who remain. They believe they do this because (1) they are ashamed to admit where they came from once they are in integrated environments or (2) once they have "made it out," they simply prefer to erase their "unforgotten memories." Moreover, participants suggested that this behavior conveys the message to those who remain that there is something to be ashamed of. This pattern creates feelings of resentment and hostility and further decreases racial solidarity among African Americans.

> Divide and conquer, Black on Black not Black and White. It's mostly with the men. The Black men they separate themselves and then they work against each other. Like you may have a man that's doing very well in life, and he just leaves everybody. He doesn't help anyone. He doesn't pull anyone on that train with him to help them go forward because the further he goes the further apart they grow from those people…you know the people he originated from. You know how they say you forget where you came from? And it's really easy because once you get so far in the world, or whatever you're doing, the ladder or whatever you're doing, it's frowned upon to be with the people that helped you.
> (*Female, 28*)

Some people get a little position of power, a white-collar job or something, and they forget they're Black you know. Some people [are] not even up there in that caliber and they still down here and they still don't like Black folks.
(*Male, 26*)

Well you know we've been fortunate enough to get a high-paying job. We live in a $500,000 house and drive a Hummer and everything is going along just fine. Until that company decides that ok, we're going to reorganize. We're going to restructure. We don't need you anymore. And you have not taken the time to maintain those ties from whence you left. All of a sudden you done gone to the big house and forgot all about the field n**** and now the field n**** said forget you because you got up there, you didn't even pass me…you got to the big house…you didn't even pass me the heal of the bread much less a slice of the bread, so now you're on your own. And I think we forget. We get caught up in that corporate White world and we just think because we've made it there that we are accepted there. We are a token in my opinion.
(*Female, 60*)

Having lived during a period in which African American businesses thrived, participants from the Civil Rights era cohort suggested that African Americans poorly support modern-day communities. They contended that this support is imperative to the future success of revitalizing African American communities, and moreover, that many African Americans have ceased supporting their own people.

We won't even keep our own money in our own community. That's the biggest yard stick of all. You know if you go right downtown to the part of Detroit where the Chinese people live the Chinese dollar circulates thirty-three times in that community before it leaves. White people don't like them because they don't patronize White folks' banks. They are their own banks. We can't keep a hot dollar in our pocket past Friday before we're on the other side of Eight Mile Road spending it with the White folks. We won't keep our money in our neighborhoods.   We take it to the other side of Eight Mile Road. Other people's ice is colder. So if you don't support your own, and that's the greatest history [lesson] that other ethnic groups have learned, charity begins at home. Your strength comes from supporting yourself not what somebody else will do.   I think that's...what do they call it? What's the name of that? Let us make a slave mentality…Willie Lynch Syndrome. We're still suffering from plantation psychosis.
(*Male, 56*)

See Black people don't have too many businesses and if you open up a business, Black man won't even want to come to you to buy your product. They'd rather go to the White man and get what they need and you may have the same thing they want, but they won't try to help you. They'd rather go to the White man and get what they want or the Arabs or go someplace like that.
(*Male, 68*)

Participants from both cohorts acknowledged the presence of derogatory behaviors among African Americans. Some of these behaviors were described as the result of the Willie Lynch Syndrome, an age-old theory that asserts that African Americans have been psychologically programmed to perpetuate intra-group dissension. Other participants described these behaviors using the metaphor *crabs in a barrel* and claimed that African Americans no longer act in a manner that is universally supportive.   The behaviors described here are in stark contrast to those described in the traditional African American communities.

I think that's another problem with Black people, they don't unite and achieve success. They knock each other. They're in competition with each other instead of trying to help each other. That's another thing that when you said embarrassing or shames me, that's definitely another thing. I don't think Black people unite when they should, you know to be successful and help each other to be successful.
(*Female, 28*)

We help each other to a certain extent, but then they'll go around town and talk about it. Well I did such and such and such a thing for such and such a person. What's the point of helping a person if you have to go tell everybody that you did it? You do that from your heart and hold your mouth.
(*Male, 70*)

We forget how we got it. I've been saying this over and over, when we get in a position of power we forget from whence we come. Or if we don't forget, we don't take the time to nurture somebody else along so that they can have that same achievement or chance at achievement that you did.
(*Female, 60*)

That's the worst type of it…because it's an internalized form of racism. That you think of a fellow African American as not as meriting of attention or certain things.
(*Male, 51*)

But one thing I can see, like if they get into a position where they are achieving something, they're getting to where they're like I've got it, you get it the best way you can. They're not reaching out to help someone else to climb. There's one little old saying that they're like…when one starts climbing up they'll reach down and pull them down…crabs in a barrel.
(*Female, 83*)

Several participants from both cohorts contended that African Americans have failed to support each other in a variety of ways. They attributed this behavior to individualistic values, such as many African Americans' believing that because it was necessary for them to struggle in order to achieve, everyone else should have to struggle as well. This is just one example of the gradual decline of racial solidarity. No longer do the majority of African

Americans realize the value in helping others, but rather, they allow others to struggle

unnecessarily even when they are in a position to offer assistance.

> A lot of Black people don't even think about helping people, all they
> concerned about is helping they self. They don't think about going out
> helping nobody else. I know they don't because I know too many of them
> who don't. [They say] naw man, they got to get it just like I got mine.
> (*Male, 68*)

> Well most of us, like I said, are just caught up in our own little thing.
> Most of us are not interested in the positive things in life and they're not
> interested in helping each other.
> (*Female, 18*)

> I don't know why they don't. I think a lot of times out of fear of losing
> the position that they have and sometimes it's just that they've forgotten
> from whence they came. Forget their roots. I know back in the olden
> days, if you want to call it that, we looked out for each other and if one
> had the other one had. And now I see it that, you get over here in a
> neighborhood say like I have and you look down on the people who are
> over here struggling to make ends meet. There's no consideration for
> them or their well-being because I got mine, and by my own bootstraps I
> drug myself up through this.
> (*Male, 61*)

> Because it's so hard for Black people in lower income families to get
> ahead that once they get something they don't want to share. They don't
> want to help somebody else get it. Because they probably figure that it
> will take away from what they got or because it was so hard for them to
> get it. So they're like uh huh [no] you gotta get your own, I am not
> helping you.
> (*Female, 30*)

> Because it has been such a struggle for us to do it and they think
> everybody else should do it. I know one friend of mine he always
> preaches lift yourself up by your bootstraps. I said suppose you're coming
> along and you don't have any bootstraps? Don't you think this other
> person should help you and help lift you up?
> (*Female, 83*)

Participants from both cohorts seemed appalled over the deleterious messages that are

being transmitted through rap music and rap videos and their far-reaching effects on today's

youth. Participants argued that the lyrics and videos send unproductive messages through their glorification of criminal activity, illegal means of acquiring enormous sums of money, and disrespectful attitudes toward women, which further engrain these attitudes as acceptable and popular.

Their concerns were rooted in the popularity of rap music and videos because so many youths wish to emulate entertainers, who have so easily become their role models and admired figures.

> It [rap videos] shows that Black men have to get fast money to get money. It shows that it's okay to disrespect Black women. [It] teaches women that it's okay to disrespect their selves for a guy for fast money. It's okay to walk around damn near naked for attention or to get the guy. As long as you can dance and take your clothes off you can get chosen. Or you don't even have to dance, just take your clothes off and you can get the guy with the money. They got the fast money to choose you, and that's not realistic. Not to me it's not. It's not good. It's teaching the young girls, I have a 12 year old daughter, and she thinks it's okay to dress half naked. Because that's what she sees on television all day. She thinks it's okay to shake her ass in front of whoever, because that's what she sees on TV all day. She thinks it's okay for men to get fast money. But she doesn't understand how you get that fast money. Everybody didn't get that fast money from rapping…they didn't start that way. It's just degrading women and it's also degrading men. It's just telling the men that it's okay to treat women like shit and telling the women it's okay to treat them like shit. Don't respect me. I don't need you to respect me. I just need your money. That's not good. That's not what I'm trying to teach my daughter today because it's not okay with me. I'm not anyone's bitch. I [am] not going to run around shaking my butt and wearing tight, next to nothing, to get some guy's attention because I really don't want that attention.
> (*Female, 30*)
>
> Or even the rappers and these videos for God's sakes. It's just a lot that a lot of our ancestors worked for and I think it's been taken out of context you know. For one like the videos with those women. I think it's very distasteful. They leave nothing for the imagination, for anybody …everything is off.
> (*Male, 30*)

I get home it's about midnight and seeing 7-12 year olds out there playing basketball or with that loud music. And the rap music calling one another "Bs," you know, that's just not acceptable.
(*Female, 51*)

I'm ashamed of the way that I see African American males disrespect African American females in terms of being sex objects in a lot of the videos and in a lot of the media in terms of entertainment.
(*Male, 52*)

Our music. Back your boom boom…I'm going to… I don't know how old you are, but you do know how to act, right? Why do you want to hear it? What about that four or five year old that's learning that before they're learning their alphabet? Now which one is more amusing to them and what is it doing to their minds? We allow it.
(*Female, 64*)

4.5 Emergence of the New African American Community – The "Ghetto"

The consequences of the exodus of the more affluent residents and positive role models, the disintegration of the common value system, and the absence of value reinforcement from the traditional African American community brought about the emergence of a new, poor African American community, popularly referred to as the *ghetto*.

Although other racial and ethnic groups, upon their arrival in America, made their homes in ghettos, they often did not reside there for very long. One major contribution to the longevity of African Americans in ghettos has been their exclusion from adequate employment and abject poverty (Massey and Denton 1993).

These communities tend to have very limited resources and be inundated with a variety of social problems, such as experiencing higher rates of criminal activity, welfare dependency, juvenile delinquency, high-school dropouts, illiteracy, and social pressures that spawn increased levels of hostility (Weisbrot 1991). Over half of the participants in the post-Civil Rights era cohort were raised in this environment.

They wasn't working…they had aid. I don't care, you go to any ghetto…ghetto people have fun…they do…because they make the best of what they have. And then they get in that situation where it's ok, I'm comfortable with this lifestyle and then they stay in that situation. That's what I think and that's where I hung out at. They get their quick money if they want some money. It's ways to get their little quick money…they do that. It's weird and it's crazy, but that's how life goes.
(*Female, 28*)

Some Black people [think] OK, I only get $400 a month from the government, I'm ghetto. You ain't ghetto, you make yourself ghetto. Ghetto is a word to where we used to live. Now they acting like it's a lifestyle, it's a slang…no it's not an image. I don't want to be ghetto.
(*Male, 26*)

Some of the things that comes on TV that has little kids shooting each other, or little kids holding guns, little kids selling drugs, smoking drugs. All those kinds of things. For that matter you could go outside and see it on your porch.
(*Female, 18*)

One very crucial social problem that plagues these communities is the overwhelming presence of poverty. Poverty in this setting is viewed not in terms of individual poverty but in terms of the shared values that tend to cultivate the impoverished conditions of so-called ghettos. Poverty greatly impacts how African Americans interact with each other as well as society while also affecting the value system that operates within these environments. Participants from the post-Civil Rights era cohort emphasized how poverty directly impacts individual life chances.

I think that with poverty comes a whole bunch of other things. Like babies out of wedlock, and crime, like all the glitz and glamour of Black people…what they see on TV. All that; it's all due to poverty. I think it's easier for a White person to get higher education than it is for a Black person to get higher education. For one, there are more Black people that can't afford education. They get so far and then that's it. That poverty group, after you get so far ok, it's time to drop out of school and then when you got that "so far" education it's hard to get a job. Not only because you don't have a great education, but because you're Black.
(*Female, 28*)

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Because you see so many, like the projects, so many African Americans in poverty, we don't have too much money. It's just like what can you do to make things better?
(*Male, 19*)

Like say for instance you grew up with your parents on welfare and everything and they never showed you anything. They stayed in the house all their life. They never worked or tried to get a job or anything or showed you anything positive and then that's all you knew. So when you grew up that's all you knew was the system so you went and got on welfare and you had all these kids and that's all you knew.
(*Female, 22*)

Participants also acknowledged the presence of yet another negative consequence of these poor communities, the pervasiveness of drugs and alcohol. These two problems stifle many African Americans' ability to ascend from poverty-stricken areas and improve their situations. Several of the participants from the post-Civil Rights era cohort described their experiences growing up in environments where drugs and alcohol were present. The negative influence of these environments not only impacted their childhoods, but also carried over into their adult lives. Participants indicated following the destructive patterns of their parents in the use of drugs and alcohol.

My parents were then, at the time using marijuana. My father at that time was using marijuana and crack. My mother never did it around us as kids, but, you know, we were her children, we knew what she did. She was like in her thirties staying with her mother, no college education, no high school education. I really just don't see that at all as being no good role model. And I really couldn't respect, or quite listen to, anything she had to say because of that. I also ended up following my mother's footsteps as I was using marijuana, I was drinking, I was running the streets with guys, basically getting in trouble with the law.
(*Female, 18*)

You were either a drug dealer or a drug user or caught up in it. The children had no choice and I was a child and had no choice. Both my parents were drug users…heavy drug users…crack addicts. My grandmother who I lived with in between parents, she was an alcoholic. So it wasn't nice. It was tough. With the addictive behaviors in my family it turned out that I was an addict too. But I didn't think I was an addict because I was just drinking alcohol which is legal, it's a legal drug…smoking weed…marijuana. I realized that if I keep doing what I'm doing I'm going to end up just like her [mother] and I didn't want that. (*Female, 30*)

It's just…the fast life of living. I see young kids now-a-days up here…they just…young kids…they're living that fast life to me. Young men and young women…they're living a fast life…they get into too much. They get into all that drugs and all that kind of stuff. But that's what I call they living that fast life. Because when I come up from down South, we didn't know nothing about all that stuff like that…smoking and all that stuff like that. My momma catch me with a cigarette in my mouth she'd kill me. But kids now sit in the house with their parents smoking a cigarette and drinking liquor. Some parents drink with the kids, go out with them and party with them and all that kind of stuff. See when I grew up…I didn't grow up like that. (*Male, 68*)

Civil rights era cohort participants shared their concern for the incidence of criminal activity that is so common within these newer African American communities. Extremely poor economic and social conditions have been determined to increase rates of crime. Therefore, in the African American community where a disproportionate level of poverty and other social ills reside, crime proliferates (Blau and Blau 1982). Civil rights era cohort participants expressed disappointment in observing those in the younger generation who perceive crime as their only option for meeting their needs. Additionally, they expressed even greater disappointment when those committing crimes fail to consider or even realize that there are alternatives to criminal activity.

When we see the violence that takes place it's usually against our own race. (*Male, 61*)

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They don't see the importance of yeah, it's going to be a little hard, but I don't
have to rob and steal. I may not get the celebrity status I may not have this
big giant house. But when I say see the light, but if you do it and do it
honestly that to me that's Black pride. It's not Black pride when you're going
to kill somebody to get it. That's not pride. It's like what I can get for
nothing and it continues on.
(*Female, 58*)

I got a little nephew right now. I guess he's still locked up for breaking in
people's houses. That's wrong. You don't break in their house and take what
they got. Work…you young…young man…get out there and work. You can
get the same thing what they got if you get out there and work for it. So why
you going to go and break in my house and take what I got?
(*Male, 68*)

4.6 Adversities among the Younger Generation

Participants from both generational cohorts described problems they insist are mostly

prevalent within the younger generation of African Americans. They also expressed

discontent with the manner in which young people carry themselves, ranging from their attire

and disrespectful mannerisms to their profanity in public. Participants felt that these

behaviors were embarrassing and functioned to reinforce many of the negative racial

stereotypes about African Americans. They also believed that those in the younger

generation have misplaced values and priorities, which serves to keep them in a state of

constant struggle.

Again, participants from both cohorts bemoaned the deficiency in parental direction

among the younger generation. They attributed a portion of this to the absence of so many

fathers and the number of children being born to young mothers who themselves don't

possess the necessary knowledge or adequate parenting skills to successfully raise children.

Participants further asserted that those in the younger generation simply lack the ambition to

do what is necessary to improve their situation and often present themselves as if they are

entitled to certain benefits without putting forth any effort on their own. Furthermore,

participants expressed concern over the increasing number of high school drop-outs and the

failing education system in which many of the younger generation is being educated.

Both age cohorts expressed great disappointment in the values and priorities of many

African Americans in the younger generation that are the consequences of in-group

sabotaging behaviors and attempts to assimilate into an integrated society. Although

participants from both cohorts described these behaviors, the Civil Rights era cohort had

witnessed the shift in values. Their historical frame of reference allowed them to describe a

period in time when values were distinctly different from those exhibited today.

> One of the things that make me feel ashamed would be some people
> priorities. Not all, but some Black people's priorities. They kind of fit
> into a box…it's common. Like, you know, it's common. It's common for
> Black people to have big fancy cars, nice clothes, and live in the basement
> with their momma or live in a little house. It's common for them to just
> be into material things and not into things that are going to benefit them.
> Like, a house…a nice house…work on your house first…have good
> credit.
> (*Female, 28*)

> You know we need to change our values on a lot of things…our
> perspectives on a lot of things. It's like we've made heroes out of the
> wrong people. It's a shame that the glory has been misplaced with us as a
> people. Like my grandfather was my hero. He worked for B&O Railroad.
> That's where he died. He went to work everyday. My dad was my hero.
> Basketball players and all those cats that's getting that enormous money,
> they're not my heroes. And every kid can't be that. Every kid can't be a
> rapper. We have to change the things that we value.
> (*Male, 56*)

I don't know if it's our priorities have gotten…it's the same situation with priorities. Why is it that a poor family will not eat…have junk in the refrigerator, but they will go out and buy certain name brands to impress, but be starving their children. Why do we do that? Whereas you can find a middle-class family, middle-class Blacks, we can't afford that…we can't afford it. Gotta wait 'til momma get some money. You know…you gotta wait. It's more important to pay your bills, it's more important to get your groceries [and] to have a place to sleep.
(*Female, 58*)

As far as trying to get together and help the community out or something or help a school function out or something, we're very poor in that field. But let somebody roll up and say oh, we got the hook up on all the cars with the rims. You'd see people going to grab they mommas, they sisters, and the aunties that they don't like, to pile up in the car to go get it. But if you say, hey let's go up here and be a family, oh, I got something else to do…stuff like that.
(*Male, 26*)

In addition to the proliferation of misplaced values, participants from both generational cohorts also recognized the existence of a false sense of entitlement among many African Americans in the younger generation. They felt that their sense of entitlement had decreased their desire to work hard to achieve or accept responsibility for their situation. The gravity of their unrealistic expectations often leaves those in the younger generation bewildered when they are unable to capitalize on their assumptions for simple success.

I just don't get it. I think a lot of young people feel that things are owed to them. They owe me. They mistreated my race a long time ago so everything now is owed. We're supposed to have it. They look at it like instead of working to get it, we're just going to go out and get it because we deserve it. I've heard them say that.
(*Female, 58*)

I think the younger generation may think they are entitled to get certain things because of what society owes them or their status and I don't think that's true at all.
(*Male, 51*)

Don't get into the rut that somebody owes you something. That's another
thing. Nobody owes you anything. You just have to come in and
everybody has good days and bad days, ups and downs, that's just life.
But you have to keep getting up.
(*Female, 56*)

They think somebody is supposed to give something to them. They're
looking for a handout, not all of them, but some of them are. They don't
want to work.
(*Female, 22*)

Several of the participants from the Civil Rights era cohort speculated that these

feelings of entitlement among the younger generation originated from their parents' giving

them too much. They further asserted that the context in which the parents of today's youth

were able to acquire their possessions is missing; therefore, children are not acutely aware of

the amount of effort expended to acquire these luxuries.

They as parents spoiled them. They gave them everything they thought
they should have. It's like when people ask me don't you want your
children to have more than you have? Nope! I want them to get a job and
get whatever it is they think they want. I had to work to get what I have.
You know people don't appreciate anything when you give it to them.
They don't. It just makes poor hustlers out of them. Then they'll just be
looking for somebody to give them something all their life.
(*Male 56*)

I just got back from my 40th high school reunion. And we talked about
our kids and what we try to do to instill it in our kids. And over half of
them were saying that their kids don't appreciate it. And you know why?
This is my opinion, because we didn't have it, some of us are giving our
kids too much. You know, we give them too much because we didn't
have it. And they don't have that sense of thankfulness about it. It's like
well, why can't you?
(*Female, 58*)

Participants from both cohorts maintained that those in the younger generation have

been strongly influenced by the perception that they need to acquire hordes of material

possessions. Conspicuous consumption is a symbol of recognition, an indicator of success

attributable to a particular, artificially devised social status (Frazier 1962). Moreover,

participants believed the pursuit of these possessions has substantially impacted the value

system of the younger generation and caused them not only to become materialistic, but also

to engage in criminal activity as a means of obtaining these material possessions.

> That is the message they're [children] getting. Because when you look at
> these ball players, these athletes, you know they're crying about all these
> millions of dollars. Like T.O. for instance, crying about more money.
> And you have these kids looking up to these athletes as role models. And
> if they're sending that kind of message, well I need more money so I can
> get me a bigger mansion or more cars, that's not really a positive message
> to send. The materials things that they're taking it to a whole 'nother level.
> I mean if you go to see Donald Trump is he actually really driving all
> these cars and having millions of dollars around his neck and his wrists?
> No. The real world is not about what car you drive or what clothes you
> have. You know those $100 gym shoes, $200 gym shoes, or whatever it is
> to make you somebody. That's not what it's all about. You're making
> somebody else richer and you're jeopardizing your life because people are
> killing people for these material things.
> (*Male, 30*)

> So I stayed out there and ended up having to make money, because I
> couldn't get a job. I didn't have a car, so [I] just got into the streets like
> that. Hooked up with a couple of guys that I knew who was from the
> projects and we ran it like that. In the whole midst of all that, money was
> coming up short on the streets. My brother-in-law was coming back to
> [location] and I didn't want to stay there I wanted to come with him. He
> said well we got to get a bunch of money to go. And the only way I knew
> to get a bunch of money was to go rob a bank. So we did. I actually
> ended up doing a year and a half of time for that.
> (*Male, 26*)

> And the parents, that's where you have to start, with parents. Parents have
> to learn to realize that it's not so much of owning the latest model of car,
> and the biggest house. See that your child gets the proper education.
> (*Female, 83*)

Several participants from the Civil Rights era cohort believed that rather than working

to earn material possessions, those in the younger generation desire instant gratification.

They believed that without realizing the value of hard work, many in the younger generation

not only believe they are simply entitled to certain things but that these things should come quickly and with minimal effort. In addition, participants suggested those in the younger generation are unwilling to sacrifice or delay their gratification for longer-term benefits.

> It's about instant gratification. I want it now…more and more and more. But that's not how it is. Anything my parents had, or your parents had, they accumulated over a 20-30-year period. But only with the advent of this enormous sports money and entertainment money has that instant gratification become possible. Where you have absolutely nothing one day and be on your knuckles, and then the next day you're driving a Benz. (*Male, 56*)

> But I've seen people with the temptation of wanting to take the short benefit, the short reward like the "good-paying job" out of high school in exchange for investing in a college education. They want to get the job and work in the four-to-eight shift at Wendy's instead of getting involved in an after-school program to learn how to read or work on your writing skills to get into college. (*Male, 51*)

Many participants in the Civil Rights era cohort lamented the paucity of parental guidance of African American children. Their concerns arose from the lack of paternal presence and witnessing children being born to teenage mothers who fail to provide basic and necessary parental direction and appear to condone blatantly disrespectful behavior.

> But then you have to look at how they're being taught. They're not being taught. It's babies having babies. How are you going to be 13 and get pregnant? And then you're momma is 20. You're not being taught because she has to go do this or do that. (*Female, 51*)

> When I was coming up all the teacher had to do was teach us, not raise us…not teach us manners. But parents today just drop their kids off. No direction, and want everybody else to raise their children. (*Female, 56*)

There's been a failure, a breakdown. When I was in college I heard an astounding statistic, that 25% of the…Daniel Patrick Moynihan said that 25% of African American families do not have a male head of household and kids out of wedlock. That number is now 75%. That's amazing. So in 40 years of social programs they've actually…we've probably gone backwards.
(*Male, 51*)

From 12 on up having babies. They haven't done anything. How do they expect the children to do anything? You know the child is coming into the world with a deficit hanging over their head. That road they're going on, I don't know where it's leading to really. They're going to have to open their eyes.
(*Female, 83*)

Participants from both cohorts asserted that they found it disheartening to see African Americans in the younger generation further reinforcing negative racial stereotypes of African Americans in the minds of others. They commented that the continuation of these behaviors are not only embarrassing to them as African Americans, but also make it all the more difficult to overcome racial stereotypes.

This generation that's coming up now makes me ashamed. I am truly ashamed of some of the kids that I see, even some of the grown-ups. They have no pride in themselves from the way they dress, from the way they act, from the way they talk. It's nothing in there for me to be proud of them or for me to say they are my sisters and brothers.
(*Female, 83*)

I'm ashamed when I see African Americans actually exhibiting those stereotypes. Because I know I don't, well sometimes I can be lazy, but I'm not really loud and obnoxious and things like that. But when I see people who….but to a certain degree it's okay, it's fine, you know have some fun do whatever. But if it gets past a certain point where it's just really bothersome, then that's kind of where I feel ashamed.
(*Male, 19*)

Say me and you were having this interview in a restaurant, Olive Garden. We're hearing somebody's conversation about what happened on BET. They're sitting way over there. That's ghetto. They ain't got to be loud. You acting that way, why? Because this is how we act where I'm from. Naw…that's not how it is. We got to show them that just because you said this is us, that ain't us. Everybody ain't like that. If you ghetto and you proud cool, but learn how to utilize it. People are looking at you. You may not care about other people's opinion, but you have to now-a-days.
(*Male, 26*)

But we do it to ourselves. It's the way that some of us portray ourselves, the way we carry ourselves. The things that we do when you see us in the store or you're out and you hear a lot of profanity. I'm not saying the Whites don't do it, they do it too. But I'm talking about on a larger scale, you see us. Even I get embarrassed sometimes in the store and hearing all this cussing or seeing somebody beating their kids down.
(*Female, 56*)

When I see them with their pants hanging down their butt. When they are calling one another dog. When they steal from one another or kill one another. For what? Because you got on a chain or I like your vehicle. The jealousy and the envy. When I see a 13 or 10 or 11 year old on the corner selling dope.
(*Female, 51*)

Several participants from both cohorts believed those in the younger generation simply lack the ambition to overcome achievement barriers and frequently present these barriers as legitimate obstacles. Generally speaking, participants found it difficult to sympathize when they perceived African Americans as unwilling to help themselves improve their situation.

They want to be ghetto. They don't want to do nothing with their self.
(*Female, 22*)

I was going to help her [god-daughter] get financial aid because her mother was real sick and I knew she could have gotten it. So she's hiding from me because she would rather work for Burger King than to come in, and smart too, and go to school and be the best that she can be.
(*Female, 56*)

I'm just saying I don't have any solutions if I'm just going to sit around and complain I'm poor and uneducated. I can change that. I can get educated. But you can't go for the quick fix. You can't let someone offer you a $5,000-a-year job that's going to take all of your time working at Wal-Mart instead of letting you go to college. Now if they want to send you to college and let you work at Wal-Mart, that's a different story. But what we want now is this low-income wage earning, $6.00 job, minimum wage stuff. They don't want you to go to Washtenaw Community College or go to Eastern Michigan. They want you to go to Wal-Mart and work there from 4 to 12 and that's it.
(*Male, 51*)

Many participants from the Civil Rights era cohort insisted that too many in the younger generation fail to realize the value of education. They also acknowledged the failing education system that is doing a great disservice to many African American children, especially those in urban and low-income areas. Consequently, drop-out rates have increased, which further reduces the life chances of numerous African Americans and leaves them destined to face dismal futures.

I look at the school system now and I look at the kids that we're graduating and I'm thinking, will I ever be able to retire? Because the way many of them are being educated. They're not going to be equipped for anything.
(*Female, 60*)

We're not educating our children. We're allowing sub-standard education to happen. We have school systems, like a lot of urban school systems, where they get a lot of money to educate kids, but the scores on the tests are not good, the kids don't go to college, kids drop out. Then we allow the schools not to be maintained. You can go to an inner-city school, you'll see the school in disrepair, grounds not kept up, facilities run down.
(*Male, 51*)

And then these drop-outs of high school, how they expect for them to ever achieve anything is beyond me.
(*Female, 83*)

I didn't realize that there were so many people…like 23% of Detroit high schools are graduating. That's awful. We have a 77% drop out rate and the kids…most of the reasons for doing it aren't justifiable. They were bored. They didn't have nothing else to do. You ask them, why did you drop out of school? They weren't challenging me.
(*Male, 56*)

Participants from both cohorts identified two possible causal factors for the challenges facing those in the younger generation: the failure to realize their own potential and the fear of their own success. Participants contended that peer pressure, a simple lack of awareness of their capabilities, and discriminatory social forces all contribute to their lack of achievement.

We're scared to succeed in areas. We're not scared to have big ol' diamonds though. But we [are] scared to have a big ol' vocabulary. Have some books on the stand that we actually read. We're scared of all that because it's not "Black." We're scared of it.
(*Male, 25*)

Their brain. I'm just totally taken when you find it. We have more knowledge than we allow ourselves to know. But then they're afraid to be different.
(*Female, 64*)

I would like to see more of our young people think that they have a future. Many of them feel that, for whatever reason, there is no future for them. I don't know if it's that the educational system has failed them in some way, they just feel that there's something else out there, or the lure of things outside is more important than going to school.
(*Male, 52*)

Yet another dilemma participants believed exists among the younger generation is the perception that so many make excuses for their failures or lack of motivation rather than taking the necessary action to correct their problems. Some participants were extremely frustrated because yet again, as much as they would like to sympathize with other African

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Americans, it remains difficult because some of those who solicit support do not always put forth the necessary effort.

> Some do want to get ahead. I want to get ahead. Obviously you want to get ahead. Some do make excuses because it's easier to make an excuse. It's not easy for a Black person to get ahead. When I was drinking I didn't realize alcohol was the problem. I blamed everything else. Like the job was stressful or I couldn't cope. It was my dad's fault, my mom's fault. It was everybody else's fault but mine. But I don't feel that way today. (*Female, 30*)

> A lot of times I hear that people won't try because it's a White man's world and I can't handle this and I can't do this or I'm not going to do this. (*Female, 18*)

> Like society. Like the White man just trying to get me, trying to bring me down. And really, they're bringing their self down and they're not looking at their self for who they really are. (*Female, 22*)

4.7 Dispute of the Younger Generation

Both generational cohorts admitted to having been confronted with socially constructed achievement barriers. However, despite the post-Civil Rights era cohort's awareness of these present-day problems, they argue that their situation is a consequence of not only in-group sabotaging behaviors and their environment, but also a lack of personal direction and assistance.

Those from the post-Civil Rights era cohort contended that there is a real absence of direction that if present, would otherwise enable them to overcome many of the barriers they encounter. To them, their situation appears so overwhelming that they simply are unaware of how to approach the myriad of tasks necessary to succeed.

A lot of us are lost. Lost in that some don't know where to start off, what to do first. Don't know how to start off and don't know where to start off. That's what I mean by lost. Some just don't know when to draw the line, when to take the next step. When do you move on? When do you walk away? [They are] just lost with no one to look up to and no one to respond to. They need more motivation and inspiration things, or people or whatever, around them to inspire them [if] they decide that they really want to do something, they really want to help, or they really want to make life its best.
(*Female, 18*)

Be it other people saying well you need to make sure you set your goals low so you're not disappointed or you know, not having the teachers and other role models to say that you can do whatever it is that you want to do.
(*Male, 25*)

I think a lot of them do have the potential to go to school. But it's just they don't know anything or their ignorant of the situation. They don't know how to go to school. Like I worked work-study here [community college] and I got this one girl to go to school. She's 29 years old, she's a single mom, she has an 11-year-old child and she told me [name] you made me come to school. She was like nobody ever sat down and really explained the process, that's why I didn't go to school. She was scared because she didn't know how it worked, what the process was. I mean, I feel like that's not a good enough excuse, but it's messed up to know that the reason she didn't go to school was because she was scared or nobody took the time out to show her the ropes on how to do anything. So I think a lot of them are scared, ignorant of it, and they just make it the best way they know how.
(*Female, 22*)

Because once you've seen things for so long and then doing things one way for so long a lot of them are not willing to change. A lot of them don't want to change because that's all their mom and dad taught them and they don't know. I know somewhere deep inside you know that's wrong what you're doing. But because that's the way you live and your mom and dad said it's okay, that's the way you're going to continue to live.
(*Female, 18*)

Several participants from the post-Civil Rights era cohort commented on the

difficulty they had encountered when attempting to overcome achievement barriers in life.

They felt that their attempts to overcome these barriers often appeared futile and suggested that even their best efforts would be to no avail.

> I got tickets 'cause my license wasn't up to par. But look what I was doing. I was trying to go make money the honest way and they still got to smack you around. But you go out here on these streets, you get smacked around. You go into this corporate world, you still get smacked around. We can't win for losing unless we build our own stuff. But yeah, that's going to always go on.
> (*Male, 26*)

> When I lived in the projects I always had a fairy tale dream that you see on television. But when you're in it, it's not easy to believe that you can get out of that. I always had the desire to want more or whatever, but when you're in the midst of gangs and drugs and violence and abuse on a consistent basis you lose focus or you lose the motivation. Because you're so busy…I was so busy trying to survive. Where am I going to get my next meal? Where am I going to sleep? It was very hard to focus on schoolwork.
> (*Female, 30*)

> Just to trying to make it. To try to make it in your neighborhood, try to make it through schooling, trying to make it in the workforce, and really to try to make it in a standard relationship now-a-days, you got to add that. Seems like we got a wall in front of us on everything. Some stop, some dig through, some climb, some try to walk around.
> (*Male, 26*)

Those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort also argued that many of the racial stereotypes that have been accepted by society exacerbate their ability to overcome obstacles. Some participants claimed that even before they are given the opportunity to prove themselves, society has already determined their fate. Comments from some post-Civil Rights era cohort participants highlighted how knowing stereotypes exist caused them to operate in such a manner as to anticipate being discriminated against and thereby made them apprehensive about pursing certain goals.

It's just like the way that the stereotypes are set up. I think there are a lot of traps that are put out there for us. I kind of feel special that I have actually made it to where I have and it's something that I wear everyday. I think it's sad because [when] they have very little contact with Black people, either be it a positive or negative thing, then that's the brush they paint everybody with. So I think that positives and negatives can be perpetuated by just that one interaction with one African American person. (*Male, 25*)

I feel that as a young Black man I have to work harder than the next person you know. Because they're always stereotyping African American men. Everybody is a drug dealer, everybody is a thief, a criminal. So you have to kind of prove yourself up front before you can go any further past the door.
(*Male, 30*)

Because of the stereotype…Black guy. I'm yellow than a mug too. I'm not even that dark. With a hat on, he's a thug. A bandana [on], oh he's trying to be a gangster. So as you come around somebody, they still do it to this day, clutching purses. Why are you clutching your purse? I don't want your purse. See what I'm saying? It's just that profile. Or you walk in and you got a nice suit on, trying to go get me a nice job. Got my afro picked out, as soon as you sit down and say one word. Oh, no, we don't want you. Why? You're not talking intelligent enough. Stereotyping already. Give me a chance first. Walgreen's…I can go in there three different days, three different looks, and get treated three different ways. Maybe by the same person or maybe by three different people. I don't want you to point the finger and know who I am. I want you to sit down and listen to me and then know who I am. Don't look at me...yeah, I know what he's about, because you don't.
(*Male, 26*)

People grabbing their purse when I walk past them because they noticed there was a person there. But when they looked and noticed me (and I don't look like a thief, whatever a thief looks like), they ended up grabbing their purse. Some people will think that if one Black person does something all of them do it. But that's not true, that's just ignorant to the fact that you can't judge a race of people by one person's idioticies [*sic*]. It's just not realistic.
(*Female, 30*)

Participants from both cohorts shared experiences of being rejected by other African

Americans for what was perceived as "acting White" or trying to improve themselves. In the

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context described by the participants, "acting White" is often in reference to a style of dress, use of a certain vernacular, taking an interest in a particular musical genre, or any behavior that is not well represented within their realm of familiarity.

> Tried to say I was a White boy or I'm a sell-out or I'm this…my Black friends. I'm acting White because I listen to rock and roll or I'm acting White because today I want to put on a button-up shirt while we go out and look nice. Or you know what man, I don't want to go eat at Popeye's. Let's go somewhere else. Let's go to J. Alexander's or something. That's too White. Why you want to hang with the White people? Look at their atmosphere dog, it's nice. I didn't want to go with them. They couldn't figure it out. Like you're not supposed to do that. You're Black, you don't act like that. It's not a certain way to act. People act the way they want to act.
> (*Male, 26*)

> What you see on TV. Dealing the drugs and things like that and that was never me. And so I was always branded as trying to be White and I was kind of ostracized from some of the Black community, if you will, at my high school for that reason. Because it [being smart] wasn't cool. It wasn't viewed as cool and I got tired of people telling me I'm too busy trying to act White. Well it was more of an issue growing up. Once I got out of that particular environment I realized that intelligence was a good thing and being considered stupid was not the best way to go about doing things. Of course I still get things like…oh, you're stuffy. Why? Because you can actually understand what I'm saying?
> (*Male, 25*)

> I lived that part of it. With my mother being as fair and blue-eyed as she was, and educated too, she caught a lot of flack. She thinks she knows so much and she thinks this and even to the point of saying she don't like little Black kids to come and play with hers. All of that is discrimination. It might take different routes, but it's discrimination. And then they didn't like the way that we talked. They said oh, she's trying to talk proper.
> (*Female, 83*)

Like I tried to talk to several people after I went to Job Corps and came back. A lot of them didn't want to talk to me anymore. A lot of them didn't want to be friends with me anymore. That was fine because I wasn't moving to look in the past. A lot of them just said, oh you changed or you did this and what I did was simply found my way. I wasn't lost anymore. And I was trying to explain that to them and they were just not trying to hear it. No one was trying to hear it. They didn't care to hear it. They were not happy that I moved on. They were like Job Corps changed you, you're not the same ole [name] anymore or you're not yourself, and you don't have the same attitude you used to have. You know anything that I did negative that I pretty much changed [to] positive, now they were very upset about.
(*Female, 18*)

4.8 How African Americans Can Use Racial Solidarity to Improve their Situation

Participants from both generational cohorts believed African Americans should unite in order to focus on collective goals and determine solutions to the many problems confronting the race. Participants almost universally acknowledged that African Americans will not arrive at this place easily but nonetheless believed there were various ways in which African Americans could use racial solidarity to improve their situation.

Participants from both cohorts expressed the need for African Americans to come together and use their solidarity for the betterment of the race.

I think we all still got the same goal…is to be a better race. Be strong, be as one. I think that's what we all have in common. I think it would accomplish a lot with you being as one instead of trying to fight the enemy individually because you're not going to make it. Once you become as one, then you can see a lot of progress.
(*Male, 30*)

Come together on some type of common ground and say look, haven't we struggled enough? Look at our ancestors, look back over history, look at all that God has brought us through. Isn't it enough killing, hating, you know. Somebody do something.
(*Female, 51*)

Stick together, that's what they got to do…they got to stick together. If the Black people don't stick together ain't no telling what might happen. But we got to stick together.
(*Male, 68*)

Another strategy participants from both generational cohorts suggested was the use of voting as a means of improving the social situation of African Americans. Many believed that voting could be used not only as resource for improvement, but also as a method to heighten African Americans' awareness of activities in, and the condition of, their communities. Some participants also suggested that African Americans become more familiar with the overall political process. These suggestions implied that many African Americans are probably not as aware as they should be of how political decisions directly impact them and their communities.

Vote. Try to make sure that we acquire some type of power through the government and just be more represented in all facets of society. Be it professional, be it government, whatever it may be. Just have some form of leadership in order to be beacons and lightning rods for things to change.
(*Male, 25*)

Number one they need to get out and vote. They need to find out what's going on in their community.
(*Female, 56*)

I think that they should be more aware of politics, like when to vote, the different parties and stuff. I think that's why a lot of us don't vote because they don't understand how the political system works. So therefore, they're ignorant of it so why go vote.
(*Female, 22*)

I think we should get more involved in the political process. I think there is definitely a power of the ballot.
(*Male, 52*)

Another way in which participants believed racial solidarity could be used to improve the situation of African Americans is through the pooling of economic resources. Participants expressed their belief that this action would allow African Americans to gain social leverage by influencing the economy. Participants also favored this approach, insisting that African Americans possess a sizeable amount of buying power. They contended that African Americans should begin to take a more pragmatic approach to their spending and acknowledged that although African Americans expend millions of dollars annually, they fail to pool these resources to use toward the benefit of the racial group.

> Keep their money in the community. Support one another, and develop an economic base. For economic strength if no other reason…buying power. We control something like three billion dollars in economic strength every year.
> (*Male, 56*)

> I think we need to pool our resources in order to make advancements. I have conversations lots of times with my peers and when I look at the kind of money that goes through the hands of us as Blacks in this country, but we fail to pool that money to do what we need to do.
> (*Male, 61*)

> The next area I think we could be united in is economically. We got to understand the buying power that we have.
> (*Male, 51*)

Finally, participants from the Civil Rights era cohort believed more African Americans should attain an education to increase their ability to compete in the job market. Participants also asserted that with more education, African Americans would be better equipped to contribute to the improvement of their communities. Education in this context is not attained for the sole purpose of personal economic gains but also as a vehicle for acquiring knowledge to share with others on how they too can improve their situation.

I think we should also be more active in making sure that more African Americans are educated. I think the better educated those in your community are the more responsive they are to the needs of their own community and being able to do something to effect those changes in their community.
(*Male, 52*)

To me, education is the first thing. That's the key. If you don't have an education, you just end up…if you're honest, you're going to end up at a fast-food place. You'll end up in a minimum-wage-paying job that is not going to be enough for an apartment or whatever. The ones who don't want to sacrifice and get two jobs or whatever they turn to crime. So the key to improvement for us as a race is we've got to get that education.
(*Female, 58*)

I guess she [his cousin] had experienced getting out of the sharecropping and working in the fields and she felt that education was the way that we could help one another better than we could if we did not have one.
(*Male, 61*)

4.9 Perspectives on Racial Solidarity

As discussed, the participants from the Civil Rights era cohort expressed how they believed racial solidarity could improve the social condition of African Americans. They realized that racial solidarity, when cultivated through communal sharing, assisting neighbors with raising their children, taking care of the sick, supporting the grieving, and having positive role models within the community can positively impact their communities.

It's more along the lines of sticking up for one another. Being there to have each other's back and despite whatever situations may be presented to them. You know, you all come together and because there are more of you then you function more of a solid unit and accomplish more because of it.
(*Male, 25*)

It takes more than one person to raise a village so you need someone to help lift you up. Because when he helps lift me up, I'm going to help lift up somebody else and then somebody else is going to help. And it's just going to keep going down as a chain reaction. I think that's most important as a race that we stay as one to keep helping one another and not keep kicking each other down.
(*Male, 30*)

[It's] about coming together. It's about helping one another. Racial solidarity, it's about being there.
(*Female, 51*)

Coming together for the right cause. For education wise, teach wise, work wise, neighborhood wise, everything and that would mean solidarity. To me it would seem like a union, like it would be bound together and couldn't be broken.
(*Female, 56*)

One component of racial solidarity that emerged from the interviews with the Civil Rights era cohort was the ability to realize that achievements are not made individually but by standing on the shoulders of those who have laid the foundation for others to build upon. It was through this solidarity that families survived during a socially volatile era and that many of the battles toward achieving racial equality were won.

We're good ones for being braggers about I did it…I did it. But the bottom line is you didn't do it. Somebody had to pave the way. Because we're not sitting on the bus now being told to give up our seat. Rosa Parks sparked that. So when we step up on the bus, we can sit anywhere we want to sit. We can't afford to not remember our past, nor can we afford to think that we did it all by ourselves, because we haven't done anything.
(*Female 60*)

The historians will give you the impression that Blacks never did anything before the 50s and 60s and that's not true. Blacks have been activists since the turn of the century and even before. The Pan African Congress and all that kind of stuff, Marcus Garvey [and] all those cats. They been down with the struggle.
(*Male, 56*)

You asked me and I'm trying to tell you…you can walk into any restaurant you want. Now, you can go where you want to go. Somebody bother you, you pick up the phone. Do you understand what happened and how people had to live in order for you to get that freedom? (*Female, 64*)

We had the opportunity to see and experience those things first hand. I would say it was very important. Because I think it changes your whole perspective on life. Just based on those kind of experiences and you know where we've come from as a people and the struggles we've gone through and how that struggle has changed from that time up until now. (*Male, 52*)

I guess it made me aware of where they had come from and not to take what I had going for me for granted. Because there were people that struggled for me to get to where I am. So no, I didn't take…I appreciate having known their struggle and how they got to where they were. (*Female, 51*)

Just as both generational cohorts were able to identify the specific, different contextual factors of racial solidarity, they were also able to identify barriers to racial solidarity. Many of their views toward African American racial solidarity were pessimistic, and the critical themes that emerged as explanations for these sentiments comprised primarily the prevalence of individualism, materialism, lack of intra-racial group assistance and leadership, and in-group sabotaging behaviors (e.g., *crabs in a barrel*) among African Americans. Participants spoke of these concepts as specific and direct barriers that have brought African Americans to a place where racial solidarity is nonexistent.

It doesn't exist. That's a figment of somebody's imagination. It's non-existent. That doesn't exist for us…not at this point and it hasn't. But we've become very apathetic as a people too. As long as it ain't happening to me. Crabs in the barrel mentality. We all have that in common. We all share that. That's what we have. We can't stand to see Joe or Suzy do well. We'll reach up and pull him back in the barrel. (*Male, 56*)

I don't think that we're as united as we should be. Because I think based on the Civil Rights Movement, to some degree, a lot of African American people are looking for one leader. And I don't think that we can look for one leader to achieve the things that we need to do in many cases. I think that we as individuals need to be first of all leaders in our own households. In our own communities and then I think to build from there. But to look for one particular person to save us, it's not going to happen. So I think it starts at home.
(*Male, 52*)

To a great degree when we make it we do not, now as we did in the past, try to help the other ones to achieve the level of happiness or success that we have.
(*Male 61*)

It's a me generation. What's in it for me?
(*Male 51*)

It would take a lot to unite us because I don't see us having the leadership. I don't see any visionary person that would unite us because a lot of people are seeking their own self-interest.
(*Female, 51*)

4.9.1 Civil Rights Era Cohort Perspectives

Those in the Civil Rights era cohort expressed a stronger sense of racial solidarity than did the post-Civil Rights era cohort. The majority of the participants from the Civil Rights era cohort were raised during legalized segregation, which presented strict limitations on the rights and freedoms of African Americans. Participants described how the segregated environments also created a climate ripe with overt discrimination in which African Americans very cognizant of the behaviors of Whites toward African Americans. They also described how African Americans were aware that they were expected to "know their place" in these same environments. Because of these limitations, those in this cohort experienced a strong family support system and close ties to family and fictive kin. They also experienced a resilient community network that consisted of a common value system, patterns of steady

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interdependent cooperation, strong neighborhood parenting, positive role modeling, a high regard for education, and pride in the accomplishments of other African Americans.

These factors combined offered a fertile environment for racial solidarity. Having experienced these elements, the Civil Rights era cohort was focused on problems among the younger generation and the impact externally imposed beliefs had on stimulating group-sabotaging behaviors among African Americans.

4.9.2 Post-Civil Rights Era Cohort Perspectives

Those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort expressed racial solidarity to a lesser degree than did those in the Civil Rights era cohort. The participants in this cohort were raised during the desegregation period and therefore were unfamiliar with the racially homogeneous neighborhoods and the traditions therein. Also, many African Americans had already begun to distance themselves from their old communities and disassociate with other African Americans. Rather than seeing African Americans supporting each other, as did the Civil Rights era cohort, this group saw more nonhelping behaviors that emerged through individualistic and materialistic behaviors. Finally, the post-Civil Rights era cohort was also much more conscious of the influential power of the media to further engrain racial stereotypes of African Americans in American society.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusions

Many of the Civil Rights era cohort participants shared the common experiences of racial and value homogeneity within the traditional African American community. They described how they retreated to these social havens as a means of escaping the hostility of racial oppression. This familiar environment consisted of mutual values, similar lifestyles, and sharing of personal possessions. The oppressive and discriminatory social encounters they experienced caused many to share a common adversary (i.e., oppression by dominant society), a phenomenon which was also found to give rise to racial solidarity among South African natives and African Americans (Brown 1931).

The Civil Rights era cohort participants described how they relied heavily on community interdependence to counter social subjugation. Their negative social experiences also appeared to have caused many to use the weapon of racial pride to combat oppression, as participants expressed a great deal of pride when a member of their family, community, or race was able to triumph over barriers and achieve success according to social standards. Some studies have indicated that the achievements of members of the race were overemphasized in an effort to counter claims of racial inferiority (Brown 1931; Ferguson 1938).

Once the barrier of segregation was dismantled and African Americans were no longer confined to racially homogeneous communities, participants witnessed the integration of African Americans into racially mixed areas. Increased social mobility created a substantial spatial distance, and the collective focus of African Americans appeared to have

been weakened. Consequently, many believed that African Americans also abandoned the mores of their old communities. Previous research by Bledsoe et al. (1995) suggested that racial solidarity is stronger in communities with only African American residents in comparison to racially mixed neighborhoods.

As older participants witnessed African American communities abandoned and the number of positive role models, communal support, and economic resources decreased, they also experienced them becoming increasingly susceptible to the influx of social problems. In comparing the neighborhood descriptions of the two generational cohorts, it appears that many African American communities gradually transitioned from social havens into inescapable webs of poverty, drugs and alcohol, and criminal activity. The presence of these factors made African American communities even more residentially undesirable.

Furthermore, the dissolution of racial solidarity appears to have occurred as many African Americans pursued the acceptance of mainstream society. Comments made by the participants suggest that African Americans found it difficult to oscillate between their old and new environments, each containing its own unique set of behavior patterns, values, and expectations. This transition can be best explained by the notion of assimilation, a process in which one group (in this case, African Americans) takes on the cultural traits of a larger group (Whites).

This study also explored the extent to which African Americans possess racial solidarity. The interviews revealed that participants, especially those in the post-Civil Rights era cohort, currently exhibit racial solidarity very minimally. The paucity of racial solidarity among African Americans to a large extent seems to be attributed to a shift from a collective viewpoint to one that is much more individualistic.

As emerged through the interviews with the Civil Rights Era cohort, racial solidarity appears to have been most prevalent when African Americans constructed their self-concept within a framework that included an acute awareness of the expectations, responsibilities, and privileges that were associated with group membership. This ideal is closely linked to patterns of behavior identified by Brown (1931), who found that African Americans often viewed any attack on the race personally, perceived degrading remarks about an individual within the race as being directed toward all members of the group, and maintained resentment toward individuals who made derogatory remarks about the race.

Racial solidarity among African Americans has also been affected through the proliferation of the portrayal of negative racial stereotypes in the media, the lack of positive role models, and ongoing intra-group dissension. These factors appear to have contributed to the decline in racial solidarity in that African Americans experience fewer in-group interactions and that the in-group perception has shifted from what was once described as a sense of pride to a sense of shame and embarrassment.

Another factor contributing to the scarcity of racial solidarity is the lack of a strong racial consciousness, which Brown (1935) and Ferguson (1938) found to be typically displayed through measures of loyalty and identification. The data from this study suggest that African Americans no longer possess the degree of loyalty described by the Civil Rights era cohort as being present during the time when they were coming of age. They suggested that rather than exhibiting loyalty to one another, African Americans often knowingly impede upon each other's success or simply ignore the needs of others. The experiences of the post-Civil Rights era cohort with the poor showing of loyalty could be the result of the lack of support they receive from other African Americans as this group faces the numerous

challenges afflicting their generation. Participants from the post-Civil Rights era cohort painted a painful portrait of the future of their generation in which the prospects for upward mobility were minimal at best. They delineated the countless barriers they face with feelings of powerlessness and, sometimes, the inability to prevail.

Although participants, almost universally, maintained an awareness of racial discrimination, they acknowledged that discrimination had shifted from overt to covert, making discriminatory acts almost invisible and all the more difficult to definitively recognize. In addition, some contended that as discrimination has become less identifiable, African Americans believe there is less of a need for racial solidarity. Participants believed an even more influential form of discrimination that plagues African Americans is the presence of intra-group discrimination. Situations in which group members treat each other poorly and harbor internal prejudices create feelings of distrust and resentment instead of loyalty and a willingness to sacrifice for one another. This type of discrimination makes achieving racial solidarity among African Americans virtually impossible.

The findings of this study closely parallel those from previous research that has found racial solidarity to be the outcome of a common racial consciousness, an awareness of racial identity and discrimination, sacrifice [to achieve social action], and a sense of pride and loyalty to the group (Brown 1931; Ferguson 1938; Turner 1967). This study also offers evidence of several of the factors contributing to the fragmentation of African Americans as a group: spatial distance, variation in education level, and social class (Blackwell 1985; Bledsoe et al. 1995; Boykin and Toms 1985; McDermott 2001). These factors provide a descriptive model for the deterioration of racial solidarity among African Americans.

5.2 Implications for Future Research

Future studies might extend the significance of these findings by exploring how best to develop a sense of racial solidarity among African Americans and replace individualistic and materialistic behaviors with altruistic and interdependence behaviors in which African Americans extend not only themselves, but also their resources, to other African Americans. Moreover, future studies may also explore how African Americans can recapture their ability to bestow the racial messages of respect, pride, and cultural heritage that the older participants in this study recalled with a sense of fondness. Finally, future research might also focus on how African Americans can begin to foster more of a sense of communality and realize that despite individual differences, such as level of education, economic status, and physical location, they remain connected, if even in a very small sense, to the struggles of all African Americans.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

African Americans' Perspectives on Racial Solidarity among Interview Questions
General questions:
1. Tell me about yourself (childhood, i.e., parental influences, family, school, social activities, & neighborhood they grew up in, school environment).
2. Tell me about your parents (what type of jobs they had, what type of values they taught or role-modeled).

Questions related to racial loyalty:
3. What are the most important things you were taught (or learned) about what it meant to be an African American? Who taught or how did you learn these things?
4. Did your parents (or other adults) ever discuss issues facing African Americans? Give examples and context.
5. Looking back, do you think it was important for them to talk to you about these things?

Questions related to racial pride:
6. Would you please describe what it means to you to be an African American?
7. Do you think it makes a difference to others that you are an African American? If so can you tell me in what ways you believe it makes a difference?
8. What are some things about African Americans that make you feel proud?
9. What are some things about African Americans that make you feel ashamed?

Questions related to racial consciousness:
10. Do you think either the positive or negative behaviors of a single African American has any impact on how non-African Americans perceive African Americans? How? Why?
11. As a group, to what extent do you believe African Americans are united, in terms of achieving group progress? *If not very much, what do you think has prohibited them from being more unified? If they believe they are, how do you think this has been achieved?*

Question about racial solidarity:
12. When you hear the term racial solidarity what comes to mind?
13. What do you think you have in common with other African Americans?

Questions related to social action:
14. What reasons do you think justify social action?
15. To improve their position in the United States, what do you think African Americans should do?
16. What type of action do you think would have the largest impact?
17. When you think of the Civil Rights Movement protesters what similarities to you see in comparison to you and your community?
18. What outcomes would be necessary to convince you to participate in social action?

Questions related to discrimination:
19. Do you think discrimination exists against African Americans? If yes, please explain.
20. Do you believe you have ever been discriminated against? If yes, please explain.

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval

Dear Ms. Ross:

The CAS Human Subjects Committee has considered your application #2237, "African Americans' Perspectives on Racial Solidarity" and rate it EXEMPT. An EXEMPT rating means that the proposal does not need further consideration by the University Human Subjects Committee. Please save a copy of this e-mail for submission to the graduate school with your thesis.

Please add the following statement to the final copy of your Informed Consent Agreement:
This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by Eastern Michigan University's Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have any questions on the approval process, please contact the chair of that committee, Dr. Robert Holkeboer, at (734) 487-0048.

Best of luck with your work.
Dennis Patrick, CASHSC