

LAS CARAS LINDAS (THE BEAUTIFUL FACES): RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT, MENTAL HEALTH AND LEGACY AMONG AFRODESCENDIENTE
OLDER ADULTS

by

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(Under the Direction of Edward Delgado Romero)

ABSTRACT

Remnants of colonial oppression permeate present-day society maintaining social, political, and economic oppression for *Afrodescendientes* (African descendants from Latin America). This oppression impacts a person of color's mental health and identity development. Older adults are central to the Latine family, influencing the racial and ethnic socialization of generations after. As such, this intersectional study aims to examine the experiences of Afrodescendientes older adults and their legacy. Specifically, this study used a culturally consistent qualitative methodology- *plática* (informal conversations; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) to gain an in-depth understanding of the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults, its impact on their mental health and how this has informed their legacy. The author situated this study within an intersectional and Black-*imienta* theoretical framework allowing for the exploration of systemic oppression from various interlocking axis while explicitly centering Blackness within Latinidad (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022; Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). A thematic analysis was used to illuminate their experiences. Study implications inform just and equitable psychological practice for Afrodescendientes.

INDEX WORDS: Afrodescendientes, older adults, racial identity development, ethnic identity development, mental health, legacy, socialization, plática methodology

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is deeply rooted in my journey as an Afro-Latina immigrant of the Dominican Republic. First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to *las caras lindas*. Often made invisible but deeply important and valuable. You have contributed to our world history and present life in so many wonderful ways. Its time the world and psychology know it. I also dedicate this dissertation to my elders (Kuki, Amalia, Modesta, Ana Silvia, Felipe and Andres) and the ancestors I've never met but carry remnants of within in. Thank you for your resilience, determination, joy, spirit and wisdom.

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I have many to thank for getting me this far. Thank you to my family both immediate and extended. A special shoutout to my parents Elvis and Taina Sena who have encouraged me and supported me along every step. I am blessed to have you. To my partner Therian Williams, for the way in which you have accompanied me on this PhD journey. To my friends and academic siblings. Thank you for being there for me, giving me grace as I navigated a lot of demands and helping me remember joy. To my mentors for all the conversations, advice and encouragement. A special shoutout to my advisor Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero, I could not have done this without you. Thank you for your dedication to breaking down the ivory, helping dreams come true and commitment to giving back to our community. Thank you to my dissertation committee – Dr. Collette Chapman-Hilliard and Dr. Rosemary Phelps for your support, modeling and willingness to guide me through this journey. Lastly, I want to thank God for carrying me through especially during the hardest moments. I am blessed beyond measure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When my grandmother Kuki, a Black Latina, finally received her visa to come to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, I remember feeling hope. Her arrival was during a time I needed her most. I was a preteen and had internalized negative messages about my big curly hair. As such, I spent a year throwing my hair in a bun, gelling it back consistently, and it became damaged. When my grandmother Kuki finally arrived, she noticed how I felt. She embraced me and told me she was finally there to help. I sat at my kitchen table until four in the morning the night of her arrival, feeling shame and hope as my grandmother patiently and lovingly detangled my hair. She made me feel normal and beautiful as a Black girl. This moment was a turning point in my hair journey, ultimately becoming a turning point in my racial identity development. When I thought of my dissertation topic, I remembered this pivotal experience and others I had with my *Afrodescendiente* (African descendants from Latin America) grandparents. It made me wonder if and how they understand their impact on my racial and ethnic identity.

Background & Context

Familismo (familism) is a core Latine value that highlights the centrality of familial bonds and is fostered by loyalty, interdependence, pride, and belonging. Familismo includes extended family members and even designates as family community members who have a significant role in a person's life (Comas-Díaz, 2012). In Latine families, elders are treated with particular regard and respect and are considered to be bearers of great wisdom and advice (Arredondo et al., 2014). They play a significant role in cultural transmission, native language

development, and traditions, providing advice (Silverstein & Chen, 1999; Arredondo et al., 2014). If in proximity and able, elders support the Latine family with child rearing, often living with their adult children. For grandparents with visas who live in their country of origin, it is common for them to visit their families and spend extended periods with them to provide support (Arredondo et al., 2014).

Prior to COVID-19, reports estimated that by 2060 Latines would be the largest racial and ethnic minority group amongst older adults (Administration for Community Living, 2020). COVID-19 has brought significant attention to the disparities faced by ethnic and racial minoritized groups and elders. This disparity was especially true for Latines, who saw their overall life expectancy drop by three years on average, and most of the Latine deaths were in the elderly population. Latines ages 45-84 were twice as likely than Whites to die from COVID-19 (Garcia & Sáenz, 2023). This inequality emphasized the unique needs and vulnerabilities of Latine older adults and tragically transformed the U.S. Latine population in ways that are still to unfold (Castaneda, 2022).

The American Psychological Association's (APA) guidelines for working with older adults discusses the demand for a psychologist to understand later-life mental health and the diverse cultural factors that may impact wellbeing (2014). Guideline five states: "Psychologists strive to understand diversity in the aging process, particularly how sociocultural factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability status, and urban/rural residence may influence the experience and expression of health and psychological problems in later life" (APA, 2014, p. 40). As such, psychologists are called to address how intersectional oppression affects the mental health of older adults.

Statement of the Problem

The current study addresses the unique intersections of race, ethnicity, and age. Afrodescendientes make up 25% of people in Latin America (The World Bank, 2018). In the U.S., 6 million Latines self-identify as Afrodescendiente, making up 2% of the overall adult U.S. population and 12% of the U.S. adult Latine population (Galdámez et al., 2023). The Afrodescendiente population in the U.S. has grown 121%, twice as much as non-Black Latines (Galdámez et al., 2023). Afrodescendientes' history of oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean (see chapter 2) has severely affected their lives in the present. Anti-Blackness and invisibility have led to multiple forms of discrimination and racial disparities (Sena & Shannon, 2023). Further, in the U.S. Afrodescendientes face racism and discrimination similar to African Americans in the U.S., often being victims of police brutality and overrepresented in chronic poverty and health disparities (The World Bank, 2018; Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021). According to the American Psychological Association, "notions of race and ethnicity continue both to frame and shape the psychology of all people in the U.S. society" (American Psychological Association, 2019, p. 4). This remains true for the Afrodescendiente. Because society differentially rewards and punishes people based on their racial and ethnic group membership, and this inequity impacts their mental health and identity development (Helms & Cook, 1999). However, little is known about the racial and ethnic identity development and its impacts on mental health for Afrodescendientes.

Afrodescendientes are at the intersection of race and ethnicity, yet they are often invisible in research (Adames et al., 2020; Sena & Shannon, 2023). This invisibility is rooted in anti-Black and Mestizaje Racial Ideologies and colorblind ideologies (Andrews, 2004; Adames & Chavez Dueñas, 2017). These ideologies and practices have permeated psychological scholarship, resulting in an inability to understand Afrodescendiente experiences. Anti-Blackness

and MRIs can manifest in multiple ways in research, including limitations in demographic questionnaires, binary forms of categorization, inconsistent use of race categorization and skin color measurements, and the use of a pan-ethnic label (Perea, 1997; Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). Moreover, being Latino and Black are not mutually exclusive, and, as such, scholars have been urged to consider the nuances of this intersection on social conditions (NLPA, 2020b; NLPA, 2020c; Adames et al., 2020; Fuentes et al., 2021; Galdámez et al., 2023).

Flores and Roman Jimenez state (2009): “Afro-Latinos occupy a crucial place in contemporary racial and ethnic relations in the United States and internationally. They are the group that typically falls between the cracks of prevailing classifications, and yet at the same time stands to serve as the most significant bridge across a growing, and increasingly ominous, social divide” (p. 319). The population growth of Afrodescendientes and older adults and the need to support the wellbeing of older adults with marginalized social identities, coupled with their invisibility in psychology research, emphasizes the need to attend to this population. Given the centrality of Latine elders to families, the current study has implications for supporting families and future generations. Studies on Latine and Black grandparents have shown their influence on the racial and ethnic identity development of grandchildren and its impact on mental health (Chanler et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2020). However, studies have yet to explore Afrodescendiente elders’ impact on younger generations.

The current study attempts to address gaps in psychological knowledge about the unique experiences and needs of Afrodescendiente older adults, their invisibility in psychological scholarship, and the need to produce culturally sensitive intersectional research. Specifically, this study explores the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults and

its impact on their perceptions of mental health. Additionally, this study will explore how their experiences informed their legacy. This study provides a retrospective lifespan perspective on racial identity and legacy. The study's findings will contribute to the budding scholarship on Afrodescendiente mental health and wellness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the lifespan experiences of populations marginalized by intersectional identities. Specifically, this study aims to explore the crossroads between race, ethnicity, and age. To examine these intersections, the author explored the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults and its impact on their mental health. Given the centrality of older adults in the Latine community and their impact on ethnic and racial socialization, this study aims to explore how Afrodescendiente older adults understand their impact.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. How has the ethnic and racial identity of Afrodescendiente older adults developed?
2. How do they view the link between ethnic and racial identity and their mental health?
3. How has their identity development impacted their legacy?

Definition of Terms

Given the multiple referents used to address Afrodescendientes and the varied ways of discussing race, ethnicity, and culture in the literature, the following section operationalizes terms frequently used. These definitions are to ensure effective communication of ideas.

Afrodescendientes: This is the Spanish word for Afro-descendants. For this study, this term is used to address those of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Brown: This study uses Garcia Peña's (2022) definition of Brown: mixed-race blackness used when engaging with nineteenth-century Caribbean people.

Black: The term is a global category and is used to describe those of the African Diaspora. Consistent with Biko's (2017) definition, Black does not only address phenotypes, but it also addresses the historical, political, social, and cultural allegiances to Black thought (Dache et al., 2019).

Latine: this term refers to people from Latin America and the Caribbean. This term is gender-neutral and can be easily said in both Spanish and English.

Afro Descendant: Describes the people of the African diaspora.

Race: In this study, race is defined as a social construct undergirded by political-economic forces (Omi & Winant, 2014). Racial categories groups people that share physical characteristics, skin color, physiognomy, and other hereditary traits (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). In this study, race is also referred to as the culturally invented beliefs that harm individuals and members of various groups (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

Ethnicity: Refers to an individual's lineage, such as nationality, region, and tribal origins of a person's oldest ancestor (Helms & Cook, 1990).

Culture: This is considered the values, customs, traditions, and practices that influence a person's life. Culture is part of ethnicity and is dynamic being passed down from generation (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

Older adults: Consistent with the American Psychological Association's (2019) *Guidelines for Practice with Older Adults*, older adults in this study refer to people 65 and older.

Legacy: For the purposes of allowing co-collaborators to share their own perspectives on legacy, it is broadly defined. In essence, this study views legacy as what (thing of value) someone is

leaving behind. This broad definition is similar to Erikson's view of legacy in the integrity vs. despair stage of his psychosocial stages of development, where older adults assess and make sense of life and the meaning of their contributions (1980).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Afrodescendientes

To accurately understand the lives of Afrodescendientes, an exploration of their collective history is imperative. This exploration is essential as it contextualizes the present-day experiences of Afrodescendientes and facilitates critical consciousness (Prilleltensky, 2003). Further, understanding Afrodescendiente history supports the well-being, liberation, and promotion of self-knowledge for Afrodescendientes, becoming a crucial component for helping professionals (Chapman-Hilliard & Adam-Bass, 2016; Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Since colonialism in Latin America and the Caribbean brought about the racial mixing of three groups: West Africans, Indigenous people of Latin America, and Iberians (Morner, 1967), Afrodescendientes may comprise these groups varying in phenotypes, values, and customs. Given this racial mixing, a condensed pre-colonial history of West African, Indigenous, and Iberian societies is explored. Further, this section will present a brief colonial and post-colonial history of Latin America and the Caribbean and its impact on Afrodescendientes.

Pre-colonial History of Afrodescendientes

The legacies of Afrodescendientes permeate society today, yet their contributions remain invisible (Sena & Shannon, 2023). Rarely are the lives of Afrodescendientes before colonialization taught or discussed. This lack of exploration creates a limited view of this community's pre-colonial existence and achievements, maintaining a deficit narrative of Afrodescendientes. Additionally, this narrow view homogenizes Afrodescendientes, making

invisible the diversity within West African and Indigenous societies (Andrews, 2004; Lohse, 2014; Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). To unearth Afrodescendientes' lives before colonization, the current section will provide a brief account of pre-colonial West African and Indigenous civilizations. Additionally, this section will present a short review of pre-colonial Iberian history.

It is estimated that West African civilizations lived in distinct cultural groups for 2,000-3,000 years from the present, evolving in ideas, governance, and technology (Davidson, 2014). West Africa had a significant influence on the world, playing a major role in the international trading of goods and contributing to ideas of spirituality and morality (Davidson, 2014). For example, in present-day Nigeria, communities were known for their advanced iron work, impacting agriculture and human control over the elements (Davidson, 2014). West Africa encompassed diverse kingdoms, intricate city-states, and political structures with strong and coherent intercommunication locally and internationally (Davidson, 2014; National Museums Liverpool, 2022). Kingdoms such as Benin, Mali, Kongo, the Songhai, and the Asante Empire had their own languages, religious practices and beliefs, skilled work, social programs, and governance (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2023). For example, Benin had highly skilled metal workers, and the Mali empire built libraries, schools, and universities (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2023). However, within and around these kingdoms existed smaller ethnic groups with unique attributes, such as the Bambara (from the interior of Mali) and the Casanga (from an area between modern-day Senegal-Guinea-Biassau border).

Similar to West Africa, diversity also existed within the Indigenous communities of Latin America and the Caribbean, which held more than 123 linguistic families, and 260 languages in Mexico and Guatemala alone (Morner, 1967). The exact pre-colonial population number of

Indigenous people in Latin America varies, and scholars cannot meet a consensus (Morner, 1967). However, the Indigenous people of Latin America had thriving societies with complex spiritual beliefs, social structures, and governance (Sena & Shannon, 2023). Further, Indigenous people significantly contributed to society in values and technology. For example, some Indigenous societies held progressive views on gender roles. Women were hunter-gathers, warriors, and agriculturalists and had property rights, as seen with the Ñudzahui people of Oaxaca, believed to be the most egalitarian Indigenous group in Mesoamerica (Kellog, 2005). The Aztecs had extensive agricultural knowledge creating *chinampas*, or small islands with muddy ground, which aided the growth of crops and herbs (Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Additionally, the Aztecs had vast knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs and were among the first to make education mandatory (Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). The Tainos/Caribs had advanced meteorological knowledge predicting hurricanes and tsunamis and held beliefs about death and the afterlife society still holds today (i.e., the ability to see or feel loved ones who are deceased; Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). The Mayans were sophisticated scientists who created the concept of zero and developed accurate calendars capable of recording lunar and solar cycles (Nalda, 2010; Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

The pre-colonial Iberian history is also the history of Afrodescendientes (Martinez, 2008). As delineated in the text by Sena and Shannon (2023), the Iberian population was not ethnically homogenous; their history of conquest, religious freedoms, politics, and violence influenced Spain and later Latin America and the Caribbean. As such, much of Spain's views on race and ethnicity were impacted by the domination of the Moors (a predominantly Black Muslim group), who ruled successfully over parts of Spain and Portugal for over 500 years (Morner, 1967; Sena & Shannon, 2023). During this time, the Moors were considered culturally

and politically superior to the Spanish. Yet, for the Christian Europeans, the Moors, and other groups (i.e., Jews and Indigenous people) were thought to be subordinate as they lacked purity of Christian blood (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). Preservation and containment of the purity of Christian blood became central to Christian Europeans when reclaiming the Iberian Peninsula (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). This belief generated anti-Jew and anti-Muslim Semitism, which persecuted, discriminated against, converted, and expelled these groups (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). To prove a person's purity of blood and distinguish those who later converted (from *Cristianos viejos* or old Christians) became challenging; as such, the church and the crown built elaborate systems for "naming, credentialing and regulating persons based on their supposed religious and racial bloodlines, which was termed the *casta*" (Sena & Shannon, 2023, p. 18; Nieto-Phillips, 2004). Documents to demonstrate the purity of blood were expensive and could be forged with the right amount of money (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, Jimenez Roman & Flores, 2010; Sena & Shannon, 2023). Spain's reclaiming of the Iberian Peninsula became the genesis of Spanish identity politics, which created oppressive environments for Afrodescendientes.

Colonial History of Latin America & The Caribbean

Colonizing Latin America and the Caribbean resulted in one of the most violent periods in Latin American history. Also, the transatlantic slave trade became known as *Maafa* or the Black Holocaust. Many European nations were involved in the conquest of Latin America and the trafficking of Africans. However, this study will focus on Spain's involvement in this region. Specifically, this section will briefly account for Spain's role in colonizing Latin America and the Caribbean, its impact on Afrodescendientes, and identity formation.

The "discovery" of the Americas in 1492 first brought Christopher Columbus and other *conquistadors* (conquerors) to the Caribbean islands encountering the Tainos, the Caribs, and

other smaller Indigenous groups (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). The Spanish later expanded to other areas of the Americas, with conquistadores (some of which were of Moorish descent like Juan Garrido) encountering Indigenous people from different regions (Lohse, 2014). These encounters had grave consequences for Indigenous people who were exposed to diseases leading to death. The conquistadors also brought with them the Spanish purity of blood laws and practices viewing Indigenous people as lesser, sinful, uncivilized, and in need of saving (Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Skidmore et al., 2010; Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). After years of oppression under the Moorish empire, the Spanish became interested in establishing themselves as global leaders, desiring social power and wealth (Skidmore et al., 2010). This desire led to exploiting natural resources (i.e., gold, silver, and agricultural goods) in Latin America and the Caribbean. As such, Indigenous people were victims of brutal violence (e.g., rape and even decapitation) and were coerced and terrorized into working in harsh conditions, which soon led to a rapid population decline (Morer, 1967; Skidmore et al., 2010). To meet the demand for human labor, enslaved Africans were later brought to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Colonialism and human trafficking led to the death of many enslaved Africans. It is estimated that one in ten West Africans did not leave Africa alive, being exposed to malnutrition, dehydration, diseases, and hunger (Lohse, 2014). The middle passage, or the voyage to Latin America and the Caribbean, caused terrible conditions for West Africans. Of the 12.5 million enslaved Africans set to arrive in the Americas, only 10.7 million survived (Morer, 1967; Gates & Pollack, 2011). Contrary to popular belief, only a small number (estimated 388,000) arrived in North America; most Africans were brought to Latin America and the Caribbean (Morer, 1967; Gates & Pollack, 2010; Sena & Shannon, 2023). The transatlantic slave trade to Latin America and the Caribbean resulted in the most significant number of Africans outside of the continent of

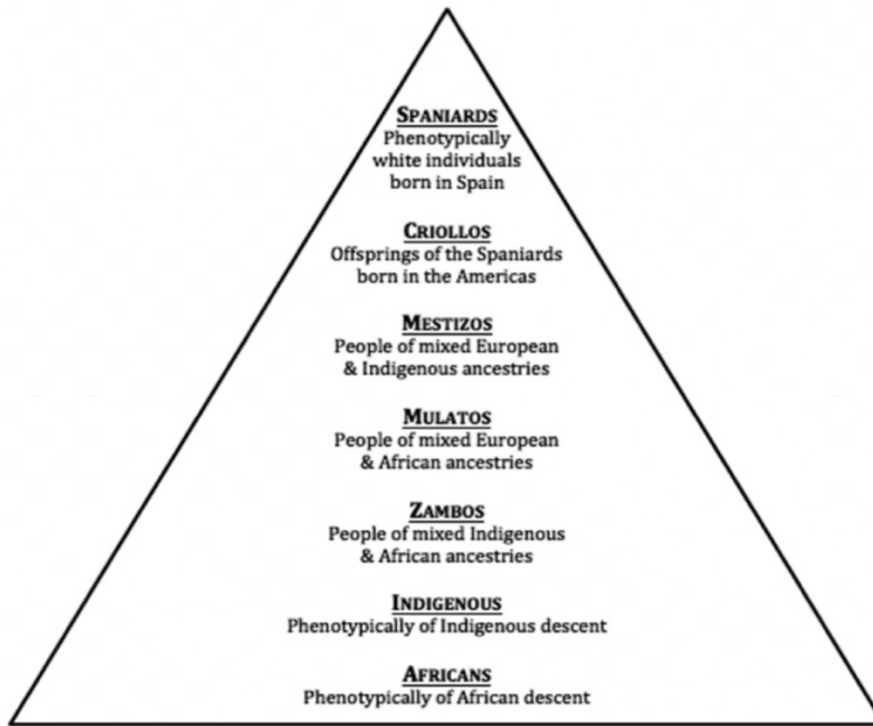
Africa. Enslaved Africans were treated as inferior to the Spanish. They faced high mortality levels as they were subjected to harsh and violent labor conditions of sugar plantations and silver mining in the Americas (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Mortality rates exceeded birth rates, dramatically impacting the African population in some areas of Latin America (Andrews, 2004).

Racial Mixing & Identity Formation in Colonial Latin America

Racial mixing inevitably became a part of Latin American history. Since White men outnumbered White women in the Americas, men procreated with Indigenous women creating mixed-blood children known as *mestizos*. Over time, laws changed to accommodate the mixing of Spanish men and Indigenous women or mestizo men and Indigenous women. However, interracial marriage was rare, limiting upward mobility for those of Indigenous backgrounds (Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Skidmore, 2010). Soon mestizos became the largest ethnic population in Latin America (Skidmore et al., 2010). Population increase led to the involvement of mestizos in critical sectors of the economy, some becoming landowners (Skidmore et al., 2010). Although mixing with Africans was not legally approved, it occurred (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). The caste system developed in pre-colonial Spain was adjusted and employed in Latin America, stratifying humans and maintaining the oppression of Afrodescendientes. This system established White supremacy and maintained Spain's social, political, and economic control; skin color and phenotypes were central to this system (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017; Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Sena & Shannon, 2023). The caste system provided power and privileges to individuals attaching laws that determined noble titles, class, censorship, and access to social benefits (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Africans were at the bottom of this social system and, as such, were treated accordingly. Figure 1 delineates the caste system as presented by Adames and Chavez-Dueñas (2017).

Figure 1

Latin American Social Caste Pyramid (LASCP)



Note. This pyramid was created by Adames & Chavez-Dueñas (2017) and was informed by the family caste paintings of Miguel Cabrera (Katzew, 1996). This figure depicts the racial hierarchy in Latin America influencing power and privileges.

Further, colonization influenced the ethnic identity formation of enslaved Africans. From captivity, enslaved Africans were removed and stripped away from their homes. For most, the transatlantic slave trade became the first encounter with others of various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds; however, they soon realized Europeans made little distinction among them (Lohse, 2014). Although Europeans viewed Africans as one racial group, Africans did not conceptualize identity as such, later being told they were Black (Andrews, 2004). This process caused enslaved Africans to identify with others of various ethnicities, transforming their understanding of their

own identity. Moreover, when discussing the development of ethnic identity for enslaved Africans in Costa Rica, Lohse (2014) states:

“Identities and identifications constantly emerged, shifted, dissolved, and became reconstituted. Disruptions, continuities, and reconfigurations of identity began for enslaved African men and women long before they arrived...The concept of diasporic ethnicity, an identity drawing both on the African pasts and the American presents of the captives, provides a useful point of entry to the consciousness of enslaved Africans in the New World.” (pp. 45-46).

Identity and identification were complex and dynamic in Latin America and the Caribbean, heavily influenced by various factors.

For Afrodescendientes, the ability to identify with others of the diaspora became a source of resilience and resistance as they maintained community with one another, providing emotional and economic support and engaging in cultural practices related to music and dance as a way of healing (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). It is important to note, however, that resistance existed since the inception of the transatlantic slave trade; for example, slave rebellions often occurred during the middle passage and in Latin America (Lohse, 2014). Others, like Miguel Largo (an enslaved African in Costa Rica from the Mina nation, present-day Ghana), resisted acculturation, refusing to learn the Castilian language, which infuriated Spanish political figures (Lohse, 2014).

Post-Colonial Latin America & Anti-Blackness

The Spanish crown established viceroyalties headed by the *viceroy* (vice-king) to rule over various territories of Latin America (Skidmore et al., 2010). Viceroyalties worked parallel to the church attempting to maintain order and enforce laws established by the Spanish crown,

although they maintained considerable autonomy (Skidmore et al., 2010). However, after centuries of Spanish dominance in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Spanish began to lose power and control as other European countries rose to power (Skidmore et al., 2010). This decrease in power facilitated the independence of many present-day Latin American countries by the 1830s. But freedom came at a price for many Latin American countries facing the aftermath of war and liberty, including the significant death of humans and economic challenges (Skidmore et al., 2010). By the mid-1800s, slavery was abolished, but anti-Black sentiment remained influencing the socio-political climate in Latin America.

Blanqueamiento (whitening) policies, practices, and discourses promoted the belief that White and European features and behaviors were superior to that of African and Indigenous peoples (The World Bank, 2018). Rooted in studies of eugenics and the belief of the inferiority of non-white races, these policies and practices helped maintain inequitable and inhumane social conditions for Afrodescendientes (Guthrie, 2004; The World Bank, 2018). Immigration of Europeans to Latin America and the Caribbean was embraced by political leaders to whiten society racially, demographically, culturally, and aesthetically (Andrews, 2004). Urban reform occurred, which introduced modern infrastructure but revered European design, pushing out poor Afrodescendientes from the town centers (Andrews, 2004).

After the 1930s, oppression remained for Afrodescendientes in Latin America and the Caribbean, not by whitening but by browning policies and practices (Andrews, 2004). *Mestizaje* ideologies, or the denial of inequality based on race, argued that everyone was of mixed descent and thus racism does not exist in Latin America, was widely accepted (even by some Afrodescendientes; Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). This ideology encouraged racial mixing and saw it as the essence of Latin American identity, superficially acknowledging and valuing

African and Indigenous roots (Andrews, 2004). As such romanticized notions of Mestizo Racial Ideologies (MRI; e.g., *La Raza Cosmica*; Vasconcelos, 1925) and Racial Democracies concealed the actual inequalities in society (Adames et al., 2021; World Bank, 2018; Sena & Shannon, 2023). It is important to note that countries within Latin America and the Caribbean have unique colonial and post-colonial histories informing present day realities. Since this study only incorporated Afrodescendientes from Panama, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, it is suggested that scholars deepen their historical knowledge of these countries. Some suggested readings are *The Politics of Race in Panama: Afro-Hispanic and West Indian Literary Discourses of Contention* (Watson, 2014); *Fantasy Island: Colonials, Exploitation and the Betrayal of Puerto Rico* (Morales, 2019); *The Dominican Republic Reader* (Roorda et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, Afrodescendientes have resisted the oppressive conditions of Latin America and the Caribbean, fighting for the visibility and preservation of their culture. The civil rights movement of the U.S., Black feminist thought, and global Black liberation movements contributed to Black and African pride for Afrodescendientes. In the 1970s, Colombian Black organizations such as *The Centro para la Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Negra* (The Center for the Investigation and Development of the Black Culture) created and disseminated information regarding Afrodescendientes (Andrews, 2004). In the 1980s and 1990s, other organizations and gatherings formed across Latin America that centered on the intersections of race, gender, and class, such as the *Encuentros de Mujeres Negras de Latino America y el Caribe* (Meeting of Black Women of Latin America and the Caribbean) who was founded by Afro-Dominican Ochy Curiel (Andrews, 2004). Today, people like Miriam Miranda, a *Garifuna* (an Afro-Indigenous group) and activist, fight for Garifuna's cultural and land rights in Honduras (Kellog, 2005). In sum, while the post-colonial societies of Latin America are plagued with anti-

Blackness, Afrodescendientes are still “revolting, organizing and aiming to preserve [their] histories, [their] cultures, [their] power and [their] souls” (Sena & Shannon, 2023, p. 29).

Race, Systemic Oppression & Well-being

A history of oppression has severe consequences for Afrodescendientes today. Anti-Blackness and invisibility leading to multiple forms of discrimination and disparities (Sena & Shannon, 2023). Though Afrodescendientes are poorly accounted for in research (Galdámez et al., 2023), some information exists on the prevalence of discrimination. In a report published by The World Bank (2018), disparities among Afrodescendientes in Latin America and the Caribbean were presented. Afrodescendientes are 2.5 times more likely to experience chronic poverty having difficulties in social mobility than White and Mestizo groups. This disparity is partly due to labor gaps, where Afrodescendientes have higher unemployment levels and those employed work in low-skilled jobs. When controlling for variables like education, age, gender, and other characteristics, Afrodescendientes earn less (e.g., 11% less in Uruguay and 6.5% less in Peru), often met with glass ceilings. Regarding education, Afrodescendientes have higher dropout rates in secondary education (e.g., two in three in Uruguay) and are underrepresented in tertiary-level degrees (only 12% of the population). These disparities are due to institutional and interpersonal racism insidiously embedded in Latin America and the Caribbean (The World Bank, 2018).

In the U.S., Afrodescendientes face discrimination and disparities similar to African Americans being subjected to similar forms of racism and discrimination (Sena & Shannon, 2023). For example, Afrodescendientes have higher poverty rates than non-Black Latines and are more likely to be denied loans or receive high-cost loans than non-Black Latines (Galdámez et al., 2023). Further, compared to all ethnic groups, Afrodescendientes are less likely to own a

home (Galdámez et al., 2023). The Pew Research Center (2021) recently reported on the experiences of darker skin Latines in the U.S. Their study found that 62% of Latines believe having darker skin limits social mobility in the U.S. Additionally, of the Latines with darker skin, 64% reported experiencing discrimination in the last year, most commonly reporting being treated as if they are not intelligent. Within group, racism was also discussed, with 41% of darker-skinned Latines stating they experience discrimination by other Latines (Pew Research Center, 2021). Regarding health, one study found that Afrodescendientes are at greater risk of developing hypertension (Borrell, 2009).

In Latin America and the U.S., Afrodescendientes often fall victim to racial profiling and police brutality (Sena & Shannon, 2023). The limited availability of data makes it difficult to quantify the magnitude of police brutality for Afrodescendientes, yet narratives and case examples provide us with information. For example, when reflecting on the wrongful convictions of the Central Park Five, one member was Afrodescendiente- Ray Santana. He was marginalized not only by his race but also by his ethnicity, as his primary guardian had limited English fluency, placing him at a disadvantage in the court systems (Hordge-Freeman & Loblack, 2021; Sena & Shannon, 2023). Police brutality can also be seen when reflecting on the life of Adolfinia Villanueva Osorio, who was murdered in her home by police with 16 bullets in 1980. Her story is one of no justice, displacement, and lack of regard for the life of Black women in Puerto Rico (Abadia-Rexach, 2021). Discrimination and the subsequent disparities faced by those of darker skin have implications for mental health. For the Afrodescendiente, the intersection of race and ethnicity situates them uniquely when considering the impacts on mental health. Thus, the following section will review Afrodescendiente mental health literature.

Afrodescendiente Mental Health

Historically, psychological literature has neglected the experiences of Afrodescendientes, rendering invisible the impacts of discrimination on their mental health. A content analysis conducted by Mazzula and Sanchez (2021) found that within two prominent Latine psychological journals, only eight empirical studies were published on Afrodescendientes from 2009 to 2020. Authors attributed this gap to limitations in demographic questionnaires, inconsistencies in race categorization and skin color measurements, and the use of a pan-ethnic label (Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). Recently, scholars have called in psychologists to challenge the idea of a raceless Latinidad, providing action steps for improving psychological research with Afrodescendientes (Adames et al., 2021). Although the psychological literature on Afrodescendientes' mental health is limited, the next section will review the available research.

Some studies on Afrodescendientes have focused on the effects of skin color and colorism on mental health. In a study on the impacts of skin color and self-perception on Latina college women, Telzer and Vazquez Garcia (2009) found that darker skin immigrants tend to have poorer self-perceptions than U.S.-born women. Moreover, results indicated they experience lower self-esteem, lower feelings of attractiveness, and a desire to be lighter (Telzer & Vazquez Garcia, 2009). In another study on Afrodescendiente Puerto Rican college students, Hall found that they often associate positive attributes with lighter skin people and that darker skin Latines have higher mental health outcomes (2000). Further, Capielo Rosario and colleagues (2021) found that skin color and shade impacted exposure to ethnic and racial discrimination. For those with the darkest skin shade, discrimination came from within their ethnic group and among other ethnic groups. Those with the darkest skin shade also reported more psychological distress than their lighter counterparts (Capielo-Rosario et al., 2021).

To the principal investigator's knowledge, only two studies have explored mental health symptoms and their prevalence in Afrodescendientes (Ramos et al., 2003; Calzada et al., 2019). However, both studies focused on youth. Ramos and colleagues (2003) found that Afrodescendiente adolescent girls had higher levels of depressive symptoms than other ethnic groups and across genders (boys and girls). Similarly, in a study that centered on Afrodescendiente children, internalizing (anxiety and depression) and externalizing (aggression, hyperactivity, and conduct) behaviors were investigated as they related to skin color (Calzada et al., 2019). Results indicated that darker skin was associated with a higher risk for internalizing and externalizing problems, especially for girls (Calzada et al., 2019). Both studies' authors discuss the unique impact intersectional oppression (race and gender) may have on Afrodescendiente youth.

When exploring the mental health of Afrodescendientes in the U.S., one study has focused on the broader impacts of being both a racial and ethnic minority. In a qualitative study on Afrodescendientes, the authors found that physical characteristics, cultural connectivity, and systemic and interpersonal oppression impact self-perception and mental health (Lipscomb & Stevenson, 2022). Moreover, the authors found that Afrodescendientes struggled with rejection from the African American and Latine (mestizo) communities. They concluded this rejection is due to several factors, including English or Spanish fluency, expectations around how to behave or act, physical appearance, and differences in cultural practices. Further, 64% of Afrodescendientes in this study also reported feeling pressured to choose between their racial or ethnic identity to increase belongingness. In conclusion, the authors discuss the impacts of racial and ethnic identity as having positive and negative effects on self-perception and emotional well-being (Lipscomb & Stevenson, 2022).

In conclusion, for Afrodescendientes, skin color and shade affect identity development and mental health (Fuentes et al., 2021). Additionally, living at the intersection of race and ethnicity may further marginalize Afrodescendientes, often impacting belongingness and connectedness (Haywood, 2017). Other social identities like gender, immigration status, and language fluency also influence Afrodescendientes highlighting the impacts of intersectional oppression on mental health (Comas-Díaz, 1996 & 2021). While some scholars are considering the implications of both race and ethnicity on Afrodescendiente mental health, virtually no studies have evaluated this among older adults.

Racial & Ethnic Identity and Development

The current section presents relevant racial and ethnic identity literature. It begins by highlighting the difference between racial classification and racial identity development. Afterward, racial and ethnic identity developmental theories are introduced. This section culminates with the presentation of a framework that supports the understanding of racial and ethnic identity development for Latine people.

Racial Classification & Afrodescendientes

Racial classification is not to be mistaken for racial identity development. Racial classification or identification refers to how a person is perceived by others (Franco, 2019). It is important to note that the distinction between race and ethnicity is that race heavily relies on the labeling of others (Cornell & Hartmann, 2004; Newby & Dowling, 2007; Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). For Latines in the U.S., racial ambiguity or the inability of others to clearly identify their race disrupts the Black-White U.S. racial binary (Rodriguez, 2014). For example, in a study that explored the experiences of Afro Cubans migrants to the Southwest, Newby and Dowling (2007) found that although participants identified as *negro* (Black) in Cuba, African Americans did not

perceive them as Black enough. Further, participants expressed they were told this was due to being of Spanish-speaking origin, a lack of shared history of racial oppression in the U.S., and cultural differences (Newby & Dowling, 2007).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, blackness is perceived broadly, with multiple labels used to specify skin tone, hair texture, facial features, social class, and other personal characteristics (Newby & Dowling, 2007). Labels such as *moreno*, *indio*, *trigueño*, *mulato*, *jabao* are all used to refer to the continuum of Blackness (Vaughn, 2005; Newby & Dowling, 2007). This continuum is rooted in the history of anti-Blackness in Latin America, which idealized and rewarded whiteness and denigrated and punished blackness. As such, being categorized within a multiracial schema is expected as it facilitates privileges in Latin American society. Some scholars have argued that preferring or using multiracial classifications maintains a colonial mentality or the internalization of ethnic, racial, and cultural inferiority (David & Okazaki, 2006; Adames et al., 2021; Comas-Díaz, 2021). Yet, when Afrodescendientes arrive or are born in the U.S., racial classifications become complex and often create discord regarding the self-identification process (Franco, 2019). For some, this process may mean the development of a triple consciousness or the feeling of three-ness as a Latine, a Negro, and an American, where Afrodescendientes are not fully visible and are unable to integrate all three parts across all three contexts (Flores & Jimenez Roman, 2009). The concept of triple consciousness complements the ideas of DuBois's double consciousness highlighting the complexities of transnationalism across the diaspora (Flores & Jimenez Roman, 2009).

As mentioned previously (see *Racial Mixing & Identity Formation in Colonial Latin America*), identity formation for Afrodescendientes was a dynamic process in colonial Latin America influenced by various factors. This process remains true for Afrodescendientes today,

where racial and ethnic identity is determined by self-appraisal and external classification from others (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997; Newby & Dowling, 2007). Cornell and Hartmann (1997) argue that ethnicity and race go beyond labels forced on individuals but are also:

“identities that people accept, resist, choose, specify, invent, redefine, reject, actively defend and so forth. They involve an active “we” as well as a “they. They involve not only circumstances but active responses to circumstances by individuals and groups, guided by their own preconceptions, dispositions, and agendas (p. 77; Newby & Dowling, 2007).

Further, Cornell and Hartmann (1997) conclude that three factors influence identity self-classification: 1) boundaries and/or borders that separate groups from each other (e.g., criteria of inclusion or exclusion); 2) a group's perceived position in relation to others in a hierarchy and; 3) group meaning, assignment or assertion by others or the group (Newby & Dowling, 2007). In sum, the identity formation process for the Afrodescendiente is dynamic and influenced by multiple factors which cannot be perfectly situated within the U.S. White-Black racial binary (Perea, 1997; Flores & Jimenez Roman, 2009).

In conclusion, while racial classification relies heavily on the perceptions of others, it impacts racial self-identification. The internal process by which one negotiates self-identification and the experiences one may face being classified by others alludes to components of racial and ethnic identity development. As a psychological variable, racial and ethnic identity is the psychological process of negotiating racism and analyzing the emotions, thoughts, and attitudes regarding self-labeling (Garcia, 2017; Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). Surely, this process goes beyond just choosing a label. As such, there is a need to continue understanding the racial and ethnic identity development process for Afrodescendientes.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Theories & Frameworks

Within psychology, scholars have created and adapted theories to describe the developmental process through which members of marginalized social identities come to understand and value their group. Given the saliency of race and ethnicity in the lives of Afrodescendientes, the current section will present a summarized review of relevant racial and ethnic identity development literature. This section will culminate with introducing an applicable identity framework for Afrodescendientes: Centering Racial-Ethnic Identity for Latinx (C-REIL; Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017).

Racial identity development is the process by which members of marginalized racial groups overcome the version of internalized racism that typifies their group (Helms & Cook, 1999). The goal of this process is to achieve a self-affirming and more realistic collective group identity. According to Helms and Cook (1999), “the need for such development exists because society differentially rewards or punishes members of societally ascribed racial groups according to their racial classifications” (p. 84). Racial identity development theories first began by understanding this process for African Americans. The concept of Black racial identity development (BRID) into stages was first introduced by Cross (1971) in the seminal article titled *Toward a Psychology of Black Liberation: The Negro-to Black Conversion Experience*, calling it the *Nigrescence scale*. Cross argued that for African Americans, the process of developing a healthier Black identity included four stages: 1) Pre-encounter, 2) Encounter, 3) Immersion/Emersion, and 4) Internalization-Commitment (Cross, 1971). During this process, African Americans move from self-denigration to pride. Since its publishing, this scale has been adapted, and recent iterations incorporate ethnic identity (Cross Racial Identity Scale; Vandiver et al., 2000; Cross Ethnic-Racial Identity Scale-Adults; Worrell et al., 2016/2019)

Other scholars have also developed racial identity development theories. For example, *The People of Color Racial Identity Ego Statuses* (Helms, 1995) proposes five ego statuses that inform the cognitions, beliefs, and processing strategies for ethnic and racial minorities. This scale can be used for people of color but has slight variations when used specifically for Black people. Helm's racial identity model challenges the concept of stages and introduces ego statuses allowing for the dynamic identity development process (Helms, 1995). Table 1 explains the five statuses, which are: 1) Conformity, 2) Dissonance, 3) Immersion/Emersion, 4) Internalization, and 5) Integrative Awareness.

Table 1

Summary of the People of Color Racial Identity Ego Statuses and Information-Processing Strategies (IPS)

Statuses	Explanation
Conformity (Pre-encounter)	External self-definition that implies devaluing of one's own group and allegiance to the White racial group and/or standards of merit. A person most likely is oblivious to socioracial groups' sociopolitical histories. IPS: Selective perception and obliviousness to socioracial concerns.
Dissonance (Encounter)	Ambivalence and confusion concerning own socioracial-group commitment and ambivalent socioracial self-definition. IPS: Repression of anxiety-evoking racial information, ambivalence, anxiety, and disorientation.
Immersion/Emersion	Immersion: Idealization of one's socio-racial group and denigration of the White group. Use of own-group external standards to self-define and own-group commitment and loyalty is valued. IPS: Hypervigilance and hypersensitivity toward racial stimuli and dichotomous thinking. Emersion: A euphoric sense of well-being and solidarity that accompanies being surrounded by people of one's own socioracial group. IPS: Uncritical of one's own group, peacefulness, joyousness.
Internalization	Positive commitment to and acceptance of one's own socioracial group, internally defined racial attributes, and capacity to objectively assess and respond to members of the dominant group. Can make life decisions by evaluating and integrating socioracial group requirements and self-assessment. IPS: Intellectualization and

abstraction.

Integrative Awareness

Capacity to value one's own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups. Life decisions may be motivated by globally humanistic self-expression. IPS: Flexible and complex.

Note. This Table depicts the five statues of racial identity development proposed by Helms (1995). This table is adapted from Helms and Cook (1999). Ego statuses in parentheses are used by Helms when assessing the racial identity development of African Americans (adapted from Cross, 1971).

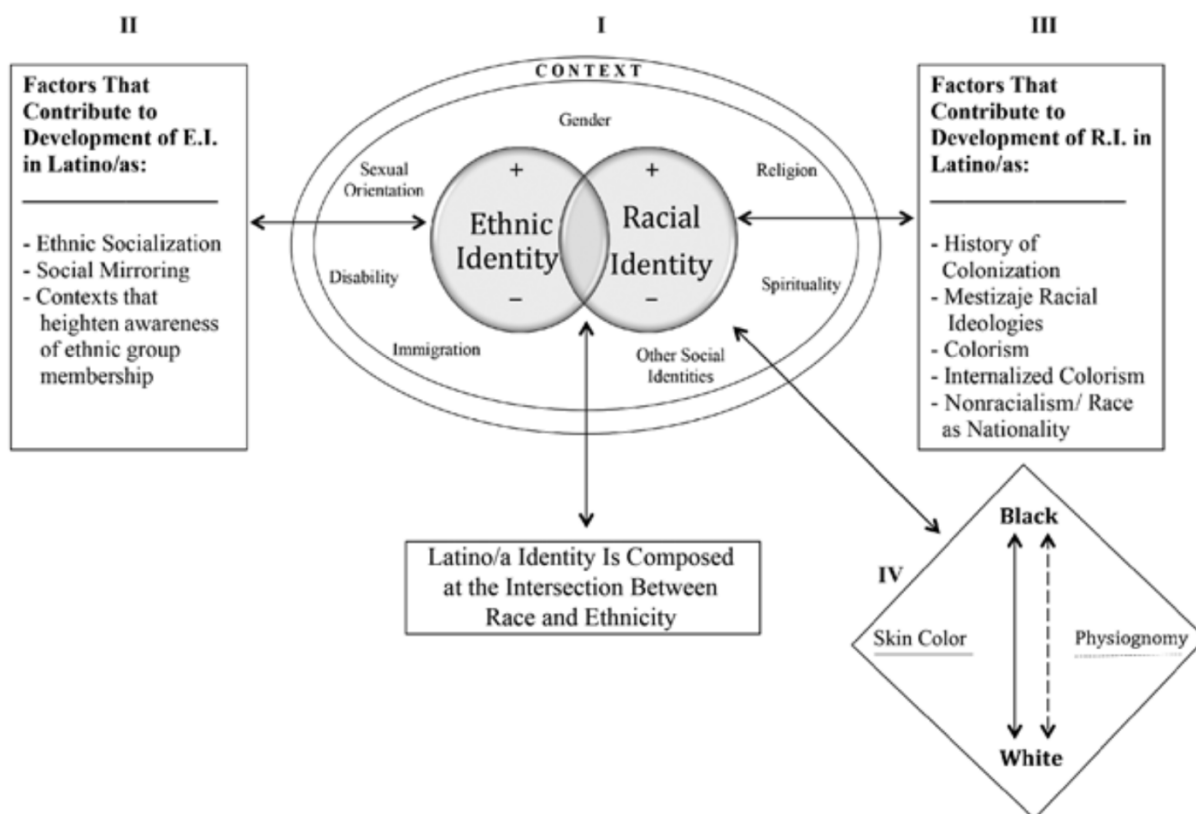
While racial identity relies heavily on the classification of others, ethnic identity is different in that it can be determined by the individual, and it can change over time (Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). Ethnic identity development derives from an individual's sense of community, culture, their setting and begins early in childhood (Phinney & Ong, 2007). One of the earliest scholars to discuss Ethnic identity development theories was Phinney (1989), who argued that ethnic identity development occurred in three stages across ethnic groups: 1) unexamined ethnic identity, 2) ethnic identity search/moratorium, and 3) ethnic identity achievement. Scholars of ethnic identity development theories have also created models to discuss this process for Latines (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007; Bernal et al., 1990). For example, the *Ethnoracial Model of Latino/a Identity Orientations* (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2007) consists of six identities that Latines may employ when viewing themselves. When considering ethnic identity development, it's essential to consider how it intersects with migration. For example, ethnic identity development may be influenced by the arrival to a new country with differing attitudes; at times, individuals have to choose what cultural aspects to retain in order to be accepted in the new society (Phinney et al., 2001). However, when pluralism is encouraged and welcomed, ethnic identity tends to be

strong, but when there is denigration and hostility, individuals may reject their ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001).

To understand the nuanced complexities of Latine social identities, Adames & Chavez-Dueñas (2017) developed the *Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity for Latino/as* framework (Figure 2). Although this framework does not demonstrate the developmental process of identity development, it provides a mapping of factors that influence the Latine identity. This framework provides the foundation for conducting racially and ethnically congruent research, assessment, and treatment. There are four parts to this framework. The first part explicitly focuses on race and ethnicity, the context of the individual, and other social identities and considers acceptance and congruency (i.e., the +/-) in racial and ethnic groups. The second component of this framework addresses factors that impact ethnic identity development, such as socialization, social mirroring (e.g., media representations), and contexts that may heighten awareness of ethnic group membership. The third component considers factors that impact racial identity development. These include the history of colonization, mestizaje racial ideologies (colorblind narratives), and beliefs of race as a nationality. Lastly, the fourth factor in this framework considers phenotypes or skin color (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). Although this framework is not specific to Afrodescendientes, it can be used to contextualize all the factors that may impact their identification.

Figure 2

Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity for Latino/a Framework (C-REIL)



Note. The C-REIL provides a framework for understanding the racial and ethnic identity development of Latine people. This image was created by Adames and Chavez-Dueñas (2017).

In sum, Afrodescendientes' experiences of discrimination based on race and ethnicity place the question of how preexistent racial and ethnic identity models might support or be discrepant from their process. In a publication that reviewed racial and ethnic identity measures in multicultural counseling, Cokley (2007) concluded that race and racial identity development might not function alike across Black ethnic groups. Though some studies have attempted to address racial and ethnic identity development across ethnic groups (Hall & Carter, 2006; Sanchez, 2013), limited studies have explored this process on Afrodescendientes. This limitation is especially true when considering lifespan factors such as age. However, the C-REIL by Adames & Chavez-Dueñas (2017) provides a framework that maps the factors that may

influence racial and ethnic identity for Latine people. This framework can be used to assist in understanding Afrodescendiente experiences.

Older Adults

The current study concerns the experiences of Afrodescendiente older adults' racial and ethnic identity development, its impact on their mental health, and their legacy. Virtually no information exists on Afrodescendientes older adults as they are not captured in research or evaluations. However, some data highlights the experiences of African American or Latine older adults. As such, the current section will explore relevant literature on older adults as it pertains to the research questions. This section begins with a summary of a lifespan theory: Erikson's Psychosocial Stages. Later, a discussion of the intersections of age, mental health, and racial and ethnic identity is provided, highlighting key literature. Finally, this section culminates with a discussion on the role of elders in socialization.

Psychosocial Stages of Development

To contextualize the experiences of older adults, developmental theories are vital. According to Erikson (1980), later adulthood is marked by making meaning of life, discovering reasons for one's existence, and realizing death. Erikson's psychosocial stages of development highlight two essential stages that may be pertinent to older adults: Generativity vs. Stagnation and Integrity vs. Despair. Those in middle adulthood (45-65) or the Generativity vs. Stagnation stage focus on legacy. At this stage, adults contemplate their ability to create or nurture things that will last, often placing importance on parenting, grandparenting, mentoring, or contributing meaningfully to society (Ehlman & Ligon, 2012). On the contrary, adults who are not generative are stagnant or disconnected, uninvolved, and will often feel unproductive. Stagnation may affect adults' health, including reduced cognitive abilities, poor physical and mental health, and

decreased life satisfaction (Malone et al., 2016). This stage may impact individuals as they enter older adulthood. The next stage of Erikson's psychosocial model is Integrity vs. Despair and is considered for those in older adulthood (65+; Erikson, 1980). Older adults in this stage are concerned with life examination, reflection, acceptance, and contemplating contentment. Those content with their life exhibit feelings of accomplishment, pride, peace, and wisdom. However, those who struggle to reach integrity may experience despair (Erikson, 1980). This stage may come with feelings of regret, shame, and disappointment and has implications for mental health (Malone et al., 2016). Lastly, the ninth stage- very old age (80+), was later added by Joan Erikson (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). This stage suggests that people at this age experience new challenges (i.e. deteriorating health, death of loved ones, reality of own death), isolation (culture dependent), and a renegotiation of the previous eight stages (ex. loss of autonomy or reduction of trust; Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

Age, Mental Health & Ethnic and Racial Identity

Older adults are at unique risk of developing mental health disorders, often vulnerable to developing depression making up 18% of suicides (World Health Organization, 2017; National Council on Aging, 2022). This vulnerability may be due to factors such as chronic illness and pain, grief, loss of independent living, cognitive impairments, and financial stress (National Council on Aging, 2022). However, scholars have noted that older adults with mental disorders are less likely to receive mental health services (American Psychological Association, 2014). For Latine older adults' factors such as isolation, migration, and intergenerational tensions impact their mental health, specifically the development of depression and anxiety (Barrio et al., 2008; Guo et al., 2014). Furthermore, some challenges impact access to mental health services, such as

language and cultural barriers and lack of transportation and housing, which may maintain or worsen mental health issues (Barrio et al., 2008).

No studies were found on the intersections of age, mental health, and racial and ethnic identity for Afrodescendientes. However, some studies have explored the relationship of these variables within Black Caribbeans (English islands) or Latine communities. For example, in a quantitative study that examined the relationships between stress, social networks, and depression among Black older adults (African American and Caribbean Black), Marshall-Fabien and Miller (2016) found that perceived discrimination and depression symptoms are linked. They also found that compared to African Americans, social support and social connectedness are a greater protective factor against depression for Caribbean Blacks (Marshall-Fabien and Miller, 2016). Similarly, in a qualitative study, Beyene and colleagues (2002) found that the level and quality of social support, the elder's ability to fulfill cultural expectations, and faith in God improve emotional well-being and perceptions of aging despite physical functioning and chronic health conditions for older Latine adults. One crucial factor of note across these two studies is the need and value of social connectedness, which may be rooted in ethnic and cultural values of collectivism (Comas-Díaz, 2012). While familismo provides opportunities for social connections for Latine older adults (see *Chapter 1*), complexities remain.

One qualitative study with a predominantly Mexican sample revealed these challenges (Barrio et al., 2008). Elders shared their expectations of family upholding cultural customs of valuing their elders, and when that was not met, feeling abandoned. Although it is common for elders to live with their adult children, caregivers discuss that disconnection may be due to family members' work and the demands to provide (Barrio et al., 2008). Additionally, they shared stress and burnout as they cared for their elders, reporting a need for additional support

(Barrio et al., 2008). Similarly, in another study that looked at Latine caregivers for elders with Alzheimer's found that often family members cared for their elders as they believed good care could not be hired (Martinez & Acosta Gonzales, 2022). Interviews revealed the gendered caretaking experiences and the greater expectations placed on women/daughters. These findings further highlight the intersectional complexities of the Latine family dynamics and the added tensions on the family structure. Nevertheless, caregivers stated the importance of elders in the family unit, describing feelings of love, gratitude, loyalty, and duty (Martinez & Acosta Gonzales, 2022).

Elders and Racial & Ethnic Socialization

Given the centrality of older adults in the Latine community and their role in society as holders of knowledge and active contributors to child-rearing, it is essential to consider how they might influence generations after. Specifically, how they might impact the racial and ethnic identity development of younger generations. Studies have shown that proper racial socialization has been proven to foster the resiliency of darker skin Latines (Charles, 2021). Results from a study on Latinas suggest that when socialization from parents is centered on affirmation and equality, this leads to positive racial socialization and mental health outcomes for those of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage (Telzer & Vazquez Garcia, 2009). Most studies on racial and ethnic socialization have focused on parental influences, with only a few discussing the role of grandparents.

A literature review on the role of grandparents in ethnic minority families revealed that across families- African Americans, Latine, and Asian Americans- grandparents were considered responsible for cultural transmission and socialization (Kataoka-Yahiro et al., 2004). A study by Jackson and colleagues (2020) examined the saliency of ethnic minority grandparents in the

ethnic-racial socialization and identity development of multiracial grandchildren. Narratives from 24 multiracial adults of Mexican heritage revealed that grandparents were beacons of cultural socialization and enhanced participants' ethnic identity development and multicultural pride. Participant narratives shared that grandparents were the primary source of cultural traditions, practices, and language exposure. Additionally, narratives revealed the negative impact grandparents might have on grandchildren when invalidating multiraciality and conveying disapproval of participants' parents' interracial relationships. Nevertheless, this study reveals the impact of grandparents on grandchildren's ethnic and racial identity development (Jackson et al., 2020).

While studies have discussed elders' influence on their racial and ethnic identity development, little is known about this from the elder's perspective. Virtually nothing is known about this dynamic for Afrodescendiente elders and their families. However, one study explored grandparents' experiences with socialization, yet, it was with Black (ethnicities unknown) grandmothers and their role in the socialization of biracial grandchildren (Chancler et al., 2017). Themes revealed grandmothers' perspectives and methods in racial socialization, including exposing grandchildren to diverse communities, transmitting spiritual values, providing unconditional regard regardless of biracial identity, and deliberately exposing grandchildren to Black culture.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study aimed to understand better the racial and ethnic identity development of *Afrodescendiente* older adults, their perceptions of their identity on their mental health, and its impact on their legacy. This chapter describes the study's research design, selected theories, methods, co-collaborators, measures, and procedures. Additionally, this chapter culminates with a discussion on trustworthiness and the writer's reflexivity.

Research Design

Given the dearth of research on *Afrodescendiente* older adults, qualitative approaches are critical. Using qualitative methods with communities that have limited research will allow for strong construct and external validity (Sue, 1999; Murrow, 2007). Multicultural research must take an “inside-out” approach where we first value and account for the perspectives of ethnocultural communities before moving towards generalizability (Hall, Yip & Zarate, 2016). This approach will increase the development of a diversity science, challenging binaries and developing complex theories, frameworks, and nuanced understandings of diversity within groups (Jones, 2010). As such, qualitative research aims to understand the “complexity of people's lives by examining individual perspectives in context” (Wang, 2008, pp. 256).

Qualitative research can take many forms being particularly appropriate for multicultural communities (Wang, 2008; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). However, historically, qualitative methods have failed to consider the intersectional experiences of marginalized populations and

instead have viewed them through a “colonizer’s imagination,” presenting them as an Other, deficient, and even “savage” (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022, pp. 8; Guthrie, 2003). Thus, many scholars have argued for an intersectional and decolonial approach in qualitative research design that contemplates the “political and/or intellectual intent to understand how people come to garner collective agency, resilience, and forms of resistance against oppressive situations, policies, and practices” (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022, pp.7). Similarly, scholars have extended this intersectional and decolonial approach to research with Latine populations, pointing out that this approach fosters a deep understanding of experiences, trust, empowerment for individuals, and alignment of cultural values (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Intersectionality and *Black-imiento* are used as this study’s theoretical framework. *Plática* was used as both a methodology and method. Visual methodologies, such as photo elicitation and artifacts, were incorporated to facilitate discussion during the *plática*. The following sections will expand upon the writer’s use of the theoretical frameworks, methodology, and methods to explore this study’s research questions.

Intersectionality

To fully address the co-collaborators’ breadth and depth of experiences with race, ethnicity, age, and mental health and how that has informed their legacy, the current study utilized intersectionality as a theoretical framework. In this study, intersectionality was used to guide the study from beginning to end. Intersectionality assumes that oppression cannot be seen as a “single axis” (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022, pp. 37) and instead views oppression within various identities as interlocking. Intersectionality has its roots in multiple resistance movements; however, it is primarily attributed to Black Feminist thought and Womanist activism (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) coined the term intersectionality to describe

Black women's experiences of workplace discrimination based on both race and gender in critical legal studies. However, intersectionality existed as early as 1851 with Truth's speech *Ain't I a Woman?* at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio. Truth (1851) articulated her invisibility as being Black, poor, and a woman. Similarly, Cooper published a collection of essays in *A Voice from the South* (1892), which underscored the unique experiences of Black women and their importance for societal advancement (Cooper, 1892). Subsequently, Black activists and writers such as Angela Davis, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, and Leila Gonzalez furthered intersectional epistemologies and political resistance (Collins, 2000; Machado & Perry, 2021).

Since the U.S. civil rights movement, intersectional theoretical frameworks have entered academic arenas. In addition to Crenshaw, Collins is credited for major contributions to the study of intersectionality in academia, publishing seminal texts that proposed this theory as a "radical critique of institutional violence" (Grzanka et al., 2020, pp. 306) and introduced concepts such as the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000). In psychology, scholars have advocated for the use of intersectional theories and frameworks for collective liberation and social justice (Moradi et al., 2017; Grzanka et al., 2020). However, when contemplating intersectional theoretical frameworks in psychology, scholars have cautioned not to dilute its theoretical framework to mere understandings of subjects, identities, and/or attitudes (Shin et al., 2017). Instead, intersectionality is ideally used as a radical and transformative framework to critique and challenge structural inequalities (Shin et al., 2017).

Esposito and Evans-Winters (2022) discuss the use of intersectionality theory in qualitative research. They argue that an intersectional theoretical framework allows for analyzing those on the margins and their resistance and addressing the systems that maintain oppression.

As such, intersectionality influences methodology as it allows for “contemplating, interrogating, naming and simultaneously reclaiming and rejecting that nexus between the known and unknown, invisible and (hyper)visible, and humanizing and dehumanizing” (p. 4). Additionally, they state that intersectional methodologies interrupt traditional forms of research by centering cultural experiences, values, and beliefs of participants and the researcher, bringing about authentic representations of people, places, and emotions and countering hegemony and master narratives. When using intersectionality in research, Esposito and Evans-Winters state that researchers must (1) accept that academia only represents one way of understanding the world, (2) lived experience shapes our critical consciousness and approach to the research process, (3) differences within and across communities must be embraced to understand the social world (4) research is an opportunity for researchers to learn with and from the Other (5) research is a collaborative experience where differences can help us thrive together (2022).

Black-imiento

Traditionally, U.S. racial categorization has been referred to as the racial binary of White and Black. This narrow definition does not allow for the reality of intersectional and mixed identities (Perea, 1997). Hispanic/Latine people have been defined in many ways by social science, for example, as a raceless pan-ethnic group (Diaz & Delgado-Romero, 2004; Adames, 2020). Conceptions of Latine identity continue to evolve in the U.S. as the population grows in size and influence. True to the concept of the binary, U.S. Latine people may choose to identify as White, given the White over Black ascendancy present in all facets of U.S. society. The reverse is an amplification of Anti-Blackness that replicates racist structures in the larger society within the panethnic Latine group.

To consider the complexities of race within Latinidad and politics, this study used a Black-*imiento* framework (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). Black-*imiento* has its roots in higher education studies and was constructed to discuss the lack of representation of Afrodescendientes in literature. This framework is situated within Chicanx and Black resistance movements and highlights the influences of identity politics, history, and Black liberation. Black-*imiento* seeks to “(re)situate, (re)negotiate, and (re)present Blackness within Latinidad” (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019, p. 139). This framework problematizes how Latine identity is studied and exhorts U.S. scholars to consider how their conceptualization of race shapes inquiry, creation, and dissemination of knowledge in scholarship, research, and policy (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). Black-*imiento* is essential in research because it challenges Latine U.S. scholarship to look beyond the actual phenotypes of the individuals and consider the intentionality around performing and asserting a Black identity (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). Black-*imiento* can be considered as the counter-narrative to *blanquemento* or the “whitening” of the Caribbean and Latin America that encouraged people to embrace interracial relationships with European descendants and U.S Assimilationist strategies (Twine, 1997; Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019)

Dache and colleagues articulate the three tenets of the Black-*imiento* framework for exploring Latine experiences (2019). The first tenet is Black anti-racist aesthetics, which argues that there are racialized standards of beauty that maintain racism. Thus, this tenant promotes the natural Black body and resistance to societal beauty norms and expands the White-Black binary by creating a positive, more all-encompassing identity. Secondly, the Black-*imiento* framework calls for a historical, transnational consciousness that engages the work of Black and Brown intellects across nations. Explicit in this tenet is the understanding of Pan-Africanism and the

interwoven oppression of those marginalized. This tenet demands restoring the public memory of resistant movements (e.g., Black Panther Party and Young Lords Party) and the shared history of colonialism. Lastly, the third tenet of the Black-*imiento* framework is rejecting a pan-ethnic racialized Latine label. This tenet contemplates U.S. racial categories and their attempt to make ethnic identities into a homogenous race. The authors consider how U.S. racial categories need to be more nuanced to explore the racialized experiences of Afrodescendientes due to phenotypes. Moreover, Dache and colleagues argue that the collapsing of Latine identity and its being “raced” upholds assimilationist tactics and the privileges of proximity to Whiteness (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019).

Although the Black-*imiento* framework is situated within U.S. politics, this framework was used to negotiate the role of White supremacist politics in Latin America and the Caribbean as well, given the influence of U.S. colonialism and imperialism in this area of the world. The Black-*imiento* framework has been interwoven throughout this study, informing the research questions' development, findings analysis, and implications.

Plática Methodology & Method

Pláticas is the Spanish word for informal conversations between family members, friends, and neighbors. *Pláticas* has been described as the “glue that maintains cohesion, resiliency, and protection of Latina culture, social networks, and identity sustaining the individual and family during periods of distress...” (de La Torre, 2008, p 45) and thus providing an avenue for healing and empathy. *Plática* methodology, therefore, allows persons to “share ideas, knowledge, memories or *consejos* [advice],” values *la despedida* (or the goodbye), and is a legitimate culturally responsive methodology in Latine research (Delgado Bernal, 2020, p. 159; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Flores & Morales, 2021). *Plática* is informed by resistance to

the dominant culture, challenges Western notions of objectivity or neutrality, and informs the entirety of the research process and subsequent practice (Delgado Bernal, 2020). Plática methodology has taken many forms in research and has been used extensively in the Latine educational literature (Flores & Morales, 2021).

Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) delineate the five principles that drive plática methodology. First, plática methodology draws from Chicana/Latina feminist theory; therefore, it centers on marginalized persons and brings attention to systems of oppression and how it impacts the daily lives of humans to benefit those with privilege. Secondly, this methodology is relational and honors participants as “co-constructors of knowledge” and contributors to the meaning-making process (p. 111). The third principle is that plática connects everyday lived experiences with the research questions, allowing the participants to share the various facets of their lives that are related to the question. Fourth, plática provides a potential space for healing by creating a cathartic experience for participants. More concretely, relationships in plática provide a space where vulnerable discussions can flow from exploring past stories of pain and trauma to current negotiations and future hopes. Lastly, plática methodology heavily relies on the concepts of reciprocity, vulnerability, and researcher reflexivity, which informs trust and may mean that the participants may ask the researcher questions and creating a dialogue (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Flores & Morales, 2021).

Plática has no concise method; however, scholars have conducted studies incorporating the principles. For example, in one study examining how immigrant working-class Latina mothers shape the success of their daughters, Flores (2016) engaged in dialogues with mother-daughter dyads. In this study, researchers shared connections to participants’ personal experiences, made connections to other findings, and embraced the emotionality of participants

(Flores, 2016). In another study, Latina educators of color engaged in pláticas that explored their experiences of belonging in school, implications for their practice, and their understanding of belonging. Researchers met for six hours (across days), transcribed their plática, and identified sections associated with emotionality, shared resonance, and cultural memory and after recombined sections to inform implications (Soto-Manning et al., 2021). As seen in the aforementioned studies, plática allows for creativity in methods. As such, the current study will use dialogues between the researcher and co-collaborators to address the study's questions.

Plática methodology aligns well with Latine values regarding the treatment of older adults and the importance of social support for improving well-being (De La Torre, 2008; Valle & Bensussen, 1985). This methodology is a culturally responsive approach to qualitative research, facilitating the writer's ability to address this study's questions. Though a growing body of literature has used plática methodology (Flores & Morales, 2021), limitations exist. To this writer's knowledge, plática methodology has not been used for Afrodescendientes, and its epistemology does not explicitly center on race. Thus, in this study, plática was situated within intersectionality and Black-*imienta* theories. Moreover, limited studies in psychology have incorporated plática methodology. As such, in this study, plática methodology was used to respond to the call for psychologists to use intersectional and decolonial approaches in research-expanding the horizons of traditional psychological science that often ignores racial and cultural variables and people (Sue, 1999; Jones, 2010; Delgado-Romero et al., 2018).

Visual Methodologies

Visual methodologies enhance the "richness of data by discovering additional layers of meaning, adding validity and depth and creating knowledge" (Glaw et al., 2017, p. 1) and pair well with traditional qualitative methodologies. Visual methodologies in qualitative research can

promote the social justice agenda and be transformative as it provides flexibility in eliciting information when working with marginalized communities (Moon, 2019; Hays & Singh, 2022). Although underutilized in health research, sociologists and anthropologists have embraced various forms of visual methodologies to understand people (Glaw et al., 2017). Visual methodologies can take many forms, including photo-elicitation or soliciting photographs, visual ethnography or using images (e.g., paintings or photos) to understand a cultural experience, and music and film inquiry (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Visual methodologies can stand alone as a data collection method or can be used to supplement other forms of qualitative methodologies. For example, in a study conducted by Edwards and I'Anson (2020) on the experiences of pharmacy students' learning practices, the authors collected artifacts (e.g., photos, songs, and objects) that students identified as representing what they learned. Artifacts were presented and discussed during a semi-structured interview (Edwards & I'Anson, 2020). The current study asked co-collaborators to bring visuals or artifacts that connect them to the African diaspora. Visual representations and prompts were used to deepen the pláticas and provide additional points of reference for data elicitation for co-collaborators.

Data Collection & Analysis

Co-Collaborators

Consistent with plática methodology, the current research study refers to participants as co-collaborators, embracing them as co-constructors of knowledge (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Embracing participants as co-collaborators are aligned with Latine cultural values of *respeto* (respect), viewing them as holders and co-creators of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Initially, co-collaborators were recruited via purposeful

sampling. Patton (2004) defines purposeful sampling as a strategy that requires researchers to develop specific criteria for those entering the study (Hays & Singh, 2022). After, snowball sampling was used where co-collaborators identified others who might meet criteria and be interested in participating (Hays & Singh, 2022). When determining sample size, scholars of intersectional qualitative research suggest depth over breadth and spending more time with individuals (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022; Hays & Singh, 2022). Since the sample size in qualitative research is contextual and dependent on a study's paradigm and questions, prior research suggests a sample size of 6-10 co-collaborators or until the study has reached saturation (Hays & Singh, 2022; Boddy, 2016). Saturation is the point in the study where findings become redundant, and no new properties, concepts, or dimensions are seen (Hays & Singh, 2022). As such, the current study included nine co-collaborators. Multiple recruitment strategies, including flyers and word of mouth, were used. Recruitment materials were available in Spanish and English. The researcher shared recruitment materials via social media. Additionally, flyers were posted to listservs and Latine community group chats.

Inclusion Criteria. The current study aimed to explore the experiences of Afrodescendiente older adults. Thus, co-collaborators were 65 or older, born or lived for an extended time in a Latin American or Caribbean country, and self-identified as Afro-descendant. Co-collaborators also self-identified as *orgullosa de ser Afrodescendiente* (proud of being Afro-descendant). Given the variability of colonial and pre-colonial European histories on race and ethnicity, this study only incorporated co-collaborators from Spanish-speaking countries. Lastly, given the elements that can impact identity development and the breadth of transnational experiences for Afrodescendientes, co-collaborators had a connection to the U.S. This connection was through the form of (1) at least one family member currently living in the U.S.,

(2) familiarity with U.S. racial dynamics, (3) visitation the U.S. and or (4) currently lives in the U.S. Screener questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

Measures

Given the qualitative nature of this study, measures included (a) a screener questionnaire (Appendix A), (b) a demographic data sheet (Appendix B), and (c) plática guide (Appendix C).

Demographic Questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to co-collaborators after the informed consent was completed. To gather additional information from co-collaborators and ensure they meet inclusion criteria, their age, gender, country of birth, racial and ethnic identification, Spanish level fluency, English level fluency, and their home country or country of residency were collected. To further explore their connection to the U.S. and ensure inclusion criteria, participants were asked if they had family in the U.S. if they had visited the U.S., if so, how often and where if they live or have lived in the U.S., if so for how long and where and lastly if they had familiarity with U.S. racial dynamics. Participants were also asked if they had worked or attended school in the U.S., how long and where, and demographics or characteristics of their current neighborhoods (e.g., dominant race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and housing options in the community) and who they currently live with. This information was collected orally to ensure understanding of questions and to build rapport with the principal investigator, who is bilingual, bicultural, and Afro-descendant (see subjectivity statement).

Procedures

Upon showing interest in this study, co-collaborators were screened via phone to ensure they met the study's criteria. If they meet the study's criteria, a day and time was determined for the plática. To obtain an adequate depth of experience, the researcher engaged in pláticas for 60-90 minutes. Co-collaborators could engage in pláticas in their homes or via video chat if

preferred. However, all co-collaborators chose video chat. Before the plática, co-collaborators were asked to select photos, objects, or any other visuals that connected them to the African diaspora to be shared during the plática. The pláticas began by reviewing informed consent, and upon receiving consent, the researcher started recording. After, the writer verbally administered a demographic questionnaire. The writer then engaged co-collaborators in pláticas addressing this study's research questions. Co-collaborators were then asked to explain their visuals. The writer then obtained a picture of their visual. Pláticas concluded by the writer thanking co-collaborators with a warm appreciation for their time. For their participation, co-collaborators were compensated 35 US dollars.

An integral part of this study included researcher memos (Flores & Morales, 2021). Thus, after each interview, the writer engaged in reflexive journaling. Recordings from pláticas were transcribed and reviewed. Pseudo-names were created to protect co-collaborators' identities. Audio recordings were deleted after transcription. Co-collaborator identifying information, de-identified transcripts, and pictures of their visuals were protected via 2-step password protection and were stored on the writer's laptop.

Thematic Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis for this study. A thematic analysis is a method that explores patterns (or themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is considered flexible as it can be situated within various epistemological positions, thus allowing for the centering of this study's theoretical framework intersectionality and *Black-imiento* (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher used Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis process (2006). The six steps are as follows: (1) familiarize yourself with the data by transcribing, repeated reading of the data, and noting initial ideas; (2) systematically generate initial codes

across the entire data set, coding as many patterns as possible (3) search for themes by collating the codes, contemplate the relationship between codes and subthemes; (4) review themes created in step 3, begin to refine them and compare to entire data set; (5) define and refine themes by considering their specifics, generating a clear definition and name; (6) producing the report with sufficient evidence for each theme, selecting vivid examples that tell the narrative.

It is important to note that codes do not emerge from the data but from the researcher's interactions with it, thus highlighting the importance of tending toward researcher subjectivities throughout the analysis process (Varpio et al., 2016; Hays & Singh, 2022). As such, memos (see trustworthiness) assisted the analysis process by further allowing the writer to engage in reflexivity, preserve and develop ideas, and contemplate "what does this data source...teach me about the research question?" (Hays & Singh, 2022, p. 351). NVivo was used to facilitate the analysis process.

Trustworthiness

Engaging in strategies that promote trustworthiness is critical to intersectionality theory and plática methodology. Trustworthiness is defined as "the degree to which a qualitative study genuinely reflects participant perspectives and the context under investigation through its design and report" (Hays & Sing, 2022, p. 235; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Since the researcher's cultural and social identities, experiences of power and privilege, and subsequent assumptions and values may influence data interpretation, researchers' subjectivities must be tended to (Hays & Singh, 2022). Explicitly identifying and describing your worldview and how this may inform data analysis, conclusions, and implications can increase trustworthiness (Varpio et al., 2016; Hays & Singh, 2022). Trustworthiness is examined through multiple criteria: credibility, transferability,

dependability, confirmability, and authenticity, and multiple strategies exist to improve these areas (Hays & Singh, 2022).

To maximize trustworthiness in this study, the writer engaged in memoing after each plática and during data analysis. Birks and colleagues (2008) state that by memoing, “the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research” (p. 69). Memoing is a form of reflexive journaling that allows for clarity of thinking, articulation of assumptions, feelings, and thoughts, and retention of ideas that may be otherwise lost (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008). Memoing is helpful during the data collection and analysis process. Hays and Singh (2022) state memoing increases credibility, confirmability, and authenticity. Additionally, reflexive journaling increases dependability (Hays & Singh, 2002). The author engaged in memoing throughout this study. Memoing allowed the author to reflect and process feelings and thoughts related to pláticas, patterns observed throughout analysis and reflect on connections to previous literature. For example, memoing assisted the writer in processing negative counter transference during a plática with a co-collaborator. Memoing allowed the writer to process personal feelings and how it may have impacted the plática.

Also, the writer used an external auditor to increase credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. An external auditor is an individual who reviews the audit trail of a study to ensure that it was conducted correctly and that the findings accurately represent the data (Hays & Singh, 2022). An auditor with relevant expertise and interest, no conflict of interest, and who can objectively review this study was selected. Specifically, the writer selected a colleague from Higher Education studies whose work focuses on Afrodescendiente populations and who identifies as Afrodescendiente (from the Dominican Republic). Further, the external

auditor had extensive knowledge of Black-*imiento* as a theoretical framework and plática as a method and methodology. An audit trail or “physical evidence of systemic data collection and analysis procedures” was maintained to facilitate the auditing process (Hays & Singh, 2022, p. 263). The author met with the external auditor at two different stages of analysis. The external auditor assisted the author with determining clear definitions of themes and subthemes, organizing codes and challenging writer to center study’s theoretical frameworks in analysis. For example, when presenting codes to the external auditor, they highlighted the authors lack of explicitly using the word “racism” in a code that highlighted experiences of racism. This feedback allowed the writer to reflect on their coding process, and re-center race to align with a Black-*imiento* framework.

To further increase the trustworthiness of this study, an advisory committee was selected to assist the writer in developing the plática questions. The advisory committee comprised of three Afrodescendiente graduate students across disciplines (rhetoric, social work, and Black studies) representing various Latine countries (Guatemala/Honduras, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic). They served as a brain trust, bringing in their collective wisdom, in assisting the researcher in translating academic constructs to the study’s co-collaborators. Their lived experiences of being Afrodescendiente, in conjunction with their academic background, facilitated the development of this study’s plática questions.

Reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity is a researcher’s active self-reflection process and is crucial when using an intersectional framework and plática methodologies (Flores & Morales, 2021; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022; Hays & Singh, 2022). Plática methodology begins with self-examining biases, values, life experiences, privileges, and power that may impact the research process

(Flores & Morales, 2021). Similarly, intersectionality prompts researchers to consider their “interpretations of the self and Others in a more nuance” (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022, p. 16) and complex way while exploring the researcher’s proximity to power. Reflexivity impacts the research process and is vital in building trust with participants and increasing the trustworthiness of findings (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Flores & Morales, 2021; Hays & Singh, 2022). Thus, the current section explores the writer’s reflexivity related to the study’s purpose. This section will conclude with the writer’s reflection on the academic and career experiences that relate to this research study.

My Identity & My Elders

Racially and ethnically, I identify as a Black, light-skinned Dominican. Throughout my life, I have experienced conflicting messaging and treatment regarding my racial and ethnic identity. These experiences have informed my understanding of myself, others, and the world. My experiences of pain in these social identities have been juxtaposed with privilege and opportunity. Moving from White American, Black American, and Latine spaces (both in the U.S. and abroad), I have received opposing messaging regarding my identity. This experience has led to my development of a triple consciousness or feeling of “three-ness” (Flores & Jimenez Roman, 2009, p. 327) of soul and thought as a Latina, a Black person, and an American. As I navigated these three spaces, I found myself in constant pursuit of authenticity and visibility, negotiating the politics surrounding my identities.

The development of my triple consciousness began in preschool, completely disrupting my worldview. One instance particularly stands out during this time. Worried about my lack of English language fluency and how that would impact me academically, my parents worked extra hours in factories to afford private education in a predominantly White Catholic school. This

school was a culture shock, and it was my first experience being fully immersed in White American culture. I looked and acted differently, I spoke a different language, and I struggled to communicate and understand others and I often faced discrimination. One particular moment marked my time at this school. While ordering lunch from the cafeteria for the first time, I was lost and did not know what to do. I was handed what I now know to be called a meatball sub. Confused and disgusted by slimy saucy meat, I threw it out. My White teacher noticed my action, picked my lunch out of the trash, and forced me to eat it. I felt humiliated, dehumanized and wondered what kind of person would make a child eat food from the trash. This experience privy me to the feelings associated with marginalization. I internalized the idea that I was bad, dumb, and overall lesser than others. Although I did not have the language to describe what had happened, I had a sense early on that this marginalization was rooted in the ethnic and racial differences to my White American counterparts.

While the messaging around my identities has been complex, my grandparents substantially impacted my identity formation. Most of the time, my grandparents remained a source of steadfast, unconditional regard and connection to my African and Taino ancestry but other times, a source of confusion and pain. This mixed experience was primarily due to the complex history of the Dominican Republic regarding colonialism, race, Haitian relations, and U.S. imperialism (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2018). Though not every moment was perfect, they alleviated some of the distress that came with navigating my identities in the U.S. My grandparents' centrality in my life, their own identity development, and the desire to support their well-being have led me to the research topic at hand, the source of my inspiration. This value informs my lens as a scholar, practitioner, and advocate. As such, I will discuss the role the

elders of my life have played in my ethnic and racial identity development and how that has informed my worldview.

My paternal great-grandmother- Ana Silvia - took care of me during the beginning stages of my life. Silvia was a powerhouse, stern, strong-willed woman who has become childlike and joyful in her older age. Dominicans would identify her skin color as *mulata* (mulatto), her skin a perfect blend of Afro, Indigenous, and European ancestry. My earliest memories of my Dominican culture were introduced by her. Together we watched *novelas* (Latine soap operas) and listened to music. She introduced me to Afrodescendiente musical artists such as Celia Cruz and Los Cantantes. I grew up yelling Cruz's catchphrase- *azucar!* (sugar!) randomly throughout my day and quoting Cruz's song *Esa Negra tiene el tumbao!* (that Black woman has flow/rhythm) She would also sing folk songs that told stories about the misfortunes of the people of the Dominican Republic (DR) but embraced Dominican culture, language, and humor. Through Ana Silvia's stories, I was also introduced to Dominican *campo* (farm) life. I heard all about her experiences with intersectional oppression, being marginalized as a poor woman farmer who became a widow twice, and her resilience in gaining stability. From her, I learned how to cook *chéunchén* (a Dominican cracked corn pilaf dish) and *arepa Dominicaná* (a sweet and spiced cornmeal cake), dishes with Taino and African roots. This immersion in Dominican culture early on was where I learned to have pride in being a Black Dominican woman. Since beginning my dissertation journey, abuela Silvia has passed, causing profound grief for me and my family.

Amalia, my paternal grandmother, and Ana Silvia's daughter, is why my family is in the U.S., arriving first to New York City and later moved to Providence. She often shared her experiences with extreme poverty, being a *criada* (child domestic helper raised by a wealthier

family) at the age of 11. She discussed discrimination and oppression she faced in her various work settings in DR and the U.S., as well as her ability to *echar pa' lante* (push forward). Amalia often referred to darker skin positively but couched this through Mestizaje Racial Ideologies (MRI; Adames & Chavez Dueñas, 2017), constantly reminding us of our Taino background but never explicitly discussing our African ancestry. She would share how the area where she was from in the DR- *San Juan de la Maguana* (Maguana being the Taino name for this location), which was the center for the Tainos in the DR. However, she normalized darker skin and often associated it with positive adjectives, which in some ways did not fully align with the anti-Blackness that existed in DR and greater Latin America. Amalia was also the first grandparent to embrace her natural hair, ending her use of relaxation treatments and having a “big chop” (the process of cutting permed hair off, usually results in very short hair). Watching her hair journey made me more comfortable exploring my own, contributing to my pride in my Black identity.

I had a complex relationship with my paternal grandfather and ex-husband of Amalia- Don Andres, a lighter skin Dominican. He was unfaithful to his wife and, in the past, abandoned my grandmother with her children. His behavior often led my grandmother to tell me to refrain from dating Latinos as “*uno pasa por mucho*” (a woman goes through a lot). She idealized American men in that they are more relaxed regarding gender roles, stating, “*si tienen hambre les puede hacer un sangwii*” (if they are hungry, you can make them a sandwich) as opposed to cooking an elaborate Dominican meal. Witnessing Amalia and Don Andres’s relationship impacted my ethnic identity development as I developed a negative outlook on Latino men. Their relationship reinforced society’s negative stereotypes of Latino men as promiscuous, hypersexual, and as having toxic masculinity. Don Andres was also one of the earliest memories

I had with regard to anti-Haitianism in the DR. He referred to his grandmother (a Haitian woman) as unattractive because of her skin color, stating his resentment to his grandfather for being with her. This statement was shocking and saddening for me to hear as this was my ancestry, our blood, my kin. His internalized racism made me privy to how others in the DR view Haitians, leaving me to wonder where Anti-Haitianism originated. This narrative propelled me to investigate the history of Dominican-Haitian relations and its impacts on its people. These anti-Haiti ideologies created shame in me when identifying as a Dominican but pushed me to share what I learned about the history of DR from multiple scholarly sources. In Don Andres' later life, he re-married a darker skin Latina and minimized his use of anti-Black/anti-Haitian rhetoric. He attempted to repair his relationships with all his children and grandchildren, which has been healing for some. His recent changes in his ideological stance, in regard to race, gender, and nationalism, have demonstrated to me the lifespan nature of racial and ethnic identity development, which challenges cultural scripts that older adults cannot learn and grow.

Kuki is my maternal grandmother, the heart and soul of the family. From her, I learned about service, deep love and care for others, the importance of community, glamour, and overall joy as a form of resistance. She is what Dominicans consider *morenita* (darker skin, almost Black). I felt the most connected to my African ancestry around her. When visiting the DR, we would stay at her house in a slum, sometimes with no running water or electricity. However, despite the poverty, this was where I saw radical joy, felt moments of deep communal connection, and I felt self-actualized. For example, cooking was a community affair, and women and children would sit all together, telling stories while picking pigeon peas out of its stock for that day's lunch. When the electricity was out, all the neighbors would come over, sit around a circle, and tell *cuentos* (stories) that invoked laughter and cheer. Grandma Kuki introduced me to

a gospel that felt more Afro-centric, her singing mirroring more African sounds and her hips moving without restraint during worship. She embraced our African ancestry sharing the origins of her last name, *Frica* which is short for Africa. She shared stories about the *negros* (Black people) in her family with pride. Kuki, helped me during my natural hair journey, showing me all the tips when caring for natural hair, including how to wrap my hair. Though she also showed me how to straighten my hair, she made sure I felt pride in my curls and hair texture. Kuki also highly valued independence and obtained various certificates in fashion design and tailoring, nursing, and secretarial skills. She often shared how poverty kept her from going to college but encouraged me to always go above and beyond in my career. Additionally, she challenged gender norms, played sports as a child, and preached independence, equity, and resistance to *machismo* (patriarchy).

Felipe, the husband of Kuki and my maternal step-grandfather, is the grandfather I have the fondest memories with. He is an accomplished Latin jazz artist, fisherman, and self-taught electrical engineer with a peaceful and loving nature. Dominicans would identify his skin color as *negro*, which he holds much pride in. He would often walk into a room, well dressed, fedora on his head, dripping with class and effortless bohemian energy. He spent time teaching me how to play the guitar and would, at times, encourage me to sing with him. He introduced me to classic Latin jazz music, creating pride in my ethnic identity. Felipe would express the challenges he faced as a darker skin Dominican and its intersection with chronic poverty and intergenerational trauma. He discussed the power music had on his life, providing him with confidence, increasing his visibility in society, and the respect he received from others. Immigrating to the U.S. at an older age was challenging for him, with language impacting his self-efficacy. His immigration struggles and the recent losses of multiple siblings have impacted

his mental health, worsening his alcoholism. He would candidly share his desire for change but felt of helpless navigating the U.S.'s health care system and access. Nevertheless, Felipe still constantly offers me wisdom and encouragement. He modeled for me the importance of living my dreams despite how society treats me because of my skin shade, teaching me to have great pride in both my ethnic and racial identity.

The recent death of my great-grandmother Modesta, “Mama,” caused me to further reflect on the centrality of my grandparents to my life and their impact on my identity. Born from a lighter skin father and an Afro-Cuban refugee mother, Modesta embodied the greatest strength and resilience I’ve known in a person. She was a community leader, entrepreneur, maternal figure to many, and very spiritual. As a widow and mother of multiple children, she sold almost anything to survive- homemade sweets, harvested vegetables, handmade rugs from rice sacks. Her mother was a *curandera* (healer), and when my great-grandmother got the call to be a *curandera*, she refused. When I asked why, she shared her traumatic experiences as her mother abandoned her family to follow the call. The maternal neglect she faced caused her, at the age of 12, to become the mother of the house and care for her siblings and her father. Although she never accepted the call, she was still a healer and often engaged in African spiritual practices. She was a master dream interpreter and an herbalist and was highly connected to the earth, finding joy and peace in agriculture. I would often go to her for wisdom on life and her interpretation of “signs.” Her generosity, community organizing skills, and love for people were my introductions to social justice. She showed me traditional African cooking methods and foods. She helped me understand my racial and ethnic identity, which added to my pride. I believe her care for others, healer capacities, commitment to community and activism is the reason I am a psychologist in training.

The elders in my life and their stories are also my stories. My *respeto* (respect) to them made me empathic to their experiences, their identity development, and their needs. I think about my elders when contemplating the factors that have influenced my lens and my passion for this study. Their racial and ethnic identity has caused me to grow in my own. While messaging around my racial identity has been complex, the moments of hurt and pain led me to seek further understanding of my history. This understanding has contributed to my consciousness development and has helped me in my own well-being. It is my hope to uncover the stories of our Afrodescendiente elders, in the hopes of supporting their healing and better understanding ourselves.

Academic and Career Journey

Though my experiences within my social identities and with my elders have significantly inspired this study, my academic and career journey has positioned me to be well-equipped to explore the study at hand. I began my college education studying psychology at Suffolk University in Boston. Through my experiences in psychology classes, I met a Puerto Rican educational psychologist who introduced me to cultural competence and social justice. Until then, I had no prior exposure to multiculturalism in psychology. I decided to supplement my degree by declaring a double major in Latin America and Caribbean Studies and a minor in Education. I intended to bring the knowledge I was exposed to in this new major and minor to psychology to better inform psychological practices for the Latine community. Not knowing what a major in Latin America and Caribbean Studies entailed this became one of the first experiences that deepened my critical consciousness. The classes in this major introduced me to liberation psychology, Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon, resistance movements, political science

and history, anthropology, and sociology. I read works from Latin American socialist scholars, which challenged my assumptions around health, healing, and the role of systemic oppression.

Upon graduation, I worked at a children's inpatient hospital as milieu support. There I quickly burned out being over worked and underpaid. This experience was also the first time I saw how psychiatric institutions disproportionately affected Black and Brown people. For example, I witnessed how Black and Brown children were disproportionally readmitted although the etiology of their issues were systemic (e.g., parents struggling with substance abuse, abusive foster parents, inconsistent structure). Additionally, I noticed how health care providers conceptualized Black and Brown children's issues through a deficit lens, problematizing their behaviors and over medicating them to "manage" their behaviors. After a year, I re-enrolled in school, looking for a way to better promote healing for Black and Brown communities. This time I pursued a master's degree in mental health counseling from Boston College drawn to their mission of social justice. While at Boston College, I decided to join Dr. Janet Helms' research lab- *the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race* as a research assistant to further develop my skills as a culturally competent counselor. Through her lab, I learned about multicultural research and Black psychology, participating in multiple research and community projects examining race, culture, and mental health intersections. I presented at numerous conferences and even published a chapter in a book. I also assisted as a planning committee member for the annual Diversity Challenge at Boston College. At Boston College, I also declared a concentration in Human Rights and International Justice. This concentration expanded my knowledge on global, peace, and cross-cultural psychology, human rights law and violations, and the benefits of interdisciplinary work to target deeply entrenched social justice issues.

While at Boston College, I also obtained a fellowship with the American Evaluation Association (Graduate Education Diversity Fellowship- GEDI). I did so with the hopes of learning how deepen my research skills to better serve marginalized communities. With the GEDI fellowship I learned how to engage in culturally responsive program evaluation, learning alternative ways to structure inquiry for all individuals. I was taught decolonial and liberatory research theories and methods within the field of evaluation. As part of this fellowship, I also interned at the Education Development Center, assisting on National Science Foundation-funded projects promoting marginalized communities' participation in the sciences. I later stayed on as a part-time research assistant, using my culturally responsive qualitative research skills to support the needs of various social justice-focused grants.

Upon graduating from Boston College, I was hired as an Intercultural Counselor at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, providing group and individual counseling and outreach to students of color, both domestic and international. Here, I created culturally relevant programming that supported the well-being of students at a Predominantly White Institution. I also lead many trainings and workshops, such as racial identity theory and decolonized self-care for women of color. At Bryant University I was able to bring theory into practice and develop programming that promoted the well-being of marginalized communities.

After two years of practice, I decided to obtain my PhD in Counseling Psychology, seeking a program that would further develop my skills as a social justice-oriented psychologist and leader in psychology. I enrolled at the University of Georgia (UGA) to work with Dr. Delgado-Romero and expand my skills working with Latines. At UGA, I had the opportunity to broaden my development providing bilingual and bicultural (Spanish language) therapy and supervision, as well as deepen my knowledge of Latine psychology and research. Under the

advisement and mentorship of Dr. Delgado-Romero, I was also able to further my development as a multicultural scholar and leader. Dr. Delgado-Romero and I worked on a recently published textbook- *Latinx Mental Health: From Surviving Thriving* (Delgado-Romero, 2023). On this project, I was the senior associate editor and contributing author. A significant contribution I made to this textbook was writing a chapter on Afrodescendiente mental health (Sena & Shannon, 2024). I also worked with Dr. Chapman-Hilliard in the Sankofa lab with the hopes of seeking additional training in Black psychology, research and outreach. In the Sankofa lab I participated in research projects that examined various facets of the well-being of the African diaspora. Through my work with Dr. Delgado-Romero and Dr. Chapman-Hilliard, I presented at various research conferences, participated in professional associations, and engaged in many community outreach events.

As a doctoral student, I have also had the opportunity to participate in multiple fellowship programs that deepened my skills as a social justice psychologist in training. A pivotal program that helped me grow my knowledge and confidence in Afrodescendientes studies was participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute on Transnational Dialogues in Afro-Latin and Afro-Latinx Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. This pivotal fellowship grew my learning on all things Afrodescendiente from various disciplines, which were vital in this study's development. Participating in this program also validated my desire to expand literature in psychology on Afrodescendiente issues. My academic and career journey thus far has helped me become a more critically conscious researcher and counselor. My work in Latine and Black psychology has perfectly situated me to explore the topic at hand. It is my hope to continue my development as an emerging Afrodescendiente scholar.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to better understand the racial and ethnic identity development of *Afrodescendiente* older adults, their perceptions of their identity on their mental health, and its impact on their legacy. To explore these variables in depth, a qualitative study was used. As previously mentioned, qualitative methods allow researchers to understand the complexity of people's lives by examining the individual perspectives within their context (Wang, 2008). Further, to accurately explore the experiences of Afrodescendiente older adults, intersectionality and Black-*imienta* were used as guiding theoretical frameworks. *Plática* (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) was used as this study's methodology, along with audio-visual data collection methods. Using Braun and Clarke's six-step process (2006), a thematic analysis was applied to transcripts, systematically generating and refining codes. NVivo was used to facilitate the analysis process. This study's theoretical frameworks (intersectionality and Black-*imienta*) were used in developing and finalizing codes. This chapter presents the results from *pláticas* with Afrodescendiente older adults ($N=9$).

Co-collaborators' Characteristics

The current study included nine co-collaborators who self-identified as Afrodescendiente, self-identified as proud of being Afrodescendiente, and were 65 years or older. Five co-collaborators identified as "men" and four as "women." Co-collaborators' ages ranged from 65-81, with a mean age of 69. All co-collaborators were given culturally consistent pseudonyms.

Table 1 provides an overview of the co-collaborator's characteristics. Table 2 provides an overview of co-collaborators' self-reported skin color. Brief descriptions of co-collaborators' characteristics are to follow.

Table 2

Co-collaborators Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Ethnicity	Currently Living
Julio	65	Man	Married	Puerto Rican	US
Pedro	81	Man	Widow	Puerto Rican	US
Manuel	75	Man	Married	Dominican	DR
Santiago	66	Man	Long-term relationship	Dominican	US
Juan	66	Man	Married	Puerto Rican	PR
Esperanza	65	Woman	Married	Dominican	US
Elena	70	Woman	Widow	Panamanian and Mexican	US
Carmen	66	Woman	Married	Puerto Rican	PR
Rebecca	67	Woman	Separated	Dominican and Haitian	US

Note. All participants are referred to by pseudonyms.

Table 3

Co-collaborators Self-Reported Skin color

Name	How would you describe your skin color?	How would others close to you describe your skin color?	How would people on the street describe your skin color?
Julio	Butterscotch	Jabao**/Brown*	Jabao/Brown*
Pedro	Trigueño**	Trigueño	Trigueño
Manuel	Negro**	Negro	Negro

Santiago	Negro	Indio**	Indio/Latino*
Juan	Mixto**	Jabao	Quemado**
Esperanza	Canela**	Canela/Brown*	Canela/Black/Latino*
Elena	Paper Bag Color	Brown	Trigueña/Latina or Native*
Carmen	Brown	Hispanic skin color/Puerto Rican color*	Hispanic skin color/Puerto Rican color*
Rebecca	Negra	Morena**	Black

Note. Questions were adapted from Lopez et al. (2018): *What's your "street race?"*

*Some co-collaborators shared how people would identify them in multiple contexts (i.e., U.S. White spaces vs. U.S. Black spaces vs. Latin America)

**Some co-collaborators used words in Spanish to describe skin color that represents the continuum of Black and Brown shades seen in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Julio. Julio is a 65-year-old Puerto Rican man who is a native English speaker and is fluent in Spanish. He was born in a major city in a northeastern state of the U.S. but moved to Puerto Rico at the age of seven. There, he attended school and was raised by his grandparents until he was 14. He moved back to Puerto Rico with his parents until he was 18 when he joined the army. Julio moved up the ranks and eventually became an officer. While in the military, he spent most of his time in the southern U.S. He obtained a master's degree in business with a concentration in Human Resources. Upon retiring from the Army, he worked for FEMA. Currently, he lives in a diverse upper-middle-class neighborhood in a southeastern state of the U.S. with his wife.

Pedro. Pedro is an 81-year-old Puerto Rican man who is a native Spanish speaker and intermediate in English. He was born and raised in Puerto Rico by his parents. Pedro became blind at 21 and obtained his bachelor's degree in social sciences in Puerto Rico with a

concentration in Political Science. In Puerto Rico/university he was a disability activist. Pedro shared having a spiritual encounter that led him to the Christian faith. He moved to a northeastern state of the US in 1971 and currently lives in a racially and ethnically diverse poor to a middle-class neighborhood. In the past, he has worked as a radio host (in Puerto Rico) and a social worker (in the U.S.) with others who are visually impaired. Pedro also completed advanced degrees in Theology, master's and doctorate. Currently, he is a pastor, professor of theology at a university, and published writer. He is a recent widower and is adjusting to living alone.

Manuel. Manuel is a 75-year-old Dominican man who is a native Spanish speaker and has basic English language skills. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in education. He works as a missionary within the Christian faith and has had the opportunity to travel to various parts of the world. He often visits the U.S. for extended periods to visit family and work. Previously, he was the founder and director of an orphanage, summer camp, and primary school in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, he was involved in local politics, specifically the electoral process. He lives in the Dominican Republic with his wife, an adult son, two granddaughters, and an adopted granddaughter.

Santiago. Santiago is a 66-year-old Christian Dominican man who is a native Spanish speaker and has basic English language skills. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. He has a bachelor's degree in Sales from a university in the Dominican Republic. Previously, he worked as a salesman, tutor, and was involved in local politics, assisting on various campaigns. In the past, he would visit the U.S. often; however, he moved to a northeastern state of the U.S. in 2018, where he continues to work in sales. He lives in a

predominantly Latine neighborhood that ranges from poor to lower middle-class. Santiago lives with his girlfriend of six years.

Juan. Juan is a 66-year-old Christian Puerto Rican man who is a native Spanish speaker. He was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He has had multiple odd jobs but spends much time tending to farm animals. He grew up in a humble environment and could not complete his high school education. He moved to a northeastern state at 18 to work on a mushroom farm for one year. Since then, Juan has occasionally visited family in various parts of the U.S. He currently lives with his wife in Puerto Rico in a lower-class neighborhood.

Esperanza. Esperanza is a 65-year-old Christian Dominican woman who is a native Spanish speaker and an advanced English speaker. She was born in the Dominican Republic and moved to Puerto Rico when she was eight. She was raised by her mother in a poor neighborhood but, would sometimes visit the Dominican Republic. She received her bachelor's in biology from a university in Puerto Rico. Esperanza joined the Army and was stationed in two different southern states of the U.S. She moved to a northeastern state in 1987 and obtained a master's degree in social work. She currently works as a therapist and lives with her husband in an ethnically and racially diverse middle-class neighborhood.

Elena. Elena is a 70-year-old self-identified Panamanian woman who is a native Spanish and English speaker. She was born in Panama to a Mexican American father and a Panamanian mother. She identifies with the *Chichimeca* indigenous group and indigenous Panamanian groups. She is a medicine carrier and ceremony leader. Her father was in the Army and she was raised in the U.S. and Europe until 6th grade. She later moved with her family to Panama where she completed middle school through her first year of junior college. Elena moved back to the U.S. when she was 19 and lived mainly on the West Coast. She later obtained her doctoral

degree in Clinical-Community Psychology. Currently, Elena lives in a predominantly White upper-middle-class neighborhood in a southwestern state of the U.S. with her dog. She is adjusting to life as a widower.

Carmen. Carmen is a 66-year-old self-identified Christian Puerto Rican woman who is a native Spanish speaker and fluent in English. She identifies with the *Taino* indigenous group. She was born in a major northeastern city in the U.S. but moved to Puerto Rico at the age of seven. Carmen obtained her bachelor's degree from a university in Puerto Rico and her master's in literature in a Midwestern state in 1984. She lived in the Midwest for five years until she moved to a northeastern state. While there, she worked in the Department of Education, provided substance abuse counseling for Latines, and completed forensic evaluations in Spanish. She is obtaining her doctorate in theology with a concentration in evangelism and missionary. She is a writer and has published works through various platforms. She moved back to Puerto Rico in 2005, living in a predominantly "White" Latine middle-class neighborhood with her mother and her husband.

Rebecca. Rebecca is a 67-year-old self-identified Dominican woman, a native Spanish speaker fluent in English. She was born in a major city in a northeastern state but moved to the Dominican Republic at the age of 12. She lived there for three years and then moved with her family to a southeastern state in the U.S. Her parents raised her, one from the Dominican Republic and the other from Haiti. She attended university in the U.S. studying literature but was two credits away from completing her degree. She has worked multiple retail jobs in the past, and currently works in real estate and at a local bookstore. Rebecca lives in a racially and ethnically diverse middle-class neighborhood in a southeastern state with her husband, whom she is separated from, and her two adult daughters.

Analysis

The results from a thematic analysis of the pláticas resulted in six themes and twenty-nine subthemes. Themes were developed by the author from within case and cross-case analysis in the co-collaborator's respective language. The writer used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach to facilitate a thematic analysis. Black-*imiento* (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019) and intersectional theoretical framework (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022) were used to guide analyses of audio transcripts. The writer met with an external auditor twice, once upon completing step two (generating initial codes) and step three (collating codes to develop themes and subthemes) to increase the study's trustworthiness. Feedback from the meetings with the external auditor was incorporated into developing themes and subthemes. The writer used memoing throughout the analysis to increase trustworthiness (see Chapter 3).

It is important to note that audio recordings from Juan's plática only captured the writer's voice for the first 29 minutes. To mitigate this technical issue, the author wrote down as many quotes as possible from the missing audio recording immediately after the plática. Table 3 summarizes themes and subthemes that addressed this study's questions. The following sections provide a deeper exploration of each theme with highlighted co-collaborator direct quotes.

Table 4

Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Research Question	Theme	Sub Themes
	1. Transnational Identity Development- Experiences of <i>Vaivenes</i> (Comings and Goings)	• a. Complex and Fluid Immigration and Migration • b. Unique Challenges in the U.S. • c. Unique Challenges with Latines • d. Afrodescendiente Racialized Experiences at Various Levels and Contexts • e. Perceived Buffers to Racism and

		Discrimination • f. Development of Triple Consciousness
RQ 1: How has the ethnic and racial identity of Afrodescendiente older adults developed?	2. Intersections Matter: Beyond Race & Ethnicity	• a. Intersection- Class • b. Intersection of Race & Ethnicity • c. Intersection - US Citizenship • d. Intersection - Gender • e. Intersection - Body Size • f. Intersection - College Educated • g. Intersection- Disability • h. Intersection- Language
	3. Towards Black- <i>imiento</i> : Building Afro Pride	• a. Africentric Attributes Builds Pride • b. Building Afrodescendiente Pride is Interconnected • c. Building Afrodescendiente Pride is Intersectional • d. Building Pride is Impacted by Perseverance and Achievements • e. Building Pride Through Exposure to Black Arts and Historical Leaders
	4. Towards Black- <i>imiento</i> : Building Critical Consciousness	• a. Areas of Demonstrated Critical Consciousness • b. Diasporic Connection • c. Action • d. What Helped Built Critical Consciousness
RQ2: How do they view the link between ethnic and racial identity and their mental health?	5. Afrodescendiente Wellness: Navigating Intersectional Identity Development Experiences	• a. Unique Afrodescendiente Challenges • b. Negative Impacts on Emotions • c. Negative Impacts on Self-Perception • d. Resiliency & Coping Strategies
RQ3: How has their identity development impacted their legacy?	6. <i>Mi Legado Como Afrodescendiente</i> (My Legacy as an Afro-descendant)	• a. Defining My Legacy • b. Afrodescendencia & Transmission of Values

RQ 1: Understanding Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

The first question of the current study explored the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults. A thematic analysis highlighted four significant themes regarding their racial and ethnic identity development, including 1. Transnational Identity Development- Experiences of *Vaivenes*, 2. Intersections Matter: Beyond Race and Ethnicity, 3. Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Afro Pride and 4. Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Critical Consciousness. It is important to note that theme 2. Intersections Matter: Beyond Race and Ethnicity and theme 4. Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Critical Consciousness extend beyond this question as such, as such these two themes will be briefly discussed. The subsequent sections will explore these themes as well as major subthemes.

Transnational Identity Development- Experiences of *Vaivenes* (Comings & Goings)

The first theme highlights the often complex and fluid identity development of Afrodescendientes older adults. All co-collaborators, at some point in their life, lived in Latin America or the Caribbean and frequently moved between their country of origin (or heritage country) and the U.S. They shared the vast experiences living or visiting these areas and how it impacted their identity development creating a transnationally informed identity. Subtheme 1a. Complex and Fluid Immigration and Migration captures the various shifts in living for co-collaborators in this study. For example, Carmen shared that after being born in a major Northeastern city in the U.S. and then moving to Puerto Rico at the age of six:

I went back [to the U.S.]. Two times. One time was to spend the summertime with some of my family members. And then I went back to when I was 16 years old. I went back to spend the summertime. And then I went back. In the 80s. 1984. To [state in the Midwest] story. And I remained there five years and a half. Then I went back in 1994. To work in [major city in the Northeast], and I came back [to Puerto Rico] in 2005.

As co-collaborators navigated multiple regions of the U.S., their country of

origin/heritage and other Latine communities, they faced numerous challenges that impacted their racial and ethnic identity development. The subtheme 1b. Unique Challenges in the U.S. comprises various examples of difficulties co-collaborators faced when visiting or living in the U.S. from African Americans and White Americans. Overall, most participants shared witnessing and experiencing more overt racism and discrimination in the U.S., which they reported made it harder to adjust. Carmen shared the challenges she faced while attending graduate school in the Midwest. Note that Spanish quotes were translated into English by the author for illustrative purposes, thematic analysis was conducted in the language chosen by the co-collaborator by the bilingual author. Carmen shared:

Wow. En [estado de Midwest] fue el lugar donde yo más marcadamente. Vi esta este asunto [de racismo]. Y realmente noté que, que mucha gente blanca no quería acercarse a las personas. Eh. Como lo llaman? De color. Y que habia una separación hasta en la cafetería de la universidad todavía. Cuando yo llego a [estado de Midwest]. Yo. Yo pensaba que eso se había acabado.

Wow. In [Midwestern state] was the place where I most markedly. I saw this issue [of racism]. And I really noticed that a lot of White people didn't want to approach people. Uh. What do you call it? Of Color. And that there was a separation even in the university cafeteria still. When I got to [Midwestern state]. I. I thought that was over.

While relationships with African Americans varied for co-collaborators in this study, some shared negative experiences with this community. This experience further impacted their adjustment to the U.S., creating another unique challenge. For example, Santiago shared that in his previous employment, he experienced more discrimination from African American supervisors than White supervisors. The treatment he faced from a former African American supervisor caused him to quit his job. He shares:

Pero fíjate que he sentido más discriminación de negros [americanos]...que de blanco...En sitios donde he trabajado. Por ejemplo. El trato y el pago es diferente. Yo he tenido supervisores blancos que me dicen, “No, es tu hora de almuerzo, vete que es tu hora de almuerzo.” Bueno, y, Cuando tú haces tu trabajo y lo haces bien, te dicen “Oh, good job.” Sin embargo, he tenido supervisores negros que están vigilando y buscando

la forma de llamarte la atención permanentemente. Yo recientemente el último trabajo que tuve yo me fui. Fue por no darle un trancazo a un negro...y. Tú no podías ni recibir una llamada. Tú no podías llegar 15 minutos antes. Ni podía llegar 15 minutos después. Es como si fueran robots. Entonces siempre estaban acechando. Si tu estabas trabajando. No estaba trabajando. Decía hagan tal cosa y no te especificaba. Entonces tu dejaba el trabajo por la mitad esperando. Porque tú no me dijiste de qué color es que voy a ponerlo. Y son varios colores que se usan. Entonces cuando venía [él decía] “yo te dije esto.” [Y yo le decía] “no, no, tú no me dijiste qué color usar. Yo dejé el trabajo por la mitad, esperando que tú me digas qué color voy a usar.” [El decía] “no, eso no es bueno, eso no es bueno.” [Yo le decía] “Bueno, ese es tu problema. Yo no soy ilegal ni soy un esclavo.”

But I have felt more discrimination from Black [Americans]...than from White Americans...In places where I have worked. For example. The treatment and the pay are different. I have had White supervisors who tell me, “It’s your lunch hour, go away, it’s your lunch hour.” And when you do your job, and you do it well, they tell you, “Oh, good job.” However, I have had Black supervisors who are constantly watching and looking for ways to tell you are doing something wrong. This is why I recently left the last job I had. It was because I was about to hit a Black [supervisor]...You couldn’t even take a call. You couldn’t arrive 15 minutes early. You couldn’t arrive 15 minutes late. It’s like they wanted us to be robots. They were always lurking. If you were working. If you weren’t working. They would say to do this thing and not specify. So, I would leave the job halfway through waiting because they didn’t tell me what color I had to use. And there are several colors we could use. So, when he came [he would say], “I told you this.” [And I would say] “No, you didn’t tell me what color to use. I left the job halfway, waiting for you to tell me what color to use.” [He would say] “no, that’s not good, that’s not good.” [I would say] “Well, that’s your problem. I’m not illegal, and I’m not a slave.”

Although Santiago also shared similar discriminatory experiences with other Latine supervisors (further elaboration in subsequent themes 1c. Unique Challenges with Latines), he elaborated on why he believes this discrimination occurs. He shares:

Entonces fíjate como se siente más la discriminación del negro hacia el negro y hacia el latino y muchas veces del mismo latino hacia el latino. Ese es un problema aprendido, Un problema aprendido psicológicamente. Están condicionados. ‘Aja, ya yo soy un jefecito, yo voy a hacer lo mismo que me hacían a mí.’”

So, notice how discrimination is felt more by Black people towards Black people and towards Latinos and many times by the same Latinos towards Latinos. That is a learned problem, a psychologically learned problem. They are conditioned. ‘Aha, now I am a little boss. I am going to do the same thing that they did to me.’”

Santiago's beliefs demonstrate another theme discussed in this chapter- 3. Towards Black-imiento- Building Critical Consciousness.

Other adverse experiences with African Americans shared by co-collaborators highlighted the challenges they faced with how they were perceived as belonging or not to the Black racial group. Often, co-collaborators discussed how conditional and exclusive it felt, which offered a unique challenge for Afrodescendientes in the U.S. Esperanza shared these difficulties during her plática, stating:

O eres morena o eres blanca. Y a veces para. Para algunas personas. Fijate, para alguna persona, por ejemplo, cuando le querían decir algo a mis hijas, le decía a [tu] mamá es negra. Pero bueno, cuando...en el trabajo, trabajo con personas Afroamericanas no me consideraban negra...Te echan a un lado como hispana cuando lo dices. "Pero si yo tengo el mismo color que ustedes!" Te dicen que no, tú no eres como nosotros, que así es. Y yo le decía pues que pena por ustedes, Yo sé, yo sé lo que yo soy.

You're either Black or White. And sometimes for. For some people. Look, for some people, for example, when they wanted to tell my daughters something, they would say [your] mother is Black. But well, when...at work, I work with African American people, they didn't consider me Black...They push you aside as Hispanic when you say you are. [I would say] "but I have the same color as you!" They will tell you, "no, you're not like us," that's how it is. And I told them, well, I feel sorry for you, I know, I know what I am.

Challenges in the U.S. also included navigating the lack of understanding of who Afrodescendientes were, confusion regarding how Afrodescendientes should self-identify, navigating their children's acculturation and assimilation, and overall adjusting to the U.S. culture and customs.

Latine communities also posed a significant challenge for Afrodescendientes in this study. The subtheme, 1c. Unique Challenges with Latines, captures co-collaborators experiences as they navigated Latine communities in the U.S., in their country of origin/heritage, or other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, which also impacted their racial and ethnic identity development. Overall, co-collaborators reported feeling racism was more insidious in

Latine communities. Pedro states “*en Puerto Rico. En Puerto Rico. Pues esto. Existe. Y muchas veces existe un problema racial. A veces es mínimo, que no se da cuenta uno.*” “In Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico. Well, this. It exists. And many times, there is a racial problem. Sometimes, it is so small that one doesn’t even notice it.” Pedro’s comments and others expressed in this study demonstrate the belief in more covert racism in Latin America compared to the U.S.

Although some co-collaborators believed that there were more insidious forms of racism in Latine communities, many shared experiences of witnessing frequent within-group racism and discrimination. For example, when discussing where she experienced the most racism in her lifetime, Rebecca shares:

Así que después que nos mudamos a la [Southeastern state]. Ahí fue entonces que yo comencé a oír negrita y ahí viene la negrita y cosas así. Pero eran la gente Latina, ya lo decía. No eran como la gente blanca [Americans]. Así que eso. Yo no. Sinceramente, yo nunca sentí eso. En lo Latino sí lo sentí, en Cubanos. Lo sentí...[Eran] blanquitos.

So, after we moved to [Southeastern state], that's when I started hearing *negrita*, and here comes *la negrita* and things like that. But it was the Latinos who would say it. They weren't like White people [Americans]. So then. I don't. Honestly, I never felt that. But with Latinos, I did feel it from Cubans. I felt it...[They were] White.

While she feels pride in being Latina, she feels racism from other Latines is less acceptable than White Americans sharing:

Yo nunca voy a dejar de ser Latina, nunca, nunca. Y me siento orgullosa y me siento orgullosa de ser dominicana. Haitiana. Y digan lo que digan, hasta de ellos mismos. Eso es lo que yo soy. Pero yo hago un paréntesis. Los otros Latinos. I got a problem, tuve. De una forma, yo estoy discriminando también.

I will never stop being Latina, never, ever. And I feel proud and proud to be Dominican. Haitian. And whatever they say, even about themselves. That's what I am. But I make a parenthesis. The other Latinos. I got a problem, you see. In a way, I am discriminating too.

Co-collaborators shared not only experiencing racism and discrimination from White or lighter-skinned Latines but also from darker-skinned/Black Latines, further adding to the complexity of discrimination and racism faced by Afrodescendientes in this study.

A unique challenge for co-collaborators navigating Latine communities was the centrality of skin color and phenotypes. Co-collaborators communicated how skin color hierarchies often impacted them. For example, Juan shares his experiences with skin color discrimination in Puerto Rico sharing:

Bueno, sí, he tenido experiencias que se creen en uno siendo así se creen que son mejor que uno, tú sabes. Sí, he tenido esa experiencia también. “Pero mira a este?” Igual tenemos por los venados lo que corre son sangre roja. Yo decía “bueno, cuál es la diferencia? Que te vea un poco más perfilada, es más linda, o que era mejor?” No, eso no es así.

Well, yes, I have had experiences where they believe in one being, they believe that they are better than one, you know. Yes, I have had that experience, too. “But look at this one?” We have the same red blood that goes through our veins. I would say, “Well, what's the difference? Because you look more White, are prettier, or that you think you are better?” No, that is not like that.

The centrality of skin color and phenotypes often impacted families where variations in skin color and phenotypes were salient. Co-collaborators shared extensive descriptions of family members' skin color, phenotype makeup, and their differences. Manuel spent some of his time during his plática explaining the skin tones and phenotypes of family members sharing

[Nombre de hija] es un color negro, pero no, ella no es una negra negra. Es un color que yo creo que nada más se da en la República Dominicana, ese color, porque su mezcla. Ella se casó con un hombre más blanco que ella, entonces sus hijos, como el caso de [nombre de dos nietos], se puede decir que son de piel blanca.

[Daughter's name] is a Black color, but no, she is not a Black Black. She is a color that I believe only exists in the Dominican Republic, that color because of her mixture. She married a man Whiter than her, so her children, like [name of two of his grandchildren], can be said to be white skinned

Often, skin color hierarchies led to differences in treatment for family members, creating painful and uncomfortable situations. This treatment is the case for Juan, who shares how people would react to him and his siblings, who are all varied in skin tones, with his siblings being darker than him. He shares:

Si porque cuando ibamos a casa de otras amistades de ellos, o a una fiesta que nos invitaba y nos presentaban. "Mira que te voy a presentar a mi hermano." "Y ese es su hermano? Es verdad." Pues la gente como que se extrañaba que fuera mi hermano. "Mira! No sabía." Bueno. Y todo por el color. Me chocaba esa cosa porque son mi hermano. Yo salí así, pero ellos no. Me molestaba, verdad. Yo digo que fue medio incómodo. Medio incómodo, verdad. Y guau.

Yes, because when we went to other friends' houses, or to a party they invited us and introduced us. "Look, I'm going to introduce you to my brother." "And that's your brother? Really?" Well, people were kind of surprised that he was my brother. "Wow! I didn't know." Well. And all because of his skin color. That would hit me hard because they were my brothers. I came out like this, but they didn't. It bothered me, right. I think it was kind of uncomfortable. It's kind of uncomfortable. And wow.

Often, the fluidity and complexity of immigration and migration for co-collaborators placed them at increased vulnerability to experiencing racism and discrimination in various forms and contexts. The saliency of race in the global world resulted in a plethora of experienced or witnessed racism in both the U.S. and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The subtheme 1d. Afrodescendiente Racialized Experiences at Various Levels and Contexts demonstrates co-collaborators experiences with racism at internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels across the various regions of the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean. Elena discusses her experiences of witnessing institutionalized racism via exploitation when living in the Panama Canal zone when she was younger. She shares:

So, um, they [Afro-Caribbeans brought in to work on the canal] were already adapted to a tropical climate. And then, so, but they were segregated; they had towns that were built for the people building the canal. And the White folks who were part of the Panama Canal Company were mainly from the south [of the U.S]. And so, they built separate little towns for them. Afro-Caribbean folks and everybody were paid in weight. But the White people were paid that weight in gold. And the Black people were paid that weight

in silver. So, I grew up knowing about that, that there was a gold standard and a silver standard by which White people were paid in gold...Afro Caribbean people were paid in silver for their job. So that was pretty stark within the Canal Zone, seeing that and it was very upfront in your face.

At a different level and in a different context, Julio shares his experiences with interpersonal racism via physical violence when in the U.S. Army. He shares:

Quick example. A weekend pass. Everybody just showing back after a weekend pass back to the barracks. And you know, they had to have a head count...see who's there who's not. But anyway, this sergeant comes around and grabs me from the back of the neck, like, grabs me by the neck. Not like the collar but by the neck. He grabs me by the neck, and he looks at me. He goes, um, you were late. And I'm looking past him and there's still people coming into the barracks. And you know, but the people that are coming into the barracks don't look like me [Black].

He later shares how he ends up standing up for himself as a form of resistance.

While co-collaborators shared multiple experiences of witnessing or experiencing racism in various contexts and at different levels, they also discussed perceived buffers that soften or minimize the effects of racism and/or discrimination. Thus, the subtheme 1e. Perceived Buffers to Racism and Discrimination highlights the various buffers to racism and discrimination as perceived by co-collaborators. These include living in diverse neighborhoods, building relationships with the oppressor, obtaining a higher education degree, a prestigious job, or increasing socioeconomic status, among other variables. For example, when discussing how her father minimized the effects of discrimination as a Haitian in the Dominican Republic, Rebecca shares, “él siempre tenía como que trabajar más, you know, para que lo vieran.” “He always had to work harder, you know, so that he could be seen.” For Rebecca’s father, managing discrimination and being made visible in society meant working harder. Pedro believes that to minimize the impacts of racism, one has to go above and beyond with achievements. He shares:

Entonces si por ejemplo usted es una persona que ha logrado, eh, eh, muchos estos éxitos o algo, pues las personas lo admiran. Entonces no se fijan en el color de su piel ni su descendencia, sino que en la actitud de la persona y en los logros que esa persona ha

tenido.... En parte me ha ayudado que yo puedo comprender que el color de la tez no es lo que vale en la persona, sino en los logros que la persona pueda tener, independientemente de donde proviene.

So if, for example, you are a person who has achieved, um, many of these successes or something, well, people will admire you. So, they don't end up looking at the color of their skin or your heritage but rather at the person's attitude and the achievements that a person has had...In part, this has helped me to understand that skin tone is not what counts for the person; instead, it's the achievements that the person may have, regardless of where they come from.

As co-collaborators navigated the U.S., some shared their experiences developing a triple consciousness or their understanding of themselves in three parts: Latine, Black, and now American. Triple consciousness developed as they navigated the binary understandings of race and the invisibility of Afro-decadency in Latine communities in the U.S. The subtheme 1f. Development of Triple Consciousness was especially salient for those who lived for extended periods in the U.S. The development of triple consciousness often caused referent confusion for co-collaborators, sharing the various racial labels others may prescribe them. For example, when discussing referents and skin color, Elena shares:

Well, you know, I look paler on camera. Then with Lots of lights or whatever. But I guess I never quite knew what my skin color was. It's, you know, paper bag color. Or it, you know, and in Panama. Like, you have to put your skin color on your driver's license. The first time I went in to get my driver's license, I didn't know. And the lady says what's your skin color? And I said I café con leche? And she looked at me and said trigueña, and I said, Okay. All right...in the United States, nobody knows what that is...They would say I'm Latina or native or indigenous, but people don't peg me as Afrodescendiente. I have to say that I am.

Similarly, Julio shares, “that’s what it is. I guess in circles. Puerto Rican circles, I am a *Jabao*. I think here it's just Brown. Confusing, huh?”

While navigating referents became confusing, co-collaborators also discussed their awareness of their three-ness and its challenges when navigating spaces. Elena, who also identifies as Indigenous, further complicates this problem sharing:

Yeah, because no matter which space I was, if I was in, in the indigenous space, it's like, am I indigenous enough, because I don't have a certificate of Indian blood from a North American tribe. Because I'm from a Mexican tribe and Panamanian tribes. And we don't do American blood quantum, which is a very colonial concept, which up here, they're like they're really cling to. So, in indigenous space, because I don't have a certificate of Indian blood. Then I get questioned until they hear me teaching, and they're like, oh, she knows what she's talking about. Then, in Latino spaces, Latinos are very, you know, they're racist against both Indians- Native Indigenous people and African people. And so, it's constantly bringing it up and just like pushing it aside, [like] “oh, yeah, yes, si si si...” And then in the African American spaces, I walk in, and it's like, “why are you here?” Because I don't present as Afrodescendiente...I have to say so, I constantly have to say in each space that I am.

The contentions between these identities experienced by co-collaborators have implications for well-being, further explored in the theme 5. Afrodescendiente Wellness- Navigating Intersectional Identity Development.

Intersections Matter: Beyond Race & Ethnicity

The second theme that addresses the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente, older adults, highlights the importance of intersectionality. Co-collaborators in this study are diverse in various ways, with extensive lifetime experiences which creates a rich and nuanced understanding of their identity development. Specifically, this theme highlights the various salient social identities of co-collaborators via subthemes. Subthemes include the intersection of a. class, b. race and ethnicity, c. U.S. citizenship, d. gender, e. body size, f. college education, g. disability and h. language. The current section highlights a snippet of this theme as it is a theme that will be further developed for future publications.

Some co-collaborators draw the connection between more than two social identities, emphasizing the interlocking forms of oppression that Afrodescendientes may experience. Elena highlights this experience by discussing how race, ethnicity, and class intersect in Panama and greater Latine communities. Elena shares, “...The poorer you are, the darker your skin. And the richer you are, the lighter they say your skin is. And that's pretty kind of standard in Latin

America that people don't like to admit.” Similarly, Julio stated, “A *blanquito* (White person) in Puerto Rico is not necessarily a White person, it is someone that has money.”

With regard to gender, Rebecca shares a racist experience with medical providers after childbirth that pains her till this day. She shares:

I did feel discriminated. Cuando yo di a luz de mi hija pequeña. En el hospital. Yo ahí tirada en la cama. Eso fue...en [estado in el Sureste E.U.]. Este, fue un blanco y él dijo. Él fue el que asistió al doctor. Ay eso, eso me duele todavía. ¡Que si yo lo viera Ayayay! ¿Yo lo hago llorar ahora...[Entonces yo con dolor] el me dijo... “Whats wrong with you?” Y yo ahí tirada con unos puntos, porque yo lo que tuve fue cesárea y él se fue, como que yo era, yo no sé, un animal. Y esto hasta este día me hace daño. Todavía eso me hace sentir mal, pero mal. Oh, my God! También. Ahora mismo lo estoy sintiendo.

I did feel discriminated. When I gave birth to my little daughter. At the hospital. I laid there in ed. That was...in [Southeastern State]. This was a White man. He was the one who attended the doctor. Oh that, that still hurts me. If I see him now, oh boy! I'd make him cry now...[Well, I was in pain] and he told me...“What's wrong with you?” And I was lying there with stitches because what I had was a cesarean section, and he left like I was, I don't know, an animal. And to this day, it hurts me. That still makes me feel bad bad. Oh my God! I'm feeling bad right now.

Intersectional forms of oppression also occur about nationality. Salient to Esperanza's experiences of identity development were her experiences as a Dominican growing up in Puerto Rico. She shares how damaging Puerto Rican's views of Dominicans were. Although some Puerto Ricans had skin colors like hers, Dominicans are generally darker, and Puerto Ricans are considered lighter. She shares that most of the discrimination she felt was primarily due to her being Dominican, which led to her not sharing her nationality unless asked. She shares:

En Puerto Rico no vi discriminación por mi color. Sí, la vi. Sí, vi discriminación por mi nacionalidad. Mientras yo no decía que era dominicana. Aunque lo parezco. Pero como hay gente de mi color en Puerto Rico y aparentemente no hablo el dominicano. Hasta que dijera que era dominicana, entonces ya no me dejaba. A veces cuando iba aplicar para trabajar todo lo más bien hasta que decía que era dominicano. Entonces ahí ya no me cogían.

In Puerto Rico, I did not see discrimination because of my color. Yes, I saw. Yes, I saw discrimination, but because of my nationality. While I didn't say I was Dominican. Although I look like it, but since there are people of my color in Puerto Rico, and

apparently, I don't speak Dominican (Dominican accent and dialect). Until I said I was Dominican, then they wouldn't let me. Sometimes, when I was going to apply for work, everything was fine until I said I was Dominican. So, then that's when they would catch me.

Esperanza later goes on to share how her Dominican nationality impacted the discrimination she felt when dating in Puerto Rico, which had mental health (to be further discussed in theme- 5. Afrodescendiente Wellness- Navigating Intersectional Identity Development.)

Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Afro Pride

The current study included co-collaborators who self-identified as prideful in their African roots. As such, a salient component of racial and ethnic identity development for Afrodescendiente, older adults highlighted the factors that led to Afrodescendiente pride. The subtheme 3a. Africentric Attributes Builds Pride shared three Africentric attributes that co-collaborators stated helped build pride: pride in African physical appearance and aesthetics, resistance attitudes, and rhythm and dance.

When discussing what connects Juan to his African roots, Juan shared a picture of himself wearing a dashiki, an afro, and carrying his baby (see Figure 3). He shared how much he loved his hair and dashikis, sharing that it made him feel empowered:

Y yo lo tengo como afro. Porque yo antes lo que tenía era afro. Me gustaba eso. Y orgulloso yo con mi afro en la escuela, y por donde quera por ahí. ¡Como me la echaba...[¡El dashiki, me hace sentir] bien Poderoso! Sí. Te digo una cosa como wow. Que a mí no me importaba que me decían. La tenía en tantos colores.

And I have it like an afro. Because before, what I had was an afro. I liked that. And I was proud with my afro at school, and wherever I went. Oh, how I would style my hair!...[The dashiki, it made me feel] very Powerful! Yes. I'll tell you something, like wow! I didn't care what people said. I had it in so many colors.

Figure 3

Juan shared a photo of him wearing a dashiki and sporting an afro



For Carmen, pride in being an Afrodescendiente is influenced by African resistance attitudes. For her, the history and the continued engagement in resistance by people of African descent built her pride, inspiring her to keep fighting. She shares:

Esa es una. Es una raza que no, no se quiere dar por vencido. Es luchadora, es luchadora... Cuando llegué a [ciudad en el noreste de E.U.] yo no tenía trabajo. Agarro un teléfono. “Quiero hablar con el jefe de tal sitio.” Entonces yo no sabía quién era. Solamente había cogido el nombre. “Mire este. A mí me gustaría una entrevista... Para el trabajo porque me dijeron que estaban buscando personas.” Y llego allí y me dice, “el trabajo es tuyo porque eres persistente. Porque te atreviste y eres persistente.” Pero yo sé que la raza afro es así... y lo lindo de la raza negra es, cómo, es el interior. La calidad humana. Cómo es ante la adversidad. Lloro. Sufre. Pero se levanta más fuerte.

That is one. It is a race that does not give up. She's a fighter, she's a fighter... When I arrived in [a city in the northeastern United States], I didn't have a job. I picked up the phone. “I want to talk to the boss of such a place.” I didn't know who he was. I had only taken the name. “Look, I would like an interview... For the job because they told me you were looking for people.” And I get there, and he told me, “The job is yours because you are persistent. Because you are daring, and you are persistent.” But I know that the Afro race is like that... and the beautiful thing about the Black race is how, is the interior. The human qualities. What we are like in the face of adversity. We cry. Suffer. But we rise stronger.

The people surrounding co-collaborators also impacted pride in African roots. As such, the subtheme 3b. Building Afrodescendiente Pride is Interconnected highlights the impacts of others on identity development. For most co-collaborators, elders and ancestors played a significant role in pride development. For Manuel this subtheme was salient. When asked what connects him to his African roots, he shares about his aunt, who embraced African aesthetics and traditions along with her loving embrace, which helped instill pride in being Afrodescendiente. Manuel shared a painting of his aunt with the writer, further reflecting on who she was (see Figure 4). He shares:

...verdad la pintura tiene tantos rasgos de África por la forma de su paño amarrado como amarrado y fumando su pipa. Así que yo me identifico con ella porque ella era una hija de mi abuelo...Y ella era una persona dulce, una persona que no estudió, pero era una persona con característica de dulzura, de saber tratar a...Pero esa señora. Yo recuerdo que ella cocinaba. En el en el suelo, cocinaba su comida, sus alimentos. No tenía estufa, no tenía, sino. Pero ella cocinaba. Y cuando yo era un niño que yo la visitaba. Me. Me recuerdo de eso. De ella cocinando en el suelo, cocinando tarde en la noche con leña y todo. Ese es una práctica que, aunque se la hacían diferentes personas en el país, es una una práctica totalmente de de descendencia de africanos.

...Truly, the painting has so many features of Africa due to how the cloth is tied and her smoking her pipe. So, I am related to her because she was my grandfather's daughter...And she was a sweet person, a person who did not go to school, but she was a person with a lovely character, of knowing how to treat [people]...But that lady. I remember that she cooked. On the floor, she cooked her food. She didn't have a stove, she didn't have one, but. But she cooked. And when I was a child, I would visit her. I. I remember that. Her cooking on the floor, cooking late into the night with firewood and everything. That is a practice that, although it was done by different people in the country, is a practice entirely of African descent people.

Figure 4

Manuel shared a painting of his aunt



Like Manuel, Julio also shared that witnessing a family member, specifically his grandfather, who raised him helped him build his pride. Specifically, Julio shares how witnessing his grandfather's confidence despite being Black and working manual labor and his great pride in Julio positively impacted pride development. Julio shares:

But just walking next to him. He had this thing he would say: walk slow but deliberately, not hurrying; he never walked in a hurry. He always walked, like, being proud, like straight up...he would just like to be seen, you know. So, in my head. I always thought, here's this guy, that I would walk by the neighborhoods, and he would be building a house that day, sweat running down his back. And he would just come home, give me a hug. Pick me up, whatever. "I see you when I get home this evening." And would get home, take a shower. And he would put on his like, dressed up to the tee. Benders hat. And then he's like, let's go to the plaza. We [would] just walk the plaza. He would chew tobacco and talk to people. You would have never known that he had done 10 hours of hard labor. He had hands like...you know, like big ol hands, when he shook your hand, it was all pride, you know? And [he] would go like this is my grandson!

Most co-collaborators shared that building Afrodescendiente pride was connected to their other social identities. The subtheme 3c. Building Afrodescendiente Pride is Intersectional and highlights how different social identities (i.e., age, ethnicity, gender, and spirituality) informed co-collaborators' pride in their race and vice versa. When discussing age, some participants discussed how age impacted their pride. Elena, for example, shares how getting older impacted her pride and assertion of her identity as Afrodescendiente. Elena shares:

No, it was very much an interior path. I got to the point where, you know, the thing that I was hiding the most is how eccentric I am. But I think I'm eccentric because, meaning

there are a lot of things about me that are very unusual, but it's because of that multiple paths that have been integrated. And so, I would just keep quiet about it so that people wouldn't think I was so weird. When I was 40, it finally occurred to me that my friends are my friends because I'm the way I am, [that I am not] gonna be successful at hiding anything. Okay, well, I guess I don't have to put any energy into that anymore. Because the people who don't have a problem with it are going to be my friends and my friends already know. People who have a problem with that. I don't want to be around them anyway.

Like Elena, Julio also expresses how getting older has impacted his confidence, sharing how he is now too old to care when people place stereotypes on him.

Though society places significant barriers for Afrodescendientes to achieve and obtain certain opportunities and goals, some co-collaborators stated that doing so increased their Afrodescendiente pride. The subtheme 3d. Building Pride is Impacted by Perseverance and Achievements demonstrates this. For example, Esperanza shares: *“pues lo creo que lo logro. Lo que he logrado en la vida, este que creo que eso me hace sentir orgullosa a pesar de los problemas.”* “Well, I what I have achieved. What I have achieved in life, I think that makes me feel proud despite the problems.” Similarly, Juan shares *“siempre es sido orgulloso... pues uno está en situaciones que uno ha vivido...Y uno [a] progresar y echar hacia adelante.”* “I have always been proud...because of situations one has experienced...And [to be able to] progress and move forward.”

Lastly, knowledge of Black arts and historical leaders was a salient factor in building Afrodescendiente pride for co-collaborators in this study. Co-collaborators in the subtheme- 3e. Building Pride Through Exposure to Black Arts and Historical Leaders- shared how poetry, writings, historical political figures, and symbolic African-inspired items increased their pride. For example, Esperanza shared her love for poetry and engagement in reciting poems related to Afrodescendiente life. During the plática, she shared a poem with the writer - *Majestad Negra* (Black Majesty) by Luis Pales Matos [see Appendix D], which celebrated Afro life in the

Caribbean and embodied African sounds, words, and rhythm. After sharing this poem, Esperanza felt pride in her African roots, sharing “*y me sentí como el la describe. Cuando tú vas caminando, es como rumba, macumbe.*” “And I felt like he describes us. When you're walking, it's like rumba, macumbe.”

Further, Santiago shares how exposure to the readings and writings of liberatory and democratic socialist Afrodescendiente political leaders impacted his pride. Specifically, learning about Black Dominican political leaders like José Francisco Peña Gomez impacted him. He shares about the life of Peña Gomez and why it has impacted him:

El sociólogo más eh destacado de la República Dominicana y enseñaba, que se dedicó a enseñar y también sobre todo el Peña Gómez. Me impactó increíblemente. Sí, porque fue un tipo víctima de la discriminación racial porque su padre y su madre fueron asesinados en una de esas operaciones de limpieza étnica que sucedieron en República Dominicana... Y un muchacho que se cría huérfano lo ponen a estudiar, lo ayudan a estudiar. Se graduó de abogado en la Universidad de Sorbona de París. Primero estudia en República Dominicana, se hace abogado y va y estudia en la Universidad de Sorbona en París y se convierte en uno de los líderes o en el líder político más importante de América Latina... Y luchar por una sociedad igualitaria. Porque fue una persona que no tuvo su corazón lleno de de rencor y fue víctima del racismo. Porque por ser negro, eso le impidió ser presidente de la República Dominicana y la República Dominicana se perdió un lujo de presidente.

He was the most prominent sociologist in the Dominican Republic, and he taught, he dedicated himself to teaching and, above all, Peña Gómez. He had an incredible impact on me. Because he was a guy who was a victim of racial discrimination because his father and mother were killed in one of those ethnic cleansing operations that took place in the Dominican Republic... A boy who grows up an orphan is made to study, and they help him study. He graduated as a lawyer from the Sorbonne University in Paris. First, he studied in the Dominican Republic, became a lawyer, and studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris and became one of the leaders of the most important political leaders in Latin America... who fought for an egalitarian society. Because he was a person whose heart was not filled with resentment, although he was a victim of racism. Because being Black prevented him from being president of the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican Republic missed out on a luxury of a president.

Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness is essential to racial and ethnic identity development and understanding and, more broadly, dismantling oppression. Pláticas showed co-collaborators' engagement in and development of critical consciousness. Subthemes include 4a. Areas of Demonstrated Critical Consciousness, 4b. Diasporic Connection, 4.c Action and 4d. What Helped Build Critical Consciousness. The current section will provide a brief overview of these subthemes. However, this theme will be further developed in future publications.

Throughout the pláticas with co-collaborators, many demonstrated the development of critical consciousness. The subtheme 4a. Areas of Demonstrated Critical Consciousness highlights the areas in which co-collaborators have developed critical consciousness. Many co-collaborators demonstrated awareness of historical, political, and sociocultural histories, providing critical reflections on the oppressive conditions of Afrodescendientes. Some discussed their reflections on the cycle of oppression and power dynamics, while others shared the belief in embracing liberation and decoloniality. Santiago's perspective on the cycle of oppression exemplifies this subtheme:

Cuando una persona ha sido abusada se convierte en un abusador y. Cuando una persona ha sido discriminada es un discriminador. Entonces las pocas confrontaciones que pude tener. Fue precisamente con negros o con hispanos.

When a person has been abused, he becomes an abuser, and when a person has been discriminated against, he is a discriminator. So, the few confrontations I had were precisely with blacks or Hispanics.

Interestingly, all co-collaborators reported always knowing they were Afrodescendiente. While many shared culturally, it was not explicitly discussed or always embraced; they stated always being aware of their African roots and knowing they were African. However, some stated arriving in the U.S. was when they realized the weight of what this identity meant and how it impacted human life. The subtheme 4b. Diasporic Connection reviews co-collaborators

understanding of their African roots and their affinity to others of the diaspora. They reported affinity to African Americans, Africans, Haitians, and Other Black Latines. They demonstrated awareness of Pan-Africanism. A pan-African understanding is seen in Carmen's plática when sharing a poem she wrote and published (see Appendix E). Carmen states:

Es un poema que es un tributo. A esas raíces negras. Es un viaje en el tiempo. Porque es un viaje que que lleva a África. A los esclavos, eso primeros esclavos y esos esclavos que estuvieron en distintas naciones. Porque no solamente fue en el Caribe. Norteamérica. Europa. Este. A recordar lo que. A recordar lo que uno es. Que la sangre de uno. Es negra. A recordar que. Que los tambores nos llaman. Nos llaman. Nos llaman a. A esa conexión [Africana]. Nos llaman a esa cultura a través de la música del repique del tambor. Qué más dice mi poema? Que ahora no.

It is a poem that is a tribute. To those black roots. It is a journey in time. Because it is a journey that takes us to Africa. To the slaves, those first slaves, and those slaves who were in different nations. Because it was not only in the Caribbean. North America. Europe. East. To remember what. To remember what one is. That one's blood. Is black. To remember that. That the drums call us. They call us. They call us to. To that [African] connection. They call us to that culture through the music of the drumbeat. What else does my poem say? Not now.

A crucial component of Critical Consciousness is action. Co-collaborators in this study all shared engaging in some form of action. The subtheme of 4c. Action highlights how co-collaborators have engaged in resistance, advocacy, service, and activism. For example, Manuel shares the work that he and his wife do for children and youth in the Dominican Republic who are of Haitian descent but are stateless and undocumented. They often serve these children through an orphanage and a school they have established in the Dominican Republic. Further, Manuel tells a story of his wife engaging in activism, where she helped hide a Haitian man from Dominican immigration to prevent deportation.

Throughout the pláticas, co-collaborators made many observations on what helped deepen their critical consciousness. The subtheme 4d. What Helped Build Critical Consciousness highlights the many factors contributing to co-collaborators consciousness development. Many

share factors such as aging, proximity and communing with marginalized and diverse groups, spiritual leaders and mentors, the bible, and exposure to critical education and poetry.

RQ2: Link Between Ethnic and Racial Identity and Mental Health

The second research question this study explores is co-collaborators' perceptions on how their ethnic and racial identity development impacts their mental health and wellness. Through collating codes, one theme appeared salient for the Afrodescendiente older adults. The following section explores this theme and subsequent subthemes.

Afrodescendiente Wellness – Navigating Intersectional Identity Development

Co-collaborators at times struggled to share how their experiences within their racial and ethnic identity development impacted their mental health; however, four subthemes were created from the pláticas. First, co-collaborators shared unique challenges they experienced as Afrodescendientes; these include acculturative stress, struggles with belonging and visibility, discomfort asserting Afrodescendiente identity, and longing to understand themselves as Afrodescendientes. The subtheme 5a. Unique Afrodescendiente Challenges highlights these experiences. For example, during Esperanza's plática, she shared how being Dominican in Puerto Rico was challenging as she navigated negative stereotypes and degrading comments when dating, which impacted her belonging and visibility. In one instance, she shares how she felt when dating a man whose mother told him they couldn't date because Esperanza was Dominican and preferred their son date a White Puerto Rican girl. Further, Esperanza shares how painful this was, given that his family was also Dominican. Esperanza shares how this impacted her wellbeing:

[Me sentí] bien mal. O sea, eso me hizo. Ya te digo que se me fue enamoramiento, me hizo sentir mal, me hizo sentir este como que yo no valía nada cuando me dijo eso. Y el no fue el único. Hubieron como dos más que a mí me hicieron eso. Hubo uno que me dijo, que yo me enamoré también, mayor que yo. Y un día me dijo, ay, tú como

dominicana, mejor tú debes hablarme a mí con los ojos bajos. Tú no puedes mirarme a los ojos porque...yo dije "excuse me?" Ay, que este es otro que se va pa la porra. Y no lo volví a hablar más. Después, al tiempo, estaba pidiéndome perdón, pidiéndome disculpas y se acabó.

[I felt] very bad. I mean, that made me. I'm telling you that I lost my feelings for him, he made me feel bad, he made me feel like I was worthless when he told me that. And he wasn't the only one. There were like two more who did that to me. There was one who told me that I fell in love too, older than me. And one day, he told me, oh, as a Dominican, you better talk to me with your eyes downcast. You can't look me in the eyes because... I said, "excuse me?" Oh, this is another one who is going to hell. And I didn't talk to him again. Afterward, after a while, he was asking me for forgiveness, asking me for forgiveness and it was over.

Further, Rebecca shares how she was impacted by feelings of not belonging and not being seen. Rebecca shared having trouble navigating the racial binaries of the U.S. and people constantly trying to tell her who she was. Rebecca shares:

Mentalmente. uno se siente, you know drained. Espiritualmente, uno se siente. You know. Tu quiere que todo pare. Uno quiere sentirse you know free, que quien tú puedes ser y pensar, como tu quieres actuar. Pero hay como una restricción. You know. Nadie debe de ser, you know, nobody should be restricted in being who they are and what they stand for. It's like your a slave in a way.

Mentally, you feel drained. Spiritually, you feel you know. You want it all to stop. You want to feel free, who you can be and think, how you want to act. But there's a restriction. You know. Nobody should be restricted in being who they are and what they stand for. It's like you're a slave in a way.

When navigating belonging and the contentious that surrounds triple consciousness, Rebecca shared:

Si, uno se siente como que. A donde? Que yo? Donde yo me paro. Donde yo me puedo parar. Y eso hace sentir a uno muy mal. Uno se siente mal. Uno se siente perdido. No importa qué edad tú tienes. Como. Qué pasa? No, No puedo ser negra, Americana ni Latina. Dominicana. No puedo. Qué, Qué, You know. Y todo el mundo tiene derecho de decirte y yo soy esto y esto y esto y esto. Y que nadie te vea. Oh, y mirándote así y mirándote de arriba abajo. That's the worst thing a person can feel.

One feels like. Where to? What am? Where I stand. Where I can stand, and that makes me feel very bad. One feels bad. One feels lost. It doesn't matter how old you are. Like. What's happening? No, I cannot be black, American or Latina. Dominican. Can't. What, What, You know. And everyone has the right to tell you, and I am this and this and this

and this. And let no one see you. Oh, and looking at you like that and looking you up and down. That's the worst thing a person can feel.

When further exploring the perceived impacts of racial and ethnic identity development on Afrodescendiente, older adults, much did not express direct association to mental health disorders, however, most discussed experiencing negative emotions throughout their identity development. The subtheme 5b. Negative Impacts on Emotions highlights the most common negative emotions expressed by co-collaborators. These emotions included anger, fear, shock, confusion, fatigue, and discomfort. One negative emotion frequently shared by Afrodescendientes is not easily translated to English- “mi sentí mal.” The direct translation of this emotion is “I felt bad”; however, these words can mean multiple things, including complex emotions of guilt, shame, and sadness. For example, Manuel shares a story of how witnessing discriminatory attitudes towards Haitians made him feel. He shares:

Entonces él. Él me dijo. Y él era un hombre de más de 70 años. Y él me dijo. “Oye, mira cuánta gente viene en ese camión,” dijo él. Y dije “Oh, sí. ¡Cuánta gente!” Entonces, cuando ya vamos a pasarnos a rebasar, el camión viene de frente de nosotros y el hombre dijo “Ah, no, pero si son haitianos.” Y entonces yo le dije “Oh, y cómo tú dices eso?” Le dije “Tú no sabes que ellos son gente también?” O sea, fíjate para él, en ese momento la reacción de él era que porque esa gente eran negros... Y porque eran haitianos. Esas personas no eran gente. Eso me afectó un poco, en el sentido de que él no lo vio a ellos como personas, como gente, como seres humanos. Él lo vio como haitiano.

So him. He told me. And he was a man over 70 years old. And he said to me. “Hey, look how many people are on that truck,” he said. And I said, “Oh, yeah. So many people!” So, when we were about to pass, the truck came in front of us, and the man said, “Oh, no, but they are Haitians.” And then I said, “Oh, and why do you say that?” I said, “Don’t you know they are people too?” I mean, look, for him, at that moment, his reaction was that because those people were Black... And because they were Haitians, those people were not people. That affected me a little because he didn’t see them as people, as people, as human beings. He saw them [negatively] as Haitians.

Further, experiences within their racial and ethnic identity development also negatively impacted co-collaborators' views of themselves at some point in their lifetime. While most currently shared being prideful, they discussed previous experiences of how it affected their self-

perception. The subtheme 5c. Negative Impacts on Self Perception demonstrates Afrodescendiente older adults' difficulties with needing to be perfect to be deemed worthy, questioning their strength and ability to persist, and struggling with feelings of self-worth and confidence. When discussing the intersection of race and ethnicity and how that impacts the need to be perfect, Carmen shares:

Yo pienso que el que es negro norteamericano...está en una mejor posición que el que es desde raíces afro y hispano encima. Sí, definitivamente. Este. Uno sabe que uno, por ser ambas cosas, tiene que ser, tiene que proceder de una manera de hacer las cosas con una mentalidad. Por lo menos eso estaba en mi mente. Si Pone presión. Pone presión...Este. En que si alguien trabaja menos en tu propia compañía. Sabes que? Que tú tienes que trabajar más porque no puedes hacer lo mismo que haces ni siquiera para descansar un poquito.

I think that the one who is Black American... is in a better position than one who has Black and Hispanic roots on top of that. Yes, definitely. Uh. You know that you, because you are both things, you have to be, you have to proceed in a way of doing things with a [cautious] mentality. At least, that was what was on my mind. Yes. It puts pressure. It puts pressure...Uh. That if someone works less in your own company. You know what? That you have to work more because you can't do the same thing they do, even to rest a little bit.

During Rebecca's plática, she shares how her experiences impacted her self-worth, leading her to question her existence. She shares:

Tú sabes, en el trabajo. Y te lo dejaban, Te lo demostraban. Maybe she can't do it...Porque era morena They don't trust me because yo soy Morena. Y eso te hace sentir coño. Entonces, you know. A veces uno piensa Y pa que yo estoy viva. That's a bad feeling. Para que estoy viva entonces si yo no puedo.

You know, at work. And they let you, they would show you. [That] maybe she can't do it...Because she was Black. They didn't trust me because I am Black. And that makes you feel damn. So, you know. Sometimes you think. Why am I alive? That's a bad feeling. Why am I alive if I can't?

It is important to note that Rebecca denied suicidal thinking.

Though challenges faced by Afrodescendientes negatively impacted their mental health, all co-collaborators shared how they had to cope. The subtheme 4d. Resiliency and Coping

Strategies discusses how Afrodescendientes survived and thrived. Many shared using multiple strategies to mitigate these challenges, such as having a solid community, self-affirmations, humor, maintaining a positive outlook on life, resisting and fighting back, engaging in a self-journey of identity and truth-seeking, engaging in spiritual practices, and keeping faith in God, and using the arts. For example, Carmen shares how she used self-affirmations to navigate challenges she experienced as a Puerto Rican in the Midwest:

Pero a la misma vez me hice fuerte. Si. Y me hice fuerte porque yo no iba a dejar de ser quien yo era. Y yo sabía que, aunque yo me pintara el pelo, no iba a seguir siendo lo que soy y tampoco no lo iba a hacer. Tampoco iba a renegar, ni nunca renegué de quien yo era, ni lo voy a hacer jamás. O sea, hay una afirmación puertorriqueña. Ellos tienen su afirmación de lo que sea. De lo que ellos, de lo que piensen o crean que sean o son. Porque hay una realidad también de raza. Este. Pero nada si te voy a decir. Antes de que terminara en mes, yo me quería salir corriendo de allí.

But at the same time, I became strong. Yes. And I became strong because I wasn't going to stop being who I was. And I knew that, even if I dyed my hair, I was going to continue being who I am, and I stop being who I was either. I wasn't going to deny it, nor did I ever deny who I was, nor will I ever do it. I mean, there is a Puerto Rican affirmation. They [oppressors] have their affirmation of whatever. Of what they, of what they think or believe they are or aren't. Because there is also a reality of being Black. This. But let me tell you. Before the month was over, I wanted to run away from there.

Another coping strategy observed by co-collaborators in this study is humor sometimes helped navigate racism, as seen with Manuel, who shares:

Yo a veces lo uso esto para como dice, no burlarme de los demás, pero para hacerle chiste yo le digo mira ese color que yo tengo esa piel. Tú no ves que los europeos vienen a este país [Republica Dominicana] a coger sol en la playa? Es porque le gusta. Yo le hago eso (points to arm), Entonces la gente se ríe, [y dicen] "es verdad." Entonces yo le digo tú no ves esto es la vitamina de mi cuerpo, tú no ves, ellos no tienen ese color. Además de eso, me hace sentir bien porque tengo a mi, mi piel, le digo mi piel no está arrugada, tú no ves, es por mi color y yo soy así. La gente se ríe.

I sometimes use this to, how do you say, not make fun of others, but to make jokes, I tell people to look at my color, the skin I have. Don't you see that Europeans come to this country [Dominican Republic] to sunbathe on the beach? It's because they like it. I do this to them (points to arm), then people laugh, [and say] "it's true." Then I tell them don't you see this is the vitamin in my body, don't you see, they don't have this color. Besides

that, it makes me feel good because I have my, my skin, I tell them my skin is not wrinkled, you don't see, it's because of my color that I am like this. And people laugh.

RQ3: Identity Development & Legacy

The third research question of this study explored how racial and ethnic identity development impacted the legacy of Afrodescendiente older adults. Co-collaborators reflected on their legacy and on how being Afrodescendiente has impacted it. All co-collaborators stated that being Afrodescendiente was crucial to their legacy development. As such, the theme 6. Mi Legado Como Afrodescendiente (My legacy as an Afrodescendiente) highlights how it has impacted their legacy. The following section provides a deeper look into this theme.

Mi Legado Como Afrodescendiente

To explore the ways in which being Afrodescendiente impacted co-collaborators legacy, co-collaborators began by identifying what their legacy was. The subtheme, 6a. Defining my Legacy, shares what Afrodescendientes considers their legacy to be. Most Afrodescendientes stated their legacy is being able to impact others positively. This includes other adults and younger generations. For Rebecca, her legacy is her daughters and how she's raised them. She shares:

Voy a decir que mis hijas y la forma en que la he criado. Yo digo que lo mejor que yo he hecho en mi vida ha sido criar mis hijas como la crié. Y con la ayuda de mi familia, mi mamá, mi papá, mi abuela, todas tuve, porque ha sido una comunidad. Pero yo digo que son mis hijas lo que yo dejo atrás cuando yo me vaya. Son mis hijas. Y son mujeres hecha y derecha son mujeres tú ves, responsable. No son una loquitas. Y ellas saben lo que quieren en su vida. Entonces yo diría, I think I did a good job. I did a good job.

I will say my daughters and the way I raised them. I say that the best thing I have done in my life has been to raise my daughters the way I raised them. And with the help of my family, my mom, my dad, my grandmother, I had all of them because it has been a community. But I say that my daughters are what I leave behind when I go. They are my daughters. And they are grown women, they are women, you see, responsible. They are not crazy. And they know what they want in their life. So, I would say, I think I did a good job. I did a good job.

Others shared their legacy as accomplishments and achievements such as having a family and spouse, obtaining certain career goals and impacts they have made in their fields, and publishing writings. For Pedro, being able to publish books on his faith and beliefs and have it be well received is his legacy. Esperanza shares that obtaining a higher education degree despite the odds is her legacy sharing:

Pues fíjate, uno de los que más orgullo fue el haber estudiado, porque para mi mamá la educación no era importante y no es porque mi mamá no, es que mi mamá no estudió... Que estudié hice el bachillerato sin pagar. Porque. Pude lograr becas y seguir hacia adelante hasta llegar a trabajar y encontrar lo que verdaderamente me gustaba que fuera este ayudar a los demás. Y llevo trabajando como psicoterapeuta.

Well, look, one of the things I'm most proud of was having studied, because for my mother education wasn't important and it's not because my mother didn't, it's because my mother didn't study...I studied, I went to high school without paying for it. Because I was able to get scholarships and keep moving forward until I got to work and found what I really liked, which was helping others. And I've been working as a psychotherapist.

Further pláticas with co-collaborators on legacies explored how being Afrodescendiente impacted them. The subtheme 6b. Afrodescendencia & Transmission of Values captures the ways in which being Afrodescendiente impacts the values they share and instill in others. Co-collaborators discussed that their experiences as Afrodescendientes impacted their values of teaching confidence, perseverance, and standing up for yourself or resistance. Carmen shares on transmitting the value of perseverance:

También creo haber sembrado en mucha gente. He. Lo lo que lo que, lo que es el. A la gente que yo atendía, por ejemplo, en mis trabajos en Estados Unidos estaban en la misma posición que ellos, que eran latinos, aunque tenían sus problemas. Creo haberle dejado saber que podemos ayudarnos mutuamente a levantarnos. Ayúdanos, que, aunque somos una comunidad distinta. Tenemos nuestra cultura y nuestro lenguaje, estamos con un propósito en el lugar donde estamos. Y que tenemos que aprovechar las oportunidades. Ese. Ese era un mensaje, ¿verdad? Yo le llevaba. La mayoría atendieran muchachos puertorriqueños. Pero siempre tuve el llamado para ellos de superarse, de que aprovecharan las oportunidades, que no las dejaran pasar.

I also believe that I have planted a message in many people. What what what. The people that I served, for example, in my jobs in the United States where I was in the same

position as them, as Latinos, although they had their problems. I believe that I let them know that we can help each other to get back on our feet. Help, that, although we are a different community. We have our culture and our language; we have a purpose in the place where we are. And that we have to take advantage of the opportunities. That. That was a message, right? I shared it with them. I mostly served Puerto Rican kids. But I always had the call to help them improve, take advantage of the opportunities, and not let opportunities pass by.

Julio shares how he transmitted his value of resistance and standing up for yourself. He shares:

So go off in your ass, and let it roll, you know? So you do it once or twice, and the word gets out. I just don't think about it too much, because people deserve it. And then I don't regard it as a bad trait. Just think of it as something that I need to do for my own survival, then I thought that to my kids. You have to have a nice personality, develop that, work on being nice and decent. But then, if something happens, just don't think about it. Don't don't work yourself through the process of what if you go off, say what you need to say and do and know that that's what you needed to do at that point. Because no one has the right to make you feel bad.

Santiago discusses how he transmits his value of confidence, an important value he learned from his mother sharing:

La discriminación que existió siempre en el país (Republica Dominicana). Uno lo vio que como, eh, el hecho de ser un negrito, por ser de estrato humilde. Mucha gente, eh, Como que te subestimaba o te asquerosiaban... Bueno. Gracias a Dios yo tuve el privilegio de tener una madre que siempre se preocupó porque nosotros anduviéramos bien vestiditos... Y limpios todo el tiempo. O sea que eso nos ayudó a romper el estereotipo. Pero no todos tenían ese ese privilegio. Pero lo vi mucho en amiguitos. Tuve que lo. Los menospreciaban, los subestimaba. Entonces eso me. Me impactaba mucho y trataba de motivar a esas personas que no se sintieran mal por eso.

Discrimination has always existed in the country (Dominican Republic). One saw it as, eh, the fact of being a Black boy, of being from a humble background. Many people, eh, kind of underestimated you or made you feel like you were disgusting... Well. Thank God I had the privilege of having a mother who always worried that we were well dressed... And clean all the time. So that helped us break the stereotypes. But not everyone had that privilege. But I saw it a lot in friends. I had to. They looked down on them, they underestimated them. So that had a big impact on me, and I tried to motivate those people not to feel bad about it.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study represents a unique contribution to psychology as it involves a significant but overlooked population: Afrodescendiente older adults. Afrodescendientes are a growing part of the U.S. Latine population who are invisible due to being at the intersection of race and ethnicity (Flores & Roman Jimenez, 2009). While Afrodescendientes, both in the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean, are in need of support, they can offer tremendous wisdom and benefits to society. Given the centrality of Latine elders in families, their role in caregiving, and ethnic and racial identity development, this study also has implications for future Latine generations. Specifically, this study explored the racial and ethnic identity development of nine Afrodescendiente older adults proud of their African roots. Additionally, this study examined their racial and ethnic identity development's impact on mental health and legacy. To address the study's research questions, *plática* was used as both a methodology and method situated within an intersectional and Black-*imienta* theoretical framework (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022; Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). Further, the author incorporated visual methodologies to facilitate discussions during the *plática*.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process for thematic analysis, the writer identified six themes. The study's themes are as follows: 1. Transnational Identity Development-Experiences of *Vaivenes*; 2. Intersections Matter: Beyond Race and Ethnicity; 3. Towards Black-*imienta*: Building Afro Pride; 4. Towards Black-*imienta*: Building Critical Consciousness; 5. Afrodescendiente Wellness – Navigating Intersectional Identity Development and 6. Mi Legado

Como Afrodescendiente (My legacy as an Afrodescendiente). It is important to note that theme 2. Intersections Matter: Beyond Race and Ethnicity and theme 4. Towards Black-*imienta*: Building Critical Consciousness extends beyond the study's research questions; these two themes will not be incorporated in this chapter's discussion and will be addressed in a subsequent study. The following section will review the major themes and connections to psychological literature.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development of Afrodescendiente Older Adults

The current study provided a nuanced and complex understanding of the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults. The theme Transnational Identity Development: Experiences of *Vaivenes* (comings and goings) highlights the salient factors that impacted co-collaborators' racial and ethnic identity development. One key factor in understanding the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults in this study is the complex and fluid immigration and migration patterns. The fluidity of migration, entering and exiting, comings and goings of Afrodescendientes from their heritage country to the various regions of the U.S. leads to the constant exposure to various colonial histories impacting identity formation.

Navigating different contexts at various stages of life exemplifies what Lorgia Garcia Peña calls *vaivenes* or comings and goings (2022). She argues that for Afrodescendientes, "the plurality of diasporas means that Black Latinx people confront and navigate multiple contradictory regimes of coloniality and racial hierarchies" (Garcia Peña, 2022, p. 19) those produced from colonization in Latina America by European countries as well as those imposed by the racialized citizen/immigrant subjects abroad. *Vaivenes* leads to an identity development that is impacted not only by the country of origin but also that which a person enters, causing

Afrodescendientes to move between belonging and unbelonging. As such, co-collaborators' expression of experiencing differing challenges in the U.S. as opposed to their Latine country may reflect the various colonial histories that have informed each country. Further, *vaivenes* thus imply that Afrodescendientes may experience racism and discrimination in multiple contexts. Co-collaborators shared experiencing or witnessing racism and discrimination at various levels (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and system) in both the U.S., their country of origin, and from others in the Latine community.

The contradictions that may exist while navigating the various colonial histories and subsequent regimes lead to constant movement between belonging and unbelonging. Applying a *vaivenes* framework to the Afrodescendientes' experiences may also explain the array of encounters with African American communities in the U.S. While many discussed being viewed and treated as Black by White Americans, co-collaborators shared varied experiences with African Americans. Often, co-collaborators in this study felt excluded from the African American community who did not always consider Afrodescendientes as Black, which resulted in unbelonging. The lack of American understanding of African diasporic history in Latin America and the Caribbean presented challenges for Afrodescendientes in this study who identified as Black. However, for the co-collaborators who felt an affinity to African Americans and were considered by them as Black and also Latine had significant impacts on creating positive experiences in the U.S. Experiences with African Americans, both positive and negative, may have tremendous implications for Afrodescendientes comfort with claiming and asserting Blackness and navigating racism. Findings concerning experiences with African American communities are consistent with previous research that explores Afrodescendiente exclusion (Newby & Dowling, 2007; Lipscomb & Stevenson, 2022).

Further, applying an intersectional approach to *vaivenes*, Afrodescendientes' identity development of other social identities is also impacted by the various histories and colonialities of the heritage country and that of the U.S. This idea further complicates our understanding of Afrodescendiente identity development and allows for a nuanced understanding of how identity is shaped. For example, gender is socially constructed, and the realities of colonial histories and current social-political climates in an Afrodescendiente's country of origin may differ from that of the U.S. As such, contentions may exist when navigating the definitions and expectations of genders in a new place. Additionally, Afrodescendientes' experiences highlighted how social identities are interlocking. For example, class and race are often linked in Latin America and the Caribbean. Co-collaborators discuss how upward mobility regarding social class can "whiten" someone, meaning it can provide privileges generally associated with lighter-skinned Latines. However, in the U.S., class may not be as enmeshed to race, creating fewer opportunities to access privileges and buffer racism or discrimination. Currently, identity development research situates the psychological process of identity development as an independent variable leading to identity development that transpires in silos. The findings from this study suggest that this approach may not fully encompass actual Afrodescendiente experiences whose social identities are interlocking. Thus, this study indicates that identity development functions as a web, with race at the center.

While a critical component of this study highlighted the factors that impacted the racial and ethnic identity of Afrodescendiente older adults, co-collaborators also discussed building pride in their Afro-descendency. The theme- Towards Black-*imiento*: Building Afro Pride - highlights how Afrodescendientes in this study have built pride in their Black identity. Factors for building Afrodescendiente pride included Africentric attributes such as African aesthetics,

rhythm, and dance, identity development of other social identities, ability to persevere and meet achievements, and knowledge of Black arts and historical leaders. A significant finding of this study was how interconnected the process for the development of pride was for co-collaborators. Most co-collaborators discussed the importance of friends, family, mentors, and community in building Afrodescendiente pride. Further, most co-collaborators in this study addressed the role elders and ancestors played. Specifically, they shared positive experiences with Afrodescendiente grandparents, great aunts, and uncles, witnessing remarkable resilience, confidence, and love despite the challenges they faced being Black in Latin America and the Caribbean. Co-collaborators shared how seeing this influenced their pride in being Afrodescendiente. Further, the visibility elders offered co-collaborators in this study further impacted their ability to build Afrodescendiente pride.

To the writer's knowledge this is the first study within psychological literature that discusses how Afrodescendiente older adults have built pride. While literature highlights the significant impacts of elders on ethnic and racial identity development of present-day middle-aged adults and youth (Chancler et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2020), this study demonstrated similar findings for co-collaborators. This finding becomes increasingly interesting as one considers the unique political climates older adults' elders and ancestors had to face within their country of origin (e.g., dictatorships, racial cleansing, colonialism, and American imperialism). Elders' ability to transmit confidence, perseverance, and Africentric cultural knowledge to co-collaborators demonstrates resilience, which the author terms *intergenerational transmission of Afro-pride*. Further, this finding proves even more interesting within the context of this study and its interest in co-collaborators legacy.

Overall, identity development is a dynamic process influenced by many variables. For Afrodescendientes, considering vaivenes further complicates ethnic and racial identity development. Additionally, vaivenes impact the development of other social identities interlocked with ethnicity and race. As such, identity development for Afrodescendientes can be considered a web encompassing multiple social identities with race at the center. While numerous factors influenced the development of Afrodescendiente pride, others (i.e., friends, family, mentors, and community) appeared to be a significant contributor. Most interestingly, elders and ancestors play a vital role in developing co-collaborators' Afrodescendiente pride.

Afrodescendiente Identity Development and Mental Health

As previously stated in Chapter 2, as a psychological variable, racial and ethnic identity is the psychological process of negotiating racism and processing emotions, thoughts, and attitudes (Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021). The theme - Afrodescendiente Wellness – Navigating Intersectional Identity Development, explores the psychological process by which Afrodescendientes experience identity development. Further, this theme highlights the impact of identity development on mental health. While co-collaborators did not share how their experiences impacted the development of mental health disorders, findings did suggest it affects their wellbeing. Consistent with previous research that included Latine and Black Caribbean older adults, Afrodescendiente older adults shared how their identity development experiences resulted in challenges such as acculturative stress, unbelonging, and invisibility (Barrio et al., 2008; Marshall-Fabien and Miller, 2016). Unique to this study, findings also suggest that co-collaborators at some point in their life struggled with asserting their Afrodescendiente identity in the U.S. and longing to understand themselves. As such, this study provides evidence that co-collaborators genuinely desire to embrace their Blackness and understand their African roots.

This finding offers a counter-narrative, presenting a nuanced perspective on Afrodescendientes negotiating their identity in racist and anti-Black environments.

Other significant findings of this study illustrate the impact of identity development experiences on emotions and self-perception. Negative emotions that were salient for Afrodescendientes in this study were anger, fear, shock, confusion, fatigue, and discomfort. A significant emotion many discussed was “*me sentí mal*.” This phrase’s literal translation is “I felt bad.” Often in Spanish, this phrase suggests a complex set of feelings that feels indescribable, encompassing sadness, shame, and guilt. Most importantly, in Spanish, “*me sentí mal*” also refers to an overall mind-body unwellness, whereas in English, “I felt bad” is used to describe either the mind or the body. Concerning self-perception, co-collaborators discussed how experiences within their identity development impacted how they view themselves. Specifically, co-collaborators shared how it negatively affected their self-worth, perceptions of their strength, and perfectionism. Findings on the impacts of emotions and self-perception build upon existing studies that explore the effects of racial and ethnic identity on mental health (Telzer and Vazquez Garcia, 2009; Garcia, 2017; Mazzula & Sanchez, 2021).

An essential contribution of this study is the development of resiliency and coping skills expressed by co-collaborators. Despite the challenges co-collaborators faced, all discussed ways they have engaged in resiliency and coping. Many shared multiple strategies such as building a strong community, engaging in self-affirmations, humor, maintaining a positive outlook on life, resisting and fighting back, truth-seeking, arts, engaging in spiritual practices, and keeping faith in God all have contributed to their wellness. These strategies offer insight into how Afrodescendientes have survived and thrived in the face of oppression. Traditionally, psychological research has either been medically or problem-focused, adopting a deficit

framework for People of Color. Due to the underlying assumption of strength in the research philosophy and design (steeped in Counseling Psychology values), the author explored the resiliency and coping of this population.

Afrodescendiente Identity Development and Legacy

The third research question of this study explored how identity development impacted Afrodescendientes' legacies. The theme- *Mi Legado Como Afrodescendiente* (my legacy as an Afrodescendiente)— reflects how co-collaborators define their legacy and the ways in which being Afrodescendiente has impacted it. When exploring the psychosocial stages of development, legacy becomes increasingly salient for older adults (Erikson, 1980). To the writer's knowledge previous studies have not explored the role of being Afrodescendiente on the legacies of older adults. This study offers a retrospective lifespan perspective, which is rare in psychology for elders of color. All co-collaborators shared that being Afrodescendiente has in some way impacted their legacy. Specifically, they shared how being Afrodescendiente has influenced their values of confidence, perseverance, and standing up for yourself or resistance. They shared how navigating challenging experiences as an Afrodescendiente has created and informed these values and their desire to transmit them to others. Further, as co-collaborators defined their legacy, a salient factor has been the ability to positively influence others, especially younger generations. These findings show a connection between being Afrodescendiente, the development of values, and the desire to transmit these values. Furthermore, this finding provides further support for the intergenerational transmission of Afro-pride.

Implications

The current study provides insight into the identity development experiences of Afrodescendiente older adults, its links to mental health and legacy. Since Afrodescendientes are

invisible in psychological literature, little is known about their unique mental health needs. For the Afrodescendiente older adult, there are virtually no studies that give voice to their stories. As such, the current study has great implications for research, practice, theory development and policy, funding, and overall, the field of Counseling Psychology.

Research

A unique contribution of this study regards its innovative study design. Historically, marginalized communities deserve to be seen for all they are, challenging dominant society's binaries and categorical practices. As such, it is not enough to “just” do a qualitative study but instead to be intentional in the practices chosen for a study’s design. The current study presents a unique model for engaging in research with historically marginalized communities, embracing methods, methodologies, theories, and strategies that are culturally consistent, honor and respects the wisdom that is within communities, and highlight colonial realities. The present study design moves the dial forward of what Latine psychology can do to better account for and support the needs of Afrodescendientes. Moreover, this study addresses the call established by Delgado-Romero and colleagues (2018), who advocated for including creative, liberatory, and decolonial approaches to Latine psychological research.

The use of intersectionality as a theoretical framework provided a lens that further challenged qualitative research to embrace intersectional experiences and refrain from perpetuating the “colonizer’s imagination” (Esposito & Evan-Winters, 2022, pp. 8) by othering, maintaining deficient perspectives or reductionist views (Guthrie, 2003). Further, using intersectionality as a framework allowed for the intentional exploration of the systems that have created the social conditions by which marginalized persons exist.

The current study also incorporated a Black-*imiento* theoretical framework. Black-*imiento* framework was created within higher education scholarship and holds tenets that move Latinidad towards Blackness, rejecting the notion of a raceless and a pan-ethnic group (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). This framework problematizes how Latinx identity is studied and exhorts U.S. scholars to consider how their conceptualization of race shapes inquiry, creation, and dissemination of knowledge in scholarship, research, and policy (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). Moreover, this framework is essential in research, challenging Latine U.S. scholarship to look beyond the actual phenotypes of individuals and consider the intentionality of performing and asserting a Black identity (Dache, Haywood & Mislán, 2019). The tenets presented within Black-*imiento* framework are valuable when engaging in psychological research with Afrodescendientes, which has historically maintained Eurocentric ideologies even in Latine psychology.

Clinical

The findings in this study have vital implications for clinical practice. First and foremost, this study's nuanced and complex understanding of identity development and how it impacts the wellbeing of Afrodescendientes older adults highlights the need for clinicians to expand their understanding of Afrodescendiente histories and issues. Deepening clinicians' knowledge of Afrodescendientes' unique challenges can help clinicians address areas that may exacerbate mental health symptoms. Further, it can assist clinicians in conceptualizing Afrodescendiente older adult mental health, creating conceptualizations that contemplate sociopolitical and cultural histories. Clinicians' understanding of Afrodescendientes' identity development can also impact treatment planning and clinicians' ability to incorporate consciousness-building and a lifespan perspective on identity development throughout sessions.

Building Afrodescendiente pride was a salient theme for co-collaborators in this study, who shared the various ways they have resisted colonialism and racial hierarchies. This finding has implications for clinical practice. Specifically, this finding has implications for informing interventions that help build Afrodescendiente pride. For example, clinicians may consider incorporating reflection and historical knowledge building on resistance efforts of Afrodescendiente clients' ancestors and/or historical figures. Facilitating critical reflection may lead to consciousness building and restoring the memory of resistance movements, which can lead to pride. Clinicians may also guide Afrodescendientes' clients to explore how emotions, thoughts, and behavior may impact their ability to perform and assert their Black identity, a critical component of pride development. For older adults who have recently migrated to the U.S., this may be pivotal in maintaining confidence and pride.

Other interventions for developing pride may also consider the role of achievements. Despite the challenges society has created, achieving things of value is an essential factor in building Afrodescendiente pride. As aging occurs, what happens when an Afrodescendiente feels stagnant in their development? What happens when there are disruptions to Afrodescendientes' achievements (ex., migration)? These questions provide opportunities for clinicians to create interventions that maintain purpose, encourage goal development, and values living. Assisting Afrodescendiente older adult clients with linguistic and culturally sensitive purpose development and goals development may positively affect wellbeing. Further, assisting clients with identifying, conceptualizing, and goal-building regarding legacy as Afrodescendientes can also promote wellbeing. For example, clinicians can help clients navigate acculturation issues and foster family connections or opportunities to influence younger generations as therapeutic goals.

This intervention can have positive outcomes not only for Afrodescendiente older adults but also for the generations to follow.

Theory

To the writer's knowledge, no racial and ethnic identity development theories exist intentionally developed for Afrodescendientes in the U.S literature. While components of specific racial and ethnic identity development models may be salient for Afrodescendientes, no current model is entirely relevant. Further, current racial and ethnic identity models either view race and ethnicity as separate from each other or provide a simplistic understanding of how they are linked. This sentiment is aligned with Cokley's (2007) perspective, which concluded that race and racial identity development might not function alike across Black ethnic groups. The current study contributes to the literature on Afrodescendiente racial and ethnic identity development, which has implications for theory development. For example, racial identity theories often begin with an individual denigrating or oblivion to race; however, for the Afrodescendientes in this study, all reported consistently being aware of their African heritage. Theories on Afrodescendiente's racial identity development may start with awareness of African heritage and move from there.

Findings from this study also demonstrated the complex and fluid nature of identity development, highlighting the role of intersections and colonial histories of a country. When considering theory development for Afrodescendientes on ethnic and racial identity development, theories should also consider the development of other social identities and the role of transnationalism, migration, and history. Theories should demonstrate identity development of social identities as not occurring in isolation but instead are connected. Doing so may be a better representation of Afrodescendiente experiences.

Lastly, this study highlighted the impact of generations on ethnic and racial identity development. Elders and ancestors' role in identity development has implications on what gets transmitted generationally. Psychological literature has explored the role of intergenerational trauma, creating robust evidence for the biological and psychological implications (Brave Heart et al., 2011). However, to the writer's knowledge the literature has not explored positive generational influences for Afrodescendientes. As such, this study's findings lend itself to developing a theory on the intergenerational transmission of Afro-pride.

Policy and Funding

As health fields move towards servicing communities in equitable ways, this study has implications for policy and funding. Health disparities research has begun to address the various systems and practices that create and maintain health inequalities for marginalized communities. Improving the wellbeing of those most marginalized requires that we continue to assess our policies and practices while addressing systemic barriers. This study provides evidence for how Afrodescendientes, both in the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean, continue to experience racism and discrimination and how their experiences are linked to their identity formation and mental health. Thus, creating societies that target discrimination and racism at various levels and in differing contexts may have positive impacts on the wellbeing of Afrodescendientes, further addressing health disparities. Moreover, as funding sources move towards increasing the health of our communities, funders must consider how to provide support to projects addressing intersectional forms of marginalization. Often, funding sources fund projects that either service Latine or Black communities, treating Latine or Black as opposing groups. For funders and policymakers, viewing Latines as an ethnicity and understanding that Black individuals exist within Latine groups is critical. Further, when considering Black racial

groups, it's important to understand the various ethnicities that exist within. Policies and funding sources should attempt to address the nuances in social identities and the intersectionality that may occur.

For Counseling Psychology

The current study extends the field of Counseling Psychology by (CP) maintaining its values. The values of diversity, multiculturalism, humanism, transnational issues, strengths-based approaches, developmental perspectives, and social justice informed the study at hand (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012). Using a culturally consistent qualitative approach – *plática* -, the author of this study explored an invisible yet significant population- Afrodescendientes older adults. Through an intersectional and Black-*imienta* theoretical framework, this study examined the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente older adults, how their experiences impacted their mental health, and their legacy. Findings from this study provided insights into the complex, intersectional, and fluid factors that influence identity development for Afrodescendientes elders. This study has critical implications for the field of CP in its efforts to continue to support the wellbeing of a community impacted by various social identities, including race, ethnicity, and age.

At the core of this study are two theoretical frameworks that assist in maintaining CP values: intersectionality and Black-*imienta*. Including both theoretical frameworks allowed for a decolonial and liberatory approach that amplified the experiences of people socially positioned at the margins. Further, the current study design facilitated the analysis of systems of oppression for Afrodescendientes older adults and how that has impacted their lives (i.e., mental health and legacy). Contemplating the systems at hand and the ways in which they inform social positioning is critical, as human life is inseparable from the oppressive and social-political climates they are

in (Prilleltensky, 2003). As such, this study demonstrates implications for research within counseling psychology, offering a unique model that advances the field.

The present study required the inclusion of interdisciplinary knowledge to better understand and support the research practices at hand. The author incorporated perspectives from higher education, history, sociology, anthropology, arts, and education. Given the dearth of information on Afrodescendientes in psychology, it becomes essential that CP explores literature in other disciplines. Maintaining an interdisciplinary approach may provide the contextual information needed to situate the experiences of marginalized populations in research. For counseling psychologists, this study illuminated the need to consider how other disciplines may be contemplated to inform CP's research practices to advance and promote its values.

As sociopolitical and cultural climates of the world continue to impact marginalized communities, it is important that counseling psychologists continue to address the systems that continue to impact the wellbeing of marginalized communities. As first responders and often the people who bear witness to pain, suffering, and the outcomes of injustices, counseling psychologists are uniquely positioned to dismantle systems of oppression (Varghese et al., 2019). Counseling psychologist's training and interpersonal skills make them adept to advocate for and collaborate with those who are most marginalized (Varghese et al., 2019; DeBlaere et al., 2019). Thus, this study has implications for the counseling psychologist and supports the invisibility of Afrodescendientes, who are also targets of racism and discrimination.

Delimitations

Given the dearth of research currently available on Afrodescendiente older adults, the writer set forth delimitations. Delimitations can be defined as the limitations or parameters consciously set by the authors of a study and can inform what is or is not included (Theofanidis

& Fountouki, 2019). Specifically, the writer intentionally expanded the study's inclusion criteria. Doing so facilitated the recruitment of diverse Afrodescendiente older adults. For example, initial iterations of this study's inclusion criteria included the requirement that Afrodescendientes were born in Latin America or the Caribbean. However, as recruitment began, it quickly became evident the complexity of migratory experiences of Afrodescendientes. As such, the author decided to expand the inclusion criteria to include Afrodescendientes born in the U.S. of Latine heritage but spent extended amounts of time in Latin America and the Caribbean. This expansion allowed for the inclusion of three co-collaborators who, although they were born in the U.S., currently live or lived at some point in their life in the Caribbean (Puerto Rico or Dominican Republic).

Another delimitation of this study also concerned itself with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Co-collaborators who were recruited had to have some connection to the U.S. However, the connection to the U.S. could vary. This connection could include: currently living in the U.S., visited the U.S., having at least one family member in the U.S., or familiarity with U.S. racial dynamics. Excluding persons who did not have some connection to the U.S. (as previously defined) allowed for more control of common experiences of co-collaborators included in this study.

Limitations

All nine participants in this study self-identified as Afrodescendiente, but they only represented three countries- Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Panama (with Mexican heritage). As such, it is essential to note that the experiences shared in this study are not comprehensive of all Afrodescendientes from all Latine countries. Further, variables such as Latine countries' physical distance to the U.S., migration patterns, legal status relative to the

U.S., racial and ethnic demographics, and socio-political histories are complex interactional variables that may need further study.

Additionally, this study included co-collaborators who were proud of being Afrodescendiente. Pride was assessed in two ways. First, the author directly asked if co-collaborators were prideful in their African roots. Second, the author played a salsa song- *Las Caras Lindas* - that portrayed Afrodescendientes positively (Ismael Rivera, 1988). Co-collaborators were later asked to reflect on their thoughts and feelings regarding the song. The writer assessed their reflections for thoughts of pride, affinity and centrality to being Afrodescendiente. While this method offered a unique approach to assessing pride, it may not be directly correlated to racial identity status. Thus, levels of critical consciousness and colonial mentality varied across participants, yet everyone who showed interest in participating met criteria. Assessing pride prior to participation in this study allowed for the inclusion of a unique group of Afrodescendientes. As such, pride in African roots should not be assumed to be an inherent value of all Afrodescendientes.

The current study asked older adult co-collaborators to reflect on past experiences with regards to their racial and ethnic identity development. This study design allowed for co-collaborators to share reflective and thoughtful experiences with the writer. However, given the retrospective nature of this study, it is important to consider the limitations that may exist. Multiple factors can influence a person's memory and therefore influence the accuracy of recalling events. For example, participants may have idealized the past or forgetting critical experiences related to racial and ethnic identity development. Future studies may consider triangulating pláticas by interviewing close family members (e.g. partners and children)

There were technical limitations of the study. All pláticas took place over Zoom. While Zoom facilitated access to Afrodescendiente co-collaborators across the U.S. and abroad during one of the pláticas, the writer experienced technical difficulties when audio recording. Specifically, during Juan's interview, the audio recording only captured the writer's voice for the first 29 minutes. To mitigate these issues, the author wrote as many quotes as possible from memory after the plática. This technical issue may have impacted the author's ability to capture all of Juan's experiences when analyzing transcripts.

Another limitation of this study regarded language. Given that this study was a bilingual endeavor, pláticas, translation of documents, transcription, analysis, and translation of quotes all relied on the author's bilingual language skills. While the author identifies as fluent in both English and Spanish sought support for document translation, language skills may have still impacted the study.

Lastly, all co-collaborators were compensated 35 USD for their time. However, the writer faced challenges when compensating co-collaborators remotely with an award from the University of Georgia. Currently, the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board has limited options for compensating co-collaborators remotely. Additionally, common money transfer platforms held by co-collaborators were unacceptable for reimbursement. These platforms included Zelle, Venmo, or Cashapp. Moreover, compensating co-collaborators abroad was also challenging and required the support of family members who often helped the writer problem-shoot solutions. Thus, institutional policies and procedures for compensation of cash remotely created barriers that limited the author's ability to receive reimbursement from the award money for this purpose.

Future Directions

The current study explored the links between racial and ethnic identity development, mental health and legacy amongst Afrodescendiente older adults. To the writer's knowledge, there has been no previous psychological research that centered on Afrodescendiente older adult experiences. As such, the author recruited co-collaborators from all Spanish-speaking Latine countries. Given the unique colonial, sociopolitical histories and complex migratory experiences of Afrodescendientes in this study, experiences and perspectives varied significantly. Scholars should consider exploring these variables within the context of a specific country. Doing so may allow for more in-depth development of themes that may eventually lead to generalizability. Embedded in this recommendation is the importance of scholars deepening their knowledge of the historical factors that have impacted Afrodescendientes.

The goals of qualitative research are to provide an in-depth account of people's lives by examining their perspectives within a given context (Wang, 2008). As previously mentioned, (see Chapter 3), qualitative research is crucial when exploring the experiences of those from marginalized communities, allowing for strong construct and external validity (Sue, 1999; Murrow, 2007). Qualitative research thus becomes essential in providing nuanced understandings, which is needed before moving toward generalizability (Jones, 2010; Hall, Yip & Zarate, 2016). The current study's design provided an alternative approach to engaging in qualitative research, specifically by providing a design that is culturally consistent.

This study is in alignment with the recommendations made by multicultural and liberatory scholars to include intersectional and decolonial approaches in qualitative research design as well as culturally consistent methods (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022). Future studies on Afrodescendientes should continue to use liberatory and decolonial approaches to qualitative research that pushes the status quo of traditional practices. It

is recommended that scholars embrace adapting current methods to better align with the values of marginalized communities. Further, given the need for diversity science in psychology (Jones, 2010), it is recommended that scholars explore decolonial and liberatory methodology, methods, and theories from other disciplines (ex., higher education, sociology, anthropology, social work, etc.) and adapting as appropriate.

Conclusion

*Las caras lindas de mi raza prieta
Tienen de llanto, de pena y dolor
Son las verdades, que la vida reta
Pero que llevan dentro mucho amor*

*Somos la melaza que ríe
La melaza que llora
Somos la melaza que ama
Y en cada beso, es conmovedora*

- *Las Caras Lindas*

The beautiful faces of my Black race
They have tears, sorrow, and pain
They are the truths from life's challenges
But they carry a lot of love inside

We are the molasses that laughs
The molasses that cries
We are the molasses that loves
And with every kiss, there is great power

- The Beautiful Faces

The inspiration behind this study's title came from the song *Las Cara Lindas*, written by Tite Curet Alonso (Rivera, 1988). Growing up, few songs depicted the beauty and complexity of Afrodescendientes. When I first heard this song, my heart filled with pride and joy. This song was also a reminder that Afrodescendiente pride and resistance have always been a part of the Afrodescendiente story and broader the Latine story. The realities of anti-Blackness and the

damaging effects it has on the ego have led to internalized oppression for Afrodescendientes. Often, present-day Latine culture has created simplistic narratives of Afrodescendiente views on race, constantly depicting them as discriminatory and filled with internalized racism. While colonial mentality (see Capielo et al., 2019) may be seen in some Afrodescendiente elders, younger generations may also be susceptible to developing it. One may argue that even with more critically conscious younger-middle-aged adults, the impact of colonialism transpires as self-doubt and imposter syndrome. For me, the goal of this study was to highlight the strength, wisdom, and the complexity of identity development for our Afrodescendiente elders. Another goal of mine was to illuminate how we (younger generations) are tied to the resilience of our elders. I believe that it is through our ancestors' resilience and strength that we now have more opportunities to dismantle internalized oppression and liberate our minds, bodies, and souls.

So much of our Afrodescendiente stories will never be heard, documented, complicated, renegotiated, or valued, and generations of people's experiences have been lost. Yet the values, lessons, and culture have remained. For those generations that have remained, there is a piece of our ancestors' stories and experiences that live inside of us. This study has provided a platform to document some of these stories and make visible the experiences of Afrodescendientes. The stories shared by every co-collaborator in this study further illuminated these realities for me. Every *plática* brought different emotions and moments of discomfort, pain, anger, empathy, joy, healing, and connectedness. These *pláticas* solidified for me the role research can play in the liberation and healing of historically marginalized people while challenging psychology to do better. For the researcher of color closely related to a study's topic, this also remains true, providing opportunities for liberation and healing and guiding your practice.

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Appendix A.

Screening Questionnaire- English

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. My name is Ammy Sena, and I am a researcher and doctoral student at the University of Georgia's Department of Counseling and Human Development Services.

I would like to take some time to ask you some questions to ensure if you are a good fit for this study. But first, I would like to tell you a little bit about this study. The purpose of this study is to look at the racial and ethnic identity development of Afrodescendiente (Afro-descendants of Latin America and the Caribbean) older adults, how that may impact their perceptions of their mental health and how their identity development has informed their legacy. Do you think you may be interested in participating in this study?

{If No}: *Thank you very much for your time.*

{If Yes}: *Great! I would love to ask you some questions to ensure you are a good fit. This should only take 10 minutes of your time. These questions should not make you feel distress or uncomfortable, however, if at some point you don't feel comfortable answering a question please let me know. Do I have your permission to ask you these questions?*

1. *Are you 65 years old or older?*
2. *Were you born in Latin America and/or the Caribbean?*
3. *Were you born in a Spanish speaking country?*
4. *This study is looking for co-collaborators who identify as **Afrodescendiente**. An Afrodescendiente is someone who is born in Latin America and the Caribbean but has African ancestry. Do you self-identify as Afrodescendiente?*
5. *This study is also looking for collaborators that have **pride** in their Afro-descendancy. As such, the title of this dissertation is *Las Caras Lindas* (The Beautiful Faces). This title was inspired by a song. I would like to play a piece of this song. - [play song]- When listening to that piece of the song, how did you feel? (Get a sense of their pride or affinity to the song).*
6. *I am interested I am looking for co-collaborators that understand racism in the U.S. Do you feel like you are pretty aware of racism in the U.S. or have personal experiences with this? If so, do you have an example?*
7. *As part of this study, co-collaborators will have an opportunity to share a photo or an object that represents their connection to your African heritage? Is this something you are willing to do?*

Lastly, at least one of the following must be confirmed in determining co-collaborators connection to the U.S.:

1. *Do you currently live in the U.S.?*
2. *Have you visited the U.S.?*
3. *Do you have at least 1 family member in the U.S.?*
4. *Are you familiar with U.S. Racial dynamics?*

***If the co-collaborator is eligible for participation in the research study the lead researcher will schedule the loose semi-structured interview, share contact information, and share information on compensation (\$35 USD). Additionally, researcher will let co-collaborators know to prepare a audio-visual (photo, object, song) that connects them to their African roots. This audio-visual is to be shared during the loose semi-structured interview. Informed consent will be reviewed during the interview.

Cuestionario de Selección – Español

Gracias por su interés en participar en este estudio. Me llamo Ammy Sena y soy investigadora y estudiante de doctorado en el Departamento de Consejería y Servicios de Desarrollo Humano de la Universidad de Georgia.

Me gustaría dedicar un poco de tiempo a hacerle algunas preguntas para asegurarme de que encaja en este estudio. Pero primero, me gustaría contarle un poco sobre este estudio. El propósito de este estudio es observar el desarrollo de la identidad racial y étnica de las personas mayores afrodescendientes (de América Latina y el Caribe) y cómo esto puede impactar el desarrollo de su salud mental y su legado. ¿Le interesa participar en este estudio?

{Si no}: *Muchas gracias por su tiempo.*

{Si es Sí}: *¡Genial! Me encantaría hacerte algunas preguntas para asegurarme de que encajas con este estudio. Sólo le llevará 10 minutos. Estas preguntas no deben angustiarle ni incomodarle, sin embargo, si en algún momento no te sientes cómodo respondiendo a una pregunta, por favor, hágamelo saber. ¿Me da permiso para hacerle estas preguntas?*

1. *¿Tiene 65 años o más?*
2. *¿Naciste en América Latina y/o el Caribe?*
3. *¿Naciste en un país hispano hablante?*
4. *Este estudio busca colaboradores que se identifiquen como afrodescendientes. Un afrodescendiente es alguien nacido en América Latina y el Caribe pero con ascendencia africana. ¿Te identificas como afrodescendiente?*
5. *Este estudio también busca colaboradores que se sientan orgullosos de sus raíces afrodescendiente. Por eso, el título de esta tesis es “Las Caras Lindas”. Este título fue inspirado en una canción. Me gustaría tocar un fragmento de esta canción. - [tocar canción]- Al escuchar esa parte de la canción, ¿que sentiste? (Hágase una idea de su orgullo o afinidad con la canción).*
6. *Estoy buscando colaboradores que entiendan el racismo en los EE.UU. ¿Sientes que eres bastante consciente del racismo en los EE.UU. o tienes experiencias personales con esto? Si es así, ¿tienes algún ejemplo?*

7. *Como parte de este estudio, tendrá la oportunidad de compartir una foto o un objeto que represente su conexión con su herencia africana. ¿Es esto algo que está dispuesto a hacer?*

Por último, para determinar la conexión de los colaboradores con los EE.UU. debe confirmarse al menos una de las siguientes condiciones.:

1. *¿Vive actualmente en Estados Unidos?*
2. *¿Ha visitado Estados Unidos?*
3. *¿Tiene al menos un familiar en Estados Unidos?*
4. *¿Conoce la dinámica racial estadounidense?*

***Si el colaborador cumple los requisitos para participar en el estudio, el investigador principal programará la plática, compartirá la información de contacto y la información sobre la compensación (\$35 USD). Además, el investigador informará a los colaboradores de que preparen un audiovisual (foto, objeto, canción) que les conecte con sus raíces africanas. Este audiovisual se compartirá durante la entrevista semiestructurada. Durante la entrevista se revisará el consentimiento informado.

Appendix B.

Demographic Questionnaire- English

This questionnaire is to be verbally administered to participants during the loose semi-structured interview.

Participant Name:

Gender:

DOB:

Age:

Marital Status:

☐ Single

☐ Married

☐ In a Committed Relationship

☐ Widow

☐ Divorced

☐ Separated

☐ Other: _____

Do you speak Spanish? (Assess fluency)

☐ Beginner

☐ Intermediate

☐ Advanced

☐ Native

Do you speak English? (Assess fluency)

☐ Beginner

☐ Intermediate

☐ Advanced

☐ Native

What is your ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

Caribbean:

☐ Puerto Rican

☐ Dominican

☐ Cuban

☐ Other Caribbean

(specify) _____

(specify) _____

Central American:

☐ Honduran

☐ Guatemalan

☐ Costa Rican

☐ Nicaraguan

☐ Salvadorian

☐ Belizean

☐ Panamanian

☐ Other Central American

South American:

☐ Argentinian

☐ Bolivian

☐ Chilean

☐ Colombian

☐ Ecuadorian

☐ Paraguayan

☐ Peruvian

☐ Uruguayan

☐ Venezuelan

☐ Other South American

(specify) _____

North American:

___ Canadian
 ___ American
 ___ Mexican

Other not listed (specify)

Do you identify with an indigenous group(s)? (if so, specify) _____

Skin Color:

1. How would you describe your skin color? _____
2. How would others close to you describe your skin color? _____
3. How would people on the street describe your skin color? _____

Background:

4. Where were you born? (City/region, country):
5. Where were you raised?:
6. Where were your parents born?

Where do you live now? _____

Who do you live with? _____

If currently in the U.S.:

7. How long have you lived in the US?
8. What are some characteristics of your neighborhood?
 - a. Which racial groups are present?
 - b. Ethnicity?
 - c. SES?
 - d. Housing options?
9. Have you attended school in the U.S.? If so for how long and where?
10. Have you worked in the U.S.? If so doing what and for how long?
11. Do you have additional family in the U.S.? If so, what relation and where?

If currently not in the U.S.:

12. Do you have family in the U.S.? If so, what relation and where?
13. Have you lived in the U.S. before? If so for how long and where?
14. Have you attended school in the U.S.? How long and where?
15. Have you worked in the U.S.? If so, doing what and for how long?
16. Have you visited the U.S.? If so, how often and where?

Cuestionario Demográfico - Español

Este cuestionario debe ser administrado verbalmente a los participantes durante la entrevista media semiestructurada.

Nombre del participante:

Género:

Fecha de Nacimiento:

Edad:

Estado civil:

☐ Soltero

☐ Casado

☐ En una relación comprometida

☐ Viuda

☐ Divorciado

☐ Separado

☐ Otro: _____

¿Hablas español? (Evaluar la fluidez)

☐ Principiante

☐ Intermedio

☐ Avanzado

☐ Nativo

¿Hablas inglés? (Evaluar la fluidez)

☐ Principiante

☐ Intermedio

☐ Avanzado

☐ Nativo

¿Cuál es tu origen étnico? (Seleccione todas las que correspondan)

Caribe:

☐ Puertorriqueño

☐ Dominicano

☐ Cubano

☐ Otros Caribe

(especifique) _____

Centroamericano:

☐ Hondureño

☐ Guatemalteco

☐ Costarricense

☐ Nicaragüense

☐ Salvadoreño

☐ Beliceño

☐ Panameño

☐ Other Centroamérica

(especifique) _____

Sudamericano:

☐ Argentino

☐ Boliviano

☐ Chileno

☐ Colombiano

☐ Ecuatoriano

☐ Paraguayo

☐ Peruano

☐ Uruguayo

☐ Venezolano

☐ Otro Sudamericano

(especifique) _____

Norteamericano:

☐ Canadiense

☐ Americano

☐ Mexicano

Otros no enumerados (especifique)

Te identificas con uno o varios grupos indígenas? (en caso afirmativo, especifique)

Color de la piel:

1. ¿Cómo describirías tu color de piel? _____
2. ¿Cómo describirían el color de tu piel otras personas cercanas a ti?
3. _____
¿Cómo describiría la gente de la calle tu color de piel? _____

Fondo:

4. ¿Dónde naciste? (Ciudad/región, país):
5. ¿Dónde te criaste?:
6. ¿Dónde nacieron tus padres?

¿Dónde vives ahora? _____

¿Con quién vives? _____

Si se encuentra actualmente en los EE. UU.:

7. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas viviendo en Estados Unidos?
8. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las características de su barrio?
 - a. ¿Qué grupos raciales están presentes?
 - b. ¿Origen étnico?
 - c. ¿SES?
 - d. ¿Opciones de vivienda?
9. ¿Has asistido a la escuela en los EE. UU.? Si es así, ¿por cuánto tiempo y dónde?
10. ¿Has trabajado en Estados Unidos? Si es así, ¿qué y por cuánto tiempo?
11. ¿Tiene familia adicional en los EE. UU.? Si es así, ¿qué relación y dónde?

Si actualmente no se encuentra en los EE. UU.:

12. ¿Tiene familia en los EE. UU.? Si es así, ¿qué relación y dónde?
13. ¿Ha vivido en los EE. UU. antes? Si es así, ¿por cuánto tiempo y dónde?
14. ¿Has asistido a la escuela en los EE. UU.? ¿Cuánto tiempo y dónde?
15. ¿Has trabajado en Estados Unidos? Si es así, ¿qué y por cuánto tiempo?
16. ¿Has visitado los Estados Unidos? En caso afirmativo, ¿con qué frecuencia y dónde?

Appendix C

Plática Guide- English

The following guide is to be completed upon reviewing **Informed consent** and completing the **demographic questionnaire**. During the plática approach this conversationally, being authentic in your own experiences and how listening makes you feel. Guide participants to share examples and details. This is to be used as a tool to facilitate conversation. Consider this a “loose” semi-structured conversation. Alternative questions are available to facilitate discussion.

Opening Statement

Thank you for agreeing to having a conversation with me. As a reminder, I am interested in having a conversation with you as an Afrodescendiente (African descendant from Latin America and the Caribbean) person who is also an older adult. Specifically, I am looking to have a conversation with you about your experiences in your race and ethnicity throughout your life, how these experiences have impacted your mental health and how it has informed your legacy. It is important for you to know that you are my co-collaborator, meaning you are an expert here. As such, I am not looking for a specific answer, just your authentic experiences and perspectives.

Other things to know, our time together will last from 60 to 90 minutes and will consist of some open-ended questions. During our time I will also ask about the picture or object that connects you to your African roots. Do you have any questions before we start?

Loose Plática Questions

Racial-Ethnic Identity Development

1. In the society you grew up, what were the messages you heard about Black people?
 - a. What were some of the negative messages? What were some of the positive?
 - i. What did you notice were some of the qualities associated with Afrodescendientes?
 - ii. *[Probe If co-collaborator lived in different countries]*: Were these messages different in the various societies you were a part of? If so how?
 - b. Where did you hear these messages from? Media/News? Arts? Family? Friends? Political figures?
2. When did you notice you were Afrodescendiente? What did that moment look like for you?
3. As an Afrodescendiente, what messages did YOU specifically receive growing up?
 - a. What messages did you receive about your skin color? Phenotypes? About your work? *[Probe for examples both positive and negative]*.

4. How has being Afrodescendiente impacted how others view and treat you? Have you felt accepted? [*Probe examples*].
 - a. What were your experiences amongst other Latines as an Afrodescendiente? How did you feel?
 - i. What were your experiences amongst other lighter skin Latines?
 - ii. What were your experiences amongst other darker skin Latines?
 - iii. How have these messages impacted the way you treated or viewed other Afrodescendientes?
5. Have you felt an affinity to the Latine community?
 - a. When did you start to feel an affinity to the Latine community?
 - b. Are you proud to be Latine?
 - i. What has helped you feel pride as a Latine?
 - c. What things make you proud to be Latine?
6. How has being a Latine Afrodescendiente impacted you in your gender, class status, age?

Mental Health

7. How have these messages impacted your wellbeing throughout your life?
 - a. How have these experiences impacted your physical health? Mental health? Spiritual health?
 - b. How have these messages impacted how you view yourself?
 - c. How have these messages impacted that way you view other Afrodescendientes?
 - d. Has being Afrodescendiente elicited negative emotions [*Probe fear, guilt, shame, anger, sadness, horror*]? If so which? When?
 - e. Has being Latine elicited negative emotions [*Probe fear, guilt, shame, anger, sadness, horror*]? If so, which? When?
8. Over the years, what has helped you feel proud about being Afrodescendiente?
 - a. What has helped you feel empowered as an Afrodescendiente? With your phenotypes?
 - b. **Cue Visual-** Tell me about the object/photo/song that has helped you feel more connected to your African roots.
 - i. *If no visual-* What does this mean to you?

Legacy

9. What are some of your greatest accomplishments thus far?
 - a. Why are they your greatest accomplishments?
10. How have your experiences of being Afrodescendiente impacted your...
 - a. Legacy?
 - b. Activities or groups you have been a part of?
 - c. Grandparenting [if a grandparent]?
 - d. Relationships with younger generations who are Afrodescendiente?

Ending Statement

Thank you once again for your time. I truly appreciated you sharing your experiences with me. I hope this time was equally as meaningful to you. As a thank you for your time I will be giving you a \$35 USD. Please do not hesitate to ask reach out to me if you need anything or have any questions.

Plática Guide- Español

La siguiente guía debe completarse despuse del **Consentimiento Informado** y el **Cuestionario Demográfico**. Durante la plática aborde esto de manera conversacional, siendo auténtico en sus propias experiencias y en cómo te sentís a escuchar las historias. Guíe a los colaboradores a que compartan ejemplos y detalles. Esto debe utilizarse como herramienta para facilitar la conversación. Considéralo una conversación semiestructurada "suelta." Existen preguntas alternativas para facilitar la discusión.

Declaración de Apertura

Gracias por aceptar hablar conmigo. Para recordarte, estoy interesada en tener una conversación con usted como persona afrodescendiente (afrodescendiente de América Latina y el Caribe) que también es persona mayor. Específicamente, estoy buscando tener una plática contigo sobre tus experiencias en tu raza y etnicidad a lo largo de tu vida, cómo estas experiencias han impactado tu salud mental y cómo han influenciado tu legado. Es importante que sepas que eres mi co-colaborador, lo que significa esto es que eres un experto aquí. Como tal, no estoy buscando una respuesta específica, sólo sus experiencias y perspectivas auténticas.

Otras cosas que debes saber, nuestro tiempo juntos durará de 60 a 90 minutos y consistirá en algunas preguntas abiertas. También le preguntaré por el elemento audiovisual que le conecta a sus raíces africanas. ¿Tienes alguna pregunta antes de empezar?

Preguntas Media Semiestructurada

Desarrollo de la Identidad Racial-Étnica

1. En la sociedad en la que creciste, ¿cuáles fueron los mensajes que oíste sobre los negros?
 - a. ¿Cuáles eran algunos de los mensajes negativos? ¿Cuáles eran algunos de los positivos?
 - i. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las cualidades asociadas a los afrodescendientes?
 - ii. [Indagar si el co-colaborador vivió en diferentes países]: ¿Fueron estos mensajes diferentes en las distintas sociedades de las que formó parte? En caso afirmativo, ¿de qué manera?
 - b. ¿Dónde escuchaste estos mensajes? ¿Medios de noticias? ¿De las artes? ¿De la familia? ¿Amigos? ¿Figuras políticas?
2. ¿Cuándo te diste cuenta de que eras afrodescendiente? ¿Cómo fue ese momento para ti?
3. Como afrodescendiente, ¿qué mensajes específicos recibiste durante tu infancia?

- a. ¿Qué mensajes recibiste sobre el color de tu piel? ¿Fenotipos? ¿Sobre tu trabajo? [*Busca ejemplos tanto positivos como negativos*].
4. ¿Cómo ha impactado el hecho de ser afrodescendiente en cómo te ven y te tratan los demás? ¿Te has sentido aceptado? [*Indagar ejemplos*].
 - a. ¿Cómo Afrodescendiente, cuáles ha sido tus experiencias con otros? ¿Cómo te sentiste?
 - i. ¿Cuáles ha sido tus experiencias con otros latines de piel clara?
 - ii. ¿Cuáles ha sido tus experiencias entre otros latinos de piel más oscura?
 - iii. ¿Cómo estos mensajes han impactado la forma en que tu tratas o vez a otros afrodescendientes?
5. ¿Has sentido afinidad con la comunidad Latina?
 - a. ¿Cuándo empezaste a sentir afinidad con la comunidad Latina?
 - b. ¿Eres orgulloso de ser Latine/o/a?
 - i. ¿Qué le ha ayudado a sentirse orgulloso de ser latino/e/a?
 - c. ¿Qué cosas te hacen sentir orgulloso de ser latino?
6. ¿Cómo te ha impactado ser un Afrodescendiente Latino/e/a en tu género, clase social, edad?

Salud Mental

7. ¿Cómo estos mensajes han impactado tu bienestar a lo largo de tu vida?
 - a. ¿Cómo estas experiencias han afectado a tu salud física? ¿Salud mental? ¿Salud espiritual?
 - b. ¿Cómo estos mensajes han influido la manera en que te ves a ti mismo?
 - c. ¿Cómo estos mensajes han impactado la forma en que ves a otros afrodescendientes?
 - d. ¿Ser afrodescendiente ha provocado emociones negativas [*indagar sobre el miedo, culpa, vergüenza, ira, tristeza, horror*]? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuáles? ¿Cuándo?
 - e. ¿Ser latino/e/a ha provocado emociones negativas [*indagar miedo, culpa, vergüenza, ira, tristeza, horror*]? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuáles? ¿Cuándo?
8. A lo largo de los años, ¿qué te ha ayudado a sentirte orgulloso de ser afrodescendiente?
 - a. ¿Qué te ha ayudado a sentirte empoderado como afrodescendiente? ¿Con tus fenotipos?
 - b. **Cue Audiovisual-** Háblame del objeto/foto/canción que te ha ayudado a sentirte más conectado con tus raíces africanas.
 - i. Si no hay visual- ¿Qué significa para ti?

Legado

9. ¿Cuáles son algunos de sus mayores logros hasta hora?
 - a. Por qué son sus mayores logros?
10. ¿Cómo han impactado tus experiencias de ser Afrodescendiente en tu...
 - a. ¿Legado?
 - b. ¿Actividades o grupos de los que has formado parte?
 - c. ¿Abuelos [si es abuelo]?
 - d. ¿Relaciones con generaciones más jóvenes que son afrodescendientes?

Declaración Final

Gracias una vez más por su tiempo. Realmente aprecio que haya compartido sus experiencias conmigo. Espero que este tiempo haya sido igual de significativo para ti. Como agradecimiento por su tiempo le daré \$35 USD. Por favor, no dude en preguntarme si necesita algo o tiene alguna pregunta.

Appendix D

MAJESTAD NEGRA

Por: Luis Palés Matos

Por la encendida calle antillana
 Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba --Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula--- Entre dos filas
 de negras caras.
 Ante ella un congo--gongo y maraca-- ritma una conga bomba que bamba. Culipandeando la
 Reina avanza,
 Y de su inmensa grupa resbalan
 Meneos cachondos que el congo cuaja
 En ríos de azúcar y de melaza.
 Prieto trapiche de sensual zafra,
 El caderamen, masa con masa,
 Exprime ritmos, suda que sangra,
 Y la molienda culmina en danza.
 Por la encendida calle antillana
 Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.
 Flor de Tórtola, rosa de Uganda,
 Por ti crepitan bombas y bámbulas;
 Por ti en calendas desenfrenadas
 Quema la Antilla su sangre ñáñiga.
 Haití te ofrece sus calabazas;
 Fogosos rones te da Jamaica;
 Cuba te dice: ¡dale, mulata!
 Y Puerto Rico: ¡melao, melamba!
 Sus, mis cocolos de negras caras.
 Tronad, tambores; vibrad, maracas.
 Por la encendida calle antillana
 --Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula-- Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.

Black Majesty

Translated by Paquito D' Rivera

Down the scorching Antillean street
 Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba* Between two rows of black faces
 --Rumba, macumba, candombe, bámbula. Before her, a congo band thumps
 A bombastic conga—gongos and maracas. Moving her hips, the Queen steps up

And her immense buttocks with drums collide The Congo seductive plays along
In curdled rivers of sugar and molasses.

Brown-skinned mill of sweet sensation,
Her colossal hips, those massive mortars, Make rhythms ooze, sweat bleed like blood, And all
this grinding ends in dance.
Down the scorching Antillean street
Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba. Flower of Tórtola, Rose of Uganda,
For you the bombas and bambulas crackle. For you these feverish nights go wild
And set on fire Antilla's ñañaiga blood.
Haiti offers you its gourds;
Jamaica pours its fiery rums;
Cuba tells you, give us what you got, mulata! And Puerto Rico: melao, melamba!
Get down, my black-faced love-crazed rascals. Jangle, drums, and jiggle, maracas.
Down the scorching Antillean street
Goes Tembandumba of the Quimbamba --Rumba, macamba, candombe, bámbula.

*Quimbamba: The chimerical region (Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic & Cuba)

Appendix E

Viaje Musical

Los tambores me llaman recordando parte de mi esencia.

El repique incesante llama mi cuerpo.

Tum, tum, tum, tum: tum, tum, tum, tum.

Oigo el sonido vibrante, tropical.

Lo veo confundirse con el viento y viajar.

¡Suena!, lléname con tu ritmo.

Llévame en tu viaje a tus orígenes amados,
al verdor de los paisajes que te vieron nacer,
a ese sol distante de tu renacer.

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