

Black in America but not Black American: A Qualitative Study of the Identity Development of Black Caribbean Immigrants

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BLACK IN AMERICA BUT NOT BLACK AMERICAN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF THE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS

Dissertation
by

CHRISTINA MARIE DOUYON

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ABSTRACT

Black In America But Not Black American: A Qualitative Study Of The Identity
Development Of Black Caribbean Immigrants

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Black Caribbean Immigrants (BCIs) migrating to the US face the particularly difficult challenge of managing their racial and ethnic identities in relation to the subordinate African American (AA) culture and racial group as well as the dominant White American (WA) culture and racial group. Formal theories of acculturation have not focused on the adaptation of Black immigrants to both a low-status racial group (e.g., Blacks) and ethnic culture (e.g., African American) in the US. The acculturation literature usually has evaded the topic of race and the racial literature has not addressed Black immigration or ethnicity. Furthermore, when investigations of acculturation of BCIs have occurred, consumer habits, behaviors, and cultural expressions have been used as proxies for racial and ethnic identity. Moreover, virtually no research has investigated the BCI-AA acculturation experience from the perspective of BCIs. Hypotheses derived from an integration of Berry's (1997) theory of acculturation and Ferguson et al.'s (2012) tridimensional model of minority-status ethnicity were that BCIs' acculturation involves the intersection of two dimensions: (a) joining or not joining AA culture versus maintaining one's own ethnic culture and (b) Black racial integration versus separation.

When responses to each dimension are assessed, four possible acculturation outcomes were proposed: (a) *Separation*, (b) *Integration*, (c) *Assimilation*, and (d) *Marginalization*.

The sample for the present study was Black Caribbean immigrants from the English and French speaking West Indies. I used narrative theory and analysis of participants' interviews to assess the fit of participants' stories about their ethnic/racial identity and acculturation process to the model. Findings indicated that maintenance of their ethnic culture rather than joining AA culture was more important for most of the interviewees than their Black racial identity (i.e., Separation).

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	13
Introduction.....	13
Definitions of Terms	14
Culture.....	14
Race, Ethnicity, and Racialization	15
Acculturation.....	16
Purpose of the Study	19
Chapter 2.....	21
Review of Literature	21
Acculturation.....	22
Racial-Group Individual Acculturation	23
Acculturation Theoretical Models and Research.....	24
Separation/Segregation	25
Assimilation	27
Integration.....	28
Marginalization.....	29
Summary.....	30
Identity	31
Black Caribbean Immigrants and Race.....	31
Racial Classification and Identity	33
Implications of Racial Identity Theory for BCIs	34
Conformity (Pre-Encounter).....	34
Dissonance (Post-Encounter).....	35
Immersion-Emersion.....	36
Internalization	36
Integrative Awareness.....	37
Empirical Studies of Racial Identification and Racial Identity	37
Summary.....	39
Ethnic Identity.....	39
Statement of Problem.....	41
Racial Identity.....	42
Ethnic Identity.....	43

Model	45
Research Questions	48
Research Design and Rationale	49
Chapter 3	52
Method	52
Participants.....	52
Measures	54
Interviews.....	55
Memos.....	56
Reflectivity.....	56
Procedures.....	61
Chapter 4	66
Results and Analysis	66
Roseline: Separated Identity	68
Roseline and Immigration.....	68
Racial Identity in the U.S. context.....	68
African American and Haitian Differences	70
Acculturating with African Americans.....	72
Racial Identification with African Americans	74
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	76
Summary	78
Francoise: Separated Identity.....	78
Francoise and Immigration	78
Race, Colorism, Haiti.....	79
Acculturating with African Americans.....	81
African American and Haitian Differences	84
Perceived Stereotypes of Haitians	85
African American and Haitian Similarities.....	86
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	87
Summary	89
Adriana: Separated Identity	89
Adriana and Immigration.....	89
Acculturation Strategies.....	90

Racial Socialization	92
Racial Socialization	93
Acculturating with African Americans.....	95
African Americans and Guyanese Differences.....	98
Stereotypes.....	101
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	103
Summary.....	103
Anya: Separated Identity.....	104
Anya and Immigration	104
Race and Trinidad.....	106
African American and Trinidadian Differences	108
Values	112
Racial Socialization	114
Acculturating with African Americans.....	116
Identification with Co-ethnics or BCIs.....	118
Racial Identification with African Americans	119
Identification with African American Culture.....	122
Ethnic and Racial Identity Change	123
Summary.....	125
Jean-Richard: Integrated Identity.....	125
Jean-Richard and Immigration.....	125
Acculturating with African Americans.....	126
Politics and Acculturation.....	127
African American and Haitian Differences	128
Racial identification with African Americans	129
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	130
Summary.....	131
Errol: Integrated Identity.....	131
Errol and Immigration.....	131
Race, Colorism, and Jamaica	132
Acculturating with African Americans.....	133
African American and Jamaican Differences	134

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	137
Summary	137
Stacy-Ann: Integrated Identity.....	138
Stacy-Ann and Immigration.....	138
Acculturating with African Americans	138
Race, Colorism, Jamaica.....	140
African-American and Jamaican Differences	141
Racial Identification with African-Americans.....	144
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	147
Summary	148
Patrick: Integrated Identity	148
Patrick and Immigration	148
Interactions and Experiences with African Americans.....	148
Race and Jamaica.....	150
Acculturating with African Americans and African American Culture	151
Racial Identification with African Americans or Ethnic (BCI) Identification	153
Values	153
Stereotypes.....	154
African American and Jamaican Differences	155
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	158
Summary	159
Donovan: Integrated Identity	159
Donovan and Immigration	159
Race, Colorism, and Jamaica	161
Acculturating with African Americans.....	163
Values and Stereotypes	167
African Americans' Stereotypes of Jamaicans	169
Acculturative Stress	169
Racial Identification with African Americans	172
Racial and Ethnic Identity Change	173
Summary	176
Chapter 5.....	177
Discussion.....	177

Acculturation Outcomes and Strategies.....	178
Ethnic Cultural Outcomes.....	179
Separation/ Segregation	179
Integration.....	181
Assimilation	183
Marginalization.....	185
Strategies and Contexts.....	186
Acculturating with African Americans --the Racial Dimension.....	186
Racial Socialization	188
Interpersonal Interactions with AAs	189
Similarities and Differences.....	191
Interpersonal experiences with African Americans and African American Culture	192
Changes in Acculturation Over Time	193
Limitations	195
Sample Characteristics.....	195
Theory Elaboration	196
Research Implementation.....	197
Transferability.....	198
Credibility	198
Implications.....	199
Medical Professionals	199
Policy	199
Psychoeducation	200
Theory.....	200
Mental Health.....	201
Future Research	204
References.....	209
Appendix A.....	220
Interview Schedule.....	220

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1. <i>Acculturation Strategies/ Outcomes</i>	48
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Chapter 1

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Black population in the United States was more than 90% descendants of formerly enslaved Africans (Rong & Brown, 2002). Yet following the 1965 Immigration Act, Black people from the Caribbean and Africa began immigrating to the United States in large numbers (Bryce-Laporte, 1972). Consequently, the population of Black immigrants grew to roughly 800,000 people by 1980, and quadrupled to over 3.8 million by 2013. As a result, immigrants of some African diaspora heritage accounted for 8.7% of the Black population, with about half being from the Caribbean and a significant number being from Jamaica (18%) and Haiti (15%) (Pew Research Center, 2013). With almost 9% of Blacks in America being foreign born, it is imperative that the study of Black racial identity development takes into account the role of ethnicity within the Black racial group because the nuances of ethnicity have implications for health and mental health, as well as social policy (Benson, 2006; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). Historically, psychological theorists and researchers have focused on the Black population as a monolithic socially defined racial group, regardless of nativity, and (White) immigrants as various ethnic groups without regard to race. Therefore, racial factors that influence how immigrants adapt to US culture seldom have been considered.

In general, being perceived as Black by the dominant culture places one at risk of racial discrimination in a variety of societal domains (e.g., education, employment). Consequently, if Black immigrants choose to identify with Black Americans generally, they are choosing to identify with an at-risk population. However, perhaps choosing to

identify with their ethnic group of origin may serve protective functions. Virtually nothing is known about how this decision-making process happens for Black immigrants. Therefore, it is essential that the study of acculturation accounts for the role of race and ethnicity with respect to the immigrant experience for Black people, particularly those from the Caribbean.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the racial and ethnic identity development of Black Caribbean immigrants, from the French and English speaking West Indies, in the United States in relation to African Americans. At this stage in the research, the study of racial and ethnic identity development of Black Caribbean immigrants (BCI) focused on Black Caribbean immigrants' interpersonal (communications and relationships) interactions with African Americans (AAs/AA) and African American culture, as the immigrants perceived them. The underlying question was: What types of experiences influenced Black Caribbean immigrants' decisions to identify either more with African Americans as members of the same racial (but different ethnic) group(s) or more ethnically according to the immigrants' country of origin?

Definitions of Terms

Taking into consideration the varied ways in which race, ethnicity, and culture are discussed in the literature, these terms will be operationalized in order to facilitate effective communication.

Culture

In this study, *Macro-culture* refers to the dominant (White) society and its values, customs and worldview to which all members of society are expected to conform (Helms, 1994). *Micro-culture* refers to social groups within a macro-culture that share the same

customs, values, traditions, products, and, most importantly, sociopolitical histories with each other rather than other social groups (Helms, 1994). Thus, for Black Caribbean immigrants, macro-culture is White society's cultural practices, but micro-cultures are the immigrants' positionality with respect to African Americans and their own Caribbean ethnic groups. The focus of the current study is the micro-cultural experiences of Black Caribbean immigrants.

Race, Ethnicity, and Racialization

Race is a sociopolitical construct used by society to aggregate and socialize individuals based on ostensibly biological categories (Helms, 1990). *Ethnicity* is defined as a "social identity based on the culture of one's ancestors' national or tribal groups as modified by the demands of the culture in which one's group currently resides" (Helms, 1994, p. 293). Therefore, according to Helms (1994) rather than phenotype or biology, ethnicity is marked by a set of customs, values, language(s) and traditions. She contends that ethnicity, unlike race, is also self-defined and upheld out of choice, rather than operating as an identity imposed on an individual by a dominant group. A racial group may consist of many ethnicities and an ethnic group may consist of individuals from various racial groups (Casas, 1984). Thus, the racial group "Black" consists of various ethnic groups including African Americans and Black immigrants, but not every person classified as Black in the US identifies with the African American ethnic group. Consequently, Caribbean immigrants of African descent may choose whether they identify with African American culture even though they typically do not control their racial group designation.

Race and ethnicity in the US are often conflated because society uses race as an all-encompassing interpretive framework for understanding people in relation to power (HoSang, LaBennett, & Pulido, 2012). Omi and Winant (1994) define *racialization* as an ideological process of extending racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice, or group. Racialization can also be understood as the process of stereotyping a group of people. Therefore, when Black immigrants come to the US, they must respond to the process of being racialized and racializing others. The experience of being racialized for Black immigrants often involves an erasure of their ethnic identity, thereby bolstering White macro-culture's conceptualization of Blackness as monolithic.

Acculturation

Acculturation can be defined as the interaction between two cultural dimensions one of which involves an adoption of ideals, values, and behaviors of the receiving culture and the other of which involves retention of ideals, values, and beliefs from the immigrant person's culture of origin (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Acculturation is the product of continuous, first-hand contact between at least two discrete cultural groups in which change occurs in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). According to acculturation theory, the majority of change occurs on the individual level for members of immigrant or non-dominant groups (Berry, 1992).

When presented with the multitude of new challenges and opportunities of the U.S. environment, immigrants may adapt by using various acculturative strategies that are focused on different aspects of their identity (e.g., music, language). These strategies may impact their ethnic identity or subjective sense of belonging to their ethnic group of

origin (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993; Phinney, 1990). However, it seems plausible that being perceived automatically as members of a stigmatized racial group (i.e., Black Americans), as is the situation of Black Caribbean immigrants, may also impact their preferred acculturation strategies (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), although this topic does not appear to have received attention in the acculturation literature.

To preserve their positive self-image in U.S. macro-culture in the face of possible racial discrimination, Black immigrants may choose to identify with their country of origin, which allows them to differentiate and potentially maintain a more empowered social status. They may also choose to align themselves with the larger Black racial group by either suppressing their culture of origin or attempting to integrate their home culture with African American culture.

There are advantages and disadvantages to assimilating into the African American ethnic group(s) and advantages and disadvantages to maintaining a separate ethnic identity. With regard to the disadvantages, Black immigrants may view assimilation into an African American ethnic group as reducing their social status because of the ways in which Black immigrants have been taught to perceive African Americans through negative media portrayals, propagated stereotypes, and so forth. In addition, Black immigrants may believe that affiliating with African Americans reduces their status within macro-culture because White Americans perceive Black immigrants as “model minorities” and maintaining such differentiation from African Americans allows them to be exempt from the undue hardships and oppressions that are often reserved for Black people as a racial group in the US (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). Yet according to Hine-St.

Hillaire, the “protections” of the model minority status are only available if one’s accent, dress style, and behavior (i.e., ethnic cultural practices) are different from those of the stigmatized group.

On the other hand, engagement with African Americans may be advantageous to Black immigrants by helping them to learn to navigate and manage experiences of racial discrimination (Vickerman, 1999). Some scholars suggest that as immigrants experience more discrimination, they are more likely to identify with their stigmatized reference group (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey, 1999; Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001). Furthermore, the status of becoming “American” may be associated with immigrants’ believing that they are a part of the “in-group” rather than the “foreign” out-group. Identification with an in-group can be advantageous, even in circumstances when the in-group is an oppressed group (Joseph et al., 2013).

In sum, scholars suggest that there are multiple responses to acculturation and many factors that encourage assimilation into and separation from the African American racial group or culture (Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Joseph et al., 2013; Vickerman, 1999). Yet it is not clear what experiences lead Black immigrants to decide that one set of factors is more enticing than another. Moreover, although acculturation theorists contend that immigrants generally have choices with respect to whether or how they acculturate (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010), it is possible that Black immigrants may not truly be given “choice” with respect to assimilation, particularly given the salience of racial factors in U.S. society.

Purpose of the Study

This study adapted existing acculturation/assimilation theories to explore the ethnic and racial identity development issues of Black Caribbean immigrants from the English and French speaking West Indies. Although some scholars have described the acculturation experiences of Black immigrants (Ferguson & Birman, 2016), virtually none has investigated race and ethnicity as distinct aspects of their acculturation. Furthermore, virtually none of the existing acculturation theories necessarily fits the acculturation processes of the Black Caribbean population. Therefore, it is important to determine whether or how Black Caribbean immigrants view their acculturation process as involving two dimensions—joining or not joining African American culture and maintaining or relinquishing immigrant cultures—and whether they make deliberate decisions based on racial group membership. Formal theories of acculturation do not focus on the adaptation of Black immigrants to both a low-status racial group (e.g., Blacks) and ethnic culture (i.e., African American) in the US (Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001; Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, & Utsey, 2005).

This study posited that Black Caribbean immigrants' experiences and interactions with African Americans and African American culture influence whether they choose to identify racially, ethnically, or a combination of both. Findings from this qualitative study illustrate the ways in which Black immigrants' ethnic and racial identity development may be affected by their perceptions, experiences, and interactions with African Americans and African American culture. Narrative theory and analysis is the qualitative perspective that was used in this study because it allowed research participants to tell their own stories about their ethnic/racial identity and acculturation through interviews

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which the researcher then analyzed to elaborate on Black acculturation as a construct of interest. The results of the study provided insights to facilitate appropriate care for Black Caribbean immigrants, be it physically or mentally, as well as proposed policies that truly address the needs of the constituents they are meant to aid.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

When Black immigrants from the Caribbean come to the US, they are typically assigned the racial category “Black” and treated accordingly (Fries-Britt, George Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014). Yet the experience of being Black in the US does not consider differences within the Black population with regard to cultural factors (e.g., ethnic origin, ethnic culture, language). Therefore, Black Caribbean immigrants’ (BCIs’) sense of self with respect to their racial identity when they settle in the US may require them to adjust to the expectations and stereotypes that have been assigned to the Black racial group generally. Moreover, their encounters and engagements with non-BCI people who resemble them phenotypically may play a role in how BCI’s come to understand themselves as racial beings in the US. Most of the acculturation theory and research considers the acculturation process as an interaction between two cultures, ones’ home culture (e.g., immigrant cultures) and the receiving culture (i.e., White American, “dominant culture,” or macro-culture) with little regard given to other factors or experiences that might affect a person’s identity development. Therefore, when such acculturation frameworks are applied to BCIs, their migrant status is generally the only factor considered, despite the barriers and challenges that also come with being a racial minority in the US (George Mwangi & English, 2017).

Although acculturation research has expanded from a two-culture framework to one that allows for subcultures and other complexities, there still remains a gap in understanding Black Caribbean immigrants’ experiences with respect to their racial identity development and acculturation to the Black racial group. Unlike mono-racial

ethnic groups that typically are the focus of existing acculturation theory and research, the basic premises of this study are that (a) BCIs make conscious choices about their positionality with respect to African Americans and their own BCI ethnic cultures of origin and that (b) society's Black-White racial dynamics play a role in BCI's choices. Therefore, to clarify the issues that should be explored with respect to racial and ethnic minority-status acculturation, the following facets of the BCI experience were explored: (a) acculturation, (b) racial and ethnic identity, and (c) immigration. Yet given the sparsity of relevant literature pertaining to Black immigrants specifically, in many cases, it will be necessary to generalize from other minority-status immigrant groups.

Acculturation

The acculturative process for BCIs encompasses their understandings of African Americans (AAs) and White Americans (WAs) prior to coming to the US as well as their experiences with both groups after they have settled in the US. As it pertains to individuals, the acculturation process may be defined as change that happens to a person as their group (e.g. family unit, community) is experiencing collective acculturation (Berry, 1992). Multiple mainstream and subcultures co-exist in the US; therefore for immigrants, the interpretation of the dominant culture is subjective. The subjective interpretation of the dominant culture for BCIs is influenced by their perceptions of various aspects of their contexts (e.g., demographics, urbanity, community cultures) and, therefore, will influence how and to whom or what they acculturate. Therefore, perhaps a first decision that BCIs make is determining the cultural groups available to them.

Ethnic Acculturation

BCIs, similar to Latinx immigrants, may be likely to identify with a culture in the host country that is most similar to their culture of origin or a culture present in their community that is most likely to be largely populated with other co-ethnics or immigrants because immigrants are most likely to settle in areas where they have family and friends (Ferdman & Horenczyk, 2000). Ferdman and Horenczyk coined the term “subjective acculturation” to describe the phenomena of acculturating to an ethnic enclave, arguing that there is no objective dominant culture, but rather immigrants’ interpretations of the culture is what dictates their acculturative experience. Therefore, the racial-ethnic composition of the various communities in which BCIs settle (e.g., mostly co-ethnic, mostly White, mostly AA) determines how they define and choose to acculturate to U.S. culture. Moreover, BCIs’ access to and interactions with AAs and AA culture may also affect their manner of acculturating if they perceive themselves or their cultures as similar to AA culture in some ways.

Racial-Group Individual Acculturation

Individual acculturation for BCIs has been described as “becom[ing] Black” indicating that BCIs experience racism from which they learn their societal-designated racial-group membership (Vickerman, 2001, p. 243). Vickerman posits that acculturative change occurs in response to experiences with racism that move BCIs toward a strong sense of kinship with AAs, a kinship not previously expressed. Individual acculturation can be intrapsychic and/or interpersonal. *Intrapsychic acculturation* is defined as personal and ethical changes such as identity shifts that occur in one’s self understanding given one’s new social location, whereas *interpersonal acculturation* is defined as behavioral changes such as immigrants’ values, beliefs, attitudes, and/or motives, and

social changes, such as their relationships and experiences with others. The acculturation process may be greatly affected by the perceived similarities and differences (e.g., cultural practices and habits, language) of the [two] disparate cultures (BCI and AA), but it may also be affected by similar racial characteristics of the [two] groups (e.g., political leanings, stereotypes) (Berry, 1992). Thus, the second decision BCIs make concerns whether they succumb to being Black (i.e. AA).

Acculturation Theoretical Models and Research

Acculturation has been studied qualitatively and quantitatively over the past several decades using multiple theories (or variants of the same theory) to better understand the process of culture change that occurs either at the individual and/or group levels (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Dalisay, 2012; Ferguson & Birman, 2016). Two acculturation theoretical models seem somewhat applicable to the question of how BCIs adapt to or choose their subjective cultural groups. They are the fourfold model (Berry, 1997) and the tridimensional model (Ferguson & Birman, 2016). The first assumes that two independent cultural poles intersect to form four acculturation strategies, which are a product of a combination of either a positive valence (i.e., acceptance) or negative valence (i.e., rejection) of ones' immigrant culture and the receiving culture or aspects of the cultures (Berry, 1997; Rudmin, 2003). *Cultural aspects* refers to cultural products such as identification with a cultural group, linguistic acculturation, and food preferences.

In their tridimensional (3-D) model, Ferguson, Bornstein, and Pottinger (2012) proposed that BCIs acculturate along three cultural dimensions: Ethnic- Caribbean, European-American, and African-American cultures, as opposed to Berry's (1997) model

that only accounts for two cultural dimensions: Ethnic- Caribbean and European-American. Otherwise, their theory is so similar to Berry's (1997) theory that it is useful to combine the two perspectives to avoid redundancy.

Theoretically, the differential acceptance or rejection of each of the cultural aspects relative to one's culture of origin and/or the receiving culture results in four possible acculturation outcomes under Berry's (1997) and Ferguson, Bornstein, and Pottinger's (2012) models. The outcomes are (a) separation/segregation, (b) assimilation, (c) integration, and (d) marginalization. For present purposes, the outcomes are described as they potentially pertain to BCIs and AAs rather than BCIs and White macro-culture. In other words, AAs are the presumed "host culture".

Separation/Segregation

Separation/segregation occurs when a BCI places greater value on holding onto one's culture of origin rather than having substantive relationships with members of the AA society (Berry, 1997). For BCIs, separation/segregation may present as primarily identifying with members of one's "ethnic cultural enclaves" that exist within larger Black communities (Waters, 1999; (e.g., "I am Jamaican, not Black or AA). It may also present racially as identifying with members of the Black community rather than with White Americans (WA). The circumstances under which separation/segregation occurs determines whether the acculturative response is considered separation or segregation. When members of the dominant group (AA or WA) impose barriers to separate themselves from BCIs, *segregation* occurs because the non-dominant group members (i.e., BCIs) do not have the power to choose their acculturation strategy (Berry, 1992). If BCIs have the power to limit or abstain from meaningful engagement with AAs (the

“host” culture in this study) and maintain their home culture, this response is referred to as *separation*.

The question of which group has the power to influence segregation/separation becomes less clear when evaluating the process with respect to two disenfranchised groups, BCIs and AAs, who share similar and dissimilar experiences with oppression within and outside of the US. In the US, BCI’s acculturative response to AAs might be affected by AA’s historically racial and disenfranchising relationship with White Americans. The false and disempowering narrative that AAs are responsible for their subjugation is known in the US and propagated outside of the US; as a result, when BCIs immigrate to the US, they may come with or learn negative stereotypes about AAs that in turn impact the way BCIs interact with AAs and how AAs interact with BCIs. As a result, the circumstances that produce the acculturative outcome of separation/segregation become unclear with regard to BCIs who hold the least amount of power with respect to their race and immigrant status relative to WA, but have ambiguous status/power with respect to nativity relative to AAs (Hine-St.Hilaire, 2006).

In support of BCIs’ use of the separation strategy, Bryce-Laporte (1972) reported that many White and Black persons in their home countries and in the US, instruct Black immigrants to differentiate themselves (e.g., display heavy accents and “exotic” apparel) from AAs in an effort to shield themselves from the discrimination and subjugation reserved for AAs. In Reid’s (1939) ethnographic study on Black immigrants across the diaspora, he indicated that Black Latinos spoke Spanish louder than their lighter-skinned friends while in public as a way to emphasize their “Latin-ness” and to distinguish themselves from AAs. It seems that throughout the diaspora, Black immigrants

consciously or unconsciously react to the racial stratification of the US which may inspire in them a desire to separate themselves from AAs racially and culturally, despite the objective futility of this endeavor.

Assimilation

Assimilation occurs when immigrants relinquish their cultural identity in favor of adopting the dominant society's culture (Berry, 1997). In traditional acculturation theory, BCIs who give up their ethnic culture in favor of White culture would be described as assimilating. From this perspective, assimilation can appear as a "melting pot" in which two cultures merge to create a new group or the immigrant culture is absorbed into the dominant group (Berry, 1992). However, for BCIs, assimilation may occur with WAs who represent the larger White society and/or with AAs who represent smaller communities that exist within the dominant society (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012). Some research has investigated the assimilation of Black immigrants.

In a qualitative study of consumer acculturation (i.e., how Black immigrants adapted their consumer behaviors in a host country), Wamwara-Mbugua, Cornwell, and Boller (2008) studied Kenyan immigrants ($N=30$) living in a metropolitan city in the US. They found that Kenyan immigrants first attempted to meet their consumer needs related to appearance or cultural practices (e.g., hair care) by seeking services from White society. When the immigrants' needs could not be met or were poorly met (e.g., barber did not have proper tools to cut Black hair), Kenyan immigrants turned to AAs for guidance. Wamwara-Mbugua et al. suggested that Kenyan immigrants were perhaps unaware that they needed to acculturate to the AA subgroup, and, therefore, initially turned to the dominant White group. Subsequently, the Kenyan immigrants' future decisions about

cultural group activities (e.g., church services, entertainment, and clothing choice) led them to seek out AAs for consultation. Similarly, Griffin and McIntosh (2015), who studied Black ($N=23$) immigrant college students, found that although the students initially attempted to join majority White spaces (e.g., sororities or fraternities), they eventually chose to seek membership in majority Black spaces (e.g., historically Black sororities and fraternities) when they felt unwelcome in White spaces.

Collectively, Wamwara-Mbugua et al. (2008) and Griffin and McIntosh's (2015) studies suggest that Black immigrants seeking to be assimilated into WA culture or social groups may seek assimilation into AA cultural spaces and practices if they experience rejection by Whites. However, the conditions that encourage BCIs' assimilation into minority-status ethnic groups are not accounted for in Berry's (1997) model. The assimilation strategy also assumes that the "choice" to relinquish one's cultural or ethnic identity is made out of free will, rather than being a necessary decision for surviving in a new country.

Integration

Integration occurs when one works to maintain one's culture of origin while actively participating and integrating with members of the larger cultural group (Berry, 1997) and/or members of a smaller culture group (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012). The Integration strategy supposes that the immigrant has the power to make this choice unilaterally without regard to members of the receiving (WA and/or AA) culture's thoughts, beliefs, or actions. Yet it is probable that members of the receiving culture could respond in a multitude of ways including, but not limited to, helping facilitate the integration process and/or constructing barriers to prevent or control it. Furthermore, for

BCIs, “integration choices” are likely to look different with respect to AAs relative to WAs.

Ferguson and Bornstein (2014) found that, in a sample of adolescent-mother dyads ($N = 473$), composed of Jamaican immigrants, Jamaican natives (living in Jamaica), African-Americans, White Americans, and non-Jamaican immigrants. The non-Jamaican immigrant sample was 17% Black and 83% not Black. The authors described 70% of the Black immigrant’ acculturation outcomes as integrated, suggesting a high degree of identification with their own ethnic culture and a combination of either AA culture, WA culture, or both. The researchers found that Black immigrants were most likely to illustrate tri-cultural identification with their home culture, AA culture, and WA culture, illustrating a more complex integrated strategy than Berry (1992) had originally postulated.

Marginalization

Marginalization is the product of acculturative stress that may be brought on by feelings of isolation from members of both ones’ home culture and the receiving culture(s) (Berry, 1992). Berry and Annis (1974) expounded upon his definition by contending that marginalization is characterized by functioning in contradiction to the standards of the larger society, as well as a loss of identity. Marginalization can occur by exclusion or withdrawal, but one can argue that no one chooses to be marginalized. Rather, a series of factors may contribute to one feeling that seclusion is the most harm-reducing option available. With regard to BCIs, there are two communities (AA and WA) from which BCIs can come to feel “excluded” in addition to their own (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012). There is a lack of clarity around how marginalization

might come to be when two potential host cultures have dissimilar access to power with each other as is the case of AAs relative to WAs. Moreover, each host culture may have different types of power relative to BCIs. In other words, WAs have the power to marginalize AAs and BCIs, but at the same time can choose to express a preference for foreign-born Blacks in education and the workplace (Waters, 1999), leading to additional imbalances in power within the Black racial group. AAs, in turn, have some power as U.S. citizens to marginalize BCIs interpersonally. It is not clear that BCIs perceive this power differential and, if so, whether it contributes to marginalization.

Summary

Berry's (1997) version of the four-fold model operates under the assumption that the acculturating (e.g., BCI) group and the receiving group are each mono-racial and mono-ethnic and the immigrant group is only adapting to one dominant culture. Bashi and McDaniel (1997) note that focusing on only two cultural dimensions is limiting and may conflate nationality with culture. More specifically, a two-dimensional model overlooks the potential for multiple cultures of origin as well as multiple receiving or host cultures, majority (e.g., White) and minority (e.g., Black, co-ethnic) (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014). Additionally, Berry's model does not account for the role of differences in race between the immigrants and the host culture(s), nor does it adequately account for the role of differences in power in a hierarchal society (Ferguson et al., 2012). Furthermore, the acculturation models do not specifically consider the role of immigrants' identities generally as factors that determine which acculturation strategy is selected.

Identity

Identity is an individual's personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups (e.g., racial, ethnic) and their expression of said beliefs (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). Two types of identity seem particularly relevant to the acculturation process of BCIs, racial identity and ethnic identity. Racial identity may be defined as a person's racial self-conception, personal beliefs, values, and attitudes as compared to other racial groups (Helms, 2003). Ethnic identity may be defined as the subjective sense of belonging to a group that is connected by culture (e.g., shared values, language, customs; Phinney, 1990).

Black Caribbean Immigrants and Race

Racial identity may be an important aspect of BCIs' identity because racial classification in the US implies a social hierarchy that has implications for a person's life and life chances (Bashi & McDaniel, 1997). By most accounts, Black people as an aggregated demographic group, undifferentiated by ethnicity, are among the lower ranks of the sociopolitical and economic hierarchies in the US (Helms, 1994). As a result, BCIs are forced to contend with this fact and determine how they understand themselves within U.S. society's construct of race. However, scholars contend that BCIs' racial identification with AAs is virtually inevitable as a result of the US's racially stratified society, and is most greatly influenced by time spent in the US (Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001; Rogers, 2001; Waters, 1994). Nevertheless, previous theorists and researchers have erroneously equated BCIs' and AAs' shared racial classifications with BCIs' process of developing racial identity.

In support of race and ethnicity as separate aspects of identity, Rogers (2001) found that BCIs identified themselves both racially (i.e., Black) and ethnically (i.e., according to their home countries) in his open-ended structured interview with BCIs ($N=59$) in New York City. Interviewees acknowledged their shared racial classification with AAs, but overwhelmingly named their ethnicity or home country as their primary group attachment. Many respondents also expressed feeling close to AAs and personally affected by what happens to AAs in the US, a finding that Rogers labeled “linked racial fate”.

Yet, Rogers (2001) argued that BCIs’ declared shared racial identification with AAs did not come with the same set of ideological and political meanings that accompany AAs’ identification. Accordingly, Rogers contends that BCIs are more likely to attribute poor life outcomes for Black people to a mixture of structural and individual factors (e.g., work ethic), whereas AAs are more likely to attribute the same outcomes to racism and other structural factors (Sigelman & Welch, 1991). BCIs were also more likely than AAs to claim that AAs were preoccupied with racism, whereas BCIs were less so, despite having experienced instances of racial discrimination (Rogers, 2001; Waters, 1994). However, BCIs’ foreign-born status and new membership in the U.S. racial hierarchy dictates a different frame of reference with regard to race than is characteristic of their AA counterparts who have experienced multiple generations of racial discrimination in their country of origin. As a result, even when interviewing BCIs about race, one cannot assume that the same words and expressions used by AAs mean the same things for BCIs. Rather, it would be important to further interrogate what racial

identity and racial group membership mean for BCIs, given the difference in ideological frameworks.

Racial Classification and Identity

Much of the existing research and discussion about race and BCIs equates racial classification (i.e., race) and racial identity. Racial classification or category refers to how others perceive the person and decide what racial socialization messages to transmit. However, racial identity speaks to the internalization of racial socialization, such as discrimination, that affects one's racial group (Helms, 2007). According to racial identity theory, racial identity is comprised of three elements: (a) personal, the self-conceptualization of "who am I?"; (b) affiliative, a belief that what happens to other members of ones' racial group also happens to the self; and (c) reference group, the degree of conformance to the norms of ones' racial group (Helms, 1990, 2003). These elements of racial identity are initially shaped during childhood and adolescence by influences from family, peers, education/educators, and societal messages (Helms, 2003).

When BCIs come to the US, they are likely to have had personal, affiliative, and reference group experiences that informed their racial and ethnic identity in their homelands. However, they are unlikely to have had race at the forefront of their self-concepts because they come from primarily Black countries in which race was less of a defining factor. Therefore, when BCIs come to the US, a highly racialized context, they may for the first time be required to synthesize their identity and place their blackness at the forefront, triggering a conflict of self that would necessitate exploration of their racial as well as their ethnic identities.

Implications of Racial Identity Theory for BCIs

Racial identity theories examine the role of race in an individuals' personal and social beliefs about the self in a society where privilege is assigned to White people, and withheld from people of color based on their membership in their respective racial groups (Sanchez, 2013). Helms (1994; 2003) posits that Black Americans experience discriminatory and/or oppressive socialization messages based on their non-White physical appearance, regardless of how they self-identify. The same can be said for BCIs who may or may not identify with AAs. In other words, how BCIs self-identify may have no bearing on their treatment in the US where they are likely assumed to be AAs (i.e., Black Americans).

Helms theorizes that the central theme of racial identity development for all people of color is "to recognize and overcome the psychological manifestations of internalized racism" (1995, p. 189) and surmount the "internalized societal racial stereotypes and negative self- and own-group conceptions" (1995, p. 189). Yet it is not clear whether BCIs actually do internalize racism in a manner consistent with theory. Helms's (1995) Black racial identity theory proposes five ego statuses that are informed by the thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and information processing strategies a Black person uses to engage with or process racial stimuli. The statuses are conformity, dissonance, immersion/ emersion, internalization, and integrative awareness (Helms, 1995).

Conformity (Pre-Encounter). The Conformity status is marked by an external definition of the self as a result of a commitment to White standards of merit and therefore a devaluing of one's own group (Helms, 1995). The desire to assimilate may foster a "color-blind" mentality and a preference to not be defined by racial terminology

(Jernigan, Green, Helms, Perez-Gualdron, & Henze, 2010). A Black person who primarily relies on this status is likely to have “selective perception and obliviousness to socioracial concerns” (Helms, 1995, p. 186). Hall and Carter (2006) used three quantitative measures to assess the relationship between racial identity ego statuses and perceived experiences of racial discrimination of first- and second- generation Black Caribbean adults ($N=82$). The first- and second-generation Black Caribbean adults’ Conformity status attitudes were not significantly related to perceived racial discrimination, although the more racially aware identity statuses were related to perceptions of racial discrimination. Furthermore, they found that second-generation Black Caribbean adults (i.e., those born in the US) perceived higher levels of racial discrimination than first-generation BCIs and they credit this difference to second-generation Black Caribbeans’ life-long socialization in the US. Therefore, it should not be concluded that BCIs’ Conformity racial identity attitudes are unchangeable.

Dissonance (Post-Encounter). The Dissonance (Post-Encounter) status is characterized by an ambivalence and confusion with regard to one’s commitment to one’s socioracial group as well as one’s self-definition (Helms, 1995). Dissonance is illustrated by a reluctance to question one’s previous belief systems when encountering experiences of racism (Jernigan et al., 2010). A Black person who relies primarily on dissonance to interpret race-related circumstances is likely to repress “anxiety-provoking racial information” (Helms, 1995, p.186). For BCIs, a commitment to one’s own ethnic group as one’s primary identity and resistance to identifying with the AA racial group might be interpreted as dissonance. Due to the U.S. construction of race as AAs’ only demographic category of importance, AAs’ dissonance presumably is activated primarily by White

racism rather than interactions with other Black ethnic groups. Therefore, dissonance possibly has a different meaning for Black immigrant groups who might have untangled the two concepts.

Immersion-Emersion. The Immersion/ Emersion status involves a denigration of “Whiteness” and an idealization of one’s own racial group, which can be manifested as making decisions to the benefit of the racial group as well as placing a high value on commitment and loyalty to one’s own group (Helms, 1995). If immersion/ emersion is a person’s prevailing status, that person is likely to be hyper-vigilant with regard to racial stimuli and express bifurcated thinking (e.g., “there is only one way to be Black”) (Helms, 1995). Immersion into ones’ racial group and hyper-vigilance with regard to race has been illustrated in second-generation BCIs, but less so in first-generation BCIs (Sanchez, 2013; Waters, 1994).

Scholars have explained this generational difference by noting that U.S. American socialization, particularly socialization in AA-predominant spaces/culture, awakens race-based critical consciousness and fosters “oppositional thinking” with regard to the White racial group. AA socialization experiences may not occur frequently enough to affect first-generation BCIs’ acculturation process, but may be more evident for successive generations (Sanchez, 2013; Waters, 1994). Therefore, this status may require a certain level of exposure and understanding of U.S. race relations to develop. Consequently, adequate exploration of BCIs’ development of Immersion-Emersion requires attention to generational status and/or length of time in the US.

Internalization. The Internalization status entails an internal definition of racial attributes and a positive commitment to one’s own group, as well as an ability to engage

impartially with members of the dominant group (Helms, 1995) and other racial or ethnic groups (Jernigan et al., 2010). Persons who interpret racial information by means of this status can make decisions that take into consideration the needs of their socioracial group as well as their personal needs, illustrating flexibility and analytic thinking (Helms, 1995).

Integrative Awareness. The last status, Integrative Awareness, is marked by an ability to “value one’s own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups” (Helms, 1995, p. 186). With integrative awareness as a dominant status, one is likely to take into account “globally humanistic self-expression” to help govern life decisions, demonstrating an ability to engage with racial material in a manner that conveys flexibility and complexity (Helms, 1995).

Empirical Studies of Racial Identification and Racial Identity

When attempting to use the same racial identity framework to understand BCIs, scholars have often reported that BCIs differ from AAs in how they choose to identify and understand race (Butterfeild, 2004; Case & Hunter, 2014; Phelps et al., 2001; Waters, 2001). However, many of these researchers have unintentionally explored BCIs’ perceptions of ethnic cultural differences rather than race or racial identity. For example, Bashi Bobb and Clarke (2001) found that BCIs believed they were different from AAs with regard to cultural values and work ethic, and they credited their success (e.g., education, professional status) to those differences. However, cultural values are aspects of ethnicity rather than racial identity (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993).

Some studies have explicitly investigated various aspects of racial identity. In a quantitative study of the relationship between racial identity and ego identity of Black

Caribbean students ($N= 255$) studying at two and four- year colleges in the US, Sanchez (2013) administered standard measures of racial identity attitudes and ego identity statuses. Ego identity may be roughly defined as the search for one's self-identity (Marcia, 1966). She found that racial identity attitudes were significantly predictive of ego identity statuses generally, although the identity processes were not parallel. Sanchez found that Conformity racial identity attitudes were not related to diffused or foreclosed identity statuses. Diffused identity indicated a lack of commitment to an identity, whereas foreclosed identity meant commitment as defined by one's identification with significant and influential others (e.g. commonly parents). Conformity was related to achievement status (e.g. career and academic), Sanchez interpreted these findings as supporting the BCI belief that BCIs self-concepts are different from AAs' self-concepts. However, without more information about participants' generational status, it is also possible to infer that BCIs are prematurely committed to the Conformity racial identity status when they enter the US, which seems consistent with Wamwara-Mbugua et al.'s findings.

In Sanchez's (2013) study, Immersion-Emersion racial identity attitudes were related to low scores on diffused, foreclosed, and moratorium (actively exploring identity) ego identity statuses, suggesting that when BCIs were adopting a Black racial identity, they were more secure and confident in their self-concepts. However, the security and confidence BCIs experienced about themselves when their immersion-emersion racial identity was strong was not associated with a self-actualized racial identity (i.e., Internalization). Internalization racial identity attitudes were negatively related to an achieved identity (i.e., commitment to an identity as a result of thoughtful exploration of possible identity options). In interpreting these results, researchers

hypothesized that BCIs had internalized a rejection of White conformity norms in a manner similar to AAs (Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001). The researchers believed that the rejection was a reaction to racial discrimination and barriers to educational achievement (Sanchez, 2013; Waters 1994), which demonstrated that BCIs experiences with WAs in the US and their interactions with AAs impact their identity development.

Summary

In a critical review of racial and ethnic identity measures in the multicultural counseling literature, Cokley (2007) concluded that race and racial identity may not function the same way for various Black ethnic groups (e.g., AAs, BCIs). Although BCIs' racial identity has been found to be related to personal (ego) identity, the racial identity schemas may not have the same meaning across Black ethnic groups. Moreover, scholarship indicates that BCIs endorse White culture (Sanchez, 2013), but in her historical and psychological narrative of the West Indies, Gopaul-McNicol (1993) posited that Black Caribbean students' endorsement of White culture may be a means of managing acculturative stress by trying not to associate with a negatively perceived racial group. Therefore, although outcomes related to BCI racial identity have been hypothesized, the factors that affect it, particularly with respect to their experiences with AAs, are still unknown.

Ethnic Identity

Betancourt and Lopez (1993) define ethnicity as individuals' adherence to the customs, values, and traditions that define the cultural groups in which it has been socialized. Ethnic identity refers to the person's choice to adhere to the principles of an ethnic group. Unlike ascribed racial groups as perceived by others, ethnicity is malleable

and responsive to context as well as social, psychological, and developmental factors (Ferdman & Horenczyk, 2000; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Ethnic identity and its role in the acculturative process for BCIs is likely a result of interactions “between the attitudes and characteristics of immigrants and the responses of the receiving [societies], moderated by the particular circumstances of the immigrant group within the new [societies]” (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001, p. 494). More specifically, BCIs come to the US with differing beliefs about retaining their home culture and/or adopting new cultural norms. Their beliefs then interact with the beliefs of U.S. natives—particularly AAs—concerning how immigrants should respond to the acculturation process (Phinney et al., 2001).

Ethnic identity for BCIs in the US is also a unique process because many BCIs settle into ethnic enclaves within major cities where they maintain or foster the ethnic identity of their country of origin, but also must decide whether to adopt aspects of AA culture in a society in which it often has been appropriated and defined by the dominant society. Using 1980 and 1990 US census data to trace the development of West Indian neighborhoods throughout New York City’s five boroughs, Crowder and Tedrow (2001) found that West Indians (Black Caribbean immigrants and their descendants) were more likely to be confined to neighborhoods with large Black enclaves. Overtime, these West Indian enclaves grew to be more distinct sections within the Black enclaves, rather than being dispersed throughout the Black communities. Recognizable BCI enclaves allowed them to maintain and cultivate their ethnic distinctiveness (Crowder & Tedrow, 2001). Consequently, when considering BCI ethnic and racial identity development, it would be important to consider in what neighborhoods or residential niches they have come to

acculturate and how said communities could consequently impact their identity as a result of their engagement in available social networks.

An additional potential outcome for BCIs' ethnic identity is the development of a transnational identity or pan-ethnic Caribbean identity that aligns them with other people from the Caribbean. Rogers (2001) found that transnational identities were common among the participants in his studies with 48 out of 59 respondents taking regular trips to their home countries, and most participants reporting strong ties to their home countries. Maintaining familial and fraternal bonds through remittances, financial investment in property and assets in home countries, and staying up-to-date on political and social developments in their home country are evidence of BCIs' maintenance of their ethnic-identities. Maintaining connections to their home countries may make BCIs more likely to identify with other BCIs (pan-ethnic Caribbean identity) rather than AAs with whom they share a racial classification. BCIs' pan-ethnic Caribbean identification might be encouraged by the presence of multiple ethnic enclaves in Black communities, whose members are likely to have different cultural characteristics from AAs in the community. Therefore, the development and maintenance of BCIs' ethnic identity has many potential influencing factors that necessitate inquiry in order to develop a more holistic understanding of the impact of their acculturation experiences on their identity.

Statement of Problem

BCIs migrating to the US face the particularly difficult challenge of managing their racial and ethnic identities in relation to the subordinate AA culture and racial group as well as the dominant WA culture and racial group. Upon coming to the US, BCIs, based on their phenotypical characteristics and/or ascribed membership in the Black

racial group, are also assigned membership in the AA ethnic group by the White dominant culture. With little knowledge about how to navigate the U.S. racial climate and the misclassification of their ethnicity, BCIs have no blueprint for how to respond. The literature about acculturation usually evades the topic of race and the literature about race does not address Black immigration or ethnicity. Furthermore, the literature that does address acculturation of BCIs uses consumer habits, behavior, and cultural expression as proxies for racial and ethnic identity.

For BCIs, the question of how one identifies was potentially far less complicated in their generally mono-racial home countries. Therefore, immigrating to the US presented a unique experience in which U.S. society challenges BCIs' previously held notions of identity, triggering a period of crisis and commitment (Miville & Helms, 1996, as cited in Miville, Koonce, Darlington, & Whitlock, 2000). Although some researchers have made an argument for the importance and validity of race and ethnicity in BCIs' global identity (i.e., ego identity) (Helms, 1994; Miville et al., 2000), there is still much left to learn in terms of how this developmental process functions for BCIs in their relationships with AAs.

Racial Identity

Racial identity might initially serve as a point of reference for understanding BCIs' acculturation experiences. Yet relevant scholarship is deeply rooted in an American context that assumes shared experiences of racial discrimination and associated socialization messages. When researchers have evaluated BCIs on racial identity measures meant for AAs, their obtained results are sometimes consistent with AA socialization (Sanchez, 2013) and sometimes not (Rogers, 2001). It can be argued that

inconclusive results have occurred because the thoughts, experiences, and knowledge that are meant to assess certain belief systems about the self as a Black person relative to White people or other Black people, are not present for BCIs. Perhaps their foreign-born status in majority Black and predominantly mono-ethnic cultures initially protects them from racism in the US.

These differences in pre-migration racial and ethnic experiences may speak to why some literature has found that the longer BCIs remain in the US the more likely they are to report a shared racial identity status with AAs (Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001; Benson, 2006; Rogers, 2001; Waters, 1994). They have had time to experience the same kind of racial socialization to which AAs are exposed. Yet what that socialization process looks like outside of shared experiences of racial discrimination is unclear. Additionally, the nature of BCIs' experiences and relationships with AAs as factors in their racial identity acculturation generally have been indirectly explored or have been discussed only as a consequence of racial discrimination rather than as aspects of BCIs' interactions with AAs.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity and BCIs' beliefs about remaining "separate" or "integrating" are often the primary points of discussion in relevant scholarship because ethnicity is the identity that is upheld out of choice, as compared to race (but not racial identity), which is ascribed to a person based on systems of power (Helms, 2003; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Therefore, there is potentially more judgment associated with what it means for BCIs to either (a) insist on their uniqueness from AAs, (b) foster an integrated racial and/or ethnic identity, (c) develop a pan-ethnic identity, or (d) engage

in behaviors that result in a number of other potential acculturation outcomes.

Consequently, the ethnic identity research that exists does not account for the multiple sub- cultures to which BCIs can acculturate or the intersectional identities of BCIs (e.g., Black, immigrant, ethnic).

No theory exists for explaining and validating the acculturation experiences of BCIs in relation to their experiences with AAs. An appropriately explanatory theory should address BCIs' indoctrination into the US's racialized system, in which Black people are viewed as a racial monolith with no ethnicity, while also managing the cultural aspects of the acculturation process. Theory would help scholars, mental health practitioners, medical professionals and policy makers understand the unique issues and experiences of Black immigrants while also helping Black immigrants to make sense of their own journey toward identity.

Understanding and highlighting the diversity of the Black population in the US is particularly important because scholars and the dominant WA CULTURE often disregard foreign-born Black ethnics, such as Jamaicans, Haitians, and other Caribbean immigrants in order to highlight the more "visible" category of race (Waters, 1999). As a result BCIs in the US find themselves grouped in with a larger racial group with whom they may or may not share the same culture (e.g., language, food, music, or cultural norms), but virtually never share the same history of racial subjugation or colonialism (Alba & Nee, 1997; Bashi & McDaniel, 1997). Furthermore, the racial group that they are ostensibly a part of based on the US social construction of race, has the least value and power in U.S. society, an experience unfamiliar to many Black immigrants (Benson, 2006; Waters, 1999).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the racial and ethnic identity development in the US of Black Caribbean immigrants, from the French and English speaking West Indies, in relation to African Americans. This study of racial and ethnic identity development of Black Caribbean immigrants (BCIs) focused on their interpersonal interactions (i.e., communication styles and relationships) with African Americans (AAs) and African American culture as the immigrants perceived them. The underlying question was, what types of perceived experiences influenced BCIs' decisions to identify either more with AAs as members of the same racial (but different ethnic) group(s) or ethnically according to the immigrants' country of origin.

Model

To account for the gaps in the literature, I proposed a model that (a) did not conflate nationality with race or ethnicity, (b) acknowledged race and racial identity as primary factors in acculturation outcomes, (c) focused on individuals from a specific immigrating group (BCIs) and individuals from the group to which they are most likely to acculturate (AAs), rather than assuming homogeneity in either the home or receiving country, (d) considered the impact of relational experiences as imperative in the acculturation process, and (e) examined the role of perceived systems of power for BCIs.

Until recently, most acculturation theory and research did not account for immigrants' potential to acculturate to more than one receiving culture, which means little information is available concerning the actual acculturative experiences of BCIs. Additionally, the most widely used acculturation framework (i.e., Berry's 1997) does not account for the role of power or issues of race and racism. Ferguson, Bornstein, and Pottinger's (2012) tridimensional framework accounts for some of the gaps in Berry's

fourfold theory by acknowledging minority-status of ethnicity as a third culture, but most of the relevant research has been primarily quantitative studies from which researchers have inferred immigrants' thinking processes.

Consequently, there is a need for qualitative research to provide the necessary contexts for explaining the quantitative findings and grounding the research in the words and experiences of the individuals they are meant to reflect. Additionally, virtually all of the models presume that acculturation occurs only in response to WAs and WA culture, but the tridimensional model illustrates that acculturation to AAs may be more significant to BCIs than acculturation to WAs. Therefore, two issues were addressed with respect to BCIs' unique acculturation experiences. They are whether BCI's acculturate to (a) the AA ethnic group as a result of BCI's experiences with AAs and AA culture (excluding WA), and (b) whether their own maintaining of their ethnic culture occurs in ethnic immigrant enclaves or as a result of their experiences with AAs and AA culture.

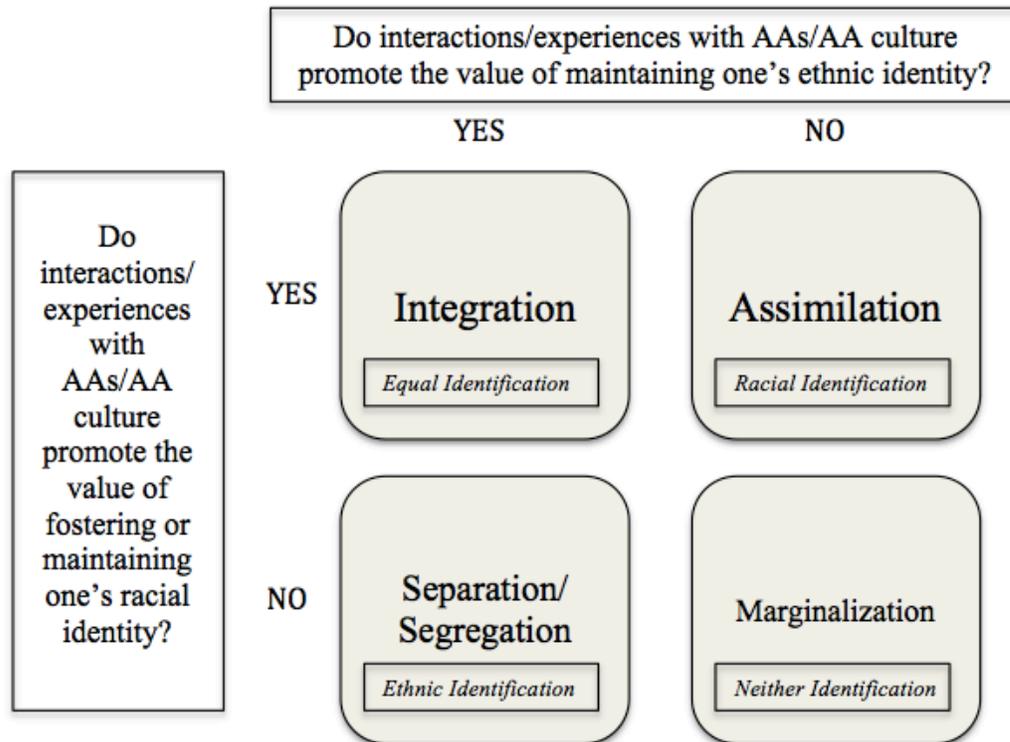
I proposed that BCIs potentially responded to the presumption that they are AA in a variety of ways based on their knowledge of AAs prior to coming the US and/or their interactions with AAs and the larger White race and culture once they entered the US. I have adapted and expanded upon Berry's (1997) theory of acculturation by integrating aspects of Ferguson et al.'s (2012) tridimensional model, which incorporates minority-status ethnicity. WAs have been removed from the framework because studies that have measured acculturation to WA, AA, and co-ethnics illustrate BCIs eventual preference for acculturating to AAs (Ferguson et al., 2012; Ferguson et al., 2014; Portes & Zhou, 1993). I posited that BCIs' racial and ethnic identities are influenced by or are responsive to their interactions with AAs and AA culture.

Figure 1 illustrates the framework, which is characterized by two dimensions. In the figure, the horizontal dimension reflects AAs as a perceived cultural influence on BCIs' acculturation and the vertical dimension reflects AAs as influences on BCIs' racial identity. For simplicity, the framework consists of "YES" or "NO" questions for each dimension. If the answers to these questions are assessed together in the matrix, an acculturative outcome is indicated. The outcomes are as follows:

1. BCIs who have interactions or experiences with AAs that promote maintaining their ethnic identity (YES) and foster maintenance or development of Black racial identity (YES) are potentially expressing an Integrated response to acculturation. That is, they are equally identifying as members of the Black racial group and their own ethnic group.
2. BCIs who have interactions or experiences with AAs that promote maintaining the ethnic identity of their culture of origin (YES), but do not foster developing or maintaining a Black racial identity (NO) are likely to express a Separation/ Segregation response to acculturation. Their ethnic identification is primary.
3. BCIs who have interactions or experiences with AAs that do not promote maintaining their ethnic identity (NO), but promote developing or maintaining a Black racial identity (YES) are expressing an Assimilation response to acculturation in which racial identification is primary.
4. BCIs who have interactions or experiences with AAs that do not promote maintaining their ethnic identity (NO) or promote developing or maintaining a Black racial identity (NO) are more likely to express Marginalization as a

response to acculturation. That is, they do not identify with either their own ethnic culture, the Black racial group, or African American culture.

Figure 1. *Acculturation Strategies/Outcomes*



Research Questions

The following interview questions were used to help provide some insights into BCIs' racial and ethnic identity development and their experiences with AAs/AA culture:

(a) How have BCIs' racial and ethnic identity changed since moving to the US? (b) What kinds of interactions/experiences with AAs and/or AA culture inspire BCIs to identify either more racially or ethnically? (c) How do BCIs in the US describe their interactions/experiences with AAs and AA culture, and how do these experiences shape their racial and ethnic identity development? (d) What are BCIs' acculturation strategies and how have they changed or remained consistent based on interactions/ experiences

with AAs/ AA culture? (e) What values, experiences, and stereotypes do BCIs associate with AAs and AA culture? (f) In what ways do BCIs believe they are different or are similar to AAs?

The interview questions were developed and piloted with written narratives of two BCIs during the Fall 2016 semester in the Design of Qualitative Research course at Boston College under the supervision of the course instructor, Dr. Lillie Albert (Interview Schedule in Appendix A). The results of the feasibility pilot study were that (a) shared oppression inspired an assimilated identity in which ethnicity was not a factor; (b) music played an integral role in helping BCIs move toward an integrated identity; and (c) individual relationships served as vital tools to dismantle or promote separation/segregation. Participants were able to identify a meaningful experience or relationship with an AA that either encouraged identification with their own ethnic group or encouraged identification with the Black racial group (i.e. AAs). The results of the pilot study helped illustrate the role of relationships with AAs and AA culture as a pivotal aspect of BCIs' identity development and demonstrated that it is possible to study racial and ethnic identity as separate dimensions of BCI acculturation, which then informed the proposed model.

Research Design and Rationale

Racial and ethnic groups are socially constructed phenomena that help to inform individuals' identity formation, whereas racial identity and ethnicity are people's manners of responding to the social constructions. Therefore, social constructivism serves as an appropriate interpretive framework by which to study and analyze data on BCIs' racial and ethnic identity development. Furthermore, social constructivism posits that

individuals make meaning by way of their interactions with other individuals and with their environment (Kim, 2006), which seems analogous to the way that Black immigrants construct their racial and ethnic identities. According to Kim, social constructivism assumes that learning, knowledge, and reality are products of human activity that are socially and culturally informed. Learning, knowledge, and reality for BCIs are perhaps socially and culturally constructed because it is through their acculturation experiences that BCIs come to understand how their identity, their relationships, and their opportunities in the US differ from those in their home country.

Given the tenets of social constructivism and the purpose of this research, which was to understand the racial and ethnic identity development of BCIs in relation to their experiences with AAs, I selected narrative theory and analysis as the most appropriate qualitative research method. Narrative data are “spoken or written text[s] giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions” of interest to the researcher (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). Narrative theory and research methodology is also best for collecting and analyzing in-depth stories from individuals as defined by a particular context or theoretical construct, such as culture, time (i.e. zeitgeist), and place (Creswell, 2013). When speaking to BCIs, it was important to have in-depth conversations about their experiences with issues of race, ethnicity, identity, and AAs, in order to acquire some understanding of how they came to see themselves.

When using narrative research methodology one gathers stories from participants about their lived and told experiences (Creswell, 2013). The stories may be (a) a co-construction between participants and the researcher through dialogue/interview, (b) a product of a performance meant to convey a message, and/or (c) simply a story told to the

researcher from the participants' lived experiences (Riessman, 2008). According to Creswell, narrative stories allow individuals to talk about their own experiences, which help to inform the researcher about a construct that has significance for the researcher's theory; in this case, BCI individuals' perceptions of their racial and ethnic identities as they relate to their experiences with AAs/ AA culture. Understanding how BCIs' see themselves is critical to this research. Therefore, one-on-one interviews were the primary source of data collection for this study, although narrative research permits the use of multiple data sources.

Interviews were chosen as the primary data source for this study because the goal was to understand the personal experiences of BCIs following a specific event (i.e., post migration) rather than chronicling their entire life story or personal experiences that are not germane to the study. Interviews also potentially helped limit the extent of interpretation needed to understand the participants' stories because interviewing permitted the researcher to ask follow-up questions in order to improve clarity by revisiting points that may have been unclear originally. Interviewing also allowed for questions to be modified throughout the data collection process, soliciting information from participants that addressed gaps in the overall conceptualization of BCI acculturation. Through the use of interview questions about participants' experiences before immigrating, after immigrating, and presently, thoughtful analysis supported by memoing (i.e., the researcher's critical thoughts about the data), helped determine themes and turning points in the immigrants' stories about their acculturation experiences (Saldaña, 2016).

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

The participants were Black Caribbean immigrant volunteers ($N=9$), who somewhat met the following criteria: (a) at least 18 years old, (b) identified as Black, (c) were born and raised in a majority Black Caribbean country, (d) lived at least half of their life in their country of origin, (e) had parents who were also born and raised in the same majority Black Caribbean country, and (f) lived in the US for at least four years. Nine of the 10 potential participants, who reached out to the principal investigator, were included in the BCI sample. The participants consisted of an equal distribution of men ($n=4$) and women ($n=5$). BCI participants were from Haiti ($n=3$), Jamaica ($n=4$), Guyana ($n=1$), and Trinidad ($n=1$). Participants' mean age was 40.3 years (range 27 – 64), and they immigrated to the US at an average age of 13.78 years (range 8 – 19 years). Participants reported various reasons for immigration, such as the political climate of their countries of origin, family distress, desire for better economic opportunities, parental plans about BCIs' educational future, and in some cases there was a lack of transparency about what prompted the move. Participants immigrated to one of the following major metropolitan areas, Brooklyn, or Long Island, NY; Greater South Florida; or Boston, MA.

For purposes of the present study, the Caribbean was defined as countries surrounding the Caribbean Sea (e.g., Haiti, Jamaica, and Bahamas) as well as some countries bounded by the Atlantic Ocean (e.g., the Bahamas and Turks, Caicos Islands). *Black countries* were defined as those within the African Diaspora. The African Diaspora

refers to countries in the Caribbean that are a consequence of historic movements by African people (e.g. transatlantic slave trade or mass migration).

Determining inclusion. Some of the sample did not exactly meet the inclusion criteria, but were included if most of their characteristics would allow them to provide a perspective informed by their having lived in the US and a Caribbean country.

Exceptions were made for participants not born in their country of origin and/or who did not live half their life in either the US or their country of origin.

Two of the participants were not born in their respective Black Caribbean countries, but they indicated that their place of birth was not their families' country of residence at the time. They also stated that they were born in either the US or US Virgin Islands for most likely citizenship purposes and therefore do not consider their places of birth to mean anything in particular about their identity. Neither participant remained in their respective birth countries after being born and returned to their family's country of origin to be raised. As a result, both of those participants were included in the study because they were primarily raised in their respective countries of origin and have no personal recollection of having ever lived elsewhere. Additionally, participants were infants and not in their birth countries long enough to have adopted a cultural or racial identity affiliated with said country that could have otherwise impacted the results of this study.

Four of the nine participants had not lived at least half of their lives in their countries of origin. It was necessary for participants to have spent a notable portion of their lives in their country of origin to assure that they had adequate socialization in one location prior to being socialized in the US. Through participant screenings this PI

learned that *half of one's life* was not required for an individual to be adequately socialized to their country of origin and that the BCIs could define themselves and their degree of socialization. When interviewed, all four BCIs stated that they considered themselves to have been raised in their respective Caribbean countries, to have adopted the cultural norms and values of their country, and they identified as immigrants to the US. Given their narratives, these participants were also included in the BCI sample.

One participant was excluded from the analyses after she had completed the interview because, although she understood that America racialized her as Black, she identified as multi-racial and multi-ethnic which played a notable role in her acculturation experience. As a result, her acculturation narrative was incongruent with the ways that the remainder of the sample responded.

Measures

Measures used to collect data were (a) a demographic data sheet (*appendix A*), (b) semi-structured interview schedules (*appendix A*), and (c) researcher memos.

Demographic data sheet. This questionnaire was verbally administered to participants following their completion of the informed consent. To make sure that participants met the inclusion criteria regarding demographic characteristics, they were asked to report their age, race, sex, gender, ethnic group, primary language and comfort communicating in English. Because the focus of the study was first-generation BCIs, they were also be asked to indicate their country of birth, their mother and father's place of birth (or primary guardians), their home country (i.e., country of residence before immigrating to the US), and their age when they immigrated to the US. Given the nature of the interview to follow, it was also important to find out the reasons for participants'

relocations to the US, their length of time living in the US, the cities where participants resided, profession/ employment, and demographic characteristics of their neighborhood (i.e., dominant race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and housing options in the community). Demographic questions were administered orally to begin building rapport between the participant and the principal investigator.

Interviews

The PI conducted 30 – 90 minute interviews with all the participants in one of the geographical areas in which they currently resided. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 BCIs. The purpose of the in-depth narrative interview was to provide Black Caribbean immigrants the opportunity to reflect on their own racial and ethnic acculturation experiences with African Americans. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use unplanned follow-up questions to improve clarity and to modify questions to address gaps in the data. According to Shank (2006), in-depth interviews can create “new insights and forms of awareness for the participants” (p. 47), and these new insights were an essential part of the research process. Thus, the in-depth interviews offered the researcher “access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provide[d] a way to understand the meaning of that behavior” (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). The interviews in the present study provided the opportunity to place BCIs’ self-reported behaviors and experiences into a sociocultural context, while also facilitating the researchers’ understanding of BCIs’ positions and attitudes regarding their experiences and interactions with AAs in the US as such informed their racial and ethnic identity.

Memos

In addition to interviews, writing memos served as an integral part of the data collection and analysis processes because doing so led to a “richer and more powerful explanation of the setting, context, and participants” (Janesick, 2011, p. 148). A memo is a written account, largely conceptual, of a researcher’s reflections and thought processes throughout data collection and analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Memos were brief, and were meant to synthesize data into analytic meaning as opposed to providing a summary of the data (Miles et al., 2014). Memo-writing was also a primary source for helping this researcher make sense of raw data generated from in-depth interviews (Polit & Beck, 2006). Moreover, it started and sustained this researcher’s construction of ideas and initial hypotheses. Although memos are subjective, they allowed the PI to think reflectively about each interview, and the written document served as a snap-shot of this researcher’s thought processes at a given stage of the research and facilitated an understanding of this researcher’s perspectives that were held and why this researcher made certain analytic decisions. Such a record decreased this researchers’ need to go over old ground, but facilitated reconsideration of previous thought processes or location of analytic themes that would otherwise have been lost (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008, p. 71). Charmaz (2014) posited that once a memo is written, it also becomes data that then can be used as part of the data analysis process.

Reflectivity

As the principal investigator, I aspired to understand and describe the types of experiences of BCIs that encourage them to identify either more racially, ethnically, equally, or neither after critical or meaningful encounters with AAs and AA culture

during their immigration transition to the US. Taking into consideration the sensitive nature of such an inquiry, I found it imperative to illustrate my positionality and the possible influences it might have had on my data collection and interpretation of interviewees' responses. To fulfill this goal, I incorporated into this reflexivity section self-observations from the memos that I wrote during my data collection and analysis.

I share with my participants, a BCI immigrant history of transitioning to the US. To provide me (i.e., the principal investigator) with more opportunities for success, my mother and I immigrated to the US when I was six years old. During my formative years in the US, I understood myself to be an outsider who came to this country because of the political turmoil in my home country, rather than a desire to be American. My identity was primarily rooted in my ethnicity: I was Haitian, not African American or American. This is a theme that I saw present in many Haitian participants in particular, "being explicitly or implicitly told to maintain a separated identity." This decision to promote one's ethnic identity over an assimilated identity was interpreted as either a way to differentiate oneself from AAs due to stereotypes Haitians held and/or in an effort to "hold onto one's sense of identity because the choice to leave one's home country was not their own." My memos about this topic illustrated for me the ways in which my own immigration story potentially spotlighted an underpinning of my participants' immigration stories that may not have been overt. A desire to remain connected to "home" or a place that made them feel known or seen, as opposed to simply a rejection of AA-ness. Yet my own need to hold on to my own ethnic identity may have led me to over-emphasize the salience of such issues for my participants.

Over the years, I have had many experiences with AAs and AA culture that further contributed to the maintenance of my ethnic identity. Living in Brooklyn, New York, I often found myself at odds with AAs in instances where I was either bullied for being Haitian or I saw behaviors that affirmed stereotypes that I had been taught (either directly by family or indirectly through the media). But much of this changed during high school when I participated in a pre-college program that taught me about the Harlem Renaissance and the history of Blacks in America. It was the first time that I made friends with AAs and began to see all the things that made AA culture unique, admirable, and in some ways similar to my own culture. From that point forward, I identified myself first by my race, and second by my ethnicity. The trajectory of my personal racial identity development is what brought me to this work and these research questions, but also affects the ways in which I frame this work and understand its findings.

Many participants told stories that sounded similar to my own. My memos have a recurrent theme of statements such as, “being bullied by AAs; being rejected by AAs; not being able to relate to AAs; not feeling like she/he belonged to the AA group” as well as “a change in relationship with AAs; learning about AA history as a sparking empathy or serving as a turning point in BCIs relationships with AAs.” The first set of memos demonstrate a typical experience of school children being unkind to those who are different, but particularly to BCIs feeling like their ethnic difference was the impetus for their rejection or mistreatment. An experience that would understandably make it challenging to assimilate to AAs, if BCIs determined AAs to be the source of their distress. The second set of memos illustrated for me the malleable, but at times resistant nature of acculturation strategies. For many participants, there was a shift, but for others,

there was a resistance to shift their acculturation strategy because of their early hurtful experiences with AAs. So even in instances where empathy and understanding was acquired for AAs, some BCIs were still resistant to identifying with AAs.

Evaluating the previously stated memos helped me reflect on how I personally came to wonder about the impact on BCIs' racial and ethnic identity as it relates to their interpersonal experiences with AAs over their lifetimes. As I read through the participants' stories I looked for points of change in either how BCIs narrated their identity or in the language they used to describe AAs (e.g., we, us, them, they). Because of my own experiences, I was more alert to these, at times, subtle shifts in narration or language that unconsciously represented BCIs' racial and ethnic identity change(s) over time.

Due to a variety of factors, the stories of participants in this study were similar and dissimilar from my story, but some constructs were consistent. The participants are all Black and from a Black Caribbean country. In these Caribbean countries, race (but not necessarily colorism) was not a primary (or acknowledged) aspect of their identity in their countries of origin, given that the racial make-up of the Caribbean countries included in this study is predominantly Black. The participants primarily understood themselves as ethnic beings when they arrived in the US, who had come to a country that was not their own. Yet at some point, the BCIs became aware of their in-group membership with Black people (AAs) as a racial group, often due to "shared experiences of oppression" or "interactions with AAs." Nearly every participant explained that they learned through one experience or another that their ethnicity was inconsequential and that their race was what mattered in the U.S. context. Although I noted in my memos that

“conceptually, BCIs [at the time of the interview] saw themselves as Black/AA because of the racialized U.S. context... but did not necessarily identify with AAs,” which I believe was more of an intrapsychic acculturation, given BCIs’ new social location, rather than an interpersonal acculturation, which would be marked by behavioral changes such as BCIs’ taking on the values, beliefs, attitudes, and/or motives, and relationships associated with AAs.

Participants also learned that in the US, the Black racial group is synonymous with the AA ethnic group on a societal level, an understanding that was related to how BCIs chose to identify, particularly those who were “mindful of separating the Black racial group from the AA ethnic group.” While exploring these concepts I was mindful not to impose my beliefs about what constituted racial or ethnic group membership, although I was aware which participants used my shared language and which ones did not.

The experiences of the participants also diverged from mine many times based on their (home) country’s individual history with colonialism and imperialism, calling forth a stronger or weaker identification with race or ethnicity. Participants’ experiences also diverged from mine when they came from countries with multiple ethnic groups or racial groups that further divided access to power and privilege, as well as their membership in those groups. Although “few to no participants acknowledged the role of race or ethnicity in the inequitable socioeconomic stratification of their country.” A point that I was careful to state in the results but not to attribute undue meaning.

Additionally, participants who held membership in either ethnic and/or socioeconomic groups with power in their country, differentially acculturated based on

their positive or negative experiences with AAs/AA culture. The context of participants in terms of socioeconomic status, neighborhood demographics, language ability, accent, gender, U.S. zeitgeist at the time of immigration, and condition of their relocation (voluntary vs. involuntary) also played a role in the types of interactions that they had with AAs/AA culture as well as how they interpreted those interactions. A notable factor was how “accents identified them [BCIs] as different from AAs,” which influenced their interactions with AAs and their acculturation experiences as a whole.

It is also important to note that I believe that an integrated identity, where race and ethnicity are both valued (with BCIs identifying with AAs as members of the same racial group), is a more advanced response to acculturation, as compared to a separation or assimilation (i.e., valuing only one’s ethnicity or race) response to acculturation. Believing that an integrated identity is more advanced, is rooted in the theories that guide my work, as well as my personal development and experiences. Consequently, I was mindful of my thoughts/reactions throughout the data gathering and analysis process, so that my biases would not color my interpretations of participants’ stories. I monitored my potential biases by remaining in communication with my advisor and discussing my thought processes throughout data collection and analysis. Discussing my thought processes allowed me to reflect on my beliefs and assess the ways in which they may have influenced my work, while also giving space for my advisor to highlight for me the biases of which I may not have been aware.

Procedures

Participants were recruited through undergraduate and graduate level collegiate listservs and paper fliers distributed on various college campuses in Boston, South

Florida, and New York City. Additional recruitment occurred on non-university affiliated listservs and social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Craigslist) consisting of Black people in the Boston, South Florida, and New York City area. These three cities were chosen because they consisted of the highest populations of Caribbean immigrants in the US according to the Migration Policy Institute (U.S. Census Bureau 2014; American Community Survey, as cited in Zong & Batalova, 2016).

Potential participants initially contacted the principal investigator (PI) via email (using an email address specifically created for this study) and underwent a preliminary screening by phone (using a Google phone number that is not connected to the principal investigator's personal phone) to determine their eligibility for the study. If potential participants met the inclusion criteria based on the phone screening, they were asked to schedule an in-person interview. Interviews were conducted in participants' homes, or at private tables in public coffee shops that facilitated comfort and privacy. Although some meetings were in a public place, participants' responses were not likely audible to others due to the distance between others and ourselves.

Prior to conducting the interview, participants were asked to give informed consent and, if they agreed (all agreed), they were assigned a random computer-generated ID number that was used for their data collection. Informed consent documents were the only documents with participants' names, and questionnaires and interview data were stored separately from the Informed Consent. The PI also refrained from using participants' names during the interview so that they would not be on the audio recording, and if any other names were said, they were omitted from the transcript.

Once given a random computer-generated ID number, participants were asked questions from the demographic questionnaire as a way of beginning to build rapport. After the demographic questionnaire was completed, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interview that was audio recorded to facilitate transcription. To facilitate participants' anonymity, interviewees were not video recorded.

Following the interviews, the PI wrote memos to record her initial thoughts, reactions, notes, and all other relevant data points. Memos were categorized by participants' anonymous ID numbers and securely stored with participants' anonymous data. Participants' anonymous demographic data and the PI's memos were entered into a password-protected document on Boston College's (BC) secure servers. Participants' anonymous interview recordings were transcribed within three weeks of the interview date and then the transcripts were entered into the same password-protected document on BC's secure server. Original audio recordings of participants' interviews were destroyed immediately after auditing. Informed consent documents were not uploaded to the BC server, but were kept in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked room on BC's campus.

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were given a \$5 Starbucks gift card as a thank you for their participation. Participants were also given the option to be contacted by the PI via email if they wanted general information about the results of the study.

Interviews were conducted and audio recorded during the spring of 2019. All interviews were transcribed by the principal investigator or one of two graduate research assistants (graduate assistants did not conduct interviews). The principal investigator and the graduate assistants, to assess accuracy, audited one another's interview transcripts.

The graduate assistants experienced some challenges in understanding the BCIs' accents and consequently made incorrect decisions about what they believed that they heard on the audiotape. As a result, all of the transcripts were re-audited by the PI whose personal familiarity with BCIs facilitated her understanding of BCIs' accents.

Ethical Considerations. A major ethical consideration in this study was the citizenship status of the immigrants that I interviewed. For participants who were undocumented, had temporary visa statuses, or were not yet citizens, an interview about their feelings and experiences with Americans, given the contentious immigration policies in the US may have been frightening. Therefore, I reassured participants by not asking about their citizenship status and informing them that all data were securely stored and de-identified to ensure additional safety precautions. None of the participants' names were recorded anywhere outside of their consent forms which were kept separate from any memos. Additionally, audio recordings were destroyed after they were transcribed and only random computer-generated ID numbers were used on all participants' data (e.g. memos, transcriptions, and demographic questionnaires).

Participants, regardless of citizenship status, may have experienced some distress as a result of reflecting on their sense of self and identity. The risk of this was made clear during the informed consent and participants were given contact information for culturally competent mental health professionals that they could reach out to for support.

Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

Participants' ($N=9$) interviews were individually analyzed to determine the common themes that explained their immigration experiences, interactions with AAs and AAC, and, for some of them, various acculturation strategies used to navigate their racial and ethnic identity development. The analysis of participants' interviews are presented individually in order to illustrate the unique acculturation experiences of each BCI and the complexity of the types of experiences that informed their acculturation strategies. Culturally congruent pseudonyms are used for each participant. Each analysis begins with a summary of the participant's immigration to the US, which includes age at time of immigration to the US, and the reason for their immigration if known. The respective analyses conclude with each BCI's self-reported current ethnic and racial identity as well as the researcher's interpretation of their acculturation outcome.

The purposes of the narrative analyses are to elucidate the interpersonal interactions BCIs report having with AAs and AAC throughout their time in the US, and the subsequent impact those interactions had on BCIs' racial and ethnic identity. Narrative analysis was ideal for the present study because individuals do not objectively recite their histories, rather they interpret and refract their past (Riessman, 2005). Therefore, when BCIs shared their experiences in the interviews, they infused meaning and their reflections into the stories. The meaning and reflections BCIs included in their narratives provided earnest information about BCIs' sense of identity throughout their acculturation. Narrative analysis permitted this researcher to extricate the major thematic

elements of each participants story and across participants, in order to understand the intersection of BCIs' racial and ethnic identity and acculturation.

Moreover, the analysis aimed to highlight potentially confounding factors that consciously or unconsciously influenced BCIs' acculturation strategies. For example, BCIs' perceptions of AAs before moving to the US, as well as BCIs' perceptions of how AAs view BCIs' culture. In the analyses, I also aimed to tease apart the role in BCIs' racial identity development of shared oppression with AAs from the role of interpersonal interactions with AAs. Narrative analysis allowed for the evaluation of the content and function of participants' narratives in order draw more accurate meaning and conclusions. Given the purpose of the analysis, the themes presented in each participant's analysis and across the participants were selected because they helped provide the context of BCIs' racial and ethnic identity development over time.

Participants' results are organized by acculturation outcomes to facilitate understanding of the nuanced differences across acculturation strategies/outcomes. Based on my narrative analyses, participants that I determined had a separated acculturation outcome, primarily ethnic identification, will be presented first, followed by participants with an integrated acculturation outcome, equal racial and ethnic identification. No participants were determined to have assimilation or marginalization acculturation outcomes. The participants' results aside from the two groupings are presented in no particular order.

Roseline: Separated Identity

Roseline and Immigration

Roseline was a 27-year-old woman who was born in Massachusetts, but was raised in Haiti. Roseline immigrated to the US when she was 14 years old due to “a lot of political unrest.” She reported that “it wasn’t my choice” to move, but “my parents sent me here to live with my aunt and go to school.” Roseline continued by saying that it was a surprise to her when she learned that she would be living in America. While visiting family in Boston one summer, her parents, without notice said, “hey, put on an outfit, we are going to interview at schools.” Roseline said, “I didn’t plan on living in America,” but before she realized it, she had tested into the 11th grade and began attending a school where she recalls being “one of three Black people.”

She described her transition as “really rough” and feeling “angry” because she “didn’t quite understand why the transition was happening” and she was placed in “an environment [that was] not very diverse and it was the first time that I was going to school [that was taught] in primarily English.” Despite speaking English and having visited the US previously, Roseline still found her transition to be taxing and isolating because she was also, for the first time, without her nuclear family, who all went back to Haiti after enrolling her in school.

Racial Identity in the U.S. context

Roseline’s academic environment was the first time she developed an awareness of her race.

I had never been [the] “other” before and ... it was the first time that I realized that I was Black. It’s not that I didn’t know I was brown, I have a mirror I can very

clearly see that my skin is brown. But that didn't really mean much to me because everyone around me was brown.... and so, to now constantly be Black and then to have sort of things that were associated with that identity put onto you and also feeling like I needed to learn so much about the culture. Because I think that was the other thing too where I was like sure I'm Black now, but there are so many things that I don't know.

Understanding what it meant to be Black in the U.S. context was a complex experience for Roseline because "I knew I didn't want to blend in because I just couldn't, but figuring out how to carve a space for myself." She asserted, "I think I went through this identity crisis which I might still be going through" because there are still moments in which she finds that she does not meet the expectations that come along with [being] Black in America. "Even to this day—recently, I was in a car with a friend and she mentioned, there was a song playing and it was an Anita Baker song and I didn't know, and it was like "Oh we're going to revoke your Black card" and I was like "Okay, to be fair, I grew up in Haiti and I didn't listen to Anita Baker." Roseline's experiences illustrate moments in which she is "othered" by White people for being a minority and moments in which she is "othered" by AAs for not knowing what is expected of her as a member of their racial group.

During Roseline's first Black History Month, she remembers her university serving soul food ("fried chicken, greens, and mac and cheese") in the cafeteria in celebration and a friend becoming upset because of the "stereotypes that are associated with food." Roseline remembers thinking, "what's the big deal? It's just food and I love fried chicken, like everybody loves fried chicken, right?" Which eventually led to a

“larger conversation that I had never been privy to where they talked about food, what they ate back home, their culture,” which helped her “learn about African American culture.” Although it did not contribute to a feeling of connection,

...it made me feel like I didn’t belong, but it made me feel like I wanted to learn more about it. Because I think- sort of when I think about the African American community, I never want to pretend like I belong. I don’t speak African American English. There are a lot of things I don’t know. So, I never want to feel like I am taking on this persona to fit in. But I am Black. And so, I think there’s this sense of wanting to belong.

Balancing the meaning of racial group membership and ethnic differences is important to Roseline, but this continues to contribute to “a disconnection with the African American community” being that the Black race and the AA ethnic group are synonymous in the U.S. context.

African American and Haitian Differences

Roseline’s perceptions of AAs were that “they were lazy and loud, and underachieving, and ... [had] not taken opportunity of—the US was the land of opportunity and so they had not taken advantage of this opportunity that they were given.” To her family, the inequality in Haiti was a result of Haiti being a “poor country... but if you live in the US there is no excuse for you not to be successful.” Bolstering the notion that AAs were not only unsuccessful but personally responsible for their lack of success and that she needed to differentiate herself as an ethnic minority.

Roseline’s desire to distinguish herself from AAs was also rooted in some of the messaging she recalls receiving from her family.

Like a lot of Haitian folks and I don't think this is specific to Haitian folks, I think it's to a lot of Black immigrants. You kind of move to this country being told by your elders you're not African American. You are whatever your ethnicity is. So, I very much heard that when I was home where they [said] you're not African American you are Haitian. And it was like African Americans are lazy, they don't work, they don't do well in school, that is not you. So, I think like I definitely had internalized a lot of that where I think like I was like oh, no, no, no, no, no. Even when they had those boxes where it said African American, I would just check "other" and write Haitian. So, it wasn't until college, I started checking that box.

As a BCI, Roseline was expected to and wanted to differentiate herself from AAs because of the disparaging belief systems she had been taught about AAs. Navigating this desire to not be associated with the harmful stereotypes associated with AAs while also trying to experience a sense of inclusion with other Black people contributed to confusion Roseline had about her identity, which served as a point of distress during her acculturation process.

Additionally, Roseline states that AAs have not always had a positive perception of Haitians. Noting that AAs believe Haitians to be "dirty, poor, hungry, willing to sort of stab each other in the back if they need something," but see them as having "valor, honesty, integrity and like mysticism." Roseline also says, "I think they associate that we are aloof in the sense that they think we are better than them, but then I think on the flip side, there are a lot of Haitians who do (laughs)." Roseline explains, "I think African Americans have an ever-changing relationship with my culture, like with Haitians specifically. I think right now, we are in this period where like being Zoe [sic], is

popular.” Public regard, how an ethnic group is viewed by a society of Haitians, also appeared to contribute to Roseline’s acculturation experience and by consequence, strategies. Believing that AAs had an unfavorable impression of Haitians may have fueled Roseline’s commitment to the stereotypes she heard about AAs in an effort to unconsciously uplift her own group.

Acculturating with African Americans

Roseline credits her experiences in college to changing her perceptions about “the regular Blacks [AAs], versus the like not regular Blacks [Black immigrants].” She was able to “pinpoint the moment where it chang[ed],” recalling a social event, Roseline elaborates,

there was a Caribbean club party my Sophomore year and we invited students from the neighboring schools, and one of the police officers—and so it was like a bunch of Black people in the dining hall, and at one point one of the police officers, I guess felt overwhelmed or threatened, and he decided to like start pepper spraying people. I got caught in the crossfires.... I think a lot of times it’s hard for people to understand things, until it happens to them. And I like don’t know why, but that was the first time where it was like, they’re not going to stop and ask you “Are you Haitian? Oh please go on your merry way,” Haitian? Clean. Like you are just, you are one in a sea of many. And then I also started a lot of conversations for us about, what it meant to be Black, and so it was the first time that I owned Blackness and like I stopped straying away from the African American label.

This event inspired several conversations with AAs and other Black immigrants that helped Roseline understand her Blackness in an American context with regard to privilege and discrimination.

I guess my views changed in the fact that I started recognizing that my path here was paved by people I still called lazy, because I am standing on the shoulders of the African Americans who fought in the civil rights movement, who were bussing people for Montgomery etc. like I didn't just—I had a leg up in a sense, where it was like there were people who were already fighting the fight and then I came in having access to all these things that they fought for. And I also needed to recognize that I also came in with a certain level of privilege, you know from where I came from I had access to education, I had access to resources. So, I stopped seeing this whole like they're lazy, and they are just uneducated, and they just don't want anything for themselves, and started understanding a little bit more about the intricacies of what it meant to be Black in this country.

Roseline's experience of discrimination highlighted for her the ways in which her ethnic identity did not protect her from racial discrimination. Inspiring a multitude of conversations and a historical exploration about the meaning of Blackness and the saliency of race in the US. Roseline began to see herself as benefiting from and a part of the AA ethnic group, and by consequence, the greater Black racial group. Following the sharing of this story, Roseline used the word "we" when discussing AAs in response to a question about what AAs value, "creativity is one of them. I just feel like we move the culture forward. Look at me saying we! (laughs)." Roseline's use of the term "we" may have been inspired by a feeling of linked racial fate, precipitated by her retelling of the

incident of racial discrimination she experienced in her undergraduate years and the events that followed. Linked racial fate and shared experiences of oppression often contribute to shared racial identification with AAs.

Racial Identification with African Americans

Roseline's acculturation process and learning to see herself as a part of the AA community came with feelings of anxiety and internalized racism.

So, being called the N word by [someone in] a passing car and sort of like, feeling unsafe, or like having anxiety around sort of like how do I—there are certain spaces where I don't go to, or certain spaces that I am weary of. Um I think that's something that I was never, never aware of before moving here. Also, sort of feeling this need to like be extra, ...where I find the need to tell people what I do so that they won't think I am just this like good for nothing just kind of like lazy bum and this goes again into still buying into certain stereotypes about what other people think about Black people. Um, so, I think there's a lot of anxiety that I've taken on by moving here because there's this new understanding of what it means to be Black.

For Roseline, understanding what it means to be Black in America comes with fears for her physical and psychological safety, as well as concerns about her future. She adds that she “broke down” when thinking about what it would mean to have children in the US because her “children could just one day walkout and never come back home, because somebody couldn't see them as children.” Roseline notes, “there's a lot of stuff that impacts my mental health and like how I see myself that I've developed later in life because of sort of this new context of living here.” She explains, “how I interact with

Black men and what it means and that I never really had before, and I think there's also feelings about, like not being worthy, that I also didn't have before that. I feel like I am struggling with because I feel like the message I received here is, "You're not good enough in like so many different ways." As Roseline came into adulthood in the US and began to identify with AAs, she also began to internalize the harmful stigmas and devaluing tropes that are often ascribed to AAs, particularly AA women.

Roseline recalls a memorable conversation she had with an AA man she dated. He was the first person I had ever met who did not know his father because his father had been in jail his entire life. So, I guess I remember that conversation being really memorable, and I probably said some things that were not great....so then I relayed the conversation to my mother who then was like, break up with him because his daddy's not in the picture and that's a terrible reason because this man is great.

Roseline acknowledges the internal challenges she experienced as a result of this interaction because "I was like probably 23 by then, so I think that this was after I thought I had done all this work, and I thought I had done all this like understanding of things," but she still found herself feeling "disconnected" because she "could not relate to any of it." It was the first time she had an intimate relationship with someone whose life experiences differed so much from hers and she had trouble connecting: "I think there's a difference between empathizing and sympathizing and I couldn't do either." Despite her efforts up until that point to see herself as a part of the AA community and understand the intergenerational impact of the "13th Amendment, and [the]school to prison pipeline and

mass incarceration,” she still found herself feeling disconnected, when an AA- stereotype affirming situation arose.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Roseline admits that she still sometimes has thoughts that affirm stereotypes she has held in the past about AAs, but she is more aware now and examines those judgements.

I would love to say I am free of biases and like I never have any prejudices or stereotypes! That’s not true. I think I still sometimes catch myself like playing into respectability politics and so I still sometimes... I’ll see somebody and just be like, oh do you have to be so loud? ... yeah so, I think there’s still—I still have to catch myself. I think it’s different now where before it was sort of like I would put that label on someone and was like yep that feels good and I’ll just walk away. And now I try to interrogate that feeling.

For Roseline, the process of challenging the belief systems she learned about AAs is ongoing, despite her understanding of AA history and her personal experiences of discrimination, because it requires a consistent critical examination of her thoughts.

Roseline’s current acculturation strategy involves understanding her racial identity as a unifying group membership with AAs, while also aiming to maintain a non-prejudiced different ethnic identity from AAs.

I am very purposeful in identifying as Black. So, I don’t identify as African American not because I’m like oh I am different from you but because I want to respect that they have a very different experience of what it means to live here and have their parents and grandparents live here, and have a very different

history that I will never be able to understand. And so, I don't want to feel like I am trying to colonize that and be like yeah we are the same kind of thing. But I do think that we are all Black and there is a shared experience in that.

Roseline acknowledges that this has been a growth point for her because she was used to “conflating Black and African American,” but understands now that she can see herself as part of the AA community because of the shared experience of being Black in America, without diminishing her Haitian identity. Additionally, “I don't think that this country particularly views me differently as African Americans and so I stopped viewing myself as different [from] them.” Roseline goes on to explain how her shared experiences of oppression play a role in her identification with AAs.

...it's basically stories of trauma, issues of trauma that have made me feel more a part of the African American community, but it's also because how I felt when I watched those stories, or when I am at protests or marches, or talking about how do we mobilize? That's where I felt the sense of community, I recognize there are different experiences, I recognize that I'll never have the same frame of references, but at the end of the day they are the people that I am in community with, and they are the people who have this Black experience of living here with me.

For Roseline, the shared experience of being Black in America is a notable factor in her feelings of belonging in the AA community. She also contends that the context of the day, each day, influences which community she feels more aligned with

I would say I feel more connected to my Haitian folks, partly because I live with a Haitian....So, it depends on what's happening in the world that day and what

language I wake up speaking. So, if my first interaction of the day, usually means I am speaking like Creole, I probably sort of feel like I have [a]very Haitian day....but then like I think on most days I probably feel like I am probably more part of the African American community, mainly because in my head, I'm like, we're all Black. I guess I don't make a difference. I just feel like I'm just Black, blackity, black, black (Laughs).

Being Black is an identity that Roseline carries proudly and one that contributes to a sense of community she has with AAs. Yet, Roseline maintains that her ethnicity is a different identity that, at times, feels like the primary one she wears because it is subsumed in her Blackness.

Summary

Roseline's acculturation strategies shifted over time based on her encounters with AAs. Roseline operated from a separated acculturation outcome currently, but expressed a desire for exploration that indicated a degree of flexibility with regard to the trajectory of her ethnic and racial identity. Roseline shared many experiences with AAs that reminded her that she either was not or could not be a part of the AA community, as well as many experiences that made her feel like she must be a part of the AA community by virtue of being Black. Therefore, if Roseline has additional positive encounters with AAs, her acculturation strategy may eventually move toward an integrated route.

Francoise: Separated Identity

Francoise and Immigration

Francoise is a 27-year-old woman from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She immigrated to the US when she was 19 years-old to attend college. Francoise reported that "it was

always the plan...my parents always said that after high school, I didn't have a choice. I had to come here for college." For Francoise, the transition to living in America "was easier" in some ways and "harder in some ways." She explained that "speaking English every day (laughing)...was one of the hardest thing[s]" because at times "I forget and I randomly start speaking in Creole or French to people." Giving up class privilege also may have been a stressor in Francoise's acculturation. She was used to having hired help in Haiti, whereas not having such help in the US seems to have been a salient aspect of her transition.

Doing everything on my own, that's very different because in Haiti, well we grew up and we were catered to.... We had somebody that was there to clean, we had somebody that was there to cook, and everything. And when I came here it's like, 'alright you have to do everything on your own'. It's not that I didn't know how to do them but having someone there to do it for you is completely different then you doing everything. So I – it took me a while to adjust to that.

Having to become fully self-sufficient was a notable part of her acculturation process potentially illustrating a change in her socioeconomic status due to her residency in the US.

Race, Colorism, Haiti

When reflecting on oppression in Haiti, Francoise framed her perspective in terms of skin color and socioeconomic status. She contended that the disparity in wealth and limited means to change one's financial circumstances contributed to conflict between the haves and have-nots.

[In] Haiti, there is no really [sic] middle class. So, it's either you have it or you don't have it. And people who have it, they constantly look down on people who don't have it." "...even if you are in a situation where you can help them, they [poor people] always try to sabotage your business because overall they're not really helped.

In addition to issues of class, Francoise noted, "there's a lot of colorism" in Haiti, which often influences the way one is treated, although that too can be mitigated by class privileges.

The lighter your skin is, you get treated better....If you are dark-skinned and poor you are going to be treated unfairly. But if you are dark-skinned and you have money then it changes their perception of you a little bit. Even though they would not treat you as well as they will treat other people, but you'll get respected better.

Despite colorism being a notable part of life in Haiti, Francoise contends that class may serve as a protective factor.

Prior to immigrating to the US, Francoise recalled having little understanding of race in the American context. She contended, "I really didn't have an impression of African Americans before coming to the United States" although she was aware of some representations of AAs as "rappers [or] drug dealers" on television. She noted that the "only thing" her mother told her was "just when you come here [US] the way you'll see some of the kids act here, some of the Black kids act here, do not act like that (laughing)." Her family didn't talk about race aside from that comment. Francoise states that in Haiti, "everybody around you is Black," therefore, "I had no understanding of what she [her mother] meant before I moved here." She explained further,

even if someone is like- is foreign in Haiti, once they lived in Haiti, they speak Creole, they're automatically Black. Also in Haiti, if you are not from Haiti, or were not born in Haiti, you visit Haiti, and you don't speak the language, regardless of your skin color, they'll call you White. You get called White regardless of your skin color. So, it's not something that we learned growing up. Thus, according to Francoise, the concept of race as defined in U.S. culture was defined quite differently in Haiti. If race was discussed in Haiti, it was with reference to in-group [Haitian] membership and out-group [White] membership, which were defined by the acquisition of language and, to some extent, cultural practices, as opposed to one's physical presentation or ancestral line.

Acculturating with African Americans

Despite having visited the US prior to migrating, Francoise describes her transition as "a culture shock." The shock seems to have been a result of transitioning from a community oriented culture to an individualistically oriented culture. She noted:

[In] Haiti, there's a sense of community, in the area where you live, you kind of know everybody, everybody knows everyone, your parents know the people that you are hanging out with and everything.... Whereas here I don't see the same sense of community, everybody just, kind of mind their own business. They don't really care about each other as people care about one another in Haiti.

Francoise acknowledged that some unforeseeable factors may impact AA families and communities:

[T]here are situations that do happen that put some people- that people have to like deal with but mainly I see a culture of people just randomly having kids, not

caring-not caring to really have a family, not caring to really have a stable relationship with this person before having kids which was not a thing for me growing up.

Francoise also saw this absence of community in the activities in which people engaged. For her, time with family and eating together is how people [should] connect. What she viewed as the lack of such connection among AAs potentially contributed to a sense of disconnection with AAs who she saw as not being in community with one another. “[AA] people are all about their electronics in everything, whereas in Haiti they tend to take a step back and spend time with family or eat together at a dinner table.” She said,

Even though in Haiti, yes, there were some forms of discrimination, but at the end of the day- like a lot of people, they do have each other’s back.

Here I don’t see that as much” [when comparing Haitians and AAs]. I find that for a community... that is like a minority, people are always fighting each other within that community and that is not something that I can relate to.

Continuing her observations about disunity as being typical of AAs rather than Haitians, Francoise noted,

...like there’s so much divide between people. Like I am not used to, like I grew up in Haiti, I am not used to having people fight each other. Yes, you know there is like discrimination in Haiti but it’s not widespread. It’s not everywhere. So, I was never used to people, like, automatically hating someone else because of their skin color, because of their shade darker than your or a shade lighter than you because in Haiti, when someone asks you, what are you? Like I am Black.” It’s

not I am light-skinned, I am dark-skinned, I am this, I am that. There is not all this, all this, you know, I mean there is colorism, but it's not as blatant as it is here.

Francoise supported her argument about how AAs' differ from Haitians by noting another way in which she recognized lack of community.

[T]hey look up to rappers, instead of looking up to other people who are like ...what I don't condone is a rapper that used to deal drugs before or tried to destroy the community. They would rather support this person rather than support someone that is actually working in the community and that is always making it better.

These belief systems bolstered Francoise's idea that there is not a sense of support or upliftment within the AA community, despite their living in an oppressive environment. Not being able to relate to how AAs respond to adverse conditions may also make it harder for Francoise to identify with AAs. Furthermore, Francoise felt "shocked" that her interests at times distanced her from her AA peers.

I find that, so, the things that I would be interested in, you know, some African Americans I know they would look at me and they would say 'Oh, you must think you're White' because I am interested in certain things that they are not interested in. Also, I have to say, I don't know, maybe it's the difference in culture? But, um, so, when it comes to dating, the type of-- the type of men that I would want to date, African Americans would consider them being like, boring or nerdy, because you know they are interested in certain things that other people are not.

The verbal and/or non-verbal feedback Francoise received about her romantic and personal interests potentially promoted a feeling of disconnection from the AA community. Additionally, she perceived AAs as having “a culture that promotes a lot of drug use” and “I don’t really see a big emphasis on like education here, which I think is pretty bad. So it has gotten better, I have to say from when I moved here. Now I see it a little bit more but before, no.” Therefore, for Francoise, there are a multitude of perceived differences in cultural values, including community support, education, and drug use. All of these perceived differences contribute to her feelings of dis-identification. Which in turn may promote an acculturation strategy of separation.

African American and Haitian Differences

Francoise described AA’s perceptions of Haitians, and at times herself in particular, as being responsible for pushing her away from AAs. Francoise recalled,

...when I first moved here, I started dating someone who was African-American. And his family automatically thought that I was not legal, that I was looking for papers and everything. And there was [sic] all these negative stereotypes that I never heard before in my life (laughing) come out. So, that was a shock. That was a shock.

In that relationship, Francoise was seen as a foreigner and someone who could not be trusted due to that AA family’s stereotypes about Haitians or about her. Her reactions to the family’s stereotypes likely promoted a separation response as an acculturation strategy.

Perceived Stereotypes of Haitians

Francoise attributes some of the stresses in her adjustment to the US, to stereotypes that people hold of Haitians, although it is not clear whether she always holds AAs responsible for them. In addition to her interaction with the AA family, Francoise also asserted

...the stereotypes that people have about Haitians... and the way Haiti is portrayed, really. So, I understand why people have those stereotypes because the way Haiti is portrayed on the news is so horrible. Umm, so at some point, it's like, I'm always that person that says "Yeah, I am from Haiti, whatever" and then sometimes I would get positive responses and sometimes people would look at me like "okay there goes another one". And, umm, it's not always a good feeling. It's not always a good feeling, but that never stopped me from saying that I am Haitian regardless. It's either you're going to like it or not, it's not going to change.

Francoise stated that it was stressful to tell people that she was Haitian because of the array of questions she would have to navigate in response.

I was always very stressed to say where I am from because it's always like when I say I am from Haiti, then comes the question: 'Can you tell us about voodoo?' and I am just like, I just don't like talking about that.... It's not fair for you to assume, that you know? That's what I do. So, um, yeah, people have always, like, stupid questions that you are asking, if "it's true that you guys eat dirt?" I don't like the questions about stereotypes about Haiti (laughing). It's, um, it always get [sic] me like upset and I don't look forward to people asking me these questions.

Francoise coped with the stress of navigating others' stereotypes by limiting her interactions with non-Haitians. "I associated with other Haitians. So, a lot of friends that I have here are from Haiti, they grew up in Haiti as well. So, I feel like it's, umm I don't have to explain (laughing) a lot of things." Francoise described feeling alienated in her interactions with AAs and WAs, which resulted in what may have been a [necessary] acculturation strategy of separation.

African American and Haitian Similarities

When considering the ways in which Francoise's culture is similar to AA culture, she focused on the values of respect for elders, hard work, and AAs' connections with other Black people.

In Haiti and here, like people, well, the Black community really, they respect elders....which I really like." "[AAs are] usually more hard-working than any other (laughing) races I've seen out here....I would say that's why it's similar to the Caribbean community really.

Francoise's interpretation of AA values and work ethic may be most influenced by the degree to which they are similar to those of her own culture. She also described AAs as "very pro-Black" and "willing to support Black-owned businesses," which she considers being "very positive." Francoise may look favorably upon this because it aligns with her own cultural value of supporting members of one's own ethnic group.

Francoise also acknowledged the challenges of being AA in the US, although she did not conceptualize them as her challenges. After moving to the US, Francoise realized "that African Americans are considered a minority here. There is not [sic] a lot of opportunities --like good opportunities-- that are offered to African Americans." Perhaps

understanding the systemic challenges that impede AAs may have contributed to a more contextual perception of AAs which may, in turn, contribute to Francoise's greater identification with AAs.

Additionally, Francoise felt "somewhat more connected" to AAs through music and food. She described positive experiences with AAs when either sharing her food or eating their food, which may have facilitated a feeling of connection.

Music usually connects people. Food as well. And I have to say like, umm, African-Americans are open to, they're always open to, like, they're open to trying like, new cultures, other foods. I think that is something that is very positive and also, the way they cook is not that far from how we cook (laughing) in [the] Caribbean, so. I could say that I was drawn closer.

Similarity in the cultural practice of food preparation helped her feel safer connecting across differences.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

When discussing how she currently identifies, Francoise assumed a perspective in which she is Black, but not AA. "I am Black, and I would always say I am from the Caribbean." She noted that she does not identify as AA because "I wasn't born here so I don't think I have the right to say, yeah, I am African-American." She contends that she does not always have a choice on paper though, "on paper they don't have anything else but African-American (laughing). [So] That is what I would circle." Although she "always mention[s] that I'm from the Caribbean" when people ask, she does state that she sees herself as part of the African American community. She explains that is because, in the US, Black ethnicity is inconsequential.

It just doesn't matter what your background is here. When you are Black, every Black person gets treated the same way. So, it's not like "Ah, are you from the Caribbean, are you from Nigeria? Are you from-like- wherever you're from". It's like "there goes a Black person". We all have the same experiences so it's not – there's no difference.

Francoise's reasoning for seeing herself as a part of the AA community is rooted in a shared marginalization as compared to her rationale for seeing herself as a part of the Black Caribbean community.

Everybody from the Caribbean we pretty much have the same values. Even though we come from different countries, we have a similar history, the food is very similar, of course, language--the language is different, but for some reason we are always drawn to each other. We work well together, and, um, most--most people from the Caribbean are very proud of where they're from...

The contrast between these two answers illustrates that for Francoise, her identification with AAs feels somewhat compulsory due to the systemic racism that pervades American society rather than because of a true kinship or identification, as she appears to describe with other BCIs.

Francoise explained that when she is with other Haitians she feels that they "would understand me better" and in their [Haitians] absence she next feels most comfortable with other BCIs. She said,

with other Caribbean's I feel like-- okay, you know, I could speak English, we could still be able to relate on some things. But for African-Americans not only

there is a language barrier I have to make an effort to understand and then some things that I-- that in my culture would seem ok, I can't voice that.

This language barrier may highlight another reason why Francoise does not identify with AAs. She does not feel understood and/or comfortable in being herself.

Summary

At first glance, it appears that when Francoise chose to identify with AAs or rather Blackness, it was because of her shared experiences with them of racial oppression. Also, she did acknowledge some shared cultural values that make her feel more positively toward AAs. Yet upon closer examination, Francoise's recurrent ruptured interactions/experiences with AAs/ AAC seem to have played a notable role in her separated identification from AAs and maintenance of her Haitian ethnic identity as well as BCI identity more generally.

Adriana: Separated Identity

Adriana and Immigration

Adriana is a 33-year-old woman from Georgetown, Guyana. Adriana immigrated to the US when she was 8-years-old and she contended that "I feel like I was pretty much myself by age 8 and that's when I came here to the states. So, I feel like those were my actual formative years, were in Guyana." Adriana reports that she "didn't really have a choice" about coming to the US and believes her mother brought them here for "more opportunity." Adrianna describes her transition to living in America as difficult because she was often "picked on" and "bullied" for being "different."

Acculturation Strategies

Prior to immigrating to the US, Adriana asserts that she didn't have any understanding of oppression because "I was too young to realize it." She says "it wasn't until I came to the US that I started to see race, and color, and division." When Adriana started school she remembers being "made fun of" for having an accent. "People thought that I was stupid or that I was weak. I remember this one big heavy set girl would always pick on me everyday.... I feel like I was seen as lesser, or less intelligent because I-- you know-- came from a different place." Adriana's experience of being bullied by an AA peer likely served to distance her from identifying with her AA peers, although she asserted "I don't feel like I was stressed".

Adriana's primary acculturation strategy was to change herself to fit in and avoid conflict. An example of this self-change strategy is that Adriana responded to her experience of being bullied because of her accent by learning to turn off her accent and adopt other accents in order to mitigate her differences and at least superficially to assimilate to the culture of whomever she was around.

A lot of people tell me that I don't have an accent now. And I think it's because that was the one thing I did try to change about myself so that people didn't make fun of me anymore. Alright, I'm going to get an education, and if this is going to distract you and me from getting my education, fine, I'll speak like you. Whoever I was around, [I] picked up accents like [snaps fingers] this [snaps fingers]. Around Spanish people, *mira mira* [in Spanish meaning "look, look"]. I picked up whatever accent just to not seem different; so that whatever we were doing we could just focus on doing. It was mostly in school of course. Um Yeah. White

people, hmm. My professional voice is *phew* [sound effect]. People can't tell.

They like where are you from? They can't tell...

Adriana's acculturation strategy varied according to her context and included a degree of performative assimilation in which she changed her accent in order to sound like she was a part of the ethnoracial group she was currently interacting with, but she noted that this performance only occurred at school. "They say that they see that I'm different. I don't want to be different, so let me at least play along with them while I'm with them but soon as I get home, (*in Guyanese accent*) 'aye girly'."

For Adriana, code switching was a necessary strategy that she used so as not to feel "different."

Adriana's linguistic code switching appeared to generalize to all non-Caribbean people. "Even when I'm with other West Indian people, I'll start off first speaking like this [*said in a softer Eurocentric voice*] where people understand me, and once I know they're West Indian, boom the accent comes out." Adriana likely learned through her academic experiences that she could not be herself with non-BCIs, thereby resulting in a separated approach to acculturation, cloaked in performative assimilation as a means of coping.

Adriana reported that she still code switches to avoid judgement and to feel accepted by whichever ethno-racial group she is interacting with at the moment.

You're going to understand me so I can speak and be myself and you're not going to judge me, and you're not going to be like (*said in softer more Eurocentric voice*) excuse me, what did you say? I didn't understand it... So if anything that's probably the only thing that has stuck with me. I mean but it's subconscious... It's

not an oppressing thing like that, it's just something I've learned to do. You know, to cope. Even with Black Americans, I can sound real ratchet, (*in "ratchet" accent*) if I want to. Even down South... I went down there one week, came back sounding like (*in southern accent*) I lived there the whole time. It was just easier to be like, (*in southern accent*) *Hey ya'll*... I picked up the accent within a week. People thought I was from down South, and it was just- I don't know, an innate adaptive ability.

Adriana's adaptive code switching became an instinctual reflex that has allowed her to experience social inclusion with various AA ethnic groups across the US. For Adriana, being able to mimic cultural ways of speaking has served to facilitate more approving interactions with AAs.

Racial Socialization

When Adriana reflects on her life back in Guyana she recalls growing up in a diverse community in which race did not matter to her, but over time her perspective on race and racism in Guyana changed somewhat.

I don't recall me personally ever feeling any kind of issues between anyone.... even the area that I grew up in was very mixed.... Portuguese, Black, Indian, Black, Black, Portuguese (racially identifying neighbors)... So again, I wasn't separated from, I wasn't separated, I didn't grow up in an all Black Guyanese community. You know what I mean? It was predominantly Black, but just my little block alone, had people from all over.... my personal experience was very blended. And we were just people you know... I look back at my birthday party pictures and you see all the different races of people.

Race and its potential social impact was not something Adriana considered or witnessed growing up in Guyana. Therefore, she did not seem to have a racialized schema by which she could better understand her racially informed acculturation experiences.

Adriana now acknowledges that Guyana currently has a racially-stratified society as evidenced by its political landscape.

The political parties, like they are very segregated by race. Like it's kind of crazy... I mean I guess you can say that here too (laughing). There it's more clear cut. That everybody who is this [race], does this or is with that [racially aligned] particular party... Their party's agenda is, is about their people, and putting their people first... They won't say it out right, but that's the connotation... the propaganda they put out there. That, you know, we are a better race, we are better capable.

Although Adriana's childhood memories were diverse and free of discrimination-based racial socialization, she now sees the country she grew up in, in a different light.

Witnessing the extent to which race can function as a political tool in her country of origin may influence the lens through which she views race relations in the U.S. context, and by consequence her racial and ethnic identification.

Racial Socialization

Adriana stated, "it was not until I came here, did I have my first race talk." As a result, she said "I didn't have perceptions" of AAs before immigration. Adriana's exposure to AAs was on television, but at that time she did not distinguish AAs from herself in any notable way outside of a difference in accent. "I would see some of the shows on TV we used to watch like, Different Strokes, like all those old time shows, we

used to watch. I just knew that they had a different accent, but I didn't have any kind of understanding that, oh, they're different. Or that their experience was different." Despite having seen depictions of AAs from U.S. television programs, Adriana did not consciously make any meaning about AAs as an ethnic group, let alone one to which she would soon be acculturating.

Adriana remembers that her first conversation about race happened when she was "in fourth grade" and it was spurred by a commercial about a "doll." To which Adriana noted, "I said to my grandmother that I wish I was this color, pointing to my palm, so that I can get a doll that looks like me. And to me, it was just you know, that doll is this color and I'm not and I want a doll that looks like me." Adriana's grandmother interpreted the statement to mean "oh, you want to be white" which led to

a whole lectures about Black, and race, and that's when I learned about even Indian people in Guyana. And that there's racism between the Indian Guyanese people and the Black Guyanese people and the Chinese Guyanese people and all these other different subsets of our race or culture. I should say culture or country to be more accurate. Like I didn't even see any of that when I was there. It was like, there's a Guyanese person, there's another person. It wasn't separation... it was that year that you know I kind of started to see that oh, we don't- we aren't all the same... it didn't click until that conversation. And then I don't want to say fear set in, but I just started thinking about people differently, and identifying people- identifying with people who looked more like me than just being about everybody else.

When Adriana learned about race in her country of origin, she also learned about discrimination and difference. Understanding these concepts also contributed to a desire to identify with presumably other Black people, Black Guyanese people or BCIs. She expressed her developing awareness as follows;

“I don’t think it was a negative thing, I think it was subconscious.” She explained that her early approach to friendship was “literally [an] elementary way of thinking about, alright who am I going to hang out with?” [She considered] “you look like me, you have dolls at your house that look like me too. Alright let’s go to your house.... you probably cook food like I do, if you come over to my house and have curry you’re not going to be like, ‘what heck is this?’ ... You’re more likely to like the things that I like and do the things that I do because you look like me... that [common appearance and cultural practices] was the basis of... [her] friendship groups” because it was “less to explain. I think that was the one part that I didn’t like, having to explain each and every time where I’m from and why do you talk like that and why do you eat that food?”

These questions seem to have made Adriana feel like she didn’t belong or that her culture was abnormal. Therefore, she looked to befriend those whom she thought would make her feel accepted or understood, fostering a separation acculturation strategy.

Acculturating with African Americans

Initially, Adriana separated her experiences of race from her perceptions of race in the US. For her, her Guyanese ethnicity was how she defined herself. She reported that her opinions about racial and ethnic separation were formed when she came to the US.

“Where I was coming from, I didn’t really have the idea of separation until I got here.”

Adriana explained her early experiences filling out demographic questionnaires,

I go down to the check box and was like, but mom I’m not Black but it doesn’t say Guyanese on here. And she’s like no, check Black, that’s what they mean.

And I’m like, but it doesn’t say Guyanese. Like I didn’t understand that concept.

Of what meant White, what meant Black, like, I’m just Guyanese, that’s what I am.

At that time, Adriana solely identified with her ethnic identity which she was now learning would be subsumed by her racial group membership in the US. Race was an identity category that felt foreign to her and was in conflict with her ethnic identity.

Indicative of her separation of race from culture, Adriana said that when she first learned about AA history, “I felt very bad for them. Not understanding that we were the same in the sense of our, what’s the word, experiences, and you know, atrocities against us.” Learning about the role of slavery in dispersing Africans across the middle passage, including Guyana, led to Adriana developing a certain level of intellectualized kinship between herself and AAs. “They [AA and Guyanese ancestors] rode the same ships. Your ship just took a left and their ship took a right. And that’s the difference between the two of you.” Seeing AAs as having similar histories of slavery could have encouraged a more integrated approach to acculturation.

When reflecting on her first or most memorable experience with an AA person, she recalled the “school bully.”

The big Black chick I was talking about. She was a heavy set girl and she was like the school bully. She bullied everybody. But when I came on the scene, I feel like

everybody else got a break and I got the brunt of her bullying... maybe she thought because I have an accent that I didn't understand or that I didn't speak English or whatever it was. Maybe she thought that she could get more done with me, and because I didn't know the lay of the land, didn't have friends, didn't know to go to the teacher of whatever, that I would end up not reporting or not, I don't know... It was basically just bullying, typical bullying, pushing, making fun of me. 'Why your hair like that?' 'Why you smell like that?' 'Why you eat like that?' It was just more along those lines. I don't want to say that I was stressed, I mean I do remember not wanting to go to school sometimes, or feeling like I don't feel like being bothered by her today. I do remember changing up where I sat because she sat on one end of the room and I would try not to, you know, sit next to her, and if I had to get up and use the bathroom, I take a different route just to avoid her. But like I said, I don't feel like it was to the point that I was long term affected by it... it took that one day where I was just like, I'm done, I've had it... So [I] go up, went to sharpen my pencil, and on my way back she pushed her chair out to like get in front of me, kind of trip me over. So I threatened her with the sharpened pencil (laughing). I was like, you don't come near me one more time (laughing) with the pencil. I don't know, everyone was just like, 'ahhh, the savage is going after her.' Ok, they didn't say that, but it feels like that's how it probably felt.

Adriana's earliest and potentially most formative experience with an AA person came in the form of a bully that chastised her for what she perceived as her ethnic differences and novelty. Although Adriana does not describe this experience as having a "long term"

impact on her with regard to stress or mental health, it may have influenced how she chose to approach interactions with AAs moving forward, promoting a separated identification.

African Americans and Guyanese Differences

Adriana contended that there are many differences between BCIs and AAs, rooted in the experience of her recent immigration. She contrasted the work ethic of Guyanese to her perception of the work ethic of AAs.

Now I feel like we have a different work ethic, and I don't know if that is, if it's, a fact of being an immigrant, we have to work to establish ourselves here and they [AAs] were already here. So I see a difference in our work ethic just because, especially [since] I came here with my family. It wasn't that my mom was here for a few years, we came at the same time and we all worked our ass off at the same time. Like, our uncles, like everyone was working their ass off.

For Adriana, the act of establishing one's self in a foreign country requires a great deal of work ethic which she may not believe is either necessary for or evidenced by AAs. She continued, "it's not just the fact that we're West Indian and we have a different work ethic. It's just, you know our experience is different because we came here at a different time." When comparing AAs and BCIS, Adriana contended:

African Americans who have been here for a long time, their grandma, people like their grandmothers were slaves. They came from nothing and they're still trying to build up their families. And they're still trying to build wealth with who they have, versus us coming and everybody being at kind of the same starting place. And then knowing, hey, we're going to have to work extra hard because

now we're coming and taking jobs... It's a different drive, when you live in a county and you're trying to get up the ladder versus never living in the country and being like, if we're going to make it here, we gotta be like, we gotta go hard, we gotta go extra hard... In that lens I feel like we have a different work ethic and we push more. Again because we left everything that we had behind and started from the ground, whereas some people are-- may already have family who helped them out, or already have a house, or land that they own. They're not really working as hard to get something, because they already have stuff; or at least the semblance of having something... So I feel like the starting line was different, you know. Someone who's been running a long time is probably going to run a little slower than someone who's fresh.

Adriana concedes that AAs and BCIs each experience challenges to finding success in the US, but asserts that those challenges are dissimilar and result in the two ethnic groups responding with a different degree of drive or work ethic to cope with their unique challenge. Given Adriana's perception of the differences in the challenges AAs and BCIs face, she may not always see herself and AAs as engaging with the US in comparable fashions. Moreover, Adrianna did not perceive that AAs viewed her ethnic group's work ethic favorably,

“I think they [AAs] joke about it, but the same hard working thing. That we have like five jobs and (laughing). Probably the same thing, again as a joke, that we're resourceful. We always know somebody that knows somebody that does something.”

Adriana's perceptions of AAs and her interpretation of AAs' perceptions of her cultural group's work values, are consistent with a separated identity in which she prioritized her ethnicity; because being a BCI is the predominant identity by which she believes she is experiencing the US.

Aside from their work ethic, Adriana sees AAs as culturally different "even in the mundane things, like how to eat food." Adriana attributes much of this difference to Guyana being "very rooted in the British ways of doing things." She framed her argument by saying:

"I can't speak for the entire Guyanese race. I can only speak for my family." Adriana explained, "we are very proper, my grandmother still drinks tea with a saucer and a spoon.... manners are very important and that's not something I see with African Americans or that I saw with African Americans. And at first it was like, what do you mean, you don't use a knife and fork when you eat? You eat with a spoon?" To Adriana, the cultural differences extended to her "upbringing,... how we wash clothes, or how you cook, or how you keep your house." Adriana's idealization of her British-influenced cultural practices and disdain for perceived AA cultural practices plausibly supported her inclinations to separate herself from AAs. While continuing to discuss the differences between AAs and Guyanese people, Adriana clarified, "I don't see it as a bad thing, I just understand that we have different experiences and that's why we do things differently." She believes that difference is rooted in each group's experience with and time spent separated from their respective "colonizers."

[The Guyanese were] under, literally under British rule up until, what '64. So it's like, very fresh, that we're kind of branching off in our own thing, whereas the

African Americans' side of things, they've been doing their thing, their own way for hundreds of years. Well, not hundreds, but you know. They've had more time on that course of kind of devising who they [are] separate from their colonizers if you will.

Understanding the unique ramifications of each group's respective history was salient for Adriana because it helped her “think it through” and “instead of it becoming judgment [about AAs], it becomes, understanding.” By distancing herself from judgement, Adriana could potentially interpret the behaviors and experiences of AAs she engaged with, differently than she did initially.

Stereotypes

When considering stereotypes of AAs, Adriana listed some AA stereotypes, but shifted her focus to a critique of AAs' discomfort with her ethnic group's shared stereotype, hypersexuality. As she discussed stereotypes, she interpreted them as natural if they pertained to her ethnic group. Thus, Adriana reported that she knows

the [AA]stereotypes that have been fed to me (laughing)... the stereotypes that have been fed to just about everybody. That they're lazy... that's the biggest one, that they're lazy or unrefined.” She also stated that AAs are “hypersexualized,” similar to “the West Indian community.” Adriana contended that “for the African American experience, twerking [provocative dancing] for them is like (makes ‘shocking’ sound), when for West Indians that's just called dancing. We don't give it specific names... I don't want to say that we're free-er in that sense, but it's something that's celebrated for us versus you know, if you're too hypersexual in African American [culture], it's considered a bad thing.

To Adriana the “experience is different,” when it comes to dancing and how it is discussed, serving as another point of differentiation between BCIs and AAs.

Adriana associates many of her perceptions of AAs with their experiences of colonization and what she believes is their need to define themselves in opposition to how they were defined by their colonizers. She described AAs as being “pride[ful]” as an example of their opposition.

I think again, it is, that wanting to disassociate themselves from their colonizers, and having their own unique identity... So I feel like they have more of a want to identify as a strong Black whatever. Like those are all sayings. Like I never heard of a strong Black Guyanese... But like Black women- it's like, you gunna [sic] know that I'm a strong Black woman [referring to AA women]. But for me it's like, oh I'm Guyanese.

Although Adriana expressed an interpretation of what she believes to be AAs' experience with defining themselves in the racially divisive U.S. context, she does not relate to their experiences because she does not know of Black Guyanese people who resisted their colonization by defining themselves in a similar fashion.

As a BCI, Adriana defined her identity as a collective ethnic identity and relied on her beliefs about the strengths of Guyanese culture to inform her acculturation strategy. “I think because we have a definitive culture that we can point to, like ‘oh, I'm Guyanese.’ It's not as important for us to represent it to everybody... Because I think we already feel separated, [then] when we come here we're told that we're separate.” Feeling like she or her ethnic group was not integrated into the AA ethnic group or greater American culture may also have contributed to Adriana's separated acculturation strategy. It is possible that

Adriana's feelings of exclusion by presumably AAs, led her to believe that she did not have another option with regard to her acculturation.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

When discussing race, Adriana expressed that "race is a bit more important to me right now" because she has a daughter who is bi-racial, "half Colombian, half Guyanese." Adriana reported that "depending on which parent" her daughter is with, determines how "doctors" "will document what- who she is and that's one of my fears. Her having to deal with that, what's the word, dichotomy of her existence." She questioned, "how is she [her daughter] going to identify between the two races essentially?" Adriana expressed, "if I bring her to the doctor... they'll document it as Black or AA. If he takes her, she is White, Hispanic. And I'm like, no, she's both, hi, hello." Adriana's concerns about her daughter have likely influenced how she now sees herself, or rather her daughter, as a racial being and the type of significance she gives to racial and ethnic categories. Adriana presented herself as primarily identifying with her ethnic group and as having had a separated acculturation strategy, although it is unclear whether this is how she would currently describe herself.

The remainder of Adriana's interview was corrupted, and the portion of the interview that directly addressed her current racial and ethnic identity was unavailable. Therefore her racial and ethnic identity change cannot be accurately reported.

Summary

Adriana appeared to illustrate a separated acculturation outcome due to the multiple negative encounters she had with AAs. Adriana may have come to believe that a

separated acculturation strategy was most effective in helping her navigate difficult interactions with AAs. As a result, Adriana remained steadfast in her ethnic identity as being the primary identity of relevance to her, aside from when she considered the role of race for her daughter.

Anya: Separated Identity

Anya and Immigration

Anya is a 30-year-old woman who was born in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but was raised in Trinidad. Anya immigrated to the US when she was 11 years old because “my mom made me,” she didn’t have any choice in the decision. She reported that her family was “supposed to move to England,” but on a visit to see her “sister who was already living up here [in the US],” her mother decided “it was better to stay in the US to monitor my sister.” Anya describes her transition to living in the US as “rough” because “the kids there, they would [be] rather mean.” Anya’s academic experiences were marred by multiple instances of Americans calling attention to her accent because they either liked it or thought that it meant something negative about her abilities or aptitude.

Although Anya tested into “8th grade” when she arrived in the US, school personnel thought the following year, “at 12 years old, in high school. I would not have been emotionally ready, so they put me in the 6th grade.” She remembers that the teachers “didn’t like my accent, so they tried to put me in ESL, like ESOL classes” because “they thought I was- I didn’t speak English.” Anya expressed

no it’s not that I don’t, or I can’t speak English... I speak English and French, but I just chose not to speak because I hate repeating myself. Or I hate people ‘Oh my

God! Say this. Oh my God, say that, Oh my God your accent is so cool.’ I felt like a puppet so I would rather [be] silent.

Anya responded to challenges to her intellect and linguistic fluency with silence, which may have been the first step toward developing a separated acculturation strategy by which she disconnected from non-BCIs or AAs.

Anya also reported that when she first came to the US, she would have “to constantly fight and argue with people about where Trinidad was” because they were unfamiliar with the island. Anya recalled saying,

...it’s not in Jamaica, it’s not in South Africa. So, that was my main thing and then I think educating people on the fact that not every Caribbean island is the same... We don’t all smoke weed, we don’t all say (in *Jamaican accent*) ‘mon’ at the end of every sentence (laughs). We have electricity, we have indoor plumbing, we speak English.

Anya’s experiences of alienation may have contributed to her desire to be more resolute in her ethnic identity.

Additionally, Anya reported “some [AAs] look down on us [Trinidadians], like they look down on Haiti and stuff like that. I don’t think anyone I’ve encounter[ed] has taken the time out to really get to know how the Caribbean has contributed [to the US or the world].” Anya’s feeling of having the Caribbean looked down upon, likely diminished her desire or belief that she could approach acculturation with an integrated identity. Particularly if the AAs she was meant to integrate with, had a disparaging opinion of BCIs.

Race and Trinidad

When reflecting on her experience with oppression in Trinidad, Anya contended, “I don’t think I experienced any kind of oppression. Trinidad is very open. I would say that the only people that would be oppressed would be the LGBT community.” Other than sexual and gender minority bias, Anya only recalled “one instance of racial bias.” She described it. “Ironically enough it came from my Black principal at a school,” who “rarely allowed [sun or artificial] light into the classroom” as a “way of keeping cost down for the school.” Anya and her mother became “frustrated” with the principal and in response, the principal “told my mom, in front of me, ‘this is why I regretted allowing for Black people to come into my school, because ever since I allowed Black students to come to my school I started having issues.’” Anya asserted that outside of this experience, Trinidad was a very diverse place without race-based social issues.

So race has never been ‘this race is better, that race is better.’ We celebrate literally everyone... All my friends are-were Black, White, Indian, like, east-Indian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, like we were all very mixed together. As a result of Anya’s heterogeneous racial-ethnic surroundings, Anya may not have developed a schema for racial stratification, which potentially impeded her understanding of U.S. racial stratification, although stratification was implicit in her description of her Black principal.

Additionally, Anya reports that her family is quite diverse because many individuals are married to non-Black partners.

My grandparents divorced, my grandfather remarried an Indian woman. My grandmother remarried a Jewish guy in the States. So, again, my family itself is so

mixed and diverse. I have like, White-as-a-cloud cousins who are my mom's first cousins and then I have Indian cousins. Any kind of racial disparities or racial inequality-- I didn't experience down there.

Within Anya's family, physical racial differences were commonplace, potentially influencing how she interpreted racial stimuli. Nevertheless, Anya admitted that she sometimes read or heard words that she was told might be derogatory toward a particular racial group. Moreover, she contended that some derogatory words were person-dependent because the word was "synonymous to [AA] people using the n-word up here."

I learned what words you can say, what words you can't say... like if you are calling someone a coolie or dougla [derogatory words for Indian people in Trinidad] for some people that is just a regular term to reference someone who is of Indian descent, and then for some Indian people they're like 'no that's a derogatory term, you don't reference anyone [like] that, you don't say it.' So, it was very weird cause I would see Indian people call themselves dougla and call themselves coolie and other Indian people get upset.

At the time, Anya was confused by this and reported that her family didn't discuss it. Despite hearing words that she learned were offensive, the lack of explanation, personal experience and unified stance against use of the probably derogatory labels made the concept of racism difficult for Any to grasp until she came to the US.

It still wasn't something that was talked about in my house, it wasn't something we experienced... I wanna say I didn't really understand or go through a lot of it.

Moving to the US, that's when I understood racism. That's when I understood colorism.

Anya explains that regardless of race, complexion, or religion, everyone in Trinidad is Trinidadian and that national identity subsumes and unites all others.

Down there, whether you're White, whether you were Black, you were Trinidadian. Didn't matter what you-- everyone kind of differentiated [differentiated] themselves by their religious background. And, you know, we all have our cultural differences. But we're all Trinidadian. Moving to the US, that's when I learned that there's a difference between Black people, light-skin Black people, there's dark-skinned Black people and there's a whole separate, like, spectrum, between them, and I am like 'How?' We're all Black.

In Anya's experience, the skin-color differences within the AA community served to separate people rather than unify them under a larger identity. Anya's acculturation experience may have led her to believe that her ethnic differences meant that she was not a part of the AA community.

African American and Trinidadian Differences

Anya's beliefs about AAs before she came to the US were shaped by television portrayals of successful AA characters. Before moving to the US, Anya reported that her "perception of them [AAs] were [that they were] a lot more free. They could do what they want, say what they want. I got a lot of my, African-American (laughs) knowledge of Black people from TV." Anya described the development of her belief system.

[She grew up] watching the Cosby Show, watching A Different World, watching [the] Fresh Prince [of Bel-Air]. So my image of Black people was like, yo-- they

all go to college, they are all very high ranking, very powerful, very wholesome. You know, I always said I would-- I would kill to be part of the Huxtable family. I was like ‘they are so entertaining they are so cool. I can't wait to go [to] college in the US and go to, like, Hillman [a fictional university from the TV show, A Different World]... I am going to go to Hillman and I am going to live this, like, Black experience.

Anya appeared to have had high expectations for the AA community and the AA experience based on what she learned from television programming. Anya's predetermined acculturation strategy may have been to develop an integrated or assimilated identity, given her desire to attend a fictitious HBCU (Historically Black College or University).

When Anya began visiting the US prior to moving, all of her interactions were within BCI ethnic enclaves that gave Anya the illusion that “everybody in the US is Caribbean... That's really what I thought for a long time. That America was like a subset of the West Indies.” After moving to the states Anya's perceptions of AAs were challenged. She recounted,

I go to New York, and we'd be around my family and other Caribbean people. Come down to Miami, or Florida, only around my family, and other Caribbean people... I was like ‘where are the Black people that I see on TV?’(laughs)
They're not here, I want to see them... Until I officially moved to the US and then I officially got to see [AAs], and I was like, it's not the Huxtables at all, whatsoever. It's not A Different World at all, whatsoever.

Anya may have experienced disappointment that the AAs she met did not live up to her idealized expectations which, in turn, likely disappointed her, and altered the belief system underlying her acculturation strategies as they involved AAs moving forward.

Anya confessed:

I am not gonna lie. Growing up in Brooklyn... I was like 'why is everybody dropping out of high school? Why do you feel like you must be loud? Why do you feel like you must be hood? Why must you be, like extra Ghetto?' Now mind you I can be Ghetto. I can be loud and, you know, ratchet [meaning without the restriction of social norms or etiquette]. But I felt like there were some people who felt like there was no other option. Like, 'there is no other option but for me to be in projects, there's no other option but for me to live off of government welfare. There is no other option for me to do anything'. And I am like 'yes there are.' There's so many options... And it's not to say that I look down on anyone, but... there's so many opportunities in the US for everybody. There should literally be no reason why anyone's living off of the government assistance. There should be no reason why anyone is choosing to not go to school, choosing to not make things better for themselves.

As she perceives it, AAs have the same access and opportunity that are available for all Americans and, therefore, AAs are choosing to not make more advantageous life choices. Anya's perceptions of AAs serve as a point of disconnection because she expresses a lack of understanding of the AA decision-making process as she perceives it. Treating her view of AA opportunities as realities may have led to her development of a separated identity.

Despite seeing herself as different from AAs in terms of decision making, Anya discusses the challenges of managing the stereotypes of being Black in America as a collective struggle.

That's what frustrates me... you can't say 'Oh, Black lives matter,'... if it wasn't for Black people you wouldn't have this, and you wouldn't have that... But, then, you are not showing people that greatness. You're showing people the impression that they already have of us, which is we're uneducated, we don't know any better, we don't know how to speak.

She continues, "all we're concerned about is fast money, football, basketball and we're not interested in anything else." Anya's use of the term "you" to first explain her impressions of the incongruence in AAs' statements and actions; followed by the use of the terms "us" and "we" indicate that she positions herself within the Black community as a consequence of the stereotypes that she believes AAs do not more actively and collectively dismantle.

As Anya expounds upon the differences she sees between AAs and BCIs, she highlights what she believes to be a disparity in commitment to success. Anya says that she went "from thinking that Black people were like the upper echelon of everything in the US to seeing that they're kind of their own worst enemy" as compared to the BCIs in her life. Her

Caribbean-American friends, they don't play. My Trinidadian friends, my Antigua friends, some of my Jamaican friends are about going to school, getting an education, and starting a busin[ess]-- I have so many friends that start their

own business... [be]cause they don't wanna be put down or be put into a box...
that's what we all should be doing.

For Anya, BCIs approach to oppression is how she and AAs should be approaching oppression. She believes that there should be a focus on education and business ownership to counteract their experience of oppression rather than what she perceives as complacency. The differences that Anya sees between her idealized image of AAs and her current perceptions further fostered a separated identity.

Values

Anya described AAs as valuing “image and status” and as making financial decisions to uphold that image and status. She asserted,

It's like 12 of them in a three-bedroom apartment. But they all had the Jordans [costly sneakers] that just dropped. They all had the North Face jacket. They all had eight pairs of “Timbs” [costly winter boots]. Whereas, for me, my mom was... like ‘Nope. You got one pair of boots, you only got one set of feet... But I just noticed, a lot of my friends were more concerned about what they have on.

Although it was her mother who forbade Anya to have costly clothing items, she experienced not being able to dress like her peers as “othering” because they would chastise her for not having the newest fashionable or costly clothing items. She would hear, “you don't got Jordans? What is wrong with you? You don't have the new AirMax [sneakers]?” Anya often responded by giving examples of the things that she spent her money on which she believed reflected a difference in values. “I was like, ‘I am not spending \$250 on a pair of sneakers. I'll pay \$250 on my cheerleading uniform, I paid \$250 on softball equipment.’” At the time, or perhaps in retrospect Anya agreed with her

mother's choices about spending money and too saw it as a value based decision.

Experiencing AAs as having a different value system or decision-making schema from herself and other BCIs contributed to Anya's acculturation strategy of separation.

Anya also asserted that when it comes to making "safe-secure money" over "fast money," AAs choose fast money. "You just have to put the work in and I see it, a lot of them [AAs] don't wanna put the work in. And it sucks and it's sad." Anya continued,

Some people are ashamed to get a job. That's manual labor, it's minimum wage, but to me... it speaks highly, or more highly about the person who would rather have that McDonalds job, or Checkers job, or work as at CVS than somebody who's out here doing more harm to the Black community by selling drugs and doing illegal things and gang-banging, just so they can get \$1,000... yeah, you make less money, you might not have the best, but at least you know that you're doing something good. And you don't have to be looking over your shoulder every 30 seconds, 'is the cops coming... , is that one snitching? Am I gonna get shot? Am I gonna get hurt? Like, why should you be living under that bubble of stress, when you can just go get a regular job?

As Anya perceives it, AAs have choices about their financial conditions and employment and they make a choice that she does not agree with. Anya's challenge around understanding what she perceives as the economic choices of AAs serves to further distance her from the AA community and encourage a separated identity.

Anya considered valuing family as another way that Trinidadians differed from AAs. She considered strong familial protective responses, whereby she expects those who care about her to not allow others to bring her any harm, a uniquely Trinidadian and

BCI cultural value. She seemingly had not seen or experienced the value among AAs. The belief that AAs do not protect family members may have made it hard for her to see herself as a part of that community.

...family...we could talk shit about each other as much as we want, but the minute we catch somebody else doing it, it's not gonna go down. We [BCIs] generally] might not always be the most supportive, but when the time counts and when it really matters, we're there for each other. And that's not just Trinidadians, I feel like that's [the] Caribbean as a whole. Sometimes we might beef [meaning disagree], sometimes we might brawl, but when you're on the line, I can turn to one of my Caribbean friends and I know that they got me.

Anya describes herself as trusting other BCIs to support her in challenging situations despite disagreements. Anya's ability to trust BCIs to support her may be rooted in her experiences with AAs vs. BCIs since moving to the US. Assuming trust is a contributing factor to identification with a community, Anya's trust of BCIs may be an indication of her separated identification.

Racial Socialization

When Anya was first enrolled in school in the US, she attended a school that was predominantly White and was traumatic for her. Anya noted:

"I was the third Black child ever to go to that school [and I] lasted less than a week." At the time, "[I] had this huge like, cross between your hair [referring to the interviewer's hair which was curly] and like an Angela Davis Afro, like it was massive, ginormous... And these White kids... discovered they could put things in my hair and I wouldn't notice... [Additionally,] they would just say things and

they would do things and ask me very inappropriate questions. Walk up to me and try to like, pet me and touch me... it was just me and two other Black girls and we would just always be together 'cause no one wanted to communicate with us. I used to go home crying every day. I told my mom, I was like, "I need to get out." Anya remembered saying, "I needed to be around other people, (laughing) who wouldn't treat me like a science project." Anya's race-based mistreatment and segregation forced her to befriend the AA girls in her school and potentially edified the possible implications of her race in the U.S. (White) context.

Anya transferred to a school of predominantly AAs in Brooklyn after these incidents, but despite her previous experiences of racial microaggressions, still contended that she does not see race because of her family's diversity. She described her interactions at the AA school:

I still got the same kind of treatment, but it wasn't as bad. It was really only, they loved my accent and they liked me saying certain things... I made friends and things got better," but "I would hang out with-- I mean again, I don't see race, don't see color 'cause I am used to my family being so diverse, my friends are diverse... The Black kids would get upset if I was hanging out with my one White friend... [who]was the only White girl in the school... [Her AA peers] would say things like 'why am I hanging out with her?'... It was really trying, toting that line of I didn't know I had to pick a group. To, um, to hang with. So, that's-- that was like, one of the real struggles I had."

Anya's friendship with a WA was an option that she had at the Black school but not at the White school. However, the friendship served as a point of contention between her

and her AA peers. Anya understood her AA friends' disapproval to mean that she had to consider race in choosing friends. She discovered that her White friend's race was meaningful to her AA peers, but perhaps not to her. Anya's acculturation strategies were likely influenced by these experiences because she was learning the expectations of her racial group membership and what was necessary to remain included in that racial group.

Anya reported that high school was much better, partly because, we had three more Hispanic kids in my school (laughs)... So, I was like, yes! I am not the target!... as mean as it is (laughs)-- Yes, they're focusing on the Hispanic kids... I'm safe... I am not a commodity anymore, I am not cool, I am not fun, I am just, like, average.

In Anya's experience, being different was a point of ridicule and the addition of new foreign students allowed her to experience some reprieve. It is possible that Anya learned that being different would negatively affect her interactions with AAs, given that her own "differentness" was a theme in her interactions with AAs and WAs. Thereby informing her acculturation strategy of remaining separate.

Acculturating with African Americans

A prominent aspect of Anya's transition to living in America involved learning about "racism" and "colorism." After getting to know AAs from Brooklyn, where she immigrated to, and AAs from the surrounding boroughs, she reported "on the one side you would feel like a lot of Black pride, and then on the other side you felt a lot of self-hate." The concept of self-hate greatly framed many of Anya's early experiences with AAs. "I did feel a lot of self-hate from other Black people when like, the whole skin-color comparison thing would occur."

Anya was often taunted about her complexion, an experience she said was new to her. Anya described herself as “a lot lighter than my sister” with “hair [that] is naturally very-very-very light brown” and “eyes... like a light grey-greeny [sic] color.” Anya described her sister as “very brown” and asserted that this difference in their appearance played a role in her acculturation experience.

Moving to the US, there wasn't a day that went by where people didn't remark on the differences between my sister and I, or made comments such as-- my mom and my sister look a lot more alike than my mom and I do. 'Cause they're both very brown and [have] similar facial features, where I was not. And I always felt not Black enough for the Black people because it was always something that they wanted to point out. Me being too light skinned, me being too this, me being too that. Any name you can think of, I was called it. Peanut butter cup? Yes. White lightning. Snowflake. I am like 'but I am not White though.'

Upon coming to the US, Anya experienced colorism that repeatedly spotlighted the aesthetic differences between herself and her family. These differences were also used to separate Anya from the Black community, requiring her to regularly defend and re-identify herself. “I felt like, no matter how hard I would try to fight, ‘no, I am Black’ people would look at me and they wouldn't believe me.” Anya's experience with AAs resulted in an indirect form of segregation in which she learned that she was not a part of their group, which likely fostered a separated approach to acculturation.

Anya shared a story about a neighbor's cousin who often visited from South Carolina and would make comments about Anya being “light skin.”

He would torment me, and torment me, and torment me and say, ‘we don’t have people that look like you in the South,’ light-skinned Black people. The only light-skinned Black people are the ones who are descendents of the slaves who got with the slave masters. And I am like, ‘what?’ He’s like ‘yeah, the only light-skinned Black people are the biracial babies whose daddy is Black-- or dad is White or whatever,’ and I am like ‘no, that is not what this is.’ And he would make that comment, all the time, about... ‘light-skinned Black people think that they’re better than everybody else.’ ‘Light-skinned Black people always got the good hair, light-skinned Black people-’ and I am like ‘you keep calling me a light-skinned Black person, I am just a Black person, yeah I am fair-skinned but I am still a Black person.’ I don’t feel like I am different or better than anyone else. Or I’d be walking down the street and same thing, I’d get like, girls look at me funny, and they [sic] guys would call me, like I said, ‘snow-flake’, and all this different type of stuff, and I am like ‘what? Why is there such a hate?’ That’s really what it was. Such a hate towards Black-like, light-skinned Black people that eventually I started not hanging out with Black people.

Anya’s experience of self-isolation from AAs because she did not relate to the skin-color histories of AAs likely encouraged an acculturation strategy of separation because it allowed her to protect herself from what she determined was rejection and “self-hate.”

Identification with Co-ethnics or BCIs

Part of Anya’s acculturation response to conflict with the AAs in her life was to retreat into a Caribbean co-ethnic enclave. Anya had

two Black friends, everyone else was Hispanic. ‘Cause I was like Hispanic people were the only people who I felt embraced me. [Be]cause they’re like I look Dominican, I don’t know how (laughs). They were like ‘oh yeah, you’re our little adopted Dominican.’ So, it’s like they didn’t question me about anything so I felt comfortable being around them and I felt secure being around them.

Feeling embraced, secure and comfortable in her relationships was important to Anya and primarily guided her interpersonal choices. Leading to more relationships and by consequence identification with Hispanic students as co-ethnics than with AAs as members of the same racial group.

Racial Identification with African Americans

Anya’s limited relationships with AAs was not challenged until she “joined the softball team” and “started developing more friendships with Black [AA] people.” She noted that “it took me a while to open up to people... I always kind of had a guard up, and I always had defense that I would have to explain myself.” Anya became friends with “three light-skinned Black girls” because “we kind of really hung out together because we still felt not included by some of the darker girls at school. And, yeah, they would throw shade [veiled insults] constantly. Always mak[ing] obnoxious comments about us and toward us.” Anya contended that “it took me literally cussing one of them out” in order for the chastising to stop and for her to feel like her AA peers “finally started embracing me,” although she expressed disappointment that she had to get “angry to be accepted.” According to Anya, she chose not to attend an HBCU because of her colorism experiences with AAs.

I got deterred from wanting to go to Howard... I was considering Spelman but I can't be around a bunch of mean girls.... I was like, 'damn, what if I go, I have to redo this entire thing of having to defend why I am light-skinned, having to defend you know my features... So, that's why I ended up here in Florida going to [University Name Redacted], which had a very, very high Caribbean population which was great. 'Cause I was around people who I didn't have to explain myself to. I was around people who understood that there's literally everybody under the rainbow in the West Indies and it was a good, good, good thing for me... I could speak with my accent and not have anybody be like, 'Huh? What? Oh my God.' They understood me, I was with my people, so,-- it was good.

Anya's acculturation strategy was informed by her AA peers' reactions to her, which, in turn, informed her future decisions about the types of individuals she surrounded herself with. Anya's decision to attend a predominantly BCI university, as opposed to an AA university, speaks to her segregated identity.

During Anya's senior year of college, she had an "eye-opening" experience with an "African-American [female] professor" who made her feel "more connected" to the AA community. Anya was called into this professor's office to discuss why two White male students had submitted "identical" final papers to her.

She just looked at me and she was like, 'why would you give these White boys your paper?' And I was like, 'I didn't give them my paper,' and she was like, 'so how did they get it?' And I was like, 'I didn't give it in a sense of, here, have it, do what you want with it'-- you know-- they were asking for help and as a class

we were literally looking out for each other because we wanted to ensure that [we] all passed.

Anya's professor responded by not assuming that she had been the one plagiarizing or by punishing her greatly. Instead, she had a discussion with Anya about the politics of race and how they showed up in that assignment.

She was just like 'there is [sic] certain people you can't help'. And she was like I can't say what I really want to say cause, as your professor, there are certain lines I can't draw. But you have to realize that some people aren't here for us. And the way she broke it down for me; she was like, 'as a Black woman and as one of the few Black female professors on the campus, I am not going to bring another Black woman down, by sending you to the honor board. You're about to graduate, I am not gonna do that to you.' So, that's what she said, she brought it [the paper] down a full letter grade, but she was like, what I did was dumb and stupid.

Because I let the fact that I am dating someone cloud my judgment. She was like 'you can date anyone, Black, White, Hispanic, other, but always remember that [if I was] dating someone White, they're never gonna see me on their level.' So, that was very eye-opening for me... And she was like, 'they will tell you one thing to your face, and do something completely different behind your back. So... that's a powerful message I always kept and not just for dating White guys, but for dating anyone in general.

Anya's experience with this AA professor was "powerful" and compassionate, partly because the professor took the time to teach Anya what she believed was a necessary lesson, and partly because of who the professor represented in her position of power.

I would say that's a powerful interaction with an African-American person [that] I had and I am still in contact with her, because it's rare to see Black women in power positions. And she's one of the few Black women in power positions that I know.

Anya also elaborated, "because she actually-- rarely I get called Black. Not many people call me Black. So to me that is, that's a connector, that's a connector-word for all Black people." Anya's professor had referred to Anya as Black, and spoke to her from a place of community and inclusion, which Anya credits as making her feel connected as a Black person.

Many of Anya's challenges with respect to developing an integrated identification may have been her personal experience of being racially rejected by AAs. Consequently, her experience of inclusion with this one professor made the incident particularly powerful.

Black is our whole identity and then we have our individual places where we come from, but not many people call me Black. No matter how much I say that I am, no matter how much I try to prove that I am. And I do feel like sometimes I like to over compensate... but she [the professor] was like, 'no, you're a Black woman! And this is what happens to us and this is why I need you to never, ever, ever, do something like that again.'

Anya's professor spoke to her from a place of inclusion which made Anya feel like she was a part of the AA community; contributing to an integrated identification.

Identification with African American Culture

Anya also discussed feeling connected to the AA community around AA food.

I go to this particular rib place... and I am like, 'yes! Yes, Black people!' Every time I eat Soul food, I am like 'ok, we got this'... when my friends and I are together we crack jokes and we don't even look at Caribbean-American, African-American, or whatever. We're just together, we're all Black people, we all know the struggle, we all have the same struggle... that's our connector, right there.

As Anya has grown older, she's become less concerned about what makes her different from AAs and tried to focus on building relationships with AAs, as a fellow Black person.

I do feel as I've gotten older and I've stopped apologizing for being Caribbean, and stopped feeling like I have to defend myself for being Caribbean. And feel like I have to stop hiding my accent and doing the things I had to do when I was a kid, for fear of being, you know, taunted or whatever. Now, I feel more embraced, and I have a lot more open relationships with all Black people.

Therefore, one may conclude that as Anya felt embraced by AAs, she also became more comfortable and authentic in those interactions which helped foster a sense of integration or, at minimum, set the stage for an integrated identity.

Ethnic and Racial Identity Change

Anya contended, "I do feel very close to a lot of African-American people," but "I don't consider myself to be African-American [and] I don't think I ever will." Anya notes that "I feel connected to them, but not like I am part – like I don't share that same history that African-American people share." The difference in history and other facets of ethnicity (e.g., music, food, etc.) continue to serve as a point of difference for Anya, but

not a point of disconnection. Although Anya responded, “no” she does not see herself as a part of the AA community, indicating a separated approach to acculturation.

When others ask Anya how she currently identifies she says:

I always start by saying I am Trinidadian, first and foremost. And people are like, ‘well, what does that mean?’ and I am like, ‘I am Black, I am Black-Caribbean, I am West Indian.’ Anya asserts, “I’ve never not once thought of myself as anything else but Black.

Anya believes that her Blackness unites her with AAs, but that her race comes second or in tandem with her Trinidadian identity. Anya used to insist upon naming her Trinidadian identity but now, “there are many times I don’t even mention I am Caribbean anymore,” because it isn’t worth the effort for her to explain her country of origin to someone who might not know.

Additionally, Anya viewed her Black identity as the primary identity with which Americans engage. Anya explained,

We [AAs and BCIs] go [through] the same struggles. Because, when people look at us, they can’t readily identify, ‘well, that’s an African-American, that’s a Haitian, that’s a Trinidadian, that’s a Nigerian’... They look at us and they see just Black as a whole. So, we do suffer from the same racial stereotypes. We suffer from the same type of prejudices.” “We’re all the same people, we just had [different] stops on the Cruise line (laughs)... there’s a lot of similarities [between AAs and BCIs] because we share the African ancestry.

Anya believes that BCIs' shared racial history with AAs makes the two groups similar in many ways, particularly with respect to how they are both treated in the U.S. context, but she does not want to emulate them.

Summary

Anya's interpersonal encounters with AAs may have contributed to a separated acculturation outcome. Anya understands her racial classification and its implications in the US, but that did not translate to an integrated racial identity. Anya contended that her ethnicity is her predominant identity, although she acknowledged that she is Black and therefore, in community with AAs.

Jean-Richard: Integrated Identity

Jean-Richard and Immigration

Jean-Richard, is a 64-year-old man from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Jean-Richard came to the United States when he was 15 years old because of the political turmoil that increasingly resulted in government-sanctioned murders of Haitian citizens. Therefore, Jean-Richard does not consider his family's migration to the US as a personal choice, but rather an act of necessity for survival because "they [the government] were just killing people left and right." Transitioning to living in the US produced "many mixed feelings" because of the differences in weather, language barriers, and most notably, a change in social class. Jean-Richard expressed, "it's tough to understand that you are not Mr. (name redacted) anymore. You are not the son of this professional engineer. You are a nobody. So that was kind of hard to accept." Jean-Richard credits school and more senior immigrants for helping him cope with the transition, which meant "imitating their [senior immigrants'] experiences" and getting into similar professions that provided access and

opportunity which gave him and other new arrivals the potential to regain their social status and become “the closest thing to being Mr. so-and-so that you were in Haiti.” Jean-Richard’s initial acculturation strategy was rooted in an effort to regain the social status he had in Haiti. This goal likely impacted who he spent time with, successful BCIs; what activities he engaged in, school and BCI endorsed professions; and whom he chose to distance himself from, AAs. He was taught they might hinder his efforts to raise his social status.

Acculturating with African Americans

Jean-Richard immigrated to Brownsville in Brooklyn, NY, which was and is primarily inhabited by African-Americans who are of lower socio-economic status. When reflecting on his conceptualization of AAs while living in Haiti, Jean-Richard stated, “... the movies that come to us, they depict the Black man as a person who would murder you, who would kill you, who would rape your wife, who was totally uneducated and a savage.” Consequently, Jean-Richard admits that his early interactions and behaviors with the AAs in Brownsville were dictated by this belief system.

So, when I came here, the Black men was someone who was dangerous and you don’t want to be a Nigger, you don’t want to be a Black American. And so, you have to set yourself aside from them. Set yourself aside from them to the point where although I was raised in a Black neighborhood, I have very few friends. I associated myself with the Caribbean folks that were there, but the Black man proper or Black Americans, not until I became older, that I started to understand the struggle, and I started understanding the sacrifices that were made prior that enabled me to be in the position that I was and having the opportunities that I had.

Jean-Richard admits that he also saw positive models of AAs while he was in Haiti, which were scarce and difficult to find.

Politics and Acculturation

Jean-Richard recalls that his perceptions of AAs shifted when he started being bussed from Brownsville to Canarsie in order to integrate their schools. He realized,

I wasn't the only person that was bussing to the school. There was [sic] a lot of Black kids that I figured, hmm you are no different than I am. They're respectful, I'm respectful. They have a family, I have a family. They don't pickpocket. And I'm like wow these are human beings just like me. All these things that they wanted me to believe, it's not true... and I started informing myself, I started reading, I started discovering things. I started getting organized. As you know, in the political field.

Jean-Richard also attributes much of his growth with respect to AAs and issues of race to a Haitian friend who had been in the United States for a longer period of time. "He schooled me, he told me the Black struggle, where we came from and what our purpose is as far as getting [a] better deal in life." As Jean-Richard learned what it meant to be Black in the US context, his acculturation strategies changed from wanting to distance himself from AAs to seeing himself as part of a larger racial community context.

Jean-Richard was able to name commonplace stereotypes about AAs, but in the same breath, he was able to name examples that made those stereotypes untrue and connect them to his own lived experience as a Black man in America.

Angry, they have a reason to be angry but are they angry? No, they're not. Do I get angry personally? Of course, I do. If my child is stopped just because he's

Black of course I am going to get angry. Don't tell me that I just have to lay down and take it. No! I am going to be angry. The little white boy doesn't get stopped. Mine gets stopped. And you tell me not to get angry. But again, as I said, we [are] angry because there's a reason to get angry.

When Jean-Richard began exploring what it meant to be Black in America, he expressed feeling more connected to AAs, but also began feeling more distant from his family and his culture, "...but you see the other thing is when you're in a Haitian family and all of a sudden you start coming up with those ideas it's like what the hell is wrong with this kid? This is not what we brought him [here] for. So, you have to be very discreet when you were [sic] offering your opinion." Jean-Richard's growing identification with AAs had an inverse effect on his family's identification with him as a co-immigrant. Proposing the idea that mutual identification with one's home culture and AAs as U.S. members of a shared racial group, could result in BCI's feeling marginalized from their culture of origin. A marginalization that Jean-Richard responded to with apprehension when addressing his family.

African American and Haitian Differences

Jean-Richard also expressed the ways in which AAs perceived Haitians and explained the reasons for those stereotypes. "In the beginning, they used to think that we were just stooges, whatever the White man told us to do, we would do it and at some point it was true. We used to conform [to] whatever we were told, we would just do it." Jean-Richard explains that coming from a dictatorship teaches you to acquiesce to power and it takes time to unlearn that fear-induced response. He goes on to explain, "when I look at my people, the things that we've had to do in order to navigate immigration is

unbelievable and people would think that we're bad just because we do it...we've had to lie our way through—I always tell people that Haitians are storytellers and when we tell stories it's not because we are bad a lot of times we tell stories because this is what we've had to do in order to survive". Jean-Richard explained Haitian's propensity for storytelling as a necessary acculturation strategy that may have impacted how AAs' perceived and by consequence treated Haitians. This perception in turn potentially affected how Haitians and AAs engaged with one another, which influenced BCI's sense of shared identification.

Given the need to navigate a new country with limited training or knowledge, a fear of being associated with AAs who you believed were "savage," and an understanding that the community you're immersed in may hold their own prejudices, Jean-Richard recalls insulating himself in the Caribbean enclave of Brownsville. "Back then we would stay within our own.... we had our Haitian club, we had a Umoja society, we had our Caribbean club. We stayed within that little sphere and [did] not really move out of it." Jean-Richard stated that these measures served to protect him and other BCIs from stressors that came along with immigration.

Racial identification with African Americans

When Jean-Richard went to college, he states that he became a "rebel." "I completely immersed myself with the African-American community. I had friends, girlfriends, family that I was friends with; I had this gentleman who lived next door to me who was like a big brother to me. He took me on jobs, paid me good money". Jean-Richard explains "we were one and one... we were just all together," which made him feel connected to the AA community. Additionally, Jean-Richard listened to Rhythm and

Blues (RnB), naming James Brown and Otis Redding as influential artists. He stated emphatically that the music made him feel “totally connected” to the African American community and culture because RnB “told our story, our stories of love, our stories of trouble.” Jean-Richard also believes that RnB is a descendent of Haitian Folklore music because the rise of Blues coincides with the influx of Haitians to Louisiana in the late 1800s. Being able to see BCI culture reflected in AA culture may have contributed to a belief in shared heritage and therefore shared identification.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Jean-Richard now identifies as a “full blooded American” because he has lived in the US for about 50 years, more than three times his tenure in Haiti. He admits that he did not always see himself this way because he, and many other immigrants, according to him, always think they are going to go back home, until America becomes home. Jean-Richard also now sees himself as specifically a part of the AA community because “we are part of it, and we are part of the struggle. We struggle with them, politically when they’re running for office, this is where we are. This is where we find our home. Because you’re struggling for what we struggle for.” Despite this struggle, Jean-Richard notes that when he has a choice, he always gravitates toward Haitians, “because it is so automatic when you hear Creole, you get attracted to it.” Although America is now home, hearing Creole also still feels like home. Jean-Richard’s experiences with AAs and AA culture influenced his acculturation strategies, which in turn affected his identification with AAs as members of the same racial group; Yet identification with the Black racial group has not diminished his identification with his culture of origin (i.e., Haitian).

Summary

Jean-Richard's encounters with AAs resulted in an integrated acculturation outcome. Jean-Richard's experiences with AAs and AAC served to make him feel more connected to AAs as a member of the greater Black community. Given his experience of acceptance and support from AAs, Jean-Richard was able to integrate his ethnic and racial identity in a manner that facilitated connection and well-being.

Errol: Integrated Identity

Errol and Immigration

Errol was a 57-year-old man from Jamaica. Errol came to the US when he was 16 years old and stated that he "never wanted to come," but "my mom sent for me" and, therefore, he didn't have any choice around his migration. Errol described his transition to living in America as "night and day." By comparison, Errol noted that coming from "the island, you know, greenery everywhere" to living in East New York, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, NY, with "mostly Puerto Ricans and African Americans." He jokingly recalled everyone in Brooklyn living "in a little house, [where] there's no backyard, a lot of people live in these apartments, and there wasn't a lot of green space." Errol's initial culture shock was rooted in the environmental differences between Brooklyn and Jamaica, which he later speculates as playing a role in the cultural differences he felt between himself and AAs.

In addition to the environmental change, Errol recalled being mocked with names like "banana boat" and "coconut head," although he contended that the teasing "didn't bother me." He often responded with "Oh, you want to call me names?" It's fine. I'll show you in the classroom. That was my thing. I became the best. I mean education to me

was my top priority.” Errol explained that succeeding in the classroom was one of the primary ways that he managed his transition to living in the US. “You could call me coconut head all you want but when that test comes, see who is at the top of the class.” He found that the intention of being at the top of his classes was in contrast to the goals of his classmates.

To me, that was a shock that a lot of young people my age, even though I was a teenager, did not aspire to be like, to do good things or do great things.... I didn’t see that drive that I had as a Black person or as a Black kid.”

Errol believed that education was not only a personal or family value, but also a cultural value. He contended, “it could be both” because “growing up in Jamaica the way to get ahead was through education.” Errol believed that his culture as a whole valued education in a way that AAs did not, which he interpreted as a noteworthy bifurcation.

Race, Colorism, and Jamaica

When reflecting on his understanding of race and oppression while living in Jamaica, Errol asserts that oppression “wasn’t more of a race thing, but it was more of a class thing” in which one could “get into the upper echelon class... through education.” Errol admitted that Jamaica does have a “color thing” as a result of being “controlled by the British,” and noted that the older generations believed that “the lighter you are, the fairer you are, the more Eurocentric that you look, was how much better off you were. You know that was their symbol of beauty.” He recalled a moment with his grandmother, “a dark-skinned person,” saying to her great-grandchild, “Wow, (name redacted) is so beautiful but the only thing is she is Black.” Errol asserts that he wasn’t taught those

same beliefs about complexion, “I think my parents taught me, hey you treat people with respect, and you know hopefully you get that back” and, “I knew where I came from at least, from my Blackness.” He continued, “I knew we built the pyramids....People who built the pyramids looked like me. While the other people who looked like them, they were living in caves in Europe.” Errol states that his parents’ messages around race, class, and complexion differed from those of the previous generation. Errol’s belief system about his own race, which he defines as “Blackness,” may have later contributed to him being able to identify with AAs and the African Diaspora once he moved to the American South.

Acculturating with African Americans

Errol felt that the African Americans he grew up with in Brooklyn were “more materialistic,” but after joining the military where he was stationed in North Carolina, he found an AA culture that he felt was more aligned with his own.

“I came to the South, I saw a whole new...it almost [reminded me of] being back in the island where people want their children to do well, they care about things, they want to be homeowners, uh even though they may not have a lot of money per say but they...own their own homes. And that to me was like wow that’s cool.”

Errol contends that his experience in North Carolina changed his perception of AAs, stating “it was a whole new light for me, and I totally looked at things differently [ever since then].”

Additionally, Errol developed a life-long relationship with a family from a local Black church with whom he still visits.

The first Sunday I went there [to the Black church], I met them, and they took me to their house and fed me. (Laughs) And mannn I was still-- until this day Sweet Potato pies are my favorite... My relations with those people hasn't changed over the past since I went to Fort Bragg in 1980, you do the math. And I am still connected to those people and their children, and their children's children.

While in the military, Errol also developed a meaningful friendship with an AA woman from St. Louis, whom he still remembers with fondness. He attributes both of these experiences to feeling more connected to the AA community. Errol states,

You learn about people by talking to them. And you kind of learn how their family life, how they grew up and stuff like that. And that made me like—you know at the end of the day people are people. They just have different experiences that's all.

Errol also believes that AAs and BCIs connect as a consequence of being a part of the African diaspora. He noted, "I think the broader picture...is our Africaness and I think everybody eventually will go back to their original motherland." When Errol was able to find points of connection and community with AAs, primarily through meaningful interpersonal experiences, and in one case, the connection lasted decades, he felt more connected to AAs as co-members of a larger racial group.

African American and Jamaican Differences

Despite his experiences in North Carolina, Errol still found notable differences in his value systems as compared to AAs, asserting that,

a lot of Black Americans seem to think the way to get ahead is through sports.

Because [of] my experience here, I remember when the kids were going to school,

there was a PTA, not a lot of us [Black people] showed up. But let there be a football game or a Peewee league in the park, you'd see tents lined up, chairs ... our people tend to show up more for the sporting event rather than the education thing. I've experienced that personally.

Errol recalls that in Jamaica, the whole community came to PTA meetings because "the community was invested in all the kids.... it's not just your parents who is [sic] raising you." He posits that some of the differences he sees in AAs' value systems or work ethic, as compared to Jamaicans, may be attributed to when AAs acquired their freedom.

From a historical point of view, we were freed before the American Blacks were. So, I think, I don't know whether it was psychological or whatever it was. You know, but ...coming from our own country and you look at the Prime Minister and you say hey, you look like you and me, ... So maybe that has something to do with it from a psychological point. That you know hey, you go to the doctor and the doctor looks like you. So ...maybe empowers you and, say hey I can do this.

Errol suggests that the differences in AAs and Jamaicans' career aspirations may be rooted in the differences in their emancipation, which may have had an intergenerational psychological impact on AAs.

Errol's views on race were expounded when he came to the US and learned about American history. He states,

I mean you have to be born like Stevie Wonder (laughs), even a blind man could see clearly that this country is built on racism. Historically you know the White folks came in, the Indians were here, what they did? Wiped them out. And the ones that were left you throw them on a reservation.

He also acknowledges the double-consciousness that comes along with being Black in America and being an immigrant. Errol asserts,

they see what we look like, that's all they are going to see. That is the first thing you see....you and I could walk through Davie [a city in FL] and we would be called names. Certain places in Davie, in 2019, so what does that say about America? Is that the whole story of America? No. The whole story of America is the people that look like you and me. You and I, we can have the opportunities.

This double-consciousness may play a role in the interpersonal experiences BCIs and AAs have when attempting to reach a shared identification. Particularly, BCIs underemphasize the system of racism that permeates the US and overemphasize the degree of opportunity that is afforded to residents of the US.

When considering the stereotypes AAs might have about Jamaicans, Errol states, "I think they think that we think we are better than them. (pause) I really do. I think they think that, and is there some truth to that? I think so." Errol suggests many explanations for this stereotype, such as "we were freed before they were," "we had women's suffrage before the US did," and "we weren't barred from going to school because of the color of our skin;" but, in the end, he believes that it's a mindset that is a consequence of slavery.

I mean, if you look at somebody who were [sic] born free vs. someone who weren't born free and then in the middle of their life, they are 50, and then all of a sudden, they now have freedom. They could have different ideas than the person who was born into freedom vs. you know living in slavery for a little bit before you get your freedom. You have two different mindsets.

Errol maintains that emancipation potentially played a notable role in the differences in the “mindset” of AAs, as compared to Jamaicans. This notion illustrates an ideological disparity in the two cultural groups.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Despite his individual experiences, Errol now firmly sees himself as a part of the AA community because, “I have first-generation American children, I can’t separate. Therefore, I will be forever connected to my roots in Jamaica and that will be forever connected to the seed that [I] planted in America.” Errol’s connection to the US is now rooted in the family he has chosen to build here, but he notes that his Jamaican culture will remain a part of his children’s lives, although it will not be primary. “They are Americans at the end of day What they can do is take that Caribbeanness and unite and mix together with the Americanness and then they will be better people for it.” Errol also conceptualizes himself as a part of the larger BCI community because,

culturally, yes we [are] a little different. But we fought under the same umbrella.

At the end of the [day] we want our children to do well, we want good schools, we want good representation, and we want a better future for our children and ourselves.

Illustrating a belief in shared values with BCIs across the community, Errol asserts that he is a member of both the AA and BCI community, neither of which detracts from his core Jamaican identity.

Summary

Errol’s acculturation outcome is integrated as a result of his positive and supportive encounters with AAs and AAC. Errol also asserted that his ethnicity was not

in conflict with his race and understood his racial identity to be what unified him with AAs, which was a unity that he welcomed and fostered in addition to his community with co-ethnics.

Stacy-Ann: Integrated Identity

Stacy-Ann and Immigration

Stacy-Ann is a 32-year-old woman from Jamaica. Stacy-Ann immigrated to the US at 14-years-old because “my mom was running away from my dad.” Due to the circumstances of her migration, she did not have a choice about coming to the US. When they settled in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Stacy-Ann states, “we didn’t have the best of situation, we didn’t have the financial status that we had in Jamaica, because it was just my mother at that point. And the neighborhood we lived in was not the greatest. So, the school I got zoned for was an inner-city low-income school.” She recalls, “I was so happy to be with other Black people, and in Black environments and I would wear Malcolm X T-shirts” because it was the “first time, for a long time that I had been in a school with so many other Black people.” In Jamaica, Stacy-Ann attended a racially diverse and prestigious private school. Although Stacy-Ann’s family’s financial and social status had changed greatly, she looked forward to being in a predominantly Black educational environment in the US.

Acculturating with African Americans

Growing up in Jamaica, Stacy-Ann listened to “hip-hop” and “R&B,” and loved “Whitney Houston,” “TLC,” and “DMX.” She asserts that the music made her feel more connected to the AA community because music “was shared experiences, it was something that I could share with [others], like, especially when I came here ... because I

knew the song you were singing, just as well as you did...I felt like I was prepared for at least that aspect of the culture because I had grown up with it already.” Music served as a bridge for Stacy-Ann to bond with AAs when she immigrated, but she often found herself disappointed with her other interactions with AAs, particularly around Black history.

Stacy-Ann describes her parents as being “very African-centric” and being mindful to “teach us our history.” As a result, she found herself “absolutely amazed at how much my Black counterparts did not know about Black history.” She recalls “the only person they knew of that everybody discussed was Martin Luther King. And I am like ‘you know there’s other people,’ and I would talk a lot about the Black Panther Party and I would talk about like, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, and they’d be like ‘Sho? Sho that? (laughing) Some rapper?’” Stacy-Ann expressed feeling “so frustrating that the lack of, like- the lack of Blackness in my fellow Black people” because, “this is the space where I should be able to, to like, revel in this now, I should have other people I can talk to without feeling like they don’t fully understand or they don’t fully care.’ Hum, and I didn’t” which she experienced as a “culture shock.” Stacy-Ann expected to be in a tight-knit community with AAs and bond over issues of race and shared understanding, but her perception of their lack of knowledge about Black history left her feeling disconnected.

Stacy-Ann’s feeling of disconnection was further bolstered when she was discouraged from attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). She said, “I just wanted to immerse myself in Blackness and he [a teacher] told me not to. He told me not to go to an HBCU because they weren’t good enough for my grades.” She was also discouraged from joining the Black Panther Party by a mentor, “she was like, ‘no, don’t do it’ and I felt like [I was] cheated, I felt like ‘but you got to be a part of it, and

you got to experience it, and you got...’ you know? To live this lifestyle that I wanted to enjoy.” Stacy-Ann states, “I just remember her being another Black person discouraging me from doing what I thought was Black things.” Stacy-Ann was looking for a Black experience and felt that she was dissuaded by AAs from engaging in the experiences in which she was interested. “I just wanted to feel connected somehow to something. And so, I didn’t get to feel connected in that way to my Blackness and so, I decided to feel more connected to my ethnic background instead.” Stacy-Ann’s interactions with those AAs promoted an acculturation strategy of separation, despite her desire to have a more integrated identification.

Race, Colorism, Jamaica

Before coming to the US, Stacy-Ann attended an elite private school in Jamaica that served “diplomat daughters, government official daughters, or just- you know- they were extremely wealthy. I only got in because I was smart.” She recalls the school being very racially diverse and encountering individuals who did not believe that she attended the school because she was Black. “Why is [it] unbelievable that I attend this school? But not unbelievable that my lighter-skinned and the white counterparts go to this school?” Stacy-Ann remembers her parents telling her upon being accepted to the school “that you are going to have to try a little bit harder than your school mates, you are going to have to work a little bit more, you are gonna not get the same advantages that they get because you don’t come from the same background. And I remember, like, even as a kid, understanding that that meant my racial background.” Therefore, the feeling of being othered or prejudged because of her racial group membership was an experience Stacy-Ann was familiar with before coming to the US.

Stacy-Ann also experienced colorism in Jamaica as a result of being much darker in complexion than her sister. “I remember, like, people talking to my sister, being like ‘ Oh, my God, look at the pretty brown baby, ‘look at the pretty red skin baby, look at this, this’ and it was always ‘pretty’ and her color, as her descriptive factor and ... I never got a descriptor before my name.” She continues, saying that the comparison to her sister even translated to a difference in the types of gifts they received growing up, “she would always get toys, she would always get dolls, she would always get all these, like, fancy toys. And I would always get books. And for me, growing up it told me, [that] as the Black one, you needed to be more educated and read. Whereas, my sister was able to have fun because she was pretty and she was Brown.” Through these gifts, Stacy-Ann interpreted that the expectations and possibilities were different for her because she was a dark-skinned Black woman. Stacy-Ann acknowledges that these experiences were oppressive, but she contends “I learned a whole different level of oppression when I came to America. Like, Ho, Ho. I thought it was- it was completely different. (laughing).” Alluding to a unique experience of racial oppression in the US, she found herself unprepared.

African-American and Jamaican Differences

Stacy-Ann admits “coming from a Caribbean culture, we have a very negative impression of African-Americans.” Her perception of AAs before coming to the US was that “they were lazy, that most of them were from the ghetto communities, that, you know, all they wanted to do was - the only way that they thought they could get rich was either to play football or to become rappers. Hum, that they just didn’t try hard enough to pull themselves up from the boot-straps.” Stacy-Ann was taught that the plight of AAs

was self-imposed because they lacked work ethic. This belief system was challenged through some of her own experiences with discrimination.

[White people] didn't care that I was Jamaican (laughing). They didn't get the difference... to them Black was Black and I was a Black person. So, I was treated the same, and being treated the ways that I had seen African-Americans being treated, and nobody knowing what I was until, like, I opened my mouth made me realize a lot of the systemic and the inherent racism that, just the country itself operates on and how hard it is to break those barriers and to overcome those challenges.

Stacy-Ann learned that her ethnicity did not shield her from the anti-Black discrimination that is part of American society and through those experiences she understood how that could impact a person or a racial group.

Going to college in the "South" helped Stacy-Ann "learn more about Black culture.... And it ... helped me learn like what have been their resiliency, what has been their coping so what might appear to be lackadaisical to me or what might appear to be like you're not trying hard enough. Well, this is what has gotten them so far, for so long." Stacy-Ann recalls a conversation with a resident of one of the Black neighborhoods in Gainesville, FL arguing, "why are all the Black people still living in this one community in Gainesville? If you are complaining that Gainesville has racists," why not leave? The response was "no, no, no, why would we move from our community?" This is where we were raised, this is where our family is from, so, why would we change that?" Stacy-Ann remembers,

feeling like they don't care enough to move, they don't care enough that they are in these negative spaces, or oppressed spaces to want to change that. Um, and I think as I got older, I recognized, and I learned now, that, no, these were safe spaces for them. Why would they want to move from somewhere where their culture is prevalent, were their culture is not going to environments that are going to be even more oppressive for them or possibly harmful for them, for living. Hum, and I think that has helped me a little bit, like, gain a better understanding, that, hum, and to help break down some of the stigma and the stereotypes that I myself had of African-Americans. Thinking that I was so much different than them, I was so much better than them.

Stacy-Ann's misunderstanding about the motives and choices of the AAs in that particular community initially contributed to an 'othering' of AAs that aligned with some of the stereotypes she had about AAs. Yet, after reflecting on the situation, she realized that there were justifiable reasons for their behavior that she hadn't been able to acknowledge before, but she could now understand.

Stacy-Ann also contends that AAs have perceptions of Jamaicans that may impact the relationship between the two groups.

They [AAs] expect that we're gonna act superior [sic] than them, that we don't understand Black culture, and we don't see where they're coming from and I can understand that stereotype is based on a lot of people's reaction to them [AAs] and...how they [Jamaicans] treat them [AAs].

Stacy-Ann understands why there might be discontentment between the two groups and finds herself understanding how AAs may feel. "I feel like I can identify with that [AAs]

a lot more than some other immigrants probably would be able to. Hum, but I am still, not one of them.” Despite identifying with AAs, she notes that it does not make her a part of that ethnic group, but her time in the US may also threaten her status in her own ethnic group.

But then when I go into Jamaican spaces, or when I go back home, I am not one of them either, you know, like ‘oh, you’re a foreign now’ (laughs).... Sometimes even my father does it to me, ...he’s like ‘well, you wouldn’t know this, or you wouldn’t remember this but in Jamaica’ and I was like, ‘I was grown when I left that island, you know that, right?’... when I go back home and I say things ...they tell me that I don’t sound Jamaican anymore, and I am like ‘what?’ Cause I- I promise you, when I talk in America they instantly go ‘oh, you’re Jamaican, aren’t you?’ (laughs). Um, so, just always feeling like you’re on the fence and you don’t really necessarily fit into either space. But you identify with both spaces, and you can understand things from both spaces, but both spaces kind of push you [out] like ‘oh, you’re not one of us, really’.

Stacy-Ann’s acculturation strategies are likely always in flux because she experiences an integrated identification with her ethnic and racial identity, bonding her with AAs, yet she feels like both groups respond to her with some degree of marginalization about her membership in either group.

Racial Identification with African-Americans

Since arriving in the US Stacy-Ann notes that her perceptions of AAs have been challenged and now believes

if nobody is teaching you, and everything you are learning is so White-washed, and, you're not learning about your history to understand how far you've come, and understand the struggles that others have gone through, then how can we expect people to then just jump up one day and be like 'Oh, I'm gonna overcome my barriers,' when they don't even necessarily know even what those barriers are....our chains have been on for so long, then how can we really expect people to be able to move beyond when literally segregation and civil rights just happened. We are still evolving as a country....I think it's so challenging as, like, a race, when not everybody fully understands the dynamics behind how, literally, society impacted their ability to move ahead.

Stacy-Ann contends that there are many factors that have influenced how AAs live or the extent of their prosperity in the US. She also illustrates frustration when others do not understand the same contributing factors. As Stacy-Ann explains this frustration, she oscillates between the use of the word "we" and "they/them/their," potentially typifying the inner struggle of BCIs who see themselves as a separate ethnic group from AAs as well as a part of the AA community and struggle, as members of the same racial group.

When Stacy-Ann thinks of AA values, she thinks of "collectivism" as something they exemplify and that comes from AAs and BCIs and their shared Africanness. She states,

I think community is really important. Hum, I think the whole, and I want to say it has come down throughout slavery and pre-slavery. One of the Afro-centric ideals that we've held on to is the idea of [the] village being able to help out. Living in a poor, very, very, poor community in America, helped me to gain an appreciation

of that collectivism. Because when something happens to one of us, you saw people chip in, and you saw people help out.... none of us had anything, but the little that we had, everybody was sharing, like, if one person had food stamps, then everybody got groceries, (laughs). Even if you just got a milk, and you got a juice and you got some beans, you got what you could out of that, you know – collective grocery, you know? And if one person had Medicaid and could get medication, well, you know, they're bringing over a bottle of aspirin for you, cause I know you have headaches, so here 'have it, I don't need it, but I got it for free'. Hum, and I want to say that, that's one of the proud culture...

Stacy-Ann's experiences with AAs from the community she joined, aligned with her own cultural values, rooted in their shared racial history. Which contributed to a sense of connection and safety because the people in the community took care of one another, despite having insufficient resources. For Stacy-Ann this sense of community and safety now shows up in smaller ways with Black strangers she passes while working in the courthouse,

I had a White co-worker with me, and I would walk through the hallways and a Black person would pass and you would nod and they'd nod back. And I remember always, always, always being asked ..., 'Oh, do you know them?' and I am like 'No.' 'So why are you..?' So I am just nodding to let them know, 'I see you, you see me' if something happens, something goes down, we got each other, like, we're here, we're all here together, hum, so I like that, that's one of my favorite values that I see among us. Hum, resilience, resiliency. Ain't nobody as strong as us?

Stacy-Ann describes the act of exchanging nods with other Black people as eliciting a sense of safety and togetherness fostered by a linked racial fate, what happens to one of them impacts all of them. While she discusses this she also uses “we” and “us,” illustrating an integrated racial and ethnic identification.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Stacy-Ann notes,

I spent so many years identifying as only Jamaican for so long. Not now. I’m like, really really proud to like, I am Black. Like, I’m-I’m Black, that’s all I am, that’s all I will be that’s what you see before you even know me or speak to me. You see, you can see this Blackness right here, I can’t change that, so that’s what I am.

She expressed that this change partly came from “shared trauma,” noting, “I get the same oppression that you get.” She goes on to say that she also enjoys AA culture and feels like she has “benefited” by having access to AA and Jamaican culture. “I like feeling as if I can be a part of both cultures and experience both cultures and live in both cultures.”

Stacy-Ann states,

I call myself Black ... I will not tick boxes on applications- if all it has is African-American, cause I’m not African-American, so I want to give credence to the fact that their culture is separate and different from mine.

For Stacy-Ann, her Black racial identity brings her into community with AAs without requiring her to take on their ethnic identity as her own, because she respected the differences of her home culture and AA culture.

Summary

Stacy-Ann illustrates an integrated acculturation outcome as a result of her interpersonal experiences with AAs. Stacy-Ann recognized the significance of her Black identity for herself, for WA, and for her community with AAs. She also maintained her ethnic identity and incorporated both aspects of herself into her lived experiences because she had had encounters with AAs that were welcoming her to do so.

Patrick: Integrated Identity

Patrick and Immigration

Patrick was a 62-year-old man from Jamaica. Patrick immigrated to the US when he was between the ages of 12 and 14 years old and he reported not knowing why his family left Jamaica, “I just came along but I’m sure it was economic. The streets were paved in gold and all of that stuff.” In terms of his transition, Patrick recalls that “the biggest thing at the time... was primarily the weather. You know, that fact that you’re going from summer to cold, and you had to get used to that.” Aside from the weather, he remembers, “you get into more of a color situation... categories and what have you. And then I think that’s where oppression kind of comes in... And then of course, also some [socioeconomic] class situation [sic], you know. That also exists.” Learning about differences between people and racial categorization was a notable part of Patrick’s transition to living in the US.

Interactions and Experiences with African Americans

Conflict among ethnic groups is a salient theme in Patrick’s transition. He notes that “there were some differences between the Black Americans and the Caribbean

Jamaican Americans,” which he believed may have contributed to how the two groups interacted.

“They weren’t too excited with how people from the Caribbean come here and you know, they weren’t too pleasant, so to speak. That’s Black Americans.”

Patrick recounted “territorial fights” between AAs and BCIs, “the American guys would fight against people from the islands, Jamaicans.” Therefore “you always had to watch out for that.” Patrick was not a part of the fights, “I witnessed it” but he states that the fights were “always there, in the background.”

The concept of “young males” fighting was familiar to Patrick because it happened “even in Jamaica... it was just a transition now, and instead of it being Jamaican against Jamaican towns, it was now Americans-African Americans against Caribbean Americans.” Despite the familiarity of boys fighting, the experience of needing to be hypervigilant to the threat of violence by AAs likely had some influence on Patrick's acculturation experience. In order to safely navigate the US, it may have been necessary for Patrick to remain separated in his ethnic group because AAs were positioned as rivals rather than allies.

Looking back, Patrick noted, “you don’t really deal with it [conflict]... you just stay with your group as much as you can” in order to avoid getting “into trouble or fights.” Patrick reports that he was still “friendly with other African Americans who were friendly.” He stated that “[you] manage the situation as best you can.” For Patrick, his engagement with AAs was based on how they interacted with him and he did not appear to extrapolate the actions of a few AAs to the larger ethnic group. As a result, Patrick may have remained open to various, positive and negative, interactions with AAs

throughout his acculturation process which possibly influenced his racial and ethnic identity development.

When asked about his most memorable experience with an AA person, Patrick reported: “A girl that-- my neighbor in the apartment-- that I liked.... She talked [sic] the American dialect. I thought it was the cutest thing in the world.” He says that he felt “probably more connected” to the AA community as a result of this experience because “she was pretty and the voice was just unbelievable.” For Patrick, the romantic connection brought him closer to AAs which may have potentially helped him view all AAs in a more favorable light.

Race and Jamaica

When reflecting on his experiences of oppression before coming to the US, Patrick asserts “there’s no oppression” in Jamaica. He contends: “I didn’t have that growing up, thinking there was any oppression. Now, poverty, rich and poor, class? Yes,” but he clarifies stating, “no,” he does not consider issues of class to be oppression. Patrick adds that his family taught him “nothing” about race before coming to the US.

He says,

we were just Jamaicans... I guess in Jamaica at the time we did have the Black and White issue a little bit. But not a whole lot. It was more on the economic sense if there is anything. That white Jamaicans tend to have the bigger houses, more this, you know. The Black Jamaicans tend to have less you know. Just from an economic perspective, you know. So, that’s all. But it wasn’t a big thing at all.

Being that everyone was Jamaican, Patrick did not interpret the economic disparities to be a product of race or discrimination. Patrick admits “my family had

money so to speak, or land, or what have you, none of those things came up or bothered us.” He argues that the economic disparities didn’t affect those who lived in the country as much, “you know I think it’s more in the city that this went on a little bit. We didn’t care, you know. We didn’t go to the city all that much.” Patrick’s family’s economic standing and location may have shielded him from the role of race in the class imbalance evidenced in Jamaica’s cities. Patrick may also not have interpreted economic disparities or other racially disproportionate matters as social issues if they did not personally affect him. Not having a concept of shared racial fate likely influenced ethnic and racial identity development.

Acculturating with African Americans and African American Culture

Patrick’s earliest exposure to AAs was vicarious. Patrick remembers “listen[ing] to the radio [to hear] “Muhammad Ali” the “biggest, greatest fighter at the time.”

That’s my first thing, of what African American was, Muhammad Ali. You know, in this case he was popular, rich... so that was my first experience of African Americans. Other than that, the only thing that we knew about America is that it’s a rich country that we’d like to go one day.

Patrick reported a very positive impression of AAs and the US in general prior to immigrating which may have served to facilitate his transition and eventual acculturation.

Invisibility and conflict were themes in Patrick’s direct interactions with AAs. When Patrick first came to the US, he felt that AAs had “never heard [of] a Jamaican” and therefore they believed, “you guys [Jamaicans] have never done anything good so, you guys must be backwards.” Patrick notes that this might be a result of Americans having had little education about the world. “They know nothing else that goes on, [in]

any other part of the world... and it just doesn't seem like they even want to you know. Both groups, White and Black in America. So that allowed them to not really think right." If AAs indeed had no reference point for Jamaicans at that time or that Patrick perceived them in that manner, it is likely that Patrick's engagement with AAs resulted in many interpersonal conflicts.

One interpersonal conflict that Patrick recalled having to navigate is AAs' perceptions about Jamaicans' use of marijuana. "They think that we-- every Jamaican-- smoke ganja [marijuana] because they see a Rasta smoking ganja.... I have to tell them 'no', if you go to Jamaica, back in the 70s and 80s, 90% of them did not smoke." Patrick often had to defend the fact that he did not use marijuana, nor was it widely used by Jamaicans or Rastafarians at the time. Having to manage stereotypes about one's culture can contribute to feelings of isolation but Patrick did not describe any intrapersonal stresses resulting from these experiences.

Patrick asserted that he also "probably" feel[s] more connected" to the AA community because of "basketball, baseball, [and] football." Patrick explained that he enjoyed watching these sports because of

the fact that these African Americans were so good. I mean they were just dominant in every aspect. And it also helped with the whole oppression business. Because here it just shows you that, in the case of sports at least, whenever they put their mind to something, their body and soul to whatever, they can do that, they can dominate it just as good as, if not better than most and they did that. Patrick expressed awe in response to the success of AAs in these three sports which may serve as a point of pride for him to be associated with AAs.

Racial Identification with African Americans or Ethnic (BCI) Identification

Patrick's racial identification in the US derived from his comparison of how White people treated people of color in the US and how White people treated Black people in Jamaica. In the US, Patrick observed, "the oppression, the struggle, it became very obvious that you know, in this case, many White Americans was [sic] doing everything that they can to keep these particular people of color, you know, Black skin, down if they could." Seeing the oppression of AAs in the US called for Patrick to reflect on his own country of origin. "Lucky for us in Jamaica by the time I was born, we had gotten independence from Britain so we had an African American prime minister." Comparing himself to AAs, Patrick felt fortunate to be from a country that he determined to be free from the influence of "White males in power." Patrick also described his prime minister as AA, which may indicate that he either believes AA is synonymous with Black or that he does not see a difference between Jamaicans and AAs. Patrick's terminology may also indicate that he does not see himself and BCIs as different from AAs, illustrating an integrated identity in which he equally identifies with his racial group and ethnic group.

Values

When asked what values he associates with AAs, he contrasted AA experiences with his life in Jamaica.

Patrick posited that "like any other human being, they care about all things, family... obviously there was a big thing with the oppression, you know, they wanted to get rid of that and it seems that they have. Their goals was... equality, civil rights." Patrick notes that "in Jamaica we all had civil rights" and as a result,

“we had to kind of adapt as a foreign[er] and look back like, ok. What is this thing that these people, they’re fighting over?”

To Patrick, AAs were fighting for something that he was already accustomed to and had to adjust to no longer having when he immigrated to the US. Adjusting to the lived experience of being Black in the US at the time that he immigrated, late 60s and early 70s, potentially did not allow for Patrick to acculturate in any other way than integration, because his ethnicity did not insulate him from the struggles AAs were fighting against.

Stereotypes

When asked about the stereotypes associated with AAs, Patrick asserted that he did not have any but that he “know[s] people” who believe stereotypes about AAs.

The whole thing that they’re poor and they’re from the ghetto, you know, they’re lazy. You know, that kind of situation. Which I think is absolutely wrong that they ascribe this on [to] them, cause it’s my experience that- now in Long Island where I grew up.... and unlike the city, Long Island was like at the time it was probably 90-95-98% White. And most of the jobs, the hard difficult jobs were done by African Americans. You know, they would do the jobs the White guy wouldn’t do. However, the same guys would then complain when the Black guy didn’t do that real dirty, nasty, ugly, job, that he was lazy. And they [WAs] wouldn’t even do that job. So how can you call someone lazy, for the very job you wouldn’t dare do, and he’s complaining maybe one time, and you harp on him that he’s lazy... that’s a part of the whole oppression business.

Patrick not only rejected the stereotype about AAs being lazy, he took issue with its validity and the people who he believed falsely perpetuate it. Patrick’s defense of AAs

against this prevailing stereotype may have contributed to a more integrated approach to acculturation because he illustrates admiration and respect for AAs, potentially making it easier for him to identify with them.

Patrick also chastised other AAs and BCIs who believe that AAs are lazy.

And sometimes some of our very own people believe that stereotype. You have kids walking around here, who quickly, and particularly Caribbean Americans.

They come over here, they listen to some of the stereotypes and they quickly assume it. And they will call their fellow African Americans lazy, stupid, all the names or what-have-you. Nothing true about it.

For Patrick, it is important for AAs and BCIs to not ascribe to inaccurate stereotypes potentially because it is attributed to their own racial group (i.e. “fellow AAs”). Patrick said that he identifies with “both at this point,” when asked if he identifies with AAs or Jamaicans. Having an integrated racial and ethnic identity, as evidenced by Patrick’s answer, may explain his defensive nature around the stereotypes associated with AAs, because he sees those stereotypes as meaning something about himself as well.

African American and Jamaican Differences

When reflecting on Jamaican and AA differences, Patrick emphasized Jamaican successes and AAs’ lack of success due to their succumbing to oppression. According to Patrick: Jamaicans “stand out in a lot of things that they do” such as “Reggae music” and “their zeal for education.” Patrick gave the example of “this young lady running for president this year, she happens to be part Jamaican, her dad is Jamaican, Kamala Harris. Before her, I think it was Colin Powel who was the head of the military.” Patrick noted that through education Jamaicans have been successful in America. “For a little island of

only two and half million people, you know, whenever they come here, it seems they, you know, they don't have a closed mind, which is one of my issues with African Americans." Patrick attributes the success of Jamaicans to having open minds which he believes to be different from AAs, who have closed minds. Patrick contended that the mindset of AAs is a product of oppression and slavery, which has now affected their ability to achieve success.

Too many of them [AAs] tend to have a closed mind. It's almost like, because of the oppression and the segregation, they think like, 'I can't do that.' And there is no wall around them, but mentally there is... The parents are perpetuating it, they don't tell the kids to open up their mind, and stop being you know, closed minded... so if they had just somehow learned to be that way, I think African Americans would be just 100 times more brilliant than they are. You know there are some great ones... but some of them just keep themselves in that mentality and it goes all the way back to slavery and some people say, well there's no chain anymore.

Patrick believes that AAs have a mental wall that is impeding their success and that most of them have not succeeded. Patrick gives the example of "rap music" and says that it should "take over the world." He notes that "they should be making money or royalties out of every other country who puts out rap music, but they're not," which he sees as a product of AAs' close-mindedness. He compares AAs to battered women,

think of the experience like a woman that's been-- she's married to a guy or girlfriend, who's abusing her, beating the hell out of her, and people are just saying, 'well why don't you just get out of it.' Well mentally and physically, and

all the stuff related [to] that he abused her, even when he's gone, she's still wrapped up and covered in that mentality.

Viewing AAs through the lense of a battered woman may be illustrating some empathy and understanding for AAs, but also may indicate a stereotype that distances AAs from his own experience. With regard to education, Patrick recalls:

Some of them [AAs] will voice to me that they didn't like the aggressive nature of Jamaicans... when I mean aggressive I mean... If there's a chance [a] Jamaican come here, and if there's a chance for most of them to go to school and it's free and they can find it, they'll take it and go all the way as much as they can.

[African] Americans will think, I'm finished with school, high school, why do I need to do the rest? They don't even want to. They don't make an effort per se, over and above the middle class... They won't take advantage of the opportunities, you know, that's something they could really do more of. I think Caribbean Americans tend to do that.

When Patrick compared BCIs with AAs, he believed that BCIs have a greater desire for academic and economic advancement. He notes that AAs perceive this desire and express distaste for how Jamaicans engage with the educational system. It is not clear to what extent Patrick's interpersonal experiences with AAs around the topic of education were based on actual interactions rather than inferences he made post hoc from behaviors that he had observed from a distance. Nevertheless, this perspective may serve as a perceived point of difference, but it does not necessarily negate the possibility of an integrated identity given his previous statements.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Patrick acknowledged a shift in his identity development from purely ethnic to racial. Patrick currently identifies as “African American,” although “I probably used to identify myself as Jamaican.” He asserted that “now, I think being Jamaican is too narrow.” He explained, “when I say African American, I don’t even just mean American per se, I consider myself more like an international person.” Patrick argued that “you have to grow and expand, and just being like, yes I’m a proud Jamaican... that just gets you a little piece of pie. So now you become African American, that gets you a bigger piece of pie. So now you become a person of color, and you’re more connected to the universe of color.” Through Patrick’s experiences, he appears to want greater connection to people of color, a desire that initially began with his identification with AAs, but has now grown to include presumably all people of color.

Nevertheless, Patrick declared that he only “partially” sees himself as part of the AA community. He said: You’re living here in America and [are] African American because of your color.” But he also argues that “I don’t like to be considered just African American cause I’m not that.” Patrick further explains his identity by saying

Jamaican is fine, but that’s small. You know, I identify with people in Africa. I identify with people who are from China. Who are from the- not Chinese per se, but the native Chinese, the people of color in China, the darker-skinned people. So, you know, mainly people of color. I identify with that aspect.

For Patrick, identification may not need to be geographically located, but rather seems rooted in a principle encompassing virtually all “people of color.” Even within the

American context, Patrick does not limit his identification to single racial or ethnic groups.

There are times when I consider myself just a greater part of the American experience-- Black or White-- 'cause not every White person is doing horrible things. There are many who have fought and died for freedom in America that we all have, they fought with African Americans.” Patrick explained, “I’m not locked into anything at all. I think some people are too locked into everything. That’s the issue.

Summary

For Patrick, identity has no bounds, and while in the American context he identifies as AA, he also saw himself as many other things, which at times were subsumed by his AA identity. Patrick’s encounters with AAs over the course of his time in the US resulted in an integrated acculturation outcome, that accounted for the role of his ethnicity and his race in how he understands himself. Given Patrick’s experiences with AAs and AAC, he described himself as feeling like he was a part of the AA community and greatly connected to minorities in general.

Donovan: Integrated Identity

Donovan and Immigration

Donovan is a 31-year-old man from Jamaica. Donovan immigrated to the US when he was 15 years old to join his parents who “were living here for a number of years and wanted to have us move here so that we can take advantage of the education system here.” He stated that he didn’t have a choice in the decision, “but I wasn’t necessarily opposed to it because I had traveled here a number of times previously and it was all for

vacation so my perception of America was a good one.” Donovan noted that his transition was “tough at first” despite the facts that he was open to coming here, “didn’t have a language barrier, wasn’t shy and didn’t personally feel inferior because I felt like I was equal to everyone else in terms of my ability to articulate myself, my education.” Donovan’s early experiences with AAs were unfavorable and fostered mistrust, which likely promoted a desire to distance himself from AAs. In his words, the “struggle came in with trusting” others.

Donovan understood that he left Jamaica “so that we would better be able to utilize the [educational] opportunities that were available here in America.” Therefore, he found himself feeling angry with AAs who he felt did not take advantage of those same opportunities.

Maybe it was cultural or maybe it was the stereotype that we tend to say [African] Americans are lazy and that idea of them having all the opportunities and then being lazy. Made you, from my perspective or from how I looked at it, in a sense, I was kind of angry that I saw a lot of people back home in Jamaica who would have loved to have these opportunities to make something of themselves not given the chance. And then people who had it, kind of not take advantage of it so it kind of created a little animosity, I just personally felt some type of way towards [African] Americans because of that stereotype of them being lazy.

Donovan’s perceptions of AAs and his resentment about Jamaicans’ lack of opportunities, also affected how he interacted with AAs. Accordingly, he admitted, “I wasn’t necessarily as welcoming as I probably would have been moving here.” He also recalled being asked a lot of questions about his culture. “So I would get a lot of... what

do you eat, what language do you speak?” He was also mocked because of his ethnicity, “[people were] calling you coconut or anything that they could think of that related to something from the Caribbean. That was your label.” Donovan explained that “I felt like I was being kind of challenged or tested to see if I was equal to them in that sense.” These experiences, in turn, made it “hard for me to trust people initially.”

Donovan coped with his early transitional experiences (i.e., name-calling) by developing friendships with other BCIs or Caribbean descendants. “Luckily I met ... Caribbean American[s], some were Jamaica[n], some were Trinidad[ian], or Guyanese that I could relate to and those were the people that I developed first friendships with and boosted my own self-confidence.” Donovan’s acculturation strategy in response to his experiences with AAs promoted a separated identification by which he came to identify more with other Black Caribbean ethnic minorities.

Despite his reported difficulties in trusting AAs, Donovan stated that toward his senior year of high school, he started “making friends who were [African] American, and understanding this is how they have their own values and you have yours and you kind of just have to find [a] middle ground.” Donovan’s acquired insight potentially illustrates that his early interpersonal experiences with AAs did not result in a fixed acculturation strategy of separation, but rather was a temporary or need-based through which he built his “self-confidence” from a place of safety.

Race, Colorism, and Jamaica

When reflecting on his understanding of oppression in Jamaica, prior to immigrating to the US, Donovan focused on Jamaica’s history of colonization and

oppression. Rather than viewing the oppression as racial, he tended to attribute it to socioeconomic status.

My country was colonized by multiple European nations ...So we've retained a few different cultural practices or discrepancies in how we tend to treat each other. You don't actively see racism in my country but what you more see, is more of a status grading where there's a large disparity between the haves and have nots or how wealth is distributed. And that's typically the determining factor in how you're treated.

In Donovan's experience, one's socioeconomic class served as the predominant factor that affected one's treatment by society at large. Donovan noted that "any type of discrimination or oppression wasn't really based on color," although he noted that "the lines were more blurred if you were going to compare it between someone who might have been Asian who was living there [in Jamaica] or Caucasian." He elaborated:

if you were more of a mixed-race... there was probably some type of generational wealth that was passed down.... So in that sense, you did find that people who were "White or Asian or Hispanic" that lived in Jamaica had higher status or treated differently because they had the wealth that was passed down through generations. So in some sense, the darker skin Jamaicans were kind of left to the wayside while the others, the more fair-skinned Jamaicans were given more opportunities to kind of grow and build and accumulate more wealth over the darker skin Jamaicans.

Nevertheless, for Donovan, the discrimination that is present in Jamaica is mostly a consequence of socioeconomic disparities, but he acknowledged that race plays a role in

how those socioeconomic disparities came to be. Donovan's understanding of what factors contribute to discrimination in his country of origin may influence his understanding of issues of discrimination in the US.

Prior to coming to the US, Donovan stated that he had been taught nothing about the concept of race. "So my parents didn't personally teach me anything about race and it gave me the best perspective of seeing people for who they are because I never saw racial difference until I came to America." Although Donovan initially stated that he "didn't have" any perceptions of AAs before coming to the US, after a brief pause he said,

I think I kind of just had a little bit of an um—of an epiphany.... the picture that I have in my mind of when I think of a white American when I was younger was the doctor, the businesswoman, the guy—so my picture of them was success. So if you really—if I'm being honest with myself, that perception of lazy was the Black Americans.

Donovan had not previously interrogated his belief systems about AAs before coming to the US. Therefore, he may not have been aware of how his original thoughts about AAs could have negatively affected the lens through which he viewed them, which presumably had some influence over his early interactions with AAs.

Acculturating with African Americans

Upon further reflection, Donovan noted that his introduction to AA culture began while he was still in Jamaica. He recalled, "my 2nd oldest brother became a big fan of-- at the time they were called, Cash Money. He loved Juvenile and Lil' Wayne and so, that was my introduction to the culture, to the music." The southern rap genre of music that Donovan was exposed to was foreign to him, he stated

I did not understand it [the music] at the time because it wasn't relatable. Nothing that they were saying, how they acted, how they talked, dressed, nothing, none of it interested me at the time. Um, it wasn't the music that I was raised on but I do, I do remember how it made my brothers dress different[ly], how they got tattoos, how they used different words. I don't know if it was a bad memory, I want to say I wouldn't have chose [sic] to do it because no one in my family had tattoos before him; so I saw it as making him more American and less Jamaican so in that sense I didn't like it.

Although Donovan's brothers embraced and emulated AA rappers, Donovan felt like the music, lyrics, and behavior that went along with rap music caused his brothers to change in a way that made them less reflective of their own ethnic group. Donovan contended that he felt "neutral" about his connection with AAs at the time though because he was still in Jamaica and that schema [identification with AAs] had not yet become relevant.

After arriving in the US, Donovan's parents broached the topic of race with him. I remember my mom basically sitting me and my brother down and saying to us this isn't Jamaican anymore. In this country, rules apply and they don't just-- the rules aren't unilaterally applied in all situations. So you have to be careful of who you get into [a] confrontation with.

Donovan remembered the conversation being "brief." But his mother emphasized: If a [racial or ethnic] situation does arise, I don't want you guys to try to rectify it yourself. Go and seek authorities, whether it's like a teacher in school, because we were school-aged so that's where she kind of steered the conversation of race towards, on how to deal with it in school...She said we might get picked on

because we're Jamaican, we talk with an accent, we're going to dress different[ly]; so, we'll probably stand out. But the one thing that she said to be mindful of is how people treat us. So, don't be naive in terms of, if someone is treating you a certain way or if someone was-- I'm trying to think of the words she used, if you were denied um certain opportunities that you felt like you were qualified for, she wanted us to come to her and talk to her about it. Because I think at the time she didn't think that we would be able to recognize racism because we weren't raised in a culture where it was upfront.

Based on Donovan's conversation with his mother, he concluded that "she just wanted us to work hard and try to be overqualified so that she could use that as a reference point to see if we were being treated differently or not." He contended that his mother tried not to overstate the role of race in what would become their lived experience in America because he believes that she didn't want them to become fearful. "So I guess that was just her best way of trying to transfer that knowledge or that information that she had without directly saying hey you need to be aware, or you need to be afraid, or you need to watch out for this." Although Donovan's racial socialization was subtle, it began with his parents. From them, he learned for the first time that his race might serve as an incontrovertible factor in the ways he would be treated by others. Therefore, he had to do his best at all times.

Learning the lesson that he needed to be "overqualified" because of his race may have put Donovan in conflict with the AAs he grew up around because, due to the negative stereotypes of them that he held, he assumed that they had not learned the same rule.

I saw a lot of the Black Americans in... the community that I moved into. They were the ones mainly hanging out, mainly in the gangs. They were the ones that was disruptive in class and didn't seem like they wanted to achieve and, the white Americans, it was the complete opposite. So in that sense, that stereotype was confirmed.

In contrast, Donovan also reports "other African Americans, who, who didn't hang out—we weren't in gangs, we were in the same classes with the Caucasian Americans." While discussing the AAs who were in Donovan's "honors class[es]" and "AP [advanced placement] classes," he used the term "we," potentially illustrating a shared identification and experience with some AAs. He explained that he was able to move between the successful and unsuccessful student cliques, each of which contained some AAs. To differentiate the two types of groups, Donovan argued that the AAs who were in the higher-level courses with him were not a part of the

quote on quote in-crowd, or in the circle of like Blacks. They didn't hang out with the rest of the Black kids. They hung out with either-- with themselves or with the white kids... I sat with the white kids, and the successful Blacks and then at the same time.... I could relate to the rest of the Black kids... the Blacks who were in gangs.

Donovan's experience managing his diverse social life with being in higher-level academic courses and seeing a stratification between the AAs who were with him and those who "hung out" led to a perspective that being academically successful and "assimilating to your [Black] culture" was incongruent. "If you ask certain African Americans about other African Americans, who tend to speak properly or they tend to

dress a certain way, we say they quote on quote act white.” Donovan’s high school racial socialization may have contributed to an acculturation strategy that signified integration, as evidenced by his use of the word “we” and his commitment to various social circles.

Values and Stereotypes

As Donovan described his perception of AA values, he oscillated between language that separates him from AAs, such as the use of “they” versus the use of “we” which unites him with AAs.

There’s a lot of inconsistencies in how people are treated here in America, and there’s tons of reasons of why anyone could just be fed up with it. Or an African American can just be fed up with how they feel disenfranchised or not equal. But we don’t necessarily tend to go rogue. So, that takes a fair amount of reason to say, you know, well things isn’t [sic] the way it’s supposed to be but you can’t just lash out because of it.

Shared experiences of oppression with AAs may contribute to Donovan’s use of the word “we” in the example about not lashing out, despite having cause to do so. Donovan goes on to explain his admiration for AAs because of their ability to persevere in spite of the odds.

We are definitely loving. Um, we’re definitely resourceful. I’m trying to think how to turn my feelings into words (Laughs). Um, I definitely admire, African Americans, coming from another country, coming from the Caribbean, Jamaica. I don’t know how I would be today if I was raised here. So um, I don’t want to make um, excuses, because... we all have to make life what we want it, we all have to choose, but when you’re raised to—in a culture that doesn’t accept you,

that... you feel disenfranchised, you clearly see that you're treated differently I don't know that I would be the same me today had I not come here with some values of feeling equal prior, to um, moving to the US, that's why I am trying to put that admiration for African Americans here into words.

Donovan's admiration for what he perceives to be AAs "resilience," may also be a factor in his shared identification with them.

Donovan's shared identification was evident even as he discussed the negative stereotypes associated with AAs. "We're thugs, we're lazy, we are violent, scary, not very attractive, not very intelligent, (exhales and pauses) untrustworthy, criminals." Donovan also became defensive as he discussed the negative stereotypes attributed to AAs, whom he was now referring to with the term "we."

Those are tangible stereotypes that you can see from governmental policies to how laws are enforced, opportunities given, how you're looked at, where you're allowed to go, how you're allowed to speak. Um, none of it is equitable... if you put a Caucasian and an African American in the same situation and have them perform the same act good or bad, equities would never be balanced. It's always uneven, we're always the later. And um it's, it's easy to perpetuate those stereotypes when you put all these negative words attached to us.

Recognition that his ethnicity has not shielded him from the same subjugation experienced by AAs, potentially promoted an integrated or assimilated identity for Donovan. Yet Donovan does not discuss his identification with AAs as a designation forced upon him by society, but rather it seems to derive from a shared plight of racial discrimination and admiration for the ways in which AAs manage it.

African Americans' Stereotypes of Jamaicans

When considering AAs' stereotypes of Jamaicans, he addressed both positive and negative beliefs about BCIs generally. Donovan asserted

If there's one stereotype in America that's attached to any Caribbean American is that we're hardworking... But when you, when you migrate to another place and you have to start from nothing, it's all those little pieces that end up becoming a whole. So that's why we tend to juggle multiple jobs and have multiple roles.

In addition to being perceived as hard workers, Donovan contended that AAs view Jamaicans as "potheads,"

definitely more violent than the typical Black [person], we're a culture of womanizers, and also caring...when you're in Jamaica, it's exactly as they say-- they'll definitely give you the shirt of [off of] their back, they're very loving.

Donovan's perceptions that AAs expressed varied beliefs about Jamaicans during their interactions with him potentially facilitated his identification with them.

Acculturative Stress

When describing the stresses associated with acculturating to the US, Donovan focused primarily on his ethnic culture. Work and success were strong themes. He recalled "[the] biggest things for a Jamaican is to be given the opportunity to better yourself and not take advantage of it." As a result, "a big stress for me, because of my culture, would be if I wasted my opportunity here [in the US]." He noted that "wasting away any chance" or opportunity at a better life was seen as significantly more disappointing than being unsuccessful in general.

In my culture, you'd be looked upon as worse than someone who was just living on the street taking drugs. Because there's so much people that would give everything for that chance that everyone expects you to be the greatest and the best... I was always nervous about not living up to her [his mother's] expectations. Because when I see the amount of work... the effort that she put [in] to provide for us and to give us these opportunities he felt that he couldn't fail her. In addition to his family in the US, "[there are] friends and loved ones also back home in Jamaica, that are expecting you to also like excel and take advantage of the opportunities." The pressure to succeed because of the opportunities he had to be educated in the US, led to a great deal of stress for Donovan which influenced how he interpreted some AAs' engagement with their education.

In Donovan's opinion, the pressure he felt to succeed was culturally informed in a way that wasn't present for AAs.

I think what I see here it's a lot of individuals, it's--African Americans tend to make individual decisions. Like how I've described the pressures that I've faced, none of my decisions were just for me. It was always for us. How was my decision going to affect my family, my friends, and I think that's what creates that pressure.

Donovan viewed his culture as being collectivistic and AAs as being more "individualistic" which is "how I would say I differ from an [African] American." Donovan's interpretation of his AA friend's motivations may have hampered his ability to feel connected to them, but their individualistic decision-making style also potentially inspired some degree of envy or resentment.

In acknowledging his conflict over his AA friends' greater freedom, Donovan stated:

When I was younger... I felt like I wanted to live life, in the same sense that I saw my African American friends live life where their parents who aren't as tough, and they weren't as strict, and they weren't pushing them as much, I didn't feel like I had as much freedom, I didn't feel like I had as much room for error... I wanted to become an artist but [if] it was going to be the kind of job that wouldn't be seen as you being a success then I couldn't do it... I didn't have the freedom to choose who I wanted to be and do it my way.

A comparison that may have contributed to some degree of resentment because he was not able to pursue a career of interest to him, which was a freedom he saw afforded to his AA peers. This difference in perceived choice about one's future likely highlighted for Donovan one way in which he believed he was culturally dissimilar to AAs, although he did not necessarily view this dissimilarity as an asset. Donovan explained:

My coping mechanism was dancing, music. Music is a big part of my culture [and for] a period of time [was an escape when] I didn't know what I wanted to do [and] you feel like you're about to fail not only your family but your whole country.

Feeling like a representative of his country added to the pressure Donovan felt about needing to succeed, but also potentially served as an additional point of difference and disconnection between him and AAs.

Racial Identification with African Americans

When reflecting on a memorable experience with an AA, Donovan contends this friend “didn’t have the stresses I had,” referring to the pressure to succeed for his family and country. “I could see that he laughed more, and when he laughed it felt like a more genuine laugh. He just seemed like a lot more relaxed like there was less on his shoulders” which may have brought a lightness into Donovan’s life. He explains that this friend,

was my first time making a real connection who-- who wasn’t Caribbean American but shared so many of my personal values. He cared about family the way I did, he cared about education the way, the way I did. He was personable, he didn’t feel fake, he was very genuine, in um, how he interacted with me. And um our relationship grew where I really felt as though he was an extended part of my family.... we actually went to um community college together too and for a period of time... we were like yin and yang. But um, when I think of his name I smile because I remember all the good times that we’ve had and I know that I was able to experience that with him because of the connections that we made in high school. He didn’t have all the best qualities but the ones that were important. Loyal, family, education, trustworthy. Like those, those were the values that I saw in the person that I admired the most, my mom.... So it felt safe, it felt like home, you know, um being around him.

Donovan says that because of this friend, “absolutely, I felt more connected” to the AA community. He explains that this friendship is what allowed him to have other friendships with AAs.

“If there was one, there would be another. I think if I didn’t experience that I would probably have been more closed off to really opening up.... having someone that shouldn’t relate to you at all, relate to you that much made me more willing to experience new things.... I was a lot more open and a lot more accepting of African Americans who had no Caribbean background because of him.”

Donovan’s interpersonal relationship with this one AA friend was so significant to him that it changed the way he approached relationships with all AAs moving forward. “Even if the first impression wasn’t what I expected it-- what I wanted it to be, I would give that person [an AA] the chance to grow, to grow with me and I definitely think that made me grow and mature as a person.” Donovan’s friendship probably played a significant role in what appears to be Donovan’s integrated identification with AAs and the use of the word “we” when discussing issues that pertain to AAs. He learned through that friendship that he could see AAs as “family.”

Racial and Ethnic Identity Change

Donovan now identifies as “Jamaican-American.” He contends that “part of me was created within the first 15 years of life,” and the rest of him “was developed with the last 16 from America.” He explains, “the type of music that I like now, how I dress, the catchphrases that I use” developed from his time in America and “the things that I care about were definitely influenced from my Jamaican culture....how I view family, how I view my responsibilities” which is “why I would see myself as a Jamaican American.”

Donovan admits that he did not always identify as Jamaican-American.

I think it changed when I met that African American friend. Prior to that I-- there was nothing about me that I wanted to associate with quote on quote America, Americanness, ... I just wanted to retain who-- I like my culture-- who I was, I was a Jamaican living in Jamaica [America], and that's how I wanted to be perceived. After meeting my-- the African American friend I realized that my-- my values weren't Jamaican values. They were just values and depending on how you were raised and who your parents are they gave you or they didn't give you those values. So, from that point on I was okay with accepting some American values and I guess quote on quote adopting them and acting accordingly where I didn't have to be the Jamaican with the tight pants that was pulled up. I could wear the big shirts and... play a little rap music, and it wouldn't make me any less Jamaican.

Donovan's relationship with his AA friend challenged what he believed were value differences between himself and other AAs. Not believing there to be fundamental differences between the cultures also allowed Donovan to engage with AA culture without feeling like it challenged his ethnic identity, which in turn permitted him to develop an integrated identity.

In addition to having an AA friend, who helped him develop an integrated identity, Donovan also attributed his identity change to his relationships with other BCIs who modeled an integrated identity.

It's meeting Caribbean-Americans, other Jamaican-Americans, who are just like me. Born in Jamaica, raised in Jamaica, have the same Jamaican values that I immediately... related to. But then, they're American. They act American, they

do the same things, they dress American, and still retain the same values, still have the same perspective on being successful and being educated and progressing forward. So having an African American who had my values who I could connect with and then having Jamaican Americans or Caribbean Americans who I assumed I'd connect with immediately and then have them be American. It -- it made it easier for me to accept my role of being multicultural, being Jamaican and American at this point.

Establishing friendships with BCIs who had personally developed an integrated identity created a model for Donovan about another way to engage with AAs as the ethnic group to whom he was assimilating. As a result of his friends, Donovan was also able to find points of similarity that helped him feel connected to AAs without feeling disconnected from his Caribbean ethnicity, further promoting an integrated response to his acculturation.

Furthermore, shared racialized experiences served as a function that contributed to Donovan's integrated identity.

I live here in America, living through the same experiences that they go through. The same prejudice, the same racial experiences. Shared experiences is how we build bonds. Sometimes they're direct, sometimes they're indirect so um, I can relate to someone being harassed by a police officer because I've probably had that experience. I relate to them, I sympathize, so you tend to feel connected through your experiences. So it would be hard for me to distinguish myself in that sense.

Despite having positive interpersonal experiences with AAs that Donovan directly attributes to his identity change over time, he noted that the shared experiences of oppression were conclusive factors in his integrated identification because the society at large does not distinguish him from AAs, so he can not distinguish himself.

Summary

Donovan illustrates an integrated acculturation outcome as a result of his encounters with AAs. Donovan's acculturation strategies shifted over time as he remained responsive to his interpersonal and intrapersonal needs. Despite having had at one point a separated identity, Donovan's meaningful relationship with an AA friend appeared to have been the catalyst for a shift in his acculturation strategy.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Society perceives BCIs as being members of the Black racial group, treats Black racial group membership and African American culture as synonymous, and thereby disregards ethnic cultures within the Black group. Previous literature has not investigated the complexity of the acculturation of BCIs as it pertains to acculturating to a minority-status racial group, in this case, Black Americans (i.e., African Americans). To account for the gaps in the literature, I proposed a model that did not conflate nationality with race or ethnicity and acknowledged race and racial identity as primary factors in the acculturation outcomes of BCIs who physically resemble AAs, but are not them culturally.

The test of the model focused on the narratives of BCI individuals regarding their experiences with individuals from the group to which they were most likely to acculturate (AAs). The questions that informed the present study were a product of the proposed conceptual model that integrated Berry's (1997) theory of acculturation with Ferguson et al.'s (2012) tridimensional model. The proposed model assessed BCIs' acculturation strategies and outcomes in response to their interactions with AAs and AAC, the racial group and ethnic culture that others ascribe to them. The model is characterized by two intersecting dimensions, one reflects AAs' perceived influences on BCIs' ethnic identity and the other reflects AAs' perceived influence on BCIs' racial identity. When responses to each dimension are assessed in combination with each other: four possible acculturation outcomes are proposed: (a) *Separation*, defined as BCIs' interactions with AAs/AAC that promoted maintaining their original BCI ethnic identity, but did not foster

developing or maintaining a Black racial identity; (b) *Integration* indicating that BCIs identified equally with their Black racial identity and their Caribbean ethnic identity as a result of their encounters with AAs and AAC; (c) *Assimilation*, which occurred when BCIs' encounters with AAs/AAC promoted developing or maintaining a Black racial identity, but not a BCI ethnic identity; and (d) *Marginalization*, defined as the consequence of BCIs' interactions with AAs that did not promote developing or maintaining their Black racial identity or maintaining their BCI ethnic identity.

Narrative analyses of nine BCI participants were conducted to determine the extent to which their acculturation experiences authenticated the four proposed model outcomes of the model. Toward fulfilling this goal, acculturation strategies used throughout BCIs' acculturation were analyzed and are reported. Additionally, overarching themes that address previously discussed gaps in the literature and buttress or permit elaboration of the proposed conceptual model are presented. I also discuss limitations of the research and implications of the results for future research and clinical practice.

Acculturation Outcomes and Strategies

Acculturation Outcomes pertain to the ultimate decisions BCI participants made about how they will negotiate the race-ethnicity dimensions with AAs. Acculturation strategies are the intra- and inter-personal adaptations BCIs make in response to the multitude of new challenges and opportunities that accompany their acculturation journey.

Ethnic Cultural Outcomes

Separation/ Segregation

BCIs who distanced themselves from AAs and/or retreated into BCI spaces were considered to have a separated acculturation outcome. Also, BCIs, who experienced themselves as having been excluded (i.e. segregated) from AA spaces rather than excluding themselves, engaged in separation in response. Four of the participants interviewed (i.e., Francoise, Roseline, Anya, and Adriana) exhibited a separated acculturation outcome, meaning they primarily identified with members of their own ethnic group or with a pan-ethnic enclave (e.g., other BCIs). They were all women in their late twenties to early thirties and immigrated to the US between the ages of 8 and 19. They also all shared one or more negative interpersonal experiences with an AA person that involved being bullied, rejected, or simply unable to relate. The women described different types of rejection experiences, but many of them seemed to relate to AAs not accepting or being overly intrigued by aspects of their appearance or communication style.

For example, Adriana reported being made fun of because of her accent and “being [perceived as] different” by an AA peer. She noted that these experiences made her feel like she was “lesser or less intelligent” because of her BCI identity. Adriana’s AA peer in this instance had the power to segregate her because she was American and a member of a more dominant group relative to Adriana. Berry (1992) noted that segregation occurs when non-dominant group members do not have the power to choose their acculturation strategy. Given Adriana’s lack of power, she did not really have a choice in her acculturation strategy at that time. As an acculturative response though,

Adriana chose to separate herself in future interactions with AAs. These four participants each expressed feeling disconnected from the AA community as a result of their experiences, which likely fostered their reliance on use of a separated acculturation strategy because they did not feel comfortable, understood, or safe in their relationships with AAs.

Despite these participants' relying on separation acculturation strategies, it is important to note that some participants had some interpersonal experiences that could have promoted a more integrated identity. For example, Anya reported feeling connected to her AA professor who embraced Anya as a Black woman, which was an experience that Anya said she had rarely felt before-- being embraced as Black, and described as "powerful". Prior to this exchange, Anya's immigration story and interpersonal experiences with AAs had been marred with rejection, which bolstered her use of a separated acculturation strategy, despite her understanding of her shared oppression with AAs. Positive experiences with an AA did not outweigh her negative experiences as influences on her reliance on a separated identity acculturation strategy. Perhaps the positive event(s) occurred too late in her development. It is also possible that these participants chose to engage in "subjective acculturation" as a result of their experiences with AAs, which aligns with Ferdman and Horenczyk's (2000) argument that immigrants' acculturative experience is dictated by their interpretations of culture.

Francoise, Roseline, and Anya each shared positive experiences in AA culture, which involved food. They each expressed liking AAs' food and interpreting AAs' food to be similar to the cuisine of their own cultures. Giving them an appreciation for AA

culture and promoting a sense of connection. Only one of them cited her connection with food as contributing to racial identity development.

Integration

Participants who shared meaningful interactions with AAs/AAC and expressed feeling equally connected with AAs and co-ethnics were determined to have an integrated acculturation outcome. Additionally, BCIs with an integrated identity did not illustrate any conflict about their racial and ethnic identity. Of the nine participants in this study, five typified an integrated acculturation outcome: Jean-Richard, Errol, Stacy-Ann, Patrick, and Donovan. Integration is marked by BCIs' maintaining their respective culture of origin while actively participating and integrating with members of the AA culture. Virtually none of the participants began their acculturation journeys with an integrated identity, but rather through a series of experiences and acculturation strategies, came to such an identity.

The majority of BCIs with an integrated acculturation outcome were men (four out of five) and all shared multiple meaningful positive experiences with an AA person. Errol discussed being taken in by an AA family that made him feel at home, Jean-Richard reported being cared for and given opportunities for employment by AAs, Patrick expressed a heartfelt romantic relationship with an AA girl, Donovan shared his earnest appreciation for an AA friend, and Stacy-Ann reflected on how she felt supported by her AA neighbors who took care of one another. Each of these experiences were significant and meaningful to the BCIs who lived them and they recalled them warmly when they communicated these stories to the PI years later.

It is also relevant to note, although potentially less significant, all of these participants also had meaningful connections with some aspect of AA culture. Errol's favorite pie is still sweet potato pie as a result of his time in the American South, Jean-Richard was politically active in issues germane to AAs' lives, Patrick loves AA dominated American sports, Donovan notes that his style of dress and music choices are a product of his time in the US/ AA spaces, and Stacy-Ann's love of AA history and music has persisted throughout her life. Engaging in AA culture is a noteworthy aspect of an integrated identity that operates symbiotically because as BCIs engage with AAC, they feel more connected to AAs and as AAs engage with BCIs through their own culture, they likely too, feel more connected.

Mutually positive interactions seem to have fostered relationships in which both parties felt seen and accepted. Although one can not yet argue that engagement in AAC alone precipitates integration; thus far it can be posited that engagement in AA culture helped facilitate integration for these BCI participants. In my model, I contend that meaningful interpersonal relationships play a more crucial role in integration.

Integration also does not appear to be a conscious decision unilaterally made by a BCI, but rather a consequence of repeated meaningful interactions with AAs over time. Given the gender make-up of the BCIs with an integrated acculturation outcome, one can surmise that either men are more easily able to acculturate or that the intersectional identity of being Black and woman in the US brings about additional challenges that were not measured in this study. It is possible that dating experiences with AA and WA men, which nearly all of the women in the study shared, played a role in their acculturation strategies. For example, Roseline shared that as a result of her dating experiences and

acculturation in American society as a whole, she's internalized messages of not being "worthy" or "not good enough." The extent to which this was an influential factor is not yet known. So while interpersonal relationships between BCIs and AAs may serve as a mediating variable for an integrated identity, being a Black woman might be a moderating variable.

Assimilation

Assimilation outcome refers to immigration stories that indicated that participants relinquished their Caribbean ethnic identity in favor of adopting an AA ethnic/ racial identity. Participants' narratives were evaluated for attempts to either hide their ethnic difference or take on AA cultural norms in responses to encounters with AAs. No participants' narratives indicated this outcome. Nevertheless, some participants used assimilation as a temporary strategy in response to some of their interactions with AAs. Particularly with regard to bullying, some participants attempted to erase the "visible" or "audible" indicators of their ethnicity in order to better assimilate. Two BCIs attempted to use this strategy at different points in their acculturation process. Jean-Richard and Roseline endeavored to take on an AA ethnic identity with varying degrees of success and different results.

Jean-Richard discussed fully immersing himself in AA culture, people, and politics at one point in his life which made him feel more connected to AAs. Despite enjoying his assimilation process, Jean-Richard expressed the need to hide this from his family. He understood that his assimilation was not something that his family would value or encourage. Therefore, to some extent, Jean-Richard did not have the choice to

continue to assimilate if he wanted to also remain authentic in his family relationships, necessitating his use of a different acculturation strategy over time.

Roseline shared multiple interactions with AAs in which she was reproached or felt confused because she did know something that was expected of her as a Black person (e.g., knowledge about a specific AA person) such as the music of Anita Baker.

Roseline's attempts to assimilate into AA culture resulted in points of growth and connection as well as multiple points of disconnection and regression. Indicating that assimilation may not be accessible for all BCIs because of either how they interact with AA culture or how AA people respond to BCIs transgressions. Roseline had concluded by the end of her interview that she could not fit in (i.e., assimilate) with AAs, and had to in fact find a different niche for herself. That niche manifested as a separated identity.

Assimilation in theory implies a great deal of choice that is not always afforded to the BCIs. They must consider the response from their families and the consequences of being viewed as diverging from one's home culture, which alone may dissuade some BCIs from attempting to assimilate. They must also consider whether AAs will allow them to assimilate and bear the constant, yet unconscious assessment that comes along with being Black in AA spaces. The assumption of knowledge and beliefs, as well as, the potentially repeated experiences of realizing that, as an immigrant, you might not actually fit in. Which may be something BCIs are managing on a regular basis, their own imposter syndrome as well as AAs responses to BCIs' culturally or racially incongruent behavior, attitudes, or knowledge.

Marginalization

Marginalization occurs by exclusion or withdrawal, as a result of acculturative stress when BCIs feel isolated from their home culture and AA culture. None of the BCIs in the study demonstrated a marginalized acculturation outcome. Many of the BCIs in this study shared moments of feeling isolated from AA culture, but all of them noted that they had BCI enclaves in which to retreat. The BCIs who retreated to their enclaves expressed feeling supported, understood and safe among co-ethnics. All of the participants were also from major metropolitan cities with a variety of BCI enclaves that likely shielded BCIs from the experience of marginalization.

Although marginalization did not occur in the U.S. context, the participants who visited their home country expressed feelings akin to marginalization. They noted that in their country of origin they were treated like Americans or felt excluded because it was assumed that they no longer knew or understood colloquialisms or the culture or customs of their home country. For example, Stacy-Ann reported that, “when I go back home [to Jamaica] and I say things ...they tell me that I don’t sound Jamaican anymore,” and she is referred to as a “foreigner.” Lack of belonging was particularly challenging for Roseline and Stacy-Ann who described themselves as feeling like a foreigner in America as well. Roseline and Stacy-Ann each had BCI communities to which they felt connected. Therefore, they did not experience marginalization in the U.S. context. Nevertheless, the general feeling of being isolated or like a foreigner existed in the US, as well as in their respective countries of origin.

Strategies and Contexts

My model proposes that race, defined as racial identity, position with respect to racial oppression, and interpersonal interactions are a part of the context in which BCIs form their acculturation strategies.

Acculturating with African Americans --the Racial Dimension

Prior to immigrating to the US, the concepts of race, racial identity, and racial oppression were foreign to a majority of the BCIs as an aspect of their personal experiences in their countries of origin, nor were they familiar with these concepts as they pertained to AAs in the US. For many of them, their introduction to AAs was through television or radio that depicted AAs in a variety of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical ways. An example of a counter-stereotype is that some participants believed that all AAs were upper-middle class and lived like the actors from *The Cosby Show*, a show in which the (AA) parents were a doctor and a lawyer and the female children scored 700s on the SAT. A handful thought that AAs were militant and collectively fighting systems of oppression. Others believed that AAs were loud and lazy, whereas others asserted that they had no impressions of AAs whatsoever before coming to the US. The various perspectives that BCIs held, whatever they might have been, influenced the lenses through which they filtered racial stimuli and made decisions about the quantity and nature of their engagements with AAs and AAC.

BCIs, who held a positive image of AAs (i.e., Stacy-Ann, Anya, and Patrick) in their home country, indicated that they initially wanted to assimilate and be associated with AAs, although assimilating to AA culture did not likely have the same connotations for all BCIs. Anya, for example, discussed not understanding that her friendship with the

only WA girl in her school would have implications for her AA peers, which supports Wamwara-Mbugua et al.'s (2008) suggestions that (Kenyan) Black immigrants were perhaps unaware that they needed to first acculturate to the AA subgroup. Moreover, a desire to emulate AA success is not synonymous with immersion in AA culture or spaces.

BCIs, who initially held negative images of AAs (Donovan, Jean-Richard, Francoise, and Roseline) in their home countries, admitted to wanting to remain separate from AAs from the onset of their immigration. Francoise, for instance, recalled being told by her mother “when you come here [US] the way you’ll see some of the kids act here, some of the Black kids act here, do not act like that (laughing).” The messaging Francoise received was similar to Bryce-Laporte’s (1972) findings that Black immigrants were often instructed to differentiate themselves from AAs. Additionally, Bryce-Laporte’s (1972) and Reid’s (1939) works discussed Black immigrants’ predetermined desires to differentiate themselves from AAs through exaggerations of accents or ethnic styles of dress, which they interpreted as a conscious or unconscious reaction to racial stratification.

BCIs, who held a neutral image of AAs (Errol and Adriana) in their home country, described no conscious decisions about how to initially interact with AAs. Yet, when met with negative stereotypes about Black people that BCIs attributed to just AAs, all of the participants, regardless of initial beliefs, reacted with a separated acculturation strategy. Despite BCIs’ initial belief systems about AAs, there was an unconscious or conscious desire for them to distance themselves from the harmful associations they learned about or witnessed in AAs. As a consequence, throughout their acculturation

journey, many chose not to engage with AAs and to reject those values BCIs attributed to AAs.

Racial Socialization

As BCIs became more racialized and learned that their ethnicity did not protect them from race-based experiences of oppression, they entered a period of crisis and commitment during which they had to figure out what it meant for them to be Black in the US. So BCIs were simultaneously engaging in a cultural acculturation process that involved learning what it means to be American, while also undergoing a racialization process that required learning the meaning of Blackness in the U.S. context, which had personal implications for them as individuals.

Discovery of the significance of their Blackness led many of the BCIs to attempt to understand their racial classification, primarily based on understanding the role of their appearance and the racial socialization messages (e.g., negative stereotypes) that accompany the Black classification, which is essentially a political designation. Acceptance of the racial category while denying the personal meaningfulness of negative racial stereotypes about Black people was challenging for all of the participants. Yet some of them were greatly challenged because they believed that the stereotypes were accurate descriptors of the Black people with whom they interacted. In their narratives, they used “them” vs “us” to refer to their differentiation from AAs and indicate a desire to distance themselves from AAs and the messages associated with being AA. BCIs’ use of “othering” language evidenced that experiences of racism or oppression did not inherently move BCIs toward a strong sense of kinship with AAs, as previously posited by Vickerman (2001). All of the BCIs in the study expressed either personal or related

experiences of racism in the US, but these experiences alone did not necessarily move them toward an integrated identity with AAs, as evidenced by the various acculturation outcomes.

Some of the BCIs were able to deconstruct the associations between racial designations and negative stereotyping and they responded to the negativity of these messages by owning the AA experiences of racial oppression as also applicable to themselves. In their narratives, use of they or them to refer to AAs became “we” or “us” terminology, signifying racial identity and illustrating an internalization of the racial socialization and how it affected their racial group. Rogers (2001) labeled this joining with AAs as “linked racial fate” in which BCIs expressed feeling like what happened to AAs in the US also had implications for them. Errol, for example, stated, “they see what we look like, that’s all they are going to see. That is the first thing you see....you and I could walk through Davie [a city in FL] and we would be called names.” Errol’s statement implies an understanding of linked racial fate because he acknowledges that BCIs and AAs are not given dissimilar treatment in the US. Although it is important to note that for BCIs, linked racial fate did not necessarily generate an integrated identity, concurring with Rogers’s (2001) findings.

Interpersonal Interactions with AAs

How BCIs responded to their racialization affected their interpersonal experiences with AAs because a desire to distance themselves from the stereotypes attributed to AAs led to a desire to distance themselves from the AAs themselves. Followed by common conceptualizations of AAs’ actions that otherwise explained or supported the plight of AAs, as a product of their own choices. Many BCIs reported that AAs did not value

education or hard work and attributed this value system to the perceived failures of AAs as individuals and as a group. BCIs also looked to their own successes and advancements as evidence that AAs were choosing to not have better life circumstances. These findings (i.e., AAs' values and BCIs successes) were mirrored in the work of Bashi Bobb and Clarke (2001), who found that BCIs credited their success to the different cultural values and work ethic they held in comparison to AAs. Illustrating the enduring nature of stereotypes and ethno-cultural beliefs, Françoise, for instance, stated, "[T]hey look up to rappers, instead of looking up to other people who are like ...what I don't condone is a rapper that used to deal drugs before or tried to destroy the community." Françoise's perceptions of AAs' values affected how and whether she interacted with AAs. As a result, it appeared that the experience of racialization had a negative effect on the possible relationships BCIs might otherwise have had with AAs. Indicating that racism is so pervasive that it can and does disrupt BCIs acculturation strategies, particularly with regard to their interpersonal relationships with AAs.

For the BCIs who developed racial identity, in spite of some belief systems that distanced them from AAs, it was evidenced by the three elements Helms (1990, 2003) indicated were necessary, personal, affiliative, and reference group identity. *Personal* refers to the self-conceptualization of "who am I?" Patrick stated that he is African-American because he is Black and in America. Of course, this characterization of himself suggests that he might be something else if he lived elsewhere. *Affiliative* is a belief that what happens to other members of one's racial group also happens to the self. As an example, Jean-Richard discussed his fears and justified anger about police brutality with respect to Black men. *Reference group* refers to the degree of conformance to the norms

of one's racial group. Donovan was acknowledging a Black reference-group orientation when he discussed his ability to conform to the norms of the various AAs with whom he spent time.

Each of the BCIs who identified with the Black racial group described meaningful relationships with AAs whom, they reported helped bolster their feelings of connection to the AA community. Therefore, the racial identity development or acculturation decisions of some of the BCIs in the present study suggest an ability to overcome the harmful messages that accompany racialization, but not without counteracting factors such as positive interpersonal relationships with AAs.

Similarities and Differences

Several BCIs contended that AAs did not value their communities or personal advancement because of the choices BCIs believed AAs were making or the opportunities BCIs believed were available to all Americans. BCIs often placed their values in opposition to those of AAs and emphasized that their success was a product of their ethnic differences. BCIs were also able to name similarities between themselves and AAs, which included most notably shared racial oppression, followed by mentions of family, resilience, cuisine, and creativity or resourcefulness. Although BCIs' impressions of the similarities and differences that they held in comparison to AAs were evident to BCIs, those values or stereotypes appeared to only mildly moderate BCIs' racial identity. BCIs across acculturation outcomes named common differences and similarities which did not appear to have any bearing on how connected the BCIs felt to AAs.

Interpersonal experiences with African Americans and African American Culture

BCIs' interpersonal experiences with AAs played a significant role in their acculturation narratives and the extent to which BCIs felt more or less connected to AAs. BCIs who felt more connected to AAs described experiences of being welcomed, accepted, helped, supported, and/or understood. When BCIs felt like they could be themselves and accepted in their encounters with AAs, they reported feeling more connected to AAs. For example, consider Donovan's statements about his AA friend,

He didn't have all the best qualities but the ones that were important. Loyal, family, education, trustworthy. Like those, those were the values that I saw in the person that I admired the most, my mom.... So it felt safe, it felt like home, you know, um being around him.

BCIs' experiences with AAC also helped to facilitate some positive encounters with AAs, but alone did not appear to be the impetus for a more integrated acculturation strategy. Stacy-Ann, for example, came to the US having already been acquainted with AA music (i.e. Hip-Hop and R&B), but despite feeling connected through that art form, still felt disappointed and disconnected from AA people early in her acculturation process. The BCIs, who shared multiple positive experiences with AAs or had at least one long term meaningful relationship with an AA person, demonstrated an integrated acculturation strategy.

BCIs who experienced rejection or shame in their encounters with AAs often turned to BCI enclaves for support. The BCIs who spent the most time in their co-ethnic enclaves reported feeling more comfortable and accepted by co-ethnics as opposed to AAs. Some BCIs who spent a majority of their time in ethnic enclaves naturally

illustrated a more separated acculturation strategy, but these instances did not occur in the absence of negative encounters with AAs. Donovan, for instance, experienced rejection from AAs early on in his acculturation experience which promoted a desire to acculturate with co-ethnics in order to “boost [his] self-confidence.” So, Donovan’s decision to separate into his ethnic enclave was in response to his experiences with AAs, but that acculturative strategy did not persist throughout his life. Perhaps BCIs, who engage in a separated acculturation strategy, are not doing so exclusively because they are in BCI ethnic enclaves, but potentially do so in reaction to or in combination with negative interpersonal experiences with AAs.

Changes in Acculturation Over Time

For nearly all of the participants there was a change in how they chose to identify, with regard to race and culture, between their initial arrival in the US and their interview for this study. All of the participants initially identified as ethnic beings (e.g., Jamaican, Haitian, etc.) because either (a) their identity was constructed around their ethnic culture, (b) they were coming from countries that were predominantly homogenous in race, and/or to many of them, (c) their ethnicity is what differentiated them from Americans. At the time of their participation in the present study, the BCIs’ identifications included, (a) African-American (n=1), (b) American (n=1), (c) Caribbean-American (n=1), (d) Black (with emphasis on their ethnicity) (n=3), (e) Black (without emphasis on their ethnicity) (n=1), or (f) a hyphenated American, with their ethnicity preceding the hyphen (e.g., Jamaican-American) (n=1). One participant did not confirm a current identification.

Participants cited many contributing factors to explain the shifts in their racial and ethnic identification over time, but what appeared to contribute to the greatest

interpersonal change (i.e. development of racial identity) was BCIs' relational experiences with AAs. The current literature on BCI racial and ethnic identity credits shared experiences of oppression and time as the catalyst for change (Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001; Rogers, 2001; Waters, 1994), which I argued in the present study is an incomplete portrayal of the acculturation process because it neglects the role of relationships in identity development. Additionally, time can be a contributing factor in allowing for more experiences of oppression and/or more opportunities for positive interpersonal relationships with AAs. The argument of time as the primary component in BCI racial and ethnic identity change is a moot point of discussion because BCIs who have been in the US for an extended period of time, but have not had positive interpersonal experiences with AAs are not likely to develop an integrated identity.

All of the participants in the present study acknowledged the role of oppression and racism in helping them identify with AAs as members of the same racial group, but that alone did not necessarily lead to shared racial identification. Nearly every participant alluded to or explicitly stated something about being treated the same as AAs, therefore making their ethnic difference inconsequential. Yet that shared racial classification and treatment only contributed to an intrapsychic acculturation in which participants intellectually understood the implications of their new social location, but did not bring about BCIs' racial identity; as opposed to the ideological and behavioral changes that accompany interpersonal acculturation. All of the BCI interviewees acknowledged the implications of being Black in the U.S. context, but that knowledge alone did not necessitate or inspire racial identification with AAs. Of the nine participants who expressed an understanding of their shared racial plight with AAs, only five of them

illustrated or communicated an integrated identity, evidenced by shifts in their values, beliefs, attitudes, motives, and relationships with AAs. Meaning they identified with AAs and the AA community as a result of personal choice and experience, which may have been moderated by time spent in the US.

Furthermore, all of the participants, who either illustrated or communicated an integrated identity/acclulturation outcome, also shared an interpersonal experience with an AA that they described as making them feel more connected to AAs. Although the participants were only asked to name their first or most memorable experience with AAs, the content of the experience they chose to share is noteworthy because it was salient enough to be recalled. Each of the nine participants were also able to describe their experiences with AAs or AAC in a way that demonstrated potential emotional ramifications, despite a majority of participants denying any mental health consequences related to their acculturation.

Limitations

It is useful to consider limitations of the study. The characteristics of the sample, research implementation, transferability, and credibility.

Sample Characteristics

The present study was limited by the length of time participants spent in their country of origin in comparison to their time living in the US. The BCIs in the present study immigrated to the US during different decades and at various ages, yet their narratives shared many major commonalities that spoke to a familiar series of experiences and use of acculturation strategies. Despite their complementary narratives, the role of time or era could not be adequately examined in their acculturation outcomes.

Moreover, given the wide age range of participants, it is possible that they are currently and were during their immigration at different developmental stages. It would not be surprising if younger participants make different acculturation decisions as they age. Ideally, participants would have spent the same number of years in their home country and in the US, which would have permitted me to account for the influences of time, age of immigration, developmental phase, and zeitgeist. As a result of participants' being self-selected, their lived experiences could not be controlled in order to account for some of the limitations that come about as a result of a heterogeneous sample.

Theory Elaboration

In general the acculturation theory worked as proposed. However, there were some factors that should be considered if it is used in future work. First, two of the proposed acculturation outcomes, Marginalization and Assimilation, did not occur as outcomes, although they did appear as strategies. Marginalization and Assimilation did not occur as an outcome potentially because the research participants were recruited from the three cities in the US that have the largest BCI populations. Each participant had a large, known, and accessible BCI enclave in which to acculturate in response to negative encounters with AAs. Therefore, BCIs had the opportunity to be included in co-ethnic spaces which may be a more accessible and appealing strategy than Assimilation because it requires the least amount of adaptation. The option to engage primarily with BCIs likely also reduced the probability of experiencing Marginalization. It is possible that, if participants were recruited from areas more sparsely populated with BCIs, Assimilation or Marginalization would have been a more prevalent strategy and therefore outcome.

Secondly, although the theory does propose that acculturation outcomes are a developmental process, it was somewhat surprising to discover how strong an aspect it was, particularly for participants who developed Integrated identities. Acculturation strategies did not appear to be linear or progress in a particular order. BCIs' interpersonal encounters and relationships appeared to affect what acculturation strategies participants used at various points in their lives, rather than developmental phases.

Two important unanticipated outcomes were gender differences in outcomes and strategies and the role of family (especially mothers) in determining acculturation outcomes. Perhaps not surprisingly the process seemed to be more difficult for women than for men. They seemed to be judged and judged AAs on different criteria than typified men's experiences. In addition, family seemed to be important for participants regardless of gender. Sometimes families gave explicit instructions about how their children should distance themselves from AAs. Other families gave no instructions about whether or how their children should engage with AAs.

Research Implementation

Research Assistants. One limitation of the present study was the ethno-racial experiences of the research assistants. The research assistants identified as White, Brazilian or Brazilian-American women. They were responsible for transcribing the interviews and expressed some difficulty in understanding the BCIs' accents. Their challenges in understanding the audio recordings resulted in mistakes in the transcripts that appeared to have racially informed undertones. The mistakes in the transcripts seemed to indicate that the research assistants made decisions about what they believed they heard in the interviews that were often skewed in a biased direction. For example, a

participant said, “no one was better than I was,” but the research assistant wrote “I am not better than others.” As another example, a participant said, “I graduated high school and I could go get a job,” but the research assistant wrote, “I graduated high school and I couldn’t go get a job.” As a final example, a participant said, “why are all the Black people still living in this one community in Gainesville?” The research assistant wrote, “why are all the Black people still living in this one community in Gangsville?” As a result of these mistakes, the PI reviewed all of the interviews for accuracy and made dozens of edits per participant. It would be important for others who choose to engage in qualitative research with BCI samples to choose at least one transcriber who is also a BCI in order to better manage the potential biases that might come forth in transcription.

Transferability

Transferability is whether the methods or results of the study can be transferred to other populations or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, an additional limitation of the present study might be that the findings are not particularly meaningful for non-BCI samples, nor do they greatly fit situations outside of this study or research focus. The research questions, participants, and results address a niche interest that lacks direct transferability to other settings or context. However, transferability is ultimately determined by whether, in this case, the theory, methodology, and results can be replicated in other Black immigrant samples (e.g., Black African immigrants, Black Latinx).

Credibility

Credibility allows for, in this case, BCIs to recognize their experiences in the narratives of the participants within the experiment. Credibility is achieved by “checking

for the representativeness of the data as a whole” (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 152).

This was done through reflexivity which required the PI to engage in a certain degree of self-reflection. The PI and her adviser, who is not a BCI, were active in the PI’s self-reflection in order to increase this study’s credibility.

Implications

Despite the limitations of the present study, it may have implications for medical practice, policy makers, psychoeducational interventions, theory and mental health.

Medical Professionals

Medical professionals are often the first health professionals to have encounters with BCIs because of the stigma against using mental health services that pervades the Black and immigrant community. As a result, if medical professionals understood the implications and narratives associated with immigration, they might be able to suggest culturally competent resources that would connect BCIs with support systems that are informed by their acculturation strategies. For example, if a BCI’s acculturation strategy at the time of assessment is Separation (from AAs), a medical professional might connect the BCI person with a BCI nurse or social worker within their healthcare network for a follow-up. If a BCI’s acculturation strategy is Marginalization, a medical professional might refer them to a support group for people of color with the hope that the BCI will be able to create relationships across some racial or cultural commonality.

Policy

Policy makers may also take advantage of the information gathered in this study because often policies that are geared toward helping immigrants or AAs are not culturally informed and end up missing the target group of interest. Additionally, if

policy makers understood what BCIs need in order to facilitate a productive transition to living in the US (meaningful relationships with AAs and other BCIs), community resources could be more properly constructed.

Psychoeducation

BCIs themselves would also greatly benefit from learning about the themes that were reflected in the narratives of the present study. Such information would provide them with some sense of community and normalcy. BCIs often dismiss their acculturative stress as something that did not affect them and therefore, they do not revisit those early injuries as the foundation for their separated, marginalized, or assimilated identities. Although one can experience emotional distress in accompaniment with any acculturation strategy, it can be more challenging for the strategies that take BCIs out of meaningful connection with either their community, the AA community, or both.

Psychoeducation for BCIs can also include learning more about the history of AAs in the US, AA cultural practices and norms, as well as the systemic issues that impact Black people in the U.S. context. BCIs' preconceived notions that knowingly and unknowingly influence their interactions with AAs may be mitigated with a greater and more accurate understanding of AAs.

Theory

Furthermore, scholars would benefit from having a more comprehensive understanding of acculturation and racialization that currently excludes the narratives of BCIs and their relationships with AAs. The scholarship thus far has sidelined BCIs' experiences due to the literature discussing Black people as a monolith void of ethnic

diversity or discussing immigrants with an assumption of Whiteness. These perspectives consequently have resulted in a fragmented understanding of the role of meaningful interpersonal relationships within the greater Black community in supporting or obstructing the acculturation of BCIs.

Additionally, gender played a notable role in BCIs' acculturation experiences, an outcome that researchers should take into account when studying BCIs. Men were overly represented with an Integrated identity and women were overly represented with a Separated identity. My theory does not currently account for the role of gender in acculturation, but it should be expanded to do so in the future, particularly because gender appears to be a moderating factor in acculturation outcomes.

Mental Health

Mental health is not something that has historically been discussed in communities of color, and the same can be said for immigrant communities of color. Nearly all of the BCIs interviewed denied any emotional distress associated with their transition to living in America or their acculturation decisions. Although many participants described feelings of rejection, low self-esteem/ self-worth, invalidation, and confusion. Participants discussed being bullied for their presumed ethnic traits, hiding their accents, and avoiding friendships with AAs who they determined would treat them unfairly. Participants also shared experiences of being embraced and accepted by AAs, describing these moments with more joy, ease, and contentment. Despite the limited exploration and insight about the emotional toll of acculturation, one can venture to say that it was likely a taxing experience that impacted the acculturation strategies BCIs

either chose to implement or felt were available to them given their family's expectations of them.

The implications for this research are particularly notable for mental health practitioners. Mental health practitioners would benefit from better understanding the acculturation experiences of BCIs in order to help normalize BCI experiences in the greater US context. They should pay particular attention to role of racial and gender socialization, as well as the intersection of racial trauma and immigration trauma. Mental health professionals often have the unique power to determine if a person's emotional, psychological, and/or physical responses to stimuli are considered abnormal or normal. Therefore, they are uniquely positioned to advocate for BCIs who might be responding "normally" to the "abnormal" experience of moving to a new country where one's former understanding of themselves and society's rules, no longer apply.

BCIs may be likely to feel disoriented given the following compounding factors: (a) moving to a new country, (b) being assigned meaningful and subordinate racial group membership, (c) having one's ethnicity generally disregarded, (d) learning that societal barriers and widely accepted stereotypes are in place to justify your oppression and the racial group of which you are a part. For any person, such experiences would be challenging and being supported by a mental health professional, who can provide the contextual understanding to help make sense of BCIs' acculturation processes, could be life altering for many BCIs.

The mental health applications can also be extended to the types of interventions mental health practitioners consider when working with BCIs. Psychoeducation interventions would help BCIs learn the different acculturation strategies available to

them and allow BCIs to process said strategies with a mental health provider as well as what factors they, BCIs, should consider when deciding how they want to engage with their acculturation process. Providers can also direct BCIs to culturally attuned resources that help address BCIs' particular mental health needs. Mental health providers can consider sending BCIs to predominantly BCI serving institutions for services or predominantly pan-ethnic Black serving institutions depending on what types of relationships the BCI would benefit from developing at that time.

When they are serving the mental health needs of BCIs, mental health professionals must also take into account the traumatized environments into which BCIs are acculturating. AAs have been navigating the racial social fabric of America for generations and as a result engage with and are engaged by the US in discrepant ways. The impact of being a Black person in the US plays a paramount role in how BCIs and AAs interact with one another and how the greater US interacts with them as a presumed monolithic group. Therefore, BCIs must learn the effect their race has on their environment, their interactions, and their sense of self in order to healthily navigate their acculturation.

When mental health practitioners are able to conceptualize BCIs in my acculturation framework, they can perhaps determine how their client is engaging with their racial and ethnic identity and how they are navigating the systemic racism of the US. Mental health practitioners can help BCIs manage the emotional distress that comes with the inevitable and important shift in one's sense of self, as well as one's sense of self in relation to one's context. Furthermore, mental health practitioners can consider how

BCIs acculturation plays a role in other compounding ethno-racial traumas which may further impact BCIs experience of living in the US.

Future Research

The present study can be expanded upon in many ways in order to develop a wider breadth of knowledge about the racial and ethnic identity development of BCIs. Future research should consider the role of gender and gender socialization for the BCIs and for AAs. Learning about the role of gender in these two converging cultures can potentially help elucidate the differential experiences of the women and men BCIs in this sample. Although gender itself likely played a role, the gender socialization of both cultures as well as the perceived gender socialization of BCI women coming into the WA and AA context potentially contributed to their Separated identities.

Marginalization and Assimilation did not present as acculturation outcomes within this BCI sample possibly because of the cities from which the sample was recruited. As a result, future research should be conducted in cities throughout the US that have varying degrees of BCI ethnic enclaves and AA communities. The ethnic and racial composition of the cities to which participants immigrate and from which I recruit them will likely have an effect on their perceived acculturation strategies and therefore outcomes. Perhaps in a city with no BCI enclave or few AAs, BCIs might choose a strategy of assimilation that is more favorable or more necessary for survival.

Additionally, recruiting groups of participants who enter the US through specialized programs or visas might help diminish the role of self-selection due to dissatisfaction

with their immigration experiences and therefore increase the likelihood of garnering participants with varied acculturation outcomes.

Social class is also an important factor to consider in future research because some participants forfeited their higher social class status when they immigrated to the US and others thought they would enter at a higher social class given their impressions of middle-class AAs. Evaluating the impact of a change in social class and future social class expectations may provide valuable insights about the more covert factors that influence BCIs' decisions with regard to relationships with AAs and BCIs' acculturation strategies. It is possible that BCIs' who believe that engagement with AAs may jeopardize their aspirations for upward mobility may be more likely to choose a Separated identity and/or perceive AAs in a stereotypically-affirming manner. Similarly, AAs who perceive BCIs' behaviors or efforts to acquire higher social class status unfavorably, may interact with BCIs in a manner that does not promote Assimilation. As a result, the role of social class is worthy of further exploration.

Controlling for the impact of zeitgeist and length of time participants spend in their country of origin as compared to the US would also be necessary to further validate the results of the present study. Therefore, a future research study should sample participants who come to the US around the same time and at about the same age in order to better account for the role of age of immigration, the U.S. zeitgeist at the time of immigration, time spent in the US, and current age. Such a sample could be acquired from incoming freshmen students who study abroad in the US for university. After graduating, the BCIs are also likely to stay in the US on OPT (Optional Practical Training) work visas for at least one additional year. The four years of undergraduate

studies followed by a minimum one-year work visa would allow researchers to interview students before they went back to their respective countries, totaling a five-year stint in the US. Additionally, if a portion of the students stayed in the US beyond that initial work visa, follow-up studies could be done at varying lengths of time to measure how acculturation strategies change over time.

Family is a notable factor that nearly all the BCIs stated affected their ability or decision to come to the US as well as the decisions they made once they were here. Given the import of families, future researchers should also interview families to obtain their perspectives about immigration, acculturation, AAs and the messages they knowingly or unknowingly transmit to the children they bring to the US. In the present study, participants reported that their families' decisions about coming to the US were in large part to provide greater opportunity for the respective participant, be it educational or social. Some participants discussed the pressures they felt from their families to succeed in order to justify the sacrifices that were made for them to live and prosper in the US. Additionally, some participants discussed the direct messaging from their parents about what it meant to be Black in the US or, more directly, why they should not model themselves after AAs. Better understanding about how BCI families operate, their belief systems, and expectations will expand the analysis of BCI acculturation experiences and strategies. Furthermore, clarity around the familial factors that BCIs are managing when making decisions about their acculturation may help facilitate their acculturation.

Transferability is a limitation in the present study and therefore should be addressed in future research through the application of the present study's research methods to Black African immigrants as well as Black Latinx immigrants. Black

immigrants across the diaspora may have similar acculturation experiences as BCIs who immigrate to the US. Black African immigrants, for example, are likely to be from predominantly Black countries, be assigned Black racial group membership upon coming to the US, and experience some discord with regard to assimilating to AAs. As a result of these similarities, future research should consider applying the research methods of the present study to other Black immigrant groups.

The BCIs in this study expressed a great deal of distress with regard to their acculturation that likely affected their mental health in the moment, if not over time. Future research should focus on the mental health aspect of immigration and acculturation for BCIs specifically, in order to better understand how BCIs are managing such a monumental life change and in turn, how such life changes affect the decisions they make with regard to acculturation strategies.

In conclusion, if this study were to be replicated, a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis would be beneficial. For instance, the participants would first be recruited from various cities around the US in order to create more variance in the sample with regard to potential acculturation outcomes. The participants would then be given a series of questionnaires about mental health (e.g. Beck Depression Inventory, Beck Anxiety Inventory), racial identity (e.g. PRIAS), ethnic identity (e.g. Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure), and trauma (e.g. Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale). Following the completion of the questionnaires, participants would engage in a semi-structured interview similar to the one conducted in the present study. The semi-structured interview should be revised to include additional questions about the role of family and gender socialization. The data from the questionnaires and the interview

would provide a greater degree of information about the participants and their acculturation, hopefully expanding on our understanding of BCIs' experiences.

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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

Demographic Data Sheet

1. What is your Age?
2. What is your Race?
3. What is your Gender?
4. Where were you born? And raised? (City/Region, Country)
5. Where were your parent(s)/Guardian(s)'s born? (City/Region, Country)
6. What is your ethnicity? (ex. "I am Haitian")
7. At what age did you come to the US? And how long have you lived in the US?
8. Why did you immigrate to the US? Did you have the choice?
9. How are you employed? (e.g. student, construction worker, lawyer, etc.)
10. Where do you live now? And what is the demographic of your neighborhood?
11. Are you a native English speaker?
 - a. If NO, at what age did you learn to speak English? And what is your level of comfort communicating in English?
 - b. What is your native language, if not English?

Interview Questions

(Italicized questions will be stated if participants need clarity)

1. Tell me about your experiences transitioning to living in America?
 - i. What was hard? What was easy? And how did you manage it?*
2. What were your perceptions of African Americans before coming to the United States?
 - i. What did you know/believe about them?*
3. In what ways were your perception of African Americans challenged or confirmed when you came to the U.S.?
4. What values do you associate with African American Culture?
 - i. What do you think AAs care about?*
 - b. What stereotypes do you associate with African American Culture?
 - i. Positive and/or negative?*
5. What values do you associate with your Culture?
 - i. What do you think your culture cares about?*
 - b. What values do you think AAs associate with your Culture?
 - i. What do you think they think your culture cares about?*
 - c. What stereotypes do you associate with your Culture?
 - i. Positive and/or negative?*
 - d. What stereotypes do you think AAs associate with your Culture?
 - i. Positive and/or negative?*
6. Please describe your first (or most memorable) experience with an African American person?

- a. Did this experience make you feel more connected to the African American community or disconnected from the African American community? Please explain.
7. Please describe your first (or most memorable) experience with African American culture?
 - i. *Music, Food, Language, etc.*
 - b. Did this experience make you feel more connected to the African American community or disconnected from the African American community? Please explain.
8. How do you primarily identify yourself in terms of race and/or ethnicity?
 - i. *Do you state your race, ethnicity, or a combination of the two? Such as "I am Black" or "I am Haitian-American"*
 - b. Has this changed since coming to the US?
 - i. If yes, why and how so?
 - ii. If no, why do you think that is?
9. Do you see yourself as part of the African American community?
 - a. What experiences have led you to feel this way?
10. Do you see yourself as part of the Black Caribbean community?
 - a. What experiences have led you to feel this way?
11. Do you feel more connected to members of your own ethnic group, co-ethnics (i.e. Black Caribbean's) or members of the African American community?
 - a. What experiences have led you to feel this way?
12. In what ways do you believe you are similar to African Americans?
13. In what ways do you believe you are different to African Americans?
14. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview that you think would better help me understand you and your experiences as they relate to race, ethnicity, and identity?