COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE DOCTORAL STUDENTS AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

CEDRIC G. SANDERS

(Under the Direction of Juanita Johnson-Bailey)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

Narrative interviews were conducted with seven African-American/Black men who earned doctoral degrees from predominantly White institutions representing multiple disciplines, including educational psychology, higher education and leadership, adult education, and engineering science. The data revealed three major themes. First, it was found that all of the participants were the only or one of few African-American men in their doctoral programs and classes and carried that knowledge as part of their daily academic consciousness. Given their status as being the "only one" in their doctoral programs and classes, the majority of the participants said they experienced feelings of isolation, alienation, and invisibility. The second

theme revealed that the participants survived the doctoral process by drawing on cultural wisdom and the advice of family members and other graduate students, African-American men and women. The third theme found in the data was that participants possessed a notion that they were earning a doctoral degree not only for themselves, but others—their community. There were two major conclusions from this study: 1.) African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) approached their doctoral experiences guided by a racial consciousness that informed their identities and helped them to navigate their educational experiences using a culturally grounded schema and; 2.) The narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) provided a multi-dimensional profile that both supported and refuted the literature, revealing stories of stress from underrepresentation, isolation and racial stereotyping, while also relating accounts of high performance, persistence, and strength.

INDEX WORDS: adult education; African-American males; African-American male doctoral students; Black male identity; critical race theory; higher education; narrative inquiry; predominantly White institutions (PWIs); racial identity theory

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DEDICATION

For my father, Willis D. Sanders Jr., April 16, 1928—February 14, 1987.

Daddy, when I was a child, you often told me not to make the mistake you did by quitting high school. I followed your advice, but I went beyond my high school education and obtained my bachelor's and master's degrees, and with the completion of this dissertation, I now have a doctorate. Although you are not here for me to share with you my joy in this accomplishment, I know in my heart that you are looking down from heaven and smiling at me. Although your time here was short, I thank God for the time that I did have with you to embrace the wisdom you shared with me.

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are the model of a Black man who never quits and exemplifies the perfect example of a reentry college student. For 14 years I sat by and watched how you started and stopped, but ultimately finished your college education. Due to your success and determination to finish, I was convicted and inspired to complete my college education. Thanks for pushing me brother, and thanks for encouraging me during the many times I got discouraged along the way. To my sister Dr. Aleza Beverly, thanks for helping me by jump starting my academic writing and editing my papers in my master's program. I will always cherish and value the excitement and pleasure you have for helping adult learners, particularly those like myself. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to believe in my abilities to write and synthesize the literature.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> *I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me.*
>
> —Ralph Ellison (Ellison, 1952, p. 3).

I argue the current societal view of African-American men is consistent with Ellison's theme of invisibility (Huber, 2016). Just as the protagonist of *Invisible Man*, today's African-American men, young and old, continue to face racial injustices which affect the way they live their daily lives. Continually navigating through the racial and negative views society holds towards them can ultimately lead to African-American men assimilating a negative view of themselves (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000).

Invisible Man, written by Ralph Ellison (1952), is a novel about an African-American man, the protagonist of the story, who deals with the complexities of a racialized American society within the early 20th century. As the title of the book suggests, the protagonist deems White Americans' view of him as being invisible, is due to his racial identity. Throughout the story, Ellison masterfully addresses the unfair societal and intellectual stereotypes African-

American men had to navigate in the 1950's regarding their race and personal identity. Ellison's book embodies a period in American history, the 1950's, where the Civil Rights Movement was in its infancy, and the fight for racial equality was beginning to produce significant accomplishments for African-Americans.

The Invisible and Disparaging View of African-American Men in America

Within our current society, primarily due to the media's deficit framing of African-American men, there is a false narrative which hold African-American males as the primary perpetrators of crimes such as robbery, rape, and assault (Crichlow & Fulcher, 2017; Dukes, 2017; Oliver, 2003; Wise, 2011).

As racial and social injustices continue to transpire towards American-African men, researchers found those injustices hurt the way African-American men define themselves—in their homes, jobs, communities, and society (Harper, 2009, 2012; Nedhari, 2009). Unfortunately, as African-American men navigate through racial injustices, they face the alarming reality that racial injustices not only affect their sense of identity but may have an impact on their physical well-being and mortality (Nehhari, 2009). For example, since 2012, an uptick in awareness of police shootings involving unarmed African-American men and boys has shown the overarching problem in society and is reminiscent of the violence perpetrated on persons of color during slavery and the Civil Rights Movement (Staggers-Hakim, 2016). The deaths of Trayvon Martin (February 26, 2012), Michael Brown (August 9, 2014), Tamir Rice (November 23, 2014), Freddie Gray (April 12, 2015), and Philando Castile (July 6, 2016) are reminders of the horrific August 1955 lynching of a 14-year-old African-American boy, Emmitt Till (Tell, 2008). The racial motivation of Emmitt Till's lynching, for allegedly whistling/making a pass at a White woman, is consistent with the deaths of the previously named African-American men. Therefore,

the historical details surrounding Till's death and recent police shootings of unarmed African-American boys/men, are a reminder of the climate in our current racialized society, the lives of African-American men are devalued, and their existence as human beings is still considered to be insignificant (Tyson, 2017). Thus, the unjust killing and eradication of African-American men, even in the United States in 2018, are consistent with the slaughtering of animals (Smiley & Faknule, 2016).

In response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the 2013 shooting and death of Trayvon Martin and other significant police shootings and deaths of unarmed African-American men and boys, the activist group, hashtag Black Lives Matter (BLM), was formed (Loken, 2017). The three Black women responsible for starting the movement, Alicia Garza, Patrice Cullors, and Opal Tometi, stated the purpose for forming BLM was to proclaim and make an "affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression" (Garza, 2014, pp. 23-28).

In support of BLM, Americans from various races, genders, and cultural backgrounds, engaged in acts of protest by engaging in demonstrations and marches (Brooks, Ward, Euring, Townsend, White & Hughes, 2016). Representatives from Black Lives Matter declare their primary goal is to confront the issues of violence towards people of color, male and female. "They say it is about much more than each individual death of an African-American man or woman, it is about what it means to be Black in America" (Sidner & Simon, 2015, p. 28). Critics draw a comparison of the group's existence to the Occupy Wall Street movement, which faded away due to the lack of strong leadership; however, despite their critics, BLM has been successful regarding sustainability and gaining supporters.

Despite the efforts of Black Lives Matter, police shootings, racial profiling, and other racially biased acts continue to occur towards African-American men. Since its inception, many conservative White Americans stand in opposition to BLM and categorize it as a hate group (Loken, 2017). Moreover, during one of his 2016 presidential campaign speeches, Donald Trump took advantage of the negative stance most of his conservative supporters held towards BLM by proclaiming All Lives Matter (Swain, 2018). Trump's statement, along with past acts and attitudes of racism in America, demonize the efforts of African-American groups and individuals such as The Freedom Riders of 1961, The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Colin Kaepernick, who fight for equality and attempt to raise awareness on social justice issues (Nedhari, 2009).

In the documentary, *Hidden Colors*, Tariq Nasheed notes, "Whenever other people (European descendants) tell their stories from a historical context, who they are, where they've been, it's called patriotism." Nasheed goes on to point out, "When African-Americans, Black people, talk about their history and attempt to proclaim and celebrate who they are, they are labeled as militants, rebels and Afrocentric" (Nasheed, 2011). Nasheed's statement does an impressive job of defining the harmful effects of White privilege on African-Americans. Moreover, drawing on Ellison's theme of invisibility, Wise, (2011) offers a justification which supports the underlying reasons for White American's reluctance to fully embrace and *SEE* African-Americans (men) as valuable and productive American citizens:

> But for Whites, we often don't see people of color. To be White in this country has long been to be in a position where, if you wanted to, you could construct a life that would be more or less all-White (p.27).

In response to Wise's quote, people of color cannot construct their lives as they choose, they must instead, construct their lives in the shadow of and in context with lives that are all-White. Contrary to the master narrative of our society, African-American men, past and present, contribute significantly to our society. As such, African-American men serve profoundly in many professions as doctors, educators, lawyers, and successful business owners. By doing so, they represent an image of the African-American male our racialized society is not accustomed to, or willing to acknowledge.

Prominent African-American Males and Their Scholarly Contributions

The year 1877 signaled the end of Reconstruction in the southern states, and as African-Americas transitioned into the 1900's, they held high hopes of procuring better jobs and homes, and education. However, despite the post-slavery progress African-Americans enjoyed (government jobs, land ownership, voting rights) White Americans were still not willing to fully accept African-Americans as members of society (Nedhari, 2009). Therefore, to keep African-Americans in a state of disenfranchisement, the southern states enacted Jim Crow laws (Alexander, 2012). In response to the Jim Crow laws, racial climate, and the uncertainty African-Americans were experiencing, W.E.B DuBois and Booker T. Washington, along with other prominent African-American leaders, wrote papers to address the societal problems affecting African-Americans (Frantz, 1997). The collective works were combined in the book entitled *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (DuBois, 1903). The focus of DuBois and Washington's works was offering solutions for African-American people to gain equality and acceptance from White Americans. While DuBois and Washington held shared interests in the advancement of African-Americans, their solutions for addressing the issues (the Negro problem) were different. To address the matter of White American's reluctance to accept

African-Americans as productive members in society, DuBois argued the importance of education and civil rights whereas, Washington believed economic independence was the key. Despite the difference DuBois and Washington held in their approaches on the advancement of African-Americans, they both made significant contributions to the field of education (Frantz, 1997).

African-Americans and Adult Education

Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, highly accomplished scholars, made significant contributions to the field of vocational education and what is known today as adult basic education. Washington's work at Tuskegee Institute (which he helped establish) involved teaching industrial trades such as foundry, printing, shoemaking, and sawmilling. Washington's approach to the Negro problem was to educate African-Americans with what he deemed as practical work skills which the student would benefit personally, and likewise, the entire African-American community. Although not generally acknowledged in White academia, the model of education Washington designed is the foundation of today's adult basic and extension education (Frantz, 1997).

DuBois' approach to education for African-Americans was significantly different from Washington's. DuBois taught at Atlanta University and believed in a model of education which, advocated for African-Americans to "hitch their wagons to a star" rather than "to a mule" (Lewis, 1993, p. 353). As such, Dubois (1903) embraced a model of education whereby African-Americans would become leaders through liberal arts and other forms of classical education:

> Men we shall have only as we make manhood the object of the work of the schools — intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and of the relation of men to it — this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true

> life. On this foundation we may build bread winning, skill of hand and quickness of brain, with never a fear lest the child and man mistake the means of living for the object of life (p. 209).

The central theme of DuBois's philosophy of higher education and African-American men embodies the focus of my research study. In response to the disparaging view of African-American men in society, I argue that adopting DuBois's early model for educating African-American males in higher education will began a process of changing the landscape of our institutions of higher education and will launch a much-needed transformation to the way society views African-America men. Further, as more African-American men enter the college classroom, I contend the educational process will be very instrumental in shaping the way they view themselves (Harper, 2012).

As African-American men experience personal and intellectual growth and embrace the knowledge they acquire from their college experiences, they develop a desire to share it with their communities (Ingram, 2016). Further, increasing the number of African-America men in college will have a direct impact on younger African-American males (Bailey, Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). Although increasing the numbers and graduation rates of African-American men in higher education may not end the racism and social injustice they endure, the result of their educational experiences will produce confident, qualified, and highly skilled men of color. Drawing on the work of W.E.B Dubois, our society will benefit from more college-educated African-American men who will be able to diversify the technical workforce, and the political arena, and positively impact their communities. Ultimately, my hopes are this outcome will challenge America to change its perspective on African-American men by realizing "Black men do matter".

Statement of the Problem

Within the American college and university systems, African-American males are underrepresented (Harper & Harris, 2012; *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* [JBHE], 2013; Wood, 2011). Data sources state there are 15 million students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States and roughly 5 to 5.5 % are African-American males (Hauptman, 2008; JBHE, 2013). According to Rosser-Mims, Palmer, & Harroff (2014), African-American males, before and during college, commonly experience barriers in their lives which can have negative implications on their ability to succeed in the college classroom. The types of obstacles which typically plague African-American males include subpar P-12 schooling experiences, financial disparities, and a lack of role mode and/or parents who did not finish high school or attend college (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Harper, 2012). In response to this problem, several researchers (Harper, 2015; Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol, & Brown, 2015; Strayhorn, 2008) conducted studies which provide a positive view of African-American males in college and offered suggestions for policy makers of higher education to consider for bolstering the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of the African-American males. The literature focused on the success of African-American men in college offers a welcomed perspective. The literature focused on African-American graduate students is abundant, however, it lacks in studies with an emphasis on doctoral students (Ingram, 2016).

African-American Male Doctoral Students: The Talented Tenth

> *The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own races* (DuBois, 1903, p. 209).

Within higher education, the reported number of African-Americans, particularly men, pursuing and completing doctoral is lower than White Americans (Ingram, 2016). Moreover, the discourse of the literature emphasizes the negative and disparaging aspects of African-American men's performances during their undergraduate and graduate school experiences (Scott, Taylor & Palmer, 2013; Harper, 2015). While the preponderance of the literature reports adverse experiences on African-American male college students, researchers argue there is a need to include positive and counter narratives of African-American male doctoral students who successfully navigated their college journeys (Ingram, 2016; Gildersleeve, Croom and Vasquez, 2011). In response to the general tenor of research on African-American males in higher education Harper (2015) proposed:

> On the other hand, it seems just as necessary to investigate how the one third who persisted through graduation managed to do so, especially given what the literature says about the racism, stereotypes, low expectations that threaten their success and sense of belonging at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (p.647).

Harper's statement offers a viable argument for studies which redirect the focus from the negative narratives on African-American males in higher education to those which counter the deficit literature and concentrate on the positive accomplishments of this group.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?

2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the limited body of literature on African-American male doctoral students at PWIs and will seek to explore the narratives of successful African-American male doctoral students to provide a more complete picture of the experiences of African-American males in higher education. This study seeks to add to the literature on African-American males in doctoral education by examining the impact of them being role models to other African-American men in higher education. While the literature concerning the adverse practices and experiences African-American male college students typically encounter is necessary to frame their entire college experience, this study aims to provide narratives which explain the supporting structures and relationships for African-American males who completed the doctoral process. Most of the literature emphasizing stories of an African-American males' college successes is unclear on how successfully navigating college and completing a degree is life changing or transformative. This study examines narratives of former African-American male doctoral students describing their graduate school learning experiences of personal change and growth. This research offers stakeholders of higher education a better understanding of the roles African-American male doctoral students play as minority students within their institutions, offering information on how to foster diverse, equitable, and inclusive graduate programs and how to structure their doctoral programs for African-American male graduate students. An additional benefit this study may offer is inspiring images and narratives from African-American male doctoral students for African-America men who are contemplating the pursuit of or are completing doctoral degree.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Though the colored man is no longer subject to barter and sale, he is surrounded by an adverse settlement which fetters all his movements. In his downward course he meets with no resistance, but his course upward is resented and resisted at every step of his progress. If he comes in ignorance, rags and wretchedness he conforms to the popular belief of his character, and in that character, he is welcome; but if he shall come as a gentleman, a scholar and a statesman, he is hailed as a contradiction to the national faith concerning his race, and his coming is resented as impudence. In one case he may provoke contempt and derision, but in the other he is an affront to pride and provokes malice.

—Frederick Douglass (Douglass,1883)

In the preceding quote, Frederick Douglass has proclaimed what is the common bifurcated and racial viewpoint society holds toward African-American men. I argue Douglass' quote explains the disdain and fear a racialized society holds towards an educated African-American man and lays the groundwork for the impetus for my research. The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

In this chapter, I present relevant literature, which speaks to the experiences of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions. Specifically, the main topics I discuss are: 1) the historical foundations of African-Americans and education; 2) African-American's transition to higher education; 3) African-American males in higher education, and 4) African-American male doctoral students.

Historical Foundation of African-Americans and Education

In order to understand the complete picture of African-American men's educational experiences, it is necessary to examine the overall historical context of African-Americans and their educational journey. Within this historical section, I discuss the restrictive laws of slavery that denied African-Americans access to education. Then I continue with an examination of the self-taught methods and self-governance of education African-Americans employed during slavery and Reconstruction, which is followed by a discussion of African-American's educational barriers, and the work of groups who were opposed to slavery and contributed towards educating African-Americans by creating adult education programs.

For African-Americans, the road to education in the U.S. encompasses exclusion and 300 years of slavery (Anderson, 1988; Franklin & Moss, 1988; Woodson, 1919). Beginning in the 15th and ending in the 19th Century, it has been estimated that out of the 10 million African slaves who were transported via the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade to North America, Europe, Brazil, and The Caribbean's, 400,000 of them were brought to the United States (Franklin & Moss, 1988). From 1790 to 1890, the slave population increased throughout the Northern and Southern states of the U.S. Initially, the highest concentration of the slave population existed in the North. However, as emancipation laws emerged in the North, the slave population in the North

decreased. The result of this decrease lead to an increase of slaves along the coastal counties of Georgia, South Carolina and the Mississippi River (Curtin, 1972).

Restrictive Laws of Slavery Denying African-Americans Access to Education

Through chattel slavery, African slaves worked for landowners. Slave labor was used to harvest tobacco, cotton, and to perform a multitude of agricultural and household duties such as animal husbandry, cooking, and carpentry (Cochrane, 1979; Okoye, 1980). In addition to carrying out strenuous physical labor, slaves were allowed to acquire training for higher skilled jobs, such as Blacksmithing, but were not taught to read and write. Educating or schooling slaves was prohibited by laws throughout the United States (Anderson, 1988; Franklin & Moss, 1988). Despite the laws that prohibited slaves from the processes of formal education, often and in secreted ways, slaves devised ways to educate themselves (Anderson, 1988; Woodson, 1919). According to Williams (2007), slaves devised ingenious ways to learn how to read, such as eavesdropping on their slave master's conversations, memorizing the letters slave masters used to spell out messages, or by relying on literate slaves to teach others. Williams proposed that slaves were determined to learn because they understood the freedom that education and knowledge it provided. Due to their motivation and desires to read and write Williams proposed that whenever an opportunity arose for slaves to acquire written works, the Bible, newspapers or other forms of literature, they engaged because those sources provided hope. For slaves, the notion of hope freed them to embrace thoughts outside of the realms of their enslavement (Woodson, 1919). Besides their self-taught efforts, slaves learned how to read and write from some progressive slave owners and abolitionists groups such as the Quakers who established schools for African-Americans (Franklin & Moss, 1988). Furthermore, African slaves enjoyed educational opportunities through organizations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church

(AME), Quaker philanthropists or by joining the Union Army (Anderson, 1988; Denton, 1993; Williams, 2007).

Williams (2007) argued that by depriving African-American slaves of learning how to read and write, White slave masters could have hindered their slaves' ability to think for themselves. Woodson (1933) expanded on this idea: "When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions (p. xiii). Williams reiterated Woodson's (1933) argument when she claimed slave owners maintained total control over their slaves [mind body and spirit] by speaking for them in public. Williams proclaimed, on the one hand, not allowing slaves to speak for themselves in public, enabled slave owners to hide the truth about how wrong slavery was. On the other hand, Logue (1981) proposed literate slaves were a threat to slave owners because they could articulate the fallacy of the system of chattel slavery. Williams (2007) reiterated the threat that literate slaves posed for the slavery system when she argued:

> "Reading indicated to the world that this so-called property [slaves] had a mind, and writing foretold the ability to construct an alternative narrative about bondage itself. Literacy among slaves would expose slavery, and masters knew it" (p.17).

Gundaker (2007) emphasized, in secret processes of self-education, slaves challenged the hegemonic practices of slavery. By doing so, slaves upset the balance of power between themselves and their masters. Further, Gundaker emphasized, through self-education, slaves could experience a private life for themselves, absent the control of their masters.

Reconstruction

During the middle of the 19th century, White Americans experienced a divided perspective over the concept of slavery. This divided perspective between the Union and Confederate states led to the four-year, 1861-1865 Civil war. In 1865, the Union won the Civil

War and by defeating the Confederacy, the Union moved to end slavery in America (Franklin & Moss, 1988). The end of the Civil War ushered in a new era leading to efforts for educating former African-American slaves, the period of Reconstruction (Franklin & Moss, 1988).

The intent of Reconstruction involved a threefold plan. The first phase of the plan was to restore the Union. The second and third phases of Reconstruction involved the renovation of the southern states, and most important, the passage of new legislation to enforce the rights of newly freed slaves (Franklin & Moss, 1988). Towards the end of Reconstruction, the first phase of the Reconstruction act occurred when the North and South reunited. With the restoration of the Union, the second and third phases were realized when the southern states abolished slavery in their respective constitutions (Franklin & Moss, 1988).

While the threefold plan of Reconstruction was successful, Franklin and Moss (1988) argued, it failed in sustaining the rights of African-Americans. In 1877, the end of Reconstruction, President Rutherford B. Hayes ordered federal troops to leave the South. Upon the federal troop's departure, the old regime of Confederate officials and slave owners reversed the gains made during Reconstruction that were created to protect newly freed slaves. The reinstatement of the old regime of Confederate officials resulted in the Southern states creating of Black codes (Pilgrim, 2000), forcing African-Americans to enter into unfair labor contracts with White landowners (Franklin & Moss, 1988). The contracts African-Americans signed were enforced by the threat of incarceration and were structured to guarantee a profit for the White sharecropper only. The practice of sharecropping was a disadvantage for African-Americans because it kept them at a financial deficit. Another setback for Reconstruction occurred when the Supreme Court ignored The Fourteenth Amendment, which assured equal protection under the law and the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave Black men the right to vote, and the Civil Rights

Act of 1875. Due to this legal setback along with Northerners' loss of interest in Reconstruction, African-Americans continued to experience unfair treatment and violations of their civil rights (Franklin & Moss, 1988).

Post Reconstruction and the Role of Adult Education for African-Americans

With the failure of Reconstruction, the rights promised to African-Americans would not be granted fully for another century (Franklin & Moss, 1988). Despite the failures of Reconstruction, for African-Americas, adult education programs provided educational opportunities (Denton, 1993). As such, one of President Lincoln's efforts for educating African-Americans was his creation of the Freedman's Bureau (Denton, 1993; Cimbala, 1999). Through the financial support of the Freedman's Bureau, groups such as The American Missionary Association, (AMA), Quaker philanthropists and other African-American freedmen who were trained to teach, educational facilities were established for newly freed African-Americans (Denton, 1993). Throughout Reconstruction, despite resistance from the Southern states, African-Americans participated in public schooling, which involved general subject matter such as reading, writing, and mathematics (Denton, 1993). However, most African-American's educational experiences came from adult education programs (Anderson, 1988). Although adult education programs were a common and significant means of educating African Americans during and post Reconstruction, historical accounts claim the skills and trades adult education programs taught to newly freed African-Americans were not new and traced back to when they were enslaved and placed on plantations to work (Woodson, 1919). For example, Franklin and Moss (1988) stated enslaved African-Americans created efficient farming methods and invented tools to run the plantation more effectively.

During Reconstruction and beyond, the 1920's and into the 1940's, The Freedman's Bureau, The American Missionary Association, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and Young Women's Christian Associations (YWCA), played a role in providing adult education programs for African-Americans (Denton, 1993). Through adult education programs, African-American's educational trajectories were broadened to higher education by the inception of normal institutions such as Tuskegee, Hampton, Dillard, which eventually became Black colleges and universities (Denton, 1993).

African-Americans and Self-Governance in Adult Education

The adult education literature credits White organizations such as the YMCA and American Missionary Association for providing African-Americans with educational opportunities. However, Johnson-Bailey (2006) noted there were African-American lead groups that had a role in providing adult education programs. Further, Johnson-Bailey argued there is a lack of historical recognition in the adult education literature regarding the struggle and self-governance of African-American educators to advance their freedom. Johnson-Bailey (2006) recognized the importance of the post-post Reconstruction (Denton, 1999) period, 1920 through 1945. She proclaimed it was during this time where African-Americans self-governed their adult education programs. Johnson-Bailey specified African-Americans received cultural teaching from African-American institutions such as the "Universal Negro Improvement Association, Tuskegee University, the National Colored Women's, Clubs and African-American fraternity and sorority groups" (p. 103). The study revealed three specific themes on education: assimilation, cultural survival, and resistance. An analysis of Johnson-Bailey' study shows that the themes embody notions of social justice through education. A major takeaway of this study

is that despite their experiences of slavery and being denied education, African-Americans valued education and were vigilant in pursuing educational opportunities.

African-Americans' Transition to Higher Education

After reviewing the historical literature on the educational struggles of African-Americans, I find many examples demonstrate how adult education played a role in framing the education paths for African-Americans. As such, in this section, I briefly discuss the role adult education played in formulating historically Black colleges and universities and how key legal cases on desegregation, affected African-Americans in the realms of higher education.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Adult education programs created by the Freedman's Bureau and White organizations such as the American Missionary Association were instrumental in providing educational opportunities for African Americans (Denton, 1999). As the Freedman's Bureau was ramping up their efforts to provide public educational programs for African-Americans, likewise, they were working to create opportunities of higher education for African-Americans. Through the collaborative efforts of the African-American Episcopal Church, and the AMA, several Black colleges were created to provide higher learning for African-Americans (Anderson, 1988; Denton, 1988). While some of the original institutions the AMA and African-American educators started as adult education-based programs, eventually, those programs evolved into Historical Black Colleges and Universities, (HBCU's) (Anderson, 1988; Denton, 1988). The institutions deriving from adult education programs were: Hampton Institution, Howard University, St. Augustine's College, Fisk University, Johnson C. Smith University, Atlanta University, Dillard University, Shaw University, Virginia Union University, and Tougaloo College. African-Americans, particularly those who lived in the South, depended on HBCU's as

their primary source of higher education because of legal racial segregation (Anderson, 1988; Denton, 1988).

The Impact of Desegregation for African-Americans in Higher Education

Within the stories regarding the founding of HBCU's is a legal history of higher education and desegregation. The legal history highlights landmark court cases that led to the desegregation of public schooling on all levels. These court cases had an impact on African-Americans and their ability to pursue higher education. Stefkovich and Leas (1994) note the legal history of desegregation in higher education as having three distinct periods. The first period was the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. This period covers old laws on equal protection of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution and how they used race to justify separate but equal institutions of higher education. The second period began in the late 1930's and encompass lawsuits filed by African-Americans towards predominately White institutions of higher education that denied them full access to their programs. Finally, the third period covers litigation towards institutions of higher education that occurred after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Specifically, Stefkovich and Leas (1994) started the third period that covers lawsuits that called for "dismantling dual systems of education for Whites and Blacks, and that reconsidered the role of choice in this process" (pp. 407,408).

Morrill Act of 1862 and 1890

An essential event, which occurred in the history of higher education desegregation, was the 1862 pre-Emancipation Proclamation passage of the Morrill Act (Clark, 2012). The Morrill act played a role in increasing federal funding for land-grant universities who offered fields of study in agriculture and mechanic arts. One of the limitations of the 1862 version of the Morrill act was that it did not provide funding for African-Americans in higher education (Comer,

Campbell, Edwards, & Hillison 2006). However, in 1890 a revised version of the Morrill Act was passed. The 1890 version called for reliable sources of funding for historically Black institutions by stipulating equitable distribution between HBCU's and White institutions. Unfortunately, while the 1890 version provided funding for HBCU's, concurrently, due to the stipulations it made on equitable funding, it promoted the Jim Crow law of separate but equal (Christy, 2017).

Plessy v Ferguson and Separate but Equal

A noteworthy precedent, which harmed African-Americans in higher education, was the case of *Plessy v Ferguson*. Stefkovich and Leas (1994) argued that while the Second Morrill act lead to funding for HBCU's, shortly thereafter, the United States Supreme Court's decision in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case further corroborated the practice of segregation and led to the rise of racist Jim Crow laws in the South. Therefore, based on the Plessy doctrine, throughout the south, it was not legal for African-Americans to attend all White educational institutions. Specifically, the law demanded all public facilities be separated by race as long as the facilities provided the same accommodations for the race of persons they served (Stefkovich & Leas 1994).

In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), Homer Plessy, a man of African descent, challenged the State of Louisiana's version of the law that prohibited African-Americans from sitting in railroad cars with White passengers. Plessy's attorneys challenged the law based on it violating of his 13th and 14th amendment rights for equal and fair treatment. In this 1896 landmark case, the U.S. Supreme Court made a ruling based on the law of racial segregation within public places by arguing the practice was legal as long as the segregated public spaces were equally established. Stefkovich and Leas (1994) argued that on the surface the Supreme Court appeared to serve a

fair ruling with regards to the notion of separate but equal; however, the ruling was controversial on whom it benefited. Out of the eight Supreme Court Justices who voted to uphold the laws on racial segregation, John Marshall Harlan was the lone dissenter. Stefkovich and Leas (1994) contended while Harlan's decision to dissent did not change the outcome of the case, but it sent a message regarding the dominant view in American society on racial equality. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), Harlan stated:

> The White race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so, it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time if it remains true to its great heritage and holds fast to the principles of constitutional liberty. But in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved. It is therefore to be regretted that this high tribunal, the final expositor of the fundamental law of the land, has reached the conclusion that it is competent for a State to regulate the enjoyment by citizens of their civil rights solely upon the basis of race (163 U.S. 537, 559).

Stefkovich and Leas (1994) suggested Harlan's message exposed the fallacy of the United States Constitution as being colorblind. Hutching (2015) contended Harlan's response to the Plessy case "communicates the confusions and contradictions that so often accompany the (racial) facts of life in the United States" (p. 445). Hutching goes on to note with Harlan's decision to dissent

in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Harlan introduced "a new way of conceiving the relationship between the law and material racial inequality in the United States" (p. 446).

Sweatt v. Painter and McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents

In 1950, two significant court cases occurred which involved desegregation in graduate school higher education. Two of these cases led to the admissions of two African-American men at predominately White universities. The other case was the 1954 landmark, *Brown v Board of Education*, which eliminated laws on public segregation in all levels of education (Lavergne, 2012; Warren, 1954;). In the cases of *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment thus requiring The Universities of Texas and Oklahoma to admit Black students to their graduate and professional schools (Hubbell, 1973; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). The background of these cases involved Heman Sweatt, an African-American male being denied admission to the law school at The University of Texas and George W. McLaurin, a 61-year-old African-American male college professor being denied admission to a doctoral program in education at The University of Oklahoma (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

In *Sweatt v Painter* (1950), it was against the law for African-Americans to attend all White schools in Texas (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). In response to his denial for admission to The University of Texas, Sweatt appealed his case to the state district court. Upon Sweatt's appeal, the state of Texas recognized there were no law schools for African-Americans in the state (Goldstone, 2006). Therefore, intent on complying with separate but equal laws, the state of Texas stalled the court proceedings on Sweatt's case for six months to allow for the construction of a law school, Texas State University, for African-Americans thereby avoiding the admission of Sweatt or other African-Americans to all White law schools in the state (Stefkovich & Leas,

1994). Stefkovich and Leas stated that although the state of Texas provided an all-Black law school, the Supreme Court ruled, compared to The University of Texas law school, the all Black law school was not adequate. In *Sweatt v Painter* (1950) The U.S. Supreme Court ruled:

> Since the trial of this case, respondents report the opening of a law school at the Texas State University for Negroes. It is apparently on the road to full accreditation. It has a faculty of five full-time professors; a student body of 23; a library of some 16,500 volumes serviced by a full-time staff; a practice court and legal aid association; and one alumnus who has become a member of the Texas Bar. …Whether The University of Texas Law School is compared with the original or the new law school for Negroes, we cannot find substantial equality in the educational opportunities offered White and Negro law students by the State. In terms of the number of the faculty, variety of courses and opportunity for specialization, size of the student body, scope of the library, availability of law review and similar activities, The University of Texas Law School is superior. What is more important, The University of Texas Law School possesses to a far greater degree those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement, but which make for greatness in a law school. Such qualities, to name but a few, include reputation of the faculty, the experience of the administration, position and influence of the alumni, standing in the community, traditions and prestige. It is difficult to believe that one who had a free choice between these law schools would consider the question closed (339 U.S. 629, 634).

The U.S. Supreme Court challenged the state of Texas' argument that the all Black Texas State law school met the premise of *Plessy v Ferguson.* However, Stefkovich and Leas (1994) argued that while the Supreme Court determined the all Black Texas State law school and The

University of Texas law school were not *equal*, the court did not fully challenge the *separate* aspect of Plessy v Ferguson in terms of it being *unequal* (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), McLaurin appealed his case to the federal court. McLaurin won the appeal and was admitted to the doctoral education program at The University of Oklahoma, but under the premise of the Plessy doctrine, separate but equal. Based on the provisions of separate but equal, McLaurin's admission to the University involved him being placed in a closet like structure, which separated him from the learning spaces of his White classmates (Lavergne, 2012).

Figure 1. George McLaurin The Desegregation of The University of Oklahoma, 1946-1950, (Anon, 2018).

Although McLaurin was placed in a closet, the provisions of his enrollment granted him access to the school library and cafeteria. As such, because The University of Oklahoma granted McLaurin access to the same spaces as his White classmates, the state of Oklahoma deemed his admission as equal. However, in response to these conditions, the U.S. Supreme court ruled in favor of the McLaurin, by arguing that the conditions of his enrollment were unequal because it limited his ability to learn from his doctoral program, which involved interaction with his White classmates (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994).

In the case of *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), the court summarized:

> These restrictions were obviously imposed in order to comply, as nearly as could be, with the statutory requirements of Oklahoma. But they signify that the State, in administering the facilities it affords for professional and graduate study, sets McLaurin apart from the other students. The result is that the appellant is handicapped in his pursuit of effective graduate instruction. Such restrictions impair and inhibit his ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession (339 U.S. 640 641). …Our society grows increasingly complex, and our need for trained leaders increases correspondingly. Appellant's case represents, perhaps, the epitome of that need, for he is attempting to obtain an advanced degree in education, to become, by definition, a leader and trainer of others. Those who will come under his guidance and influence must be directly affected by the education he receives. Their own education and development will necessarily suffer to the extent that his training is unequal to that of his classmates. State-imposed restrictions which produce such inequalities cannot be sustained (339 U.S. 641).

In the cases of *Sweatt v Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, the U.S. Supreme Court rulings challenged the states of Texas and Oklahoma's justifications of providing separate but equal facilities for Sweatt and McLaurin. However, Stefkovich and Leas (1994) argued while the U.S. Supreme court's decisions struck down the equal aspects of Plessy v. Ferguson, the court did not challenge the facets of separate (segregation) within *Plessy v. Ferguson* as being unequal (Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). Drawing on the outcome of *Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, Stefkovich and Leas, (1994) stated although the U.S. Supreme Court failed to address the separate portion of Plessy v Ferguson as unequal, the ramification of "these

court cases laid the foundation for and were specifically referred to in Brown, which overturned Plessy and declared that in education, separate is inherently unequal" (p. 410).

Brown v Board of Education Topeka Kansas

In 1954, the landmark case *Brown v Board of Education* outlawed racial segregation within public schools, thus leading to the integration of institutions of higher education (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). In the case of Brown v Board of Education, the U.S. Supreme court ruled against the position of *Plessy v Ferguson* that contended that racial segregation within public facilities, provided they were equal, was not a violation of the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The background of the court case involved a series of class action lawsuits filed by a group of NAACP lawyers involving the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware (McBride & Lopez, 2006).

One of the class actions cases filed by the NAACP involved Oliver Brown, an African-American parent who filed the lawsuit on behalf of families whose Black children were denied access to all White schools in Topeka, Kansas (Anderson, 2003; Tushnet, 2004). In the lawsuit, Brown challenged the segregation of Topeka's schools. Brown argued that the practice of segregation was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment because the all-Black schools in Topeka were not equal to the all-White schools. Initially, the federal court dismissed Brown's case based on the grounds of *Plessy v Ferguson,* whereby it claimed equality did exist between the all-Black and the all-White schools in Topeka. In response to the federal court's ruling, and under the direction of Thurgood Marshall, a lawyer who would eventually become the first African-American Supreme court justice, Brown appealed his case to the U.S. Supreme Court (Rowan, 1993). According to McBride and Lopez (2006), the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overrule the federal court's decision on *Brown v Board of Education* was

based in part on the equal protection section of the 14th Amendment which states: "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." In the case of *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), the U.S. Supreme Court summarized:

> Segregation of White and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The effect is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system." ...We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment (437 U.S. 486 495).

McBride and Lopez (2006) argued in the ruling of *Brown v Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme court suggested Congress's original 1860 drafting of the 14th Amendment offered a mixed message because the language of the equal protection clause did not mandate the integration of public schools nor did it prohibit it. Further, McBride and Lopez suggested that while the original intent of Congress may have sent a mixed message on the integration of public schools, at the time of the 1954 ruling on *Brown v Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's

synthesis argued by the current standards of 1954 the 14th Amendment did equate to equal education for all, absent from segregation.

Fleming (1984) contended that the outcome of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* signaled a new era with the Civil Rights movement whereby the ruling of the case played an important role in correcting the way the federal government provided funding for HBCU's. Fleming (1984) attributed the outcome of Brown v. Board for the federal government's decision to re-examine the disproportions of federal aid being provided to HBCU's along with considering ways to rectify the inadequacies they found. Fleming stated Brown v. Board of Education ruling led to a renewed sense of direction on education. With the government's commitment to fund HBCU's it increased the level of confidence that Black and White persons previously held towards all-Black institutions of higher learning (Albritton, 2012). In addition to Brown v. Board of Education, the following table lists other important legislation that had an effect on the desegregation of higher education.

Table 1

U.S. Supreme Court Decisions and Federal Legislation Affecting Higher Education Desegregation

Court Case	Outcome
1862 The Morrill Act	Provided for land-grant universities
1887 The Hatch Act	Funded equally Black and White agricultural stations unless deemed otherwise by the state legislature
1890 The Second Morrill Act	Provided grants for Black colleges
*1896 Plessy v. Ferguson	Established the separate-but-equal doctrine
1908 Berea College v. Commonwealth of Kentucky	First Supreme Court higher education desegregation case
1938 Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada	First Supreme Court higher education desegregation case to shows the vulnerability of the separate-but-equal doctrine
1948 Sipuel v. Board of Regents	African-American law school applicant entitled to same consideration as a White applicant
1950 Sweatt v. Painter	A state may not distinguish between students of different races in admission to professional and graduate education at a state university
1950 McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents	After admitting a student, a university may not afford the student different treatment based on race
*1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas	Separate is inherently unequal

Court Case	Outcome
1956 Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control	First Supreme Court case to apply the Brown principle to higher education
1964 The Civil Rights Act of 1964, § 2000d	Institutions accepting federal funding shall not discriminate on the basis of race
*1968 Green v. New Kent County School Board	Choice is not enough to dismantle segregated public-school system
1986 Bazemore v. Friday	No discrimination in segregated 4-H clubs when choice is wholly voluntary and unfettered
1992 United States v. Fordice	Mere adoption of race-neutral policies does not fulfill the state's affirmative

*Cases not related to higher education decisions, but they carry important implications for higher education cases. Adapted from "A legal history of desegregation in higher education" by J. A. Stefkovich and T. Leas, 1994, *The Journal of Negro Education, 63*(3), pp. 418,419.

Historical Sketch of African-American Males in Higher Education

The historical aspects of African-Americans and education reveal the inequalities associated with their experiences in becoming educated (Carter, 2001). Carter stated since the "17th century, African-Americans have fought to be educated" and as they emerged from slavery, they did so with a determination to becoming educated (p.1). While the history of African-Americans and their educational journeys contains stories of struggle and inequality, likewise, their education history contain stories highlighting the educational successes of African-American men and women. This section highlights prominent African-American men who were scholars, educators, and activists as well as pioneers in their respective fields of higher education and who made important contributions to the African-American community (Dunn, 1993; Gyant, 1996) and paved the educational road for future African-American men.

Alexander Lucius Twilight

Alexander Lucius Twilight, September 23, 1795 – June 19, 1857, was an American educator, minister, and politician. In 1823, Twilight graduated from Middlebury College with a bachelor's degree. Twilight was the first African-American man to earn a bachelor's degree in the U.S. (Bennett, 1988; Ranbom & Lynch, 1988). After college, Twilight became a teacher in Peru, New York. In addition to his passion for teaching, Twilight was enthusiastic about religion and later obtained his credentials to become an ordained minister.

Twilight taught and preached in the Congregational church in Brownington, Vermont and eventually became the headmaster of the secondary school, which was entitled Brownington Academy (Potter, 2013). Eventually, Twilight aspired to expand Brownington Academy by bringing in out-of-town students. To accomplish this goal, over a two-year period, 1834-1836, Twilight laid out a design and raised the money for a residence dormitory to accommodate out of

town students. The structure, named Athenian Hall, was a four-story granite building which served as a multipurpose facility for housing and teaching. At the time Athenian Hall was built, it was hailed as the first granite public building in Vermont (Potter, 2013). In addition to his teaching, preaching and administrative duties, Twilight was a pioneer in Vermont politics. In 1836, he became the first African-American to win election to a public office as a state legislature in Vermont (Potter, 2013).

Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington, April 5, 1856 - November 14, 1915, was born a slave in Franklin County, Virginia to a Black mother and a White man from a nearby plantation. Washington was an educator, innovator, skilled interracial interpreter, and leader of social change (Denton 1999). Due to the Emancipation Proclamation, at the age of nine Washington, along with his family became free from slavery. As a young boy, Washington possessed a strong desire to learn. In order to survive in his early schooling experiences, Washington worked hard at teaching himself how to read. His hard work paid off and led him to Hampton Institute, a school designed for freedmen. Washington progressed through his studies and graduated from Hampton, and on the recommendation of the president of Hampton Institute, Washington became the founder and leader of Tuskegee Institute (Denton, 1993; Franklin & Moss, 2001). Washington played a role in helping African-Americans attain education through adult education programs. Washington's model of industrial education provided skills and trades such as farming and construction. These were skills Washington deemed practical and necessary for newly freed Blacks, especially if the freed population was to be valued by Whites as productive members in society (Denton, 1999). Washington's work and leadership at Tuskegee Institute led to the school's success and prominence as an HBCU (Albritton, 2012).

W.E.B. DuBois

William Edward Burkhardt DuBois, February 23, 1868-August 27, 1963, was born a free man to a working-class African-American family. During his childhood years, DuBois lived in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a predominately White township. Despite the small number, 25-50, of African-American families who lived in Great Barrington, DuBois did not experience overt forms of racism from the White members of his community (Lewis, 2000). However, while DuBois did not experience overt racism in Great Barrington, he did experience racial microaggressions which, according to Broderick (1958), led to his withdrawn and sullen personality.

As a child, DuBois attended integrated schools in his community and interacted with his White classmates. As a high school student, DuBois was gifted, intellectual, and embraced a passion for advancing African-Americans. DuBois expressed an interest in attending Harvard after he graduated from high school. However, due to a lack of financial means, he attended Fisk University, an HBCU in Nashville, Tennessee (Lewis, 2000). It was during his years at Fisk when DuBois began to experience the racial climate of the South. Alarmed by the racial injustices perpetrated towards African-Americans in the South, DuBois became a social activist (Broderick, 1958). DuBois took an active role in fighting social injustices against African Americans by writing articles and giving speeches to challenge issues on racial discrimination and inequality (DuBois, 1932).

In 1888, DuBois graduated from Fisk and continued his educational journey at Harvard. Initially, DuBois enrolled in Harvard intent on completing his master's and doctoral degrees. However, after the former U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes, who was the current head of an educational fund for African-Americans, proclaimed there were no qualified African-Americans

for study abroad programs, DuBois decided to challenge Hayes by applying to the study abroad program. Based on his academic credentials, DuBois was admitted to a study abroad program at The University of Berlin in Germany. Due to his philosophical and sociological differences, and concerns for the racial issues concerning African-Americans in the U.S., DuBois decided to go back to Harvard to finish his Ph.D. (Lewis, 2000). In 1895, W.E.B. DuBois graduated from Harvard, thus making him the first Black to earn a doctorate at Harvard (Lewis, 2000). After receiving his doctorate, DuBois went on to teach at Wilberforce, The University of Pennsylvania, and Atlanta University. During his teaching career and beyond, DuBois developed an educational philosophy, The Talented Tenth, which advocated for the elite top tier 10% of African-Americans to receive a traditional or classical college education (DuBois, 1903). As such, DuBois' opposing stance of Booker T. Washington's model of industrial education for African-Americans, lead to a public and personal rift between the two scholars (Lewis, 2000).

As an African-American male scholar, educator, and social justice activist, DuBois made an impact on society. In addition to the contributions he made on the African-American culture with his writings and books, most notably The *Souls of Black Folks* (1903), DuBois was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Lewis, 2000). 1n 1905, DuBois gathered with a group of men in Niagara Falls, Canada to discuss solutions on how to address racial issues concerning African-Americans. The original group was a civil rights organization entitled the Niagara Movement. The group officially changed its structure to form a national civil rights movement entitled The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (Potter, 2013).

Edward Alexander Bouchet

Edward Alexander Bouchet, September 15, 1852 – October 28, 1918, was born in New Haven Connecticut to working-class parents, who were former slaves (Felder, 2014). During his formative years, Bouchet's schooling experiences were limited because the town of New Haven only provided three school choices for African-Americans. Bouchet attended Sally Wilson's Artisan Street Colored School and Hopkins Grammar School and thrived in the classroom, due to the nurturing he received from the one teacher that the school provided. Bouchet graduated from high school in 1870 and was valedictorian of his class. Bouchet attended Yale and obtained a bachelor's degree. In 1876, Bouchet made history by being the first African-American male to graduate from Yale College with a doctorate (Felder, 2014). Bouchet was the first African-American to earn a doctorate in the U.S. and was the sixth person to earn a Ph.D. in physics (Slater, 1994). Due to his prominence as a scientist and scholar, Bouchet was invited to join the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa honor society. As an African-American educator, Bouchet experienced racial discrimination that prohibited him from finding a teaching position at a White institution (Mickens, 2002). Although Bouchet faced challenges in finding a university teaching position, he eventually acquired a job teaching at The Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia, PA. The Institute for Colored Youth, established in 1837, is noted as the first and oldest HBCU in the U.S. and was eventually renamed Cheyney University (Conyers, 1990).

Alain Leroy Locke

Alain Leroy Locke, September 13, 1885 – June 9, 1954, was an educator, writer, and historian and was regarded as "dean of the African-American literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's" (Potter, 2013, p. 38). Locke was born in Philadelphia, PA to a middle-class African-American family who came from free African-Americans. Both of Locke's parents were college educated (Stafford, 1961). His father held a law degree from Howard

University, and his mother was a schoolteacher (Gyant, 1996). As a young man, Locke excelled in the classroom and graduated second in his high school class. After graduating from high school, Locke enrolled in Harvard University and graduated with honors, magna cum laude, in three years from a four-year program (Stafford, 1961). In 1907, Locke became famous, as he was the first African-American to win a Rhodes scholarship. Locke went to study in Oxford, England as a Rhodes Scholar, but due to racism, he was denied admission to some of the Oxford colleges. Locke finally gained admission to Hertford College and then the University of Berlin. Upon completing his education, he returned to the U.S. to teach (Stafford, 1961).

In 1912, Locke joined the faculty at Howard University and became a prominent professor. Locke taught at Howard until 1916 when he decided to go back to Harvard to earn his Ph.D. in philosophy. Locke completed his doctoral program in 1918 and returned to Howard to take on the role as chair of the philosophy department (Potter, 2013). As an activist, Locke taught courses at Howard on comparative race relations. Howard's Board of Trustees did not approve of Locke's courses on race relations, so they dismissed him (Potter, 2013). In 1928, Locke returned to Howard and resumed his position as department chair and held the position until he retired in 1953. Locke embraced adult education as a means to liberate African-Americans from racial disparities (Gyant, 1996). He embraced DuBois's concept of the Talented Tenth and saw it as means to train educators and leaders who would teach and improve on adult education programs for African-Americans (Gyant, 1996, p. 73). Locke furthered his support and ambitions for adult education when he agreed to serve as a delegate at the first conference on adult education. Through his relationship with F.P Keppel, the president of the Carnegie Foundation, Locke provided information to the Carnegie Foundation to address the educational needs of African-American adult learners. A noteworthy result of Locke's work with the

Carnegie Foundation was the formation of the American Association of Adult Education (AAAE). Locke was elected president of AAAE in 1946. As president of AAAE, he wrote and provided ideas on how to better the role of the adult teacher, the learner, and the overall concepts of adult education for the African-American community (Gyant, 1996). This organization eventually was renamed the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education.

In addition to the prominent African-American males discussed, Table 2 provides a view of other African-American male pioneers and their accomplishments.

Table 2

African-American Doctoral Pioneers

Recipient	Subject	University	Year
Edward A. Bouchet	Physics	Yale	1876
Alfred O. Coffin	Biology	111. Wesleyan	1889
William L. Bulkley	Latin	Syracuse	1893
W.E.B. Du Bois	Social Science	Harvard	1895
Saint Elmo Brady	Chemistry	Chemistry Univ. of 111.	1916

Adapted from "The Blacks who first entered the world of White higher education" by R. B Slater, 1994, *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education,* (4), p. 49

A Contemporary Bridge of African-American Males in Higher Education

Throughout this chapter, I discussed the historical aspects of African-American's educational experiences, which highlight their struggles and successes. Despite the history that underscores the intellectual abilities and academic accomplishments of prominent African-American men such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, the current view of African-American males disregard their ability to thrive within education on all levels (Noguera, 2003).

Within the literature, there are major studies (Allen, 1992; Bailey, 2003; Fleming, 1984; Harper, 2009; Palmer, & Harroff, 2014) which outline the challenges faced by African-American males in P-12 and higher education.

The Role of P-12 Schooling in Preparing African-American Males for College

> *There is a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that all children are not valued equally, that some children are clearly valued more than other children, and finally that, African-American male children are valued least of all. It is not likely that schools, as they are currently structured, will ever look at the majority of children they serve as having unlimited potential —Governor's Commission on Black Males.* (Maryland State Department of Education, 2007*).*

The quote by the *Governor's Commission on Black Males* succinctly frames the deficit view of young African-American males. The quote provides a basis for the overarching issues surrounding African-American men and their higher education experiences. It does so by supporting researcher's claims who express their issues beginning with their P-12 schooling experiences (Davis, 2003; Epps, 1995; Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Howard, Flennaugh & Terry, 2012; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Moore, Henfield & Owens, 2008). Moore, Henfield, and Owens (2008) stated that throughout the country, "public school systems [elementary, secondary, and post-secondary] are failing miserably with African-American male students" (p. 907). Researchers, who investigate the P-12 schooling experiences of African-American males, identified higher rates of disciplinary actions for African-American versus those for White male students as barriers to their learning (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Moore, Henfield and Owens (2008) asserted another issue surrounding the deficiencies of P-12 African-American males: they are disproportionally placed in special education programs. Drawing on the works of

Davis, (2005) and Patton (1998), Moore, Henfield and Owens (2008) argued the damaging effects of placing African-American males in special education programs causes them to miss "meaningful educational and social experiences in general education curricula" (p. 910). Other consequences that African-American males experience when assigned to P-12 special education classrooms are that the resulting risk of "lower levels of achievement and limited postsecondary and employment opportunities" (Moore, Henfield & Owens, 2008, p. 9). Finally, Bailey (2003) noted that a lack of encouragement from their peers is another possible reason for African-American male's academic deficiencies.

African-American Males and Role Models

The literature on African-American males in education, P-12, post-secondary, undergraduate and graduate, note the lack of role models as a significant issue (Bailey, 2003; Cuyjet, 2007; Nogurea, 2003). Bailey (2003), suggested a correlation exists between the issue of identity when adolescent African-American males in P-12 settings experience positive African-American male role models. Drawing on the issue of African-American males having to navigate through multiple identities, Bailey argued that adolescent African-American males need to learn how to navigate within different cultural settings and learn how to give back to the community. Thus, to promote and enhance their ability to do so, Bailey (2003) credited his Project: Gentlemen on the Move (PGOTM), for teaching adolescent African-American males academic and social skills. Bailey pointed out that one of the academic components of the PGOTM involved the teaching of role modeling type activities such as peer mentoring and tutoring. Bailey argued that for adolescent African-American males, adequate support is essential to their ability to thrive socially and academically which potentially leads to them successfully graduating from high school and enrolling in college (p.22).

Noting the challenges African-American males experience in college, LaVant, Anderson, and Tiggs, (1997) expressed the importance of mentorship for African-American males to succeed in higher education. Although their focus is on the notions of mentorship, LaVant et al. (1997) defined the process of mentorship with the notion of role modeling:

> Mentoring is also referred to as role modeling, which requires direct interaction between the mentor and the protégé. Understandably, the type of interaction that occurs between the mentor and mentee greatly influences the development and outcome of the mentoring relationship (p. 44).

Furthering their position on the importance and effectiveness of mentoring, LaVant et al. (1997) argued that the concept of mentoring [role modeling] is an essential measure in helping African-American males to become successful in college. They pointed out that through the process of mentorship, African-American male college students become equipped to overcome the common barriers they often face on college campuses. As they overcome those barriers, they are in a better position to complete college. LaVant et al. proposed another benefit of mentorship initiatives in higher education is they lead to assisting African-American men in developing and "becoming role models for others" (p. 52). Finally, LaVant et al. argued the importance of mentorship initiatives are "to attract, encourage, and motivate the African-American man who might be a potential college student but needs that extra support or attention to increase his interest and make him more comfortable with the idea of participating in postsecondary education" (pp. 51-52).

The Underrepresentation of African-American Males in Higher Education

A review of the P-12 literature makes clear that inequitable schooling experiences explain a large part of why African-American males are underrepresented in colleges and universities and also clarifies why they may enter college unprepared (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Moore, 2004; Cuyjet, 1997; Kunjufu, 1985; Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2009). Naylor, Wyatt-Nichol, and Brown (2015) proposed the racial tenor of higher education as a contributing reason for the underrepresentation of African-American males. To supplement this claim, in 2013, the U.S. Department of Labor, (2013) reported 93% of White males in the U.S. possessed a high school diploma and 40% of them held a bachelor's degree. In comparison, 86% of African-American males in the U.S. possessed a high school diploma, and 20% of them possessed a bachelor's degree (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Based on the literature and the supporting data on the number of African-American males enrolled in college, it is evident that African-American males are largely *absent* from college and universities (Strayhorn, 2008).

African-American Males as Reentry College Students

In response to common barriers African-American males face in their educational trajectories, Rosser-Mims, Palmer, and Harroff (2014) conducted a study to understand the reentry experiences of African-American males. In the study, the authors sought to give voice to the experiences of this group and understand how this marginalized group's "lived experiences shaped their paths to returning to college" (p.60). The study questions asked: 1) what are the major barriers to Black adult males' reentry to college; 2) what challenges do Black adult males experience during the reentry process, and 3) what are Black adult males' major sources of support?" Drawing on critical race theory (CRT) and its tenets regarding the permanence of racism, the study focused on the issue of race and how race played a role. The study examined

the barriers the study participants experienced in the realms of social, economic disparities, and the forms of racism they experienced in their P-12 experiences. Further, the researchers justified their use of CRT by employing storytelling, which allowed for giving voice to the marginalized group by allowing them to provide first-hand details of their lived experiences.

The study's findings were consistent with the overarching themes the literature reports that African-American males face in the educational pipeline. The findings reported the participants' claims on what they experienced in their endeavors to reenter the college classroom: 1) a lack of understanding regarding the financial resources available to them for paying college; 2) a lack of knowledge on how to navigate their work-life balance once they re-entered the classroom; and 3) a lack of role models. Some of the participants claimed the lack of African-American male teachers for role models was the most significant issue. In this study, the use of CRT was an appropriate theoretical perspective because it allowed the researchers the means to provide supporting narratives with their recommendations on how to support African-American males as they reenter the college classroom.

Are African-American Males Underrepresented in U.S. Colleges and Universities?

Much has been said in the literature about African-American men being underrepresented in college (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2009; Strayhorn, 2011). Whether researchers agree or disagree with this claim, collectively, they argued it is more important to focus on the positive aspects and accomplishments of the African-American men who are currently enrolled in college and attend to ways of increasing the enrollments of this group (Harper, 2012, 2015; Toldson & Lewis, 2013).

While the theme of underrepresentation persists with African-American males in higher education, a second study, conducted by Toldson and Lewis (2012) challenged this claim and

asserted that African-American males are *not* underrepresented in college. Toldson and Lewis argued that the data researchers typically reference to study African-American male college enrollment is skewed and does not account for the total representation of this group, 18 years and older, in the U.S. population. In the study, Toldson and Lewis (2012) referenced data, which reported, "African-American males, 18 and over, represent 5.5% of the total U.S. population. While White males, 18 and over, represent 32.7% of the total U.S. population" (p.11). In comparing college enrollment, Toldson and Lewis stated, "African-American male enrollment is at 1.2 million, which is 5.5% of the total of population of college students, and White male enrollment is 5.6 million which is 27% of the total population of college students" (p.11). As such, Toldson and Lewis argued while the numbers of African-American males enrolled in college are relative to their representation in the entire U.S. population, "the level of degree attainment for African-American males is 16% compared to White males at 32%" (Toldson & Lewis, 2012, p. 13).

Toldson and Lewis's (2012) position on the underrepresentation of African-American males in college provided a preamble to their study findings. Drawing on the study findings, Toldson and Lewis proposed a shift from the common focus of negative narratives on African-American males and their educational experiences towards providing implications for increasing the quality of education and ensuring their success. Toldson and Lewis (2012) argued, it is time to change the overall status quo on African-American males and their experiences in education settings about issues surrounding their college enrollment and degree completion, as well as the discipline and teacher disparities that exist for all African-American students in P-12 settings.

Incarcerated African-American Males Compared to African-American Males in College

Within the deficit narrative of African-American males in higher education, there are researchers Ziedenberg and Schiraldi (2002) who claim the number of incarcerated African-American men far outweigh those that are enrolled in college. In response to this statement, a third study, conducted by Toldson and Morton (2011) sought to disprove this claim whereby they argued:

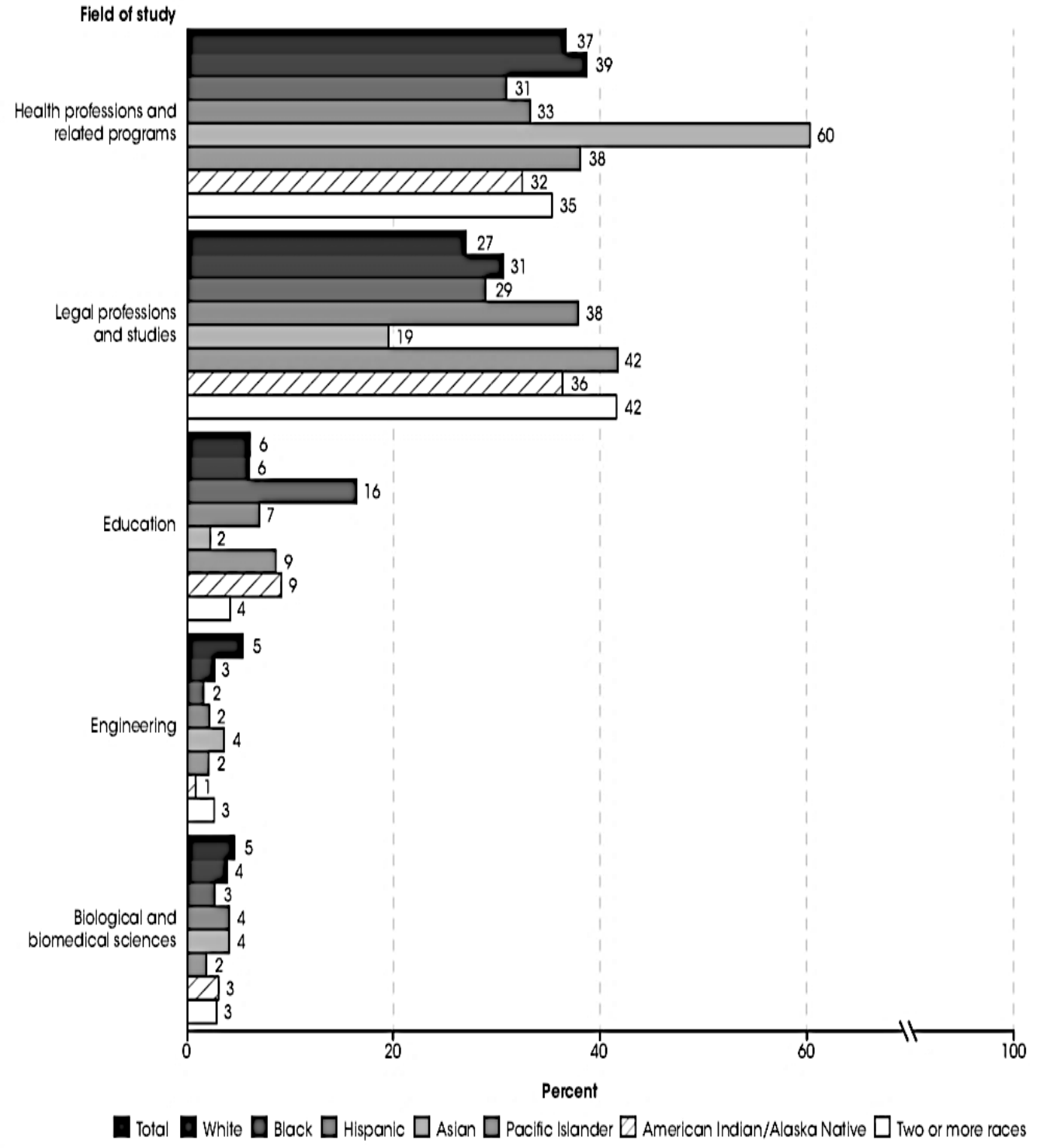
> The U. S. Census (2011) estimates that 17,945,068 people in the U. S. population are African-American males, irrespective of age. Among them, about 6.3 percent are in college and, 4.7 percent are in prison. The remaining 89 percent have already graduated from college, already served a prison sentence, have a life trajectory that does not involve college or prison, or are too young for [college or] either to apply [for college] (p.2).

Toldson and Morton (2011) bolstered their argument on the narrative surrounding African-American male imprisonment and college, by emphasizing African-American are not underrepresented as most studies report. Furthermore, at the time of the study, Toldson and Morton reported African-American males are enrolled "in various types of colleges and universities, and according to their data sources, they reported the number of African-American males enrolled in college was estimated at 1,067,000" (p.2).

Demographics of African-American College Students in the United States

The graphics in this section provide data from sources which report the race, ethnicity, the graduation rate and the areas of doctoral study pursued men and women in the U.S. Figure 2 provides data from 2012–13 described by race, degree attainment and the fields of study for the doctoral level. Table 4 provides data from 2008-2016 highlighting the number of doctoral degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of the student.

Overall, the charts provide a perspective regarding the status of African-Americans males compared to African-American females and White males and females in doctoral programs. In summary, these data sources support the literature which highlights the underrepresentation of African-American males in higher education, particularly on the doctoral level. As Toldson and Lewis (2012) argued, African-American males are not underrepresented, but are largely absent from college campuses. As such, the data sources support their position by providing a clear picture of the enrollment and graduation rates of Black males, compared to White males and Black women.



NOTE: These five fields were selected because they were the fields in which the largest percentages of doctor's degrees were awarded in 2012–13. Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Reported racial/ethnic distributions of students by level of degree, field of degree, and sex were used to estimate race/ethnicity for students whose race/ethnicity was not reported. Total includes nonresident alien graduates who are not reported by race/ethnicity.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2013, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 324.25.

Figure 2. Percentage of doctor's degrees awarded by postsecondary institutions in selected fields of study, by race/ ethnicity: 2012–13 Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016. Adapted from *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics*, by Musu-Gillette, L., Robinson, J., McFarland, J., KewalRamani, A., Zhang, A., and Wilkinson-Flicker, S. (2016). Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch. December 17, 2018.

Table 4

Doctor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex of Student: Selected Years, 2008-09 Through 2015-16

Number of degrees conferred[1] to U.S. citizens and nonresident aliens

Year and Sex	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or more races	Non-resident alien
2007-08	149,378	97,839	9,463	6,949	15,203	932	—	18,992
2008-09	154,564	101,400	10,188	7,497	15,840	978	—	18,661
2009-10	158,590	104,419	10,413	8,085	16,560	952	—	18,161
2010-11	163,827	105,990	10,934	8,662	17,078	947	1,251	18,965
2011-12	170,217	109,365	11,794	9,223	17,896	915	1,571	19,453
2012-13	175,026	110,759	12,085	10,108	18,406	900	2,440	20,328
2013-14	177,587	110,157	12,621	10,665	19,118	861	2,966	21,199
2014-15	178,548	108,914	13,272	11,263	19,186	884	3,670	21,359
2015-16	177,867	107,108	13,365	11,766	19,580	808	3,780	21,460
Males								
2007-08	73,453	48,203	3,296	3,146	6,535	447	—	11,826

2008-09	75,674	49,880	3,531	3,388	6,914	460	—	11,501
2009-10	76,610	50,707	3,609	3,642	7,184	430	—	11,038
2010-11	79,672	51,688	3,838	3,990	7,545	454	557	11,600
2011-12	82,670	53,488	4,121	4,218	7,792	418	701	11,932
2012-13	85,080	54,196	4,310	4,473	8,190	400	1,085	12,426
2013-14	85,585	53,374	4,510	4,788	8,270	365	1,297	12,981
2014-15	84,922	52,069	4,464	5,011	8,330	410	1,678	12,960
2015-16	84,089	50,628	4,558	5,113	8,614	368	1,717	13,091
Females								
2007-08	75,925	49,636	6,167	3,803	8,668	485	—	7,166
2008-09	78,890	51,520	6,657	4,109	8,926	518	—	7,160
2009-10	81,980	53,712	6,804	4,443	9,376	522	—	7,123
2010-11	84,155	54,302	7,096	4,672	9,533	493	694	7,365
2011-12	87,547	55,877	7,673	5,005	10,104	497	870	7,521
2012-13	89,946	56,563	7,775	5,635	10,216	500	1,355	7,902
2013-14	92,002	56,783	8,111	5,877	10,848	496	1,669	8,218
2014-15	93,626	56,845	8,808	6,252	10,856	474	1,992	8,399

2015-16	93,778	56,480	8,807	6,653	10,966	440	2,063	8,369

—Not available.

[1] Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level, as well as such degrees as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees that were formerly classified as first-professional degrees.

[2] Excludes 500 males and 12 females whose racial/ethnic group was not available.

[3] Excludes 714 males and 21 females whose racial/ethnic group was not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1976-77 and 1980-81; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:90-99); and IPEDS Fall 2000 through Fall 2016, Completions component. (This table was prepared August 2017). Retrieved December 17, 2018 from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_csb.asp

The Success of African-American Males in Higher Education

The literature highlighting the successes of African-American males in higher education offers a promising view of this group (Harper, 2012). Scholars who study the notion of success with African-American males in college investigate how despite the common barriers they face, racism, lack of support, and role models, they manage to complete their degrees (Harper, 2009, 2012; Strayhorn, 2011).

Fulfilment and Accomplishment

Seeking to understand the aspects of what African-Americans gain from a college degree, Warde (2008) investigated the aspects which contributed to African-American males completing a college degree. Having employed a qualitative research design, the author conducted focus group interviews with 11 African-American male graduate students. The findings of the study produced four major themes that occurred across the collected data: 1) having an epiphany about the importance of higher education; 2) having the resources needed to attend and persist in an institution of higher education; 3) having a mentor, and 4) resilience when faced with obstacles" (Warde, 2008, p. 65). Warde stated a significant finding was all the study participants reported the notion of epiphany for their decisions to enroll in college. Similarly, Warde reported all the study participants embraced the same goals of desiring to do better and ultimately feel better about themselves. Thus, the participants asserted that the only way to feel better about themselves was to obtain a college degree.

Resisting and Overcoming Racist Stereotypes through Counterstories

Harper (2009) focused on how African-American males in predominantly White colleges resisted racial stereotypes. In this study, Harper purposed "to oppose dominant discourse concerning the social and educational status of Black men in America" (p.697). According to

Harper (2009):

> (1) There is an overlooked population of African-American males on college campuses – they are academic achievers and student leaders who thrive inside and outside the classroom; (2) they often simultaneously experience both racism and success, which calls for a multifaceted navigational strategy that includes engagement in student organizations, meaningful interactions with supportive same-race peers, and the strategic publicity of their educational achievements to White persons who possess deficit views of Black men; and (3) these achievers resist niggering in its various forms through positive self-representation in campus leadership positions and the immediate confrontation of racist stereotyping whenever it occurs on campus (pp.708, 709).

For this study, Harper utilized a tenet of CRT, counter storytelling, to resist the common stereotype of being "Niggers" which Black men encounter at PWIs. Harper conducted face-to-face interviews with 143 successful African-American male college students from 30 predominantly White colleges and universities across the USA. The qualitative study focused on the lived experiences the study participants, specifically those involving being label as "Niggers" who lack the ability to succeed in a college environment.

Harper's (2009) study questions addressed the following:

> (1) Is there an overlooked population of African-American male students who are not disengaged and academically underperforming; (2) if so, what are their experiential realities and navigational approaches at PWIs; and (3) how do these Black men resist niggering in its various forms on their campuses? (p.701).

Harper's study participants offered succinct counternarratives to confront as African-American male college students who faced racial stereotyping. Harper's use of CRT helped to

uncover the underlying thought behind comments directed towards African-American male college students such as, “Are you an athlete?” In response to such, Harper argued, often, when White people ask these types of questions, they deem them as being innocent and do not understand how offensive the questions are for African-Americans. The participants shared stories which contained scenarios where White students asked if they “were in a fraternity or if they were an athlete” (Harper, 2009, p.707). Each of the participants reported their responses and reactions to these scenarios as being positive. The study participants stated they refused to be “labeled” and in their responses to stereotypical questions, they utilized non-confrontational methods to address them.

By gathering counternarratives from the study participants, Harper illustrated the stereotypes and racial commentary that African-American male college students encounter at PWIs. Most importantly, Harper noted the participant’s narratives countered those stereotypes and challenged the deficit narrative of African-American males on PWI college campuses. The participant’s counternarratives dispelled the monolithic stereotype of African-American men where they proclaimed not all African-American men are the same and equally, they have the capacity and intelligence to perform positively in the context of higher education.

Challenging the Anti-deficit View of African-American Males

Consistent with the success of African-American male college students, Harper (2012) examined African-American male achievement in higher education and sought to provide an “anti-deficit view of African-American males and their college achievements” (p.3). The study investigated how African-American male college students who are deemed achievers and exhibited above average educational goals and skills, gained access to their respective institutions of higher education. The study specifically set out to determine how the study

participants moved beyond the traditional set of hurdles most African-American male college students contend with and compiled the credentials necessary to gain admission to quality graduate and professional schools.

The theoretical framework used in this study was Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework (Harper, 2012). Harper noted the framework was built upon three decades of literature which situates Black men in education, and the disparities they face, underrepresentation, lack of preparation, which stem from their P-12 experiences that they endure within educational environments. Harper stated the basis of his Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework was "associated with theories of sociology, psychology, gender studies, and education" (Harper, 2012, p.5).

Out of the 219 study participants for the 2012 study, 143 came from Harper's previous 2009 study. The 2012 study included African-American male students from a diverse population of 42 college and universities in 20 U.S. states. Harper (2012) interviewed African-American male college graduates who had gone on to be successful in an assortment of institutions of higher education: Public/Private HBCU's, Research Universities, Liberal Arts Colleges Highly Selective Private Research Universities, and Comprehensive State Universities.
According to Harper (2012), the findings of the study encompassed responses from six categories:

- Getting to college, the respondents reported that a great amount of influence to go to college came from their parents, teachers and community based educational support programs
- Choosing Colleges, the respondents credited their parents, teachers and in some cases, guidance counselors as being an influence on their college choices.

- Paying for College, most of the respondents utilized financial aid, scholarship and summer job opportunities to pay for their education.
- Transitioning to College, the study respondents credited older African-American male college students, summer bridge programs, and early enrollment for getting them prepared for the rigors of college.
- Matters of Engagement, all the participants reported their involvement in campus leadership roles, outside of class participation with faculty and administration, as an influential factor in their success.
- Responding Productively to Racism. The respondents countered stereotypical questions from their White peers such as do you play basketball, with responses like I'm not even that tall, why would you think I play on the basketball team. The outcome of such responses, per the respondents, often embarrassed those who spouted the stereotypes thus causing them to think about their biases (p.9).

Harper (2012) claimed, beyond the study's findings, one of the most meaningful results was "that nearly every student interviewed said it was the first time someone had sat down to ask how he had successfully navigated his way to and through higher education" (p. 9).

African-American Graduate Students at PWIs

According to Ingram (2016), "At the graduate level, the scarce enrollment rate of African-American men begs the need for more information on the experiences of African-American men in advanced degree programs" (p.3). In a landmark study, Fleming (1984) stated that African-American students who attended predominantly White institutions reported feelings of "institutional abandonment, isolation and bias in the classroom from White students" (p. 155). Specifically, one of the colleges the study examined, "Magnolia College" was a predominantly

White institution in the Deep South. Fleming (1984) stated that African-American students who attended this institution deal with the "usual problems of adjusting to the social and academic life of the campus" (p. 112). In response to the participant's claims, Fleming stated when African-American students have to make social adjustments at PWIs, they have to deal with issues of stress and personal threat.

Researchers Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, and Bowles's (2009) study focused on the social experiences of African-American students at a PWI, southern flagship university. In this study, the researchers examined the social experiences of African-American graduate students, by surveying alumni (p.179). The researchers sought to map the participants' social experiences and the relationships they had with other students, faculty members, and the university. The specific focus of the research was to understand their formal and informal interactions with other students and with faculty; determine how were they were received on campus, and to ascertain if they have any fond memories of their years in graduate school or their graduate programs. Critical race theory was the conceptual framework the researchers used to guide this study. The researchers devised a survey based on current literature on Black graduate students.

The study findings revealed several key themes, both supporting and refuting the tenor of the literature on Black graduate students. Some examples of the findings revealed the participants' claims of an improvement in their social experiences with White faculty members. Most of the participant responses reported experiencing feelings of isolation, loneliness and disconnected while pursuing their graduate programs. What stood out in this study was that despite the negative social aspects they experienced they credited those experiences as bolstering their persistence, and determination to finish their graduate programs.

Situating critical race theory's tenet of endemic racism was key to this study because it provided a lens for the researchers to examine the social experiences of Black graduate students' at PWIs. As such, through analysis, they determined the social experiences of Black graduate students at PWIs are not unique to a specific region of the country, the Deep South, but are tied to the racial disparities that are inherent in our American society.

African-American Males in Doctoral Education

There is limited research on African-American males in doctoral education. In addition, the studies that have been done on African-American male doctoral students at large predominately White institutions, focused on their social isolation and factors regarding their persistence and survival. While this emphasis is understandable, there is an important and neglected narrative that is under-researched: what are the successful paths taken by African-American male doctoral students. This section of the literature review presents and examines four studies that looked specifically at African-American males in doctoral programs.

King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996) conducted a study on Black males in doctoral programs, the ninth study presented in this literature review, is an important study that looked at motivation as a key element, which determined the experiences and outcomes of African-American male doctoral students. This study by King and Chepyator-Thomson attempted to discern factors that influenced African-American doctoral students to enroll and gain a terminal degree. Most of the respondents in the study survey (73%) were male. Approximately one-quarter of the sample was composed of females (27%). Eighty-eight percent of the respondents considered themselves African-American, and most were American citizens (96%). At the time of degree attainment, the males' ages ranged from 26 to 55, whereas the females were between 29 and 48. This study used a Networking and Department survey, which identified the

ramifications of their decisions to enroll in a doctoral program, and their ability to persist and complete their degree programs. Networking occurred among African-American professional—members of the sport and exercise field, submitted names for potential candidates of the study. The departmental component of the survey provided the names of candidates who graduated from their respective institution's sport and exercise science departments (King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996, p. 3).

The findings of the study fell into two categories: Enrollment and Persistence. The enrollment category encompassed themes of external motivation, professionally, to become a college professor, earn tenure or promotion. Some of the participant's responses showed that they had personal reasons for pursuing a doctorate: "Many respondents (35%) were intrinsically motivated to pursue the doctoral degree. Some said it was a personal goal, or a challenge, while others hoped to improve themselves academically" (King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996, p. 5). A significant response was to challenge oppositional beliefs about an African-American's ability to obtain a doctorate. The factor of persistence encompassed institutional issues related to financial and academic support. Thus, most of the students reported that financial support was important to their ability to finish their doctoral program. The use of academic services and computer labs were listed as the most important tools for their success in their programs. Finally, regarding environmental factors, campus racial climate was a big issue for most of the participants. Specifically, participants reported feelings of isolation and racial injustices in grading practices. Finally, the area of mentorship proved to be a valuable aspect of them finishing their doctoral programs. King and Chepyator-Thomson's study revealed a key factor for success, mentorship, a consistent theme throughout the literature on African-American males in higher education.

A study by Ballard (2006), the tenth study in this literature review closely informs my research and looks at "persistence, campus environment and mentoring, social support, and strategies for overcoming barriers to success" (p. 3). In this study, Ballard sought to explore the meaning behind the academic success of African-American males who obtained terminal degrees from Majority White Institutions (MWI). The study participants were African-American males who have achieved academic success and given the opportunity to share their stories regarding how they pursued their educational goals of obtaining a terminal degree. The theoretical framework used to guide this study was critical race theory. The research (Ballard, 2006) examined, "How do African-American males with terminal degrees from Majority White Institutions make meaning of their success and do their stories of success include narratives of the following, persistence, campus environment and mentoring, and social support?"

The participants' counterstories consisted of two factors that they credited for their success: mentorship and safe spaces. Each of the participants reported micro-aggressions as a barrier. In addition, each participant offered counter-narratives, which challenged the myths of African-American males failing on the doctoral level, and not taking advantage of admission to a doctoral program. The participants stated just being admitted into a doctoral program was not enough. Mentorship was a fundamental element to their success as a doctoral student. The participants offered counterstories, which revealed that they, in fact, did have had mentors in their programs. This finding dispelled the common narrative in the literature, which reports African-American male doctoral students lack mentorship in their programs. All of the study participants credited the concept of safe spaces as vital to the success of their doctoral process. Another area the participants noted for their success was support from faculty members, nurturing environments, and cross-cultural relationships. The participants strongly embraced the

notion that the Ph.D. is not designed to be completed alone (Ballard, 2006).

Micro-aggressions were an issue that four of the five participants experienced. The participants who experienced micro-aggressions defined them as issues such as, delays and setbacks, and issues they deemed as political and procedural. While the participants realized these types of inconveniences play a role in the process of doctoral work, they found themselves equating the inconveniences to their struggles as African-American males. Despite the inconveniences, they found themselves in a place of having to overcome them and forge ahead to complete their Ph.Ds. The researcher's use of critical race theory offered a lens to frame the racial connection to the lived experiences of the study participants and apply them to their journeys as African-American male doctoral students (Ballard, 2006).

Another study, Horn (2012), the third on African-American male doctoral students and the eleventh study which informs my research, "aimed to provide voice to the stories of eight African-American male doctoral students who have not lived the hype and have risen above the challenges" (p.3). In this study, Horn, examined the life histories of eight African-American males in their journey to obtain a doctorate. The research questions guiding the study were: 1) what are the life histories of eight Black males pursuing doctoral studies; 2) how can we make sense of their life experiences through the lenses of critical race theory; and 3) what can be learned from their life histories that can inspire other Black males and inform the policies and practices of institutions of higher education. Horn (2012) defined hype as what the literature associates with Black males as being "an endangered species due to being overrepresented in prison, negative health disparities, poverty rates, and the military while being underrepresented in higher education" (p.4). The study was conducted at a large predominantly White university in Texas. Horn stated the institution proposes to become a more inclusive and diverse institution

with intentions of recruiting more students of color. The study employed critical race theory to investigate the connection between racism and the participants' lived experiences. The study's findings revealed all of the participants experienced overt and covert forms of racism, internalized oppression, silenced voices, and lack of support in obtaining their doctoral degrees.

The findings reported that despite the racial challenges the participants experienced, each of them chose to move past the challenges and resisted being stereotyped by the hype of how African-American men are defined. Horn (2016) contended, while the study participants chose not to follow the path of the hype, "obtaining a doctorate does not change the color of their skin" (p.122). Thus, for all of the participants, with or without the Ph.D., as African-American men, they are still viewed as a liability in the U.S., according to Horn (2016).

A final study Ingram (2016) that informs my research looked at factors of persistence and motivation for African-American males to obtain a doctoral degree. In this study, Ingram employed a narrative approach to examine the life histories of African-American male doctoral students. The study involved 18 African-American males from 24 - 44 years old and who were enrolled in doctoral programs at three large predominantly White public research institutions. The research question for this study asked, how did they negotiate their decision to pursue doctoral studies. Two of the institutions involved in this study were located in the Mid-Atlantic section of the United States, and the other was located in the North-Atlantic region of the country. The findings of the study revealed that the of most prominent factors the participants claimed as influences for their decisions to enroll in a doctoral program were: (a) faculty encouragement, (b) motivation to pursue a doctorate, and (c) personal motivations. As it pertained to the role of faculty encouragement, the participants credited former teachers for encouraging them to pursue a doctoral degree. When describing motivation to pursue a

doctorate, the participants talked about being aware of a lack of African-American males who hold doctoral degrees. Based on this reality, they contended, for them to complete the doctorate, it would allow them to give back to the African-American community and serve as a role model to younger African-American students. Finally, the participants claimed their motivation to pursue a doctoral degree evolved from wanting to be change agents. In response to the theme of change agent, Ingram (2016) reported the majority of the study participants' respective disciplines and research interests "focused around social justice issues, particularly those affecting African Americans" (p. 11).

Summary of the Literature

The majority of literature on African-American males in higher education focuses on the barriers faced by this group because of the many obstacles faced in the decades-long struggle to obtain not only an education but access to an equal education. In response to the literature, Harper (2009, 2012) and Toldson and Lewis (2011) stressed the importance of understanding how the complexities associated with African-American males and their schooling experiences have affected them and has unfortunately driven a perspective dominated by a narrative that portrays a profile steeped in deficits. These researchers, therefore, argue the importance of accentuating African-American men who successfully persist through their educational barriers and complete their college degrees. Acknowledging the influences of success for African-American male graduate students are consistent with undergraduates, King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996) and Warde (2008) claimed mentorship, was a prominent reason for the success of African-American doctoral students. Additionally, Ballard (2006) and Ingram (2016) reminds us African-American male graduate students associated motivation factors such as personal values, beliefs, and achievement as key factors for applying for graduate programs. Finally,

Ingram (2016) argued the problem with the literature focused on the graduate level of African-American students is little is said about the doctoral experiences of African-American men.

Of the studies included in this literature review, Ballard (2006) Ingram (2016) and Horn's (2012) studies were most informative to the research. Each of these narrative studies offered valuable information on successful African-American male doctoral students. Having employed critical race theory, the studies yielded their participant's first-hand stories of their doctoral experiences. While all of the studies add to the paucity of literature on African-American males in doctoral programs at PWIs, each of the researchers argued the need for more research to understand the experiences of African-American male doctoral students. As Ballard (2006) argued: "Although it is seldom heard, the story of successful African-American males at the terminal degree level is one that needs to be told" (p.141).

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by a theoretical frame that consists of critical race theory foundations that is informed by Black male identity theory (Cross, 1971). Within the context of higher education, the narratives of African-American male doctoral students are practically non-existent (Ballard, 2006; Ingram, 2016). Given this problem, understanding their first-hand experiences of their doctoral journey is difficult. Critical race theory (CRT) is utilized as the theoretical framework to guide this study. Employing CRT as a framework will allow African-American males to share their stories regarding their doctoral experiences at predominantly White institutions. Berry (2005) stated, "Critical race theory acknowledges that their voices are legitimate and provides a forum in which their voices can be heard" (p. 47). The epistemological stance CRT holds on race is it is a social construct. CRT embraces the notion that the social implications of race cannot be disregarded because it connects to the way people construct their

human and social interactions (Berry, 2005; Delgado, 1995; Henfield, 2006).

CRT was suited to frame this study because it situates race within the problem of the study context and uses the method of Counter-Storytelling (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Given this is a narrative study, critical race theory guided me in examining the narratives of African-American doctoral students. As such, Delgado (1995) noted the use of CRT helps to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render Blacks and other minorities one-down" (p. xiv). The central theme and core elements of CRT, deriving from critical theory, embrace emancipatory notions, which seek to change society by addressing oppressive practices that emanate from the hegemonic characteristics of institutions (Prasad, 2005). Therefore, CRT's epistemological situated the central theme of race within the lived experiences of my study participants.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a form of race-based oppositional scholarship (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, 2005; Calmore, 1991; Liu, 2009; Love, 2004) which challenges Eurocentric values, such as White, as a race, being normalized in the United States. As a theoretical framework, critical race theory examines the "unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, and gendered lines" (Taylor, Gilborn & Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 1). CRT's historical underpinnings can be seen in the early the works of W.E.B. Dubois (1903) where he argues the color line which exists in the American society. The color line that Dubois spoke of was in response to the unfair racial practices of institutions and the negative impact of these practices on persons of color (DuBois, 1903). In response to this problem, Dubois adopted a social-psychological concept defined as double consciousness, which embraced a social theory of two conflicting selves "in one dark body" (Treviño, Harris, & Wallace, 2008).

CRT Key Scholars

Bell, a Harvard law professor, along with fellow scholars, Richard Delgado, Alan Freeman, Kimberlee Crenshaw, and Angela Harris, began to question the role of law in maintaining and further constructing racially-based social and economic oppression (Lynn & Adams, 2002; Taylor, 1998; Taylor, et al., 2009). Crenshaw, a law professor at UCLA and Columbia University, is credited with organizing critical race theory as an academic discipline and theoretical movement. Crenshaw is an expert in the area of Black feminist legal theory, and issues on race and gender. As a scholar and activist, one of Crenshaw's most noted works is in the area of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is a conceptual tool useful in analyzing patterns of inequality, oppression, racism, and sexism, which affect Black women. Intersectionality analyzes overlapping structural systems of oppression and discrimination regarding gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, economic status, and other categories (Williams-Crenshaw, 1994; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013).

During the summer of 1989 Bell and his group, the critical legal scholars, (CLS), gathered at a CRT workshop at St. Benedict's Center in Madison Wisconsin (Harris, 1994). The group collaborated their efforts to build a theory with the intent of addressing the issues of race, and the relationship it holds to racism in politics within America (Crenshaw, Gotanda & Peller, 1995). The group held the belief that "race was a social construct" and the concepts of CRT, offered an opposing solution to expose the common practices of American politics (Treviño, Javier, Harris & Wallace, 2008, p.7). Derrick Bell's challenge to civil rights as a critique of liberalism raised awareness that the liberties for which the Civil Rights Movement fought have become perverted and distorted. He argued that the concept of equality overshadows the real issue of color/race and, White society holds equality as the lens with which to validate their

positive self-perceptions regarding the way Whites treat Blacks. However, this way of thinking led Blacks to perpetual thoughts of hoping things "will" eventually get better (Closson, 2010).

Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Taylor (1998) defines CRT as "a form of oppositional scholarship" that seeks to challenge the experiences of Whites as the normative standard and CRT is grounded in a conceptual framework that centers on the distinctive experiences of people of color (p.122). Moreover, the overarching goal of CRT and a major tenet is the confrontation of racism; CRT challenges the indifference that White society has regarding the way the American legal, educational and political institutions operate with practices that are at their core, fundamentally racially unjust and oppressive. CRT addresses the way these dilemmas marginalize persons of color and how these practices are historically responsible for affecting the lived experiences of persons of color (Treviño et al., 2008). There are five tenets of CRT:

- Counter-storytelling— The use of counter-stories in analyzing higher education's climate provides faculty, staff, and students of color a voice to tell their narratives involving marginalized experiences.
- The permanence of racism— The permanence of racism suggests that racism controls the political, social, and economic realms of U.S. society.
- Whiteness as property conversion— Due to the embedded racism in American society, Whiteness can be considered a property interest.
- Interest conversion— This tenet acknowledges White individuals as being the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation.
- The critique of liberalism— The fifth tenet of CRT, critique of liberalism, stems from the ideas of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all. The lack

> of inclusivity in the academic curriculum and student development theory used by student affairs professionals supports the notion of colorblindness that works against dismantling social inequities (Hiraldo, 2010).

Counter storytelling allows the researcher a way to solicit narratives from their study participants that are rich and meaningful. Thus, members can share the expressed detail of their lives that include the realities of living on the margins of society, and by doing so counter and challenge the prevalent racial stereotypes that White society holds towards Blacks (Merriweather Hunn, Guy, & Mangliitz, 2006).

CRT's Origins in Education

While the underpinnings of CRT are in legal studies, the stance that it holds on inherent institutional racism, plays a significant role in research within the field of education, specifically how racial practices are responsible for marginalizing persons of color, within the context of education (K-16). William F. Tate (1997) published one of the first education studies that used CRT as a theoretical framework (Capper, 2015, p.793). This study provides a basis for later studies that employ CRT as a lens to discuss racial issues within our educational structures. According to Tate (1997):

> The intent of this discussion is to describe how both educational research and legal structures contribute to existing belief systems and to legitimating social frameworks and policy that result in educational inequities for people of color (p. 197).

While Tate's article provides us with a general perspective of race and education, we find that other researchers have utilized CRT to guide their work in the education context with emphasis on specific concerns.

African-American Males in Education Through the Lens of CRT

The topic of African-American males in education is an area of research that involves studies that focus on the barriers this group encounters in the K-12 setting and while attempting to complete a college degree. Moreover, the literature most prominent on this subject encompasses qualitative studies that use Critical Race Theory as a theoretical perspective.

Ladson-Billings (1998) examined CRT for understanding its applicability to the field of education: curriculum, funding, instruction, assessment, and desegregation. She credited CRT in education as a great tool but also cautioned … "I believe educational researchers need much more time to study and understand the legal literature in which it is situated." Ladson-Billings challenged scholars who use CRT to challenge racial problems in education, "to be as committed the scholarship of race and education along with offering impactful ways to rectify those problems" (p 22).

When applying CRT to educational institutions, the theory criticizes the design of curriculum, which encompasses a tenor of exclusiveness for White society. Moreover, CRT purports that the concept of Whiteness as property embraces the status quo of curriculum and as such, White society believes that it exclusively belongs to them. The issues centered around this phenomenon occurs when persons of color, experience difficulties in taking scholastics tests or attempting gaining entrance to colleges and universities; because doing so rest upon what they could master in their K-12 experiences (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Interest conversion

CRT's tenet of Interest Convergence contends the status quo will change but only if it benefits White society (Taylor, 1998). An example of this was seen in Donnor's (2005) study. The study focuses on several cases of African-American male student-athletes and how their

respective colleges and universities' coercive use of athletics placed those institutions at a financial gain while leaving the African-American male student-athlete at an academic disadvantage. The study further highlighted the interest colleges and universities have in the revenue streams of collegiate sports. Donner (20050 argued the requirement for African-American male student-athletes to sign a letter of intent, thought to be an advantage to the student, ultimately functions as a legal means to ensure continuous revenue from the highly valuable athlete. Edwards supported this argument when he (1984) argued requiring college athletes to sign a letter of intent is problematic for African-American male athletes because it supports the view of society which sees them as a "dumb jock" who is unable to perform in the classroom. As a theoretical perspective, critical race theory encompasses a variance of applications to scholarship. The body of knowledge surrounding CRT offers an appropriate means for researchers to apply the theory's basic tenets. There is a cohesive connection between their struggles and the basic tenets of critical race theory. Given this connection, CRT offered an appropriate lens for me to view researching the experiences and common stories of African-American male doctoral students.

Black Male Identity

The literature on Black male identity is multifaceted (Dancy, 2015). As such, Tyler (2014) stated in the literature on African-American males in education and the social sciences, scholars have devised theories on Black male identity regarding racial identity (Cross, 1971) and conducted studies on aspects of Black male identity in terms of academic achievement, social, economic, race, gender, and sexuality. From a social perspective, Nedhari (2009) argued, due to the historical, endemic and institutional racism, and lack of diversity that exists in society, African-American males struggle to truly transition into manhood (p.9). Nedhari stated for

African-American men, the struggle to embrace male identity is attributed to their attempt to assimilate to the notion of White male identity. Thus, according to Nedhari (2009), from a societal perspective, for many African-American males, seeking to understand their identity equates to discovering their racial identity.

As Nedhari (2009) and Tyler (2014) proposed, the foundations of Black male identity is routed in their attempt to discover their racial identity and draws on Cross's (1971) theory of Nigrescence racial identity, the process of becoming Black. In this theory, Cross proposed five stages of development for racial identity. The first stage, pre-encounter, portrays the personality before the experience, and therefore alludes to the underlying being or edge of reference that will change after confronting the experience. In this stage, Cross contended that the Black individual is unconscious of his/her race and the social ramifications that accompany it. In the second stage, encounter, Cross proposed that Black people experience a racial encounter that all of a sudden and forcefully calls race into point of view, and is commonly an arousal to racial cognizance. Cross noted that this experience makes the individual defenseless against another racialized perspective. Regularly, Cross proposed, this event is effectively reviewed as the first run through a youngster was dealt with contrastingly due to the shade of his/her skin. The third stage, immersion-emersion, Cross noted that the Black individual goes about life as if he/she has "recently found Blackness." This individual regularly winds up determined in "demonstrating that one is dark," while taking an obvious pride in their obscurity and at the same time slandering White culture. In the fourth stage, internalization, Cross argued that the Black individual is set apart by a person's solace with rejoining society with his/her very own sufficient feelings toward their racial/ethnic character to have the option to produce associations with individuals from other racial/ethnic gatherings. In this stage, the individual can start settling conflicts between

their perspective before the experience and after the experience. In the fifth and final stage, internalization-commitment, Cross proposed that the Black individual achieves a level of comfort or satisfaction regarding his/her own notions of their racial/ethnic way of life, just as the racial/ethnic personalities of others. According to Cross, this stage makes the qualification between people who have disguised their new character yet cease their inclusion in the development for social change, and those that have disguised their personality and keep on being operators of social change (Cross, 1971 pp. 13-27).

Similarly, racial identity is an overarching theme within the educational literature on African-American males (Harper, 2007). Harper noted that high achieving African-American male college students deal with notions of racial identity in the form of internalized racism. Harper pointed out that the internalized racism high achieving African-American males report stem from criticism they receive from other African-Americans who, in response to their academic achievements, accuse them of acting White. Consistent with Harper's (2007) findings on African-American men and racial identity, Nogurea (2003) noted a connection between identity and academic performance of young African-American males. As noted in the P-12 literature, Noguera argued that when young African-American males experience high rates of school discipline and are placed in special education classes, an indirect message is sent to them. The message implies that young African-American males are good at playing sports, but scholarly activities such as the debate team or the science club are off limits to them. However, Noguera noted such scholarly activities are not off limits only because the school says so, but because young African-American males see these types of activities as inconsistent with who they are, and because they lack African-American male role models who do participate in those type of scholarly activities. In summary, the literature encompasses several notions on how

African-American male, young and old, navigate their identities (Givens, Nasir, Ross & McKinney de Royston, 2016). Be it sexual, gender or academic identity, for African-American males, the dominant issue of understanding their identity, is rooted in the guise of race and racial stereotypes (Franklin, 1999; Noguera, 2003).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the significant literature that can inform a student on African-American male doctoral students and their experiences at PWIs. The review began with a discussion of the historical foundations of African-Americans and education and the challenges they faced to become educated during slavery. Next, the review focused on the role adult education played in African-American's post-slavery and Reconstruction schooling experiences. Within the discussion on adult education and African-Americans, there was a discussion on African-African American's self-governance in establishing adult education programs. Continuing a historical presentation informed by the major themes from the literature, the chapter progressed to examining African-American's transition to higher education, by highlighting significant court cases which lead to the desegregation of public education on all levels.

In the final sections of this chapter, I discussed prominent African-American male scholars who were pioneers in higher education and activists on social justice issues for African-Americans were presented, and this was followed by a contemporary view of African-American males in higher education. This section on African-American males in higher education contained a specific discussion on the common deficit view of African-American males and education, detailing the role that P-12 schooling experiences play in African-American males' college pursuits. Included in this examination were the common barriers African-American men

face in higher education and a review of the literature on successful undergraduate African-American males and the social experiences of African-Americans graduates at a predominantly White institution in the Deep South. The final presentation of empirical studies group included literature that specifically examined African-American male doctoral students at PWIs—their motivation and successes, and their experiences. Finally, I presented the theoretical frame work, critical race theory, I used to guide my study. I discussed the history of critical race theory and noted the key scholars, tenets and its origins in education. In conjunction with CRT, I provided a discussion on Cross's (1971) racial identity development theory and how it informs CRT.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> *…stories are familiar and are easily understood as the discourse used to frame our everyday lives…disclosures related in narratives are told with moral authority and are representative of the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of the experiences… narratives have become the select method of exploring the lives of the "Other." There are sound reasons to employ narratives to investigate the lives of people who reside on the margins…*
>
> *—Juanita Johnson-Bailey (Johnson-Bailey, 2004 p. 126)*

Johnson-Bailey's quote sets the tone for the use of narratives to understand the experiences of African-American male doctoral students at predominantly White institutions. Given that African-American men, the group to be studied, fall within the scope of the "Other", as Johnson-Bailey stated, narratives will allow them to relay their doctoral experiences at PWIs in the true sense in which they occurred. The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). Ingram (2016) and Ballard (2006) argued the information on African-American male doctoral students at PWIs is scarce and requires further investigation to gain their perspectives about the doctoral journey. The study of African-American male doctoral students require an understanding of how, as minority people at predominately White institutions, their doctoral experiences affected their worldviews and social justice perspectives (Ingram, 2016). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

Introduction

As humans, we make meaning of our experiences through stories, and our stories are how we make meaning in our lives (Coles, 1989; Kramp, 2004). Given these notions, by exploring their stories, narrative inquiry will allow me to understand the meanings in the experiences of African-American male doctoral students at PWIs. Kramp (2004) stated "Essential to utilizing narrative inquiry as a method of research is the understanding that narrative is a way of knowing" (p.106). Narrative inquiry guides this study to enable me to *understand* the doctoral experiences of African-American males is synonymous with narrative being a way of *knowing* (Kramp, 2004).

In this chapter, I begin with an in-depth overview of narrative inquiry highlighting its background and theoretical assumptions. Second, to gain a perspective on narrative inquiry/analysis and how it informs my study, I examine the works of eight prominent narrative scholars. The narrative scholars I discuss are: William Labov, Jerome Bruner, Elliot Mishler, Donald Polkinghorne Robert Coles, Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, and Juanita Johnson-Bailey. Third, I present the theoretical framework, critical race theory, I use to guide my study. Here, I discuss the implications of critical race theory, detailing its history, key scholars, tenets and role in education. Fourth, I present my narrative research design where I discuss my methods of data gathering, sample selection, and data analysis. Finally, I end the chapter with a discussion on my researcher subjectivities. In this section, I address my subjectivities as a

researcher and the implications they can have on the study. I then discuss my role as an insider-researcher and note the potential challenges with this role. I conclude this section with a comprehensive discussion on my stance as a researcher.

Overview of Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin (2006) stated the concept of narrative is an old practice of joint action and communication which occurs amongst humans. Clandinin expanded the notions of narrative whereby she explained, as people communicate with each other, they do so by "inquiring" and sharing life experiences through telling and framing stories. Through the process of storytelling, narrative provides a means for people to construct meaning in their lives. Narrative is the way in which people interact with each other as they seek to build relationships beyond their conversations (Clandinin, 2006). The history of narrative inquiry connects to diverse fields and disciplines, such as the humanities, anthropology, literature, history, psychology, sociology, and education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology which consists of stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos, artifacts, and life experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Huber (2010) defined narrative inquiry as "the study of experience understood narratively. It is a way of thinking about and studying experience" (p.5). As a method of inquiry, the basis of "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (Czarniawska, 2004, p.17). Within the social sciences, the development of narrative inquiry has influenced how researchers experience people's stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Narrative inquiry is a subset of narratology. As such, Riessman (1993) stated the term narratology, derived from the foundations of structuralism and literary criticism, was created by

Todorov in 1969. Narratology is a systematic account of the study of narratives and focuses on the form and functioning of narratives. Upon its inception, narratology emerged as a new and legitimate scientific study Expanding the definition of narratology, Herrnstein Smith (1981) defined narratology as a sophisticated area of study which is "international and interdisciplinary in its origins, scope, and pursuits and, in many of its achievements, both subtle and rigorous" (p. 209). Narratology examines "the commonality and differences which exist in narrative forms" (Prince, 2012, pp. 4-5).

Theoretical Assumptions Underlying the Narrative Approach

The development of narrative inquiry in the social sciences has influenced how researchers approach gathering and telling people's stories (Clandinin, 2006). The theoretical assumptions scholars make regarding the use of narrative inquiry are mixed (Riessman, 2008). Despite the varying perspectives and beliefs narrative scholars embrace, there are key and foundational assumptions they attribute to the narrative approach. Moen (2006) stated: "One of the main characteristics of narrative research is the collaboration process between the researcher and her or his research subjects" (p.1). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) claimed Dewey's (1938) *theory of experience* as the basis of their approach to narrative inquiry. Drawing on Dewey's notions, Clandinin (2013) proposed an assumption of narrative inquiry is it "…is a way to *understand experience* and a way to *study experience*" (p. 15). Clandinin and Huber (2015) proposed an assumption of narrative inquiry is it allows for unearthing the *multiple realities* people embrace in the way they view the world. More succinctly, Clandinin and Huber suggested the way people view the world is rooted in their set of realities. Those realities include the person's life histories and experiences. Clandinin & Huber (2015) stated:

> Differences in views of reality, and knowledge developed from an inquiry, the relationship between experience and context, and the relationship between researchers and participants all shape borders (p.441).

Consistent with understanding how narrative inquiry accounts for the telling of personal experiences is acknowledging the historical aspects of personal experience. The notion of personal experience embodies time. As people focus on their personal experiences, they often express them in a chronological fashion. Polkinghorne (1991) suggested *chronology* is a theoretical component of narrative inquiry. He proposed the process of inquiry aids the researcher in formulating a chronology for the participants' stories. The chronological organization of stories allows the researcher to situate the individual's story within a wider panorama. By doing so, it allows the researcher and readers to see themes within the participant's story (Polkinhorne,1991). As people progress through life, they do so by navigating through random experiences. Consistent with the process of navigating life experiences, is another assumption of narrative inquiry, the *notion of transformation*. Narrative inquiry allows an individual to make sense of their random experiences through the process of story construction (Sinclair Bell, 2002). Within the structure of a story the element of time captures the movement of the story from the beginning to the end. As an individual tells a story, the initial state of affairs they express in the story, changes to a resulting state of affairs. This process of change produces the story's conclusion. The conclusion of the story signals the evidence of the storyteller's transformation (Mattingly, 2007).

Narrative inquiry/analysis is a dense and multifaceted methodology (Riessman, 1993). Merriman (2009) proposed as the use of narrative inquiry/analysis increased amongst qualitative researchers, so have the versions of this "type of qualitative study" (p. 34). The history of

narrative has connections to a broad range of disciplines. The broad application of narrative accounts for the various theoretical positions narrative scholars position themselves regarding their approach to the method (Riessman, 2008). Although narrative scholars embrace diverse approaches to narrative inquiry/analysis, the overarching concept research scholars agree on is narrative inquiry is a method which allows researchers to understand the lived experiences of human beings (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). In the next section, I provide a table which gives a thumbnail sketch on the works of the following narrative scholars: William Labov, Jerome Bruner, Elliot Mishler, Robert Coles, Donald Polkinghorne, Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, and Juanita Johnson-Bailey. In this table, I make a comparison of their contributions and theoretical perspectives on narrative inquiry /analysis and note how their approaches relate to and inform my study. Following the table, I provide an in-depth discussion of each of the narrative scholars and how I could potentially use their approaches to guide my study.

Table 3

Topical List of Scholars of Narrative Inquiry/Analysis

Narrative Scholar	Contributions to Narrative	Theoretical Perspective	Informs my study by:
Labov, William (1967, 1972, 1982)	Structural Analysis Linguistic Analysis	Analysis of narratives of personal experience connecting the elements of language, meaning, and action (Labov, 1972).	Provides a rationale for understanding the elements on how participants tell a story
Bruner, Jerome (1986)	Narrative Construction of Reality/ Paradigmatic and Narrative Knowing Established narrative inquiry as a legitimate form of generating knowledge in social science research.	Two ways of knowing in understanding truth and reality: Paradigmatic mode-empirical/scientific Narrative Knowing Mode-How individuals construct and make sense of their lived experiences.	Provides an analytic tool to elicit themes across the dataset Allow for understanding experience in participant stories
Polkinghorne, Donald (1988, 1995)	Analysis of Narratives Narrative Analysis	Paradigmatic mode of knowing-classifies general features into different categories fit individual details into a larger pattern. Analysis of narratives focuses on the events, actions, happenings, and other data elements to put them together in a plot to create themes.	Provides an analytic tool to collect stories as datasets Provides an analytic tool to elicit themes across the dataset

Mishler, Elliot (1986)	Narrative Interviewing	The telling means the researcher's narrating, and the told means the data that are told by the participant. From this perspective, the story (or stories) the researcher (re)tells will be a series of temporally ordered events (Mishler, 1986). Interview data focusing on the interpretation of stories.	Allows for collecting stories through interviewing Empowers study participants in the interview process Elicits rich conversations
Coles, Robert (1989)	*The Call of Stories Narratives of Patients in Medicine*	Narratives shift the focus of authority to the storyteller	Empowers study participants in the interview process
	Learning teaching from stories told by medical patients	Narratives enhance understanding the type of treatment for the patient.	Elicits rich conversations
	Narrative Authority	Storytelling enhances the relationship between the care-giver and patient	Elicits stories
	Literacy-focused	Narratives allow the care-giver to embrace the "human" aspect of the patient.	
Clandinin, Jean Connelly, F. Michael (1990, 2000)	Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry	Dewey's Theory of Experience Three commonplaces of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and	Allows for understanding lived experiences Emphasizes the Relational and

		place—as dimensions of narrative inquiry space. In particular, the third commonplace, place, is "the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequence of places where the inquiry and events take place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480).	collaborational aspects of inquiry
Juanita Johnson-Bailey (1995)	Narratives in Black feminism and cultural Studies	Positionality and Power in Narrative work: Narratives challenge the dominant deficit-prone perspectives held toward cultural groups. Narratives expose the implied communication differences that might exist between the "researcher and the researched." Narratives allow the respondent to tell a relevance story. Narratives allow the respondent's story to remain intact and stay true to its original form.	Aligns with my theoretical frame work Critical Race Theory Counter-Storytelling Embraces diverse and marginalized groups Empowers study participants in the interview process Elicits rich conversations Enhances the analytic process to present first-hand participant narratives

William Labov - Structural Analysis

Labov's work is "arguably the first method of narrative analysis" and was developed by him and his colleagues more than 30 years ago (Riessman, 2005, p.3). Labov's initial approach to structural methodology focused on the meaning of a clause in the overall narrative and to what degree it plays in the process of communication (Labov, 1972, 1982). As Labov (1982) developed his concepts on structural methodology, he expanded his focus to consider the first-person experiences of violence. Specifically, Labov focused on stories of violence which were brief, topically-centered and temporally-ordered. By examining the narratives of inner-city Black males who were involved bar fights and other forms of violence, Labov suggested the acts of violence were connected to misconstrued paths of speech (Labov, 1982).

Labov's theory on the elements of narrative structure encapsulate a purpose of the story being told thus the functional clause: 1) Abstract-the beginning of the story, *what is the story about*, 2) Orientation-time and place, *the who, what, where, and when*, 3) Complication Action-event, sequence, plot, *what happened then?* 4) Evaluation-narrators' reflection and response to the story—*this is where the narrator takes a step back from telling the story to clarify and comment or express emotions the meaning of the story*, 5) Resolution-outcome, *what finally happened?* 6) Coda-end of story, moving back to the present time. *does not allow for more questions detailing the events of the story*. Labov's structural approach to narrative analysis provides the narrative researcher a tool for understanding the way a story is told, and how the storyteller places emphasis on specific parts of the story to be convincing to the researcher (Labov, 1972). Labov's narrative approach is significant in terms of explaining the structure and form of how people communicate between each other. By considering the elements of narratives, Labov purposed to isolate the elements of narratives and show how they operate in the structure

and flow of oral narratives. Labov proposed by describing the five elements and order of a narrative structure, we can understand the temporal sequence of the narrative clause–the basic unit of narratives (Labov & Waletzky, 1997). By understanding the function of a narrative clause Labov proposed it allows for understanding the way narratives connect to each other to comprise the meaning of an entire story (Labov, 1982). Labov's structural analysis informs my study by providing a basis to understand the elements in how people formulate their stories. While my goals for analysis do not include analyzing the elements of my participant's narratives, my impressions are, observing the structures of my participant's narratives in the analytic process, will allow me to pay close attention to the small details in their stories. The type of details includes noticing the way my participants express themselves and the language they use to formulate their stories. As such, noticing these types of details will enhance my analytic efforts on presenting their narratives in a holistic fashion. At this point, I move from my discussion on Labov's structural approach to analysis to examine and discuss Jerome Bruner's Paradigmatic and Narrative Knowing approach to narrative analysis.

Jerome Bruner – Paradigmatic and Narrative Knowing

Bruner's (1986) approach to narrative inquiry, encompasses two modes of thought: *the paradigmatic mode* and *the narrative mode*. Both of these modes focused on the means of constructing reality. Bruner's concept of analysis is an interpretation of events associated in the narratives by the individual telling the story (Bruner, 1991). Bruner's paradigmatic approach to narrative encompasses a practical application of narratives and how they can be attributed, regarding the roles they serve, to different persons within society. Bruner's paradigmatic approach encompasses scientific thinking to quantitative research. The paradigmatic application to narrative inquiry is beneficial due to the practical means of analysis it provides. Thus,

paradigmatic analysis draws on empirical observations which lead to the unbiased and verifiable truth of the narrative (Bruner, 1986). Thought grounded in the paradigmatic mode seeks to explain the underlying relationships between sets of observable variables.

Bruner's model of narrative knowing examines the way narratives are viewed and regards them as the basis for how individuals construct and make sense of their lived experiences. In contrast, Bruner's (1986) notions on the *narrative mode of thinking*, employs stories to interpret and "understand the meaning of human actions and experiences, the changes and challenges of life events, and the differences and complexity of people's actions" (Bruner). While Bruner's model of narrative knowing allows for an understating of how individuals interpret and construct meaning to their lived experiences, simultaneously, it provides a means for the researcher to frame an understanding of how individuals deal with the uncertainties of their lives. In summary, Bruner's *paradigmatic mode* is a method of science. The paradigmatic mode focuses on how people logically categorize the world. The *narrative mode* focuses on how through stories, people attribute meaning to their experiences (Bruner, 1986). After examining Bruner's approach to narrative analysis, I believe it offers me a means to think narratively while looking at my interview data. As such, the *paradigmatic mode* Bruner proposed allows me to look across the collected stories of my participants and identify significant aspects within their stories. Upon noticing those specific aspects, the paradigmatic mode will allow me to categorize and place their stories within a thematic context. In the next section, I look at Donald Polkinghorne's approach to narrative analysis.

Donald Polkinghorne – Analysis of Narratives / Narrative Analysis

Polkinghorne's approach to narrative interconnects to sociology and its' approach to narrative stories and the frameworks which narratives are constructed. Moreover, Polkinghorne's approach to narrative concentrates on the person telling the narrative and the context from which the narrative is created. Polkinghorne's (1995) theory of narrative analysis focuses on what he calls the *analysis of narrative and narrative analysis*. In his discussion on narrative work, Polkinghorne, (1995) argued:

> Much of the literature on doing qualitative research has focused on the techniques of various forms of data gathering: fieldwork, participant-observation, and interviewing … Much less attention has been given to the procedures for analyzing the gathered data" (p. 13).

Polkinghorne's approach to narrative research involves a variety of other narrative scholars' strategies. Drawing on Bruner's (1985, 1991) work, *Paradigmatic and ways of knowing,* Polkinghorne (1995) made specific contributions to narrative analysis, and in doing so, he believed it was important to identify two types of analysis, paradigmatic mode of analysis—analysis of narrative and paradigmatic ways of knowing —narrative analysis. Polkinghorne contended both types of analysis "share the general principles of qualitative research such as working with data in the form of natural language and the use of noncomputational analytic procedures" (p. 21). Polkinghorne acknowledged while both types of narrative analysis are concerned with stories, they are dissimilar in their approach.

Polkinghorne (1995) explained the process of *analysis of the narratives*, draws on and embraces Bruner's (1986) theory of paradigmatic reasoning. He stated Bruner's theory of paradigmatic reason is common in qualitative research and stated the theory refers to the way

people understand the world through "cognitive networks of concepts" (p.10). Further, Polkinghorne proposed, paradigmatic reasoning provides the means for how humans express their ordered and consistent life experiences. He argued the notion of paradigmatic reasoning allows people to construct familiar experiences through "common and recurring elements of their lives" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 10). Polkinghorne's process of analysis of the narratives gathers and analyzes thematic schemes across the data. Polkinghorne stated these thematic schemes take on the form of narratives. In the analysis of narratives, the narrative researcher formulates their study findings around descriptions of common themes which are universal across collected stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative analysis draws on the notion of narrative cognition and reasoning which explain the way humans attempt to address and identify their specific actions and reactions in particular life settings and situations (Polkinghorne, 1995). In Polkinghorne's (1995) explanation of narrative analysis, he explained "Narrative reasoning operates by noticing the differences and diversity of people's behavior. It attends to the temporal context and complex interaction of the elements that make each situation remarkable" (p. 6). More specific, narrative analysis embraces the mode of analysis as "the configuration of the data into a coherent whole" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). Narrative analysis focuses on the specifics of an individual's life experience, the story told, and places the specifics into an overall plot. Therefore, in creating a storied plot, it becomes necessary to fill in the gaps or remove distracting pieces of data within the story (Polkinghorne, 1995). To accomplish this, narrative analysis employs a process called narrative smoothing (Spence, 1986). Narrative smoothing provides a means for the researcher to construct a narrative in cohesive fashion thus providing the reader a rich and understandable account of the participants' story (Spence, 1986). In summary, *analysis of narratives* moves from

stories collected by participants to common themes, and *narrative analysis* moves from elements to stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). Upon examining Polkinghorne's approach to narrative analysis, analysis of narratives, I noted the connection it has with Bruner's paradigmatic reasoning, informs my study by offering me the appropriate analytic tools. Specifically, the notions of paradigmatic reasoning and analysis of narrative will allow me to collect, categorize and thematize my participant's stories. More important, paradigmatic reasoning and analysis of narratives will allow me to construct and present my participant's narratives as a coherent whole. In the next section, I examine Elliot Mishler's approach to narrative interviewing.

Elliot Mishler – Narrative Interviewing as Discourse / Models of Narrative Analysis

Mishler's narrative work draws from William Labov's (1972,1982) narrative model which encompasses an "analysis of narratives on personal experience connecting the elements of language, meaning, and action" (Mishler, 1986, p. 116). Mishler's (1986) overall approach is a typology of narrative methods whereby he attempts to "make explicit the theoretical basis of narrative interpretation" (p. 66) Moreover, Mishler stated by comparing different approaches and studies of narrative analysis, he purposed "to sharpen our understanding of the relations between methods of analysis and underlying "theories" of discourse and meaning" (p. 67).

Mishler's (1986) contributions to narrative focus on the art of interviewing whereby he challenged common assumptions on interviewing. Moreover, the approach Mishler (1986) proposed on interviewing, "is the fundamental problem of the way that meaning is expressed in throughout the discourse" (p. 66). Mishler challenged the standard practice of question and answer interviewing. He suggested the rationale behind the common practice of interviewing is no more than a stimulus-response exchange (Rogers, 2007). Mishler (1986) proposed the stimulus-response exchange is problematic. He argued this type of exchange fails to embrace the

conversational aspects of interviewing due to the assumptive thought on interviews as a "behavioral event rather than a linguistic event" (p. 10).

Mishler (1986) argued the problem with framing interviews as behavioral events exclude the cultural and situational aspects of a participants' speech patterns. He believed acquiring culturally shared understandings in interviews are important to the interpretation and analytic process. Mishler proposed acquiring culturally shared understandings in interviews embrace the way culturally diverse groups' use of language provide meaning to their stories. Mishler challenged the traditional style of framing interview questions. He argued when the interview questions are narrowly specified and not structured in an open-ended fashion; they fail to elicit narrative responses from the interview participant. Mishler cautioned the interviewer against interrupting the participant during the interview. He explained when interviewers attempt to keep the interviewee on task of the interview protocol; it takes away from the narrative aspects. Mishler emphasized the importance of constructing interview questions to allow respondents to tell stories in their own voices (Mishler, 1986).

Mishler (1986) recognized the interview process for allowing research participants to share their social and overall life experiences. He suggested, within the research process, research participants should be given more significant roles, such as collaborator. Mishler (1986) proposed the power structure of an interview as an important aspect to the empowering the research participant because it allows the researcher to fully "connect to their responses as narratives" (p. 118). Within Mishler's argument on power structure, he expressed the value of empowering research participants in the interviewing process. He argued by empowering the participant, it encourages them to "tell stories" rather than simply answer questions. Mishler

contended “interview practices which empowers respondents, also produce narrative accounts” (p. 119).

Mishler (1986) called for an alternative approach to interviewing in narrative work and explained his approach calls for a “radical transformation” to traditional interview approaches (p.117). Mishler proposed a goal of expanding the notions behind the method of interviewing. His notions on interviewing involved placing the process within the larger sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. Thus, to elicit these sociocultural and sociopolitical characteristics, Mishler (1986) challenged the structure of power in the interviewer-interviewee relationship. Drawing on his notions of empowering the interviewee, Mishler (1986) proposed beyond finding their voice in narrative work; research participants are moved to action:

> Through their narratives, people may be moved beyond the text to the possibilities of action. That is, to be empowered is not only to speak in one’s own voice and to tell one’s own story, but to apply the understanding arrived at to action in accord with one’s own interests (pp.118,119).

Mishler’s statement augments and underscores the benefit of empowering research participants in the interviewing process. By conducting narrative style interviews, they lead to the sociocultural and sociopolitical goals he anticipates for expanding the method of interviewing. Noting this, consistent with Bruner’s (1986) notions of analysis, Mishler’s approach to interviewing informs my research by causing me to think narratively as engage with my participants in the interview stage. Drawing on Mishler’s notions, by empowering my participants in the interviewing process, it will help me to collect stories rather than responses. In the next section, I investigate how Robert Coles’ interest in literary works moved him to

understand the power of narrative and the role it had in eliciting stories from his medical patients.

Robert Coles – The Call of Stories: The Narrative Authority of Patients

Robert Coles' (1989) contribution to narrative evolved from his work as a psychiatrist. Coles established an understanding of the significance behind the stories his medical patients brought to the medical space and the reasons for how and why the express them. Coles suggested the point of storytelling, personal stories, allows for an individual to examine his/her frailties' and place them in relational spaces with other individuals. Therefore, in the process of sharing stories, Coles stated it leads to others experiencing reflections of themselves, past, and present. Coles' narrative work in the medical field embodies a humanistic and moral approach to patient care. By listening and telling stories, Coles (1989) proposed, for members of the medical field, "the positive effects of patient care when we [doctors] respect our stories and learn from them" (p. 30). Coles proposed a connection between narratives and understanding individuals via a "scientific" lens of psychology. Coles suggested, along with the meanings attributed by medical experts, an individual's "story" has its own "authority" and meaning. Thus, Coles articulated "science" could be attached to narrative and vice versa. Coles embraced a passion for literacy. He recalled his passion for literacy began in his childhood, early schooling years, and during his time as a medical student and teacher. Coles recognized his parents for introducing him and his siblings to literature (1989). Given his passion for literacy, Coles made a connection between literacy and medicine. Drawing on his literary experiences and storytelling, he saw storytelling as an effective process to enhance the doctor-patient relationship.

In his book, *The Call of Stories*, Coles (1989) mentioned challenging himself regarding the pedagogies he employed with his medical students. Through the literary works by authors

such as O'Conner, Percy, and Tolstoy, Coles incorporated a narrative approach into his pedagogy. Through the notions of narrative, Coles challenged his medical students to "listen intently to their medical patients' stories to finding meaning within them" (p.xvii). Further, Craig and Huber (2007) contended Coles' important contribution to narrative was regarding relationship, which he establishes through learning the importance of embracing the narrative authority of his patients:

> Coles' awakening to the primacy of narrative authority in the act of human meaning-making teaches us much about the fundamental nature of relational aspects of inquiry and how it most fruitfully can be conducted (p. 265).

Coles' notions on narrative and stories, informs my study because it expresses the relational aspects of narrative work. Through the call of stories, Coles reminds me to consider while carrying out my interviews; I need to understand the importance of embracing the conversation between my participants as an iterative process of sharing sensitive information. As such, through embracing Coles' approach to narrative, I can apply the relational aspects of narrative inquiry to include my story and empower my study participants in the interview process. All of which elicit rich conversations and stories. I will now move to discuss the work of D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly and investigate their notions on three-dimensional narrative inquiry.

D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly - Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) credit their position of narrative to the work of John Dewey. In their earlier research Clandinin and Connelly (2000) primarily focused on educational issues with student learning, teaching and the inner social workings of school reform. Clandinin

and Connelly focused on developing their research; they claimed Dewey's (1976) concepts on experience caused them to modify and rethink their position on social interaction and learning.

Dewey's notion of continuity in experience became the impetus for how Clandinin and Connelly framed their approach to narrative. An important part of Dewey's rationale of experience, personal and social, motivated Clandinin and Connelly to frame their educational terminology to the concept of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) proposed the process of narrative inquiry as being three-dimensional. Drawing on their notions of three-dimensional inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly contended "people's stories build from one experience to next: from the personal space to the social space-interaction, the past, present, and future-continuity and from the place-situation" (p.3). Clandinin and Connelly claimed their concept of three-dimensional inquiry supports their notions of the process of narrative inquiry as being synchronous with the analysis of narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Another significant aspect of Clandinin and Connelly's model of narrative inquiry is the role of the researcher. Clandinin (2006) argued the researcher must find a way to include their stories in conjunction with their participant's stories:

> As we enter into narrative inquiry relationships, we begin the ongoing negotiations that are part of engaging in a narrative inquiry. We negotiate relationships, research purposes, transitions, as well as how we are going to be useful in those relationships. These negotiations occur moment by moment, within each encounter, sometimes in ways that we are not awake to. The negotiations also occur in intentional, wide awake ways as we work with our participants throughout the inquiry (p.47).

Clandinin (2006) advised researchers against "bracketing themselves out of the inquiry process" (p.47). She emphasized the position the researcher takes in relation to their participants and their stories and experiences are important because the researcher becomes a part of the process of inquiry; which is the process of co-construction and is the relational aspect of narrative inquiry. As with Coles' approach to narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly's relational aspects of narrative inquiry are essential to my study. As such, by conducting my study through the notion of negotiating the relational space of inquiry, the method of inquiry will become a joint process between myself and my participants. The added benefit of embracing the joint process of inquiry in my study strengthens the level of inquiry, thus promoting conversations with my participants rather than interviews.

Juanita Johnson-Bailey - Positionality and Power in Narrative

Johnson-Bailey's (2004) scholarship focuses on issues of race and gender in educational and workplace settings. Her approach to narrative research embodies the concepts of positionality and power. As with other narrative scholars, Johnson-Bailey (2004) acknowledged the growth of narrative in qualitative research. She recognized narrative inquiry for the "familiarity it offers to the researcher and consumer" (p.124). Johnson-Bailey (2004) noted the importance of universality in narratives as providing for people in sharing stories because they "exist on several levels—the macro through the micro—which includes the community, regional, national, cultural, and individual" (p.124). An important point Johnson-Bailey made regarding the universality of narratives in research is its effective use to investigate culturally diverse groups. Thus, she contended the notion of thinking narratively allows the researcher to challenge the dominant, deficit-prone perspective which often frames the participants' life experiences. Further, thinking narratively offers an authentic means to explore participant's lives (Johnson-

Bailey, 2004). Johnson-Bailey (2004) stressed the dual benefit of narratives for both the participant and the researcher. She explained the benefits of qualitative research which utilizes data collection methodologies such as narrative, offers a means to understand "… the implied communication differences that might exist between the researcher and the researched" (p.124). Johnson-Bailey (2004) attributed the communication differences which occur between researchers and participants are connected to "the societal experiences and circumstances attached to distinct lived positionalities such as class, race, gender, and sexual orientation" (p.124).

As Johnson-Bailey (2004) stated, a research design which employs narratives encompass a flexible advantage because the flexibility allows for addressing the distinct and lived positionality of diverse groups. Johnson-Bailey stated the use of narrative allows for the story to be told in relevance and remain intact; thus, the story is captured in its true contextual form. Johnson-Bailey proposed the advantage narrative design holds for the researcher is the power of giving voice to the participants' story. In addition to a narrative design addressing diverse lived positionalities, Johnson-Bailey focused on the dynamics of power in research. As with Mishler's (1986) notions on shifting the power structure in narrative interviewing, Johnson-Bailey addressed the issue of power by highlighting the questions narrative researchers ask regarding who owns the story. Johnson-Bailey argued the notion of collaboration in the construction of the story exists within narrative work. She proposed a power dynamic exists because the researcher will ultimately walk away from the research endeavor and reap the rewards from publication (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Johnson-Bailey (2004) underscored additional issues associated with power and positionality in narrative work such as the "Other" and the insider-outsider dilemma. Johnson-Bailey acknowledged the impossibility with trying to reconcile the multitude of power

and positional statuses. She pointed out the insider-outsider dilemma ultimately affects the way researchers approach narrative research and how they approach their participants. Johnson-Bailey's (2004) approach to narrative research, informs the researcher on the importance of being acutely attuned to the power structures and forces in society which have an influence on the research. Johnson-Bailey argued both insider and outsider researchers face the same challenges of biased and unjust representation of narrative stories due to the dynamics of power and positionality (p. 137). Therefore, despite the narrative researchers' role, insider or outsider, it is important the researcher account for and be aware of the overall affects power and positionality have on the process of data collection and analysis, which ultimately lead to how they present the participants' story (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Johnson-Bailey's cultural approach to narrative inquiry informs my study because it causes me to acknowledge the role of race within the narratives of my study participants. As I discussed in the next section, the acknowledgment of race within the narratives of my study participants coincides with the epistemological stance of the theoretical framework I used to guide my study—critical race theory (CRT). CRT contends the social implications of race cannot be overlooked because it connects to the way people construct their human and social interactions (Berry, 2005). Another way Johnson-Bailey's approach informs my study is narrative inquiry allows the study participant to tell his/her story in context and the story can be presented intact.

Summary

Designing a narrative study takes careful thought on the part of the researcher. Having examined the various approaches to narrative inquiry, I learned the research design needs to incorporate appropriate methods of inquiry and analysis. More important, the methods of inquiry and analysis I choose for my study need to account for what I intended to address regarding my

research problem, study purpose, and research questions. After reviewing the works of Labov, Bruner, Mishler, Coles, Polkinghorne, Clandinin and Connelly, and Johnson-Bailey, my conclusion was narrative inquiry is an appropriate method for my study on exploring the narratives of African-American male doctoral students. As such, all of the narrative scholars I discussed offered practical approaches to narrative inquiry. DePoy and Gitlin (2015) stated: "narrative inquiry is frequently used to illuminate the voices and experiences of marginalized or excluded populations and individuals" (p. 166).

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). This study is a narrative design and will use narrative inquiry to guide the exploration of the stories told by African-American males concerning their doctoral journeys. Narrative inquiry is appropriate for understanding the narratives of African-American male doctoral students because it focuses on the way people understand and assign meaning to their lives through stories (Clandinin, 2013).

In qualitative research the focus is on process, meaning, understanding, and the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. By carrying out research studies inductively honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 17). By carrying out research studies inductively the researcher is not constrained to an inflexible arrangement of speculations to demonstrate or discredit. Therefore, the researcher can connect with the examination in more flexible ways (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). The inductive request provides approval of the study participants to control the course of the examination and the information gathered by the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Data Generation

The methods of data generation in this study were narrative interviews, follow-up phone interviews, and field notes. Patton (2002) stated qualitative data consist of "direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" obtained through interviews; "detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions" recorded in observations; and "excerpts, quotations, or entire passages" extracted from various types of documents (p. 4). deMarrais (2004) succinctly defined the process of interviewing as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 55). The process of interviewing allows the researcher a means to gain insight their specific interests and hypotheses. However, interviewing is not a process a researcher utilizes to "test" their hypothesis but rather, it offers them a way to gain insight of a research topic by "understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of it" (Seidman, 2013, p.9). For this study I employed narrative type interviews to collect the stories of my research participants. Kramp (2004) proposed the narrative type interview as a valuable tool. She stated the strengths of narrative style interviews offer the researcher an advantage in being able to hear what the participant has to tell. Employing narrative style interviews allowed me to take advantage of its conversational aspects to collect stories from my research participants (Kramp, 2004). Overall, the advantage I gained from the use of narrative type interviews was the process assisted me in engaging my participants in the kind of "discourse which lends itself to telling stories" (Kramp, 2004, p.114).

Narrative Interview Guide

deMarrais (2004) recognized the "flexibility involved in qualitative interview studies," and asserted the questions used to conduct the interview guide, "serves the basis for the

conversation" (p.54). The interview guide for this study (APPENDIX B) encompassed questions to support the study purpose, research questions, and theoretical framework. Interviewing involves styles which are very structured. Survey and predetermined based questions are designed to elicit closed-ended responses from the respondent. However, Mishler (1986b) discussed the process of interviewing in narrative work and cautions against survey or questionnaire style interviews because they elicit data which are "stimuli and responses rather than as forms of speech" (p. viii). Drawing on the notions of narrative thinking and Mishler's concepts for conducting narrative interviews, I employed open-ended, narrative producing questions to conduct the interviews.

The Narrative Interview Process

According to deMarrais (2004): "Qualitative interviews, rely on developing a rapport with participants and discussing, aspects of the particular phenomenon being studied" (p.53). The rapport building process is instrumental in setting the participants at ease. Further, Mishler (1986a) stated, "If we wish to hear respondents' stories, then we must invite them into our work as collaborators, sharing control with them, so that together we try to understand what their stories are about" (p. 249). While establishing an adequate level of rapport leads to placing the study participants at ease, I took into account what Goudy & Potter (1975) cautioned against creating too much rapport because it can lead to the researcher in becoming too close to the participant thus raising the level of bias in the interview process, potentially skewing the intent of it. Further, Ballinger (2008) emphasized the problem of over rapport and how it can lead to "a loss of distance and perspective that may impact detrimentally on the process of research" (p. 589). During the process of conducting my narrative interviews, I considered other possible challenges that may arise. One of the challenges I considered was how I would navigate any

possible emotions my participants may experience in response to the interview questions. In addressing this issue, Roulston (2012) proposed establishing rapport with the interviewee and noted rapport as beneficial for the researcher because it helps in building a relationship with the participant, and allows the researcher to navigate any sensitive reactions the participants may experience during the interview. Further, Coles (1989) and Mishler (1986a) proposed, the process of narrative interviewing leads to establishing a relationship with the interview participant. Noting what Roulston, Coles and Mishler proposed, prior to commencing my interviews, I engaged in casual conversations with my participants to establish rapport and place them at ease. After establishing rapport with my study participants, I introduced the research topic and advised them of the study content and the interview questions.

For this study, I conducted narrative interviews with a total of seven African-American/Black male participants. Before commencing the study, I obtained the participant's written consent and their verbal permission to audio record their interviews (Appendix C). I conducted the first three interviews via FaceTime video and the following three interviews were conducted via face to face sessions. I recorded the interviews on my laptop computer with Audacity digital recording software and a portable digital recorder. Once I finished each interview, I transcribed them via Express Scribe transcription software. Riessman (1993) proposed the transcription process as time-consuming, frustrating and boring. She stated it is during the transcription phase where the researcher can best familiarize themselves with the data. During the transcription process, I engaged in an initial analysis of the data and made notes and comments about my initial impressions of the participants' stories. After conducting the first three interviews, I shared the transcripts with my methodologist to gain feedback on my interviewing process. In response, my methodologist deemed it necessary to revise the interview

protocol to enhance the interviews by eliciting deeper narratives and responses from the participants. As such, with the next four interviews, the revised protocol allowed me to gain deeper responses from the participants on their doctoral experiences.

Sample Selection

Given the focus of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions; I realized the need to gain relevant and insightful information to answer my study questions. Noting this, my selection criteria consisted of participants who had "knowledge and experiences which focus on the study" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 59). The basic criteria for participation in this study was the participants identified as Black or African-American and male having earned a doctorate as a full-time student in a traditional doctoral program at a predominantly White institution, having graduated no less than one year or no more than two years from a doctoral program. In chapter four, I present the demographic profiles and summarized narratives of the seven African-American men who participated in this study. The profile table (Table 5) coincides with the selection criteria noted earlier. This complete demographic, description, and narrative information was collected using narrative interviews and a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). The questionnaire was given to the participants to complete prior to the interview. All participants completed the questionnaire and returned them by email. The data was transcribed after each interview and emailed to the participants. On the completion of the analysis, the participants were mailed an executive summary. The interviews ranged in length from one hour and ten minutes to two hours -- for an average of one hour and thirty minutes.

My rationale for choosing African-American males no more than two years removed from their doctoral programs is their schooling experiences were recent enough where they are

more likely to adequately describe their doctoral experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). I chose to interview participants who were in fulltime face-to-face programs because I wanted to explore how negotiating the aspects and responsibilities as a full-time doctoral student, such as being a graduate/teaching assistant, the impact of having or not having financial support, and working with other doctoral students, played a role in shaping their doctoral journeys. I chose to study African-American male doctorates at PWIs because I wanted to understand the way their doctoral experiences are similar or different from the deficit literature on undergraduate African-African men at PWIs. Finally, my reason for studying African-American men was to understand how obtaining a doctorate impacted their lives.

The focus of this study was based on gathering information from a particular group, namely former African-American male doctoral students. Although there are other sampling methods, I deemed the most appropriate sampling strategy for this study was purposeful (Patton, 2002). Moreover, in purposeful sampling the focus is not on collecting a reduced amount of data from a large sample, but rather, from a smaller number of participants, allowing the researcher to learn a substantial amount on the topic at hand (Patton, 2002). To gain multiple perspectives from former African-American doctoral students, I employed a maximum variation sampling technique by selecting participants from academic disciplines of study focused on education: Math Ed, Science Ed, Teacher Ed, and social sciences (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993).

Sample Size

Narrative approaches are not appropriate for studies of large numbers of nameless and faceless subjects. Some modes of analysis require careful attention to subtlety: nuances of speech, the organization of a response, relations between researcher and subject, social and historical contexts – cultural narratives that make "personal" stories possible (Riessman, 2005).

In designing a qualitative research study, the consideration of sample size presents uncertainty for the researcher (Patton, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated sample selection should exist "to the point of redundancy "…In purposeful sampling, the size of the sample is determined by the informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units" (p. 202). As such, for this study, I interviewed seven African-American men, and by the fourth interview, I began to notice repetition in the information from the participants stories regarding their doctoral experiences at predominantly White institutions.

Recruitment of Participants

Two of the difficulties associated with conducting a research study is the amount of time it takes to procure and gain access to participants who fit the study criteria. Considering these issues, I recruited participants who attended predominantly White institutions in the Southwest, Southeastern and Midwest regions of the U.S. who met the criteria for this study, via email (Appendix A). I expanded my search for participants by posting announcements through social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn via the Black Doctoral Network and the Southern Regional Educational Board Doctoral Network. The email and social media announcement included a description of the study and the inclusion criteria. As such, over a three-month period, I received ten responses to my recruitment protocol. To determine the eligibility of the ten respondents for my study, I sent them a questionnaire to complete (Appendix D). Upon review of the questionnaires, I discovered three of the respondents did not meet the criteria. Out of the seven participants who did meet my study criteria, one of them was referred to me via a faculty member in my department.

Data Analysis

Riessman (2008) defined narrative analysis as "a family of analytic methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form" (p. 11). A good narrative analysis, as Riessman (2008) stated, "prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text, and there is a move toward a broader commentary" (p. 13). Considering what Riessman suggested regarding a good narrative analysis and having investigated the approaches of Labov (1967, 1972, 1982), Bruner (1986), and Polkinghorne (1995), I utilized Bruner and Polkinghorne's approaches of paradigmatic reasoning and analysis of narratives to provide me with the flexibility I sought for conducting my data analysis.

Paradigmatic Reasoning -Analysis of Narrative

Within this study, one of my intentions was to understand what the common themes are across the narratives are of African-American male doctoral students at PWIs. Given my intent, I noted Polkinghorne's (1995) argument on *analysis of narratives* and how it mirrors Bruner's (1986) *paradigmatic reasoning* whereby he stated:

> In this first type, analysis of narratives, researchers collect stories as data and analyze them with paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in the description of themes that hold across the stories of taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings…Thus, analysis of narratives move from stories to common elements (p. 12).

Fittingly, Polkinghorne's statement corroborates these two forms of narrative analysis as a good fit for my study.

Polkinghorne (1995) stated within the paradigmatic analysis of narratives "two types of paradigmatic search are possible" (p.13). Polkinghorne stated the first search is deductive in nature whereby the concepts are "derived from previous theory and are applied to the data to determine whether instances of these concepts are to be found". The second search "looks for

concepts which are inductively derived from the data" (p.13). According to Polkinghorne (1995) "both types of narrative inquiry [paradigmatic/analysis of narrative] share the general principles of qualitative research such as working with data in the form of natural language and the use of noncomputational analytic procedures" (p. 21). As such, the paradigmatic analysis of narratives entails the inductive and deductive process of coding, categorizing, and thematizing of the data (Polkinghorne, 1995). To commence the coding process, I downloaded the interview transcripts into Atlas-ti software (version 8.24. Mac OSX). Friese (2014) stated the use of computer assisted, QDAS, Qualitative Data Analysis Software as beneficial for the research because:

> Software frees you from all those tasks that a machine can do much more effectively, like modifying code words and coded segments, retrieving data based on various criteria, searching for words, integrating material in one place, attaching notes and finding them again, counting the numbers of coded incidences, offering overviews at various stages of a project, and so on (p. 1).

After downloading and engaging in a thorough read of the interview transcripts, I began formulating my initial codes. During this initial stage of coding, I wrote notes to record my reflections and impressions of the data. The notes I wrote assisted me in creating descriptions for my codes— a process Galman (2016) described as "operationalizing" (p. 35). Once I started to notice information of interest in the codes, I organized and placed the codes in relatable categories. At this point, I engaged in a more in-depth analysis to look for consistency across the data. Once I established consistency across the data, and realized stability within the categories, I continued to analyze and compare the data until I observed nothing new was emerging. (Merriam, 2009, p. 183). Polkinghorne (1995) stated "Paradigmatic analysis is employed not simply to discover or describe the categories that identify particular occurrences within the data

but also to note relationships among categories" (p.14). Given what Polkinghorne proposed, when I encountered repetition or observed a lack of consistency with my categories, I merged them with similar concepts or constructed new categories.

Polkinghorne (1995) stated "paradigmatic analysis of narratives seeks to locate common themes of conceptual manifestations among the stories collected as data" (p.12). After identifying my preliminary themes in the coding process, I engaged in an in-depth process of reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas, notes the process of phenomenological reduction whereby the "qualities of the experience become the focus; the filling in or completion of the nature and meaning of the experience becomes the challenge" for the researcher to take up (p. 90). Further, he noted, reduction of an individual's experience holds the fact that "there is always an overlap between looking from one perspective and viewing something as a whole;" yet at the same time each individual experience allows a different glimpse of the phenomenon holistically (p. 93). Once I reduced my themes and arranged them according to the data sets, based on my assertions, I named and defined my themes to match the overall context of what the data revealed. To prevent an overlap and duplication of my themes, I aligned and compared them against each other. I then examined the themes to ensure they were dissimilar in their representation of the data and determined if they were consistent with the categories and portions of the data which exhibited salient patterns. Merriman (2009) defined study findings as "categories or themes" and stated they are the answers to the research questions (p.207). Polkinghorne (1995) noted the procedures of paradigmatic analysis of narratives for the "capacity to develop general knowledge about a collection of stories" (p.15). Drawing on this notion, I presented my study findings from the collected stories of my study participants by arranging them in a descriptive thematic format Polkinghorne (1995).

Ensuring Trustworthiness

In this section, I address how I designed quality into this study. The quality of a narrative study is based the elements the researcher uses to ensure the study holds trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, within the realm of qualitative research, there is a synonymous notion between the concepts of validity and trustworthy (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Further, Poggenpoel and Myburch (2003) proposed:

> The researcher as an instrument can be the greatest threat to trustworthiness in qualitative research if time is not spent on preparation of the field, reflexivity of the researcher, the researcher staying humble and preferring to work in teams so that triangulation and peer evaluation can take place (p. 320).

This being the case, during the course of the study, I kept in mind my researcher role as an African-American doctoral student at a predominantly White institution, and the significance it plays on me interjecting my perspectives upon my research participants.

Memos

Birks, Chapman and Francis (2008) defined memoing, "As a methodological strategy, memoing is most commonly associated with grounded theory, yet all qualitative approaches can be enhanced by the use of memos" (p.69). Further, Chapman and Francis emphasized the benefits of memoing by pointing out the process as not only an analytical tool, but one which assists the researcher "in clarifying their thoughts on the research topic and articulation of assumptions and subjective perspectives about the area of research and facilitate the development of the study design" (p. 69).

Member Checking

In qualitative research, member checking involves the researcher collaborating with their participants where the participants review the interview transcriptions and the researcher's interpretations of the data (Roulston, 2010). This process allows the researcher to determine if they have established an "understanding of the phenomenon investigated" (Roulston, 2010, p.87). Therefore, once I established my preliminary findings, to check for accuracy, credibility, and transferability, I sent each participant a copy of their interview transcript, and their summarized narratives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Out of the seven participants, five responded back to me with clarifications and confirmed the accuracy of their narratives.

Investigator Triangulation

Triangulation is a process used to assure the criterion of validity in a qualitative study (Schwandt, 2007). One of the processes of triangulation involves the use of multiple research investigators. The use of multiple investigators to conduct research is not only common, it is noted as beneficial because it enhances the process of data collection (Mathison, 1988). A research study benefits from multiple investigators when each member of the research team produces an interpretation of the study findings (Denzin, 2012). Thus, for this study, I incorporated my doctoral chair, methodologist and content expert, to gain a multifaceted view of the study data. In the next section, as another measure of ensuring quality in this study, I discuss my researcher subjectivities. In this discussion, I express the personal viewpoint I bring to this research study and the role my stance as an African-American male doctoral student plays in influencing the process of inquiry and analysis within the study (Peshkin, 1988).

Researcher Subjectivity

Lincoln and Guba (1985) acknowledge that in the qualitative paradigm, the researcher's subjectivity requires the "biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the inquirer" are identified and made explicit throughout the study (p. 290).

In qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to address their biases and how they can affect their research study. In addressing subjectivity, Peshkin (1988) stated:

> I hold the view that subjectivity operates during the entire research process (Peshkin,1982b). The point I argue here is that researchers, notwithstanding their use of quantitative or qualitative methods, their research problem, or their reputation for personal integrity, should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research (p.17).

Drawing on Peshkin's notions on subjectivity and as an additional measure of rigor to this study, I have included a subjectivity statement to reveal my assumptions and biases towards my research topic.

Inter-Cultural and Cross-Cultural Research

Johnson-Bailey (2004) addressed issues of researchers working within cultural boundaries. Within the scope of these issues, Johnson-Bailey talked about the literature on culturally based research and the myths associated with insider-researchers. Johnson-Bailey underscored the myths of insider-researcher. She argued researchers often think culturally based research conducted by an insider-researcher, is easy due to a lack of barriers and social connectedness between the researcher and their participants. Johnson-Bailey disclosed other misconceptions about cultural insider research which proclaim cultural insider-research lacks value and is overly biased. An example of this was seen in Johnson-Bailey's (1999) study with

Black females. In this study, Johnson-Bailey's role as an insider-researcher exploited the preconceived notions of comradery and connectedness amongst persons of the same race and gender. In this study, Johnson-Bailey reported issues of class, educational status, and colorism as being barriers in the research setting.

As an African-American male, I belong to a culture which stands on the margins of many facets of American society. One of them being in the realms of education. Indeed, the percentage of those in society who pursue doctoral degrees is small. However, the percentage of African-African-American men who pursue doctoral degrees, pale in comparison to the entire population of society, marginalized and non-marginalized. As an African-American male doctoral student, I belong to a highly underrepresented group in higher education. As such and given the scarcity of literature on African-American men and their experiences in doctoral programs (Burt, Williams & Smith, 2018) my reason for studying African-American males with a Ph.D. is to know more about their doctoral experiences and how they coincide with mine. As the researcher and an African-American male doctoral candidate at a PWI, I situate myself in this research study as an indigenous insider (Banks, 1998). However, as the researcher conducting this study, I was aware that during the process of conducting this study my position will shift to an outsider role. As such, and given the duality of my position to this study, I understood the need to approach it with caution. As I reflect on the complexities Johnson-Bailey experienced in her (1999) study, her experience was a reminder to me as an indigenous insider; to consider my preconceived notions and biases which could potentially affect my study. While my position as an African-American male and a doctoral student provides an advantage for me in carrying out my study, I took under consideration that my participants' views of gender identity, religion, politics, and any other underlying perspectives could affect the way they collaborate with me as the researcher during

the study. Drawing on Johnson-Bailey's experience of unexpected biases from her study participants and how those biases towards her may have derailed the study, I was reminded to guard against assuming my study participants will accept me due to my status as an African-American male doctoral student.

Researcher Stance

Before arriving at the focus of this study on African-American male doctoral students, my original research interest was to understand the issue of underrepresentation with African-American males in higher education. However, after reviewing the literature on African-American men in higher education, I realized as a marginalized group, African-American men's life experiences and challenges intersect with their educational experiences (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010). As an African-American male doctoral student at a predominantly White institution, I approached this research study embracing the importance of gaining education experiences through a culturally diverse faculty. Particularly those who embrace different cultural perspectives. I felt this would ultimately lead to me having more diverse experiences concerning the teaching, learning, advisement and dissertation process of my doctoral journey. It is my passion to encourage and challenge adult learners to equip themselves with knowledge, wisdom, skills, and intelligence to improve the world around them. As an activist, social justice advocate, and proponent of education, I have always been a champion of the underdog. My career goals involve facilitating learning opportunities for adult learners. As such, I am drawn to the underprivileged, and others whom I feel will experience transformation by furthering their education. I am especially motivated to influence African-American males to pursue higher education.

Growing up in the 1960's and 1970's as an African-American male, I was advised by members of my community the only reason for obtaining a college education was to position myself for a better paying job. However, despite those who offered me this type of advice, fortunately, there were members in my community who held a different stance on education. Those who offered me a different perspective on the reason for obtaining a college degree embraced notions of social and human development in education. More important, they believed the benefits of obtaining a college degree outweighed the career aspects. They argued, while education and career goals are important, the knowledge and wisdom one achieves from education can never be taken away.

Throughout my professional career, I have obtained teaching experience while working as a police officer in corporate and law enforcement settings. My experiences include: serving as an instructor at three regional police academies within the metropolitan Atlanta area, as a School Resource Officer, and working for a non-profit organization as an abstinence/teen parent educator. A common theme I observed within each of these settings was the lack of a positive presence and voice of African-American males. In the educational settings I worked in, it was not uncommon for the African-American male students to have an attitude of doing "just enough" to get by. Even worse, of the African-American males who were student-athletes, despite their subpar academic performances, received constant praise from their teachers and administrators for the athletic achievements and contributions they made to their schools. My intention as a doctoral student is to explore the dynamics and causal factors in education which African-American male doctoral students assert have a positive impact on them. I plan to present my cultural perspectives and research findings as a means of adding to the body of knowledge on educating African-American males in doctoral programs. Ultimately, my goal is to apply my

research findings towards developing culturally diverse learning theories within the adult education framework.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of my research study. In this chapter, I provided a historical sketch on narrative inquiry/analysis, along with a detailed description of narrative scholars and their contributions to narrative inquiry/analysis. I then presented my research design, detailing a narrative study involving former African-American male doctoral students who attended predominately White institutions, along with my process of data gathering and analytic procedures. I discussed the measures I used to ensure trustworthiness in my study, including reflexivity, member checking, and triangulation. Finally, I discussed the importance of examining the role of my subjectivities, my role as an insider/outsider researcher, and I provided a statement on my stance as a researcher.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

> *…we contend that African American males are the proverbial canary in the educational mines, warning of dangers and pitfalls that are inherent in our educational system…Although males...are privileged by their male gender…Black males, are not part of the dominant ideology of history. Instead, a counter-narrative is constructed for Black males that omits any place or importance that Black men have had in history and instead focuses on their physicality and sexuality, and consistently constructs a picture of Black men as pathologically flawed, with strong tendencies toward criminality and violence…. Black masculine identities, like all other identity markers, are formed by those who embody the identity..*
>
> —Johnson-Bailey, Ray and Lasker-Scott (2014, p. 7)

The essence of the preceding quote embodies the positive images of the seven participants in this study. As such, this chapter provides a true portrait of the study participants and dispels the negative images that society portrays of them as Black men. The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

In this chapter, I present a description of the interview setting, participant and a summarized narrative. The summarized narrative includes a synopsis of each participants' family, academic and career background, along with interview excerpts that provide insight into their doctoral experiences as African-American men at their predominantly White institutions.

Table 5

Participant Profiles

Participant Name	Place of Birth	Age	Married	Number of Children	Undergraduate Institution Attended	Doctoral Field of Study
Phillip	Atlanta, GA	33	Yes	0	HBCU	Educational Science Engineering
Drake	Detroit, MI	38	No	0	HBCU	Educational Psychology
Eric	Philadelphia, PA	39	Yes	1	PWI	Education Psychology
Akinwale Otoo	St. Louis, MO	52	No	4	HBCU	Adult Education
A.I. St. John	Tacoma, WA	54	No	2	PWI	Higher Education Leadership
Levi	Atlanta, GA	31	Yes	0	HBCU	Higher Education Leadership
Sam	Baltimore, MD	30	No	0	PWI	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Phillip

Phillip is an African-African man in his early thirties. He is a Biomedical Engineer, who works for a pharmaceutical company within the metropolitan area where he resides. He is married and has no children. Phillip contacted me via email in response to my call for participants from the email letter I placed in the Black Doctoral Social Network. He contacted me during the month of January and expressed to me that he was highly interested in participating in my study. Due to the geographic distance between us, we determined the best way to conduct our interview would be via FaceTime video. As such, I interviewed Phillip on January 26, 2019. The interview lasted for two hours and ten minutes.

Before I started the interview, Philip and I talked about the cold weather they were having in his city, his day at work, and how frustrating it was for him fight through rush hour traffic to get home. We discussed the upcoming Super Bowl football game, and he noted that he was not interested in either team that was playing in the contest. Through our casual conversation, we immediately established rapport which allowed us to segue into the interview with ease. Phillip is a man of athletic build. He told me that his height is six foot two and his weight is about 200 to 230 pounds. Phillip wears glasses, speaks clearly and with authority and confidence. He has a pleasant and welcoming personality.

Summarized Narrative

Phillip was born in the Southeast region of the U.S. to an upper middle-class family. He is an only child and from his youth, his family instilled in him the importance of pursing an education. He graduated from an all-Black high school and was involved in a magnet program at the school. After graduating from high school, he attended and graduated from an HBCU in the South, to which he said was "one of my pride and joys. His father was born in what Phillip

describes as a town in the deep racial South, came from a poor family, or as Phillip put it, "he came from dirt." Despite those issues, his father was the first from his town to go to college. Upon graduating from college, he went on to dental school and became a successful dentist. Phillip speaks highly of his father and credits his father's educational success for inspiring him to pursue his doctoral degree. Phillip said he always had an interest in math and sciences, so he chose to focus on physics in his undergraduate program. During his master's program, he worked in an internship program which inspired him to pursue biomedical engineering and the doctoral program he attended. Phillip described his transition from his HBCU undergraduate schooling experiences into graduate school as being tough --- being the only Black male in his doctoral program:

> <Sighs> It was tough. <laughs and shakes his head> it was all around tough, But I think as a Ph.D., as you probably know already, is the toughest thing you're going to do, and putting on top of it or you were a minority, makes it even tougher… So, and then in my department, biomedical engineering, there were no African-American males, and there was one female and she graduated the year after I got there. So, pretty much for my whole, you know, Grad school career, I was the only African-American male. And when I graduated, I was the first African-American male to get a Ph.D. In biomedical engineering at that school.

Phillip talked about another example of what he experienced in his doctoral program such as being racially profiled while walking on campus:

> There were times where, you know, I would be walking on campus, leaving the gym, I would see the people locking their doors. I'm like, I could hear the locks, you know, when I'm walking by because somebody was sitting in the car and they saw me walking

> past them to go to my car, and for whatever reason, they decided to lock the door. There were a lot of times on campus where we would get these notifications that, you know, something happened on campus and they would send out the description and the description was always me. It was, a five to six, two, or six foot three, Black male, 150 to 250 pounds you know, wearing a jacket and its winter time, you know, so it was always just this feeling of feeling uncomfortable on campus the whole time because, I was perceived as a threat.

Toward the end of his doctoral journey, Phillip talked about having to go to the hospital for what he thought was a heart attack:

> I was in the hospital thinking I was about to die for, I was having a heart attack and it turned out I was having a panic attack. There was a time where the room got bright and I was like, oh my God, this is crazy. And I'm rushed to the emergency room and it turns out that I'm having an ocular Migraine, which I had no idea what it was, but both of which, the root cause was the stress.

After this incident, Phillip changed his perspective on obtaining his doctoral degree to realizing that while it was important, his health was more important and not worth risking over a degree. In the end, and despite the challenges he faced in his doctoral program, he went on to graduate and embraced the gravity of his accomplishment when he looked up in the stands and saw his mother and family at his graduation:

> Aww man. It was, the funny part, well, not funny, but to me it's not even the walking across the stage. It was me walking into the gymnasium and looking up in the stands and finding my parents and my family and my friends that were there to support me. I mean, <long pause> That, that was It was at that moment I was like; it was worth it, you know?

> And you know, I could see my mom, she was crying, and It was, <pauses and puts his hands to his face> it was, I'm trying not to give something up now. That's to see, you know, to make your parents happy, you know, tears from a good standpoint. You know, it was something that can't be put into words, but I'll never forget, you know, my parents are my everything. My family is everything and to see you their pride, you know, it was an amazing experience. Yeah

Two years after graduating with his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering, Phillip is now working in a field where he said he is making a contribution to the Black community by designing medical equipment for the early detection of breast and prostate cancer.

Drake

Drake is a single African-American man in his late thirties, and he has no children. He is an assistant professor and teaches at a small private institution in the Mid-Western part of the U.S. Drake responded to my call for participants through a Facebook group post. He contacted me in January via email and expressed an interest to participate in my study. I responded back to him, and we discussed a strategy for us to conduct an interview, which was FaceTime video. Our interview took place on January 29, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. Upon our initial video contact, Drake and I engaged in friendly dialogue. I asked him about the institution he teaches at and how he became a professor there, and what he thought about living in the cold climate where he is lives. Due to the level of our initial conversation, Drake and I established a rapport. Drake has an infectious and witty personality. He talks at a medium to fast pace, but speaks with clarity and diction. Before starting the recording for our session, I clarified with Drake if he could hear and see me through our video and audio feed.

Summarized Narrative

Drake was born in the Midwestern region of the United States. He comes from a single parent home; raised by his mother. Growing up, he was the younger of two boys in his family. As for his father, Drake said, "I didn't know much about my father because he died when I was seven." As a child, Drake did not experience being encouraged to excel in education. However, his academic abilities were recognized by his school, thus leading to him being placed in gifted classes. Although he was placed in special and gifted classes in elementary school, due to the lack of support from his mother, and the need he said he felt to fit in with his non-gifted peers, he purposefully did poorly in his gifted courses so he could go back to the regular courses. Drake is close to his grandmother and credits her for "tricking" him during his childhood years into taking an interest in reading and math. He noted that during his youth because he played and was interested in sports, his grandmother would give him baseball cards and other types of sports-related material that encompassed statistical data about his favorite athletes. In other instances, Drake said his grandmother would give him copies of sports magazines to read because she knew that sports stories appealed to him:

> I remember having trouble reading and it wasn't that I wasn't smart, it was that my father had just passed away, so I wasn't really interested in reading or anything else. So, my grandmother knew I love sports so she would give me baseball cars, basketball cards, I would remember all the averages and she was like, you know all this sports stuff, but you can't do nothing else <laughs>. She would give me like kid's sports illustrated and I would just go through or read it like I wouldn't read anything else. And then she would give me like the newspaper and sports section. Then she would give me sports illustrated

> which, she was smart because she knew they had bigger words than the kids' sports illustrated. So, she was doing early intervention reading program.

During high school, Drake participated in two sports, football and track. After graduating from high school, he intended to play college football, but those plans were sidetracked when the coach that recruited him left the program. Drake said he received college scholarship offers to play at other schools but noted he did not have the grades to qualify for those scholarships. As a result, he ended going back home to work in a grocery store. While working in the grocery store, he met a coach who offered him a scholarship to play at a Division III school. Drake took the offer, played at the school for two years, but decided to transfer to another program that he ended up leaving after two years. However, after attending both programs, Drake had not obtained his college degree. Drake eventually went to a third program, graduated and became an elementary school teacher. Drake said his decision to pursue his master's degree was to get a "pay bump" Drake said he thought about pursuing a Ph.D. during his master program when he took classes that were blended with Ph.D. students:

> I was in a class where it was a master's slash doctoral class and I remember it like it was yesterday. So, I'm in this class and I was with these Ph.D. students and I thought, you know what, I'm just as smart as they are. You know what I'm saying? I'm just as good as they are <laughs>. So, once I was in a class that pushed me and I saw some brothers that looked like me too, that were working on their Ph.D.'s and they kinda, you know, convinced me. [to start his doctoral program] So, I went to the graduate coordinator of my program, and said I'm looking to stay and do my Ph.D. And she was like, do it. She was like, "your grades are good enough and so are your test scores, so you will not have

to retake the GRE". So, she was like, "just apply just fill out the application" And so, I graduated December and in January I started my doctoral program.

Drake spoke of being an African-American man in a doctoral program at a PWI institution as stressful. While he encountered other African-American men who were working on a doctorate at his institution, he said having other African-American men to share his doctoral experiences was helpful, not just for himself, but likewise for the other African-American men:

> So, when I was in other classes, and I would see other Black Ph.D.'s students and other Black male Ph.D. students. So, that was good for me, like it was up lifting. It was somebody who was going through the same thing I was going through because most of the brothers I talked to, were saying the same thing. Like yeah, I'm the only one in my program, So, we could share similar stories and even though we were the only Black men in our programs, sometimes we would also be the only Black men or Black students in some of our classes and you know, a lot of times we felt alienated or ostracized and we could talk about that. And having someone who shared that same experience or something like me that I can talk to about it. It really helped me during graduate school.

While Drake said he experienced stress from being the only Black male in his program, he also talked about feeling pressured to perform and do well so he would not mess up the opportunity for other Black men to be admitted to doctoral programs at his institution:

> <sighs> It was a lot of pressure because, I think at the end of my program they let another brother in, that was my whole thing. I was like, look man, I can't mess this up because if I do, they are not going to let another brother in for like 10 years!

Drake expressed other challenges he faced in his doctoral journey such as, lack of support from his doctoral chair and committee members and being held up in defending his dissertation.

However, and despite those issues, even after he contemplated not finishing his degree, he brought himself to press on:

> And I feel like the biggest reason, and then even when I almost gave up that I didn't and it was that I always thought to myself that, you know, growing up in my home town, growing up in a single parent home or when my father died when I was seven from a drug overdose, I was like, when I look at my dissertation and everything I went through, I was like, this isn't the worst thing I've ever been through. I've been through a lot. And if I can go through that and I can go, I can do this too. You know what I'm saying? You know, I had a couple of laughs even when I left, when I was like, I've been through worse than this, I can get through this. And that was my biggest motivation saying to myself, look at what I've been doing in the past and I made it through, I survived, and I can survive this too. So that was my biggest motivation was like, let me prove people wrong, let me show them that, you know, we are intelligent, that we do have some sense of ourselves and that we can start something and finish it, and go off to, you know, be a professor and, you know, use our degree in our field.

Eric

Eric is an African-American man in his late thirties is married and has one child. Eric serves as the president of the education association for his institution. Eric responded to my call for participants through a posting he saw with the Black Doctoral Network on Facebook. Eric contacted me via in January to express his interest in participating in my study. Through the exchange of emails, Eric and I began to establish rapport, which proved to be beneficial once we engaged in the actual interview. Given Eric's geographical location, he and I decided that the best way to conduct the interview would be through FaceTime video. Eric is a confident and

well-spoken man. As a matter of fact, from the time I connected with him on FaceTime, his no nonsense and in your face way of expressing himself, led us to a productive interview. The interview between Eric and I took place on January 31, 2019 at 4:00 pm. The interview lasted for one hour and forty-six minutes.

Summarized Narrative

Eric was born in the Northeastern region of the U.S. He came from a working-class family and talked about his days growing up and living in the suburbs. Eric's mother worked as a social worker and telemarketer, and he said his father was mostly unemployed. Eric pointed out that although his family faced struggled, which he said occurred from time to time, the struggles they faced did not prevent them from surviving:

> So, like you know, like bill's got paid, but it was like, there was like a struggle a little bit, you know what I mean? So, it wasn't like you were starving, you know, but there were some days where the lights were cut off and say, you know, and that type of stuff, and I thought all folks really just lived like I did.

Unlike the kids in the all-Black neighborhood where he grew up, Eric's schooling experiences, "all his life, up to grad school," were in predominantly White institutions. Eric was an athlete in high school. One of the issues he expressed with his being an African-American male athlete at a private all-White high school was his school counselors did not talk to him in full about going to different types of colleges:

> So, my high school experience was like a bunch of, you know, elitist experiences in terms of class. And then I'm realizing again, looking back, there was some academic conversations that the high school counselors never even had with me. Like, I didn't hear about certain universities, certain universities and colleges were never brought to my

> attention. And because of that, I only applied to two schools, and those are the schools that showed some interest in me and playing basketball. So, here I am in a private school that's supposed to be the best, people raving, I mean, people rave about the academics and stuff like that. But I didn't see, you know, the college counselor, stuff like that, didn't share words with me, you know, not just me, but the other, you know, the other Black kids, you know what I mean, that went to the schools and colleges at all. You know? So, you would just be a basketball [player] or nothing all. So, I based my undergrad experience, and my undergrad decision based off of who showed me the most interest in basketball.

Those experiences Eric had with his high school counselors were impactful for him because he did not grow up in a home where conversations about going to college were prevalent:

> I didn't come from a whole lot of money and, you know, our parents only knew a little about like a bachelor's degree. And then, you know, my dad ended up getting his [bachelors] degree when I got mine. But, you know, my parents weren't really steeped in that sort of stuff.

Despite Eric's lack of guidance on college choices, he ended up deciding to play basketball at the college that showed the most interest in him. Eric said his choice did not pan out for him, so he decided to transfer to another school. After transferring to the other school, he graduated and became a teacher. After graduating from his undergraduate program, Eric went on to pursue his master's degree, and eventually his doctorate. The principal reasons he gave for pursuing his masters and doctoral degrees were his need to prove to himself and others that he could do it:

> I went through my Grad school processes really just to prove I could do it for real, you know what I mean? Like I didn't, but I could have gone back to school for administration

> and all sorts of stuff. However, I went back to get my master's in social studies and finally my doctorate, but for real, it had a lot to do with me trying to just prove that I could, you know what I mean? Because there was so much and a lot of, you know, just residue and doubt, you know, thinking that certain things [a doctoral degree] were for other people. They are not necessarily from me, you know, as a Black guy, but especially as a Black guy…

Throughout Eric's doctoral journey, he experienced moments of self-doubt. However, there were persons in his life who inspired him to press on and finish his degree. One of those persons was his grandfather. Eric affectionately referred to his grandfather as "Grandpop" and credits him as one of his biggest inspirations for getting his doctorate:

> While finishing my masters, I just felt like there was another challenge out there. And also, like I said, to prove that I could do it and I didn't really, when I started my doctoral program, believe me, I didn't think I was going to get through, you know what I mean? But, also, I did it as a sort of nod to my grandpop, you know what I mean? My grandpa didn't have a doctorate, but he was a Black dude who graduated from Penn back in like the forties, you know what I mean? And it always mattered to me. My grandpop, I did something that made my grandpop proud, you know what I mean?

Despite the moments of self-doubt Eric experienced in his doctoral journey, he said that he did not experience issues of overt racism. As he reflected on the support he was given from his doctoral chair and committee members, he said their support allowed him to speak his voice and express his views as an African-American man:

> I didn't really even know what it meant to deal with the oppression [that other students of color dealt with] and I like I said before, I was really blessed with really supportive

> professors, and really supportive advisors that recognize that the things I had to say we're really warranted, you know what I mean? And I should be heard. So, I mean, that's a blessing, honestly. That's not everybody's, but that was my experience.

Along with Eric's passion for promoting change in his community, another one of his most prominent reasons for pursuing and finishing his doctorate was to make an impact on the kids he taught in high school:

> And also, at the time I was teaching at an urban high school, I wanted my kids to see what it was like [an African-American man to get a doctorate] You can be young, you could like rap, you could be living in the city. I mean you can teach in the hood; you can live here and do all that, play ball and something and go get your doctorate.

Akinwale

Akinwale is an African-American Muslim man. He is in his early fifties, single and has four children. He is self-employed as a computer technician and teaches at a community college in his home town. Akinwale was referred to me through his former doctoral chair by way of my doctoral chair. Akinwale contacted me by email in January to express his interest in participating in my study. Before meeting in person, we engaged in two phone calls. In the first phone conversation, Akinwale discussed his research and talked about the work he was doing in his community. In our following phone conversation, Akinwale informed me that he would be in the Atlanta area during the first weekend in March and upon his arrival, he would make himself available to engage in a face to face interview with me. As such, I met with him on March 8, 2019. The interview lasted for one hour and forty minutes and took place in his hotel room on the south side of Atlanta. When I arrived at the hotel, I met Akinwale the lobby. We exchanged a

handshake and hug between us. Akinwale is astute and his disposition is calming and pleasant. What impressed me most was how the African apparel he wore enhanced his personality.

Summarized Narrative

Akinwale was born and raised in a rough portion of a town in the Midwestern region of the United States. He is the youngest of five boys and the only one in his family to graduate from high school or college. His parents hail from Mississippi. Akinwale said his parents "grew up as sharecroppers and did not go beyond the eighth grade." During his early high school years, Akinwale said he did not think about going to college. He said for him, the kind of grades he got in school was not a high priority, as long as they were passing:

> You know, in high school, I went to an all-Black high school and out of us, probably 99% of the students were Black and we might've had maybe four White students out of 3000 students. And, I never took education seriously, I did just enough to get by, you know, a d, if was passing, that's all that mattered to me.

As Akinwale progressed through high school, he began to change his mind about going to college. One of the significant factors for him changing his mind to go to college was his involvement in the school chess club. He said his change of interest on going to college was due to his chess teammates making an impact on him, which he deemed reverse peer pressure, and the challenges he received from his chess coach about his poor grades:

> But you know, I had like a reversed form of peer pressure. I played chess in high school, so my eight-man chess club, uh, my other eight counterparts on the chess club are like in the top 10 students in the high school, I just played chess with them. So, it began to, uh, you know, make me look at education a little different. You know, my chess coach was like, you can do a little better than this now. So, you know, I started just, okay, I'm going

> to get a c, you know, but by the time I realized that, uh, I wanted to go to college, it was, I was in my senior year.

Akinwale graduated from high school, but unlike his chess club teammates who went on to four-year colleges and universities, he had to enroll in a junior college. For Akinwale, his junior college experience, while the starting point of his trajectory in higher education, turned out to be what Akinwale regarded as an emotional test:

> So, the highest form of math I ever took was Algebra, just basic Algebra. You know, cause I was in the construction trade, I was wanting to be a brick layer, or some type of, uh, electrician or something. However, so senior year, coming in high school, I graduated with a 2.2 and I look back on it, so all my friends go away to the way to top notch schools and you know, so I always had a desire to be with my friends, but I had to start at a junior college. And when I got to junior college, uh, one of my experiences was that uh, you know the junior college I went to was basically an all-White junior college. And, um, emotionally I got destroyed because now I have to take remedial courses. And one of the teachers there was giving the remedial courses was like, who let you out of high school? You can't even write.

After his junior college experience, Akinwale transferred to another two-year college and finally to an HBCU. During his time at the HBCU, he received academic support which he said changed the trajectory of his college education: "So, I ended up going to the junior college for a year and a half. Then I transferred to another school and then I transferred to an HBCU, which sure did change my life."

Once Akinwale finished his undergraduate degree, he enrolled in a master's program and obtained a degree in social work. Regarding how he decided to pursue his doctorate, Akinwale

talked about meeting an African-American man in a writing course. He credits the man for telling him about the Ph.D. program he eventually attended. Akinwale spoke of his doctoral journey as being difficult at times. He talked about navigating the struggles of writing his dissertation. He was the only or one of few African-American men in his doctoral program. Upon finishing his doctoral degree, Akinwale was the second African-American male to graduate from his doctoral program. In reflecting on being the second African-American male to graduate from this program, Akinwale said:

> I said, if my mom and my dad, he can see that. So, in my dissertation, I always said that my dissertation is the fruit and they were my parents, and this is on their shoulders. I say because you know, they never had that opportunity. This is why I run so hard academically. You know, like I said, my father came from Mississippi in 47' to the neighborhood where we live in. You know, my mother came up a year later and they married. And you know what, and all they had was factory jobs and now they [the factories] are shut down. So, they didn't even get a chance to go to high school, or actually even imagine it, you know. So, I ran hard because they gave us so much with their eight grade educations. You know, still people, my parents, my mother and my father never grew up on food stamps. I never grew up on section eight. I don't know nothing about that. I know it was my father and my mother who got up and went to work every day. So, they, they influenced me.

Levi

Levi is an African-American man in his early thirties. He is married and has no children. Levi works as a research associate at a historically Black non-profit organization in the metropolitan area where he resides. He responded to my recruitment flier and reached out to me via email to express his interest in participating in my study in February. Due to our busy schedules, we were not able to meet and conduct the interview until March 28, 2019. I met Levi at his residence. He invited me in, and we engaged in conversation about the institution where he received his doctorate. Levi quickly informed me that he did not have an allegiance to his former institution and said it was just the place he got his doctorate. Levi is a tall and slender man. He is a former basketball player and stands at what I guessed to be six foot three inches to six feet four inches in height. Levi is well spoken, witty and embodies a "matter of fact" disposition about himself. We sat down at his kitchen table and started the interview at 1:00 p.m. The interview lasted for one hour and fifty minutes.

Summarized Narrative

Levi was born in the Southeast portion of the U.S. He attended an all-Black private Christian high school. He played on the basketball team and was the team captain. Levi grew up in a middle-class family; his parents are college educated and hold graduate degrees. Levi said during high school, despite his involvement and role of captain of the basketball team, his thoughts on going to college were "nonchalant and cavalier about college." Levi clarified himself by saying despite having cavalier thoughts about college, going to college was an option for him, but his being caviler related to where he would attend college. As Levi contemplated his options for where he would attend college, his said parents made it clear to him that would only support him if he attended the college they went to:

> My parents told me that, I only have one choice, which was an HBCU that they both attended that they that they found the Lord, and they found each other and got married. So, their response was that's where their money was going and that if I decided to attend another institution that it will be on me.

Levi considered what his parents told him, but decided to check out colleges. After visiting colleges who showed interest in giving him a basketball scholarship, and realizing he would have to pay the application fees for the schools who did not offer him financial assistance, Levi chose to enroll at the same HBCU his parents attended. Levi said part of his decision to attend the HBCU his parents went to was because he knew basketball was not the determining factor in his decision to which college he would attend:

> So, I decided against that [the school who offered him a scholarship] And I think I had another offer for a JUCO which they consider to be junior colleges for basketball and I had pretty good grades, so I just didn't, I felt, I knew I wasn't going to play basketball for my lifespan that wasn't, I wasn't making a career out of it. And I felt like I was, you know, my intelligence, my work ethics we're going to be essentially what made a life for me after college. So, I didn't find it necessary to really go and get a go to JUCO just to play basketball because I wasn't really looking to get into a division one institution or of some sort to play there for four years. So, I just, went along with my parents and went to the HBCU, went to Norville [pseudonym].

Once Levi graduated from his undergraduate program, he enrolled in a master's program in history. Midway through his master's program, Levi realized his focus was changing toward issues related to diversity. Levi said he wanted to focus his efforts on making a difference in educational spaces for people of diverse and cultural backgrounds. He felt the best way to

accomplish his goals would be through getting a Ph.D. in educational leadership. Levi said his preference for a doctoral program was at a particular HBCU, but they did not offer a program in educational leadership. Through the advice of his trusted peers, Levi continued his efforts to find a doctoral program that had an educational leadership program. Eventually, he found and applied to a doctoral program he thought would be a good fit for him. The school Levi applied to accepted him but put him a waitlist, but one of the other schools he applied to, Glaston [pseudonym] accepted and offered him a scholarship for their doctoral program. Upon the recommendation of his African-American male mentors who were in the field of education, and despite his desire to go to the school which put him on a waitlist, Levi decided to attend Glaston. Levi admitted his decision to attend Glaston was not without reservation. However, given the advice of his mentors, he said, other than attending the school of his choice, the one that waitlisted him, would be beneficial for him:

> So, myself along my mentors, kind of looked at it as okay, the school [Glaston] itself is a recognizable large division one, research one high intense, you know, school. So, that is looked at. It's recognized both from a brand standpoint, although the education department isn't as robust and recognize is as I'd probably want.

Levi expressed issues he had to deal with in his doctoral program. The first issue he talked about was the location of his school and how he felt the setting fostered the racial problems students of color had to deal with on campus:

> …so the school I went to was in the deep south, so they, the institution itself dealt with racial problems, during my, there I can remember there was a whole incident with a Black face party, there were, there were other things that just went on that was extremely racial issues, the name changing, the name of a building. There was huge spat between

> that. So, a lot of the African Americans and students of color, um, just had a lot of issues with the White students there at the time. And then of course it's a predominantly White institution, so they [students of color] are typically always outvoted…

Although Levi talked about the issue of racial problems in his school, most of the problems and challenges he dealt with in his doctoral program were not racial in nature:

> …starting in my program, I had all my committee members. There were four people and out of the four, only one person wasn't a person of color. He was a White male who identified as homosexual. And, um, that was my committee. By the time I graduated, all my committee members had left to go to other institutions except for the White homosexual male who had probably been there the longest, enjoy being there, and just found his own niche and no one bothered him, and he eventually had become my chair.

Another challenge Levi had to navigate while in his doctoral program was being the only African-American man in his courses. However, Levi did not express having adverse reactions from being the only African-American man in his doctoral courses:

> So, I think I might be a little different. It wasn't as taxing on me as I think it was for my female counterparts. I think I did more by helping her navigate this space, then I did to help myself navigate this space. Mainly because it came a point where I saw it as a game, a survival of the fittest, if you will. Like, okay, I said, if I have to, In order for me to succeed, in order for me to do XYZ, to get out of here, I have to do this, I have to play this game the right way.

Despite the challenges Levi endured in his doctoral experiences such as the changes and departures of his doctoral chair and committee members, he did go on to finish his doctoral program and became Dr. Levi:

> The other success? [his response to the successes he had in his doctoral journey] I would say was just finishing, especially, especially when you have four of your people in your committee leave, you know, when I tell most people that they look at me and go what? Yes, well I'm sorry, three, yeah, but I wouldn't say that that was a success. I think to me, I look at the success being more so that I finished because three people left, not necessarily me finishing. I think not finishing was never an option…

A.I.

A.I. is an African-American man in his mid-fifties. He is single and has two sons. A.I. serves as executive director of the center community of engaged learning at the university where he is employed. A.I. was suggested to me by one of my doctoral classmates as a viable candidate for my research study in February. I reached out to A.I. via email and discussed the nature and criteria of my research study. Once I determined he met the criteria of my study, and his expressed interest to participate, we agreed to move forward with an interview. A.I. lives in another state. So, we decided the best way to conduct our interview would be via FaceTime video. The interview took place on April 1, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. and lasted for one hour and thirty-two minutes. A.I. is a mild-mannered, he speaks with confidence and is a devout Christian.

Summarized Narrative

A.I. was born on the West Coast of the U.S., but he grew up in a small Midwestern industrial town in the U.S. A.I. grew up in a working-class family. At the demand of his parents, he attended a private all-boys Catholic high school:

> I attended a college prep high school in my city, which was a predominantly White school which was not in the inner city. It was by the choice of my parents, not mine to go

> to an all-boys Catholic high school. And so, it was college prep, and I fought through that. And at that school you had to test to get in and I did fairly well.

A.I.'s parents did not attend college. However, early in his youth, A.I.'s mother recognized his academic abilities. In response to what she saw in his abilities', she, along with her brothers and sisters, pushed him to excel in school and pursue a college degree:

> Well, I for me, neither one of my parents went to college. My mother had a high school diploma. My father got his GED in the army, he was in Vietnam. But it was really my mother who was the one that would put it in my consciousness that as early as I think first grade, you're going to college, you're going to college, you're going to college, and um, and then her younger brothers and sisters, which was six, eight and nine years older than me, I grew up with them, they actually, from the time I was a little kid, they drilled me so, so I read very early. So, it was this part of just my DNA is that, do well in school, you're smart so you, you know, beyond high school you will do something with that. And so that was part of the, just the conversation. Now, none of those people went to school, none of them had the money to go to school. But it was just the conversation that I would, and I did.

As A.I. said he did go to college. He attended a predominantly White university in his home state. It was at this institution where his idea of going to graduate school materialized through his relationship with key members in leadership at the university and as A.I. said, "by the grace of God" he met the president of the university and established a relationship with him. The relationship he adopted with the president was instrumental in cementing A.I.'s decision to go to graduate school:

> I actually traveled with the president of the university, who asked me some questions, which I won't take time up of your study to talk about to share that dialogue. But he essentially said to me, well, the shorter of the conversation was, he asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I said, I want your job. He said, "You can have it, if you go to Grad school, we'll pay for graduate school and we would create a job for you". And, and that's what happened. That's how I got to graduate school, that's how I ended up working in higher education when he said, go to graduate school, work here, and then you can work you on your PhD.

A.I. graduated with his master's degree and went to work for a non-profit organization in the Southern part of the U.S. Prior taking the non-profit job, A.I. enrolled in a doctoral program and acquired 20 credits hours of course work. However, due to his job and family responsibilities, he dropped out of the program:

> And so, in my early thirties, yeah. So, you know, I kind of put it on hold [PhD], kids were growing up, I was running a nonprofit, you know, dealt with a program with children that had 500 kids and so that, that consumed about 15, 16 years of my life. I didn't take any classes at that time. And then, I had a couple opportunities to go back and finish because a good friend of mine who was a friend of the president of the university offered me a position to come back and serve as his special assistant in the early two thousands, but I didn't because my kids were still young and I didn't, because honestly, it was warm in the south and I didn't want to come back to the north and deal with cold weather.

Despite having to take a 16-year break from when he first entered a doctoral program, A.I. never gave up on his goal to finish his doctoral degree. He took advantage of a job opportunity at a university which included paying for him to complete his doctorate. During his doctoral

program, now in his late forties, A.I. navigated his program from a different perspective than when he was younger. A.I. talked about how his prior experiences at the all-White high school and colleges he attended prepared him for his doctoral experience. One of the issues he talked about was being the only African-American male in his program and having to navigate questionable practices of White faculty:

> Uh, you know, I mean, building on my previous experiences you know, by the time I got there, [in his doctoral program] I was a pro at dealing with the expectations that White faculty member have and some of the things that happened. Um, so it was, it was an uneven experience. But I think for me as an older person going back, I knew what I needed to do. …Well, one of the things with my advisor who, you know, he would try to blame things that didn't go right on me, rather than the saying, hey, "I forgot that we had a meeting today, or I forgot to call you" He would trying to blame it on my lack of scheduling, which, I was like, oh, okay, I'm a professional. You know, I'm doing things in multiple spheres in areas, you don't need to try to play that game with me. Or, I had a younger White woman faculty member who would try to um, do the social equity thing, you know, she was in her thirties and tried to quote Jay Z, you know, and I'm like, okay, I don't care anything about that.

In describing his doctoral journey A.I. said other than having experienced the issues he described with his doctoral chair and the White female faculty member, he felt blessed that his career path and doctoral experience intersected in terms of his interest on building community. He specifically talked about being blessed to have earned his doctorate while performing his job as a community builder:

> So, I've been very fortunate. So, the doctorate, really was earned in the work that I did in the inner city, I just documented what I did <laughs> in my actual work. …part of the success [he experienced in his doctoral journey] was the fact that I was able to focus my research on the work that I was doing as a scholar with my work, and that was probably one of the biggest successes. So, what I was actually doing for the center at that college was the focus of my research.

After taking 16 years off from his doctoral studies to work and raise his sons, A.I. gave many reasons for his going back to finish his degree. One of the reasons he gave was his sons:

> I always told them that I was going to finish before they finish their bachelor's degrees. And so, you know, they would always remind or ask me "dad when are you going to finish?" And when I had the chance to go back, I don't know, when they were just beginning high school and beginning college, they were like you better hurry up cause we're about to catch you. So, that was part of my motivation was I had always told them I'll finish before you finish.

Sam

Sam is a 30-year-old man who identifies as Black, Asian and Queer. He is single and works as an assistant professor in a large predominantly White university located in the Northeast region of the U.S. Sam was referred to me in April by one of the professors in my department. I emailed Sam and informed of the referral and shared with him the criteria for my study. Sam emailed back and agreed to participate in my study. Since he lived in another state, I asked him if we could interview via FaceTime video and he agreed. My interview with Sam took place on April 14, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. The interview lasted for two hours. Before starting the interview, I engaged Sam in a casual conversation, and once we felt comfortable with each other,

we began the actual interview. Sam is enthusiastic. He does not hold back on talking about his passion for helping marginalized persons. Most of, he did not hold back in expressing himself and sharing his story in our interview.

Summarized Narrative

Sam was born in a Mid-Atlantic state in the U.S. to an Asian mother and Black father. Given his multiple identities, he said his high school experiences were unique in terms of the types of schools he attended:

> I have very different experiences from place to place. I think particularly because, you know, particularly if we're talking about things relation to identity. I went to different high schools was that and my undergraduate for that matter, that very, very different in terms of their environment. So, the first high school I was in for the particular school district I was in was known as being a quote unquote Blacker high school. Um, and uh, so that was that kind of environment. And then at my second-high school, which I went into, because my mother got married during that time to someone else who, you know, was making a higher income. And so, we were able to move to a different neighborhood that was in a different school. So, and in that high school at the time it was known that actually is being the more Asian high school in the, in the district. Um, and so, you know, it was quite different, particularly like there were also like very large socioeconomic differences between the two high schools.

At one point during his high school days and where he was in spaces he deemed “all Black” such as the “Blacker high school” at one point, he experienced someone telling him he "was not really Black." At the same time, Sam was navigating his Black and Asian identities, and he was coming out as a queer man: Sam’s struggle with having to navigate his Black and Asian identities carried

out into his undergraduate years in college. An example he gave on navigating his Asian identity was after he performed well on an exam. In this instance, someone in his class said, “of course you did well, you’re Asian.” Sam countered the statement by saying “um no, I studied.” In these examples where Sam embraces the intersectionality of his identities, he realized most people see him for its benefit for them:

> Um, and so, you know, when you have like these intersecting identities, it's not that they're all there at once. People decide that one or more the other of them is more interesting at any given point.

Sam is an activist. While working on his undergraduate degree, he became involved as a community volunteer. The role he served was working with inner-city high school students where the focus of their work included tasks such as cleaning up lots the city allocated for rejuvenation. Sam did not acquire a master’s degree. However, through his activism and work with inner-city kids, he channeled those experiences to move him into enrolling into a doctoral program. Sam carried his activist work into his doctoral journey, and the main point of what he focuses on are issues related to diversity. As in his undergraduate college experience, during his doctoral program, Sam heavily involves himself in activism and advocating issues of social justice and diversity. Consistent with the other participants in my study Sam, talked about being the only Black man in his doctoral program. One of the prominent ways Sam addressed being the only Black man in his program was through his activist work on his campus. However, eventually, Sam became burned out from carrying the load of being an activist and the “go-to” or as he put it, the token Black man to discuss issues of race and diversity on the campus:

> Well, I was on every single diversity committee that existed both within the college and at the university level. Um, and I think part of it was by virtue of the fact that I part, it

was because I didn't say no. Like I could have said no, I recognize that, but it's kind of hard to feel like you can say no. Um, a lot of times, particularly when you are seeing some progress and you feel like other people aren't really stepping up and I don't get, I don't necessarily mean the other Black people, but like, you know, when they come to you say it like, you know, we need someone to come talk about the graduate experiences here as well.

Sam's unwillingness to say no to those who asked him to speak at diversity events, along with struggling with issues of identity, lead to him having to see a therapist. As such, Sam experienced psychological issues which caused him problems in his doctoral program:

> …I was diagnosed during that time with depression, and anxiety at the same time. Uh, and that was very hard, particularly to the extent that like I did, I think my third year in the doctoral program, like I checked out for quite a bit of time where I was not talking to people. I missed quite a few classes. It was hard. Um, and it was getting worse because I was still like very involved on campus. I felt very, very much obligated to be a part of these things that were happening, and they were not going well.

At the end of his doctoral program, Sam said he went through many things that were not so good. He went on to point out that while he did go through adverse challenges in his doctoral program, in the long run, the challenges Sam went through made a positive impact on the person his is today, compared to the person he was when he first started his doctoral program:

> …a lot of what I went through, in my graduate journey was not good. A lot of what I went through my graduate journey is not what I think a graduate journey should be. However, I can see how the person who I am now grew from a lot of that, I can see how those experiences, I've been made me a stronger person. It made me a smarter person,

> maybe a person that is frankly able to support my students better because I'm at an institution now where you know, we've had students protesting on campus racism and homophobia and all of those things. So, I don't think I'd be as effective as I am now in supporting them if I hadn't gone through a lot of that. Frankly, I don't think I'd be as supportive as I am now of my students with mental health problems if I hadn't gone through that.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide relevant background information on the Six African-American men and one Black/Asian man who participated in this study. The first section of the profiles centered on the interview dynamics, contained brief reflections on interviews with each of the men, and setting descriptions. The interviews took place over the course of four months, January to April 2019. Using, demographic questionnaires, and data from the transcripts enabled me to construct the significant participant background information.

The second half of the participant profiles consisted of summarized narratives. This section offered an overview of each participants' doctoral experiences. Information gleaned from the summaries highlighted aspects such as how being the only African-American man in their doctoral program, having support from other persons of color in their program, particularly men, and working different jobs impact them as men of color in doctoral programs at PWIs. By providing a summarized narrative of each man who participated in this study, my goals were to present a condensed account of significant aspects of my study participants' lives including their early years, their undergraduate and graduate schooling experiences, and how as men of color, they transitioned into and navigated their respective doctoral programs at predominantly White institutions.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

> *Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society's well. Even the poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, gain their self-esteem by gazing down on us. Surely, they must know that their deliverance depends on letting down their ropes. Only by working together is escape possible. Over time, many reach out, but most simply watch, mesmerized into maintaining their unspoken commitment to keeping us where we are, at whatever cost to them or to us*.
>
> —*Derrick Bell* (Bell, 2008 p. 5).

Bell's quote offers insight into the racial challenges the participants in this study experienced in their doctoral programs. While they managed to complete their doctoral programs, at times, they reported having to navigate through lack of support from White faculty along with being made to feel like they were less than by their White classmates. The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

In this chapter, I present the findings from the research study through an exploration of common themes constructed across the data. First provide a data display as an overview of each

thematic section. Next, I present and discuss three emergent themes, which include *Solitary Sojourns: African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWIs*, *Sankofa: Using Cultural Knowledge to Survive*, and *Learning as a Community Endeavor: "It was not Just for Me*." Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the thematic presentation.

Themes from the Data

I. Solitary Sojourns: African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWIs

II. Sankofa: Using Cultural Knowledge to Survive

III. Learning as a Community Endeavor: It was not Just for Me

Solitary Sojourns: African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWIs

The most prevalent theme to emerge from the data was Solitary Sojourns: African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWIs. This theme means that throughout the majority of the participants' doctoral experiences, they were the only one or one of few African-American/Black men in their doctoral programs. Phillip, Drake. Eric, Akinwale, Levi, and Sam all talked about being the only African-American/Black men in their respective doctoral program. Although each of them shared this experience in their respective programs, their narratives are different on how being the "only one" in their doctoral programs and classes affected them. However, what they that did report in terms of adverse reactions, were feelings of isolation, frustration, pressure and alienation. In this section, I present the narratives of the participants in this study where they shared their experiences about being the only African-American man in their doctoral programs.

Phillip is an African-African man in his early thirties. He is a Biomedical Engineer, who works for a pharmaceutical company within a large Northern metropolitan city where he resides. Phillip attended a large PWI in the Southwest for his doctoral program. His field of study, biomedical engineering, is one he said lacks students of color, particularly African-American

men. As such, Phillip said his experience as being the only Black man in his doctoral program was difficult:

> So, it was, it was difficult.<sighs> So, I think for me it was, <sighs> I think when I looked at the numbers, I think that the school I went to had 50,000 students at the time I was there. And, from there it had 400 African-American slash African Grad students. And that was mostly African students. And sometimes <pause> for whatever reason, the African students didn't always, you know, want to be, intertwined with I guess, with African-Americans. like I said, that's a whole 'nother discussion as it is. But, so yeah, it was about 400. So, and then in my department, biomedical engineering, there were no African-American males, and there was one female and she graduated the year after I got there. So, pretty much for my whole, you know, Grad school career, I was the only African-American male. And when I graduated, I was the first African-American male to get a Ph.D. In biomedical engineering at that school.

While it seems as though Phillip would celebrate being the first African-American man to graduate from his doctoral program, the reality is he did not. Phillip had mixed feelings about being the first African-American male to graduate with a doctorate from his program:

> So, it was one of those things that I found out that at first, I was like, "Oh wow, that's awesome!" And then I was like, "Oh, shoot," <laughs> This is 2017, why am I the first person to do any of this kind of stuff? So, there was nobody coming up after me. Umm, it was, <long sigh> like I said, for a split second, I was like really excited. I was like, man, I did something. And then I started reflecting back. My father was the first person from his home, Smallville, Georgia to get a graduate degree and he became a dentist. And, but my dad is older, so he was born in 1945 and this was, you know, Smallville,

> which is really South Georgia. And you know, he dealt with, you know, segregation. He dealt with the Ku Klux Klan, coming to his house, and a lot of other things that, you know, I'm glad he told me about that I thought I would never get to experience. And so, when I thought about it, I was like, wait a minute, why am I the first person in 2017 [graduating from his doctoral program] I knew that, I mean I kid you not, I'm the dumbest out of all of my friends, you know, I'm just the one that just decided to go and get a Ph.D. you know? <long pause> my parents really drove into me that you're the company that you keep and so like my friends are, literally valedictorians from high school or dual degrees in engineering and all of these kind of, you know, that looks on paper like really good things, obviously would like to say there were more than our degrees, <laughs> but just from this interview partner or you know, we were all doing pretty well. And so, like I said, I really started feeling bad that I was the first [Black male to graduate from his Ph.D. program] because I was like this is ridiculous. …. So, I was excited for a second to answer your question, but then I was like, man, it's terrible.

Phillip talked more about being the only African-American man in his program. He said that he experienced stress and pressure from feeling like he had to perform at a high academic level and navigating issues of culture with the White people he encountered in his doctoral program:

> So, like I said, it was, Grad school was tough from the academic point, but just that additional stress on yourself to know that, you know, for some people, whatever you say, became law for their [White people] whole perception of Black people, you know. So, whenever I was asked questions about cultural stuff, et cetera, and whatever I said it became, "Oh, that's the thing that all Black people do, you know?" And it's just like, that's a lot of pressure. Or if you don't do well in your class or if you don't get an "A" the

> perceptions were “Oh, Black people just aren't smart enough.” And you know, it's a lot of pressure that you put on yourself and that can be put on when you are the only one.

Drake is a single African-American man in his late thirties. He is an assistant professor and teaches at a small private institution in the mid-western part of the U.S. He attended a PWI in the Deep South and just like Phillip’s doctoral experience he was the only African-American man in his doctoral program. However, unlike Phillip, Drake did have contact with other Black male Ph.D. students who were not in his program. Drake said having other Black male Ph.D. students to talk to was important:

> I mean, it was cool because in my program, I was the only one, like I was the only Black male Ph.D. student. So, when I was in other classes, I would see other Black Ph.D.’s students and other Black male Ph.D. students. So, that was good for me, like it was up lifting. It was somebody who was going through the same thing I was going through because most of the brothers I talked to, were saying the same thing. Like yeah, I'm the only one in my program. So, we could share similar stories and even though we were the only Black males in our program, sometimes we would be the only Black male or Black students in some of our classes. And you know, a lot of times we felt alienated or ostracized. So, we can talk about that and having someone who shared that same experience or something like I can talk to about that. It really helped me during graduate school.

Drake acknowledged the support he received from Black male Ph.D. students outside of his program as beneficial. However, he said another issue he experienced with being the only Black male in his doctoral classes was feeling invisible:

> So, I don’t know, I like, I felt like I was there and a lot of times I felt invisible and my classes were, I was the only one. I mean, all my classes were that wasn't it. I would say 75% of my class I was the only one. But for the class, I wasn't the only one. I felt like the two or three or other ones, we sat together, and you know, people look at us like, “Why y'all sit together?” And I would respond, “Well, why y'all sitting together?” You know. But when it’s two or three of us we sit together, we need this and then we need this support <laughs>.

As Phillip discussed earlier, one of the issues that came up for him as with the other participants who were the only African-American/Black men in their doctoral programs was the frustration they felt from having to be the “resident expert” [quotations added] on conversations regarding issues of race and diversity in the classroom. In response to this issue, the participants chose to either abstain or confront the conversation. In this excerpt of Drake’s narrative, he illustrates how he confronted his White classmates when they asked him his opinion on of issues race:

> So, I want you to take this as one Black person, not all Black people. This is my opinion. Don't say, “Well I have a Black friend and he says this, and this is what it is”. Like no, first of all we are not really friends, but you know. …So, and they would always ask me, you know, what do you think? And I would tell them like “Look, this is what I think. This is what I think, just me. Not everybody thinks this way.” So, I'm so yeah, that's the advice, I would do that.

By choosing to address the issues of race and diversity, Phillip and Drake expressed that their intentions on doing so were to keep from being stereotyped and likewise, to protect the images of other African-American men. In other instances, Drake said he responded to conversations of diversity with silence and rebuttal:

I mean it would be similar, but I would say when you're in classes where you're the only one when topics of race or diversity or inclusion come up, I stay quiet. And then if someone asked me like, what do you think about this? I was like, I would always say, look, I can tell you what I think about it. Just, I can't tell you what all Black males think about. Cause like I'm not giving you the Black male perspective. I'm giving you my perspective. And I hated that I would, the reason why I would stay quiet was I didn't want them to be like, He said this, all Black, people think this was, all Black males think this way. I would always preface it by like, look man, this is my, you know, this is my opinion. This is what I think about whatever topic, race, diversity, inclusion. This is not what all Black people, this is not what all Black males think about this. I'm only one person. We're not a monolithic people, we are very diverse. So, I want you to take this as one Black person. Not all Black people. This is my opinion.

Eric is an African-American man in his late thirties and he is president of the education association in the school district where he teaches. Eric attended a PWI in the North and framed his experiences doctoral experiences around his early schooling years which he said were in all-White settings. Eric talked about his all-White early schooling experiences and said the problems he faced and had to navigate evolved around him trying to fit in as the only Black boy in an all-White school while doing the same in his all-Black neighborhood:

Like I said, most of the time when I was coming up in education, my schooling experiences was around all White folks and White was, right. And you have, you guys here, and I am like the only Black person, the only Black boy in school. Man, that's just the worst bro because as, especially as a kid, like you want to fit in, you just don't want to be the other, you know what I mean? Like, you don't really want to, especially when

you're home, the whole neighborhood you live in, they are all Black, you know what I mean? But yes, for eight hours a day while I'm in school and I'm weird as hell. I'm an anomaly. You know what I mean? Everything I did, everything that they're talking about thinking everyone else can relate to and not me. You know what I mean? And, visually as well. So, and it was all, and I think there's also sort of like, you know, some residue that wasn't, like I didn't speak properly and know, and I wasn't smart enough and like you feel it has a kid you carry that in to your adult life. you know what I mean? Some people never really wrestle with or really come to grips with it or even confronted, you know what I mean? So, this is my way of sort of confront and really just shaking all that off. You know what I mean? So, all the teachers, people I know as teachers, would have a tendency to remember the negative experiences, negative teachers and stuff like that. And it wasn't so much about proving it to those shows that said it was wrong. It's really just systematically as a Black person that the schooling experience who really shaped primarily by White normalcy. I had to shake that off you know what I mean? And this was my way of doing it [going to graduate school]

Eric and Drake share similar experiences in their doctoral programs in that they had other Black students for support. What stands out in Eric's story, is how he referred to a book that addresses what Drake talked about regarding the way the Black students in his program supported each other:

Well, you know, like I said, like, you know, practically most of them, most of the other students in my cohort were White. But you know, I had a book "Why Are All of the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" Well, that sort of same concept applies, like there was other Black folks who were there and there was a Puerto Rican girl who

was with us too. So, out of the cohort, about like 33, there were four of us that were non-White, and we just rode it out together and just hung out together.

In the next excerpt, Eric talked about not being around the all-White space of his graduate school all the time. He said this was the case because when he was not taking doctoral courses, he went back to the all-Black neighborhood he grew up in to hang out with his friends. He acknowledged by taking time away from the all-White space; it spared him from experiencing feelings of alienation that Drake experienced in his doctoral program:

> You know and I certainly think because I wasn't at the school all the time and did not have to stay up there all the time, being in that White space all the time, you know that certainly, you know, took a lot of, sort of feeling of alienation and marginalization away, because I go to class for a couple of hours, read some things I largely agree with, and then come home to, you know, my city and my community and my folks I played ball with. You know what I mean? So, like, I wasn't on that island, you know what I mean, the way I was when I was from K to 12 or K to 16. So, I didn't really even know what it meant to deal with the oppression by being the only Black male in my doctoral program.

Akinwale is an African-American Muslim man. He is in his early fifties, single and has four children. He is self-employed as a computer technician and teaches at a community college in his home town. Akinwale attended his doctoral program at a PWI in the Midwest. He said during his high school days; he initially had no intentions of going to college. However, as he got closer to graduating from high school, his interest in going to college changed. Because he did not take college prep courses, he had to enroll in a junior college. Akinwale said his junior college experience was not good. He said he felt humiliated by having to take remedial courses and one of his White teachers at the college asked him “Who let you out of high school? You

can’t even write.” Akinwale said that experience “almost destroyed me” but quickly noted that it did not and went on to say it prepared him for his doctoral experience. When responding to what it was like being the only African-American man in his program, Akinwale replied by noting it as difficult and then goes on to share his story where he felt he was discriminated against:

> Uh, it was kind of difficult, due to the fact that, uh, you know, one of the most difficult times I can remember was in my first semester in my doctoral program, I never forget this in my life. Uh, so we had to choose groups and we were going to have a group paper. Well, the White folks, all chose groups and so they did a group paper and the presentation, but I could not get into no group. So, the White people in there didn’t let me in their groups. I asked, them and they would not let me, they said I can't get in their group now, “we already have enough”. So, I, you know, I ended up having to do like a 15-page paper and study for the final by myself. So, I flunked the final. So, that first semester I had, okay, a B, I think I had a and an f, which made me have to go on academic probation. So, I was very distraught. So, I wrote to went to the teacher and now that I know better, I could of really went to the chair of the department. But I went to the teacher and I explained to him, I don't think it's fair that all the White people had groups. I had to not only do my paper by myself, I also had to study, which was a lot on me. So, the professor was like “well I tell you what, I'm going to let you do oral tests on this area. But the highest grade you can get is a c.” Now that I know better, if I had gone to the dean, I could've made that professor you know do things different, because this is straight discrimination. So, here we are in a class of 15 students, and they broke up into 14 groups, something like that, or three groups. However, the White students would not let me in their group, which ended up causing me to go on a trip. And here's another thing.

> I'll never forget this, on my paper, my first grade on it was a b. I could see where the teacher scratched the b out and put a d minus on it. So, that kind of really kind of got to me. So, I had a B at first. So, it's those particular situations, you know, after that first semester, I really knew who I was dealing with. I understood really clear on who I was dealing with in that particular situation. So, I like I said, I kept my GPA to, you know, 3.0, 3.2. I made sure I had a minimum of a b in the school, but, you know, I just knew who I was dealing with it. I mean, I knew, I always felt like they were out to get me, there wasn't too much support. Uh, you know, and then like I said, it wasn't just me, so you know, my other friend, he, you, I don't think I had no Black males in class with me. I think out of my three years I've only had one Black male in the class.

Not only did Akinwale experience being the only Black male in his doctoral courses he was the second African-American man to graduate from his doctoral program. In comparing what Phillip said regarding his response to being the first African-American man to graduate from his doctoral program were mixed, Akinwale's response to being the second African-American man to graduate from his doctoral program was:

> You know, I'll never forget when I was graduating, and I was the only Black. I mean, I here I am again, you know, and that's one of the greatest feelings in the world. You know, when you do the Ph.D., during graduation they walk you out first, you know. So, when I walked out and being the only Black man on the road with a Ph.D., you know. And you know, a White guy looked at me as said, "Huh, you are getting a Ph.D.?" I know you "paid" for the Ph.D., you worked for it. That's what he said. Yeah, I know you worked for that, Yeah. This institution, you know, I graduated from, my mentor was the first to receive a Ph.D. in the program and I'm the second.

Levi is an African-American man in his early thirties. He is married and has no children. Levi works as a research associate at a historically Black non-profit organization in a large metropolitan city in the Southeast where he resides. Levi attended a large PWI in the Deep South. However, he said the school he attended was not his first choice. Levi said the reason he did not want to attend a PWI for his doctorate was based on the fact that from high school, his schooling experiences were at all-Black institutions. As such, Levi said he desired to complete his doctoral education at an HBCU, but the institution he desired to attend did not offer the field of study in which he had an interest. Upon entering his doctoral program, Levi talked about the climate of his program and being the only Black man in his courses:

> Oh yeah. Every class I took, I was the only Black guy in the class. I was the only Black guy in every class I out took except for two my whole doctoral course experiences, I was the only Black guy in the class. The other two times were, so the way, the way our programs are set up for those, not the first year, some of those general courses you tend to, what's the word I'm looking for? You tend to have you take some courses, they're more like methodology, theoretical type courses. So, you would take them with people who are in the k-12 space as well. So, I had two other African-American men, they were principals. Honestly, I'm one that will drive up to come to the class, and then we were in two separate classes. But that's it. Other than that, I was the only Black male in the class. Typically, the only Black person. I wasn't the only Black person because my classmate, and I took, we always took the same classes, but we were the only two in there who really talked about Black issues, talk about HBCUs and education, a lot of education, disparities, access, completion, things of that nature that there were Black students who are always talking about in the class.

Levi said his response to being in the only Black man in his courses were stressful, but he said the way managed his stress was by leaving the campus:

> So, so I mean, I felt that every day, you know, the only days I probably didn't feel it [stress from being the only Black man in his program] were Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and that was because almost every other week I was coming home because I lived so close.

Much like Phillip and Drake, Levi talked about being singled out in his doctoral classes to discuss issues on racism. However, in Levi's case, he pointed out that most of what he dealt with regarding class conversations racism were directed towards him in what he said were sarcastic:

> So, they didn't, they wouldn't say certain things probably to me. They wouldn't do certain things around me. And then in addition to that, I was going to come to class, and I was going to leave. And interestingly enough, people did not typically have the guts to say things in person, I did have one class where people, you know, where people say things over, you know what I mean? Take a hybrid class. They would say things over the keyboard like, you know, someone made a very ignorant comment such as racism doesn't exist anymore. Obama was President and you know what, of course, they never said things like this in person, but they would say it over the computer, you know, say it in a hybrid class. So, then people would say stuff like that, you know, in response, I'm going to type and say what I had to say, but I think I did not. I put myself in situations where I didn't have to deal with people. I didn't want to deal with it any longer than I had to or more than I had to.

In the previous quote, Levi talked about one of the ways he dealt with the stress he experienced from being the only Black male in his classes was to leave campus and go home. In this next

excerpt, Levi expanded on other ways he managed his interactions with his White doctoral classmates and provides more details on how he corrected them or tried to inform them on issues of diversity. In some instances, he said avoided being placed in the position to discuss issues on race:

> So, when it came down to classes, I wasn't, you know, group projects, probably I'm not going to ask [his White classmates] to be in your group, um, you know, if we had to discuss something in class, I'm discussing them and then going on about my business. The moment class is over with, I'm going to grab my belongings and I'm going to go home or go hang out with the rest of the Black graduate students that I knew, or go to the gym. So, my interactions were very slim with my White classmates and I also wasn't as, what's the word I'm looking for? sensitive isn't the word I want to use, but I wasn't as quick to be as defensive to their racial comments And even if I was offended or defensive, I would try to correct them or do something in a educative manner that they as White folks would probably never agree with me on. So, I didn't even waste my energy there, but I went into the situation kind of light. There's a better way to go about this even if you think the way you think, so I kind of, it wasn't, I just didn't put myself in those situations and I think because things weren't going as favorable as well for my counterpart that things just did not, um, it did not. It did not pan out well.

A.I. is an African-American man in his mid-fifties. He is single and has two sons. A.I. serves as executive director of the center community of engaged learning at the university where he is employed. A.I.'s doctoral journey story is one of reentry. He originally started a doctoral program when he was in his early thirties, but due to relocating to the Southeast for a job opportunity and taking time to raise his two sons, he had to put his doctoral studies on hold.

However, 16 years later, and now in his late forties, A.I. reentered a doctoral program at a PWI in the North. A.I. talked about reentering graduate school and in doing so, he described the cultural make-up of his doctoral program:

> There were a few [African-Americans in his doctoral program] very few and very few in terms of African-American men. Uh, there was one in our cohort, a younger brother. We got to know each other pretty well. There were some other people who are ahead of us. Another one to two younger, one who was late twenties, early thirties, and then one is probably like 10 years younger. So, there was only a handful of, not even a handful. There was there were a few who were older than us and then there were a few African-American women.

While A.I. was one of few African-American men in his doctoral program, unlike Phillip, Drake, and Akinwale, he said he did not experience overt racism in his doctoral program. However, despite not having to deal with overt racism A.I. said he did experience times in his doctoral program where, compared to his White classmates, he was treated unfairly:

> Um, so it was, it was an uneven experience. But I think for me as an older person going back, I knew what I needed to do [to survive as a minority] And so, I was able to push past some of the areas, some of the things that were not clear for me to get what I needed to get. …And um, I was not going to be deterred and I had an advisor who, a White Guy, nice guy, very unorganized, but would try to blame his disorganization on me, which I was just was not going to accept that because as I had to remind him, I said, look, I'm on two planes every week at meetings and the city's I'm in the south, and meetings here, and I'm never late. So, if you forgot to put something down and you need to say that, but don't come back and say, Oh, you were supposed to call me, don't try to blame it on me. So,

little things like that and you know, that happened, but, but in terms of the environment of the people in the program, like my colleagues, I mean they were predominantly White, but they were fine.

A.I. said not only were there not many African-American doctoral students, men or women in his program, but he said there were no Black faculty in the program:

Um, we didn't have any Black faculty in the program, uh, not even adjuncts and I tried to get them to hire more and I gave them references of people who could be adjuncts, but they never took them. So, you know, that was, that was a whole 'nother issue in terms of the diversity of thought, the teachers that they had.

A.I. further explained what he meant regarding the teacher's thoughts on issues of diversity, came out when he had to challenge one of his White female faculty members on the notion of equity and inclusion:

She brought up in class one time about being fair to everyone and you know, you know, she asked, "Is it fair for me to do certain things?" and I said, I'm not expecting you to be fair. I said because since my people were brought here in 1619, there's nothing that's fair. I said, what I can ask you for is your best and that's all you can ask me for is my best. Fairness and equality have been elusive qualities in this, in this country. And so, you know, she knocked me for some things, I mean in terms of a couple of papers and stuff, but I know she didn't do it to other people [White students in the class]. I mean other people, she let people turn things in late otherwise, cause she was cool with them and they played that game and I, you know, I only had her for a few classes and I just got out of the class, did what I had to do cause I was not going to play that game, I'm not your buddy, you know, I'm not going to try to play the game with you.

As A.I. interacted with his teacher, he talked about being intentional with her by standing his ground and not playing games with her on race issues. He said he felt like she did not understand how the way she interacted with him was biased. To prove his point, A.I. gave another example of when he had a confrontation with the teacher, to which he said caused him to shut down:

> She didn't see herself as being biased at all. You know, perfect example in her case was part of the national program we talked about, and we had a paper due, this was the beginning of the semester and I said, hey, I'll be in California where this national meeting and I'll turn in my paper early, turned it in early, emailed it to come in, come back in town, and she's saying, hey, A.I., you know, you didn't turn the paper in. And I said, um, yes, I did, I said, I emailed it to you before I left town. I turned it in early. She said, Oh, you know, I didn't check my email. You know, everybody turns it in on the portal. Yeah, but you didn't have any instructions about how to turn it in. So, I emailed it to you beforehand, then I took her to the email. And then she said, well I know you're busy. You're doing, you know, you're all over you're doing all types of things, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'd let that common stand for a minute. And then I'd send her email later on and I say, oh, would you like me to tell you what actually what I'm doing? Cause at the time I was still leading the nonprofit in south and traveling back and forth. I said, are you interested? Oh No, I don't want to know what you're doing, I just want to teach the course, blah, blah, blah, blah. So, I essentially, just, I shouldn't say shut down, but I did just shut down, I'm just doing the work and we don't have anything to talk about. And then the next semester I had to take another class with her. She asked me to like come into her office and she said, "Oh, I thought you were working for the university?" I said, no, "I work for a non-profit in a city in the South and I work as a fellow in this city and

I'm taking classes." She replied, "Oh, I never knew that." I said, "I know you didn't know that. That's why I tried to email you and have a conversation with you last semester."

As for his teacher, "not seeing herself as being biased" he explained:

> So, and not that I chalk that all up being a Black and White issue, but part of it might just be her lack of aptitude as a professor. Um, but those were some of the things that we had to deal with in the course of the course. But not nothing blatantly racist. Not like when I was in high school and in college, you know the undergraduate, there was nothing blatantly racist. Just little things that I know she wouldn't say to anybody else.

Sam is a 30-year-old man who identifies as Black, Asian and Queer. He is single and works as an assistant professor in a large predominantly White university located in the Northeast portion of the U.S. Sam attended a large PWI in the Southeast and defined his early schooling experiences as different. He said there were different because initially, he went to an all-Black high school, designated as the "Blacker" high school in his city, but eventually he transferred to an Asian school when his mother got remarried, and his family relocated to an upper-class neighbor. Sam identifies as Black/Asian and Queer and said one of the ways he identifies, Black, played a significant role in his doctoral experiences. As such, throughout his narrative, while he does identify as a man, he did not talk about being a Black male in his program, but he commonly referred to himself as a Black person in his doctoral program:

> So, when I came in to my doctoral program, we were a cohort program, so people kind of came in as groups, uh, myself and a person in my program, uh, I mean my cohort, my cohort happened to have two Black people, myself and then a Black woman. Um, and that was the first time that had happened in our program for like several cohorts. There was another woman who was actually African, Black African who was, I think two

cohorts above us, but she was like really never around. Um, and then before that there was like one Black man, I think three or four cohorts above. So, when we came in, we were the first Black people were coming in for a while. And in fact, uh, there would not be another Black person admitted to that program for I think four years, cause we, you know, I know then the next Black person that came in when I was on my way out when she, when she was admitted.

Unlike A.I. , Sam said his doctoral experiences did involve blatant of racism. He equated the level of racism he experienced during his time in his program to the political climate in the country and said it was frustrating for him:

So, I started my doctoral program in 2012. Um, and, uh, a lot of political things that happened between 2012 and 2017 both there and just around the country. It was a really interesting time to be in graduate school. So, within my actual academic program, it was frustrating. Uh, I think partly because some of the things we, I mean, I don't know if anything I say here is particularly you, right? Like, you know, they, there were the day to day things that people would say to me, both faculty and students. There were like the curricular emphasis on things that seem to be disconnected from my experience as a person of color. Um, I mean, I think particularly the first time that we had a problem, um, well, I mean, let me clarify. We have a lot of problems. The first time we had a more noticeable problem was I was a social context of education class that we were in. Um, and the faculty member was writing on the board, like, all right, this is the social context of education. So, we're going to talk about all the other things that aren't school that affected the way that people experience school. And so, she started listing all of these things and race wasn't up there. And so, uh, I raised my hand and I said, race, right? Like

> it's a thing. And this was never been controversial for me. Like, it's, it's never been a hard topic. All the experiences I've had thus far, race was very, like, it wasn't a problem, but it was there. And so, it was, it wasn't controversial, it's just like part of life. Um, and so I brought it up and she said no. I was like, okay. Um, and it became an argument because the Black woman who was in my cohort, she raised her hand. She was like, no, but isn't it like it is. And it became like this whole argument that we had, and it was really frustrating cause this was a class of probably 13 or 14 people and the only people that were speaking up for myself as a Black woman in my cohort.

Sam talked about his multiple identities and said he did not approach his doctoral studies by choosing to represent himself with one identity over the other. However, he said most of the challenges he experienced in his doctoral program was racism from being a Black man. Thus, he said his identity as Black man took precedence over White people recognizing him being Asian and Queer:

> Uh, and again, like I still carried all of those other identities with me. I still carry being Asian, I still carried being queer and yet those things like did not come up. And I was not the only one that I think felt that way. Like there was another student who was in an adjacent organization at the time who I remember very distinctly during a meeting. So, these were not my words, but she said that she is, she's a Black woman, but she's also a lesbian and she said like, it is so much harder to be Black here than it is to be gay. Um, and I felt that way too. Like I, someone that had struggled with my identity like with like my, my sexual orientation throughout life and I wasn't struggling with a ton. Um, I'm not sure I didn't talk about it a lot because I was still in this house. Right. But it also was not hitting me in the face every day the way that racial identity was [in his doctoral program].

> Um, and so yeah, that I think that is my very long winded, uh, explanation summation of what the big notes of my experiences as a, as a person of color, as a Black person in my doctoral program.

During his doctoral program, Sam was heavily involved in work on his campus that centered around social justice and racial diversity. Sam said that while he enjoyed what he did, he got tired of being chosen as the expert to talking about issues on race and diversity:

> It's the thing where you having to resist being pulled and put into every space where they need someone of color, or they need a Black person. So, in recruitment events, I very frequent, I got called to be a part of recruitment events. And some of this, you could probably say it was attributed to my involvement on campus, but some of this like I don't think was right.

He said by always being asked to talk about issues on diversity and inclusion, it eventually led to him having a negative viewpoint of White people:

> So, it's kind of hard to talk about it [issues of race and diversity] particularly because there was a certain point where I was like, I'll be honest, I was getting sick of White people where I was like, I am so tired having to have these conversations every day, but like cannot go to my White therapist and be like, oh, I'm tired of White people. Like that's not a, that's not a conversation, you know. Um, and when I did actually at the suggestion of the, of the other person in my cohort, I actually had a very frank conversation with my therapist where I said for the next month was it actually, they had actually just hired I think like their first Black therapists and I said like, for a month can I meet with her? Because there's some things I need to work through that I honestly don't think I can, I can talk to you about. And being a professional therapist, they're like, I understand. And for a

> month I met with this other [Black] woman to talk about these issues and to talk about like, I am tired of dealing with some of these things and I'm getting to the point where I'm starting to like have patterns of thought that I don't like. Like I'm getting to the point where like, I'll meet a new, like White faculty member who wants to talk to me and I immediately don't trust them and like, that's not who I want to be.

One of the compelling issues Sam said he experienced in his doctoral program was the "two-toned stereotypes" he experienced as a Black man. He explained how White people in his program would say things to him regarding his success in the doctoral program. Sam said, on the one hand, the comments that were directed towards him regarding his academic success sounded like a compliment, but on the other hand, he knew what was being said was more of a negative stereotype of Black men and their abilities to be in a doctoral program:

> First of all, some similar things were happening to me there [experiences stereotypes in doctoral program] that I think happened to me as an undergraduate where I think when you are in a doctoral program and you're doing okay, you know, in a doctoral program, as a Black person, people started to point out in a way that it becomes a little annoying. Um, and you know, in a way that starts to become, it becomes one of two tones. It becomes either an, Oh, I'm surprised, you know, like usually people like you weren't here and it's like thanks like, I don't, I know that's meant to be a compliment, but I don't know what to do with that.

Summary

Each of the participants in this study talked about their doctoral experiences and what it was like being the only or one of few African-American men in their programs. Although their educational experiences, before their doctoral programs, were different, as African-

American/Black men, they all experienced subtle to overt forms of racism. While all of the participants did not experience feelings of isolation and alienation from being the "only one" in their doctoral programs, they all experienced and had to counter conversations and discussions on race which involved them being, directly and indirectly, stereotyped by their White doctoral classmates and in certain cases, White faculty.

Sankofa: Using Cultural Knowledge to Survive

Sankofa, the second theme in this study, is a word that originates from King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Africa. In the Akan language, the meaning of Sankofa is translated: "se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki." which means "it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot" (Willis, 1998). As members of the African Diaspora, the notion behind Sankofa, teaches us to return to our foundations to push ahead. Namely, we should reach back and assemble the best of what our past needs to show us, with the goal that we can accomplish our maximum capacity as we push ahead. Whatever we have lost, overlooked, renounced, or been deprived of can be recovered, restored, safeguarded, and propagated (Temple, 2010). Drawing on the principles of Sankofa, the theme, using cultural knowledge to survive, relates to the participants' embracing the cultural wisdom and advice of family members and other African-American men and women they credit for helping them to make it successfully through their doctoral programs. In this section, six of the seven participants, Phillip, Drake, Eric, Akinwale, Levi, and A.I. express and recognized members of their families and African-American classmates for cultural support which helped them to survive as African-American men in their all-White doctoral programs.

Phillip, who held mixed feelings about being the first African-American man to graduate from his program, and talked highly about his dad and said he is his biggest hero and role model.

When he reflected on why he was sad because he was the first African-American male to graduate from his doctoral program in 2017, one of the reasons was he gave related to his father's story. He said he understood that the racial climate of the time when his dad went to graduate school was a direct correlation to the lack of African-American men in graduate programs. However, Phillip said in comparing his situation to his father's; his thoughts were "why in 2017 are things the same way, why aren't they different?" Despite his feelings on being the first to graduate from his doctoral program, Phillip credits his father's experiences, wisdom and success as an African-American man who came from a small racist and rural town in South Georgia:

> Like I said, my dad, my dad came from dirt literally. <laughs> and so, he was a surprise [to his community] I mean I, that's one person I can always brag on cause it's like, it's really amazing what he did, you know, coming from nothing but waking up at three something in the morning, go to work with his dad, when he'd come back home and then go to school, finish school, go to work, you know, he gave money to his mom and then think about doing, you know, academics. And it really boiled down to, you know, he wasn't doing good in school and a teacher one day he said he was, he was sneaking into the girl's bathroom and a teacher saw him and said, you know, "what's your name and said I'm putting you in my class, you're going to be in the front of my class". And he said he studied for the first time in his life and he got like a, and you know, and she wrote a note on his paper that said, I knew you could do it. And after that, it encouraged him to start to try to excel academically. And, he got accepted to Nixon State university [pseudonym] and then, ended up going to Wisdom Institute [pseudonym] for dental school.

In the next excerpt, Phillip shared an exchange that he had with his dad on doing all-nighters in his doctoral program which he said was a turning point for him on not dropping out of school. The emphasis Phillip places on this experience: "he knew he had his dad's support":

> But, one of the things that helped me, encouraged me, was realizing, like for me, I was able to go to my dad and say, you know dad, <sigh> you know, I'm, doing all-nighters. And my dad was able to say, I did all-nighters too, <laughs> you know? and, it was like, you know, I want to quit. My dad was able to say I wanted to quit too. you know, those little those things and his stories and then seeing the success that he is now.

When Drake was in his master's program, which was at the same PWI where he got his doctorate, he took courses that included doctoral students. It was during those classes that he said he met some African-American men who were working on their Ph.Ds. Drake said it was through those relationships that he became interested in pursuing his doctorate. Once he graduated with his master's degree and moved over to the doctoral program, he said despite being the only African-American male in his program, "There were some brothers in other doctoral programs that I hooked up with." As he mentioned previously, the relationships that he established with those African-American men, allowed him space to discuss and share some of the emotional complexities that he had to deal with by being at a PWI. Drake pointed out, that in addition to the support he received from the African-American men whom he formed relationships with, he was part of a study group of African-American men and women. Drake credits his study group for not only helping him to survive and make it through his doctoral journey, but for proving to be beneficial for the other African-American doctoral students in the group:

I had a study group. Like when I first got there I didn't, I was studying in isolation by myself and once I formed a study group, it was made up of Black students who were Black women. It was Black men and we're all in different programs, but we would all meet up and study until four or five o'clock in the morning, which I wouldn't do by myself. But the fact that we pushed each other, we would meet at this one building was like, look, look, I'm here man. You got to come as a man. I was like man I don't feel like coming and there were like, look, we already hear just come on. So, we would, we pushed each other cause I couldn't do it like when I would try to push myself, I was like should I go? and I wouldn't go and wouldn't nothing get done. But like I had other people calling me, texting me, telling me, look we already here, come on here, and we would just, we will order food. So, we wouldn't have any excuse like oh we got to lead, go get something to eat. So, we have food there. We had snacks when we like, and I remember this one book I read where they were trying to get students to stay like the Asian students and the Asian students would be there till four or five o'clock in the morning cause they didn't look at studying the way we look at it, they looked at it as a social event and that's why we like well we got food we got music but we here and from that I have published more, I presented with that group. We all helped each other, graduate, like what you working on, alight, you working on chapter two? All right. We are going to stay here until you finish chapter two. What are you working on? You working on a proposal? Okay. So, we sat down, we would ask each other what are you working on? And we would stay there until we finished, and we would exchange our papers, like look can you read mine, I'll read yours. And the fact that we have four or five different people, like four or five different sets of eyes to look at it. You know, we had different people's like,

> maybe you should do this, maybe you take this out, put this in. Like when I just did it by myself, you know, four or five brains are better than one. So, the study group was such a success for me and like we published together, we presented together at conferences and we pushed each other. And before then I was kind of lost. Like, I was always looking for somebody to study with, it wasn't consistent, but we made sure, like Friday and Saturday night we were there all day, all night, wake up, Sunday, come back. I mean, we just, it was just, it was so helpful to me. Like I feel like I wouldn't be there if we weren't that close to each other. So, like the study group to me was the biggest success to me at school, at the university.

As with Drake's study group, Eric, who grew up in all-White schools, navigated being the only African-American man in his doctoral studies and said he too had a group of students of color in his program that were influential to his success as a doctoral student:

> So, you know, find out, you know what I mean? If I found out they were was like cool and we would all sort of like dealing with similar things like that should work, you know? And then they would come to my, my proposal, they came to my defense and all sorts of stuff my dissertation defense, like they were supportive, supportive as hell, you know, wishing, and pulling for each other, wishing each other well and that sort of thing stuff.

Eric talked about other African-Americans who were essential to his success during his doctoral program. One of the things he brought up and noted as significant was, throughout the time he was working on his doctorate, he also taught at an all-Black school in the neighborhood where he grew up. While discussing his teaching experiences, Eric talked highly about the interactions he had with his students. Eric said he often integrated what he was learning in his doctoral program

in the curriculum he taught to his students. Eric said this method helped in establishing the close relationships he had with his students. He said the relationships he established were not only beneficial to his students, but Eric said they supported him while he was working on his doctorate:

> They were supportive as hell you know what I mean. They were supportive as hell as well because one of them [from their community] was getting a doctorate.

When Eric finished his doctorate, he said whenever someone at his school would call him Mr. Eric, his students would correct them:

> My students were supportive as hell and they would correct anybody. Like when I got the doctorate and someone else, or a student came along and called me Mr. Eric they would say "don't you call him, Mr. Eric, that's Dr. Eric", so like that. And my kids took some pride in that too. You know, the beautiful part of the back end of it [his doctoral journey], I included them [his students] in some of the research I was putting out because I appreciated all of them. I wanted them to have something out there that they could be proud of, you know what I mean? Even before graduating, you know? So, yeah, it was, it was a good thing, a good thing. You know? That matters. And, I think it really matter to other people around me as well.

Eric said the other people it mattered to regarding him getting his doctoral degree were those in his community. Eric said he took pride in his community and pointed out that one of the reasons he decided to pursue a doctoral degree was he felt like having a doctorate would allow people to recognize him as a credible person. Eric said, more importantly, things he learned in his doctoral program allowed him to address the issues of gentrification and school redistricting that was occurring in his community:

> So, I live in Symphony City [pseudonym] and its going through sort of like, sort of forced gentrification and sort of forced urban renewal and it is really put placing most of the folks and the city in low income situations. So, it's really placing a lot of people, you know, in the cross hairs. So, that's happened in terms of land, but always at the same time, the very similar thing is happening where a very heavy influx of corporate charters is flooding into my neighborhood and it not only threatens my livelihood as an educator, but also it is a terrible on the educational system. So, all these things are happening at the exact same time. So, I'm like, "Yo, I said this happened in terms of land and this happened in terms of education." So, I'm thinking about the literature and I realized like Yo, this sort of pattern, it takes place all across the country, you know it was happening. It was happening in Chicago, you know, it certainly was happening in Atlanta, happening sections of New York and Philly. I'm like Yo, all those things I was reading about is happening here right now.

Eric did involve himself in the political affairs of his community, and while he is recognized for his educational accomplishments, and is held in high regards by members of his community, he said he remained humble. He said that for him, his humility embodied the appreciation he had for the support his community provided for him as a child an into his adult years, mainly when he was working on his doctorate. As such, Eric said, unlike his students who corrected people for addressing him as Mr. Eric, whenever members of his community called him Dr. Eric, he would respectfully correct them by telling them not to call him that:

> Like I'd tell them [members of his community] like, "Yo, don't call me Dr. Eric," Like don't call me that. But they took take pride in it like, and I never introduced myself in my community, I never introduce myself as doctor nothing. But if I'm around a bunch of

> White folks, I'll drop doctor on them in a second. But around my neighbors, like hell no! Because I, to the members of my community, I was Eric you know what I mean, before I was Dr. Eric So, like nothing has got to change. I don't change the way I look at you and I won't change the way I talk or act because it is like, don't change my title, don't call me that. You know what I mean? Or don't feel you have to because I'm not checking books at all, so I'm rarely ever call then. You know what I mean? But they feel a sense of pride. They certainly and support me as well, you know, which is cool. You know what I mean? Our people are way more supportive than what we even give ourselves credit for.

Akinwale, the second oldest participant, obtained his inspiration and support from his family. He stated:

> My mother and my father worked their balls of for me to exist. So, it is on their shoulders that I stand. I mean, failure's not an option for me. Regardless if I lack the skills, If I lacked the ability to do, failure's not an option. So that's why I always say, failure's not an option. You know, I think about my parents and the sacrifice they made for the seven of us [his brothers]. You know, I think about my mother and my father and just, you know, coming from the south, working in the fields, I mean, sharecropping, you know me, but when you go see things like cotton for real, you know I'm saying it's the images in my head of people picking 200 pounds of cotton with their hands, you know that inspired me to finish my doctorate.

As with Eric, Akinwale credits the support of his community for helping and encouraging him to complete and survive his doctoral journey:

> You know, I'm living in a community because I'm a child of the community and the only thing I have is the strength of a community. And that community, which I call the African village, contributed everything to me. So, I'm indebted to the community

Akinwale declared that because of his commitment to his African roots that he understands that without the sacrifices of his people, he would not have made it through.

> …It is important [as an African-American man] whenever you get your Ph.D. is to understand that you're not here alone. Many people have laid down their lives to get you to this point. Many Africans have died to move us from point a to point b. Um, I'm here on the grace of my ancestors and what I said, and I say it always like the movie, Amistad, I'm not here alone. It is only on the strength of people who came before me that allow me to be who I am. I always said to myself, someone survived the trip 3000 miles across the ocean for me to exist.

After finishing his doctorate, Akinwale reflected on his overall academic journey and acknowledged his resilience to push through the struggles he endured to reach his goal of getting a Ph.D. is directly related to his cultural heritage:

> I knew day one that I wanted to get a doctorate degree, as crazy as it sounds. I knew that when got to my freshman year in college and that lady asked me who let you out of high school? I knew that I was going to push education to the full brim. That's why it didn't discourage me. I come from a resilient group of Black people, which are originally called African people. So, I knew once I got in and I knew for a fact when I got the first set of degrees from the university, that I was going to get a Ph.D. I knew that. I knew, I knew it so much, even when I got my masters. I exceeded everybody's expectations and except myself.

While Levi was initially reluctant on attending his institution and was one of few African-American men in his program, he said when it came to having relationships with the other African-America men in his program, there was one African-American man whom he embraced as being the most supportive for him:

> So, there were a few other African-American men in the program. I, along with one other guy we were the only Black males in our program. And he it is interesting in that he was a grown man, like, and I mean probably 50, or he might have been a little younger than 50, but he had kids, and he had a son my age. …So, but he kinda, In a weird way, took me under his wing and not in the sense of, hey, you need to research this, you need to do this, but our research agendas didn't lineup and what we wanted to do once we graduated was also completely different. But that's not where we connected. …So, a lot of the issues that I possibly would have faced in my program, he kind of shielded me from them and protected me from things in the sense that things he had to go through. And then he would say, no, "don't do this." Or he was kind of, he would be the one to tell me you can't trust this faculty member, White or Black if, if we're being honest. Oh, because they're only in this for their best, their best interest.

Levi said there were many times during his doctoral journey, where the older African-American man in his program helped him to keep his sanity. In one instance, Levi said his advisor wanted him to take a course that he did not need from a particular professor. What Levi did not know was his advisor was not looking out for his best interest, but rather the professor's interest. Levi said, his classmate enlightened him on the intent of the advisor and told him never to do anything of that nature again:

> “Look man, don't ever do that again.” He told me you can't trust those two because they're watching out for each other and they are in the process of making sure that the classes meet and they're doing various things. So, he's going to advise you to take her class because he wants her class to meet capacity of students because he wants to make sure that she gets tenure and things of that nature. And he was telling me this and I'm like, Oh man, like dang. So, then from that point on, I almost didn't make a move unless I spoke to him. Him being the Black male, who was also, who was in my cohort, but who was also in the program.

Levi talked about other Black persons who were instrumental in supporting him through his doctoral experience. When expressing who the others were, he emphatically said:

> The Black women held me down! I mean, they held me completely, completely, completely down! And by that, so as I said, I as I was dissertating, I moved back home, and when I moved back home, I started working for a and nonprofit and it was by ran by a Black woman who was also in charge of my department at my university. And you know, I went in and because I didn't want her to think I wanted a certain thing, money, I was like, I'm not looking for money. I just want to get some experience and I need this and that. And I mean, she paid me. She made sure I got paid. She fought that I got paid decent, and she made sure I got exposed to certain things. Once she found out that I wanted to go into the one to go into the nonprofit sector, she made sure I got exposed to certain things. She made sure that I wrote. She made sure that my name started to get out of there, and when people wanted to know certain things about HBCUs and things of that nature, she would say “Hey, call Levi, he knows this type of stuff.” She was really pushing me out on the forefront, and then there was another female lady who was, um,

who really looked out for me as well. She was at a nonprofit and she created an internship a doctoral fellowship that didn't even exist. We create together to help me out because she realized that I wasn't getting the support that I needed while I was in my doctoral program, so I mean without, definitely without those two women, I don't, I think my trajectory in education and the thing that I'm doing right now might of even be remotely possible, I mean really, really held me down. [the Black women] And it was I want to say over time, but it was very, it was very obvious and apparent that they were like, no, I want to make sure that you have a very motherly type of approach, if you will, where a, you know, and I mean, don't get me wrong, they took care of themselves, but they were like, I have your best interest at heart. I want you to make sure and know that I want you to get what you need to get so you can do well and grow. So, you know, it was, that was, it was really good. I definitely need that.

Having reentered a doctoral in his late forties, A.I.'s story is consistent with Drake and Eric's in regard to drawing on the support of African-American men in women in their study groups. A.I. pointed out that he benefited from the study group, but as by being the older doctoral student in his cohort, he took it upon himself to be a mentor to the younger Black students:

> And as a cohort we, the Black students, men and women, we kind of sat together and supported one another. That was good. You know, we tried to, make sure that the people who were coming along got what they needed to get and people they weren't, I'm trying to think who was before us, there weren't a lot of Black people before us cause one brother I met who was working on his dissertation when we were still taking classes, he worked at another university, so he wasn't really involved. So, didn't have like a support,

> but we had a got a pretty good group of people with us and we, I think everybody's just about finished now. So, everybody, you know, we, everybody shared notes. you know we tried to bring everybody along. Particularly I, you know, I believe, since I was you know, I was the oldest person, yeah, I was the oldest Black person, so I was trying to bring all of them all along and just share information, you know.

A.I. spent 16 years away from his initial doctoral experience building a career and raising his children. By the time he reentered a doctoral program in his late forties, he said his notions on support from his African-American classmates are slightly different than what they were when he was a younger doctoral student. However, A.I. pointed out that while his thoughts are different, as an African-American man pursuing a doctoral degree at a PWI, he did value the cultural support he had from the African-American men and women who were in his doctoral cohort. A.I. advised, for other African-American men who aspire to obtain a doctorate at a PWI, the importance of having an African-American man as a part of their support group:

> So, find some African-American men who'd gone through at a predominately White institution and communicate with them. And that's one thing that I did mention earlier. I have a friend who grew up in my neighborhood who went to the same state school who had finished his doctor. He worked in higher education his whole career. But he finished his doctorate the year before I did mine. And so yeah, he was another encouragement. Um, so, having people that can encourage you on the journey is very critical

Sam talked about his role of activism on his campus. However, throughout his story, he did not directly express how his activist efforts were as a single support structure for him surviving as a Black man in his doctoral program. However, he did note that his female African-American classmate as one of the persons he relied on for cultural support:

So, I was lucky to have the other Black woman in my cohort there because otherwise, like I didn't have anyone to talk about this with, [situation he experienced in class with a White teacher who downplayed racism] which is why I started doing a lot of involvement on campus around this. But, you know, without her, it would've been really, really hard. …I mean, we're still friends to this day. Uh, and frankly, part of the reason why we talk so much, it's because we're still experiencing many similar things when it comes to just being Black academics. She is also a faculty member, uh, that at also a PWI. So, I'm at one now [faculty member at a PWI] and we get to talk about those things, both of our campuses and we're also currently going undergoing some changes that we were similarly involved in. So, our experiences have been relatively similar in that respect. And while I was there, [his doctoral program] um, our experiences as being Black were very different from each other's. So, for me, I had always been a very diverse spaces and frankly like had not fully been within Black only spaces, partly because I didn't feel particularly welcome in many of them. And so, uh, throughout that time period in my doctoral program like my conception of myself was Black, disparity was for her.

As a Black, Asian and Queer man, Sam discussed struggling with his multiple identities during his doctoral program. Given his struggle, he said he was thankful for a relationship he established with his Black female classmate because their relationship helped him to navigate the all-White space of their doctoral program. He said due to her struggles with issues of disparity it allowed them to share, support each, and challenge themselves to find their place as Black doctoral students in their all-White program:

….And so, like her experience being Black and coming to this institution was very different. Her prior educational experiences, we're primarily White, mine actually weren't

,even the high school I went to a school that was not very Black, It was very Asian. So, I didn't even see that. It was like a primarily White space. So, we came into it our doctoral program in a very different way. And I think those differences were important for multiple reasons. So, I know for, for me some of the things that I really valued about her experience had to do with accepting in valuing yourself as a Black person [in the doctoral program]. Like I think I saw it. Like I knew I was Black, right? But I had no idea what that actually meant to just, except that I was as a part of my identity. Like I always accepted it, but an open, a very like tangential way. But um, I think part of my offense that I took at first when people in my doctoral program were like tokenizing me and stuff like this was maybe out of a place that was not great. So, for me of I may have been at a place that like, I just didn't want to be recognized that way. And I wanted to be recognized as a whole person. And for her, she was like, you are still whole person. And so, I think, I think that the two of us managed to help each other out, both intellectually because we come from different kinds of spaces. And the things that we knew, and we brought to the table were different. But also, just frankly from the camaraderie point of view, why? Cause we're taking classes together. So, you know, it wasn't just one Black person push to back on racism in our doctoral classes Typically, it was both of us together. Um, and then like even beyond that, when we started to take other classes beyond our core classes, like she had her say, like, this happened in my psychology class. I'm like, yeah, this happened in my political science class. Really, the similar racial issues we experienced.

Summary

While the participants in the current study experienced forms of support from their White faculty members, classmates and members in their cohorts, for them having cultural support from members of their African-American communities, families, and classmates, particularly African-American men, was vital to them surviving as the only African-American/Black men in their doctoral programs.

Learning as a Community Endeavor: "It was Not Just for Me"

This third and final theme, *Learning as a Community Endeavor, "It was Not Just for Me,"* means that the study participants expressed and believed that by earning a doctorate they accomplished something for themselves and for members of their families and the African-American community. Additionally, the theme holds the meaning that during their doctoral programs the participants' held the notion that they had to perform to higher standards than their White male counterparts in their programs so other African-American men who desire to pursue a doctorate at a PWI would be embraced as worthy candidates. This section includes six of the seven participants' collective narratives where they explain that they earned their doctorates for themselves and their community.

Out of the seven participants in this study, Phillip, the biomedical engineer, expressed the most grief and stress from his doctoral journey. As such, at one point during his doctoral journey, he ended up having to go to the emergency room because he thought he was having a heart attack. Phillip found out that what he was experiencing was a physical reaction to his stress. As such, he talked about the pressure he felt from being the only African-American man in his doctoral program. One of the examples he pointed out was feeling pressure from always having

to be on guard and make a good impression to his White classmates, as he was representing his entire race:

> I think like for me it really was at that ongoing being the only one, and, just it's constantly it's like, man, like not ever being able to drop your guard, you know? And like, I was so upset with myself on time when I used slang, you know. And like one of my lab mates, he thought it was so funny of the word choice I used I can't even remember what it was. And as I think about it, I used the word joker, you know, I was like, man, that joker said something. And I, and you know, as soon as I said it and I was like, man. And my lab mate just thought it was the funniest thing, you know? And I was like, god I let my guard down for a second, you know? And I was like, now he's going to think that all Black people say joker and all this kind of stuff <laughs>. So, it was just, which looking back now was dumb. But like I said, it was just that constant pressure I put on myself to always try to leave a good image or my whole race to anybody that came in contact with me. And that's a really hard load to carry.

Given these adverse experiences, Phillip talked about his feelings towards his former institution and said due to the amount of trauma he experienced in his doctoral program, he doubted that he would ever return to the institution for homecoming or other alumni events. However, despite the racism, isolation, and emotional trauma Phillip experienced while in his doctoral program, he realized in the end, it was worth it. He said it was worth it to the point of realizing the value his earning a doctoral has for others:

> I did something that was not only big for me, but you know, future generations of my family will be able to say that Philip was here, you know, and, he, he did, you know, accomplish something. You know, I thought that was really, that was one of the

> highlights for me. ….And so, if I can to be encouragement to future generations by just finishing, regardless of what happens next in my career, I was the, it's working, you know, because I know what it did for me.

Phillip reflected again on what his father went through in terms of having to navigate racism and desegregation to get through graduate and eventually dental school. He said his father's experiences left an impact on him which caused him to push through and complete his doctorate, even though he wanted to quit. Phillip said, at the end of his doctoral journey he wanted to model and be an example for others, just like his father:

> I was like, I would like to be that for my future kids and their grandkids if possible, knowing that, hey, you know, and that was one that, like I said, and realizing where my dad came from and not knowing what a Bunsen burner was until he got to college, things that I took it for granted, I'm like, wow, how can I, how can I justify quitting, you know? And he came from nothing and was able to succeed and he, he's pretty much placed, my parents are placing me in all these schools to succeed. Why am I going to quit? You know?

Phillip noted that beyond the notion of doing it for others, he does whatever he can to inform and encourage other African-American men or women who are seeking to pursue a doctorate:

> So, like I said, whenever I hear anything about, [African-Americans seeking to pursue a doctorate] you know, I really do purposely take the effort to reach out and try to just talk to people. And even at my current company, whenever we do, you know, which they conduct tours of the company or just do little things, specifically for African-Americans, you know, I try to let you know my background and then give them my contact information on LinkedIn information. So, I let them know if you have any questions, you

know, you're about to go to college and when you're about to just go to Undergrad, you know, let me help you, you know? So that's, that's what I've done. ...I'll put it on Facebook, you know, and say, Hey I was the first African-American Ph.D. at my institution. And through that, you know, I've had people that I didn't know contact me, you know. One time I literally had a dad from, you know, I guess he went a little viral and said, "my son is in the first year of doctoral program and he's getting his Ph.D. in chemical engineering. I would love for you to talk to him." And he was like, "I'd love for you to talk to me." And so, I ended up talking to him, the dad for about an hour. And then, you know, I've talked to the son and I gave him the keys that I thought were critical to finish Grad school. …And so now I try to do whatever I can to help the next generation, whether it's an engineering, or what have you to finish and encourage the next generation to finish.

Much like Phillip, Drake said once he graduated from his master's program and moved into his doctoral program at the same PWI, the pressure he experienced from being the only African-American man in his program was based on feeling like he had to set the bar high so "other brothers" could come into the program:

It was a lot of pressure because, I think at the end of my program they let another brother in, that was my whole thing. I was like, look man, I can't mess this up because if I do, they are not going to let another brother in for like 10 years <laughs>. So, let me get all the fellowships and make sure my teaching is on point and making sure everything I do because I can't mess up because I got the whole weight of the world on my shoulders cause every brother behind me, you know, was looking up to me cause I got to be the example.

Drake pointed out that beyond the notion of feeling like he had to set the bar so other African-American men could come into his doctoral program, he said by performing at high level, his intent was proving to his PWI that Black men can perform at the Ph.D. level of education

> So, I just wanted to do well for me, for the brothers coming, coming behind me, just set good examples. I, wanted them [his institution] to know, this is what, you know, the standard for what a Black male Ph.D. student looks like. And you know, this is the work we can do. This is the research we're doing and its all, you know, up to par with everyone else's scholarship.

Drake credits his grandmother for supporting him for all of his life, particularly during his early schooling experiences. He said that if it had not been for the relationship and influence of his grandmother, he would have walked away for his doctoral program. Therefore, he said when pushed through the obstacles he faced with his doctoral committee he did so because of the "guilt trip" his grandmother placed on him to finish. In reflecting on when he walked across the stage to receive his diploma, and knowing that his grandmother was in the audience to witness it, Drake said:

> I was on the stage, you know what I'm saying? she was in the crowd, so someone showed the video to me and that meant everything to me because like, it took me a little bit longer to finish my program because I had issues with my committee members reading my stuff. So, honestly, it took me like a year or two longer and I wouldn't have finished if my grandmother wasn't there to always guilt trip me. She was like, "I need you to graduate before I pass away." So, the fact that I did it and she was there at my graduation, I was just so happy that if anybody I wanted to be there, I wanted her to be there to see me walk across that stage because it mean so much to her, you know Me going to a predominantly

> White institution in the South that the year when they desegregated, you know, like if she would've went there when she was 18, she wouldn't have been allowed to go there. You know what I'm saying? There were a lot of factors, and that's why it meant so much for her to see me get a Ph.D. from the university that I got one from. So, so yeah.

As an activist, and spokesperson for his hometown, Symphony City [pseudonym] Eric's passion for his community and his students is the impetus for him pursuing his doctorate. He said another part of his decision for getting a doctorate was because he wanted to pick up where his grandfather left off with being an activist and leader within his community:

> I felt like my neighborhood was being taken advantage of, and I felt like you know, I had to prove myself in my community and be someone like my grandpa was. I felt like my neighborhood was being taken advantage of. And this [getting his doctorate] was my contribution to the fight. You know what I mean? To fight for, you know, for what's right and challenge what's wrong and to fight for the people.

By completing his doctorate, Eric said it positioned him to not only be the leader in his community he desired, but having the doctorate allows him to be a voice for the people in his community whose voices are not heard:

> And these concerns about what is happening in my community, because of my doctorate I can take my knowledge into certain spaces in my community and represent us cause I live here too, you know? So, that was my contribution. That's the way I looked at it. Like, if I look around this whole city, I ask myself, what other Black residents are in a doctoral program? None, me, that's it. You know, so that comes with a certain level of responsibility. You know, I know I'm going to be in certain spaces that my neighbors would never be admitted, never be taken seriously. And it's because of the way they talk,

> because they don't have, like, they don't have a liberal arts education, they don't have a degree. So, like in certain places, people just won't take them seriously just because of that. Even though everything they are saying is true and right and insightful. So, by being in this spot, I realized I have a responsibility and my responsibility and my research was on this community, you know, so it was really, really personal as hell the research topic I studied and it's really personal and more on getting that message out and making sure that our story is told. So, I said one thing I realized that was missing in the literature is the voice of the people who are impacted by these decisions. So, I was like, "Yo, all these things are happening," and I'm recognizing there was a void in the literature in that we don't know what the people are experiencing. So, I decided this was going to be my dissertation topic. So, that stuff was happening right now in real time and I got something, and I realized that something was missing, and it was the voice of my neighbors like me. I wanted to get them in it, so I studied that.

As Eric was finishing his doctorate, he said he often talked with his students about what he had to go through to get his degree. As he reflected on the times when he shared with his students, Eric said one of the impressions he wanted to leave on them was that if he could do it, they could too. As he mentioned earlier, one of the ways he showed them that they could do it was by having them work through some of the doctoral level assignments that he had to in his program:

> So, I'm wanted to remove that doubt and show them that they were adequate. And I wanted to show that they could do certain things because urban students, in urban public schools, they don't hear nothing but negative things about their capabilities. And you know, I challenged them about what their life plans were and so forth, you know. So, I

wanted them to understand that, number one, I believed in them and two, here's proof that you can do it because you're doing it, you know, so, yeah.

Akinwale was direct and to the point on expressing his purpose for obtaining his doctorate. As he reflected on the sacrifices his mother and father made for him and his brothers, he said it made him realize that getting a doctorate went beyond his personal goals:

> So, I'm indebted to the community. My education is not for myself. It's not for me to be selfish, it is for me to spread it, to inject it, to encourage our people, and to help and advocate on behalf of our people. So, I can say that, you know, this Ph.D. doesn't belong to me, but honestly to the people. I don't know. I mean I just think that [as an African-American man] it's a tremendous honor to have a Ph.D. and to understand that I have a responsibility in the development and the liberation of our people academically, financially, and psychologically.

Previously, Levi said his decision on what to major in while college was influenced by members of the . He pointed out, from the time he first entertained the notion of going to college, he held an interest in majoring in a field of study that would allow him to give back to his community. In his quest to find a doctoral program which suited his interest, Levi said he established a network of African-American men who mentored and guided him on which schools to apply to. Levi said the impression those mentors left on him, went beyond helping him on his decision for which graduate school to attend, but they increased his passion and desire to help other African-American men who aspired to obtain a doctorate. Similar to what Phillip said about helping African-American men who are interested in a doctoral degree, Levi pointed out, whenever he hears of an African-American man who is interested in the doctoral process, he reaches out to him:

> I'm always going to answer back. I'm going to try to reach out and I'm going to try to help them however I can. And if I can't help the person, I'm going to connect them with somebody who probably can because I do realize that I got where I got to because of the mentors and people sticking their necks out for me. Those people were saying about me, hey, I recommend this person. You should really look at Levi or even dare I say, they gave me a shot [internship] when they knew I wasn't completely qualified for it, but they know I needed the experience and the opportunity to kind of grow and you know, and sow some roots somewhere.

As Levi got closer to finishing his doctorate, he talked about what motivated him to push through the obstacles he experienced in his program, namely the multiple times he lost community members during the process. In response to those challenges, Levi said one of the things that motivated him to finish was he needed a job. However, Levi expressed what stood out the most as a motivation for him to finish was the obligation to obtain his degree for his family and community:

> Several things, one, um, as I said earlier, I just needed a job. I mean, I had gone so far and then it was kind of like, you got to finish this, but then, you know, I would argue even the, the joy and excitement that the people in my community had for me to finish So, I did. I mean the amount of excitement people had to like just to call me doctor, and say, hey, I have a PhD. I said, it's, it's amazing. You know, my family for sure, hands down. they were more excited than I was. I think they were more excited than I probably ever was, to the point that I got in trouble probably from a lot of people because I didn't even invite him to my graduation or my defense. And they were like, "well why didn't you invite us to your dissertation defense?" And I was like, well, but it was in the middle of

> the day on like a Monday. So, I figured you weren't going to take off work for it. No, I know of course say you know, and then my graduation was well when was my graduation? My graduation was like on a Thursday at five o'clock and I was like, you had to work. There was no way! People were like no, I wanted to hear it. So, I mean the excitement around that and just knowing that I wasn't even doing it for myself, but I was doing it for, I wouldn't do it just for myself.

In the end, Levi said, just as Phillip, Drake, and Akinwale had expressed, by obtaining his doctorate, he wanted to set an example for other African-American men who desire to pursue a doctorate:

> But then I was doing it for a community of other people and even people who might come after me and look at me and say, well if he can do it, then I can do it, was probably more than enough motivation to finish.

Now in his mid-fifties, A.I. reflected on when he resumed his doctoral journey and talked about the conversation he had with his sons. He said the tone of their conversations, while competitive, regarding who would finish their degree programs first, A.I. said the conversations were a source of motivation for him to finish his doctorate:

> I always told them [his sons] that I was going to finish before they finish their bachelor's degrees. And so, you know, they would always remind or ask me "dad when are you going to finish?" And when I had the chance to go back, I don't know, when they we just beginning in the high school and beginning college, they were like "you better hurry up cause we're about to catch you." So, that was part of my motivation was I had always told them I'll finish before you finish. And so, finishing a couple of years ago, just before, I was finishing, you know, I said them, I'll will be there when they finish.

A.I. talked about his friends and extended family members and the role they played supporting and motivating him to finish his degree. As such, he said, by obtaining a doctorate as the first-born male in his family, not only was he the first to do so, but for him, finishing was a non-negotiable because his doctorate was for the family:

> So, and I'm the first of four sons and the first of 41 grandchildren and the first male, I think on either side of my families. I mean, not in the extended family because it's a huge extended family but I believe either side does not have a doctor or even a masters. Now I have helps, people, my youngest brother and numerous cousins who was after me. But I'm the first. So, finishing the doctorate was, was really a nonnegotiable because it's not just for me, it's for the family, you know, so that somebody else can say he did it, I can do it. Yeah. So, that's a big part of, you know, how I initially thought about it and why are pushed through the finish to get to the end.

After sharing the previous statement, A.I. did not stop. He paused for a few seconds, and then reiterated and expanded on the reasons why he finished his doctorate:

> I promised my mother and my grandmother long before I was married, long before I had kids, you know, and they are both gone. But it's something that I, you know, I said it. So, in honor of their memory. …My sons, I promised them and then for all the family. Because I knew that I had people looking at me. Nephews and nieces, and cousins. So, all of those things with the family really, it was just to impart to the family.

Because of his work in the city of South Tannersville [pseudonym], Sam's interest and motivation to pursue a doctoral degree aligns with Eric and Levi's. Just like Eric, Sam is passionate about his community and equated getting a doctorate as a means for him to advocate and make a difference. Similar to Levi, Sam has a desire to focus on a doctoral program that will

prepare and allow him to concentrate on helping others in terms of community renewal. Sam moved from a stems related bachelor's degree directly to a doctoral program. However, before starting his doctoral program, he worked as a volunteer educator in the inner-city:

> Well first thing, I actually don't have a masters, but I went to go get my doctorate. I took a year off you know, cause I have this stem degree and I wanted to be in education and that, and at that point, all of the experience I had in school education was volunteer work. And so, I thought about getting a big job and work like deeply within a school. And I did that. And while I was there, I was working in South Tannersville, I even get a job that I frankly loved them.

Sam was troubled by what was going on in South Tannersville [pseudonym], so he decided to take action. As with Eric, Sam believed the role he played in supporting the community was by being a voice for those whom he felt were not capable of speaking for themselves:

> And I felt where I was seeing a lot of problems was where the decisions were being made. So, I given my role there was, I was in these community meetings and went to school board meetings. I was in these parents involved in meetings. I was in executive meetings just kind of there. Um, and just consistently seeing the way that people interacted with each other and the ways that we were making decisions I felt was being done one really inefficiently, first of all. But also, in a way that I didn't feel like it was actually capturing or addressing the problems that the people had in the room. Like not even getting to the core of like, oh, we're not getting to the root problems of humanity where like we're not even getting to the root problems of the things that people were coming to the table with here. Like this woman just said is really like the important thing. And we just ignored that that happened.

Unlike Phillip, Drake, Eric Levi, A.I. , and Akinwale, Sam did not directly equate getting his doctoral degree for others. However, in response to the problems he was experiencing in his community, he makes it clear that his reasons for pursuing his doctoral degree:

> And that's why I decided to go to graduate school. Because what I realized is why I love teaching and I still do is I realized that I was always going to be frustrated unless I was somehow able to impact or be a part of the systems that create that environment you know? I was proud of the work I got to do with the other kids in South Tannersville [pseudonym] that I've got to work with [inner city kids], but I was frustrated that I couldn't do more for them and I felt like I would be able to do more for them if I could start to tackle things that a systematic level rather than in the classroom.

Summary

For this theme, six of the seven participants explicitly stated they held the notion that their doctoral degrees were not just for them, but their families, members of their community, and for other African-American men coming behind them to pursue doctoral degrees. Although Sam did not directly express the same reasoning for earning his doctoral degree for "the community," he did express that by obtaining his doctorate he was fulfilling his goal of making things better for the kids and the community where he worked.

Chapter Summary

This findings chapter included three major themes that were constructed from narrative interviews with seven African-American/Black men who pursued their doctoral degrees at PWIs. The first theme, *Solitary Sojourns: African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWIs*, focuses on the participant's doctoral experiences at their respective institutions. Based on the data, it was found that all of the participants were the only or one of few African-American men in their

doctoral programs and classes and carried that knowledge as part of their daily academic consciousness. Given their status as being the "only one" in their doctoral programs and classes, all but one of the participants said they experienced feelings of isolation, alienation, and invisibility. Also, all but one of the participants said they experienced subtle to overt forms of racism. However, all of the participant said they had to counter and navigate being stereotyped by their White classmates and faculty in their doctoral programs. Finally, in this theme, each of the participants who said they felt pressure from being the only African-American man in their doctoral programs equated the pressure to their beliefs that they had to uphold a standard so other African-Americans men who aspire to pursue a doctorate, would be admitted to doctoral programs at PWIs.

In the second theme, *Sankofa: Using Cultural Knowledge to Survive*, the focus was on the participant's need to draw on cultural wisdom and the advice of family members and other African-American men and women to help the participants to survive and finish their doctoral programs. In this theme, six of the seven men talked about the value of the African-American community for not only surviving but motivating them to finish their doctoral degrees.

In the third theme, *Learning as a Community Endeavor: "It was not Just for Me*," the focus was on the participants' notion that the outcome of earning a doctoral degree was not for themselves, but others—their community. Within this theme, six of the seven participants said that by traversing and finishing their doctoral journeys, the results were not just for them, but for their families, members of their community, and for other African-American men coming behind them who would one day pursue doctoral degrees.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

> *If you can show me how I can cling to that which is real to me, while teaching me a way into the larger society, then and only then will I drop my defenses and hostility, and I will sing your praises and help you to make the desert bear fruit.*
>
> —Ralph Ellison (Staples, 1996)

The quote by Ellison, embodies the compassion and desire that African-American men embrace when they are finally supported and recognized for their abilities to contribute to a society that otherwise categorizes them as one dimensional and lacking intelligence. The purpose of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)?
2. In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college?

Based on the results of this study, I arrived at two major conclusions. First, African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) approached their doctoral experiences guided by a racial consciousness that informed their identities and helped them to navigate their educational experiences using a culturally grounded schema. Second, the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) provided a multi-dimensional profile that both supported and refuted the literature,

revealing stories of stress from underrepresentation, isolation and racial stereotyping, while also relating accounts of high performance, persistence, and strength.

In this final chapter, I address these conclusions in relation to the research questions, while making connections to the relevant literature. Following this, I discuss how this study impacts the four significant areas of literature, which were addressed in the earlier chapters: 1.) The Underrepresentation of African-American Males in Higher Education; 2.) The Success of African-American Males in Higher Education; 3.) African-American Graduate Students at PWIs; and 4.) African-American Males in Doctoral Education at PWI's. Finally, I present implications for theory, practice, and recommendations for future research.

The Doctoral Experiences of African-American Males at PWIs

The goal of this study was to understand the narratives of African-American men at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). In an effort to allow the men in this study to share the first-hand and in-depth stories of their doctoral experiences, I employed narrative style interviews. From their data collected, which lead to the study findings, I arrived at two conclusions. The first conclusion is in answer to the first research question: How do African-American male doctoral students describe their doctoral journeys at predominately White Institutions (PWIs)? The first conclusion is African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) approached their doctoral experiences guided by a racial consciousness that informed their identities and helped them to navigate their educational experiences using a culturally grounded schema. The collective narratives of the study participants revealed that each one of them, based on their interactions and commitment to their African-American communities, held themselves as strong and intelligent African-American men. The participants grew up in homes knowing the value of education, and even for those who

grew up in homes where their parents lacked a college education, they too were given the message regarding the importance of getting a college education as African-American men. These stories shared by the participants in this study regarding being taught to value education by their parents, coincides with Harper's (2012) study whereby his participants said their parents, even when they did not have a college degree, they stressed the importance of education as a means to social uplift. Overall, the participants exclusively relied on and embraced the cultural wisdom and principles from their African-American family members, friends, doctoral classmates, and others within in their communities for helping them to survive and complete their doctoral journeys. The current study confirms the literature on Black male identity in that the first study conclusion embraced how the African-American men in the study held a racial consciousness that formed their identities, along with utilizing a cultural schema to navigate their doctoral journeys. The notion of Black male identity, according to LaVant et al. (1997) is predicated by race and relates to the role of mentorship. Although the participants the current study experienced being the only African-American men in their programs, they attributed the few African-American men they did encounter in their programs for cultural support and mentorship. Likewise, the participants credited the cultural wisdom and principles they acquired from their African-American families and communities for establishing their identities.

Narratives of African-American Male Doctoral Students at PWI's

The second conclusion in this study answers the second research question: In what ways do the narratives of African-American male doctoral students support or refute the literature on African-American males in college? The second conclusion is the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) provided a multi-dimensional profile that both supported and refuted the literature, revealing stories of stress from

underrepresentation, isolation and racial stereotyping, while also relating accounts of high performance, persistence, and strength. Noting the second conclusion, the central theme behind the issues the African-American men in this study faced, was attributed to them being the only one or one of few African-American men in their programs and classes. The participants in this study associated their feelings of isolation with not having other African-Americans, men and women in their doctoral programs. Moreover, the racial stereotypes the participants experienced in their doctoral programs which were consistent with Harper's (2009) study on counterstories and racial stereotyping of African-American men on college campuses. Just as the participants in Harper's study, the participants in this study employed counterstories to confront the racial stereotypes they encountered in their doctoral programs. Overall, what the participants in this study experienced regarding isolation and racial stereotypes, confirms the literature regarding these issues as those graduate and undergraduate African-American students, men and women typical experience at PWIs (Fleming, 1984).

In response to the pressure, stress, feeling invisible, and isolation that the African-American men in the study experienced, the findings revealed they met those challenges by performing at high levels of achievement in their doctoral programs, thus positioning themselves as gatekeepers for future African-American men who desire to pursue a doctoral degree. Moreover, in response to the racial challenges the study participants faced in their doctoral programs, this study found that their persistence and resilience to finish their doctoral programs derived from the cultural principles and relationships they established with the sparse amount of African-American classmates they encountered in their doctoral programs. As such, the study findings are consistent with Horn (2012) and Ballard's (2006) studies which focused on the

factors African-American male doctoral students at PWIs credited for their persistence to complete their doctoral degrees.

Talking Back to the Literature

This study explored the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at PWI's. As such, the study and is situated within seven major and three minor areas of relevant literature and contributes to each respective area of scholarship. I begin this section by addressing the contribution this study adds to the four major areas of literature.

The Underrepresentation of African-American Males in Higher Education

While researchers hold opposing views on the underrepresentation of African-American men in higher education, based on data sources, the number of African-American men enrolled in college, on all levels, pale in comparison to the number of White males and females enrolled in college. The first theme in this study found that the participants were the only or one of few African-American men in their doctoral programs. Given the participants' solitary status and their lack of connection with other African-American men in their doctoral program, this study supports both sides of the argument that researcher proposed, in that African-American men are underrepresented and largely absent from college (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2009; Toldson & Morton, 2011; Strayhorn, 2011). While the issue of underrepresentation and African-American men in college is valid, researchers (Toldson & Morton, 2011; Strayhorn, 2011) argue that more importantly, there is a need to focus efforts on how to increase the enrollments of this group. Given this argument, the current study adds to the literature on the underrepresentation of African-American men in college in that the study participants shared stories regarding their frustrations and concerns on the lack of initiatives aimed towards figuring meaningful ways to increase the enrollment of African-American men in doctoral programs such as theirs. In

response, the participants in the current study shared stories on their efforts to change the status quo by being a part of the conversation to make a change (Toldson & Lewis, 2012).

The Success of African-American Males in Higher Education

The literature focusing on the success of African-American males in high education offers an opposing perspective to the common barriers African-American males typically encounter in higher education, specifically at PWIs (Harper, 2012, 2015; Strayhorn, 2008). The opposing perspective, as Harper (2015) proposed:

> On the other hand, it seems just as necessary to investigate how the one third who persisted through graduation managed to do so, especially given what the literature says about the racism, stereotypes, low expectations that threaten their success and sense of belonging at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (p.647).

The current study refutes, supports and adds to the body of success literature of African-American male in higher education. The narratives of the seven African-American men in the current study, told stories based on their experiences in their doctoral programs which encompassed the barriers commonly cited in the literature—isolation, racism and stereotypes (Strayhorn, 2008). The current study is consistent with Harper's 2007, 2009, 2015 studies on African-American men at PWIs resisting stereotypes in that the participants in the current study employed counterstories to challenge the monolithic stereotype of African-American men from their White doctoral classmates and faculty members. One of the ways the current study took a turn away from the literature was based on findings which revealed that one of the techniques four of the study participants employed to manage racial stereotypes was by abstaining from conversations on race, especially when they knew if they did engage in those conversations, no matter what their responses were, it would lead to their White classmates stereotyping African-

American men as a monolithic group. Overall, this study adds to the success literature in that the study found despite the barriers that the seven African-American male doctoral student participants faced, according to their stories, they did not see themselves as a deficit, but rather as success and an asset to their communities.

African-American Graduate Students at PWIs

Most of the literature on African-Americans in higher education at PWIs focus on the undergraduate experience. This study adds to the dearth of literature on graduate African-Americans students at PWIs with an emphasis on African-American men. The literature on African-American graduate students at PWIs encompasses a consistent trend of the racial and social barriers that African-Americans face in the undergraduate level of college at PWIs (Fleming, 1984; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). The findings of the current study, refute and supports the literature on African-American graduate students at PWIs in that the seven African-American men who participated the study experienced the common barriers of the literature proposed African-Americans contend with when they attend PWIs. The findings of this study are consistent with Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, and Bowles (2009) study where they determined that the negative social and racial climate African-American graduate students experience at PWIs is not exclusive to the Deep South. As such, while four of the African-American men in the current study attended PWIs in the Deep South, three of them attended doctoral programs at PWIs in the Midwest and North. Overall, despite of the geographical location of the PWIs the African-American men in the current study attended, they all told stories where they experienced racism, feelings of isolation, loneliness and invisibility. Moreover, the current study confirms and supports the literature which found that despite the negative social aspects the African-American men in the study experienced in their doctoral

programs, they all credited those experiences as strengthening their persistence and determination to finish their graduate programs.

African-American Males in Doctoral Education at PWI's

The final body of literature that informs the experiences of African-American male doctoral students, addresses the means by which they ensured their success in their doctoral programs at PWIs. Within the realms of doctoral education, Ballard (2006) argued, "Although it is seldom heard, the story of successful African-American males at the terminal degree level is one that needs to be told" (p.141). Noting Ballard's argument, the current study contributes to the literature in that it presents the narratives of the seven successful African-American men who attended doctoral programs at PWIs. Further, the current study adds to the body of literature on African-American males in higher education because it provides a response to what Ingram (2016) argued regarding the need to understand and address the low enrollment rate of African-American males on the graduate level by understanding the experiences of successful African-American men in advanced programs such as doctoral programs: "At the graduate level, the scarce enrollment rate of African-American men begs the need for more information on the experiences of African-American men in advanced degree programs" (p.3).

Moreover, researchers argue the need for stories which reveal and express the successes of African-American males in doctoral education (Ballard, 2006; Horn, 2012; Ingram, 2016). Noting their argument, the current study found that the narratives of the participants, described their successes regarding their doctoral experiences, thus adding this dimension to the conversation on African-American males in doctoral education. The current study found that the participants equated their successes to sharing safe spaces and conversations with other African-American men and women they scarcely encountered in their programs. Thus, the current study

aligns with Ballard's (2016) study regarding the importance of safe spaces for the success of African-American men in doctoral programs.

Finally, the current study aligns with Ballard (2006) and Horn's (2012) studies which explored African-American male's motivation for obtaining a doctoral degree. In conjunction with in each of these studies, the participants in the current study expressed that as a result of being successful in their doctoral programs, they were motivated to pave the way for other African-American men, and give back to their communities. Unlike other studies (Ballard, 2016; Horn, 2012; Ingram, 2016; King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996) one of the most compelling findings that stood out in the current study regarding motivation for obtaining the doctorate was the participants expressed their motivation for earning a doctorate derived from embracing the notion that earning the degree was "not just for me." Specifically, the participants equated the notion of the degree was not for them, with regards to the historical struggles of their African slave ancestors that were restricted from education, and their family and community members who sacrificed for them in order for them to pursue and complete their doctoral degrees.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The implications for the current study derived from a combination of the study findings, interpretations, and existing literature base on African-American male doctoral students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). In this section, I provide theoretical and practical implications, and recommendations for future research that can inform both individual and institutional responses to the issues set forth in this study.

Implications for Theory

The findings of the current study provide implications for theory, which primarily focus on and contribute to research on critical race theory (CRT). As such, this study used the tenet of

CRT counterstorytelling as a means to allow the African-American male participants in this study to counter the deficit and racialized viewpoint they encountered in their all White doctoral programs. While CRT offers counterstorytelling a way for African-Americans to challenge the dominant narrative of society, it does not account for Cross notions of racial identity development which proposed that at stage four, African-Americans reach a level where they embrace their cultural awareness. Based on the study findings, and consistent with the literature on Black male identity Nedhari (2009), the African-American men who participated in this study said their racial consciousness formed their identities. Moreover, for the participants in this study, the notion of racial consciousness was derived from the wisdom and principles of their African-American families, communities, and African roots; which lead to them being successful in their doctoral programs. According to this finding, the notion of Black male identity opposes the literature on Black male identity which states that Black men in American struggle to find their identity because they falsely associate their identity on what it means to be a White male in American (Nedhari, 2009). Therefore, based on the study findings, an implication for CRT would be expanding the tenet of counterstorytelling would be to include the notion that African-American men counter the dominate narrative of society by embracing who they are relative to their Afrocentric cultural principles and other intersecting identities, such as sexuality and class.

Implications for Practice

In conjunction with theoretical implications, this study of African-American male doctoral students at PWIs yielded practical implications. The most prevailing occurrence in this study was the lack of African-American males in a doctoral program at PWIs. Given this was an issue for the participants in this study which led to them experiencing isolation and loneliness, a signification implication for Policymakers at PWIs is they need to examine their recruitment and

enrollment practices to increase the amount of African-American men within their classrooms and doctoral programs. By doing so, it will help to elevate the negative feelings African-American men experience from being the only persons of color in their doctoral programs.

Moreover, another finding in this study revealed that in response to not having other African-American males in their programs to relate to, the participants acquired a keen interest towards bringing more African-American men into their doctoral programs. Therefore, another implication for institutions is that PWIs should solicit and garner the support of their current African-American male doctoral students to gain their insight on effective ways to recruit other African-American men from the undergraduate and master's population into their doctoral programs. The advantage PWIs will gain by placing their successful African-American male doctoral students at the forefront of their recruitment efforts is, it will allow them to create high aspirations within the educational pipeline for African-American men. By creating high aspirations for African-American males, it will strike an interest within their thought processes, thus increasing their desires on enrolling in doctoral programs (Ingram, 2016).

In conjunction with PWIs enhancing their recruitment efforts, another implication for practice is the need for PWIs to evaluate and enhance their retention policies. In the study findings, some of the participants expressed times in their doctoral programs when they almost dropped out due to social issues related to being students of color PWI campuses (Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). Some suggestions for practice on the retention of African-American male doctoral students at PWIs would involve social support groups for African-American men to allow them to collaborate with their peers to discuss the challenges and success of their doctoral programs. It would be a good strategy to have Black male graduate students form and direct such a group. Another component of PWIs need to consider for their

retention efforts should mentorship (Ballard, 2006; LaVant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997). While the participants in this study equated their feelings of isolation and loneliness from being the only African-American men in their programs, similarly they equated their feelings of isolation and loneliness due to the lack of African-American male mentors in their doctoral program. Thus, the benefit of institutions creating mentorship programs for African-American men in their doctoral programs is the program would provide an additional layer of support thus preventing their African-American male doctoral students from dropping out (Thomson, 1996 ;Warde 2008).

In addition, as reported by King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996), this study found that the participants reported financial support as an important aspect for them finishing their doctoral degrees. Therefore, another implication for retaining Black male doctoral students that PWIs would be to consider creating policies to access the financial needs of African-American male doctoral students and provide ways to fund them and possibly elevating the financial stress that could interfere with their academic progress.

Implications for Future Research

Scholars who research African-American men in higher education, call for more studies on the graduate level, particularly the doctoral (Ballard, 2006; Horn, 2012; Ingram, 2016). Ballard (2006) argued there is a need for the type of studies that present the voices of African-American male doctoral students. Further, Ballard argued these type of studies allows for understanding the lived experiences of African-American male doctoral students because *their* stories need to be included in the literature. By presenting the narratives of seven African-American male doctoral students who attended PWIs, the current study adds to the body of literature and it calls for the constant need for narrative type research on African-American men

in terminal degree programs which allows them to tell their own stories. Thus, to gather a diverse sample of narratives from African-American men in doctoral programs, an implication for future research would be a comparative study on the experiences of African-American male doctoral students who attend HBCUs versus those who attend PWIs.

For African-American men in doctoral programs, the literature reports the notion of giving back to their African-American communities as a motivation for completing the doctoral degree (Ingram, 2016). In the current study, the findings revealed that given the racial struggles the participants faced in their doctoral programs, their desire to give back to their communities increased. Explicitly, they expressed the need to fight racial injustices by being a voice for persons in their communities who could not speak for themselves. In response to the study findings, future research could investigate in what ways do the racial issues that African-American male doctoral students typical face at PWIs, affect their perspectives on social justice. Finally, the findings of this study revealed that African-American men are not monolithic in terms of their sexual identities. An implication for future research on African-American male doctoral students at PWIs should investigate the implications of sexual identity the role it plays in their doctoral experiences.

Chapter Summary

This purpose of this chapter was to provide a discussion on the overall study conclusions and their relation to the research questions and to the relevant literature. The first conclusion was African-American male doctoral students at predominately White institutions (PWIs) approached their doctoral experiences guided by a racial consciousness that informed their identities and helped them to navigate their educational experiences using a culturally grounded schema, The second study conclusion was, the narratives of African-American male doctoral students at

predominately White institutions (PWIs) provided a multi-dimensional profile that both support and refuted the literature in that the study revealed stories of stress from underrepresentation, isolation and racial stereotyping, while also relating accounts of high performance, persistence, and strength. Following this, I discussed how this study impacted four significant areas of literature. The four areas of literature discussed were: The Underrepresentation of African-American Males in Higher Education; 2.) The Success of African-American Males in Higher Education; 3.) African-American Graduate Students at PWIs; and 4.) African-American Males in Doctoral Education at PWI's. Finally, I presented implications for theory, practice, and recommendations for future research.

EPILOGUE

"I am not anxious to be the loudest voice or the most popular. But I would like to think that at a crucial moment, I was an effective voice of the voiceless, an effective hope of the hopeless."

— Whitney M. Young Jr.

Whitney Young's quote describes the essence of who I am—a servant leader and a champion of the underdog. It was my honor to have interviewed seven courageous and powerful African-American men for this study. Each one of them expressed their gratitude to me for allowing them to tell their stories. In carrying out my study, it was my hope that the participants would confirm their sense of power and liberation by sharing their doctoral experiences. Thus, at the end of each conversation, they all thanked me and confirmed my hopes. Now, it is time for me tell my story and just as my study participants, by telling my story, I too hope to confirm my power and liberation.

A month before finishing this dissertation, I had the pleasure to engage in a long conversation with a fellow African-American male graduate student, I will call him Mike, in my institution's office of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In our conversation, we discussed issues of race on a societal, institutional, and personal level. One of the things that stood out for me in our conversation was when the gentleman told me that he, just like five of the seven African-American men in my study, attended an HBCU for his undergraduate degree. What was compelling about Mike's story was he said while his experiences at his institution were nurturing for him, he also experienced times where he felt like some of the faculty members he

encountered, tried to turn him against White people. In contrast, he said, "now that I am here at my current PWI, I feel lost as an African-American man and do not know how to find myself." Mike told me that part of his not knowing how to find himself was based on where he currently was in his graduate program in that he was struggling with just wanting to be himself by not having to navigate his graduate program by always having to explain to his White classmates his position on issues of race. At this point in the conversation, I shared my story with him…

During my youth, whenever I engaged in conversations with people who were pursuing a college degree, for reasons I could not explain, I would get excited. However, as I grew older, strangely, the idea of going to college was not at the top of my list of priorities. I associate my lack of interest in going to college with the fact that I grew up in a town where industrial type jobs were plentiful. So, just like my father, uncles, and the other African-American men in my community, I set my sites on landing a job that at the time, paid a decent wage and did not require a college degree. The difference and saving grace for me was, through an early placement vocational education program at my high school, I landed a job in the corporate offices of the large utility company that serviced my town. In the first year of my time there, most of my older coworkers told me that I would never have to worry about having a job because I could and should most certainly one day retire from this marvelous and secure company. This advice from my coworkers was not only comforting to me, but it also gave me all the more reason to dismiss the notion of going to college. I mentioned my landing this job as saving grace for two reasons. The first being, the industry jobs that my father and uncles held, eventually dried up. The second reason, although I felt secure in that I did not have to go to college by being in this particular company, I eventually took a promotion into another department in the company where all of my coworkers either had college degrees or were working on completing

one. As a result of moving to my new department, and at the advice of my coworkers and family members, I began to feel pressure and at the same time, a desire to enroll in college.

Eventually, I did enroll in college. I took college courses for three years until I changed careers, and raised my sons. I took a 23-year break from college before I reentered the college classroom to finish my bachelor's degree, and immediately after that, my master's degree. As I was nearing the completion of my master's degree, I reflected on the days in my youth when I used to talk to people about college, and realized the unexplainable excitement I experienced back then was my thoughts and dreams on completing a doctoral degree one day.

I enrolled in my doctoral program in the fall of 2015 and at the beginning of my program, I thought I had it all figured out regarding my research interest—understanding the underrepresentation of African-American men in higher education. As such, when I began taking my doctoral courses, it did not take me long to realize that no one else in my classes, as with the participants in my dissertation study, looked like me, and they were not talking about issues of race, particularly the way I was. What baffled me most regarding my initial interactions with some of my White professors and classmates was while they did not initiate conversations on race-related issues, they "seemed" to embrace my conversations about critical race theory and issues concerning marginalized groups in society. However, after the first year in my program, I started to notice that those whom I thought were liberal and embraced my research interests, were not as liberal as I thought they were. I found out that they were uncomfortable with me talking about issues of race, and they were uninterested in my research. Thus, the results of these actions from my White professors and classmates caused me to doubt myself and the veracity of my research. As I entered the second year of my program, I realized that in order for me to pull myself out of the doubts that I had about myself as a doctoral student, that I needed to find a

space to connect with people that I could relate to. It was at this time that I found the diversity equity and inclusion office, DEI. It was here where I found my voice. By connecting with other African-American doctoral students, male and female and more importantly, the dean of the DEI office, along with stepping out from my program and moving across campus to connect with folks who looked like and supported my research, I started to gain confidence in myself and the importance of my research.

One of the significant events that I experienced regarding finding my voice, happened in the second year of my program. The dean of the DEI office, asked me to speak at a panel regarding the subject of diversity equity and inclusion. It was at this point that I gained more confidence in myself and yet again, I met more African-American men who had not only a shared interest in my research, but they too had experiences of feeling isolation and loneliness in their doctoral programs. It was at this time that I approached the dean of the DEI office about starting an African-American men's group. The group proved to be beneficial in that I was able to come together with other African-American male graduate students and talk about the issues we were experiencing in programs, good and bad. In addition to the other African-American male students that I connected with, I formed connections of support and mentorship from two African-American male faculty members, one who was on my doctoral committee and the other was the head of a department in my building. Those relationship with these faculty members were monumental in keeping me encouraged and focused on finishing my program.

My doctoral chair, a strong, intelligent, confident, nurturing, and caring African-American woman, saved me at a time when I was drowning as a student in my program. As such, and while I did find my voice, gain confidence in myself from the relationships I established with other African-American male doctoral students in the college of education and

the two African-American male faculty members, I still needed the support of my doctoral chair to get me through the roughest times of my doctoral journey. Specifically, my chair supported me by allowing me to come to her office, many times without an appointment, talk about my research, vent about my frustrations as the only African-American male in my program and my lack of confidence in my writing abilities. There was a specific moment in my program when she encouraged me about my writing. We were in Paris for a conference, and I kept going on and on about some of the White professors in my program that had trashed me about my writing. In response, my chair pulled me aside and said "Listen those persons that you are referring to, do not measure up to who I am as an academic or the level of scholarship that I have produced in my career. So, when I say your writing is good, it is good!" It was at that point that I realized it was time for me to stop allowing other people's opinions about not only my writing but my abilities as a doctoral student, to define me.

My doctoral journey has been life-changing, and just like the participants in my study, I too experienced, subtle to overt forms of racism, microaggressions, being "othered," and yes, there were times when I wanted to quit. However, and just as the participants in my study, I pressed through. I survived and conquered my life-long desire to complete my education with a terminal degree. I did it! More importantly, no matter the obstacles I faced in my program, I was determined to finish the journey. To whom much is given much is required, and with this doctoral journey that notion became all the more real for me. Now that my doctoral journey is over, I realized that the challenges I experienced as the only African-American male in my doctoral program, were small in comparison to what African-American men have to deal with on a day-to-day basis in our society. As such, and as I mentioned, my doctoral journey has been life-changing. To the point that I am now more confident in not only who I and what I am as an

African-American man, but I have gained a heightened sense of passion and urgency about contributing to making a difference regarding the issues that relate African-American men experience from being the "only one" in predominantly White doctoral programs. As such, through the life-changing experience of my doctoral program, the good and the not so good, through my research, I commit myself to support, mentor, share, listen, and tell the stories of African-American men who are currently in or desire to pursue a doctoral degree—there are not enough of us!

In response to my story, Mike looked at me with joy in his eyes and said to me, "I don't know if you realize the power you possess in telling a story." He thanked me and said, "You have given me hope and inspiration to carry on." He then said to me; you have got to find a way to share your story with others because we need to hear stories of hope from African-American men like yourself. I replied to him and said, you know, for years, I was ashamed that I had not gone the "normal" route of getting my education, you know going to college right out of high school and then onto graduate school, masters, then a doctorate. I then said to him, I finally realized that there is no such thing as a "normal" route to education and if my path of getting my education lead to me meeting you and allowed me to share the stories of the seven African-American men that I interviewed in my dissertation study, then it was worth it. I concluded the conversation with him by letting him know that it was my honor and pleasure to share my story with him, but more important, it was my honor to listen to his story because as African-American men we all have a story to tell. I concluded by saying to him, that just as I shared my story with him, it is vital that he shares his story with other African-American men. We must pass our stories on…

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear potential research participants, If you meet the following criteria:

- Identify as Black or African-American and male
- Earned a doctoral degree no less than a year or more than two years ago as a fulltime student from a traditional doctoral program at a predominantly White institution

I am interested in your doctoral experiences as an African-American man from a predominantly White institution. I am currently conducting a qualitative study in which I would like for you to participate. As an African-American doctoral candidate with plans to be a faculty member, and as a student who works with a Black woman faculty member, I believe this research area is important as well as fascinating.

My name is Cedric Sanders and I am hoping that you will be willing to talk with me about your career and your doctoral experiences in a historically White university. Your name and contact information were given to me by _____.

Since I know your time is valuable, my protocol calls for one meeting, 60 to 90 minutes and a potential follow-up phone call. I would, of course, arrange this for your convenience as it relates to time and location. Please respond by email and let me know your interest or willingness to participate.

Sincerely,

Cedric G. Sanders, M.S. Adult Education

Doctoral Candidate

Adult Education Program

Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration and Policy University of Georgia

Main Office: (706) 542-2214 Researcher Email: cgs63672@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following guide will be used in the study of This Is My Story and I'm Passing It On: Counter-Narratives of African-American Male Doctoral Students at Predominantly White Institutions. The questions are subject to change based on the participant's responses.

1. Tell me about your educational background in high school and in your undergraduate program. before graduate school.

2. How did you come to be in a graduate program (start with masters, then go to the doctoral program.

3. Think back to when you first thought about pursuing a doctoral degree and tell me about that.

4. Were there other students of color in your doctoral program?

5. Think of a specific time that stands out for you as an African-American man in your doctoral program. Can you think of another time? And another?

6. Tell me about any mentors you had in your doctoral program.

7. What other supports did you have?

8. Think of a specific time when you experienced success in your doctoral journey? Can you think of another time?

9. Think of a specific time when your experienced a challenge in your doctoral program? Can you think of another time?

10. Was there ever a time you became discouraged during your doctoral program? Tell me about that. What motivated you to complete the degree?

11. Thinking back over your doctoral journey now, what do you wish you had known prior to beginning the journey?

12. Based on your doctoral journey, what advice could you offer for other African-American men who aspire to obtain a doctorate at a PWI?

13. What would you like to tell that we haven't already talked about?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

THIS IS MY STORY AND I'M PASSING IT ON: COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE DOCTORAL STUDENTS AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

Researcher's Statement

I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study, so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Kathleen deMarrais

Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy

Kathleen@uga.edu

Interviewer: Cedric G. Sanders

Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy

cgs63672@uga.edu

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of successful African-American male doctoral students at predominantly White institutions, (PWIs).

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will take about 60-90 minutes and will include 13 questions regarding your graduate school learning experiences as an African-American male.

Risks and discomforts

I do not anticipate any risks or discomforts from participating in this research beyond the slight risk of a breach of confidentiality. This will be minimized by using the confidentiality procedures described below.

Benefits

I do not anticipate any direct benefits to you for participating in this study. Results of this study may add to the body of literature on African-American Male doctoral students by offering suggestions to institutions of higher education and policymakers, on how to bolster the recruitment, retention and graduation rates of this group.

Privacy/Confidentiality

All information obtained during this research project will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will be used rather than the real name of your college or organization. When reporting findings, the researchers will take care not to include details that may identify these locations. No affiliations will be used in the findings. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Audio/Video Recording

I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document your responses. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. All your responses are confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of your doctoral experiences at a PWI. Upon completion of the research, I will keep all copies of the interview and its transcription in a safe and secured location for one (1) year. After two (2) years all copies of the recording will be destroyed.

Taking part is voluntary

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw your participation from this study at any time should you become uncomfortable with it.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is Cedric G. Sanders, a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Cedric G. Sanders at cgs63672@uga.edu or at *404-454-7048* If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Tucker Hall, Room 212
310 E. Campus Rd.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
IRB@uga.edu
http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/

Office of Research
Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

November 9, 2017

Dear Kathleen Demarrais:

On 11/9/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Understanding the Learning Experiences of African American Male Graduate Students
Investigator:	Kathleen Demarrais
Co-Investigator:	Cedric Sanders
IRB ID:	STUDY00004629
Funding:	None
Review Category:	Exempt Flex 7

The IRB approved the protocol from 11/9/2017 to 11/8/2022.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Kate Pavich, IRB Analyst
Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The following demographic questionnaire will be provided to each participant prior to the interview

Please take the opportunity to complete the participant demographic questionnaire for this study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Personal Background

1. Please select a pseudonym: _____

2. What is your place of Birth? _____

3. In what year were you born? _____

4. Please describe your parents' or guardians' highest educational level.

Mother or other guardian

(check one)

□ No diploma
□ High school diploma/GED Some college
□ Associate's degree
□ Bachelor's degree
□ Graduate degree
□ I don't know

Father or other guardian

(check one)

□ No diploma
□ High school diploma/GED Some college
□ Associate's degree
□ Bachelor's degree
□ Graduate degree
□ I don't know

5. What was your household income as a child? (optional – if not comfortable answering)

□ Less than $20,000
□ $20,000-29,999
□ $30,000-39,999
□ $40,000-$49,999
□ $50,000-$59,999
□ $60,000-$69,999
□ $70,000-$79,999
□ $80,000-$89,999
□ $90,000 or more

6. What is your marital status? (Please check the appropriate box.)

□ Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Widowed

7. Please list the number of children you have, if applicable. _____

Educational Background

8. What type of high school did you attend? (Please check appropriate box.)

□ Public □ Private

9. Undergraduate Institution Graduation Year: _____

10. Undergraduate Major: _____

11. Type of Undergraduate/Graduate Institution

□ 4-year private
□ 4-year public
□ Historically Black College
□ Predominately White Institution

13. Please provide the years in which you received the following degrees:

Master's Year:_____

Doctorate Year:_____

Other (specify and write year):_____

14. Please provide your area of specialization for the following degrees:

Master's Area:_____

Doctorate Area:_____

Other Area:_____

Professional Background

15. Number of Years at Current Institution/Organization_____

Professorial Rank:

# of Years at Current Rank: _____

# of Years at Assistant Level:_____

# of Years at Associate Level: _____

# of Years at Full Level:_____

16. Salary Range (optional – if not comfortable answering)

□ 40,000-49,000 □ $70,000 – 79,000 □ $100,000 +
□ 50,000 – 59,000 □ 80,000 – 89,000
□ 60,000 – 69,000 □ 90,000 – 99,000