DRAWING ON RESOURCES AND LEARNING TO PERSEVERE IN GRADUATE

EDUCATION: SOCIOCULTURAL AND PROGRAMATIC FACTORS THAT

CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF EDUCATION DOCTORAL

PROGRAMS BY AFRICAN AMERICANS AT HISTORICALLY WHITE

INSTITUTIONS

by

MINAVIA GUADELOUPE-WILLIAMS

(Under the Direction of **TALMADGE C. GUY**)

ABSTRACT

African Americans are grossly underrepresented among doctorates in American

society. Current literature purports negative social encounters, inadequate mentoring, and

limited financial support are key factors contributing to their underrepresentation. The

situation is exacerbated by lower-than-acceptable efforts from the nations' top

universities in producing African American doctorates and the prohibitive rate of attrition

from doctoral programs. These challenges, notwithstanding, more African Americans

enter and graduate from the field of education than from any other field. African

Americans with doctoral degrees in education offer a best case scenario for research on

factors that influence students from this group persistence in their programs. Nonetheless,

knowledge of doctoral completion among African Americans, that research with this

group offers, remains untapped. Little research has addressed African American

education doctorates social learning experiences in their programs, the social and cultural

capital and other resources they brought to their studies, or how this knowledge can help increase the numbers of African American students who graduate from doctoral programs.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the social, cultural, and programatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans at historically white institutions. Data analysis was accomplished through a set of narrative analysis tools. The results of the study are: 1) to complete their doctoral degrees African American students had to overcome interpersonal and intrapersonal effects of racism; 2) resources that positively influenced doctoral education for African Americans were the supportive environments that programs created for financial help and students' intellectual, psychological, and emotional safety; 3) degree completion was influenced by students' use of cultural capital; 4) degree completion was influenced by students exercising agency: taking control of their circumstances, and redefining their positions in their universities; 5) relationships played a key role in degree completion in that they created opportunities, provided support, and were frameworks for collaboration. Implications are identified and recommendations for improving doctoral completion for African Americans are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education, African American doctoral graduates, Agency, Cultural capital, Cultural dissonance, Critical race theory, Deterrents, Doctoral completion, Graduate Education, Historically white institutions, Narrative analysis, Narrative inquiry, Qualitative research, Racism, Social capital, Sociocultural theory, Self-help

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B.S., Mercer University, 2002

M.Ed., University of Georgia, 2004

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2009

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December, 2009

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Sean; to all my nieces, Jana, Kelly, Kimberly,

Robin, Sabrina, Natasha, Imani, Corrie, Chris, Leah, Brittany, Dannielle, Tamara, Tasha,

Brianna; and my nephews: Dexter, Aaron, Brandon, Alex, Earl, Glen, Elijah, Daniel,

Nevin, Kelson, Orrann, Fashi, Clay, and Kiajam

Mbinguni wako yenu ni kikomo, hakuna kitu kingine

(Your sky is your limit, nothing else).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

doctoral education – to find a research interest that grabbed my attention and to hold it; an area where I can use my passion for good. This research developed partly because of that opportunity. Thank you for illuminating my path.

Dr. Guy, God must have known I would be little…just a tad bit, skittish before I ended this race. So, he carefully hand picked you to be my Dissertation Chair. Your patience, questioning, quiet, deliberative style was a perfect foil for this student. Your scholarly inputs have opened new avenues of thought for me. Thank you for your tendency to chisel and sculpt not slash and burn and for recognizing that students are not empty vessels only to be filled.

To the rest of the Adult Education and SQUIG faculty and staff: Dr. Cervero, Dr. Merriam, Dr. Ruona, Dr. Hill, Dr. Sandmann, Dr. Roulston, and Dr. Preissle. You challenged me to think from the other side. I know other students would agree with me; you do excellent work. Cindy, Amy, Denise, Susie, Linh, Theresa, Margaret, and Johnny students tarry because you work so hard to make it so easy, for us to want to stay. Thank you all for your support and for cheering us on.

Robin, for your patience and for trying so hard to schedule my dissertation defense, I thank you. David, I *really* appreciate your help. Krista, Regina, Andrea, and all of you at the Graduate School, who work behind the scenes to ensure "another student makes it through", we see your efforts and we don't ever take you for granted, thank you!

To the 11 African American doctoral graduates who participated in this research inquiry, you who came back to lend a helping hand. Thank you for modeling the way. I promise to pass it on in your name.

To my friends: Ingy, girl-friend, after God made you he threw away the mold. There is no other friend like you. Thank you your unselfishness, unquestioning commitment, and love. You were so sure I could do this you added D. R. before my name years before I even attempted graduate school. Kelson and Nevin you have the greatest mum. Rick, you have the best wife. Thank you all for sharing her with me. Marcella, Mildred, Sandy, Monica, Jackie, Sonia, and Cheryl your support and our talks helped me make it. I could not have crossed the finish line if you had not been in my corner. Ken, you are the best librarian. To all the people who contributed to this journey, who wished me well and made this easier, thank you!

To my sisters, brothers, sister-in-law, and dearest brothers-in-law, thank you for your patience and support, for listening, for critiquing my work, and taking my share of the responsibility when I was not able to. I love you all.

Finally, to my dearest husband and my wonderful son, I chose to thank you last only because I knew you would want me to thank others first and even so, only because I know, that you know, you are never last....Larry and Sean, thank you for giving me the time to do this, for being my rock, my oasis through it all. I love you both.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The research in the field of doctoral education suggests a hierarchy of accomplishments of which obviously the most important is degree completion" (Nettles & Millett, 2006, p. 38).

Degree completion transcends the many scholastic achievements of students pursuing the doctorate. Accordingly, much has been written about its educational and economic benefits for the individual, and the positive residuals for the institution and the society. In the United States, the doctoral degree is recognized as one of the highest levels of formal education. It represents the culmination of a series of ranked educational accomplishments; the attainment of which attests to the student's ability to address an important area of research and to make an original contribution to knowledge production, in a particular field (Council of Graduate School [CGS], 1990). However, among U.S. racial groups, this accomplishment is disproportionately "monochromatic" (Wilson National Fellowship Foundation [WW], 2005, p. 7). Ethnic minority groups, specifically African Americans, relative to their representation in the U.S. population, can claim only a "small share of graduate enrollments and doctoral degrees awarded by U.S. Universities" (Nettles & Millett, 2006, p. 17).

Judging from reports on: doctoral completion rates (Council of Graduate School, 2005; Hoffer et al., 2006; Thurgood, Golladay, & Hill, 2006); the racial composition of the U.S. population (US Census, 2000); and diversity in doctoral education (Woodrow

Wilson National Fellowship Foundation [WW], 2005) the situation is particularly challenging for African Americans. The WW foundation surmised that even with some progress, African Americans are still among the most unlikely U.S. citizens to be admitted to doctoral programs and to receive doctoral degrees. The Foundations' conclusion is supported by data from the U.S. Census Bureau. For example, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's (2000) report on the nations' educational attainment, white Americans represented 73.4 % of the population eighteen years and older, but were recipients of 81.6 % of the nations' doctoral degrees. Similarly, Asian-Pacific Islanders represented only 3.9 % of the population in the same age group but accounted for 10.2 % of earned doctorates. The same report shows Hispanics represented 10.5 % of the population in question and were recipients of 4.1 % of the nations' doctoral degrees. African Americans, representing 11.6 % of the eighteen years and over population was the second largest group in this age bracket. Additionally, this group's population was 1.1 % higher than Hispanics and 7.7 % higher than Asian-Pacific islanders, yet they earned only a mere 3.5 %, the lowest percentage of doctoral degrees earned by any racial group.

Table 1. Doctoral Degree Completers in the U.S. Population Eighteen Years and Older, by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

Race/ Ethnicity	Population Eighteen Years Years and Older in the U.S.			Doctoral Degree Completers Eighteen Years and Older in the U.S.		
	*Population	% of Population		Total # of *Completers	% of Completers	% of Completers race/total population
All Races	201,762	100.0		2,032	100.0	1.0
African Americans	23,308	11.6		72	3.5	0.3
Hispanics	21,108	10.5		84	4.1	0.4
Asian	7,859	3.9		207	10.2	2.6
Whites	148,091	73.4		1,659	81.6	1.1

Source: Data from U.S Census Bureau, 2000   * Number in thousands

In addition to the relatively lower numbers of African American doctoral graduates in the society, a comparison of the rates of growth of doctoral graduates in different racial groups indicates a significant difference between African American graduates and other minority groups. Data from summary reports on recipients of research doctorates awarded by U.S universities, which were compiled by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), shows a growing disparity in numbers between African American recipients of the doctorate and other U.S racial and ethnic groups (Hoffer et al., 2006, Hoffer, et al., 2001). In particular, the 2001 report reveals that in the last two decades (1980 to 2000) Asian recipients of the degree increased by 207%, Hispanics by 177%, American Indians by 125% but Black American doctorates increased by a substantially lower 61% (Hoffer, et al. 2001).

Central to the discussion of factors influencing African American doctorates representation in the society is a discussion of the role of historically white institutions (HWIs) in its realization. Admittedly, a number of issues, external to the nations' universities, must bear some responsibility for the unreasonably low presence of African American doctorates in the U.S. population; nonetheless, a larger share of that responsibility remains with the nations' most prolific, doctorate-granting universities. For example, based on reports from the NORC, African Americans in 2005 received only 3.9% (1,688) of doctoral degrees awarded by American universities (N=43,354). The same report shows that the top 50 U.S doctorate-granting institutions, all of which are historically white institutions (HWIs), awarded 51% (22,106), more than half of the total doctorates earned that year (Hoffer et al., 2006). This feat speaks to the institutions' ability to graduate doctorates in the society and to their potential to make a greater

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contribution to the production of African American doctorates. However, as it relates to the education of African American doctoral students, these institutions have failed to use their full potentials. Although the 2005 data does not show the percentage of the 1,688 African American graduates who received degrees from the top 50 institutions, it is nevertheless sensible to conclude the numbers were extremely low. This is a reasonable conclusion because the 1,688 African American doctoral recipients also included the graduates, who received doctoral degrees from the nations' historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as well as other institutions that were not included in the top 50 doctorate-granting institution category.

Besides the previously discussed hurdles like: the inadequate efforts from the nations' top doctorate producing universities and the disadvantages that this group faces because of their underrepresentation at the doctoral level vis-à-vis representation in the population and their low growth rate in the number of doctoral recipients, there are other issues that hinder African Americans efforts to achieve the Ph.D. The burden of racism is one such issue. Racism is defined as a "system of advantage based on race" (Wellman, 1977, as cited in Tatum, 1997, p.7). Tatum suggests this is a fitting definition because it supports the notion that racism is not only a set of beliefs; it also includes messages, practices, institutional policies, actions, and behaviors. Understanding racism requires that one first comprehend the notion of inherent structural advantages and disadvantage based on the color of one's skin.

An important understanding underlying this definition is the belief that racism is a product of personal prejudices based on individual perceptions about race and the manifestations of these prejudices in the broader systems of institutional polices and

practices. Although forged in the bowels of American history, the specter of racism still haunts our educational landscape. Even in today's Twenty-First century, visages of racism and inequality still stalk the halls of historically white institutions (HWIs) validating some and discounting other sources of knowledge. In this way, racism is an ever present force in the learning experiences of African Americans and other students of color on the campuses of white institutions.

In HWIs, African American doctoral students, like other groups of black students, routinely experience less supportive and positive environments (Blackwell, 1981; Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2008, 2009). In these environments, students experience the kinds of aggressions of racism that Constantine and Sue (2007) describe as "deliberate or unintended verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that...communicate negative or denigrating messages to people[s] of color" (p. 143). Indeed, African American students oftentimes do not experience the benefits of mentoring (Smith & Davidson, 1992; Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007) despite its highly touted advantages (Golde, 2006). Furthermore, due in part to economic disparities because of race and ethnicity, African American students have limited sources of personal financial support. Consequently, they face the additional burden of accumulating high education-related debts (Gravois, 2007; King, 1994) and the issues and challenges associated with this level of indebtedness.

For any group of students, these issues: the psychological burden of having to redeem one's race primarily because of skin color; negative social experiences—being subjected to subtle, deliberate, and, or, unwittingly debilitating messages; lack of, or inappropriate mentoring; and inadequate financial support are likely to pose serious

challenges to degree completion. Evidence suggests African American doctoral students, who are faced with these situations, are also susceptible to the challenges and personal costs that can result from these conditions. These costs, manifested in various ways, interact with larger societal forces to produce fissures of negative outcomes or what many researchers have referred to as achievement gaps.

The harmful effects of these gaps on the psychosocial, vocational, economic, and academic achievements of African American doctoral students; indeed, on all African Americans, highlight the need for students from this group to have a comprehensive understanding of the societal forces that can shape their progress towards doctoral completion. It is important that current and future doctoral students have knowledge about the academic experiences of their peers who have completed their programs. It is equally as important that future generations of African American doctoral students understand the promise of self: to trust their own judgment, feelings, and experiences (Lawrence, 1995) and by extension, their capacity to overcome educational barriers (Anderson, 2004). The question then becomes: where do we look for such insights?

We can, for example, look to previous research that focused on African Americans strengths, the kind of research that Hill (1998) refers to as "asset-oriented research" (p. 50). In Hill's study, the focus in the research literature is on: 1) African Americans' education history and their capacity for triumphing together even in the face of great odds; 2) their experiential knowledge and, just as importantly, the experiential knowledge of people of color; and 3) on theoretical concepts that are appropriate for understanding the lived experiences of African Americans. We can also look for such insights in the underlying common thread in the research literature on African

Americans—the saga of Blacks' self-help tradition. This tradition offers a wellspring for understanding African Americans' resiliency in overcoming past and thus, contemporary and future educational barriers (Anderson, 1988; Cornelius, 1991; Franklin & Savage, 2004). Lastly, we can look for such insights in the voices of protest in the literature. These voices tell us it is important that those who have experienced discrimination find eloquence from their experiences, knowledge through the reflections that produced them (Matsuda, 1995) and thus, the courage and sense of obligation to make themselves heard.

In view of the importance of doctoral education for students' career and the U.S. economic, technological, educational, and scientific advancement, researchers have studied, profusely, the factors leading to doctoral completion (Barry, 2005a, 2005b; Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Guadeloupe-Williams 2005a, 2005b; Henning, 1999; Kittel-Limerick, 2005; Koss, 2003; McDermott, 2005; Nettles & Millet, 2006) and attrition (Benkin, 1984; Berelson, 1960; Bowen & Rudenstein, 1992; Cook & Swanson, 1978; Golde, 1996; Lovitts, 1996, 2001; Nerad & Cerny, 1993) and others. Much of this research, however, is from the viewpoint of majority groups. The literature from African Americans perspective (Barber, 2007; Blackwell, 1983; Clark, 1999; DeNeal, 2008; Geer-Williams, 2004; Holland, 1995; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero & Bowles, 2008, 2009; Morris, 2007; Patterson-Stewart, 1995; Ritchie, 1996; Smith & Robinson, 1992; Rocha-Singh, 1990; Willie, Grady & Hope, 1991) and specifically African American doctoral graduates in education is much more limited.

Of the empirical studies conducted on African Americans in education doctoral programs, only Bickham-Chavers (2003), Respress (1997), Rogers (2006), and Thompson (2005) focus on the persistence of African Americans in their programs. Even

so, none of these studies has examined this group's social learning experiences within doctoral education, as well as the repertoire of social resources and cultural knowledge they bring to their programs. This omission is an important missed opportunity given that, historically, the far greater majority of African Americans in doctoral programs (both in numbers and in percent) receive their doctorate from the field of education.

Indeed, decades of collected data from government and private agencies attest to the field of education contributions to the number of African American doctoral recipients in the society. For instance, in the *2005 Survey of Earned Doctorates* report alluded to earlier, some 39% (658) of the 1,688 African American recipients of the doctorate were education graduates. Compare this figure to the number of African American doctoral recipients in the same year from: engineering 5 %, physical sciences 5 %, life sciences 16 %, social sciences 18 %, humanities 10 % and the 7 % from other fields and the magnitude of the field of education contribution to black doctorates in the U. S. becomes clearer (Hoffer, et al., 2006).

The field is enrolling and producing more African American doctorates than any other field in the nations' universities. In fact, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) reports that the bulk of the nations' black doctorate recipients are education graduates (Hoffer et al., 2006). These achievements are evident in spite of some genuine challenges. For example, according to Gravois (2007), African Americans in education emerge from doctoral programs with higher debt loads than any other group and discipline, even if they invest, upfront, more of their personal income. Additionally, Gravois reports that the field has one of the longest average time-to-degrees (TTD), which can add both economic and personal costs for African American students.

Nonetheless, as mentioned before, African Americans enrollment and completion rates in education surpass that of other fields. In light of this fact, the field, and its graduates present a best-case scenario for studying factors related to doctoral education and completion among African Americans in HWIs.

This dearth in research on African American doctoral students' experiences; indeed, the experience of people of color, in general, have elicited calls for corrective research (Anzaldua, 1990; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2000; Ladson, Billings, 2000; See, 1998). This researcher attempts to answer that call by drawing from multiple concepts to appropriately frame the study in conceptual and theoretical casings that shed light on the cultural and social resources of African American doctoral students and their learning experiences within the social, environmental, and historical contexts of doctoral education. Three strands of theories, sociocultural learning, social and cultural capital, and critical race theory, are starting points for thinking about, framing, and presenting this inquiry.

Conceptual Framework for Studying Doctoral Completion among African Americans

Theoreticians of sociocultural learning posits that human development and learning is primarily a social activity occurring simultaneously on multiple levels, between varying expanses of time, and across cultures (Lave, 1993; Lava & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998, 1999; Wertsch, 1991). Focusing on the cultural plane, Rogoff discerns that learning takes place at: (1) the personal or cognitive level; (2) interpersonal or intergroup level; and (3) the community/institutional or institutional/structural levels, each of which mediates and influences the other. Accordingly, from Rogoff's point of view, a critical element for understanding one's

learning experiences lies in the interrelationship between one's cognition, relationship with others, and the institutional structures in the environment in which one interacts. Given the chasm in completion rates between African American doctoral students and other racial groups in the society, Rogoff's conceptualization of socio-cultural theory offers some conceptual relevancy to an examination of the social and cultural factors influencing African American doctoral students' degree completion. The theory contributes to our understanding of the milieu, or the social and cultural environment, that houses doctoral education and how students make sense of the process because the theory looks at the individual and his or her activity in contexts. Specifically, these concepts are useful for a deeper understanding of African American doctoral students' social interactions with their academic environment. They are also appropriate for adding clarity about how students' interactions with their environments influence how they learn to navigate the challenges in their environments, and ultimately the completion of their degrees. Other equally appropriate assumptions for examining doctoral completion among African Americans in HWIs are concepts from social and cultural capital theories. I will address first the applicability of cultural, then social capital concepts for this study.

Cultural and social capital theories focus on non-monetary forms of human capital, the equivalence of what Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) refer to as "funds of knowledge" (p. 133). Cultural capital is most often identified with inquiries in the sociology of education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Franklin 2002; Lareau & Weininger 2003; Yosso, 2005). There are two basic assumptions of the theory. First, individuals are endowed with varying levels and kinds of cultural resources which, if used vigorously and appropriately, can lead to generational upward mobility. Second,

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schools play a pivotal role in reproducing and in determining which, and whose cultural

capital leads to school success or school failure**.** Social capital based on Bourdieu's

(1985) definition, is the totality of realized and potential benefits gained from group

membership. It is these applications: the vigorous use of one's cultural assets (Franklin,

2002; Lareau & Weininger, 2003) and the ability to secure and use resources based on

"deliberate construction of sociability" from one's access to social networks (Portes,

1988, p. 3), which are most useful for understanding the cultural and social capital

African American doctoral students bring to doctoral study.

Another reason cultural and social capital theories are relevant to this study is

because of fit. Competencies that individuals bring to their learning are integral parts of

the learning process. Thus, research that includes learning as a component of its inquiry

should include, in its theoretical framework, a basis for understanding *what*, besides an

understanding of *how*, individuals contributed to their learning.

Both sets of theories: sociocultural learning and social and cultural capital

theories offer important theorizing concepts that are relevant reference points for

informing thought and researcher sensitivity to African American students' experiences

during their preparation for the doctoral degree on the campuses of historically white

universities. However, as existing literature indicates race and inequity are strong

components of African American doctoral students' education; thus, assumptions from

sociocultural learning and social and cultural capital theories are not enough to analyze

and account for what these components may reveal. Assumptions from critical race

theory provide the language to challenge current status quo knowledge on doctoral

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completion among African American students and to articulate their lived experiences about this phenomenon.

Critical race theory is a set of insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seek to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain dominant and subordinate racial positions in and out of the classroom (Ladson-Billings, & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000, 2002). Solórzano (1998) notes, "A critical race theory in education challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses, and insists on analyzing race and racism in education by placing them in both a historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods" (p. 123). Four assumptions of the theory are applicable to this study: 1) race and racism are central to the experiences of people of color; 2) empirical knowledge resides in the stories of people of color; 3) stories and narratives are a means of expressing reality and resisting oppression; 4) and empowered, marginalized groups are better able to resist oppression.In view of the fact that African Americans in doctoral programs are numerically disadvantaged in representation and degree production, a theory that challenges and simultaneously provides alternative ways of thinking, can be invaluable as part of the conceptual frame for developing this study.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

The doctorate produces significant benefits for most individuals in society. Even so, influential forces of exclusion have prevailed and the call for diversification in the American doctorate has, to date, resulted in incremental, but relatively modest results (WW, 2005). Additionally, the proportion of African Americans, who are recipients of the doctorate, is vastly disproportionate to the total number of African Americans who are

within the normal age group of the nations' doctoral recipients (U.S. Census, 2000). Moreover, among minority groups, the rate of growth of African American doctorates is much slower than that of other racial ethnic groups. The situation is made worse by the lower-than-acceptable efforts of the nations' top universities in producing African American doctorates. This underrepresentation of African Americans in doctoral education is further compounded by the injuries or microaggressions (Constantine & Sue, 2007, p.143; Solarzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) associated with negative social encounters and inadequate mentoring, and the limited financial support that members of this group routinely experience. Viewed in its totality, African American students' quest for the doctorate results in excessive, oftentimes, unaffordable costs; the highest of which is the noncompletion of their degree programs.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Research Opinion Center, for the years 1995-2005, reveal two important trends: more African Americans enter *and* graduate from the field of education, than from any other field (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2000; Hoffer et al., 2006). Yet, the potential knowledge about the dynamics of doctoral education and completion among African Americans that this trend may offer remains untapped. Relatively little research has been directed towards understanding African American education graduates learning experiences from a sociocultural perspective: the rich cache of social resources and cultural competencies—knowledge, skills, and abilities—they bring to these experiences and how those experiences can be a resource to increase the numbers of African American students in doctoral programs and, the percentages of students from these programs who complete the degree.

Given the potential for favorable outcomes from research in these areas, the purpose of this study is to understand the sociocultural and programmatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans in historically white institutions of higher education. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What were the social and cultural deterrents to African American doctoral students completing their degrees?

2. What programmatic resources were identified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies?

3. What social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their degrees?

4. How did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to degree completion?

Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. The most significant contribution is the theoretical explanations the study offers about successful doctoral education among African American students. First, it helps to fill the knowledge gap about what constitutes social and cultural capital among African American doctoral students. Second, it builds on past research by identifying the resources that African American students draw from to sustain themselves through the rigors and challenges of doctoral education. Third, it provides theoretical clarification on how African American doctoral students learn within their social environment.

Understanding the factors that contribute to this specific group of learners' completion of the doctorate will also add to the theoretical bases of the literature on adult

education and higher education. Although socialization and cultural practices are integral components of learning processes, the practice of adult education tends to give more emphasis to the cognitive and individual perspectives; leaving little room for the social and cultural factors that shape learners' experiences and perceptions (Alfred, 2003; Cafferella & Merriam, 2000). This study will add to the adult education literature by taking a broader look at adult learning in the social and cultural contexts of doctoral education.

Likewise, theoretical perspectives on graduate education, in higher education literature, will benefit from this study. Because the racial composition of the nation's Ph.D's does not mirror the racial diversity of the nation, African American doctoral students are more likely to experience doctoral study under the aegis of an overwhelmingly white faculty. Thus, they are less likely than white students to have their studies directed by faculty who have had similar life experiences. Added to the limited numbers of non-white faculty at the doctoral level is the knowledge that critical masses of African American doctoral students pursue degrees at majority white universities where the racial composition of the student body is majority white (Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, & Sullivan, 2002). Consequently, matters of diversity are enigmas for educators in doctoral programs. This research will add to existing theoretical insights on issues of diversity in higher education and the related views on educational achievement and achievement gaps by addressing the doctoral completion debate from another perspective—the perspective of African American students.

Besides its theoretical significance, this study has important implications for the practice of doctoral education. The study will add to current ways of practice in educating

African American doctoral students in that it changes the focus of the debate on African American doctoral student attainment of the degree from an entirely deficit perspective to a learning orientation. Knowledge of the factors that contribute to African American doctoral students' completion of the degree will help African American students validate their ways of learning and, provide current and future doctoral students with additional resources to navigate the complexities of doctoral education. It will provide educational researchers and educators of doctoral students with additional insights on how African American students learn within graduate education environments and inform graduate deans, doctoral programs' administrators, planners and supervisors of Ph.D. programs on ways to design and implement programs that build on the strengths and assets of students of color. Furthermore, this understanding will add to the knowledge base, which can be tapped by faculty developers, to inform faculty development programs for faculty and student success. The results of this study will also provide useful information for state and federal policymakers, graduate education governing bodies, foundations, and other funding streams interested in advancing doctoral education among African Americans.

A final but equally important significance is the study's contribution to the public good and to a core principle of adult education – the field's responsibility for social advancement. Providing a forum for African American doctoral students to learn how to be successful at doctoral study, from the experiences of their successful peers, carries on the tradition of the field's commitment to action for social and political change and the time-honored custom, among African Americans, to give back to their communities.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to understand the social, cultural, and programmatic

factors that contributed to the successful completion of education doctoral programs by

African Americans at historically white institutions of higher education. The following

questions guide this research. What were the social and cultural deterrents to African

American doctoral students completing their degrees? What are the programmatic

resources identified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies? What social and

cultural resources influenced the completion of their degree? How did African American

doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to completion?

To provide context for the study, I will review three bodies of literature that I see as

critical to extending the understanding of African American doctoral students' experiences

in HWIs. The general objective is to provide a comprehensible, balanced view of data,

concepts, and theories relevant to the research topic and to draw them from historical and

contemporary perspectives and interdisciplinary sources. There are three sections of

literature. I will begin with the literature on graduate education. Specifically, I will

describe the origins of doctoral education, its role in U.S. education, and its benefits to the

society paying due attention to the experiences and positioning of African American

doctoral students in HWIs. Following the literature on graduate education is the literature

on ideologies and perspectives on educational attainment. In this section, I will discuss the

conservative, liberal, and radical ideologies on minority schooling and juxtapose them

against education historians, social anthropologists, and social psychologists perspectives on African Americans approach to education. I will devote a key portion of this section of the review to the historiography of African Americans education. In particular, I will examine historical accounts of African Americans' insistence and agency in seeking education. In the final of these three sections, I will address theories favorable for enhancing understanding of the sociocultural factors that influence African American doctoral students' persistence to degree completion in HWIs of higher education.

I employed different techniques to locate the appropriate literature for this study. I initiated my review of the literature by using search terms that relate to the major section headings in this chapter. For example, for literature related to the academic achievement of African American students, I used the search terms "underachievement", "African Americans", and "schooling" in sociology, education, anthropology, and history databases. I delimited my choices to peer-reviewed, full-texts articles. In some instances, I used other delimiters like "time" and "author" and searched electronic journals using "type of publication" as the criterion. For instance, my search for literature pertaining to the education of Blacks in America resulted in searches of journals like the *Journal of Negro Education* and *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education.* My literature search drew from the works of scholars with similar and opposing perspectives; spanned interdisciplinary fields like education, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, social work, and law and included databases like the Internet, Eric, ProQuest, Dissertation Abstracts, electronic journals, and government agencies websites. However, I was not limited to them. I also consulted with librarians and knowledgeable others and

searched for relevant literature in books and reports from not-for-profit and government agencies.

<center>State of Doctoral Education in American Universities</center>

The year 2007 marked a hundred and forty seven years since Yale University, established the Ph.D. degree in the United States. Patterned after the German Ph.D., the American doctorate was originally reserved for only a select few—elite students with ability—to conduct independent original research (Nettles & Millett, 2006). However, elitism aside, Grigg (1997) notes that there were other more pragmatic reasons for establishing the degree. According to Grigg, supporters of the Ph.D. were motivated to provide American scholars with the opportunity to study in the United States, rather than abroad. Since then, doctoral education has chronicled its growth in terms of "scale and quality" (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992, p. 1) in the annals of generations of forerunners of the doctorate like John Hopkins, University of Pennsylvania, Harvard (Thurgood et al., 2006), and other more contemporary U. S. institutions of higher learning.

As evidenced through collected data, the nations' universities have experienced considerable growth in new research doctorates from 1861, when Yale conferred its first Ph.D. (Bowen & Rudenstein); to 1961, when the number of degree recipients exceeded 10,000 for the first time; through 2005, when the universities awarded an all-time high of 45,354 degrees (Hoffer et al., 2006). This growth is partly credited to increased access to graduate education, which was made possible by the U. S. government and public's interest in scientific developments in the post-Sputnik era and, the availability of both federal and private funds for research and development (Cartter, 1976; Thurgood et al., 2006). In fact, Thurgood et al. report that between 1957 and 1973, a decade and a half

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after Sputnik, the number of doctorates awarded annually grew by close to 9% each year. Another factor that contributed to the growth of doctoral education was the growing demand by academia "for a larger proportion of college and university faculty to have a Ph.D" (Grigg, 1965, p. 10). This expansion in earned doctorates was also fueled by factors other than the demand for more highly qualified faculty and the U.S. thrust for scientific developments following the Russians launch of Sputnik 1. According to Thurgood et al., during the period 1900-1999, the number of disciplinary fields and universities offering doctoral programs also grew dramatically. The same authors report that between the start, and "by the end of the 20[th.] Century, a total of 426 institutions had awarded more than 1.36 million doctorates" (p. 3).

In addition to its long-term growth, the American doctorate enjoys an enviable position, both in the United States and abroad. In a *Message from the President* on the state of graduate education Debra Stewart, President of the Council of Graduate Schools, wrote that:

> Graduate education in the United States has been an enormously successful enterprise, serving the vital scientific, cultural and economic needs of the national and global community...graduate schools are epicenters of discovery, innovation, and application, leading to advancements that affect every one of us. (Council of Graduate School [CGS], 2008)

Stewart seems to suggest that graduate school occupies the zenith in the hierarchy of programs of study in academia. These sentiments are borne out in the research literature. Thurgood et al. (2006) maintain that graduate education is a vital part of America's socioeconomic structure and is accorded high status through the public's perception of its image. They reference the numbers of Americans who received the Nobel Prize and suggest it is illustrative of the esteem with which American scholars are

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regarded. Citing Sherby (2002), Thurgood et al. states: "between 1901 and 1999, 162 Americans with doctorates from U.S. universities receive 164 Nobel Prizes: 57 prizes for physics, 41 for chemistry, 34 for physiology or medicine, 25 for economics, and 7 for peace" (p. 3).

Other researchers, for example, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) concur. According to these researchers, "doctoral education occupies a particularly critical place in the overall structure of higher education." Boyle and Boice (1998) argue America is the "premier training ground for the world's future scientists and scholars" (p. 87). Thurgood et al., in preparing the report on U.S. Doctorates in 20th Century referred to the important contribution doctoral education makes to the U.S. economy. Smith (1995), writing on the state of graduate education in the U.S. noted that doctoral education has gained significant recognition in the public's view through its contribution to most of society's prized goals— economic competitiveness, strong national defense, technological superiority, excellence in education, and a desirable quality of life.

Even so, Thurgood et al. (2006) maintain that for all its accomplishments doctoral education in the United States is far from ideal. A more comprehensive review of the literature reveals that the matter of access to doctoral education and the issue of degree completion by minority citizen groups remain a serious challenge (Council of Graduate School [CGS], 2005; Hoffer et al., 2006; Thurgood et al.; US Census, 2000; Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation [WW], 2005a, 2005b).

Doctoral Completion and Race

The enormity of the challenges facing diversity efforts in doctoral education is also well documented in several non-profit and U.S. government agencies. To illustrate,

Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (WW) in their analysis of doctoral education *Diversity and the Ph.D.: A Review of Efforts to Broaden Race and Ethnicity in U.S Doctoral Education,* revealed that even with good intentions "doctoral programs have made less progress in diversifying than business, government, and other levels of education." Moreover, the framers of the report projected that the population of college students of ethnic descent will increase exponentially but "their teachers will remain overwhelmingly white, because a white student is three times as likely as a student of color to earn the doctorate" (WW, 2005a, p. 7). The authors of the report attributed this dilemma to historically misguided perceptions of superiority and entitlement of one group over another and the social and economic disparities that serve to keep these forces in place. The authors argued that it is judicious to advocate for a highly racially diverse doctorate. They offered three reasons to support their argument and grounded them in realism, logic, and ideals. They contended that diversity in education, even for the most elementary reasoning, is necessary because it is in the nations' interest to make full use of its intellectual resources. Additionally, they cautioned that failure to promote diversity only compounds the U.S. dependence on international students for its workforce and increases the nations' susceptibility to changes in geopolitical and educational outcomes. Moreover, the foundation concluded, based on the nations' founding premise, institutions are morally bound to educate all its citizens equally, including students from minority racial groups.

Reports from other U.S. government agencies give accounts of similar trends. For instance, the National Science Foundation (NSF) reported diversification in the American doctorate is a real concern (Thurgood et al., 2006). Based on their analysis of data from

two sources—the Doctorate Records File (DRF), a cumulative database on doctoral recipients from 1920-2004 and the 2005 Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), the foundation reported there are significant differences in the demographic makeup of persons receiving doctoral education. However, the foundation concluded: although the racial makeup of doctoral recipients from U.S. institutions changed considerably and, in some cases, favorably in the last one hundred years, nonetheless, U.S. ethnic minority citizens' share of earned doctorate, compared to that of whites remains, "relatively low" (Thurgood et al., p. 20). The foundation surmised that any significant change in the racial composition of degree recipients were mostly a result of increases in the number of degrees awarded to Asian and white foreign nationals. To support their conclusion, the authors of the report revealed that from 1975, when data on race and ethnicity in doctoral education was first collected in the SED, to as recent as 1999, 90% of doctorates awarded by U.S institutions went to three groups: white U.S citizens (68%), Asian foreign nationals (14%), and white foreign nationals (8%). U.S. citizens from ethnic minority groups' share of the doctorates comprised only a portion of the remaining 10%; blacks earned 3%, Hispanics 2%, Asians/Pacific Islanders 2% and American Indians/Alaskan natives earned 0.3 %. The remaining 2.7% were not accounted for in the data.

The matter of under representation of U.S. ethnic citizens among the nation's recipients of the doctorate is also an issue that emerged from the 2005 summary report on doctorate recipients from United States universities (Hoffer et al., 2006). The report was commissioned by six major U. S. government agencies. These agencies include: the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institute of Health (NIH), U. S. Department of Education (USDE), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), U. S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration (NASA). The report was conducted by the National Opinion Research

Center at the University of Chicago and addressed trends in: (1) numbers and percentages

of doctorates by sex, race, ethnicity, and citizenship; (2) time to degree completion; (3)

graduate student financial support; and (4) degree recipients' post-graduation plans. The

authors of the report, Hoffer et al., based their findings on data from two sources. The

data between the periods 1920 to 1957 was collected directly from the universities, and

the data from 1958 through 2005, was taken from the annual census of new doctorate

recipients. The data was analyzed in two ways—for overall trends based on cumulative

data from prior years SED's and for current trends in the 2005 SED data.

Based on this data Hoffer et al. (2006) divulge the following information. On the

question of minority groups' representation among doctorate recipients for 2005, Hoffer et

al. noted: U.S. racial/ethnic minority groups received 20% of doctorates awarded to U. S.

citizens and 12% of the total doctorates awarded by U. S. universities. The authors further

revealed that the proportion of earned doctorates for each racial/ethnic minority group was

as follows:

> Among the 25,916 doctorates earned in 2005 by U.S. citizens who
> identified their race/ethnicity (98 percent of all U.S citizen doctorates),
> 1,688 doctorates were earned by blacks, 1,493 were earned by Asians,
> 1,294 were earned by Hispanics, 139 were earned by American Indians,
> 67 were earned by Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, and 390
> were earned by non-Hispanic individuals who identified more than one
> racial background.

Looking at the 2005 data from a different perspective, Hoffer et al. (2006)

concluded that the percentages of doctorates earned by every other group, whether they

are white U.S citizens (80%), foreign nationals (35%), or women (45%) surpassed the

percentage of doctorates awarded to U.S ethnic minority groups, individually and combined. These compelling data underscore the presence of grave, racial inequalities in doctoral education. However, because the report was primarily intended to provide information that could be used as "a basis for additional trend analyses that researchers can pursue" (p. 2). Hoffer et al. did not draw inferences about its findings. Hence, a discussion about the implications of the findings for African Americans and other U.S. minority citizens' education in the doctorate is missing in the report.

However, other researchers have used data from this and similar U.S. government reports to conduct studies and have assessed the implications of these data for minority ethnic groups. An examination of the literature on doctoral education reveals researchers (Bickman-Chavers, 2003; Gravois, 2006; Nettles & Millett, 2006) and others have used data from these reports for research on various aspects of doctoral education. For example, in *Three Magic Letter: Getting to Ph.D.,* Nettles and Millett drew extensively on Hoffer et al. (2001) work to conduct research on wide-ranging issues in doctoral education. These issues range from financing of students' education and variations in institutional types and fields of study to students' research productivity, satisfaction, academic progress, and relationship with faculty. The study revealed that these issues had direct bearing on students' access, progress, and completion of their Ph.Ds. Nettles and Millett found the racial demographics of the study's sample are typical to the demographics of doctoral recipients profiled in the U. S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports for 1994 and the NSF reports for 2001. Researchers, Nettles and Millett, also reported that race featured prominently among their findings and suggest that "real differences" (p. 46) exist in representation by

sex and race, among the study's participants. This disparity was even clearer when the researchers disaggregate the numbers by race-ethnicity, sex, and fields. Of the findings related to minority groups, Nettles and Millett concluded that concerns about underrepresentation "were entirely justified" (p. 47). The researchers further surmised that African American students in relation to White, Asian American, and international students occupy a low presence in all fields, except in the field of education.

These findings are significant not only because of the inferences about American doctoral education but also because of its broader implications for minority groups in the society. First, according to Nettles and Millett (2006), the sample in their study was selected from the top doctorate-producing institutions using criteria that allow for the generalizability of its findings to the nations' population of doctoral students. The authors report the demographics of study's sample resembles the demographics of doctoral students' profile in NCES and NSF reports. Given these factors, the authors argue that the sample in their study represents a "prototype" of individuals in the society, who are most likely, or unlikely, to be recipients of the doctorate. Second, the authors found the sample itself reveals a real pattern of unequal racial representation against minorities in the nations' institutions of higher learning. These findings are particularly significant because they corroborate the findings of researchers in organizations like the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (WW, 2005a, 2005b). Those researchers had concluded that failure to create a diverse doctorate by fully engaging America's racial minorities in the nations' doctoral education can be disadvantageous to the student, the group he or she is affiliated with, and the nation.

Doctoral Completion, African Americans, and HWI's

The weight of the research evidence on graduate and undergraduate students' persistence to degree completion in America's institutions of higher education suggests multiple factors influence students ability to complete their programs (Benkin 1984; Berelson, 1960; Blackwell 1987, Buchanan, 1989; Campbell, 1992; Clewell 1987; Cook & Swanson, 1978; Gell, 1996; Gillingham, Seneca & Taussig, 1991; Golde, 1996; Issac, 1993; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles, 1990; Nettles & Millett, 2006; Phillips, Daubman, & Wilmoth, 1986; Tinto, 1993; Washburn, 2001; Zwick, 1991). Of these many factors, issues like faculty-student mentoring (Buell, 2004; Golde, 2006; Holland, 1995; Nerad & Cerny, 1991; Nettles & Millett, 2006); financial support (Berg & Ferber, 1983; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Ferrer de Valero, 1996; Grives & Wemmerus, 1988; Lovitts, 2001; Sauer, 1986); and social experiences (Allen 1985; Feagin, 1992; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero & Bowles, 2008, 2009; Nettles, 1988); emerge among the most critical concerns.

The importance of these three issues—faculty mentoring, financial support, and student social experiences are also echoed in empirical research on African American students' persistence in doctoral programs. Studies have revealed African American doctoral students, like students from other racial groups, are also susceptible to the setbacks that lack of, or inadequate faculty-student mentoring, insufficient funding, and negative social experiences, create (Bickham-Chavers, 2003; Ellis, 1997; Henderson, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Respress, 1997; Rogers, 2006; Thompson, 2005; Thweatt-McCoy, 1998; Toliver, 1997). In fact, some studies indicate that African American students face even greater challenges when confronted with these issues.

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Faculty-student Mentoring

Researchers Kelly and Schweitzer (1999) conducted a study on *Mentoring within a Graduate School Setting*. The study simultaneously highlights African American students' use of their cultural and social capital and the challenges and importance of the faculty-student mentoring relationship. The researchers surveyed a pool of 670 graduate students of which 226 (34%) were White, (228) (34%) were minorities and 216 (32%) were international students, to ascertain which graduate students received mentoring or which students were mentoring other students. The sample was drawn from a large, predominately white, midwestern university. The results of the study revealed that: (1) mentoring may be more important to students from minority groups than to students from other groups; (2) having a mentor significantly improved minority students' perceptions of the academic climate; and (3) minority students perceived that they would be treated in a much more unfavorable manner if they did not have a mentor. An interesting aspect of the study is that the researchers found no difference for African American students who reported having a mentor as compared to white students who reported having a mentor. Interestingly though, when the researchers measured the tendency of students to mentor others, they reported that the number of African American doctoral students mentoring students were significantly higher than the number of students from professional and masters level programs, or from any other racial group who mentored other students. The researchers also found that those students who mentored others "perceived all aspects of the racial climate to be significantly worse and they perceived racial climate as a more important variable than those [students] who did not mentor others" (p. 7).

Kelly and Schweitzer concluded that even if the data showed some African American doctoral students reported they had a mentor, they nevertheless were experiencing such difficulty completing their degree, they wanted to help other students avoid, or at least better navigate, the setbacks and obstacles that they had to surmount. In other words, African American students' decision to mentor their peers was based on negative perceptions of the university's racial climate. The researchers theorized that the incongruence between the findings that African Americans received as much mentoring as other racial groups and the findings about their negative perception of the racial and academic climate; may be due to African Americans receiving their mentoring from other African American students and not from university faculty members.

Inadequate Funding

The literature on the impact of lack of funding and high education-related debt on African American doctoral students' education is sparse; at least, more so than the literature on the effects of lack of mentoring. Nevertheless, the existing literature indicates that African Americans, more than any other group, and especially African Americans in the field of education, carry a greater debt load than any other group of students (Gravois, 2007). Research conducted by Gravois shows the average debt for Black doctoral students in 2005 was $29,295 and their primary source of funding was their own resources. Other ethnic groups: American Indians, Hispanic, Whites, and Asian accumulated average debt loads of $26, 023, $24,819, $18,141, and $13,939, respectively; and their primary source of funding came from assistantships, fellowships and grants. Gravois attributes this dilemma experienced by African American students partly to reduction in the funding from the Department of Education. For example,

between 2000 and 2006 the Department, which is the principal government agency supporting education research, reduced their contributions from $41 million to $40 million. For the same period, Gravois reports funding for the sciences, from the National Science Foundation, increased form $153 million to $226 million and from the National Institute of Health, from $651 million to $761 million.

Given that the majority of African American doctoral students pursue the degree from the field of education, Gravois suggests African American students have "threadbare" sources of financial support. In fact, Gravois reports that students are faced with such costly alternatives like borrowing way beyond their means, truncating their education when they run out of funding, or working several jobs to meet their financial obligations. Given these challenges, what keep these students going? Gravois suggests it is the knowledge that they are in essence making a way for future generations of African American students.

Social Experiences

On the campuses of America's colleges and universities, intellectual and social integration are important components of students' experiences in their programs; one entails the student engaging in the scholarly aspects of the academic community, the other relates to the students' social membership status in that community (Herzig, 2002; Mendoza, 2007). The literature on students' experiences and its relationship to the completion or non-completion of their programs is extensive. Findings from research suggest students are more likely to receive the optimum value of their educational experiences when there is an active, positive relationship between the students' development and their social and academic experiences (Benkin, 1984; Boozer, 1972;

Brien, 1992; Grissom, 1985; Lovitts, 2001, 1996; Tinto, 1993). Arguing this point, Tinto maintains:

> Social membership within one's program becomes part and parcel of academic membership, and social interaction with one's peers and faculty becomes linked not only to one's intellectual development, but also to the development of important skills required for doctoral completion. (p. 232)

Even so, research on African American students on predominately-white university campuses reveals African Americans experience situations that present barriers to positive social experiences. Johnson-Bailey et al. (2009) found congruency between themes in the literature and findings in their own study about the experiences of 678 Black graduate alumni at a major Southern Research University. The study revealed the respondents in the study experienced feelings similar to the feelings of isolation, discrimination, forced representation, and stereotyping experienced by Blacks students attending predominately White universities. The research also found that most students viewed the exclusion, loneliness, and hostility they experienced as characteristic of their programs and, subsequently, if they wished to complete their programs it was something that they had to endure. They also found that even if students graduated from their programs, they were not willing to put their children through similar experiences. An important aspect of the study's findings was the revelation that even if the participants experienced "overtly and covertly unfriendly" environments, they survived their experiences by drawing on their commitment to remain undaunted and to persist.

Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso (2000) also studied how African American students at three Historically White Research I universities experienced the climate on the university campus. Like the Johnson-Bailey et al. (2009) study, students reported similar incidences

of racism and microaggressions. They described classroom incidences that made them feel inadequate in some instances, and invisible in other instances. They also had to deal with faculty and students' assumptions about their ability to cope with the rigors of the program, the admissions criteria by which they gained entry to the university, and the disbelief that they can be both—black and intelligent. These constant, sometimes intended, other times unintended racial slights served to create feelings of isolation and to undermine students' confidence in their abilities. The researchers report that in response to their marginalized position on campus, students banded together to form social or academic -counter-spaces- where they felt safe to seek and receive educational, emotional, and cultural support from each other.

In yet another related study involving both African American graduates and current African American students at a predominately White Carnegie I Research Institution, researchers Chance, Ginsberg, Davies, and Smith (2004) identified four key themes that characterize the experiences of African American doctoral students within the School of Education. The study's finding revealed that many students felt so isolated that at different points they contemplated leaving the university. To counter their feelings of isolation, students formed their own support network. This self-created network of peers provided students with the personal, emotional, and academic support they needed to progress through their programs. Along with feelings of isolation, students felt vulnerable because of their minority status on campus. They were keenly aware that they stood out among their White peers and that, because of race, their performance had to be better than others. Another finding was that because there was no formal support system,

students had to learn how to negotiate the university culture to their advantage and to use as many resources outside and within the university as were available.

Johnson-Bailey et al. (2008) conducted research on the support experiences of Black graduate students, who earned their degrees at a major southern research university from 1962 to 2003. Data pertaining to student support experiences were collected in three areas (a) student- faculty, (b) student-student, and (c) student-institution relationships. The study identified five groupings of types of support: (a) Black students, (b) Black professors, (c) self-support, (d) family, and (e) God, religion and faith. Other Black students and Black professors were found to be the most prevalent and valued form of day-to-day support. Johnson Bailey et al. reached three important conclusions. They surmised: (a) even if participants were graduates of their programs, their persistence was marked by struggles; (b) it requires more than access to guarantee equal opportunity for Blacks students, at majority white universities; (c) the findings in their study bore marked resemblance to findings from previous research on the support experiences of Black graduate students in these institutions. Consequently, this group of researchers deduced their findings to be common to Black graduate students on predominately-white university campuses.

Using Cultural and Social Capital to Negotiate Barriers to Doctoral Completion

The previous discussion of findings on: faculty-student mentoring (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999); inadequate funding (Gravois, 2007); and the lack of social support and feelings of isolation among African American doctoral students (Chance, et al., 2004; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2008, 2009; Solórzano, 2001) could be considered disturbing. This is even more of a concern in view of decades old recommendations on ways for

integrating students (beginning with their undergraduate years) in the social fabric of America's colleges and universities. For instance, Tinto (1987) in addition to identifying strong links between undergraduate students' development and the social support they receive from faculty and student peers, had also suggested universities should take steps to stem the growing tide of college students' departure from their programs. Tinto's recommendations was that colleges and universities should "help shepherd... students through the period of separation and transition to the life of the college and assist in their eventual incorporation as participating members in the communities of the college" (p. 147). However, full participation in the institution required that students first go through a cultural debriefing. Tinto recommended students move "away from the norms and behavioral patterns of past association...and [adopt] new ones appropriate to the college setting" (p. 98).

Although Vincent Tinto conducted his study with undergraduates, he strayed into the realm of doctoral education. In his post 1987 work, he fleetingly theorized on why doctoral students attrite from their programs (Tinto, 1993). Tinto argued that doctoral attrition, like undergraduate attrition, is influenced by the quality of relationship between the student and the institution. Tinto contended that doctoral students should be academically and socially integrated in their department and the discipline. While some researchers have accepted Tinto's theory for integrating students to graduate and undergraduate education, others have challenged, tested, or built on his work (Golde 2000; Grives & Wemmerus, 1988; Guiffrida, 2006; Lovitts, 2001; Tierney, 1992). Tierney, in particular, has challenged the viability and wholesale application of Tinto's integration model to students from minority ethnic groups. For instance, in his critique of

Tinto's student retention model, Tierney suggests that Tinto's strategy may work for some students but its applicability to minority students of color, who attend PWIs, is questionable. Offering an anthropological analysis of Tinto's integration model, Tierney posits that Tinto's model was framed from a social integrationist worldview, which asserts that all individuals undergo a "rite of passage" as a prerequisite for fulfillment in society. Tierney argues that Tinto's integrationist approach to schooling in higher education works from the fallacious "assumption that a uniform set of values and attitudes remain in an institution and that it is the individual's task to adapt to the system" (p. 607).

Tierney (1993) sees this approach as problematic and dysfunctional for two reasons. First, Tierney posits Tinto's developed his theory on a misinterpretation of the cultural definition of rituals. In Tierney's view, cultural rituals that are familiar to a particular culture are being used to initiate a member of another culture; oftentimes, without taking into account the cultural and historical contexts in which these rituals are initiated. Second, in schools' efforts to address the problem of students' noncompletion of their degrees, there is the danger of over reliance on a social integrative framework "that assumes an individualistic stance of human nature and rejects differences based on categories such as class, race, and gender" (p. 611). This danger of excessive dependence on social integration as a solution to the issue of degree completion is intensified when the problem of students' inability to finish their programs is, in many ways, a result of the failure of schools to acknowledge and remedy disparities from class, race, and gender. Concerns like Tierney's, present a serious interrogation of Tinto's (1987/1993) overall theory. Given that PWIs are dominated by the Eurocentric worldview, Tinto's theory may

not be beneficial to students of color as it be may be interpreted as favoring a Eurocentric assimilation/integration paradigm for students of color over the "dominant mores" of their own community. To so favor Tinto's theory, is to ignore the sociocultural context of higher education.

Guiffrida (2006) have also objected to Tinto's (1987, 1993) social integrationist approach as a means to encourage minority students' persistence at PWIs because, Guiffrida purports, it encourages students' separation from their cultural mores and the supportive relations in their home communities. Guiffrida draws on the work of Kuh and Love (2000), Rendon, Jalomo, and Nora (2000), Tierney, (1999) and others, to highlight his concerns about the integrationist framework. Guiffrida notes: the social integrationist approach, as Tinto (1987, 1993) proposed it, not only promotes the dominant norms and behaviors of American society, the approach also disregards "bicultural integration, or the ability of minority students to succeed at college while being part of both the majority and minority cultures" (p. 451). All the same, Guiffrida recognizes that a refined version of Tinto's theory, which acknowledges the need for minority students' cultural and familial connections in their education, can have significant effects on students' persistence to degree completion. Guiffrida, therefore, proposes a cultural advancement of Tinto's theory to include some of these qualities "motivational orientation…cultural norms…home social systems (i.e. teachers, parents, friends, etc.) and college social systems (i.e., peers, faculty, [and] staff)". In other words, Guiffrida, like Yosso (2005), advocates that education practitioners recognize the important relationship between minority students' cultural and social wealth and their persistence in their degree programs.

Herzig (2002) also brings a similar yet different perspective to the issue of minority students' integration in the social fabric of their institution and its relationship to doctoral completion. Herzig investigated the high attrition rate among mathematics doctoral students including the small numbers of women and minority completing the Ph.D. Herzig combined Tinto's ideas on student integration with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of learning through participation in the activity of the academic community and applied this formulation to data collected from a single case study about the interests, ideas, and experiences of 18 current and former doctoral students and their faculty members. Herzig applied the combined theories to analyzing students' reasons for leaving the program prematurely or for persisting to degree completion.

Herzig (2002) originally theorized that the application of the combined concepts, as a model for educating minority mathematics doctoral students would reveal experiences that enhanced students' participation, leading to their increased integration and persistence. Instead, Herzig found that although each student's story was unique to him or her, most had similar negative descriptions of their relationships with faculty members. Students reported that, for the most part, they were ignored; left with "little in the way of mentoring, teaching, feed back, advising, and moral support" (p. 200). Herzig also found that what differentiated the students who doubtingly remained in the program from those who made the decision to leave were the resources that students brought with them to their programs. Herzig concluded that doctoral students who were able to overcome pedagogical barriers associated with completion "were those who arrived at graduate school with particular types of cultural capital; that is, they have had experiences outside of graduate school that helped them to become integrated in the

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graduate community" (p. 197). Interestingly enough, other researchers share Herzig's conclusion. Other studies have found that the resources graduate students bring to their programs can influence their experience in the program and help facilitate the completion of their studies.

Kennebrew (2002) study on the psychosocial well being of African American graduate students in PWIs is an example of one study that addressed findings on the relationship between students' resources and students' experiences. Kennebrew found no significant relationship between social support and stress, or social support and alienation. Neither did the researcher find significant predictive relationship between spirituality and hopelessness. Kennebrew attributed her findings to African American students' access to large networks of African American friends and relatives, outside of the institution, from whom they drew their social support.

Gluckman (1967) cited in Coleman (1988) refers to such networks as "multiplex networks" (p. 108). This network (Kennebrew, 2002) acts as a buttress to the negative effects of campus stress. Therefore, even if students expressed disappointment with the institution's network of social support, their disappointment did not affect their psychological wellbeing. In addition, students knew that if they experienced race-related incidences, there was someone in their network of resources, who would help them Therefore, they were able to "process race related incidences in a manner that decreases the way in which they were affected" (p. 130).

Other scholars, through counter storytelling, have focused on "exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" as a way to counteract the overt and covert acts of racism, which students of color experience in

predominately white universities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). DeCuir and Dixson, (2004) endorses this empowering strategy. They suggest that when students of color "[tell] their stories in their own words [,] their counter-narratives allow them to contradict the Othering process" (p. 27).

<center>Educational Attainment and African American Schooling</center>

"Education is the social institution in which a culture makes its core values and vision explicit, and when there is significant tension, there must inevitably be controversy over education ideology and practice" (Miller, 2002, p. 2). Nowhere is this controversy more evident that in the literature on minority students' achievement in American schools. Research consistently shows that disadvantaged students from non-majority groups, at every level, generally have less stellar academic outcomes than White and Asian students (Steele 1997). They are: 1) academically not as prepared (Ramist, Lewis, & McCamley-Jenkins, 1994); 2) receive lower grades in school (Demo & Parker 1987); 3) have higher dropout rates (Steele, 1992), lower standardized test scores (Herring, 1989), and lower college graduation rates (Nettles, 1988); and 4) receive lower percentages of doctoral degrees (Council of Graduate Schools, 2005; Hoffer et al., 2006; Hoffer, Dugoni et al., 2001; US Census, 2000).

A review of the sizable literature on educational attainment and schooling reveals that for decades, education historians, anthropologists, sociologists, educators, educational researchers, psychiatrist, and psychologists have provided analogous and differing perspectives explaining the relationship between ethnic minority groups and their educational attainment in American schools. These explanations run the gamut from: genetics and intelligence (Jensen, 1969), to family structures (Moynihan, 1965),

through economics and politics (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Jakubowicz, 1985), to culture and language differences (Phillips, 1976), and schooling and the curriculum (McCarthy, 1990). The review also suggests perspectives on race, minority education, and schooling are generally mainstreamed into conservative, liberal, and radical camps (McCarthy, 1990; McCarthy & Apple, 1988).

Conservative View of African Americans' Academic Achievement

The conservative perspective asks us to believe minority school failure is attributable to the innate psychological and biological characteristics of this group. This theory maintains that endogenous pathological traits, more specifically, cognitive and deviant behavioral traits are transmitted intergenerationally in a self-perpetuating and intractable cycle in minority groups. For instance, Jensen (1969), using the heritability of IQ argument, contented that Blacks had less intellect abilities than Whites. Accordingly, conservatives argued African Americans cognitive inabilities were the primary cause of African Americans educational and life disadvantages. This biological deficit model was later replaced with a cultural deficit model, which portrayed the black family as culturally deprived, disorganized, and malfunctioning (Bell, 1975; Bloom, Davis & Hess, 1965; Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Moynihan, 1965).

A key contribution to the cultural deprivation model of African Americans grew out of Oscar Lewis' anthropological work, which portrayed the poor as deficient: accepting of, and contributing to their status in society. According to Lewis, the culture of poverty is characterized by hopelessness, indifference, alienation, apathy, high tolerance for pathology of all kinds, and inability to make positive contributions to the social and economic aspects of society (Lewis, 1965). Underlying Lewis analysis are the

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assumptions that the poor are predisposed to failure because of, what he assumes, are their beliefs and behaviors (Valentine, 1969; Nasir & Hand, 2006).

There are other, different accounts of the rise of the conservative view. According to Herrnstein and Murray (1994), the conservative view on minority academic achievement is a result of the convergence of three key factors: ideology, science, and public discount. Herrnstein and Murray claim the convergence was set in motion by: (a) the growing awareness about the nature of the inequalities in American society; (b) the existence of scientific data that assigned levels of intelligence based on socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds; and (c) public chagrin at the apparent failure of educational programs to address issues of poverty among minorities, in general, and blacks in particular. However, this view is not consistent across the literature.

Other explanations in the literature suggest the conservative view took shape before the War on Poverty initiative. According to Anderson (2004), the conservative view on African Americans educational attainment grew out of ideologies influenced by race and politics in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. During this period, governments at the local, state, and federal levels sanctioned policies that effectively segregated and disenfranchised Black Americans and reined (at least temporarily) the spread of public education amongst this group. Anderson notes: the responsibility to justify the de jure subordination of an entire race fell to social scientists and historians, who subsequently began a systematic effort to depict African Americans as a psychologically damaged race, "incapable and undeserving of participation in mainstream American society" (p. 36).

It should be noted that not all followers of the conservative perspective on minorities schooling subscribe to Jensen's deficit IQ doctrine or to the extremes of Moynihan's fatalistic cultural theory. On the far right of the conservative continuum, an intellectual and political movement in favor of political, economic, and social conservatism has evolved. Followers of this movement, or neo-conservatives, arose in opposition to the perceived liberalism of the 1960's. As McCarthy (1990) points out, the new conservatives offer a strategic twist to the extreme leftist conservative approach to minority schooling.

Neo-conservatives pitched their response to the minority academic achievement issue on two fronts, simultaneously attacking the traditional conservative discourse and the liberal perspective on schooling (McCarthy, 1998). On one front, proponents of the new conservative approach redirected the conservative race/education debate from one of social hegemony to a discourse on minority culture and attitude, which, they ascertain, are the precursors to minority school failure (D'Souza, 1991; Patterson, 2000; Thernstrom, 2003). On the other front, they, predominately the black neo-conservatives in academia, fought to reframe liberals' advocacy for equality in education to reflect conservative preferences for individual agency and colorblind educational policies (Steele, 1998). To illustrate, Neo-conservatives like Steele (1998) argued that the liberal approach is harmful for African Americans because it creates a sense of "black helplessness" (p. 43). Steele maintains, "Black[s] helplessness has been the raison d'etre of redemptive liberalism, the condition it was born to address, and the best justification for the demands on society" (p. 46). An advocate of Blacks agency, Steele stresses that in order for black students to perform well in school, education reformist should focus on

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setting high expectations which ultimately translate to students' engagement and will to exert ownership over his or her performance. Steele underscores his arguments with references to schools like Marva Collins, Frederick Douglas, Piney Woods, and Xavier University successes educating black students. According to Steele, three, common, defining characteristics of these institutions are their ability to empower their students to be the "agents of their own performance and [to] expect them to exercise their will in achieving excellence" (p. 92) and the schools' practice of honoring their students for their achievements.

Liberal View of African Americans' Academic Achievement

Liberal thinkers on schooling in America offer a different explanation for African Americans academic under achievement in American schools, than the conservatives. While conservatives blamed African Americans' academic status on deficit resources in their environment, proponents of the liberal perspective attributed their academic failure to differential cultural resources between Black and White Americans. Essentially, liberals adopted a cultural-style approach which "offered an alternative to the deficit model by characterizing cultural ways of different groups in ways that are respectful, attempting to describe them without making value judgments that suggest value hierarchies in cultural practices" (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003, p. 19).

One should note not all liberal thinkers attribute African Americans or other minority students' underachievement in school to differences in group culture. McCarthy (1990) suggests some liberal theorists perceive minority students' under achievement in schools in the broader social context. Some liberals argue that African American students' school failure is due to race-based prejudicial practices by White Americans

and not to cultural factors. Taking this argument further, some liberals contend that these practices not only affect African American students' educational opportunities, they also influence African Americans' access to employment opportunities.

As mentioned earlier, the liberal ideology on education originated with America's historians and social scientists (Anderson, 2004). Given its origins, any review of the liberal perspective on African Americans' education will be incomplete without a review of the liberal ideology on education from the historical and anthropological literature.

Historian, James A. Anderson, identifies the liberal view on African American educational attainment as a product of the latter part of the early twentieth century – in step with the end of the Jim Crow era and the post *Brown v. Board of Education* 1954 decision (Anderson 2004). Anderson suggests that the liberal ideology was strategically conceived to win the *Brown v. Board of Education* case on racial discrimination and constitutional equality in schools. To win this strategic ploy meant that proponents of the liberal perspective had to raise the specter of African Americans "damaged psyche". However, Anderson notes that unlike the conservatives, liberals were careful to blame African Americans' psychological damage on the experiences of slavery and racial segregation and not on African Americans genes. The liberal argument was that the experiences of slavery "produced damaging results...on African American[s'] personality, in general, and self-esteem, in particular" (p. 361). By using this strategy, Anderson alleges liberals hoped to achieve two goals: (a) to counter theories that support "scientific racism" and in the process, dispel the conservative notion that African Americans were cognitively inferior; and (b) to argue for polices that favor "inclusion and rehabilitation" for African Americans (p. 361). Anderson suggests that the framers of the liberal

ideology felt their strategy was justified because, as they reasoned, any psychological damage African Americans experienced was a direct result of the deleterious effects of slavery.

Hence, the liberal ideology on schooling was heavily influenced by historical perspectives of Blacks in America. Woodson (1993) acknowledges this relationship and suggests an understanding of African American status in education begs for an understanding of the historiography of African Americans in the U. S. The works of African American historians of culture and identity and African American historians of education were, for this reason, crucial to the framers of the liberal ideology because as Anderson (2004, p. 365) notes, "cultural histories of African Americans education document [their] educational norms and values."

Another source of liberal influence on African Americans' education was northern white benevolent societies and denominational bodies (Anderson, 1988; Woodson, 1993). According to Anderson's historical account of the education of blacks in the south, these groups of missionary philanthropists were among the most ardent supporters of higher education for blacks. They believed that if Blacks were to attain social justice they should be college-educated. These liberal philanthropists considered it their moral duty to educate blacks, so that they can, in turn, educate the masses. However, as Lynn (2006) argues black education was not intended to liberate Blacks, rather "the intent of schools and schooling practices…has always been to serve and further support the unequal system of privileges conferred upon whites" (p.116).

Drawing on Anderson's perspectives, Black leadership and Black education meant training in the type of curriculum that would introduce Blacks to Eurocentric

norms and values (Anderson 1988). Lynn (2006) takes it a step further and suggests that Eurocentric and patriarchal schools ensured the continuance of white domination. Anderson suggests that the "paternalistic tendencies to make unilateral decision regarding the educational needs of blacks" resembled a form of "principled liberalism" (p. 241). He charged that the fervent liberal supporters of Blacks' education were liberal only as it relates to civil and political issues; on cultural, religious, and economic matters they were just as fervent except they were conservatively so. Borrowing from Fredrickson (1987) and Gutman (1977), Anderson essentially argues that the ideology of liberal supporters of Black Americans education were more akin to that of "conservative retrogressionist ideologies...[which] supported the advocacy of various forms of control over blacks, including disfranchisement and increasingly rigorous legal segregation" (p. 242).

However, Crenshaw (1988) reminds us "history has shown that the most valuable political asset of the Black community has been its ability to assert a collective identity and to name its collective political reality (p. 1326). History is thus the touchstone, a sort of litmus test, against which perspectives on African Americans' stance on education should be measured. Guided by these perspectives, it becomes appropriate to ask the literature for a "historical accounting" of African Americans' approach to education, based on the lived experiences of African Americans.

African Americans Perspective on African Americans' Approach to Education

In his essay on *The Historical Context for Understanding the Test Score Gap,* Anderson (2007) chronicles the academic achievement patterns of generations of African American students. Beginning with the Literacy Gap in the 1800s, Anderson traces African American students' progression in closing gaps in literacy, elementary school

attendance, high school completion, and college graduation. Anderson's primary goal was to show that "the history of African Americans' education in the south and the nation is a remarkable record of overcoming one achievement after another, each succeeding generation building on the strengths and possibilities created by the previous generation" (p. 2). By tracing the progress of African Americans from the 1800s when African Americans were 90 % illiterate and Whites were 90% literate, Anderson asserts that even in the face of overwhelming odds, African Americans placed a high value on education. Against: (a) the constraints of slavery; (b) massive resistance to the spread of literacy during the Ante-bellum period; (c) the passage of restrictive laws to suppress Black public education; and (d) the machinery of discriminatory funding that favored white schools above Black schools, African Americans fought to educate themselves.

There is substantial literature that aims to dispel, as myth, the notion that African Americans do not value education and to replace it with the assertion that for African Americans, education is "a highly valued affair" (Guy, 2002, p. 89). In fact, Anderson (2004), and other historians, Cornelius (1991) and Webber (1978) suggest Blacks in the Reconstruction era viewed education as a means of resistance and a mechanism for freedom from oppression. In a study on southern black literacy and education in the antebellum era, African American historian, Janet Cornelius, surmised that African Americans had an unshakeable faith in education and suggested it was " instilled deep within ... the consciousness" (p. 150).

Franklin (2002) notes that the desire for literacy and formal education was part of African Americans cultural value system. Thus, when African Americans were barred from educational institutions, they turned to the self-help tradition to change their

situation. They organized their communities to support their own educational institutions. Franklin observes, in addition to paying double taxation through deeds of land, equipment, and contributions of money to the state, African Americans offered their services and built their own schools (Breaux, 2002; Randolph, 2002; Savage, 2002; Span, 2002). Furthermore, Williams (2002) explains, when all else failed African Americans exhorted northern missionary organizations to send trained teachers to assist in their education; and "exhibited their desire to have access to the books and literacy skills previously denied them by law" (p. 372).

While some scholars have argued against the perception that African Americans are anti-education, other scholars have addressed the consequences of the under achievement debate for African Americans and other minority students. They argue that emphasis on comparisons of academic achievement between African Americans and White students served to denigrate the competencies and achievements of African American students (Foster, 2004) and sabotage the natural inclination for change that exists among minority groups (Anderson, 2007). Still others in the literature contend that attempts to focus on the negative aspects of African American students' achievement are, in essence, attempts to disregard the deep-seated inequities that created the educational "gaps" between America's students (Lynn, 2006).

Understanding the links between minority groups' academic achievement and schooling is also a core issue in the field of educational anthropology (Erickson, 1987; Foley, 1991; Foster, 2004; Gibson, 1991; Phillips, 1982; Hamann, 2004). Some of the most notable contributions to research in this area come out of social anthropologist, John Ogbu's work on minority groups' academic performance (Ogbu, 1974, 1978, 1985, 1986,

2003). Arguing against negative stereotyping, cultural deprivation, and genetic deficiency theories, Ogbu offered a cultural ecological explanation of African Americans academic achievement. He contended that because African Americans did not choose to become members of the society and were undeservedly and systematically excluded from the political, social, and economic advantages available to dominant groups; African American youths developed an oppositional response to White Americans and to the institutions, like schools, which Whites control (Ogbu 1981). This oppositional frame of reference was further instilled through "fictive kinship", the sense of loyalty and obligation among members within the African American community (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Ogbu's insights on minority students' achievement, if nothing else, are controversial (Erickson 1987; Foley, 1991; Foster 2004, Gibson, 1987; Hamann, 2004 Phillips, 1982). For example, Erickson (1987) challenges the empirical validity in Ogbu's theory because of what he sees as Ogbu's inability to demonstrate the causal linkages in his model. He argues that although Ogbu's theory may explain why some domestic minority students are not successful in school, it does not provide an explanation for the success of some students, who are also domestic minority students. In addition, Erickson argues that Ogbu's case studies fail to show how immigrant minority students will perform in less or more culturally sensitive learning environment that the environments they experience in U.S. schools. Moreover, he contends that Ogbu presents a "determinist argument" in which "there is no room for human agency" (p. 343).

Other scholars in the field of anthropology take a somewhat different view of Ogbu's theory on minority school failure. For example, Hamann (2004) argues that

Ogbu's work was theoretically flawed but admitted that his work was important for educational research. Taking an opposing position to Ogbu's theory on African Americans approach to schooling, Hamann points out that Ogbu's theory reveals that:

> 1) Disadvantaged students (as judged by outcome) nonetheless have agency, 2) that their exercise of that agency can be a scathing critique of racist and otherwise unequal society (which relocates the genesis of the problem), and (3) that righting what currently is not working is a multi-party effort and includes considering how those for whom the system is not working can change their practices. (pp. 407- 408)

Scholars from other fields have also countered the deficit literature on African American students' performance in schools. Studies conducted by social psychologist, Claude Steele, found that negative assumptions about Blacks' intellect create situations that cause Blacks to feel threatened (Steele, 1995, 1997, 2003), even if the assumptions are unfounded. Steele notes that even if an individual do not believe the negative assumptions, as long as the theory applies to the situation, the threat becomes very real, creating a "self-fulfilling prophecy" about him or her. Steele explains that stereotyped individuals' "susceptibility to this threat [stereotyping] derives not from internal doubts about their ability (e.g. their internalization of the stereotype) but from their identification with the domain and the resulting concern they have about being stereotyped" (Steele 1997). Steele found that when Black students in his study were told the test was a measure of ability (e.g. verbal ability) their performance was lower than when they were not given that information. He concluded that the fear that they were viewed through negative lens caused Blacks to test low on standardized tests. Building on his findings, Steele theorized that the achievement gap between Black students and their White counterparts is a result of Blacks' reaction to their fear of "stereotype threat" (p. 614).

Radical View on Ethnic Minorities Schooling

Radical educators and theorists, many of whom are sociologists, contend that the conservative and the liberal arguments about minority school failure are fallacious. Offering instead what they perceive as a more accurate assessment, education radical theorists shifted the "blame" of iniquitous schooling to the relationship between schools and the economy. In the radical theorist world, the prevailing economic system dominates and shapes the educational system (Watkins, 2001). They also contend that the politics associated with socioeconomic inequities and structural indifferences characterized by the competition and individualism endemic of Capitalist societies, are largely responsible for school failure (Carew, 1984, as cited in McCarthy, 1990).

These concerns over the incongruity between educational goals and schools' function in "the maintenance and reproduction of the economy" were the prevailing concerns in the early radical literature on American education (McCarthy, 1990, p. 58). To quote McCarthy, evidence of these perspectives is apparent in Carnoy's (1972) *Schooling in a Corporate Society* in which Carnoy criticized schools for the way schools prepared students for the corporate "industrial machine" (p. xi). Carnoy contends students are socialized to cooperate and to fit the mold that corporations specify for them.

Of these early radical perspective, Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1977) is perhaps the most highly debated as it embodies well, the argument presented by the radical camp. Bowles and Gintis addressed several issues pertinent to both elementary schooling and schooling in higher education. They argue: 1) that students' socialization is an important indicator of their future economic success; 2) genetic inheritance of cognitive skills plays only a minor role in students' cognition; 3) and the economic advantages of high society

families from the dominate race, contribute more to their success than the education they received. Building on these perspectives, Bowles and Gintis concluded that students in U.S schools are not only sorted and stratified into two groups based on race and class, they are also socialized to fit specific, prescribed molds.

This socialization process according to Oakes (1992) prepares students to "assume the roles that are expected of them in society and to meet the demands of the different occupations they are expected to assume within the existing class structure" (p. 198). Oakes (1982) took their analysis one step further. They contend that Bowles and Gintis' theory of how students are socialized is played out in the "social relations and interaction in classrooms" (p. 194). Oakes explains: schools replicate the kind of social relations and interactions that occur in the workplace, in the classroom. In this way, schools prepare students who can adapt easily to institutionalized norms. This method of education results in two groups of students with different educational experiences and futures. One group feels a sense of alienation and disempowerment; the other group feels empowered, included, and engaged.

Arguably, Bowles and Gintis' work spawned a whole generation of work on the "political economy of education and hidden curriculum.... and put class at the very center of cultural discourse (Apple, 1988b, p. 232). Nevertheless, Apple reflected that Bowles and Gintis' work showed three critical failings. Bowles and Gintis failed to: 1) clarify how their theory evolved, 2) show that they understood schools' role in reproducing the social division of labor, and 3) explain why it was that people accept sorting and selecting. In other words, like Ogbu (1981), Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1977) failed to show causal relations in their theorizing.

Apple is not alone in his criticisms. Other scholars have also commented on Bowles ands Gintis' (1976, 1977) theory on schooling. Swartz (2003) contends that Bowles and Gintis' radical arguments are the hallmarks of functionalists. McCarthy (1990) observed, by analyzing schooling from the position of how economic activities in the society influenced how schools structure education, without a corresponding analysis of how schools "contribute to the nature of social life and social relation", Bowles and Gintis lost the opportunity to spotlight schools' economic, as well as their political and cultural impact (p. 60). However, to Bowles and Gintis' credit their position has changed somewhat as evidenced in their own analysis of their previous work (Bowles & Gintis, 2001, 2003).

Similar to the Bowles and Gintis' change in their position on school failure, the early radicals' capitalist-economic explanation for school failure experienced an evolution over time. Beginning with the late seventies, the radical perspective shifted towards a more culturalist approach to schooling (McCarthy, 1990). Critics like Anyon (1979), Giroux (1981), Wexler (1982), and Apple (1979) and others, contend that the philosophical underpinnings and processes in schools were relatively independent of the society's economic system. Influenced by the Bourdieuan school of thought, these critics argued that the "inner workings" of schools contributed more to disparities between the minority and majority students than did economic influences in society.

Continuing the tradition of change in perspectives on American schooling, radical theorists of the 1980s responded to challenges from feminists, race theorists, and the politics of a rising populist movement among diverse marginalized groups. The "new" radical perspective on schooling was a marked departure from the economic and cultural

reproduction perspectives of earlier years (Apple 1988; Dale, 1992; Wexler, 1987).

Radical theorists of the 1980s posited that even if the reproduction idea figured

prominently in the analysis of the relationship of schools and the economy the theory,

nonetheless, disadvantaged minority groups. Radical theorists claimed the idea of schools

reproducing one's culture "subordinated the *agency* [italics added] of school actors" to a

larger force. Instead, they argued that the role of schools, in the society-school dyad, was

more consistent with the role of a mediator (McCarthy, 1990, pp. 63-64).

Understanding how the under achievement of African Americans and other

minority students came to be packaged and sold, as a problem, is a much-researched issue

in the literature on the sociology of education. In the final section of this review, I will

discuss the theoretical works that support a framework for such understanding. I begin

with sociocultural theory, foregrounding some core characteristics of the theory. Next, I

examine the literature on cultural and social capital. Finally, I discuss the literature on

critical race theory (CRT).

<div align="center">Theoretical Foundations in the Literature</div>

This section of the chapter addresses the different works in the literature on the theories

that inform this study. The theories are sociocultural theory, social and cultural capital

theory, and critical race theory. The review begins with the literature on sociocultural

theory.

Sociocultural Perspectives on Learning

Sociocultural theories on learning and development have their beginnings with

Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. Drawing from his work in the early 1900s on the

psychology of art, language and thought, and learning and development, he conceived the

idea that learning, at its core, is a social activity (Vygotsky, 1978). Although Vygotsky's theory on learning was developed from his work with children, Wang (2006) suggests the concept of learning as a relationship between the individual and the environment—the "outside and the inside, the social and the cognitive process"— is also pertinent to learning in adults (p. 151). This idea of learning as a social event has, as its source, the underlying assumption that "human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). In other words, learning is situational and is not restricted by real time, place, or circumstance (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Nasir and Hand (2006) is more explicit; they explain that learning encompasses the individual, institution, cultural, social, and the historical.

Sociocultural theory originated with Vygotsky, but it also includes theories on learning and development from other theorists (Lave, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1986; Wenger, 1998, 1999; Wertsch, 1991). Subsequently, there are theoretical approaches to learning and development that are common to the various theories. The literature reveals increasing applications of these theories to research that seeks to understand learning in the context of culture as for example, Alfred (2003). However, Nasir and Hand (2004) suggest that while sociocultural theory is adequate for analyses of learning and development from a cultural point of view, it "rarely addresses the political nature of culture" or explicitly promotes approaches for greater discernment of the links between race and learning or learning and ethnic minority students (p. 463). Building on their insights, Nasir and Hand (2004) synthesize the literature on race, culture, and learning and explore the different ways that

sociocultural theory "could potentially be used to offer fresh perspectives on issues of race, culture and schooling" (p. 459). The authors suggest four levels of analysis of sociocultural theory, which can serve to extend research on the interrelationship among race, culture, learning, and school achievement. The four levels are:

1. Development occurs on multiple levels simultaneously (moment -to-moment, changes in learning and development; change over months and years; and change over historical and phylogentic time).
2. Cultural practices are an important unit of analysis for understanding developmental processes.
3. Cultural tools and artifacts (including ideational or symbolic artifacts) fundamentally influence learning and development and are mediators of psychological processes.
4. Social others and social interactional processes play a key role in learning and development, and learning is constituted by changing relations in these social relationships and the social world. (pp. 458-459)

In essence, Nasir and Hand (2004) recommend the application of sociocultural theory to research concerned with development at multiple levels and as a unit of analysis for understanding developmental processes. They also recommend sociocultural theory for research on three other situations: (1) the role of cultural tools and artifacts in learning, development, and meaning-making; (2) the influences of social others in development and learning, and (3) understanding how learning is supported through changing relations in social interactions and the social world. The authors suggest that in order for educational institutions to make substantial education reform for adult learners in historically marginalized groups, educational institutions need a better understanding of the interdependence between the individual and social processes.

John-Steiner and Mahn, (1996) make a similar connection between the individual and the society. In fact, the authors acknowledge that the significance of Vygotsky's theory on learning and development is in his explanation about the reciprocal reliance of

persons and social systems**.** The authors posit that Vygotsky's explanations paved the way for a shift in thinking from the cognitive (Piaget, 1970) and behavioral approaches to development (Pavlov, 1960; Skinner, 1974) to a reconceptualization of development "*as the transformation of socially shared activities into internalized process*es [emphasis in original]" (p. 192). Kirshner and Whitson (1997) suggest the cognitive and behaviorist approaches restrict "opportunity to explore learning and knowledge as processes that occur in a local, subjective, and socially constructed world" (p. vii). Sociocultural approach to learning, on the other hand, takes an alternate route. It attempts to expand these opportunities by addressing the issues of how "cultures reproduce themselves across generational boundaries" (p. 5).

Redefining Capital as a Sociological and Relational Concept

In educational research, the juxtaposition of social and cultural competencies with the concept of "capital" has been a long-standing model for understanding the capacity of educational institutions to impose standards of evaluations on the different forms of knowledge and competence that students bring to the educational process (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). In the literature, the term "capital" has both material and non-material connotations (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2003). The association of the term with material (i.e. physical and financial) assets is well discussed in Karl Marx's work. As Svendsen & Svendsen point out, in the classic Marxian analysis, capital is viewed from a "macro-economic, historical, and one-dimensional" perspective (p. 608). Marx's analysis of capital as exchange of goods and services and the production of profits gave little recognition to the micro-sociological and relational aspects of capital (Farr, 2004; Fine, 2007; Portes, 1998).

However, with the publication of *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu (1986) transposed the notion of capital from an economic to a social field (Swartz, 2004) and expanded the original definition of the term "capital" to include both material and non-material assets. This expanded understanding of capital, according to Svendsen & Svendsen (2003), draws from two branches of learning—economics and social science—and cemented the idea of a marriage between capital and hitherto symbolic, abstract forms of culture and social relations. Thus, Bourdieu reframed the notion of capital from Marx's original conceptualization to an understanding that includes other forms of assets beside material assets; namely, social and cultural assets. Drawing on this understanding, Bourdieu defines capital as "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth worthy of being sought and possessed" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 488, cited in DiMaggio, 1982, p. 578). Thus, the relationship was formed and the linkage between symbolic forms of wealth and the concept of capital is most often identified with Bourdieu's work.

Defining Social and Cultural Capital in the Literature

Bourdieu & Passeron (1970, 1990) developed and used the cultural capital concept mostly in their research on the sociology of education and the role taste or cultural competence plays in legitimizing social disparities. However, subsequent to its Bourdieuan origin, both concepts, cultural and social, have taken divergent and circuitous paths in the education research literature (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Nanton, 2009; Coleman, 1988; Franklin, 2002; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Portes, 1998; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Sullivan, 2001; Valentine, 1969; Yosso, 2005). As the cultural literature has accumulated, descriptions of applications of the concepts in the literature are coached in dichotomous terms like "dominant interpretations" and "Bourdieu's own

conception" (Lareau & Weininger, p. 577) versus "traditional" (Yosso, p. 77) and

"Bourdieu's own operationalisation" (Sullivan, p. 896). The delineation between

Bourdieu's conceptualization and other scholars' interpretations of both the social and

cultural concepts have yielded a plethora of definitions and applications and their

subsequent categorization into two camps, Bourdieu's interpretation *and* the dominant

interpretation.

In a critical assessment of the application of cultural capital in the educational

literature, Lareau and Weininger (2003) argue that two key assumptions support the

dominant interpretation of cultural capital. The first assumption is that cultural capital is

synonymous with knowledge of, or competency with, highbrow culture such as fine

wine, classical music, art, and painting (DeGraaf, DeGraaf & Kraaykamp, 2000;

Dimaggio, 1982; Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Kastilis & Robinson, 1990; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp,

1996; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Second, cultural capital is distinct from

other forms of human capital and technical skills in that it can be attributed to other

sources and analyzed differently (Dumais, 2002; Ganzeboom, DeGraaf & Robert, 1990).

Lareau and Weininger (2003) maintain that neither of these premises fit with Bourdieu's

premises on cultural capital and demonstrate a misunderstanding of the core assumptions

in Bourdieu's original concept.

Rejecting both the high status and the distinction between cultural capital and

other forms of human capital interpretations by other researchers in the literature, Lareau

and Weininger (2003) situate the core assumption in Bourdieu's conceptualization of

cultural capital in the role that schools play in the reproduction of cultural capital. Lareau

and Weininger maintain that in Bourdieu's view, even if high status lifestyles are

characteristic of the lifestyles of the dominant class in society, it is improbable that access to these lifestyles, in of itself, is the primary reason for the advantages some students receive in the educational system. On the contrary, they argue that Bourdieu suggests the advantages available to the dominant class were a result of schools' reproduction of cultural capital. Because schools set the criteria for school membership and value students based on students' ability to adhere to the norms of the system, schools can facilitate or hinder students' access and social mobility through schools. Furthermore, Lareau and Weininger (2003) add that the misappropriation of the cultural capital concept results in studies that limit the real meaning of cultural capital. These studies (DeGraaf, DeGraaf & Kraaykamp, 2000; Dimaggio, 1982; Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Kastilis & Robinson, 1990; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), measure whether students' levels of participation in highbrow lifestyles (i.e. theater, art, books, etc.) predict educational outcomes. Besides, Lareau and Weininger contend, introducing the idea of intellectual elites into Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital pointlessly restrict the conditions for cultural capital research. Based on what they perceive as both deficiencies and limitations in the use of the theory in the literature, Lareau and Weininger (2003) advocates for a broader comprehension and application of the concept. They recommend that cultural capital studies should focus on the "micro-political interactional processes through which individuals comply (or fail to comply) with the evaluative standards of dominant institutions such as schools" (p. 568).

Lareau and Weininger's (2003) recommendations have been heeded in the literature. Recent applications of the cultural capital theory in educational research reveal reconceptualization of the cultural capital concept (Franklin, 2002, Gonzalez & Moll,

2002; Yosso, 2005) that locates people of color in more affirming positions by being cognizant of how issues of racism and inequality serve to favor the knowledge and ways of one group over another.

Drawing from the extensive literature on Chicana/os studies and critical race theory in education, Yosso (2005) advances a broader interpretation than the traditional interpretation on Bourdieu cultural theory. Viewed from a CRT perspective, Yosso conceptualizes cultural capital in Communities of Color as a range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts including: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital. Yosso cautions that while these forms of capital are not "mutually exclusive or static"; they nevertheless represent forms of capital that nurture the strengths or "cultural wealth" of people of color (p. 77). Drawing from the literature, Yosso describes aspirational capital as a commitment to persevere in spite of barriers. Linguistic capital includes intellectual and social skill acquired through communication. This form of capital emphasizes the connection between history and traditional forms of communication. Familial capital stresses obligation and connection to community and includes an expanded definition of family to include "family members" acquired through fictive kinships. Navigational capital pertains to skills that facilitate strategic movement through social institutions. It acknowledges issues of resiliency, individual agency and draws from the benefits of social networks. Resistant capital refers to the knowledge and skills that are cultivated through opposition to inequities. This cultural capital draws on the tradition in communities of color to "challenge the status quo" (p. 81). Yosso considers social capital, the last of the six forms of cultural capital, as a component of cultural capital. She defines it as "networks of people and community resources" ... [that]

provide instrumental and community support to navigate through society's institutions"
(p. 79).

Social Capital

There are other accounts of social capital in the literature. According to Portes (1998, p. 2), social capital "call [sic] attention to how such nonmonetary forms [of capital] can be important sources of power and influence." Billed as a "sister concept" to cultural capital (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 568), Pierre Bourdieu systematically developed the concept of social capital. He defined the term as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu 1985, p. 248). Unpackaging Bourdieu's definition, Portes emphasizes that Bourdieu's application of the concept focuses on how individuals strategically use their group membership status and its networks of benefits to create social resources, which are then accessed by group members to aid in the accumulation of economic capital.

Post Bourdieu's development of the social capital concept, several path-breaking analyses of social capital have emerged in the literature (Baker, 1990; Ben-Porath, 1980; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Granovetter, 1985; Lin, 1999, 2001; Loury, 1977; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Putnam, 1993; Schiff, 1992). Following a pattern similar to the cultural capital concept, the social capital concept has experienced what Portes (1998) refers to as a "conceptual stretch" from its original application as "a property of individuals and families to a feature of communities, cities, and even nations (p. 3).

One early application of social capital is found in Loury's (1977) critique of the neoclassical explanation of persistent inequality between individuals and social groups.

Loury maintains that neoclassical explanation placed too much emphasis on individual human capital as the solution to economic inequalities. Furthermore, he discounts as fallacy the belief that equal opportunities are available for everyone. He supports his argument by drawing on the notion of intergenerational transmission of racial income inequalities. Loury posits that social context oftentimes overwhelm individual competency and overcoming that barrier may entail the combined efforts of more than one individual.

Following Loury (1977), Coleman (1988) attempts to analyze the role of social capital in the creation of human capital. Like Loury, Coleman maintains that human capital theory is limited in that it places a much too narrow focus on the individual and argues in favor of using social capital as a means to achieve established goals. However, Coleman contends that social capital is a "cultivated" resource, available only through rational action on the part of actors. This resource cannot be defined by one function or by one entity; instead, it is a combination of different functions and entities. The convergence of these factors makes it possible to achieve certain ends that ordinarily would not have been possible.

According to Coleman, the ability to obtain social capital based on membership in a group is separate and distinct from the resources themselves. Social capital becomes a resource when it is "activated" because social capital "inheres in the structure of the relations between actors and among actors" (p. S98). Furthermore, social capital is specific to the activity. One form of capital cannot be substituted for another.

Another distinguishing characteristic of social capital is its value to individuals in achieving their interests (Coleman, 1988). Coleman suggest that by identifying first the

function, then its value to the desired outcome, individuals within a social structure are then able to determine which elements of that form of social capital is useful for their purpose. Coleman investigates what constitutes capital in social relation and identifies three forms of capital: (a) obligations, expectations and trustworthiness of structures; (b) information channels; (c) and norms and effective sanctions. He suggests that for the first of these forms of social capital to exist, all three elements must be present; obligations without trustworthiness would mean that members' expectations would not be met.

Yet, another important characteristic of social capital is the presence of information channels (Alfred, 2009, Alfred & Nanton, 2009; Nanton, 2009; Ojo, 2009; Roberts & Plakhotnik, 2009). In the case of information channels, group members can draw from other members' knowledge to facilitate their own actions. The final of these three forms of social capital can have both positive and negative effects depending on whether they are used to reward selfless or show disapproval for selfish actions among group members. Another important element of this form of capital is that it usually benefits those responsible for establishing them; either way, researchers like Coleman (1988), Alfred, Nanton, Ojo, and others deem them necessary for the public good.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory in education is the progeny of the failure of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) to sufficiently address issues about the effects of race and racism in U.S. law and the efforts of scholars in education to address "questions about who benefits from the production and consumption of certain kinds of knowledge" (Bartlett, Mckinley, Brayboy, 2006: p. 366; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Solorzano and Yosso (1998) identify CRT in education as "a framework or set of basic perspectives,

methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position and subordination of students" (p. 42).

Drawing on the work of other education scholars, Bartlett, Mckinley, and Brayboy (2006) identify five themes that characterize the CRT approach. Critical race theory concedes racism is an integral part of the educational experiences of people of color in educational institutions and its existence is so deeply rooted in society's consciousness, it is oftentimes indiscernible (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT challenges the status quo and expresses skepticism with liberal claims of colorblindness, meritocracy, and satisfaction with social and political gradualism (Delgado & Stefancie, 2000; Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings 1999; Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, & Lynn, 2004). CRT recognizes the relationship between race and racism and other forms of gender and class discrimination (Solorzano, 1998) and acknowledges the centrality of lived experiences in knowledge creation. CRT values narratives as prime, rich resources of data (Solorzano & Yosso, 2000) and works towards the goal of social justice, liberation, and transformation from all forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

One of the underlying premises of CRT is the recognition that "voice" holds a favorable position in CRT research and consequently, the experiential knowledge of peoples of color have added value (Crenshaw 1989, Matsuda, 1995). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) nevertheless cautions against a singular view of the experiences of people of color. Citing Delgado (1990), Dixson and Rousseau explain the commonality in the stories of those who have experienced discriminatory practices lies in the *shared*

experiences of racism from which their stories emanate, not in the stories themselves. In other words, the experience of racism and not the story itself is the common thread.

Delgado (1989) calls attention to the dual importance of voice and stories in research from a CRT perspective. White privilege allows the dominant group to create accounts that facilitate racial stereotyping of people of color (Matsuda, 1995) and to justify the "normativity of whiteness" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 29). Through story telling, people of color interrogate, challenge dominant privileged discourse, and "cast doubts on the validity of accepted premises and myths" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001: p. 144; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Yosso (2002) points out that counter-stories take different forms and is told by different story tellers. For example, the individual who had the experience, someone who knows of another person's experience (other peoples' stories) or knows of a combination of stories of diverse people can relate these stories.

Summary of the Literature

In doctoral education, many factors are credited for students' completion of their degrees and just as many factors bear the responsibility for its non-completion. This literature review adds empirical support to the discussion about the sociocultural factors that contribute to successful completion of doctoral programs by African Americans in institutions of higher education. The review validates the rationale for the study by looking at doctoral education in context. First, it establishes the importance of the doctorate for the economic, technological, social, and scientific needs of the nation and thus, makes the argument that the education of marginalized groups in the United States, at the doctoral level, is a practical, intellectual, social, and moral issue (WW, 2005a, 2005b). Even so, it simultaneously acknowledges a disparity in representation of African Americans doctorates

in the society. It also draws our attention to the large numbers of African Americans who experience difficulties gaining access to doctoral programs, even while they face significant challenges persisting to the completion of their degrees (Hoffer et al., 2006, U.S. Census, 2000; Thurgood et al., 2006).

The literature on the education of African Americans in doctoral programs points to racism, negative social experiences, culturally irrelevant mentoring, and inadequate financing as some principal factors for the challenges African American students face on the campuses of predominately white institutions. However, failure to complete the degree is not a microcosmic phenomenon that can be explained by any one set of factors. Thus, the broader literature on ideologies on schooling, specifically the literature that pertains to the education of African Americans, is included in the discussion. Multiple perspectives on Black Americans' approach to education from conservative, liberal, and radical theorists on schooling, African American historians, social scientists, anthropologists, and psychologists extend the discussion to social, cultural, and historical fronts. These perspectives serve to refocus the debate from a deficit-based discussion of African Americans non-completion of the degree to asset-based discussions of the factors that influence degree completion.

Literature from theoreticians on doctoral completion attributes African Americans' underrepresentation in doctoral programs and among the nations' doctorates to a host of theories and ideologies and provides strategies and recommendations to address the issue. However, as the discussion reveals, the experiences and voices of those who are most affected were generally not a part of the theorizing or strategizing. Alternative literature from researchers of color asserts that African Americans and other

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peoples of color tell different stories – counterstories about their experiences (Anderson 2004, 1998; Azualada, 1989; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Chance, Ginsberg, Davies, & Smith, 2004; Cornelius, 1991; Crenshaw, 1988; Foster, 2004; Franklin, 2002; Hamann, 2004; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2008, 2009; Kennebrew, 2002; Lynn, 2006; See, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, Yosso, 2000; Steele, 1995, 1997, 2003; Tierney, 1999; Williams, 2002; Yosso, 2005).

In the face of historical opposition, through research that focuses on the resilient strengths of African Americans, these researchers and others are forging different perspectives. See (1998) suggests, and I concur, that research on African Americans should draw from theoretical assumptions that are relevant to the lives and experiences of marginalized people of color; taking the "stripes" that apply and weaving them into a new theoretical quilt. Applications of sociocultural theory, social and cultural capital theory, and critical race theory in the literature have shown that these theories are grounded in premises that authenticate and reinforce African Americans experiences. Specifically, the sociocultural theories on learning and cultural and social capital theories present explanations for how African American doctoral students learned the labyrinth of academia to persist to degree completion, and the wealth of resources that influenced their completion. Critical race theory in education provides the platform from which to articulate research that seeks to address issues of marginalization, exclusion, and omission in doctoral education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To better comprehend the broader issue of doctoral completion among African

Americans, this study sought to understand the sociocultural and programmatic factors that

contributed to the successful completion of doctoral programs by African Americans at

predominately white institutions of higher education. The research questions that guided

this study were:

1. What were the social and cultural deterrents to African America doctoral

   students completing their degrees?

2. What programmatic resources were identified as shaping, or affecting,

   their doctoral studies?

3. What social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their

   degrees?

4. How did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal

   with the deterrents to degree completion?

This chapter describes the methodology for this qualitative study. I organized the

chapter into three main sections. In the first section, I included a discussion of the study's

theoretical framework. Here, I describe important theories guiding the research.

Following the theoretical framework is a description of the design of the study, the

methodological decisions I made to conduct the study, and the steps I took to ensure its

validity. In the final section, I explicate my biases and personal assumptions and reasons for conducting this particular study.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

The study's theoretical frame drew from three theoretical perspectives—sociocultural, cultural and social capital, and critical race theory. Identifying a relevant theoretical framework for this study involved choosing theories that are appropriate for researching Black experiences, extracting usable parts, and integrating them into a coherent cultural-sensitive frame that informs the study (See, 1998).

Sociocultural approaches to learning and development cover a range of applications. However, it was Rogoff's (1995) reconceptualization of the theory that was most applicable to this study. Rogoff views learning and development as occurring on three planes—the personal, interpersonal and community/institutional: each of which mediate and influence the other. The key feature of this theory is that all three processes are necessary for the full functioning of the whole. The theory is applicable to the study from the standpoint that students' learning experiences lie in the interrelationship between cognition, relationship with others, and the community and institutional structures in which they interact.

Although social and cultural capital theory has many conceptualizations in the education literature, the theory emerged from Bourdieu and Passeron's (1970, 1990) work. The theory focuses on the non-material resources: competencies, skills, abilities, attitudes knowledge, etc. that students bring to their education. Parts of the theory relevant to this study are the assumptions that: 1) individuals are endowed with varying levels and kinds of cultural resources, which, if used vigorously and appropriately, can

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lead to generational upward mobility; 2) agency is a key element in cultural capital's utility; 3) schools play a pivotal role in reproducing and in determining which, and whose cultural capital leads to school success or school failure; and 4) the ability to secure and use resources is a result of one's access to social networks.

Critical race theory (CRT) in education has its origins in theoretical assumptions specifically related to issues concerning race, racism, and oppression. In this respect, CRT in education offers a germane framework for research on doctoral completion among minority racial groups, especially African Americans in HWIs. CRT in education: 1) recognizes the centrality of race and its defining presence in the experiences of people of color and refuses to accept race, class, and gender differences as excuses for oppression; 2) categorically challenges the authenticity of meritocracy; 3) openly challenges the dominant thinking that educational systems proffers equal opportunity to all students; 4) legitimizes the experiential knowledge of people of color; 5) and advocates for the use of interdisciplinary methods in the analyses of race in both historical and contemporary contexts; and 6) supports an avid commitment to social justice in education (Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda, 1995; Tejeda, Martinez, & Leonardo, 2000; Yosso, 2005). A CRT frame aligns with this study because it pushes us to a new, different place for thinking about, understanding, advocating for, and articulating the strengths that African American students bring to doctoral education.

Given the disparity in completion rates between African American doctoral students and other racial groups in the society, the sociocultural school of thought, social and cultural capital, and critical race theory offer a relevant frame to examine the social

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and cultural factors that allow this group of student to navigate the academic environment to complete the degree.

Design of the Study

For this study, I used a qualitative research design. Maxwell (1985) explains that "designs" in qualitative research paradigms evolve from a "flexible, non-sequential approach" to inquiry (p. 69). In this approach, the research components are not welded to each other as they are in quantitative designs; yet, they work in consort to effectively carry out the study. What then are some common definitions of qualitative research, what are some features of this type of research, and why was it appropriate for this study?

Defined broadly, qualitative research is a method of inquiry that collects its data from natural settings. This form of inquiry is also known as descriptive or naturalistic research. Specifically, Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain that qualitative researchers use non-statistical or nonmathematical procedures to analyze and understand phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) describe qualitative inquiry as research with no borders; its applicability as a form of inquiry extends across disciplines, fields, and subject matter. Esterberg (2002) builds on Denzin and Lincoln's description. She defines qualitative research as a way to examine how individuals construct social reality. Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) definition focuses on the process of gaining understanding; they explain it involves analysis and interpretation of texts and interviews for patterns. Merriam (1998) suggests qualitative research is concerned with process, context, and discovery more so than outcomes, specific variables, and establishing truth. Although these definitions emanate from the work of multiple scholars, taken together, they reveal

a central unifying theme namely: qualitative research is an adaptable approach for discovery and understanding of multiple viewpoints.

Similarly, some of the previously discussed and other scholarly works on qualitative research have identified a collection of unique characteristics that set this type of inquiry apart from other forms of inquiries. For example, Merriam (1998) lists five distinguishing characteristics, which, while not exhaustive, nevertheless present useful decision points for conducting the study. Merriam identifies qualitative researchers' curiosity to understand how people construct meaning as a key characteristic of qualitative inquiry.

Another equally important characteristic of qualitative research is the primacy of the researcher in the data collection and analysis process. The researcher acts as the medium for reconciling the data adapting different techniques to fit the situation as they evolve in the study. The researcher in qualitative study, primarily because of the "authority" of the position, is receptive to examining her or his ideological and personal biases.

A third characteristic of qualitative research is that it generally requires fieldwork. In fieldwork, the researcher seeks entry to the site going to participants in their natural settings, getting close. Fieldwork allows the researcher to spend time in face-to-face interviews observing participants' behavior in historical, social, and cultural contexts. Merriam (1998) identifies inductive method of analysis as the fourth characteristic.

In qualitative research, analysis is usually accomplished via inductive as opposed to deductive research strategies. This means themes, categories, and patterns (notwithstanding the researchers' influences in this process) are outputs of the data. The

goal in inductive research strategy is to build rather than test existing theories. Therefore, qualitative research requires that researchers should be cognizant of the risk of over-emphasis on methods, which can cloak substantive findings. The fifth and final distinguishing characteristic is that qualitative research generates rich, descriptive findings—findings that are communicated through words and pictures, rather than numbers.

A qualitative research design was particularly fitting for my study of African American doctoral students' persistence to degree completion in predominately white institutions of higher education for several reasons. Anzaldua (1990) suggests inquiries that seek to understand the experiences of people of color should include their voices in the theorizing. See (1998) suggests these inquiries should utilize a broad theoretical approach that draws from the strengths of multiple philosophical orientations. Furthermore, Peter Corning in *The Synergism Hypothesis: A Theory of Progressive Evolution* reminds us of anthropologist, Kent Flannery, thoughtful insights that civilization is a multifaceted process and to try to explain it with one expedient one-size-fits theory is, at best, quite inadequate (Flannery, 1972, as cited in Corning, 1983).

Nevertheless, all too often, the stories of historically excluded or marginalized people are either omitted from the literature or are pejorative stories told from the perspective of dominant groups usurping the discursive spaces of people of color (Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008; Solórzano & Yosso; 2000). This perspective, more often than not, fails to acknowledge the existence of other voices – another perspective, a different story. A well-conceived qualitative research study on people of color (in this case African American doctoral students) will provide opportunity

for them to tell of *their* experiences as *they* have lived and understood them. It will also allow the researcher, the conduit of the data, to present the participants' stories against a backdrop of theoretical insights that spotlight their strengths. According to Hill (1998, p. 50) "asset-oriented research", or research that focuses on the strengths of its participants, is sorely needed to help educators, professionals, communities, and policymakers "identify the factors or mechanisms that enhance the resilience of disadvantaged groups" and to reject the perceived wisdom of theories that purport to speak of minorities' educational inability.

<div align="center">Sample Selection</div>

I used a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling as the overarching sampling strategy in this study. Purposive sampling is central to qualitative research because it gives the researcher the authority to select participants for the study based on the researchers' personal knowledge of the population, and the participants' potential to be most useful to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling offers access to information-rich cases and increases the likelihood of locating a large enough sample in a short period (Patton). Use of this sampling strategy allowed me to solicit the assistance of prospective participants, and others like educators, university administrators, and current doctoral students. I asked them to recommend education doctoral graduates who may have rich, information-filled stories to tell.

The criteria for selection were: (a) participants should be African American doctoral graduates from any program in the college of education; (b) the participants must be graduates from PWIs ; and (c) participants must have graduated between two to seven years—at least two but no more than seven. There was no employment or age

limits criterion and participants could be either gender. Participants' selection continued until saturation of the data. Since saturation allowed for data collection until no new themes emerged, I did not establish a maximum number of interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam 1988). The participants were graduates from six education programs from four historically white institutions. The education programs were: Adult Education, Mathematics Education, School Psychology, Educational Psychology, Educational Studies and Counselor Education.

Several factors influenced my decision to choose from a mix of programs and more than one institution rather than a single program or institution. First, I wished to offer participants an additional level of anonymity that would not have been possible had I selected graduates from one program and one institution. Second, a single program in one PWI would not have graduated large enough numbers of African Americans within five years to provide a sizeable enough sample for selection. Additionally, I could not have been as confident reassuring participants that they would not be identified as participants, if I had selected from a small group of individuals of a specific race, within one identifiable program. Third, several programs and more than one university provided a more eclectic mix of experiences because each university and program has its own signature culture.

I chose African American education graduates to participate in this study for three reasons. First, critical masses of African American doctoral students enroll in colleges of education compared to colleges of other disciplines. Second, African American doctoral students in education programs face challenges associated with funding and time-to-degree completion, two factors which although not unique to this group are, nonetheless,

overwhelming characteristics of African Americans in education programs (Gravois, 2007; Hoffer et al., 2006). Third, as previously stated, throughout the history of Blacks in doctoral education in the United States, a consistently higher percentage of African American doctorate recipients receive their degrees from the field of education, than from any other discipline.

Participants' age was not a criteria due to the wide differences in the ages of doctoral students and because such restriction would have severely limited the sample size. Completion of the degree, though, was a criterion. I added the degree completion criteria because students who completed the degree would have had the opportunity to go though similar experiences at different stages of the doctoral process—from entry into the program, through candidacy, all but dissertation (ABD) status, and the dissertation defense. I set the time after graduation for participation in the study from two to seven years, for three reasons. I wished to set a timeframe recent enough to minimize the chance that the participants could not recall the factors that helped them to persist to degree completion but long enough, so that they have had some time and opportunity to reflect on the sociocultural factors that facilitated their persistence to degree completion.

Finally, as part of the selection process, I sent email invitations (Appendix A) to individuals, who were identified as persons of interest, asking them to participate in the study (Patton, 2002). The invitation listed the criteria for participation. I included an Informed Consent (Appendix B) and Participant's Demographic Profile (Appendix C) with the invitation letter. Once I had established that a prospective participant met the successful degree completion, time since degree completion, and race criteria; and I had

received the signed Informed Consent, the participant's selection ended, and the he interview process began.

<div align="center">Institutional Affiliation</div>

Originally, the proposed sites for this study were the education colleges of two major state-funded, historically white institutions of higher education. Both institutions are research-intensive universities, offer education doctoral degree programs, and are located in the southeastern United States. These sites were selected primarily because of these similarities and the fact that they enroll high enough numbers of African American doctoral students, a factor that would have allowed me access to large enough samples for the study. However, access to both universities proved more difficult than I had anticipated. Consequently, I opened the study to African American education doctoral graduates, from any historically white institution, in any region of the United States.

To gain access to graduates of these additional universities, I requested the help of three faculty members, all of whom were affiliated to the field of education. Two faculty members met the criteria and offered to participate. One of the two distributed the call for participants on a listserv. The third faculty member recommended a prospective participant. From these activities I received a total of fifteen responses from former African American education doctoral students from six historically white institutions. All fifteen respondents met the criteria for participation in the study but eleven of the fifteen participated in the study. Of the four respondents who did not participate in the study, one asked to withdrew because of time constraints. I did not interview the remaining three respondents because the data reached saturation before they were interviewed.

Data Collection

The primary form of data collection was interviews. I used an open-ended interview protocol (Appendix D) and initiated the conversation with semi-structured interview questions. Where necessary, I followed through with probing questions to increase the richness and depth of the participants' responses (Patton, 2002). The open-ended interview protocol was particularly effective for this study because this type of interview protocol is consistent with strategies for inductive analysis in naturalistic inquiries. This interviewing tool was also appropriate because it "allows for important analysis dimensions to emerge…without presupposing in advance what the important dimension will be" (Patton, p. 56). Each interview lasted approximately one hour. In those cases where face-to-face interviews were not possible, I interviewed the participant by telephone. I audio-recorded all interviews then transcribed them verbatim. I saved each audiotape until completion of the research project because throughout my analysis of the transcripts, I repeatedly listened to the audio versions of the texts to clarify meanings that the participant wished to convey.

Narratives in Qualitative Research

Narrative is an account of events, people, places arranged through time, and a way of understanding for both the narrator and the narrators' audience. It is the genesis of a storyteller's "voice", the spring-well for a writer's words, and the lens through which the reader finds understanding. Chase (2005) likens it to "retrospective meaning-making" (p. 656). Narrative allows individuals to shift and sort through theirs and others' experiences co-constructing past events and actions to understand their consequences over time. Johnson-Bailey in *Dancing between the Swords: My Foray into Constructing Narratives*

analogizes the act of constructing a narrative to that of an exotic dancer twirling between saber blades. Her analogy sensitizes us to the delicate interrelationship among the co-constructors of the narrative, i.e. the data, the methodology, the story, the participants, and the researcher (Johnson-Bailey, 2002a). Narrative researchers are especially conscious of the interconnectedness of the relationships even as they are also aware of the versatility in approaches to narrative analysis.

Narratives as a way of communicating and narrative analysis as a research methodology have been widely used for understanding human experiences (Bell-Scott, 1998; Etter-Lewis & Foster, 1996; Furman, Kelly, & Nelson, 2005, Johnson-Bailey, 2001; Lieblich & Josselson, 1997). Johnson-Bailey (2004) credits its appropriation to its practicability and ease of use by researchers and readers alike. She suggests researchers especially favor narrative methodology, as an uncomplicated way to collect data, while readers are attracted to the communion it offers due to the unobtrusive setting in which narratives are told.

As a means for communicating, narratives can be effective since they are spoken from a platform of moral strength. In telling their life stories, narrators simultaneously convey meaning, emotions, and information on how their lives were changed because of their experiences (Tappen & Brown, 1991) and their reasons for revealing their stories (Denzin, 1989). In addition to what narratives can reveal about individuals' life experiences within their cultural and structural settings, narratives can help to extend global understandings of a particular phenomenon. Narratives can also assist in "[facilitating] major social shifts, by including how new experiences are interpreted by

individuals with families, small groups, and institutions" (Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Pride, 2002; Roberts, 2002, p. 5).

Methodologically, narrative analysis is conducive for exploring the lives of individuals from disadvantaged groups to gain information about the conditions that can produce remedies for them. Besides its value for what it can disclose about social life; narrative inquiry assists participants, researchers, and readers to examine practices of power that is accepted as normal and, as a result, remain unchallenged by society. In this sense, it is suitable for studies that highlight human agency. Furthermore, even if all qualitative inquiry researchers attend to the research relationship, narrative inquiry researchers because they conduct deep-probing interview, are especially conscious about variations in communication differences between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviewers in narrative inquiries seek to shift the relationship from interviewer-interviewee to narrator and listener. They draw on the notion that communication patterns are influenced by cultural codes, positionalities, body language, expressions, and perceptions about disparities in power, race, gender, and class (Chase, 2005; Etter-Lewis, 1991; Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

Narrative methodology has three features that made the methodology suitable for conducting this study. The first feature is its focus on the centrality of the narrators' voice in the research process. The second feature is its compatibility with studies dealing with subjectivity and identity and suitability for topics and theories in which the characteristics of actors, as active subjects, are explored and made explicit. The third feature is its potential for facilitating positive change for the individual and for encouraging social justice.

Data Analysis

In narrative analysis, how interview text is assembled and displayed is a result of the researchers' commitment to use data analysis tools that revere the singular importance of the respondent's voice and meaning and to "preserve the essence of the story" (Johnson-Bailey, 2002a, p. 324). It is also a result of the researcher's growing awareness and the deeper understanding and discoveries brought about from testing, repeated listenings, and clarification of the texts, coupled with the way the text was transcribed (Riessman, 1993). I personally transcribed all interviews. Personally transcribing the interviews expanded the opportunity to familiarize myself with the data, maintain the continuity of the researcher-participant relationship (Chase, 2005), and be more sensitive to the respondents' stories (Johnson-Bailey). Chase explains that researchers' sensitivity is necessary because the use of individuals' stories in narrative makes the participants more susceptibility to exposure than in other approaches to qualitative studies (Chase, 1996). Personally transcribing the interview also reduces participants' risk by limiting who will have access to the data before all identifying information are redacted.

Transcription took two forms. Following a model similar to Riessman's (1993) transcription method, I recorded the first transcript verbatim: a rough draft including all utterances, pauses, and changes in the narrators' (and interviewers') tone. Next, I made changes to drafts separating narrative forms of text from nonnarrative forms like asides, questions, noise distractions, etc. I used the word processing highlighter tool to make those distinctions. The highlighted portion made it easier to focus on the portions of the non-text, which provided important contexts for interpretation. Riessman maintains this level of transcription is necessary because it is in such details "that interpretive categories

emerge, ambiguities in language are heard…and clues about meaning" are discerned (p. 58). I also separated the narrative into numbered lines for easy reference.

Following transcription, I developed profiles for each participant. Working from two data sources—the Participant Demographic Profile and the participant interview—I condensed and combined what I perceived were the most significant details of the respondent's biography and narrative while ignoring interview questions and asides. I used interpretive techniques from Alexander (1988) psychobiographical and Denzin's (1989) autobiographical approaches to data analysis. Both approaches allowed me to extract the most meaningful units of stories from the participants' narratives and to simultaneously identify and keep intact, the *intent for the story*. The participant's *intent for the story* or the narrative's raison d'être is the story's focus; the participant's conscious or unconscious reason for telling the story, which may not necessarily be the same as the researcher's reason for wanting him, or her, to tell it. For example, one participant's intent revealed itself through both the "primacy" and "frequency" indicators, two of Anderson's nine indicators of salience. She began her narrative with the statement "it all started with my father" (primacy) and repeatedly referred to her father throughout her narrative (frequency). I used each story's focus as the axis around which to construct the participant's profile. I used a quote from the narrative that best describes the story's focus as a part of the heading in the summarized narrative section of the participant's profile. In the previous example, the heading was *Synopsis of Narrative: "…it all began with my father."*

The next step was to analyze each transcript for themes from which to draw findings, by fragmenting the data (Polkinghorn, 1995). Based on the research questions, I

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developed four broad sections headings. Using each section heading as a guide, I culled

the transcripts, one at a time, appropriately coding chunks of significant data while

generating general categories in the process. I extracted the chunks of coded data

grouping them by the categories. Sections of data that were not exclusive to any one

category received more than one categorical designation. I then searched the categories

for emerging themes and concepts that seemed to be important (Glesne, 1999). Next, I

grouped the themed, categorized data with the appropriate section headings which I had

developed from the research question. The coding system I used evolved as the data

started to reveal itself (Alexander, 1988). To check for coding and analysis care and the

reasonableness of initial themes, I consulted with my advisor (Glesne, 1999). A full

description of the method I used to analyze the data is included in successive paragraphs.

Alexander (1988) psychobiographical approach was the first of the three

approaches used in the analyses of the data. This approach employs a nine-factor

technique that allows the data to become visible by calling attention to important features

of the data. Application of Alexander's "principle identifiers of salience" or "network of

rules" accomplishes two tasks: (a) it reduces the data to manageable chunks and (b)

illuminates the message that is communicated in the text. The following paragraphs

contain descriptions of Alexander's psychobiographical approach to data analysis. The

nine identifiers of salience are listed first, followed by a description of each identifier.

The identifiers are: primacy, frequency, omission, uniqueness, isolation, negation,

emphasis, error, and incompletion.

Primacy is akin to the leading or main sentence or idea in a paragraph. In

Alexander's approach, primacy is exemplified in the initial idea or topic in a participants'

narrative. Primacy in narrative provides a strong inkling of the subject matter that is of the uttermost importance to the narrator because of where it is placed in the narrative by the narrator.

Frequency is the recurring presence of an idea in the narrative. The recurrences of the same or similar factors point to the issues that the narrator wants to emphasize as important and which, he or she has no doubt about. *Omission*, according to Alexander (1988) is a sign that the narrator may want to conceal a particular issue. Alexander notes that omissions are characterized by unexplained, obvious gaps in the flow and rationale of the story. Omission, like frequency, is characterized by repetition.

Alexander (1988) explains that *uniqueness* refers to unusual content and verbal expressions in the narrative. The listener is alerted to instances of uniqueness by obvious prompts from the narrator like "it was the first and only time…" or by less obvious prompts like a change in his or her speech patterns. An example of the latter prompt is the use of language that is common to the narrator, like cultural or local expressions. *Isolation* is indicative of lack of fit; parts of the narrative text seem out of place in the story. Alexander describes it as "an orderly description of an experience…punctuated by …irrelevant association or asides" (p. 276).

Negation, emphasis, error, incompletion are the remaining four identifiers. Negation denotes avoidance or disbelief. On one hand, the narrator indicates an issue is significant, yet seems to discount the implications that it is likely or possible and, or, downplays its significance. *Emphasis* calls attention to the level of attention that is given to certain materials. It can emerge in one of three ways—misplaced emphasis, under emphasis, or over emphasis. Alexander discusses *error* in the context of distortion. In this

instance, distortion is synonymous with a slip of the tongue. Alexander explains such an occurrence signals the existence of hidden intentions that the narrator, nevertheless, unwittingly reveals. Incompletion, as the term denotes, signifies an abrupt end without closure, or an irrational end to a story.

The second approach to analyzing the data was Denzin's (1989) autobiographical method. Denzin focuses on the characteristics of biographies and different ways and contexts in which narrators' interpret and communicate their experiences. In this sense, Denzin's approach is more consistent with the question of what distinguishes biographies than with the question of how to construct biographies. He is concerned with: how biographies reveal narrators' relationship with society; how the relationship affects their stories in cultural, historical, and ideological ways; and why narrators choose to tell their stories.

Denzin's autobiographical approach to data analysis aligned with this study because narrative analysis reveals the "complexity and multiplicity within narrators' voices." Narrative analysis also alerts the reader to the notion that narrators tell stories about their lives and the lives of others, for more than one reason, in unlike ways, and to different audiences, oftentimes, the narrators themselves (Chase, 2005, p. 663). Chase's observation is evident in the various works on narrative study among marginalized groups including the autobiographies on African Americans. Certainly, not only does African Americans autobiographies bear witness to the oppression members of their group experience, autobiographical works on African American doctoral students in predominately white universities also reveal that students experience a special brand of racism. The use of Denzin's autobiographical approach in the analysis of narratives, in

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this study, helps to give voice to African American doctoral students' educational experiences and creates an opportunity for researcher, readers, and the participants themselves to hear their stories.

The third analytic method was Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education, a component of the theoretical and conceptual framework in this study. This theory was part of my conceptual framework which constituted triplicate lens from sociocultural learning (Rogoff, 1995), cultural and social capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970), and critical race theory (Delgado, 1989; Crenshaw, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Matsuda, 1995; Tejeda, Martinez, & Leonardo, 2000; Yosso, 2005). Of the three theories, Critical Race Theory, (CRT) possessed the most direct relevancy for analyzing the experiences of African American students.

Critical Race Theory configured well in the analytic framework of this study because the issue of race figures prominently in the lived experiences of African Americans and other peoples of color. Ladson-Billings and others suggest that critical race theory addresses the prominence of race in the educational experiences of people from these groups. The inclusion of CRT in the analytical framework of this study strengthened the framework and presented the opportunity for a deeper understanding of: (a) the kinds of deterrents African American education graduates from HWIs faced in completing their degree; (b) the programmatic resources and the social and cultural factors evident during their academic studies; and (c) how this group of students learned to respond to and navigate through the difficulties they encountered.

My justification for using a three-prong analytic approach to the data was grounded in the research literature. Many accounts of narrative analyses in the literature

reveal that in analyses of narrative data, " researchers begin with [the] narrators'

voice….[Instead of] locating distinct themes across interviews, narrative researchers

listen first to the voices *within* [emphasis in text] each narrative" (Chase, 2005, p. 663;

Etter-Lewis & Foster, 1996; Etter-Lewis; 1991; Johnson-Bailey, 2002b, 2004; Tappen &

Brown, 1991). Two of the three, Anderson (1988) psychobiographical and Denzin (1989)

biographical approaches to narrative analysis provided the technical-interpretive while

CRT supplied the theoretical-philosophical tools to "hear" the voices of the participants

in this study.

Lastly, narrative inquiry is "characterized by its fertile ambiguities" in that it

allows for researchers' creativity in thinking and writing and in introducing new

methodologies and ways of reporting narrative work (Lieblich & Josselson, 1997, p. x).

Employing a combination of psychobiographical, autobiographical, and theoretical

methods to analysis of the data extends the points of support for the use of narratives

inquiry on three fronts, simultaneously. As Nielsen (1999) so aptly states:

> The passion inherent in the creating of the text is not only to make sense
> of what goes on around the narrator but also to make sense of unconscious
> passion and sufferings within the narrator. When we tell stories about our
> lives, the point is to make our lives not only more intelligible, but also
> more bearable. (p. 50)

Validity

The validation factor in the validity of a study is an issue that any rigorously

conducted study ought to address (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Maxwell, 1997; Merriam,

1998, 2002; Mishler, 1990; Patton; 2004; Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 1993).

However, conventional perspectives about strategies and procedures for establishing

validity are more often aligned with quantitative than with naturalist orientation to

research. These perspectives include the assertion that procedures for establishing validity in research inquiries seek to establish truth.

Qualitative studies, on the other hand, aspire to trustworthiness and credibility of the research and not its "truth" (Riessman, 1993). Qualitative researchers subscribe to the premise that the data generated from respondents are real because "narrativitization assumes point[s] of view [and] facts are products of an interpretive process" (Riessman, p. 64). Furthermore, if one was to accept the premise that the interpretation of a particular event is personal to each individual and individuals conceptualize and reconceptualize the same event in different ways to different audiences, at different times; then, one also has to accept the premise that multiple "truths" of that event exists (Polkinghorne, 2007). From this standpoint, seeking to validate "the truth" of multiple truths becomes problematic; evaluating the trustworthiness of multiple interpretations is much more feasible.

In narrative inquiry the question of trustworthiness, or credibility, has to do with the researchers' arguments for the claim that he or she makes. Polkinghorne (2007) suggests the depth of claim will be augmented by such criteria like: a) how well the researcher clarifies what the narrative text is intended to convey; b) the representation of the respondents' life in the text; and c) evidence of the researcher and respondents' involvement in the co-production of meaning. Riessman (1993) adds that credibility is greatest when the theoretical claims are supported with evidence and the researcher considers other interpretations of the data. These are some criteria on which the study's audience—participants and readers—determine the degree to which the study is

trustworthy, are persuaded to believe the narrative's text and the research findings, and are motivated to action (Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 1993).

As discussed above, criteria are needed to establish trustworthiness in qualitative studies but methods by which we ascertain credibility are not universal (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Merriam, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton; 2004; Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 1993). For example, Merriam suggests member checks as one of five ways to establish trustworthiness. Member checks involve asking the participants to check the authenticity of researchers' interpretation of the interview. Riessman reasons: extending this courtesy to the study's participants provides dividends of "theoretical insights" for the researcher. Blackman also envisions benefits and views member checks as a politically important move with the potential to influence the "afterlife of the study" (Blackman, 1992, as cited in Riessman, 1993, p. 66).

Following Merriam's (2000) suggestion and Bell's (1998) strategy, I wrote a letter to each participant (Appendix E). The letter included a summary of the participants' narratives, I asked participants to assess the summary and to give me feedback on how accurately I have recorded what they communicated to me. I followed up with a phone interview with the eleven participants. All 11 participants confirmed that the summarized interview accurately reflected their story.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, I also revealed parts of the narrative text in the study's findings. Opening the narrative to participants and readers' scrutiny is a validation method endorsed by other researchers (Bell, 1998; Mishler, 1990; Wolcott, 1990). For instance, Bell (1988), in her study on DES daughters and Riessman (1990), in her study on divorce made narrative texts available to readers. Riessman

suggests that making text available helps to establish credibility and supports the premise that science is socially co-constructed. In essence, it perpetuates the future extension of one researcher's work by another researcher.

A final strategy was to understand the influence of the researcher in the study (Maxwell, 1997; Merriam, 2000). Merriam suggests researchers write a statement examining their subjectivity (biases and values). She claims that this statement is necessary because "investigators should explain their position vis-à-vis the topic studied, the basis for selecting participants, the content of the study, and what values and assumptions might affect data collection and...[their] "reflexivity" (p. 26). Following Merriam's recommendations, I have written a subjectivity statement that reveals my biases and values. To minimize the influences of researcher bias, as an additional precaution, I avoided leading questions and recorded my thoughts and reactions during the research process. The diary served as a mirror to keep me in close proximity with my biases and values and a constant reminder that I cannot (nor would I wish too) remove the "me" from my research. The statement is included in the Subjectivity Statement section of this chapter.

In sum, four strategies were used in this study to safeguard its validity. The strategies included audio-taped interview data, member checks and document analyses in the form of reviews of related insights in the literature, and researcher's notes and reflectivity statement.

<div align="center">Subjectivity Statement</div>

Geertz (1983), Peshkin, (1988), Guba (1990), Denzin (2000) have discussed the issue of subjectivity and the multiple forms in which it manifests itself in qualitative

research. Peshkin, in particular, have addressed the discussion from the point of view of researchers bringing their worldview to their research and its inevitable influences on the research process from conceptualization to conclusion. Arguing for its visibility, Peshkin explains that owning one's subjectivity is a way for researchers to bring into prominence his, or her, individual biases. Even so, Peshkin cautions that researchers are not always aware of how their assumptions, values, and biases can influence the research and suggests researchers "should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data has been collected and the analysis is complete but while the research is in progress" (p. 17). Peshkin adds that researchers who follow this route are better equipped to recognize characteristics of their subjectivity that can "filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue" what is revealed throughout the course of the research (p. 17).

 In this study, I followed Peshkin's (1988) recommendations to address the thorny questions of who, what, where, and why? For who is the research conducted? What purpose does it serve? Where am I, the researcher, positioned in my study? Why am I conducting this particular study? I did this, even while mindful of Bloom (2002) insightful observation that subjectivity is nonunitary, subject to change, and "always in the process of being produced" (p.13). I began with my "location" in the researcher/researched relationship because the researcher's position has a front row seat in conceiving the study.

My relationship with my study is akin to that of an insider-outsider. I claim insider status because I am a black doctoral student working towards the completion of a Ph.D. in adult education from a historically white institution. Consequently, findings

from this study on the sociocultural and programmatic resources that contribute to the successful completion of African American doctoral programs in predominately white institutions of higher education affect me personally. Also relevant to the discussion about my position in the insider-outsider relationship, is my involvement with research on the nature of doctoral completion. I was a member of a research team studying doctoral completion and non-completion. Consequently, questions related to how, why, and who completes the degree has become a deep concern. My insider status standing is also a result of my previous profession; I once was a teacher. In this role, I guided students (albeit not doctoral students) towards the completion of their studies. My students' stories of what influenced their learning have always interested me. In fact, their stories have guided my approach to teaching and were instrumental in shaping my philosophy on education. In this sense, this research is about my experiences as it is about the students' participants in my study.

My outsider, or more appropriately, my peripheral status stems from my citizenship. My African ancestry allows me claim to similar lineage as the participants in my study. In this respect, our histories are analogous. Yet, the events of our life have traveled different paths and the uniqueness of who we are was molded and shaped by different experiences; I am Afro Caribbean, the study's participants are African Americans. As an Afro Caribbean, my background did not privilege me or exempt me from the socio-political nature of school and schooling because where racism did not hold total sway, classism, and the vestiges of colonialism did. Hence, I am attentive to the fact that my worldview is also informed by the acts of oppression and exclusion by majority and authoritarian groups.

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My reference to citizenship should not be construed as an attempt at "Othering"; rather, it is an acknowledgement of the nature of my relationship and proximity to the study and the study's participants (Patton, 2000). It also serves as a reminder to me that because of our partially entwined identities—the study's participants and mine— I can consciously, or unconsciously, sabotage the study's credibility by "overwriting... [their] stories with interpretations of... [my] own" (Preissle & Grant, 2004, p. 173). I am also paying attention to my growing awareness of my own subjectivity. Like Peshkin (1988) suggests, "[it] is like garment that cannot be removed...insistently present in both the research and non-research aspects of our life" (p. 17).

As I mentioned earlier, my philosophy on education is part-product of the influences of my students' stories of their learning experiences. Reflectively, I can see how my humanistic approach to education impaled by my knowledge of my students' and my own experiences, intersected with a radical philosophy to shape my outlook on teaching and learning and the role of educational institutions (and the educator) in students' learning. I have concluded that educators should be able to identify their philosophies and to enter into dialogue with it. Identifying one's educational philosophy and participating in discourse with, and about that very philosophy are important because as Cervero and Wilson (2006) conclude, educators bring their values to the educational setting and, I may add, educational settings are social places in which students learn and develop. Furthermore, as Miron (1996) points out, education researchers who approach inquiry from a critical race perspective are responsible for addressing issues of how multiple subjectivities, about different racial groups, influence how educators and educational institutions respond to perceptions of what constitutes failure and

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achievement among students of color. Thus, for me, possessing an intimate knowledge of my own educational philosophy is a practice of key importance for my dual roles as researcher and educator.

My life, schooling, and career have taught me to value the belief that learners come from diverse backgrounds and bring to the educational experience different needs, wants, ways, knowledge, and tools for learning. Consequently, I am open to the idea that intrinsic and extrinsic factors, for example, temperament, economics, family, and community can, and do, influence the conditions for learning even if no one factor is its primary determinant. At the same time, I believe that the individual learner should exercise agency – or the means to act on his or her behalf, even if it oftentimes may require others support. Finally, drawing from my experiences as both a student and educator, it is my conclusion that experiences are shaped by context, that educators and educational institutions should recognize the singularity of learners' experiences, exercise mindful listenership to individual students' accounts of their experiential knowledge, and create conditions that validate students' knowledge of self.

Clearly my closeness to this research inquiry—my ancestral ties, student-teacher identities, approach to teaching and learning, and awareness of the social, cultural, institutional, racial, and environmental factors that influence the teacher-student and the institution-student relationship are personal biases that are bound to influence my handling of the data. Even so, as Oakley (1981) so aptly reminds us "personal involvement is more than a dangerous bias—it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives" (p. 58). Personal involvement, I have come to acknowledge is also a catalyst that gives life to "human and passionate …

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research", the kind to which Janesick (1994, p. 217) alludes to in *The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodology, and Meaning*.

Summary

This chapter addresses the various concerns related to the methodology of this qualitative study on the social, cultural and programmatic factors that influenced African American education doctoral students completing their degrees in historically white institutions (HWIs). In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework that lends support to the study. Here I sought to clarify theories and assumptions that guided the study. From thence, I describe the study's design and discussed methodological decisions related to participant and institutional affiliation, data collection, data analysis and validity. In the validity section, I describe my strategy to maintain the rigor and integrity of the study. Following the validity section is the researcher reflectivity section. The reflectivity statement is my acknowledgement of the centrality of my biases and values to the integrity of the research.

CHAPTER 4

PROFILES OF ELEVEN WHO SUCCEEDED

The purpose of this study was to understand the sociocultural and programmatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of doctoral programs by African Americans at predominately-white institutions of higher education. The research questions that guided this study are: What were the social and cultural deterrents to African American doctoral students completing their degrees? What programmatic resources were identified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies? What social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their degree? How did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to degree completion?

This chapter contains eleven demographic profiles and one related Participant's Demographic Profile. I have presented the profiles in the order in which the interviews occurred. Pseudonyms protect the identity of each participant. Each participant's profile has two parts. The first part is a description of the participant's academic and professional background, recruitment, and interview. Part two of the profile, Synopsis of the Narrative, is a condensed version of the participant's narrative constructed around the narrative's focal point.

The narrative's focal point is the narrative's reason for being and is identified in the Synopsis of the Narrative heading by a quote from the participant's narrative. It may be a revelation about a situation, emotion, idea, phenomenon, or experience that may initially appear insignificant; but, which later proves to hold the most essential

information to understanding how and why the participant experienced doctoral education. This section of the profile provides the reader with additional insights on the narrator's relationship with society; how the relationship may have influenced the narrator's story in cultural, historical, and ideological ways; and, or, why the narrator chose to tell the story To construct part two of each participant's profile, I gleamed notions from Denzin's (1989) autobiographical and Anderson's psychobiographical approach to analyzing narratives. Denzin's approach provided the rationale while Anderson's method provided how-to concepts to develop the profile.

In all cases, these demographic profiles provide windows into the participants' journeys through their doctoral programs in their respective academic institutions. To honor each participant's voice, I have included excerpts from the participant's narrative.

Table 2. Participant's Demographic Profile – Graduation Years 2001 to 2007

Name	Age	Sex	Doctoral Program	Attend Status	Yrs in Univ	Yrs in Program	Program length	Yrs to Degree post C-Work	Yrs to Degree post Candidacy
Dr. Gap	45+	M	Adult Ed	F/time	4.5	4.5	5	1.5	1.5
Dr. Anthony	45+	M	Adult Ed	P/time	6	6	5	3	1.5
Dr. Joyce	45+	F	Adult Ed	F/time	5	5	5	1	1
Dr. Nina	31-35	F	Adult Ed	F/time	5.5	3.5	5	2	1
Dr. Rachel	31-35	F	Math Ed	F/time	4	4	4	1	1
Dr. Angelina	36-40	F	Ed Psych	F/time	5	5	4	2	1
Dr. Jamika	25-30	F	School Psych	F/time	10	7	5	2	1
Dr. Regina	41-45	F	Ed Studies	F/time	5	5	4-5	2	7
Dr. J	41-45	F	Counselor Education	F/time	3.5	3.5	3 to 5	1	9
Dr.Talibav	45+	F	School Psychology	F/time	9	9	5-6	7	6
Dr. P	31-35	F	Ed Psychology	F-time	7	7	5	2.5	2

Dr. Rachel

Demographic Profile

Dr. Rachel is in her early to late thirties. She began doctoral study in early 2000. Four years later, she received her doctoral degree and was recruited to direct research at an education nonprofit organization. Before she received her doctoral degree, she was a school teacher.

Dr. Rachel was one of the first participants recruited for this study. A colleague had emailed her with details about the study. Believing that she met the four requirements to take part in the study, Dr. Rachel contacted me and offered to be a participant. We agreed to a phone interview and scheduled the date for February 16, 2009.

Synopsis of Narrative: "…It started with my father…"

Dr. Rachel began her story by telling me that her journey to the doctorate started with her father's journey. Her father was a professor. He had earned a doctorate and it was a family expectation that after she completed her undergraduate degree, she too would go on to earn a doctorate. She explained that this expectation was set very early on and although her father never insisted that she had to, he was confident that she would follow his and other members of her family's example "and get a Ph.D." She said, because of her father's example, very early in life, she equated education with an easier life, career options, and flexibility.

Dr. Rachel confided that funding and diversity were the two deciding factors in her decision to pursue her doctorate at the historically white institution where she earned her degree. She chose this university over the other "four or five" universities she had applied to primarily because the university was located in an area with a high

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concentration of Blacks. She said, at the time, she falsely assumed that she would "have a better chance of having black friends and just having a more diverse kind of social life … to not be the only black student, or to be isolated."

In reality though, Dr. Rachel found she was always in the minority. She was either one of the few Blacks in her entire program, or the only African American student among two or three non-Caucasian international students in a classroom, dominated by Caucasian American students. Dr. Rachel described her first two semesters this way: "…it was very lonely and that sort of creeps into you being able to do your work...I wasn't happy socially...it was hard for me to get excited about work." She described her experiences after two years into the program with similar distress "the two years was probably the most offensive, and I felt the worst about myself."

Nonetheless, Dr. Rachel persisted in her program. She drew on her parents' support, especially her father's counsel to remain focused, to keep her "eyes on the prize." Influenced by her sense of purpose and strong confidence in her ability to meet the requirements of the program, Dr. Rachel became her own counselor. She privately argued that the university admitted her to the program based on her merit and thus, she reasoned, they needed her as much as she needed them. She rationalized to herself that she "deserved to be here", was unabashedly unrepentant about her presence in the program, and told herself that as long as she "just got the work done" she would finish her program. She told me she relied on the early mentoring she had received from her teachers in high school; her parents, especially her father, for her inspiration; and on faculty mentors in her program, for encouragement. In addition, Rachel said she became

her own advocate; seeking the support and friendship of fellow students with similar research and social interests.

Dr. Rachel also credited her persistence in her doctoral program to the fact that she had prior exposure to the racist culture of majority white institutions. She believes her tenure at other majority white institutions "where racism was all around" had psychologically prepared her to handle "the attacks", or innuendos, that Black students, who were admitted to university programs, were allowed in because of affirmative action and not because of merit. For example, Dr. Rachel recounted her disappointment coming to terms with the notion that the university she had chosen to pursue her doctorate was not as diverse as she had thought. She divulged that she also had to face the unpleasant fact that a white professor, a person she "very much highly respected", was capable of making insensitive racist remarks that might lead others to believe that students from minority ethnic groups, were biological and intellectually inferior.

Reflecting deeper on this experience, Rachel painfully admitted that she realized she had come to a critical decision-making point in her educational journey. That *critical decision-making point* was her moment of awakening; the moment when her personal interest in "equity" became her research interest. At that point, she realized that opinions like the one expressed by her professor "held implications for students of color." Dr. Rachel explained that as an African American researcher, with an interest in matters of equity, she felt obligated to research topics that impact this group. Besides, she said, she had begun to experience a growing awareness that her concern about equality would surface in her work regardless of the research topic she undertook. Rachel told me it was

then, at that point, that her research interest crystallized and she "started taking courses and reading more on issues of equity"

<div align="center">Dr. Regina</div>

Demographic Profile

Dr. Regina is an educator and scholar in her early to mid-forties. She received her doctoral degree from a highly recognized, historically-white, southern university. Five years after she entered the program, three years after completing coursework, and within less than a year after entering candidacy, Dr. Regina had successfully completed her program of study. She achieved this success even while she juggled her roles as a student, and a parent to her children.

I was first introduced to Dr. Regina when she responded to my request for participants for my study. Dr. Regina had learned about the study through one of her colleagues. Her colleague was also a recipient of the doctoral degree and had received information about the study. Thinking that Dr. Regina met the criteria for participation in the study, Dr. Regina's colleague extended the invitation to her. Dr. Regina was convinced that she had a story to tell—the story of *her* experiences. She e-mailed me that she was motivated to participate in the study because she thought it was an important subject that needed to be researched and wished to "assist in that way". Once I received her demographic profile, I telephoned Dr. Regina to schedule an interview. We talked briefly about the study and agreed to meet at her office the following week.

It was January 21, 2009. I tapped gently on the half open door. The African American female sitting at a desk, dressed in a dark sweater and skirt, peering intently at the computer screen paused briefly, momentarily suspended in thought. As she slowly

turned towards me, she seemed to deliberate, then folded and tucked her thoughts away before she broke into a warm, radiating smile that caught her eyes and filled the room. With a quick, welcoming move of her hand, she motioned for me to enter, then gestured to a chair across from her; offering me a seat.

Synopsis of Narrative: "I always had questions....to understand, I had to go back to school."

Quietly, she began setting the context for understanding why and how she came to doctoral education and how she managed to persist to graduation. Dr. Regina explained she is the first one, on her fathers' side of the family, to receive a doctoral degree but not the first one among her relatives; other relatives, on her mothers' side of the family, have also earned their doctorate. She described her lineage as a "long line of educators." About education, she said excitedly, "I still equate it to freedom just as my ancestors did." She said she grew up in a middle class, black family in a mostly middle class, predominately-white neighborhood in the northeast. Dr. Regina vividly remembers that all during elementary, middle, and high school she was "one of the few; if not the only person who didn't go home on the bus that was mostly all black." Her parents, she told me, kept the family connected to the black community through their black church on the other side of town but Dr. Regina still felt a profound sense of "disconnect between me and the black community in my immediate area" that is, until college.

During her senior year in high school, Dr. Regina applied for admission to a black college and was accepted. Regina was elated. She felt that she finally had the opportunity to learn about her "people". The result was transformative. Her voice filling with pride she explained, "When I graduated from [college] I was almost militant, like Angela

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Davis. I learned my history. I learned that black folks could be mayors. They can be lawyers. They can be doctors. They can be presidents of major universities."

Years following her graduation from college, Dr. Regina resigned from her corporate job and entered the field of education. Early in her new career as a teacher, she wrestled with moral issues concerning the inequities in the distribution of resources between urban schools, most often the schools that educated black students, and suburban schools. Confronted with the harsh realities about race and equity in education, Regina began to question the effectiveness of the Courts rulings in Brown vs. Board of Education. She explained her confusion and her need for explanations in this way:

> I didn't understand and the only way to get an answer was to go back
> to school and so, I looked for a Ph. D. program that would let me do
> interdisciplinary work…I wanted to understand sociology, history,
> the political parts of it, the economics of school; just the big picture.

Regina said her quest for "understanding" led her to a southern, historically white university to pursue her doctorate. Although the school's promise of financial assistance was a decidedly important factor (because Dr. Regina knew that without it, doctoral education was out of her reach), the reassurances from a black faculty member that African Americans at the institution "take care of our own" was the ultimate deciding factor, in her decision, to go to this university.

Dr. Regina reported that initially she "felt inadequate" and "discouraged" among her peers, who, in many respects, were "professional students". She agonized that they would erroneously interpret her shyness, and the fact that she was quiet, as an indication of her inability to do doctoral work. She said she felt out of place, as though she did not belong there, and questioned her decision to enter doctoral study. Her insecurity was such that she described her decision as a "crazy thing."

Nonetheless, Regina rallied and she persisted with her education. Her voice filling with emotion and excitement she recounted how black faculty mentors and three African American classmates helped her to find her confidence and purpose and to define her "work". She described how they prayed, hurdled, counseled, supported, taught, befriended, and loved each other through the doctoral process. She spoke consistently about the bond that existed among black students in her program and wondered what it would have been like "had it not been for those other people pulling me, and holding me, and urging me on, thinking of the bigger purpose."

Dr. Regina acknowledged that although some white faculty, staff, and students provided some "words of wisdom" and contributed to her learning and socialization, it was black faculty mentors and her three "Diva Sistahs" who formed the center and margins of her tenure at the university and unapologetically invested in her success. With their direction, counsel, love, and support; the research work that she engaged in as a student; a keen sense of her history and, thus, an intense awareness of her accountability to past and future generations of African Americans; Dr. Regina fought through the obstacles of doctoral education and came to realize some of the answers to the questions that brought her to the university. She excitedly explained that her future goal was to ensure her research on African American families, makes it way to "every family's kitchen table". She hoped her "work" would help African American families become fully empowered to advocate for their children's education— so that they, too, can find the answers they seek.

Reflecting on her doctoral experience and the future of African American doctoral students in historically white universities, she explained, "It's not about [us]. It's a bigger

purpose. We are here to carry on this torch…all of us got this sense of history…this purpose, this story that is not finished being told.*"*

<div align="center">Dr. Nina</div>

Demographic Profile

Dr. Nina is a recipient of the doctoral degree. She is also a professor at a college in the Southeastern United States and one of the two youngest participants in the study. Before she received her degree, Dr. Nina was an outreach coordinator working on leadership issues in the community.

Dr. Nina was one of the first respondents to my request for participants. She wrote me an e-mail offering to take part in the study. In her e-mail, she invited me to contact her, provided her contact information, and assured me that she would be "happy to help in any way".

I met Nina on January 22, 2009. We had scheduled the interview at her office on campus for 9:30 a.m. I was looking forward to this interview partly because the interviews with Dr. Rachel and Dr. Regina had yielded such rich data and I was curious about what data Dr. Nina's interview would reveal, but mostly because I was also intrigued by this participant. Like the first two interviewees, her enthusiasm for this research project and her willingness to give of her time to participate in this research were quite evident. She had piqued my interest.

I walked into Dr. Nina's office and an African American female, of medium height, with roasted mocha colored skin rose to greet me. "Hey", her greeting and her smile were simultaneous. She waved casually at me as though she knew me and had been quietly waiting for me, as one does with an old acquaintance. The atmosphere was

relaxed, easy; no sense that I was intruding, or that I needed to hurry. It felt safe, like home. I smiled back.

Synopsis of Narrative:"… it goes back to pride"

Dr. Nina's account of her doctoral experience began with her memories of the initial contact with administrators and faculty members in her program. She said she had originally planned on pursuing her degree in public administration but had a change of heart and instead, she began "exploring the idea of joining the doctoral program" in education. She recalled that her first contact with black faculty members was such "a pleasant, positive, and outstanding experience", she was soon convinced that she would receive the support that she needed to complete the degree, and that Education was "really where she needed to be."

Nina found her impressions about her program were accurate. She spoke glowingly of the support, friendship, counsel, and encouragement she received from her advisor, a black female faculty member, who "opened my eyes" and never "stood in my way" but, who would gently redirect her when she was "going off course." She told me about her relationship with other black students in her program and the "powerful" support group that they formed to ensure that black students in the program had a network of peer supporters. She talked about the culture of inclusiveness in her program and the fact that white faculty and program staff members were also interested in her success and the success of other students of color.

However, Dr. Nina said her experience outside of the degree program was not as positive. She revealed stories of instances when she felt that university officials, outside of her degree program, treated her unfairly because of her race and placed barriers in her

way to prevent her from entering and completing the degree. She said she perceived, then, that these officials expressed "covert" and, in some instances, "blatant" racism against her. She said, initially she refused to address it; to "not meet it head on", "to find a way around it and still get what I needed." In essence, she suffered through it until her advisor helped her to understand that "it was ok to acknowledge certain things." Dr. Nina credited her advisor, whom she said gave selflessly and "never stood in her way"; her family, especially her mother, who taught her the importance of having pride in herself; her husband, whom she laughingly said, "allowed her to neglect him"; her black peers, for their unfailing support; and her undergraduate mentor inspiring examples of persistence, for her success. She also acknowledged her personal contribution in finishing her degree. She credited her own drive and sense of "pride in self", for helping her to persist in her program despite the unpleasantness of her experiences outside of her department.

<div align="center">Dr. Gap</div>

Demographic Profile

Dr. Gap is a professor of education for both undergraduate and graduate students. He wrote in his demographic profile that he earned his doctoral degree in education approximately five years after he entered the program. He received his doctor of philosophy degree from a historically white university in the southern region of the United States. Like several of the participants in this study, Dr. Gap came to education after a successful career in the corporate sector.

On January 9, 2009, at the recommendation of another professor, I extended an e-mail invitation to Dr. Gap. At that point in the recruitment process, I had grown used to

the enthusiastic responses and inquiries I had received from graduates of the doctoral program, who had knowledge of the study, either because I had asked them or other individuals had solicited their participation on my behalf. Even so, I was amazed at Dr. Gap's response. His January 11, 2009 e-mail response read, "Minavia, it would be an honor to participate in your research, please call me at your convenience so we can set up a time for the interview. [I am] looking forward to participating in this research."

On January 22, 2009, we met at a restaurant, towards the end of the lunch hour, to conduct the interview. I had not thought to ask Dr. Gap to describe what he looked like. Therefore, when I entered the restaurant and observed several African American males sitting solo at the tables, I was somewhat uncertain who to approach. After a few indecisive moments, I called his cell phone number. I looked around and the African American male in brown, corduroy pants and a brown, pullover sweater, sitting almost directly in front of me raised his hand and signaled me over. As I approached his table, I noticed he had a wide pleasant grin. He placed his blackberry phone carefully on the table between us and rose to greet me. He extended his right hand towards me and his grim widened even further only to be replaced by a generous, equally-pleasant laugh.

Synopsis of Narrative: "….they just constantly pushed us towards education."

Dr. Gap introduced his story with an explanation. He said that his decision to return to higher education for a doctoral degree was a well thought-out decision based on his long-standing view that education was an emancipating force and that the pursuit of a doctorate was the road to freedom, his "only way out", and an escape route from his impoverished background. He said he had developed that view because of grandparents who constantly "pushed" their grandchildren to get an education. His decision to

matriculate in adult education at a historically white institution was not as long-standing as his views on the power of education. He confessed he chose this program partly on a casual recommendation; partly because this area of study aligned with his interest and previous occupation; but principally because of the unexpected, sincere welcome he received from the program's faculty members and administrators. He chose the University because program facilitators and program offerings were so impressive.

Speaking about his experiences as an African American doctoral student in a historically white university, Dr. Gap was careful to differentiate between his experience in his program and his experience in the university at large. He described the university at large as a "typical white university" with a culture where "racism is alive and well" and "race matters every time". He said, as a black student in that culture he had to "explain" himself so that he could "fit in. He explained his personal conflict and discomfort this way: "you [are] operating within two cultures. You're operating in the Black culture and then you [are] operating within the White establishment. And that's a challenge, sometimes, that Black people experience, and have to deal with."

He described his experience within his program as a "positive, nurturing, uplifting experience", the antithesis to his experiences outside his program. He revealed that he entered his doctoral program with trepidation, fearful that he lacked the capability to be successful in a doctoral program. However, his Committee Chair "made it clear that he could achieve anything. She calmly quieted his fears. He said, "I came to realize that I can, and I will be able to get through this process; so, I became far more empowered. I became far more confident about me...my ability to complete the program." Besides the incredibly positive contribution from his Committee Chair in boosting his confidence, Dr.

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Gap said she advocated for him, creating opportunities for him to travel to conferences, publish scholarly work, and make professional and social contacts. His writing abilities "became progressively better" under her tutelage. With her unflinching commitment and the support of other Black student-peers and faculty mentors in his program, Dr. Gap said he was able to "tap into resources", financial and otherwise, and persist in his program until he graduated.

He shared accounts of how black students in his program formed student support groups for the purposes of sharing information and other resources. For example, he disclosed that he carpooled to and from the university with two other African American male students and they used this opportunity to share their thoughts, encourage, motivate and "just lean on each other." From these support groups grew long-lasting friendships, collegial relationships, and a greater sense of racial identity. Dr. Gap related that other faculty members in his program also figured prominently in his experiences. He spoke of faculty members who mentored him by allowing him to practice his human development, leadership, and organization skills; gave him advice on publishing opportunities; and generally prepared him for a career in academia.

In summing up his assessment of his experience, Dr. Gap also made linkages between family teachings inculcated in him from childhood; his knowledge about race and culture, which he acquired from his research; and the quality of his experience in his program and the university at large. He said another reason that he was able to confront his doubts about his ability to pursue doctoral education in a historically white institution, and to triumph over it was because, he was "researching and writing about diversity and multiculturalism and so…understood some of those dynamics." An even greater asset

was the fact that he was well armed with the values that were ingrained in him from childhood. Finally, he shared his perspective, born out of his experience, on how Blacks in a predominantly white academic world can be successful. Dr. Gap said:

> Don't do it alone. Understand that you are not the first person to have gone through that process. Talk to other people who have gone through the process [and] tap into these resources. Find a professor, and it doesn't have to be someone who is African American, someone who is black. Find someone who understands the unique challenges that Blacks go through when they are in a predominantly white institution. Find and tap into people who will provide a support system. And yes, they might be African American[s] but that does not always mean…you can find those [qualities] in white professors as well.

<div align="center">Dr. Jamika</div>

Demographic Profile

Just barely in her late twenties, Dr. Jamika was the youngest participant in the study. She received her doctoral degree two years ago from the same university that awarded her a bachelors and masters degree. Dr. Jamika accomplished this feat after only ten years in higher education and now holds the position of assistant professor at a historically white university in the southern portion of the United States.

Dr. Jamika initiated our introduction when she responded to my announcement asking for participants for my study. She wrote in her e-mail that she received the announcement through a professional listserv and would like more information about the study. She also offered to assist me to recruit study participants by sending details about the study to colleagues at her school. I later learned she was motivated to volunteer for the study because of her sense of stewardship. Someone helped her through the dissertation process and, therefore, she felt duty-bound to do the same for another student of color. She explained she was "paying it forward" to increase the numbers of doctoral recipients of color and to increase research on this group. We communicated by e-mail

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and phone in the days following and on February 2, 2009, after I had received her demographic profile and consent forms and she had rearranged her busy schedule, we agreed to a phone interview for the following day. The interview started promptly at 5:00 p.m. eastern standard time and for the next forty-five minutes, Dr. Jamika's story unfolded.

Synopsis of Narrative: "...this passion for learning."

She began her story with her reason for entering doctoral study — "to get the academic qualifications" to "work as a psychologist"; but, as she revealed, her preparation for this journey began in her childhood. She described herself in her early years as a child-leader, assertive, and strong in mathematics, especially algebra. Realizing that Dr. Jamika was passionate about learning, her mother and teachers stoked the flames. They made sure that she was involved in extra curricula activities to strengthen her leadership and advocated for her having access to more academically demanding classes, to feed her craving for more knowledge. For Dr. Jamika, education was first a "means to opportunity"—a way to debunk the "school system that formally or informally labeled people." Second, it was a way to "make it" out of a small, racially mixed, blue collar, working class community where many people "got stuck". Leaving her community was important to Dr. Jamika because, as she explained, the norm was that students in her community either dropped out, or barely made it out of high school.

Dr. Jamika entered her doctoral program in the same university where she had earned her bachelors degree. She said because she had the advantage of four years of undergraduate study at the university, she was "very familiar with the campus." Consequently, she concluded that she was "comfortable" on the campus of a historically

white institution. However, her interactions with her peers were not as stress free. She explained:

> I felt when I first entered graduate school I was ill-informed and I felt like
> I did not belong. I felt I was coming into a place with my peers who have
> been bred to do this; meaning their parents were doctors, lawyers,
> professors and they knew the expectations of graduate school. They knew
> the right things to say. They knew the norms of graduate school. My first
> year, I was still trying to make the transition from undergraduate to
> graduate school and I really didn't understand what the expectations were.
> So, I felt very much like an outsider. Even though, on the social level, my
> peers were very welcoming and friendly, I still felt as if I really did not
> know, you know, what the rules of engagement were.

Dr. Jamika soon realized that being one of only two African Americans in a cohort meant that she was expected to speak for the race. Dr. Jamika said, at first she was resentful. "This is not fair." However, she also knew opportunity came with responsibility. When Dr. Jamika's white classmates who would one day become the professionals to make decisions related to the wellbeing of African American children, expressed willful or unintentional, stereotypical perspectives about Blacks, she felt bound to become their defender. "It was my duty," she explained. Dr. Jamika reasoned that had she not accepted the role of spokesperson for her race, she would have missed the opportunity to tell a counter-story about African American children and their families and help her classmates rethink their perspectives. She explained her actions this way:

> I tried to provide additional information and other perspectives so that
> they wouldn't accept some of the theories they were reading as gospel…
> And, if you don't provide people with examples or other ways of thinking
> of it, they just take it [the theories] as gospel and they apply that in the
> school with children of color; that could be detrimental. I felt I had a duty
> to help them think about things differently and not just think of things one
> way.

This sense of responsibility, this passion to make a difference, her need to give and receive "additional information and other perspectives" and to challenge status quo

thinking, distinguished Dr. Jamika throughout her academic studies. As a result, she was not only an advocate for members of her race; her professors recognized that they also could benefit from Dr. Jamika's feedback. Dr. Jamika surmised that her leadership, assertiveness, hard work, and need to learn more made it easier to receive assistantships, mentoring, and opportunities for publishing.

Except for issues related to cultural differences in communication, interpretation, and meaning-making, Dr. Jamika described her experience and her relationship with her faculty and staff as positive. Nonetheless, Dr. Jamika was quick to acknowledge that her experience was not the norm for all African American students. She reluctantly admitted to the possibility that her "acceptance" by white faculty and students in her program may have been partly because she was "successful in the program…destroying people perception, going beyond people's expectations…doing more than was expected." She offered that other students of her color may not have had the same or similar experiences, and were subjected to negative situations in which the messages were: black student are looked at differently.

Even for all her hard work and success in the program, Dr. Jamika found she was not exempt from the difficulties of financing her education or the threat of ABD. She found it difficult to work on her dissertation and take care of the emotional and financial needs of her two young children on her graduate assistantship earnings. After seven years into a five-year program, she knew that the threat of not finishing her program was real. This realization, and the thought of how it might affect her daughters' future were, more than any other, the event that eventually galvanized her into completing her doctorate.

Dr. Angelina

Demographic Profile

Angelina is a recipient of the doctorate in educational psychology. Upon graduation, she accepted an assistant professor position at a university in the south eastern portion of United States, where she teaches and mentors students through their programs. Her career as a teacher began some years before the doctorate. In fact, it was partly because of her need to advance her practice as a teacher that she entered doctoral study.

I was introduced to Dr. Angelina through e-mail. Like many of the other participants in the study, she had heard about the study through a colleague. Convinced that she met the criteria for participation in the study and that she could contribute to research on the factors that influenced African Americans in HWIs completion of their doctoral programs, she sent me an e-mail offering to be a participant. After I received her completed demographics and consent form, we agreed to a phone interview on the morning of February 4, 2009.

Professor Angelina answered the telephone on the second ring. We exchanged pleasantries and I noticed, as I did during our previous conversation, that she had a pleasurable sounding voice. Because I could not see her face, I found myself listening even harder; trying to synchronize the words and its nuances, to a face and a personality. Her voice was clear and full of purpose, assertive yet friendly; unafraid, like the voice of someone who knew where she was going, why, and how to get there. I had the distinct impression she had been waiting by the telephone, waiting to tell her story.

Summation of Narrative: "…when you know more, you do more, you do better."

She began by telling me about her reasons for entering doctoral study. She explained that she wanted to be a better teacher, an advocate for parents and disadvantaged children in city schools, who needed encouragement and motivation. As a teacher in the elementary school of a major metropolitan city, Angelina recognized that some parents did not have the political or public relations know-how to advocate for their children's education. She felt that she could provide some assistance in that area and had planned to build a community center, where parents and children could receive the advocacy and advice they needed to reach their educational goals. Dr. Angelina was also attracted to doctoral education because she equated education with personal development. She rationalized "when you know more, you do more, [and] you do better. You have enough to make some informed decisions to better your life and those around you."

Guided by this philosophy, the mentoring of one of her undergraduate professors, good grades, and confidence in her ability to "earn an advance degree", Dr. Angelina entered Southern university as a fulltime student. Her initial education goal was to obtain a doctoral degree that would allow her to focus on advocacy in education. Dr. Angelina described her program this way. "So when I started at the university…I was in the social foundation program, which talked about curriculum issues, instruction issues, and issues that impact race and education that we don't have open discussions about." But after reassessing her skills and her compatibility with social foundations, Dr. Angelina said she decided to change her program from social foundation to educational psychology.

Dr. Angelina gave accounts of having both positive and negative experiences in her programs. In one program, she described the environment as "hostile." She found it

difficult to work, or share information, because she was distrustful of some faculty members. This distrust was compounded by the lack of structure in program goals and her feelings that faculty members in that program were merely tolerant of her and not very interested in her success. She contrasted this experience to her experiences in her other program. In this program, she had the benefit of a wide array of resources. She received mentoring from her advisor; collaborated with faculty on research publications; attended conferences and department sponsored seminars; and felt included, accepted, and valued.

Even so, in what appears to be a much more progressive and inclusive program, there were "subtle…but still there" acts of racism. Dr. Angelina said there were times when she was the "lone voice" defending or contradicting faculty or students' perceptions about the Black race. She explained that her racial background and socioeconomic position in life had sensitized her to issues that individuals from disadvantaged groups face and she felt compelled to advocate on their behalf. Her advocacy was not always successful and sometimes her failure to make others understand "was bothersome to me …to the point I was almost in tears."

In retrospect, Dr. Angelica believes she made it though her doctoral program because of her lived experiences. She said her life as an African American, outside of the university, had anesthetized her for the experiences of doctoral study in a HWI; in that she had learned to develop a "thick skin." Dr. Angelica credits this learned mental toughness for helping her to get though the insensitivity and negative comments in graduate school— to "pick myself off the floor" and resume working "at it again typing away… [doing] what I needed to do."

Dr. P.

Demographic Profile

Dr. P., a psychologist in her late thirties, lives and practices in the northeast. She earned her doctoral degree from a well-known southern university after about seven years of fulltime study.

Dr. P. decided to participate in the study because of her interest in helping other doctoral students complete their degrees. I was first introduced to Dr. P. by e-mail. She had learned I was recruiting participants for the study from a colleague. Thinking that she met the participant's criteria, she contacted me and offered to participate.

I interviewed Dr. P. on February 6, 2009, by telephone, at her home. We had rescheduled the interview from an earlier date due to conflicts with her work schedule. I was struck again, as I did before, by her distinctly-clear voice and how its varying tones recorded the shifting messages in her words and her emotions. She had a sense of humor too—the ability to laugh easily and often; to take a serious, painful, experience and wring the sting out of it. I recall listening to her words and laughter and thinking that she has a contagious, can't-keep-me-down, quality about her.

Synopsis of Narrative: "… 'cause there is no such thing as quit."

Dr. P. began her story by telling me about the qualities which, she said, prepared her for doctoral education. She said she was curious, smart, disciplined, and valued education. Her discipline and high regard for education she learned from her mother, a nurse, who would work double shift and yet; find the time to help her with her homework. She said she had a natural interest in medicine so when her paternal grandfather suggested that she should be a "doctor" she decided to pursue a degree in

medicine. In time, and due to "circumstances beyond her control", she changed her major from medicine to psychology but remained firm in her resolve to earn her doctorate because, as she explained, quitting was not an option for her. Dr. P. said that this refusal to not quit, was inculcated in her early in life by her mother and was a significant factor that later influenced her persistent in her doctoral program.

Dr. P's experience in her doctoral program was also heavily influenced by her family and community and a rich array of friends from her church and her undergraduate years. She said they served as a support system, a buffer, an outlet for the stress of doctoral work, and an "oasis" where she could "relax and recharge and be around people who love me and would look after me and just give me a break from life [before I] go back into the fray."

Most of her struggles as a doctoral student she attributed to her "trying to keep up with her schedule and maintain some level of sanity and health." By her account, faculty members in her program were interested in her progress, and assisted her in completing her degree. She said her Committee Chair and Co-Chair were especially understanding and supportive. Nonetheless, she spoke emotionally, and at length, about her experience with one white faculty member whom she said had a "hostile seeming intent" when he interacted with her. She said this faculty member made snide remarks to her, underestimated her abilities, revealed confidential information about her, and consistently mispronounced her name; even if she had, on many occasions, told him how to pronounce her name. Her voice rising, Dr. P. recounted an occasion when this particular faculty member chastised her about her work telling her she was the "weakest link" among the other students in her group and that he didn't think she would make it.

Reflecting on how these encounters made her feel, she said, "it didn't impact my performance as a student but it did impact me as a person." She said she did not let that stop her progress towards completing her degree. Instead, drawing on her "do or die attitude", Dr. P. said she "eked by"; finishing her degree in seven rather than five years. Although it took two years more than she had hoped, for her, the most important thing was that she finished.

<div align="center">Dr. J.</div>

Demographic Profile

Dr. J. is in her early forties and a late 2000 recipient of the doctoral degree. She is also an elementary school Guidance Counselor, an advocate for women and children, and a parent. By her own description she is shy, sensitive to the feelings of others, determined, and driven to accomplish her goals.

One of Dr. .J's colleagues informed her about this study and she wrote me that she was interested in participating and, if I so wished, she would be willing take part in the study. I learned later that she offered to take part in the study because she wanted future African American doctoral students to know that although they are likely to face struggles and issues at historically or predominately white institutions and that completing their degree may prove difficult, "it can be done and it's being done."

Synopsis of Narrative: "I though that if I exposed my oldest child, a son, to education…"

Dr. J. said she returned to the university to pursue a doctoral degree for two reasons: to improve her personal and professional life, and to be a role model for her children; but, from the beginning, and well into her narrative she spoke almost exclusively about her educational hopes for her son. She told me stories of taking her son

to her class with her. She said she wanted him to see, firsthand, his mother's "diligence" to education and her "love for the classroom." She explained that she had hoped that by going back to school, she would be an example to her son; that he would grow to recognize that "education has to be that full proof method or that one little thing that we know will get us over, or that will get us to the next level." She wanted education to become "a normal, a natural part of his life."

This natural attraction that she had for education and which she aspired to share with her son had been a family tradition; in Dr. J words, "a family value." Dr. J. credited her father for instilling in his family this "need for education." She said her father was an education "visionary" in that he made sure all his children were exposed to a college education. She explained that even if she was the first in the family to obtain a doctoral degree, they were all raised with the knowledge that when it comes to education, "you have to want more."

Dr. J. said her life experiences have taken her to different places and exposed her to people of diverse cultures and backgrounds and so she was comfortable with diversity and inclusiveness. In fact, she had chosen to live in her community because of its diverse populations. She said she chose to study at her university because of its proximity to her home and not necessarily because of its proclivity for diversity. But, she also explained: she was unprepared for her experiences in her program.

Her voice rigid with emotion Dr. J. described her experiences in her cohort. She said, that she was the only African American in a cohort of four white students and was the only one who was invariably left out of social gatherings, or was not invited to participate in presentations at conferences. At times, she felt like an "imposter." She

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shared her feelings of discomfort and hurt and her efforts to befriend an international student in the program, who was having "separation issues." She made this gesture towards this student partly "to reach out", and establish an "emphatic presence", and give her a "sense of belonging"; but, also to minimize her own feelings of isolation and rejection.

In very poignant moments in her narrative, Dr. J. described incidences that fed her distrust for at least one of her committee members. She said she had just completed her prospectus and her dissertation advisor, the only Black faculty on her committee, her dissertation chair, accepted a job offer at another university. Just at the critical point, when she needed the support of all her committee members, a white faculty member, resigned from her committee. The committee member cited disagreement with the direction of Dr. J's dissertation as the reason for her resignation. But, Dr. J. said she perceived it differently. She interpreted the faculty member's resignation as an attempt to derail her efforts to complete her degree. She described her feelings and reactions to this second resignation as one of distrust, panic, inadequacy, and uncertainty. These feelings persisted and she continued to flounder, "back-pedaling" thinking that she "must really be doing something wrong or…must really be way off base." However, her ex-dissertation chair came to her rescue by offering her counsel and support: helping to ground and redirect her. Dr. J. credits her previous advisor for helping her to realize she had "come too far [to] not see the light at the end of the tunnel"; to not complete her educational journey. With this realization came renewed vigor. Dr. J. said she "found a new committee member, and just kept moving forward, one foot in front of the other."

Dr. Talibav

Dr. Talibav is a School Psychologist in her late forties to early fifties. Before receiving her doctorate in her current profession, she practiced clinical psychology, working primarily with adults. Dr. Talibav began studying for her degree, fulltime, at a highly recognized university in the Southwest and completed her degree nine years after entering her programs, seven years after completing coursework, and six years after she entered candidacy. The matriculation period with a doctorate in School Psychology at the university Dr. Talibav attended, is five to six years. Dr. Talibav attended one program during the nine years she spent working on her doctorate.

Like most of the other participants in the study, Dr. Talibav learned I was recruiting participants for the study from a professional colleague. She contacted me through e-mails and volunteered to participate in the study. She offered to participate because, as she explained, there is limited research on African American doctoral students' experiences in their programs and an even greater silence in the research literature on the factors that influenced their persistence to degree completion. Besides, she was convinced it "a piece of work that needs to be done." because it was "important" for others to know "there is a difference for [African American] students going to traditionally white universities.

I interviewed Dr. Talibav by telephone. She had scheduled her interview in the evening to avoid possible conflicts with her daily responsibilities. At exactly 8:30 p.m. eastern time, I called her home phone number and for the next 90 minutes, she recounted

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the story of her experiences, as an African American doctoral student, in a historically white university.

Synopsis of Narrative: *"It was uncomfortable for me … to sit in the back of the bus…"*

Dr. Talibav's journey to the doctorate began with her desire to create positive change in her life and the life conditions of people who needed help. As a child, Dr. Talibav suffered from the effects of her parents' divorce and the insensitivity of social workers who were "mean to people who were having a hard time." She explained she felt "looked down upon" and wished to be a "different kind of social worker." At the urgings of her father, who had also earned a doctoral degree, and with belief in her own academic capabilities, Dr. Talibav confidently pursued education as a means, or a "leg up", out of her personal situation. She pursued her Masters in the field of psychology and initially counseled adults with substance abuse problems. Later, she did some work with children and found that she was more effective and felt a greater sense of fulfillment working with this population. With this newfound purpose and the financial backing from an assistantship, Dr. Talibav entered the School Psychology doctoral program at a Southern university.

Dr. Talibav's own assessment of her preparedness for doctoral study seems to indicate that she had many qualities and resources that a student needs to succeed. She was academically well-prepared and motivated "I knew I was s*mart* so I wanted to get an education… I wanted to reach." She describes herself as comfortable with her identity. Her 'blackness" was a source of pride and a resource that she knew she could draw on:

 "…thank goodness! I had a very good foundation as to who I was as an African American woman because I don't think I would have lasted a…[my university] if I hadn't

had that." In addition to her academic preparedness, motivation, and self-confidence about her identity, Dr. Talibav was sure she entered her doctoral program with other distinguishing advantages. By her own admission, she was comfortable with diversity, had a high sense of self-worth, and was familiar with the beliefs and practices which characterize majority-black and majority-white universities because she had earned her bachelors and masters at an HBCU and PWI, respectively. She also had the advantage of being part of a family who provided role modeling as an educational resource because some have had the opportunity to have earned advanced degrees. Additionally, Dr. Talibav divulged that she possessed high self-confidence from having grown up in a close knit, black family in a caring, "good community" where "children really respected" grown ups and "teachers really loved" the students. It was the type of community if you misbehaved "a different parent would tell your mum on you, and give you a spanking."

Nonetheless, even with these qualities and resources at her disposal, her high academic abilities and an arsenal of love and support, Dr. Talibav was hardly prepared for the experience of doctoral education in a historically white institution. Her voice taut with emotion, Dr. Talibav recounted the experience of having recruitment material to join the Ku Klux clan placed under her office door; her dismay over being told, by a white professor, that she could not write (even though she had received the graduate award for creative writing); and the overwhelming fatigue from having to prove that she was admitted to the program because she had met the requirements and not because of affirmative action.

On reflection, Dr. Talibav attributed her persistence in her program partly to her fortitude and her father's teachings about the importance of education; but, mostly to the

support she received from a black faculty, the Head of the Multicultural department at her school; and her Committee Chair and other minority students in her program. Speaking about the Head of the Multicultural department, Dr. Talibav explained that this faculty member took her under her wings and befriended her, provided financial resources so Dr. Talibav could continue her education, and was her constant source of motivation.

<div align="center">Dr. Anthony</div>

Demographic Profile

Anthony is an African American Faculty Administrator in higher education. Prior to the professoriate, he held different careers but was motivated to pursue the doctorate because of the opportunities the professoriate offered for teaching and research. He received his doctoral degree from a historically white university in the southeastern region of the United States after about six years of part-time study.

Anthony became a participant in this study after I sent an electronic mail invitation to him. I invited Dr. Anthony to take part in this study because I had personal knowledge that Anthony met the study's criteria for participation. Initially, he was concerned that his work schedule would not allow him to contribute to the study but, as I later learned, Dr. Anthony believes that research is important to advance knowledge. He also believes study participants are essential to the process and, thus, he made the decision, despite his busy schedule, to participate. Additionally, Dr. Anthony felt he had personal knowledge that he could add to a study that sought answers to the social and cultural factors that influenced African American doctoral students' experiences in historically white institutions and the subsequent completion of their programs. He said he felt that this research study was an opportunity for him to do so. Another, just as

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important reason for Dr. Anthony's willingness to participate was his conviction that this study was an opportunity for him to help "advance the cause."

I met with Anthony in his office on February 10, 2008. He had scheduled our interview between classes. Dr. Anthony was sitting at an L-shaped desk before huge, tinted, glass windows. A large framed certificate hung on the walls directly in front of the L-shaped desk. The remaining walls were sparse; the framed certificate seemed to be the focal point in the room. My eyes were drawn to the gold-gilded lettering on what appeared to be white parchment paper encased in warm mahogany colored frames. It was Dr. Anthony's doctoral degree. The surface of the remaining walls was sparse. I had the distinct impression that its sparseness was by design and that the lone certificate on the wall was a prized possession that held tremendous meaning to its owner.

Synopsis of Narrative: "...this view, colored by our experiences, is legitimate."

Dr. Anthony explained he began his pursuit of his doctoral degree because he wanted the flexibility and "the options" the degree offered for this career. Unlike some of the other participants in the study, Dr. Anthony was a first generation doctoral student and did not have a family member to act as a role model in that capacity. However, there were people outside of his immediate family—friends and professional colleagues, who pleaded with Anthony to pursue doctoral education. "[You] need to do this", they said. They were confident that Anthony would make an ideal doctoral student**.** His friend and mentor repeatedly reminded him: "we need people of color in the academy…there aren't enough and …we are absent." At their relentless urgings, he investigated the possibility of applying to the Adult Education program at a historically white university in the south.

He confessed that he did so reluctantly; but, his hesitancy soon changed to enthusiasm

after his interview with the head of the Adult Education program. Dr. Anthony told me:

> It was as if adult education was a natural fit for me. It was as if I found this
> ideology, this perspective that resonated well with me not just on education but,
> on life itself. And so, I wanted to…I wanted to do it, if you will. When I got
> involved and started studying, you know I understood. I realized that, ah ha! I
> think I have some *stuff* [his emphasis] I could add from my perspectives, from my
> own lived experiences. You know [it was] as though this was a natural avenue for
> giving voice to my own experiences.

Dr. Anthony soon found that the kind of support he received from faculty, staff,

and other African American students in his program was not necessarily available from

other faculty members or students in other programs. He recalled an occasion when he

questioned one professor's objectivity in grading his work and another situation where he

felt this same professor "did not care" about his progress towards his degree. Dr. Anthony

described this professors' approach to his situation as unfriendly, uninviting, and

unsupportive; a stark contrast to professors in his program. Dr. Anthony said he felt

forced to withdrew from the course because he explained, "I though that it might be held

against me." He described the educational experience in that particular course as

"unrewarding." He perceived that outside of his program he was seen (and not

necessarily in a positive light) as *the* male student of color. He described his situation this

way: "very often, I would stand out, particularly, as the only person of color….definitely

the only male of color." Commenting on this lack of ethnic diversity on a campus of over

25, 000 students, Dr. Anthony told me:

> As a student of color, particularly as a person of color in the era that I
> came out of, I will have to tell you that race is not invisible to me. I am
> always conscious of it. So when I'm treated differently, I wonder why.
> And yes, I will wonder if it is because I look different.

Despite these experiences, Dr. Anthony persisted to complete his degree. He attributed large sums of his success to the support he received from the "outside member" of his doctoral committee who, although she was terminally ill, remained on his committee. He said he thought she was motivated to do so because "it was important to her to get another student of color [through]." He spoke about his friends and other African American peers in the program, who gave him "insiders' information". Because of their example and the "long conversations" that they shared, he came to realize pursuing and completing the doctoral degree was a "doable process." He praised them for their friendship, support, and counsel which, he said, were priceless in helping him to navigate the intricacies of doctoral education. He also credited his parents. Their reminders that because he was a person of color, he had to be better in everything; their admonitions that quitting was not an option for their son; and their advice that "the way to survive is to learn to navigate…the racial climate; to succeed in spite of racism" were constant companions.

As fortunate as he was to have his supporters working for his success, Anthony acknowledged that his greatest motivations, the things that most compelled him to complete his degree was: (1) the knowledge of the racial harm his family suffered in the Jim Crow south; (2) his understanding that it was his responsibility to champion the silent voices of those who came before him, who did not have the opportunities that he had had; and (3) his duty to tell the story of their lived experiences.

Dr. Joyce

Demographic Profile

Dr. Joyce is an educator at a university, the same life career she pursued before obtaining her doctoral degree. I had prior knowledge that Dr. Joyce met the criteria for

participation in the study and that she may have knowledge of other African American doctoral graduates who may also meet those criteria. I extended an invitation to Dr. Joyce to participate in the study and a request that she recommend other recipients of the doctorate, who were eligible to take part in the study. Even with all her teaching and other scholarly responsibilities, Dr. Joyce did not dither; she graciously accepted the invitation and unselfishly agreed to my request.

I interviewed Dr. Joyce by telephone late in the afternoon on February 19, 2009. Knowing that Dr. Joyce had a very busy schedule, I offered to send her a reminder e-mail about her scheduled interview, the day before the actual interview.

Synopsis of Narrative: "...I wanted to kinda reach some higher levels..."

Dr. Joyce began the narrative of her experiences in her doctoral program by explaining that her decision to seek a doctoral degree was influenced by two needs: her desire to do research and write grants for professional gains, and a personal desire to advance the educational achievement of her family. She told me, "no one in my family had basically gotten that high…I have a brother who has a Masters; but, pretty much everyone else is either high school [graduate] or dropout." She recognized the doctorate was a practical way to resolve her needs. She explained her decision this way: "I really wanted to do that [doctoral education] for career purpose[s] but also for personal reasons, to meet that personal goal". Describing what education means to her, she said, "I think education is learning for self-enhancement…to provide more opportunities for advancement. So, it's a growth and opportunity thing for me." In essence, education was a way to enhance her personal, social, financial, and professional image in her community.

Dr. Joyce explained that she grew up in a community where "finances and opportunities were just not available, at least, for most of the community." This was a constraining factor but one she was fortunate enough to overcome by having connections to the "the right people", whom, she said, helped her to obtain scholarships and grants to finance her way through her undergraduate degree.

However, pursuing and financing a doctoral education proved more difficult for Dr. Joyce. Initially, she entered the program as a part time student but her other personal responsibilities conflicted with her responsibilities as a student. She said she wrestled with the decision to change to fulltime study but understood that pursuing the doctoral degree fulltime would be a tremendous financial cost she could not afford, unless she had secure sources of funding. Dr. Joyce described how she conducted what amounted to her own cost-benefit analysis. She described how she weighed the changes she would have to make to her lifestyle, and the benefits she would forego by quitting her job to attend her program fulltime. She compared these costs to the utility possibility function of the degree, and concluded that the benefits of the degree to her, and to society, were worth the costs. With the help and support of her committee chair and friends, she made the drastic but necessary changes to her life and embarked on her studies fulltime.

Although Dr. Joyce said she encountered some situations during her tenure as a doctoral student "that really open[ed] my eyes to the subtleness of racism" and the prejudicial assumptions that some White students held about race, she still maintained that her experience in her program was mostly positive. She attributed the positive aspects of her doctoral experience to her prior teaching experience; ability to understand doctoral research; her writing skills; her maturity; her understanding that the expectations

were higher for her because she was black—that she "couldn't be just average"; program support, particularly the support and friendship of her advisor and black peers; and her "desire to have that degree…the strength of God, …my spirituality and just my own *oomph.*" Even if Dr. Joyce characterized her own experience as fairly positive she was not oblivious to the possibility that other students may not have had as positive an experience as she did. Commenting on the normality of her experience, Joyce conceded , "I'm probably an outlier...I didn't experience a lot of the things that other people talked about experiencing in terms of negative interactions with faculty even outside the department because I always was able to communicate with them and get assistance."

Dr. Joyce may not have experienced negative contacts with faculty members in her program or within the university; nonetheless, she spoke of her academic tenure as a critical juncture in her developing social consciousness about racism. During that period, she said, she became more aware of "the subtleness of racism." She spoke passionately about a classroom incident, involving White students, which brought her face-to-face with the divisiveness and hurt that racism causes. She said she knew that racist attitudes, like the ones exhibited by White students in her program, existed; but, she had not experienced a lot of it and was somewhat stunned by the ferocity surrounding the incident in her classroom. Reflecting on her reaction, she explained that, initially, she was perplexed and somewhat amused at the strong feelings some students exhibited about race, but overtime, she realized she was emotionally affected "enough by it to want to have a voice." Dr. Joyce described her awareness and involvement in matters of equity before and after the incident in the classroom, this way:

> I was probably more silent about issues of racism, sexism, [and] elitism.
> So, I [was] moving towards being a more active voice for myself and for

those who were not at the table because I felt I was at a place where
 maybe a lot of people will not ever have the opportunity to be in and so,
I can be a voice for those individuals.

Chapter Summary

This chapter holds summaries of narratives about the experiences of eleven

recipients of the doctoral degree from the colleges of education in four historically white

institutions of higher education. Each summary is built around the most frequently

occurring ideas, or situations, in the narrator's account of his or her experience. The

narrative summary offers the reader a preview of the narrator's thought processes about the

experience and the basis for how and why the narrator attached a particular meaning to the

experience.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Improving doctoral completion among African Americans is an issue of concern for students, faculty, program administrators, individuals, and organizations who are interested in the highest, sustainable, educational achievement of students from minority groups. The findings in this study serve as a basis for greater understanding of the sociocultural and programmatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans at historically white institutions of higher education. Four research questions guided this study:

1. What were the social and cultural deterrents to African American doctoral students completing their degrees?

2. What programmatic resources identified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies?

3. What social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their degrees?

4. How did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to their degree completion?

The presentation of the data includes frequent, extended, quotations from the narratives. The data is presented in this format for three reasons. First, making the data available this way allows the participants to tell their stories for themselves, in their own words. Second, the completeness of their experiences is better maintained by using their own words. Full, thick, rich descriptions of the experiences provide sufficient contexts from which others can draw their own interpretation of the participants' experiences in

the context of the study. The overall findings are presented in Table 3, *Summary of the*

Findings. The chapter concludes with a summation of the discussions in the chapter.

Table 3. Summary of Findings

Themes & Sub-Categories

1. Racial Othering
    A. External Barriers: Them and us
    B. Internal Challenges: It's not me
2. Cultural Dissonance
3. Poverty of Insiders' Information

4. Opportunity, Assurance, & Reassurance Resources
    A. Relationship Opportunity
    B. Financial Assurance
    C. Reassurances of Safe Spaces

5. Cultural Capital
    A. Actualization Capital
    B. Stewardship Capital
    C. Resistance Capital
    D. Intersubjectivity Capital

6. Reconstituting Agency: Repositioning Self
    A. Mined Positive Relationships
    B. Introspection and Mental Reframing
    C. Emotional Intelligence
    D. Self-help
    E. Reasserted Their Purpose

A close analysis of the narrative data reveals that African American recipients of

the doctoral degree from historically white institutions faced deterrents to the completion

of their programs. The data also revealed that the most common deterrents were from

issues related to racial othering. These deterrents existed on both the interpersonal and

intrapersonal levels and included: (a) external barriers brought about by the interplay of

prejudicial behaviors and ideologies of people and systems (practices) within the

institutions, and (b) internal challenges, created as a result of the ensuing conflicts and the

negative effects of this interplay on students' self-confidence and psychological well-

being. The data also revealed that other strong deterrents to African American students'

attainment of their doctoral degrees were cultural dissonance, and a poverty of insiders'

information. These two themes, although not as prevalent as the racial othering finding;

nevertheless, was enough of a concern to some students to warrant notice.

<div align="center">Racial Othering</div>

Racial othering is defined here as the tendency by one racial group to subject

another group, of a different racial and ethnic background, to injurious behaviors and

practices that intentionally or unintentionally stigmatize, subordinate, denigrate, oppress,

and exclude. Unanimously, African American study participants spoke of either being

subjected to, or having knowledge of other doctoral students who were subjected to

flagrant acts of racism and, or, more veiled forms of oppression because of their racial

ethnicity. Findings revealed that many students experienced prejudice, discrimination,

marginalization, isolation, and stereotyping and racial insensitivity from white students,

faculty members, and staff. A noteworthy aspect of these findings is that in telling of

these experiences, participants simultaneously revealed their unwilling, or, unwitting

contributions to their own racialization. These contributions were evident in the

participants' altered perceptions of themselves as a response to the racism they

experienced. The data revealed participants experienced significant self-doubt and

psychological distress. They spoke consistently of their internal struggles with feelings of

imposterism, loneliness, fear, tokenism, and of compensation and denial.

Deeper analysis of the data shows not all participants experienced the same forms

of racism or reacted the same way to a similar act of racism. The analysis also revealed

that participants focused to a greater degree on describing the internal challenges they

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faced and how they may have impacted their education, and to a lesser degree on the acts, or the actors themselves. The various accounts from students' narratives corroborate these findings.

Facing External Barriers: Them and us

Many participants described instances when white faculty, students, and, or, staff subjected them to prejudicial and insensitive acts creating external barriers to their progress to completing their degrees. Repeatedly, the notion of barriers: Blacks and Whites, two learning communities, separate and unequally different, them and us, threads through their descriptions. For many students these barriers surfaced early in their studies. In one such case, Dr. Talibav described the experience of having recruitment material to join the Ku Klux clan placed under her door on her first day as a graduate assistant.

> There were those instances where there were straight out racism. Like when I was a graduate assistant [and White] students would ask me about where I was from [and] how was I was able to teach. I thought it was because I was black. It could be some of both you know. But I was *disgusted* [her emphasis] and I felt that they were [racist]. People didn't expect me to be black. My first week at Northern I got an invitation to the Ku Klux clan [be]cause they didn't know I was a black student. So, they put stuff under my door thinking that [a] Northern University student was going to be white. But it was *me* [her emphasis].

In another example of racism culled from the data, another student, Dr. Joyce, described a classroom incident and the barrier it created to the atmosphere of inclusiveness in the classroom. In this incident, black students were subjected to offensive behaviors from white students that were at variance with the philosophy and intent of the course they were taking.

> I was in a diversity class…when the flag was being changed or something and I was exposed to some people who I would really call rednecks

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(aggressively prejudiced). I mean biased, prejudiced folks. Really [the experience] open[ed] my eyes to some issues that I just had found did not exist and because of the superiority in which they were displayed. I mean people openly turning red, and getting upset, and walking out of the room just because of a flag being changed and the confederate flag not seen as appreciated by everyone.

Another act of racial othering emerging from the data was unfair treatment. Several study participants perceived they, or other African American students, were treated unfairly by white faculty members. They attributed the unfair treatment to the fact that they are of a different race. Dr. Anthony shared his insights and his experiences:

As a student of color, particularly as a person of color in the era that I come out of, I will have to tell you that race is not invisible to me. So I'm always conscious of it. So when I'm treated differently, I wonder why and yes, I will wonder if it's because I look different. Now, that's easy to always be conscious because at [Western University] there aren't a lot of students of color. And, you know depending on where you are on campus, you, very often stand out. When I took courses outside of the department, most of the other department[s] I found, were not as diverse as our …department was at the time. And so very often, I'de stand out as the only person of color, particularly if you are the one, definitely the only male of color.

African American students have so often had decisions based almost in its entirety on the color of their skin, rather than on the basis of their whole being, that they have, and rightly so, become vigilant of situations and events where their blackness is obvious and where others may use it to treat them unfairly. Like Dr Anthony, Dr. J. also reported unfair treatment from a white faculty professor who also happened to be her professor and a member of her dissertation committee. She perceived that she was treated that way because of race.

My major professor, who was an African American female left to take a deanship at another university right at the point that I was ABD ….I got through the proposal [and was] writing and right at a very critical point, the same white professor, [who had treated me unfairly in the past], resigned from my committee. The reason that they gave was that she did

not agree with the direction of my research. She did this knowing that my major professor [had] left. So, you know, I was just left hanging. My major professor chaired me on, even if she was not in physical residence. But it was very hard. It was very hard.

Other students described acts of discrimination. Nina explained that she was treated in an unfair manner by university staff in the department where she worked. She referred to this treatment as "unspoken" discrimination.

> There were occasions that I got the sense that barriers were placed in my way getting in the doctoral program [and] finishing it. I looked around me [and] there were other people who were pursuing their doctorates. Concessions were made for them in terms of work. "Hey, you can go home early. You can do your work here. You can work on your dissertation here." Never at any point was that ever offered to me… Although it wasn't spoken it was unspoken …I don't think any one really necessarily supported me.

These subtler forms of racism embody the microaggressions: the spoken, unspoken and not-quite-there insults which replaced the open forms of racism that students of color frequently encounter on the campuses of White universities, despite institutional mission and values to the contrary. These little acts of racism are extensions of the institutionalized insensitivity of dominant groups towards peoples of color, including African Americans.

Another external barrier that African American holders of the doctoral degree faced was marginalization. Participants reported that they were ignored and oftentimes discounted. One participant, Dr. Joyce described it as being "put on the perimeter and being dismissed and not brought to the table or not empowered…even when you are at the table." Another participant, Dr. J., disclosed "there were a couple incidences" when she faced this kind of treatment. She explained she was consistently treated differently than the other students in her program. She attributed her treatment to the fact that she

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was the only student of color in her cohort; the other three students were two Caucasian

Americans and one Caucasian international student. About one incidence Dr. J. said:

> The cohort put a presentation together; well….one member of the cohort
> and a professor put a presentation together. Matusha, [the white
> international student], was pulled into the presentation. The white male,
> whose name is Jude, he was not even on the presentation but he was given
> credit for the presentation. When one student asked what about J. which is
> me, the reply was, "oh, don't worry about J. she will be ok."

Dr. P's experience with her internship coordinator is another graphic example of

the marginalization that African American doctoral students were oftentimes subjected to

on the campuses of white universities. She spoke angrily about one professor's insistence

on denying her the one thing that was uniquely her own—her name.

> When I got ready to go out on internship, he was the internship
> coordinator and [he was] always having some kind of edge, or hostile
> seeming intent, when he would interact with me even [when doing] a little
> thing [as pronouncing my name]. You know when you meet someone new
> and they tell you what their name is and you mispronounce it, and they
> correct you and tell you what their name is [again] and you still call them
> the uncorrected name? I find that a bit inflexible. That's not cordial. If I'm
> telling you my name, why are you insisting on saying it the way you think
> it should be said? Small thing [but] that bugged me. That bugged me. And
> to this day, he continues to do that. He would make seemingly snide
> remarks. He pulled me aside one day and told me, "out of the five students
> that were going out on internship, I was the weakest link." And, he didn't
> think I would, you know, get a good site because I was dragging so much
> and I'm like, "are you serious?" And, [he] wrote all of this in a letter.

Isolation was part of the racial barriers that participants experienced. One study

participant spoke of being deliberately left out of social gatherings. This experience had

such a profound impact on her that on those occasions when she was included, she still

felt isolated. Dr. J's narrative addressed this experience.

> I'll just start with my cohort. In my cohort, we had a white female, a white
> male, a Turkish female and me, an African American female. When we
> began the course, I think everyone was a bit apprehensive. I felt compelled
> to reach out to Matusha, who was the [International] student and I felt a bit

isolated because we started in August and by November, around the Thanksgiving holiday, two members of the cohort had made plans to be together which did not include me but did include Matusha.

Not all students faced the unabashed racism that Dr. Talibav, Dr. Joyce, and Dr. Nina described. Other participants like Dr. Angelina, Dr. Rachel, and Dr. Jamika experienced subtler but just as effective barriers to doctoral completion. Several participants spoke of being stereotyped, of being made to feel that because they were of the Black race, they were responsible for speaking on behalf of their race. For example, Dr. Jamika spoke of having that experience and of the responsibility it placed on her to explain the behaviors and perspectives of every black person. While Dr. Jamika did not necessarily object to advocating for African American children, she objected to her classmates' assumptions that African Americans are a monolithic group. Consequently, she also objected to the presumption that because she was African American she would have firsthand knowledge to explain all African American children's behaviors.

> It made me feel, sometimes, as if I had to be an advocate for African American children. And, you know, sometimes I accepted that role head on and sometimes, you know, I was reluctant to accept that role because I thought, "this is not fair."But it really made me feel I needed to advocate for African American children. So, when we would have discussions about African American culture, why kids are not behaving in a certain way, sometimes my peers would turn to me…It mean[t] I finally would have to be the representative and I did because I felt that if I didn't do it, no one would. So, it made me have to advocate for my culture a lot.

Another kind of barrier that participants faced was stereotypical images and findings of Blacks and other minorities in the research literature, and the willingness of some white students and "highly respected" faculty members to embrace the validity of the findings. The following extension of Dr. Jamika's previous story plus additional

stories from Dr. Angelina, Dr. Rachel, Dr. J, and Dr. Talibav's narratives corroborate students' encounter with this barrier. Dr. Jamika explained:

> When we talk about the achievement discrepancy and we talk about behavior disorder in African Americans, historically there is this view that African Americans, particularly African Americans, but [also other] individuals of color are inferior. The field is now moving away from that but historically there were researchers who have done that. And, when you talk about intelligence testing and African American children scoring a standard of deviation below Caucasian children, you know, there is a need to provide a different perspective. Majority whites…wealthy, women who had never been exposed to any other population…would take the articles we were reading and just spit it back as though that was the gospel….We were talking about a parent training for therapy and one of the students brought up how she had tried this with an African American mother and the mother was very resistant…I explained to her if you were an African American parent—a single parent who had worked two jobs—coming home to do a three-hour training every night was a lot of work and that was not very realistic. So, I tried to provide additional information and other perspectives so that they wouldn't accept some of the theories they were reading as gospel.

In Angelina's experience, white students and faculty showed insensitivity in that they were oblivious to what Dr. Angelina perceived as racial stereotyping against blacks in the literature. She gave two examples of this experience. In one instance, she described her discomfort with white students' unwillingness to understand how a study that used mostly Black participants and offered its participants monetary incentives to participate in the study could authenticate Blacks' belief that they are portrayed through negative, stereotypical images in the research literature. In this particular study, researchers investigated whether intravenous drug users shared their HIV positive status with their partners. She also expressed her discomfort with white students' insensitivity to the possibility that the research design held serious implications about the researcher's ethic of care, first, for the participants and second for their race. The following account highlights Dr. Angelina's experience.

I had a couple classes, but one in particular where, again, I was the lone voice, the lone minority voice, that one little voice. There were many times where my discussions [were] so much more different that I was kinda; I don't want to say the outcast but the weird guy…I didn't want to be that person…I'll give you an example. This was a mixed-methods class and we read several articles, and had conversations about the articles, and I loved it. But there were times where I was the only person who saw something different. One particular article was a question [of] ethics, to me, because in this study [the researchers] used people who were HIV positive intravenous drug users. They wanted to know if the participants told their partners about their HIV status. Again, [remember] the participants were drug users and they got the participants from a rehabilitation center; they were still in rehab. Most of the population of the participants…not all, but 70 % were African American and this was in a majority African American community. The way they got the participants was they paid them cash. It wasn't a large sum…closer to $100…My question was "don't you guys see a problem with this?" And nobody in the room did. It was just like stone silence. I said, you don't pay a drug user cash to be a part of a program or a research. There is just a major ethical issue there. Nobody else saw that. And I was… I don't know if it's because there are people in my family who are intravenous drug users or if it was [because] the majority was black...Nobody [desperation in her voice] else in the room saw it as a problem.

Dr. Angelina shared another instance when she perceived both stereotyping and insensitivity. She described how a white faculty member told a story that offended her to the point that she felt as though it "was a slap in the face."

This one time, I had to stand up and say I disagree…We were in our seminar, weekly seminar, and we had students make a presentation about students and poverty. One of the ending questions was something like "why do we need to educate students who were in poverty" [or] something like that. One of the professors said, "so we can better train them for jobs, so they listen to us when we give them instructions about jobs." And she was speaking specifically about somebody who had put in a new floor in her house and how they did it wrong, or whatever. To me that was slap in the face. Now, she wasn't speaking about anybody who was black. They said poverty. That does not mean that she was speaking about anybody who was black. I understand that. But, having being a child who doesn't have, still doesn't have a silver spoon in my mouth [and who is] far from being well off; I do identify with people who may struggle, who may live in poverty. And I quickly said, "ok, education is much more than training people to listen to you [and] I would like to add that we educate people in poverty so that they can make better decisions about their lives and maybe

contribute to overall society in beneficial ways"...something like that. It was comments like that [one]. It was subtle but yet, still there.

The previous three accounts are examples of the permanency of racism in education. Recording deviant stories about people of color in the research literature is one way to assign 'truth" to these stories and to assure their longevity. It also illuminates the inclination by members of the dominant group, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, to perpetuate sustained negative stereotypical accounts of people of color.

Other students reported instances when they experienced stereotyping and racial insensitivity. Dr. Rachel recalled an occasion when a faculty member made insulting, racially-insensitive remarks in the classroom which lead to her awakening. Disturbingly, something clicked in her mind. Reluctantly, she had to face the reality that her professor, whom she highly respected, held racist sentiments which carried implications for her and other students of color.

> I remember I was taking a class on constructivism as a theory of learning. Towards the end of the course, this professor, who I very much respected, he started talking. Something clicked in my mind. I…(talking as though to the professor) "you have to be really careful the way that you are talking about this because this could lead people to say that there are some students who are never going to be able to do math because their brains don't develop and those students tend to be minority students ." And so I was asking questions in the course and this guy, my office mate, Brian, picked up on where I was going. He was like "yea that sounds like racism" He sort of whispered it to me in class. At that point, we started talking and it just hit me…I mean, all of these things have implications for students of color.

Dr. J. also shared experiences that were similar to Dr. Jamika, Dr. Angelina, and Dr. Rachel's experiences. In explaining the difference between what she thinks is considered acceptable in her community but unacceptable in graduate school, Dr. J. revealed two critical dimensions of how Blacks' experience racial stereotyping. First, they internalize its threat even if they do not believe the negative assumptions on which

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the stereotype is built. Second they engage in survival strategies, which they may not

necessarily applaud but which are necessary to avoid both the association with the

negative assumptions of the stereotype, and the impact of the fear of the stereotype on

their psychological and, in some cases, their physical well-being. Interestingly though,

their actions allows the stereotype to become a self-fulfilling prophecy and the thing they

abhor most, in their minds becomes a reality. Dr. J.'s story provides supporting evidence:

> I'd share this one experience that I did have that may answer a question or two for you. When I was co-teaching a health and relationship class, the instructor for that class said, "ugh!" She said, "you [are] so stern. Why are you so stern?" So, I began to question myself. So when we got into our supervising experiences, I had a white, young, female student that I was supervising; [a] Master's level student that I was supervising in a practicum. I was ineffective because in the beginning, I did not want to come across as a stern, mean, black female. So as a result of that, we just kinda got stuck in supervision. You know? I kinda got stuck in a loop that I couldn't get out off. I felt if I pushed or challenge[d] this intern that I would be perceived as "oh, I'm afraid of this black lady [be]cause she has a deep voice and she is talking, and has this presence." I tried to back away from that and as a result, we got stuck in supervision; in a cycle [where] we couldn't get out. And, I felt that if I challenge[d], I would be perceived this way. When I finally went to my professor and we were talking, you know, she said, "you don't change who you are. You are who you are. Your voice, your inflection, your tone it's the way it is and you don't have to change for anyone. People have to accept you for who you are." So, that was one instance that I did have as it related to, you know, who I was as an African American.

In Dr. J's case, the threat of being stereotyped (raised by her instructors'

comment), was the unfounded assumption that a woman with a deep voice a presence and

who can express herself, is stern and in some way threatening to others. This perception

of danger to others was heightened because of Dr. J.'s blackness and her authority as a

co-instructor and supervisor. The danger to Dr. J's was her own vulnerability as an

African American pursuing a doctoral degree in a white institution; where her progress

depended, to a large degree, on the goodwill of the same people who perceived her as a

threat. Dr. J's own words spoke to her fears. "I did not want to come across as a stern, mean, black female." The question becomes why? Was it because Dr. J perceived there were consequences for a black, female, doctoral student who is perceived as mean and stern. Because of her fear of the consequences if she was stereotyped by a "white, young, female student", she chose not to "push or challenge" this student. By her own admission, Dr. J. concluded she was ineffective as an instructor. While it is important to note Dr. J's fear of stereotyped, it is also important to note that Dr. J. was acting in the capacity of an instructor, essentially one of her responsibilities was to challenge her student to excellence; not challenging her student is abdicating her responsibility. To Dr. J.'s credit she recognized her failings and took steps to understand how to appropriately address the situation if it should occur again.

Dr. J's story points to how racism in education, real or imagined, can negatively impact students of color progress towards their educational goals. For African Americans whose survival, historically, depended almost in its entirety on their ability to present a nonthreatening persona, it is not surprising that Dr. J. interpreted her co-instructor's comment that her sternness was threatening and unwelcome in a white university and, as a result, capitulated to the fear of negative perception unable to meet her teaching responsibility. On a broader scale, it is an example of how oppression, privilege, selective deviance, a sense of superiority, lack of knowledge about and, or, insensitivity to the culture and life histories of other people, can create significant intentional and unintentional negative outcomes for all people. In essence, it is a no-winners proposition for all involved because stereotyping invariably becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Like many of her African American peers, Dr. Talibav also faced barriers because of racial stereotyping. She said that even some faculty members assumed that she was admitted to the university because of affirmative action and not because of her stellar academic credentials. "Even with some of the professors, I felt that I had to fight those images; you know the bias that they had that they maybe didn't think they had….I was like this quota black person, who was fighting against people's perceptions, against what I felt was extreme racism and conservatisms."

Struggling with Internal Challenges: It's Not Me

Another important finding is that African American recipients of the doctoral degree experienced internal challenges in response to the external barriers of racial othering that they faced during their tenure in their programs. Internal challenges were the intrapersonal conflicts that students experienced as they attempted to reconcile the representational self, that is, the doubtful, fearful, marginalized self with the authentic, self confident, empowered self. In essence, these internal challenges led students to interrogate their own identity, question their internal strengths, test their inner resources and become embroiled in a mental contest between the forces of racism and their ability to withstand its onslaught. In this sense, the internal challenges finding is inter-reliant on the external barriers finding.

The data revealed that the overarching internal challenge that students experienced was doubt, which ultimately manifested itself in various forms of other negative internal challenges like imposterism, fear, distrust, loneliness, hurt, and denial and compensating. Further analysis of the data also revealed that students experienced multiple internal challenges in response to a specific external barrier. For example,

isolation, an external barrier, may produce loneliness but it may simultaneously produce

fear, distrust, and other forms of negative feelings and emotions in the student.

A subsequent outcome of students' self doubt, imposterism, was one internal challenge

that created an obstacle to African Americans doctoral students finishing their degrees.

Participants oftentimes likened themselves to usurpers and their presence in their doctoral

programs to fraud. This feeling was expressed in varying degrees of intensity by 10 of the

11 participants; even by those students who described themselves as both academically

and psychologically well-prepared to pursue education on the campuses of white

universities. For example, Dr. Rachel, who at several points in her narrative described

herself as coming into the program with "a lot of self-confidence", revealed that she also

had succumbed to the feelings of doubts that other African American recipients of the

degree experienced. "You know, the two years was probably the most offensive and I felt

the worst about myself." Dr. Angelina was not exempt from similar self-doubts even if

she also had "develop[ed] some thick skin and was "kinda tough" prior to entering

graduate school.

> Had I not have some of my thick skin from my background, I don't know
> if I would have been able to take it. There were some days in my graduate
> program; I was like, Oh my Gawd! This is more difficult than I had ever
> imagined. I don't know what really made me decide that I had to finish
> this program.

Several other participants: Dr, Regina, Dr. Gap, Dr. P. and Dr. J. expressed this

feeling. Speaking about the self doubts she experienced during the first semester in her

program Dr. Regina lamented, "So that first semester was a dozy. I do remember

questioning, Oh! Why did I do this? This is crazy. I don't belong here." Dr. Gap had

similar recollections about his presence in his program. "I remember going into the

program very tepidly because I questioned whether or not I had the capacity to pursue and complete a doctorate." When Dr. J. described how she felt in social gatherings with other white students and faculty from her programs, after her peers excluded her from a social event that every student in her program was invited to, she had this to say:

> We had [other] occasions where we had events at one of our professors'
> house and [I] began…feeling like an imposter. [I] felt a bit uncomfortable.
> It felt more comfortable when…there were others in the room that looked
> like me.

Fear and mistrust was another internal challenge or tests to African American doctoral students' persistence in their programs in historically white institutions. Dr. Angelina divulged that her experience with racial othering affected her in negative ways that changed her relationship and perception of her professor, and the way she thought he perceived her.

> It made me think of some of the faculty more deeply; [to] not necessarily
> watch what I say, but think of what they may think of me. You know what
> I mean? ….It made me think, well can I really trust this person? Are they
> thinking that I might be one of those poverty cases and so they are training
> me to listen to them or something like that? It did have some impact
> thinking how they viewed me as a student….Of course, like I had to prove
> myself in a sense. But also it made me think that they were fairly small
> minded [even if he had] earn[ed] all these degrees and have this wide
> experience.

Dr. J. spoke about her own fear and insecurity and the mistrust she felt about a white faculty member and advisor because of what she believed was discriminatory treatment from that faulty member.

> It made me feel defensive around that faculty member and advisor. It
> made me unsure. I felt that I could not trust... I didn't know if I could trust
> her to help me through certain stages in the program and that feeling
> proved to be true….I panicked. I panicked for a while. I felt inadequate
> and felt I must really be doing something wrong or I must really be way
> off base.

Dr. J. went on to explain the relationship between her fear, insecurity, her mistrust

of her professor and advisor and her educational pursuits.

> I felt that once my major professor left... she was the only one that was
> willing to mentor me. Once she left, I didn't have anyone. When she left,
> that's when the one person dropped off my committee. I felt she protected
> me. She was a buffer between, you know, me and some of the other
> professors in the program, who did not necessarily want to see me there or
> want to see me proceed through the program. When she left, that buffer or
> that protection was gone.

Loneliness and the hurt that it created was another internal challenge that the

participants in this study identified as a deterrent to African American doctoral students

persistence to degree completion. Many participants in the study spoke passionately of

their need for a social connection with their student peers and their struggles satisfying

this need on campuses where they oftentimes were isolated. Speaking about how her lack

of social interaction impacted her ability to make progress towards completing her

degree, Dr. Rachel had this to say:

> I think graduate school can be a very lonely experience if you don't (long
> pregnant pause) have that [social life] and so I know the first semester that
> I was there, I didn't have as many friends and it was very lonely and that
> sort of creeps into you being able to do your work. I think maybe for some
> people [it doesn't]; but, for me it did. I just wasn't happy socially so then
> it was hard for me to get excited about work. And then once I did, my
> social group started to grow. Then it was sorta like, ok, you know I can go
> do the work I have to do and focus on that because I know I have a social
> outlet. I have people I can hang out with on the weekends or in the
> evenings. To me, it's a huge difference in your quality of life and the
> quality of work that you do.

The data revealed that psychological denial and perceptual distortion were other

internal challenges for African American doctoral students who persisted and completed

the degree. To protect themselves from the intolerableness of racial othering, and reduce

the anxiety they experienced because of it, African American students chose to deny the

reality of the racism they were subjected to. Dr. Nina's response to what she described as

"blatant" discrimination against her was to go into denial, to expend her energy

suppressing what was an abnormal experience for her, to pretend that it was not

happening and to "ignore that factor" of her experience so that she could cope with the

experience.

> I already experienced gender, sexism, and ageism to a certain extent but
> racism, I kinda chose to ignore that factor of my experience at the
> university. I did that as a coping mechanism. That pretty much what I did
> with my situation about going to school. Like I said, I choose not to make
> that particular situation [an issue]. That wasn't a battle I was trying to
> fight. There was a point when I could have said...I could have taken my
> department to task in that *blatant, blatant, blatant* [her emphasis] racism
> related to my going to school versus another white female. I mean it was
> just blatant.

Like Dr Nina, Dr. Talibav had similar reactions to external acts of racial othering

when she was subjected to racial othering. Dr. Talibav also unconsciously chose the

panacea of perceptual distortion over the pain of racial othering. In explaining how she

handled the incident of having recruitment material to join the Ku Klux clan placed under

her office door and how it impacted her, Dr. Talibav attempted to reinterpret the situation

to make it less threatening for her. She did not address the possibility that the perpetrator

placed the material there *precisely* because he, or she, knew that she was black; neither,

did she address what the implications of the recruitment effort meant for her as a black

person, or other African American students in a white university. She said this instead:

> I kept some of it [be]cause I couldn't believe. I mean I had heard about the
> clan but I had never seen this kinda propaganda material about Jews and
> blacks and, you know, it was really not to hurt me. The material was
> recruitment information. It wasn't material about me being b[lack]. You
> know what I'm saying? It was to recruit who they thought was the new
> practicum student but it was *me* [her emphasis] and I wasn't white. It
> wasn't meant to bother me. It was meant to recruit somebody that they
> thought might be interested.

Overcompensation was an additional internal barrier that recipients of the doctoral degree from historically white institutions had to cope with. The data showed that students consciously or unconsciously strove to protect themselves from feelings of inadequacy and incompetency because of the racism they experienced, firsthand, or vicariously through other African American students' experiences, by overcompensating. Dr. Jamika's story illuminates this finding. By going over and beyond, she was breaking the stereotypical images of black students. In return, she was spared from those injurious "messages" of racism that her other black students received.

> I didn't get many messages...I didn't get messages about race that black students were looked at differently. I felt that all the messages I got were well intended but ignorant. I didn't, I can't really say that I got any messages about race. I think that people were very accepting of me and I think that's because I was successful in the program. Does that make sense? I think had I not been as successful, maybe I would have gotten more messages about race but because I was destroying people's [images] or going beyond people expectations, I didn't get those messages. I don't want to call myself a model minority but to some extent, I was doing more than was expected so it was "whoa! She is really great." So, I didn't get those messages; but, of course, I may have [had] peers in different departments who did get those messages.

An equally significant internal challenge emerging from the data, which some students grappled with, was the under compensation in their efforts towards degree completion. Although, this finding was not evident in the majority of cases, its presence alone is elephantine in light of the fact that other data shows these students to be highly motivated by education. Dr. J's lack of trust in her own abilities, her struggles with feelings of discouragement, her fear of failing, and general lack of initiative after a white faculty, who cited dissatisfaction with the direction of her dissertation, resigned from her committee speaks to the magnitude of this finding. Her account of her experience speaks

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clearly to the gargantuan impact of racism on otherwise highly self-directed, confident students. She described her handling of the situation this way:

> I panicked. I panicked for a while…I just panicked and back pedaled until my [previous] major professor kinda grounded me and, you know told me to "take a deep breath. You are at the point in your program where either you want it or you don't". And I wanted it. I had come to far not to see the light at the end of the tunnel. So again, yet another deep breath and [we] replaced, found, a new committee member and just kept moving forward, one foot in front of the other.

The preceding binary discussions of the external barriers and internal challenges of racial othering that African American doctoral students experienced while pursuing degrees on the campuses of historically white universities, shows in a big way, that African American doctoral students perceived that they persisted in their programs at a distinct disadvantage, at best, and at worst, oftentimes at great emotional and psychological costs. Interestingly enough, even at its worst, students' discussions about their experiences revealed that racial othering requires a partnership to promulgate; depends on its perpetrator for its incubation but its growth and survival depends on the cooperation, albeit unwilling, of the people it preys on.

Cultural Dissonance

The study found another obstacle to students' persistence towards completion of their degree programs was cultural dissonance between students' interpretation of elements of social and cultural life within the university and how they perceived some white students and faculty members interpreted them. African American holders of the doctoral degree from historically white institutions reported fissures between their discourse and ways of communicating and the discourse and communication styles in their programs and universities. The fissures were evident in the differences in students'

description of the tone, language, intent, and manner of communicating with white faculty and students in their respective institutions, and the tone, language, intent, and manner of communicating within their home communities of friends and family. This theme was consistent across more than half of the participants' narratives. The following excerpts from Dr. Jamika, Dr. Regina, Dr. Gap, and Dr. J's narratives provide supporting evidence of these findings. In the following excerpt, Dr. Jamika described the differences in communication in her home and school life:

> I think the difference is really how knowledge is expressed. I think that, you know, even though my mum instilled a passion for learning, some things were very implied so I didn't have to go around telling her what I knew. Like if I told her, "oh! Yea, I learned about this", that was enough. But in graduate school the communication process is very different and so you are expected to go around professing your knowledge and that's a very different socialization process. So, you know, you have to go [around] and say, "well, I studied this and I know this." That was very different for me—this need to always talk about what you know even if it's implied. So, I always felt the sense that…it always bothered me. For example, in graduate school (this was something that we were socialized to do), when somebody would make a statement and somebody would repeat the same content of that statement again, but rephrase it very differently. And it was just an example of people trying to explicitly express their knowledge; whereas, you know, it was always implied in my family. So if I say, "yea, I agree with you" there was no need to elaborate on how I agree with you, etcetera, etcetera. But, in graduate school it was a different type of discourse. Sometimes, it was very redundant in my opinion.

Elaborating on how her unfamiliarity with the nature and patterns of discourse in her program impinged on her progress towards her degree, Dr. Jamika said:

> Part of it made me question did I belong. Did I have the skills? Was I adequate for doing this because I didn't know [about] that, initially, or didn't want to engage in that type of communication? So, I think that was part of the disadvantages. [I was] kinda questioning whether I belonged

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there and, [whether] I had the skills to be in the graduate program.

Central to this finding regarding differences between African American students' discourse and the discourse of the majority were notions of "fit" which were clearly recognizable in Dr. Gap's response to questions about similarities and differences in the way he was socialized in graduate school and in his home community?

> Well Western university is white. I mean it's a white institution … so, you know you have the culturology of living in a white world; meaning of course at home, among my peers, you are comfortable and you don't have to explain who you are. You don't have to, at some point, fit in, so to speak; whereas, at Western University, outside of my department, you may have to explain and fit in because you [are] dealing within, operating within, two cultures. You're operating in the black culture and then you ['re] operating within the white establishment and that's a challenge, sometimes, that black people, *period*, [his emphasis] experience and have to deal with.

Dr. Gap explained that he was knowledgeable about perspectives on "culturology" because he had been researching and writing about diversity and multiculturalism and was "sufficiently self-actualized" to the point where he was comfortable with his way of communicating. Nevertheless, he divulged that he felt challenged enough by the obstacles that differences in culture presented to him completing his degree, and was grateful that he had "the tremendous support from the people around him."

The three-way tension between: African American doctoral students' verbal expressions, their perceptions of what the communication expectations were for them, and their need to retain their cultural identity had a deterring effect on students' progress towards the completion of their degree. This tension is present in Dr. Regina's account of discourse within the university, her place in the university and her program, and her African American identity.

I sought out my own when I got there. I was most comfortable around African Americans and I still am. I mean I can let my guard down, for the most part, when I'm with my own. I don't have to act a certain way. I don't have to say things a certain way. I can speak in Ebonics and who cares? People understand. You can be intelligent and speak this way. But if you speak that way in the middle of class,… if I speak that way, somebody may question my intelligence and so I can't let my guard down like that. But when I got there, I did seek out my own…My black professors: I don't know that it really would have been the same without them. It wouldn't have been. It would have been a different experience.

Dr. J. also spoke about the challenges of transitioning from one way of communicating in the black community, where underlying meanings in communication are perhaps not put in words but are easily recognizable among the communicants, to a different language of communication within the university. In this forum, Dr. J. explained she had to "cross the T's "and "dot the I's"

You got to be careful of your language, Ebonics, as it may. You have to be careful to include everyone in your circle. In an African American community, you know it's ok. You're in a sorority and everyone looks like you. But I think when you get to the university you have to expand that. You have to not necessarily assimilate but you have to be able to socialize and work with, and present with and for people that don't look like you.

Dr. Talibav gave her account of the kind of exchange that presented a temporary obstacle towards her goal of doctoral completion.

For example, I had a professor tell me that... we were writing an article together and she yelled at me and told me that I couldn't write. And initially I thought "oh my Gawd! I can't write. How am I gonna get out of school because I can't write. "When I say initially, I mean the first couple of seconds. When I though about it, I said "what you mean I can't write? I just won the graduate school award for creative writing. What do you mean, I can't write? Then she reworded it and said, "well, yea, you can write creatively; you can't write in a research. You don't write well in that way." And I said, "ok, let me think about it. I may need to rewrite that" and what I did was take the journal article that we had written together and which she said that I had not written well and took it to another professor and asked him to look it over for me and tell me if it was ready to be published. And he told me it was ready and I sent it and it got published.

The issue of cultural dissonance is an important thread in students' accounts of their

experiences because it addressed issues like knowledge and how it is expressed,

linguistics, fit, and place which, in cultures of white institutions play decisive roles in the

legitimization or delegitimization of students' right to be present. This particular barrier

held even greater possibilities for deterring students' persistence towards completing their

degrees because it caused students to question, even temporarily, the core of their very

being—their identity.

<div align="center">Poverty of Insiders' Information</div>

In addition to racial othering and cultural dissonance, participants' narrative

revealed that lack of insiders' information was also one of the more prominent deterrents

to African American doctoral students in historically white institutions completing their

degrees. Insiders' information is defined here as access to critical non-public information

necessary for orderly, successful, timely completion of the doctoral degree. It includes

having access to the necessary information for a particular result and the political know-

how and relationship clout to perfect the outcome. This finding, while not as robust as

other findings in the study as it relates to deterrents to degree completion, is clearly

evident in many of the participants' narratives. Students described their discomfort with

their unfamiliarity with different aspects of doctoral education and how it affected their

progress. First, Dr. Jamika shares her story. She reveals that she was privy to less than the

information than she thought she needed to be comfortable with what she perceived was

the decorum in her doctoral program.

> I felt like when I first entered graduate school I was ill-informed and I felt
> like I didn't belong. I felt I was coming into a place with my peers who
> have been bred to do this; meaning their parents were doctors, lawyers,
> professors and they knew the expectations of graduate school. They knew

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the right things to say. They knew the norms of graduate school. My first year, I was still trying to make the transition from undergraduate to graduate school and I really didn't understand what the expectations were so I felt very much like an outsider. Even though on the social level my peers were very welcoming and friendly, I still felt as if I really did not know, you know, what the rules of engagement were. So, my first year of graduate school was [spent] learning more, kind of learning [about] these kinds of social rules and how to interact and what the expectations were.

Speaking about his initial lack of insiders' information on the doctoral education process, Dr. Anthony echoed Dr. Jamika's perspectives. Dr. Anthony perceived that he was starting out at a disadvantage because he was not informed about the mysteries of the dissertation and therefore "didn't quite know what to expect." This lack of information was troubling to Dr. Anthony to the point that he worried unnecessarily about the expectations related to "coursework" and perhaps his ability to meet those expectations. It is arguable that had Anthony had access to insiders' information, he may not have been so concerned especially because he had clearly demonstrated, through his previous academic achievements, that he was fully capable of mastering graduate work.

> It was a different kind of experience. I had never taken doctoral courses before so I didn't quite know what to expect...I had gotten a graduate degree, I had a master's degree but I also knew that [the dissertation] was different. It wasn't the same thing as doing a masters thesis. So I really didn't know what to expect, you know, what they wanted from the course work. It's good to have him there and others as well to mentor me…You have this vague notion of what a dissertation is but you don't know what it is [be]cause I didn't know anyone who had completed one at that point; at least, the details of what it was like to go through that experience.

There are other indications in students' narratives that African American students felt that they did not have the means of entry to cloistered information about doctoral education and that not having knowledge of the critical non-public information, that is so vital for students' uncomplicated progress through the doctoral program, produces negative affects on their self-assuredness. Like Dr. Jamika and Dr. Anthony, Dr. Regina

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too was troubled about the expectations of doctoral work. Like Dr. Anthony, she was accomplished in her own right in terms of her earlier academic achievements. As a teacher practitioner, her work was the extension of the researcher's work; she lived the theories, had first-hand information of their applicability and was potentially capable of validating or discounting the practicality of the theories that came out of education research. Nonetheless, the abstractness of the dissertation rendered her "inadequate". She felt unable to contribute to the class discussion and assumed that other students, who were theory-informed, had more to offer than she did. Thus, she chose to remove herself from class discussions until she had acquired the necessary research knowledge; until she felt more informed.

> When I got there, I was fresh out of my classroom. I was in courses where there were professional students. They had gone from high school to undergrad to graduate and had never worked. Subsequently, they could tell you about theories; they could tell you who said what. I hadn't read any of that stuff. I felt inadequate, at first, in my classes because I was a practitioner not a scholar, not yet…I didn't have that research knowledge that they did. I didn't even know what a dissertation was when I applied. The only thing I knew is that I had a lot of questions and I needed time to do a lot of reading to learn the big picture about education that I had missed. Because, again, my school was more [about] how to do a lesson plan, how to do a unit, how to set up a classroom. It was very practitioner oriented ... So when I got there I had to learn where to put my practitioner experience because what was more valued there was research knowledge. And so, I couldn't join that conversation until I had read some things.

Students also found that they were less than informed about the everyday politicking of doctoral education, even if most of them were recipients of masters and other professional degrees. For example, it was only after he began his studies that Dr. Gap realized that "pursuing a doctorate is very political…and if you don't know certain resources you are left out of the fray." African American students' reports about how the lack of information about doctoral education decorum can stymie students' progress

towards the conclusion of their program is well exemplified in Dr. Gap's discussion on the issue of publications.

> …your typical grad student knows how to write a paper to get that paper published. We didn't know that. That was surreal when we found out that … white students [were] getting published and we weren't getting published? And, the department realized some of those challenges and made those things clear to us…brought to us how we can [publish]. I remember I wrote a paper and Dr. T. said "let's get that published." And I said why and he sat down and explained to me what it means to get published. So those kind[s] of support; that nurturing environment that's directed towards the minorities in this…(voice trails off). I don't know if you find that across campus. I don't know if people understand those unique perspectives and unless you know where to find those resources it en't gonna happen for you.

An even more telling revelation about students' lack of insiders' information is students' apparent naiveté about the prominence and permanence of racism in doctoral education and their initial struggles persisting in their program because of it. Several students' accounts of their experiences revealed students horror and consternation at the presence and the magnitude of racism in doctoral education. For example, Dr. Talibav's experience with racism elicited this comment from her: "I was *disgusted* [her emphasis] …people didn't expect me to be black….But it was *me* [her emphasis]." Joyce confessed that prior to doctoral education she was "more silent about issues of racism" but her experiences in her program "open[ed]" her eyes to those issues. Dr. Rachel's experience caused her to become disillusioned. She began to perceive her professor, whom she had previously "highly respected", differently because he expressed an opinion about race and learning that previously had been openly expressed in the literature. Dr. J. "panicked"; unable to proceed with her dissertation after her bout with what she perceived was racism. Dr. Angelina was so taken aback and bothered by the

unquestioned racist beliefs by some students and faculty in her program she was "almost in tears."

It is important to note that these emotional reactions and comments about the reality of racism in their programs came from students all of whom had received one, or both their undergraduate and graduate degrees from historically white institutions. In all likelihood, these students had been exposed, or had knowledge of someone, who had very similar racist experiences. Therefore, their comments and reactions are significant in that they simultaneously highlight three very important factors: 1) racism has regenerative hurt-power, 2) how unprepared African American students are for dealing with the onslaught of racism in historically white institutions and; 3) the sheer scale to which racism can fragment African American students' inner souls in the absence of strong supportive interventions.

<div align="center">Opportunity, Assurance, and Reassurance Resources</div>

To achieve the goal of completing their degrees, doctoral students utilize an assortment of resources. Participants in this study identified various programmatic resources that they perceived were helpful in reaching their goals. This finding addresses the most critical of these resources for African American doctoral students.

Analysis of the data revealed that the most critical programmatic resources influencing African American doctoral students' studies were relationship opportunity, financial assurance, and reassurances of safe spaces. Relationship opportunity resources were the chances to build and the advantages gained from building nurturing, supportive, trusting relationships with faculty; student peers; and program staff. The financial assurance resources were program guarantees of financial assistance through graduate

assistantship and other types of financial sponsorship. Reassurances of safe spaces were nonthreatening, inclusive environments where students trusted that their holistic selves were welcome and free to be authentic.

Several distinguishing characteristics about the resources that facilitated students' persistence to degree completion emerged from the narratives. First, these resources were deliberately cultivated; they did not happen fortuitously. Their actuation required efforts from students, faculty, program administrators, and staff. Second, students were impelled to pursue such resources, were supported in the process, but were not bounded in how they used them. Third, an important criterion in the relationship opportunity resource was that it was peopled with "warm demanders"—faculty, students peers, and staff who sought high expectations from African American students while providing them with equally high support, care, and nurturing to meet those expectations. Fourth, while every relationship opportunity evolved under parallel circumstances and had coinciding ultimate goals, which were to create favorable conditions for students' advancement, they each followed their own unique developmental path. Fifth, relationship opportunities were reciprocal; students have similar lofty expectations of faculty, peers, and administrators and exhibited high degrees of respect and support for their mentors and supporters. Sixth, students and warm-demanders' roles were interchangeable and communication and cross fertilization of ideas between paired individuals were multidirectional. Finally, the relationship opportunity resource with the most influence on students' progress to degree completion involved significant levels of people contact, accountability, commitment, and care.

Even as the analysis of the data revealed the kinds of resources that facilitated African American students' persistence towards degree completion, it also simultaneously revealed that not all programs offered the same kind, quality, or the same quantity of resources. Moreover, further analysis indicated that, in general, the people most involved in facilitating resources to advantage doctoral completion were black faculty and students' black peers. White faculty, in relation to black faculty and black students, were not as prominent in facilitating students' persistence with white students making the least contributions. Finally, white staff contributed about as equally to students' completion of their degrees as black staff.

The dimension of this theme is surprisingly robust given the presence of other themes like racial othering, cultural dissonance, and poverty of insiders' information in students' accounts of the obstacles they encountered on the campuses of white universities. The apparent incongruity between the themes and stories that describe students' experiences in their universities and those that describe students' experiences in their programs is rooted in their contexts. Generally students 'accounts of experiences in their programs showed that students faced less challenges in their programs than in the university at large. The theme *Opportunity, Assurance, and Reassurance* emerged from analyses of portions of students' accounts of those experiences that were program-specific not university-specific.

Relationship Opportunity

Participants spoke about the relationship opportunity more frequently, and with more gusto and emotion, than any other opportunity. The two most significant relationships were the relationships African American students developed with faculty

and their peers. In those relationships black faculty and black peers played sundry and puissant roles in students' completing their degrees. From those interactions, African American doctoral students garnered huge collateral of benefits towards completing their degree; benefits that come from having positive professional relationship with people in a combination of, or all of these roles: a friend, confidante, teacher, mentor, counselor, advocate, professional colleague, cheerleader, advisor, and kin.

This notion of relationship as both an opportunity and a resource is evident in all eleven study participants' narratives. Because of its pervasiveness and the close similarities in the reasons that the relationship developed in the first place, (i.e. doctoral completion) one student experience closely resembles the other. Thus, one student characterization of the relationship opportunity echoes another students' characterization of his or her relationship opportunity. For example, Dr. Gap spoke about the friendship, support, and trust that his major professor extended to him as an incoming doctoral student and the benefits from the professional partnership that developed between them, even beyond his tenure as a doctoral student.

> And when I got there, I found in my major professor someone who told me, pretty much, and embraced me and let me realize this is doable, "you can do this, you know". The friendship has lasted beyond the major professor-student relationship. We are writing partners, you know. We have published a few articles together, you know? So, I could have gone somewhere else and have the same experience but I can only speak of the experience I had at Western University, in my department.

In much the same vein as Dr. Gap, Dr. Regina spoke of the high expectations that a faculty mentor in her program held of her, his faith in her ability to meet them, and his care in helping her to understand the process of coming into her own scholarship.

> He was tough. He was a warm-demander. He would let you know if your writing was just not. And at the same time, when I asked him about my

voice, when will I get to say what I want to say, I remember having a long conversation with him about that. He said you would come into [it]. He guided me. He said, "as you make a name for yourself you can be more and more vocal but right now, at this moment, the idea is for you to become an expert and you don't become an expert by shouting out what your opinions are. You become an expert by diving in and going deep in an area that you are passionate about". He took the time to show me and explained that I will find my voice.

She spoke about other African American faculty members, who cared about their students like they were their own children. Individuals who set high levels of expectations for themselves and others even while they provided high levels of care, support, and nurturing to meet those expectations.

Dr. S. and Dr. N. were with us as well and it's rough with them, you know, as professors. There was no beating around the bush either. Now, they're not gonna tear you up either. We're gonna tell you, you are wonderful. There is a way to critique without tearing somebody up and that's what it was like. You didn't feel bad doing it in front of them because you knew you gonna get the truth in and uplifting way….They cared about our lives. They wanted to make sure that it was more than taking courses and learning about our work. We had to be plugged in somewhere else in the community. We had to pursue our hobbies. If you didn't do that you were harshly chastised. It was almost like a mother-daughter type relationship. It was very close to a mother-daughter relationship.

This sense of "honest care" for students, by the faculty members in Dr. Regina's program, was extended to all students regardless of their demographic background.

Well, I think from what I observed, with Dr. S. and Dr. N. if you were their student they cared for you and poured into you whether you were black or white. It transcended race. It was more about teaching teachers of students of all colors about diversity, period. They had high expectations for their students whether you were black or white.

In the relationship opportunity, faculty members did not merely set expectations for students. To many of the African American participants in the study, African American faculty members were role models, motivators, counselors and cheerleaders,

friends, advocates and protectors, and teachers; individuals who also set high levels of

expectations for themselves even while they provided high levels of care, support, and

nurturing to meet those expectations. Dr. Gap described how those qualities in his advisor

helped him progress to the conclusion of his education as a doctoral student.

> Dedicated, drive, determination, their competence...I'm constantly hearing
> her say, "People [will] judge you by the quality of your work, people
> judge you on your competence level" and "never compromise that, never
> compromise that". And so I tap into that. I tap into that, you know. These
> are quality scholars that I am dealing with. Dr. T....what can I say about
> her? Man! She made me who I am. My writing became progressively
> better as a student. So those are certain qualities I admire about her. That
> is still the corner post of my practice today.

Faculty members in the relationship opportunity served as a counseling resource.

Dr. J. recounted how her previous advisor counseled her, shared her own struggles as a

doctoral student, and drew on their spiritual nature to motivate and keep Dr. J. focused.

Dr. J's previous advisor took these actions at a point in Dr. J.'s studies when she faced

what appeared to be insurmountable barriers to finishing her dissertation.

> She was a very spiritual person and I am also. So, she would use our
> spirituality to keep me focused and that was very, very important. She
> would tell me, "you know, this is a part of the plan, keep the faith, trust
> Him, what the devil made for bad, God makes for good. Maybe you don't
> understand it now but trust the process." Things like that really helped.
> She shared some of the struggles that she had in her doctoral program,
> which was at the same university. That was helpful. I was inspired because
> she persevered and she is now a Dean at a top university. So I stayed
> hopeful.

Besides counseling, the relationship opportunity offered the chance for both

faculty and students to be cheerleaders and share the benefits of mutual admiration and

support. Students' narratives revealed that students responded positively to faculty

members who routed for them. Both Dr. Rachel and Dr. Talibav, respectively, spoke

about the cheerleader factor in their relationship with faculty members. They explained

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why faculty cheerleaders are interventionist for doctoral completion among African American students and how that competency impacted them personally. Dr. Rachel suggested it was:

> Because they encouraged us, because you can tell that they really believed in you. I remember telling one of my professors one time ([be]cause they would always talk about how great we were) "you are building us up and we gonna get out in the real world and nobody is gonna think we are as great as you think we are." And they were like "that's why we do it; because we wanna build you up so that you have a strong foundation so that when you do get out there, in the real world, you have a sense of security and self esteem."

Dr. Talibav suggested it was because they filled students with hope to reach heights that they ordinarily would not have conquered on their own.

> She wants you to shine but she believed that you could and she gave you some support that you'd believe that…So, it just wasn't all expectations. Sometimes doctoral programs like they are made to be totally critical all the time…and she gave me that other piece that I didn't have, and wouldn't have had if she hadn't been there. I may have had a little bit from my Chair. He was pretty good. But like I said, he wasn't socially my friend. He wasn't, although he could [have]. He was my mentor. He stood up for me as well. There were times he stood up for me. Like telling me that paper was right, it was good, and it was time to send it in, and don't worry about somebody telling me I couldn't write.

A key benefit of the relationship opportunity resource is that it provided occasions for faculty members to be informants on insiders' information. Speaking about the occasions when his major professor helped him to extend his scholarship as a doctoral student, and to reap the benefits of the relationship, Dr. Gap had this to say:

> Other resources would be my mentor and my major professor, Dr. T. Really! She is the reason I am. I mean I could tap into her. I could sit and talk to her and find out [information]. Whatever resource I need[ed] she would point me in the right direction. I ended up travelling overseas while I was a graduate student. I had to deliver a paper with Dr. M. in another country. All the resources, and the money, and the airline ticket Dr. T. was the one who was able to point me in the right direction to pay for those

things. I had a joint class with a group over at the University of M. Again, Dr. J. was fundamental in helping me find the resource to get there.

Other African American doctoral students revealed that they succeeded partly because their departments staffed their programs with faculty who were vested in their students' success from the start. In other words, they saw themselves as primary stakeholders and perceived the opportunity relationship with each advisee as a fighting chance to see another African American student through the doctoral process. Dr. J. spoke about this resource this way:

> When I came in, I was given three people and she was one of the three. And actually, I kinda went in thinking she is gonna be hard as nails. Oh man! I'd never get through her because she will, you know? It turned out to be the total opposite. It wasn't until she and I sat down and talked that [I knew] she had my best interest at heart, from the very beginning, even in the interview process….

As evidenced by Dr. J's words, faculty members in those relationships created "opportunities so there [are] no stumble[s]; or if there is a stumble, there is not a fall." Finally, as evidenced by the data, programs that offered relationship opportunity resource created favorable circumstances for students themselves to act as resources to each other and to be beneficiaries and participants in the opportunity. Participants in this study unanimously credited their peers, mostly other black doctoral students, for helping to sustain them during the tenure in their programs. Like black faculty members, they also occupied many different roles in each other lives. Guided by faculty members, who were vested in their success, and, or, by their personal choice to survive the rigors of doctoral education; students formed support groups through which they gave and received support, friendship, advice, information, feedback, and mentoring. In many instances

African American students acted as role models, confidants, tutors, comrades, listeners, "sistahs", and friends to each other.

Anthony explained how other black students, who were more advanced in their program, gave him advice and friendship. He also stressed how important their support was for him, a fledging doctoral student.

> I knew most of the people who took classes with me. I got to know them fairly well. I drove up from the city with the same person for most of the time actually. Steve [and I] we drove up a lot. He was further along than I was, you know. He was, at least, I'd say near the end of the program and I was [at] the beginning. But we still took several courses together—the few courses that he had left. So, I sorta switched my course around and took the ones that he had left because I had somebody to take them with, as well as a mentor. From that sense, because I knew someone fairly well and I was taking courses with people that I knew, you know, I had…quite a bit of a support group starting out.

In Dr. Anthony's view there was a definite link between his relationship with other black students and his support structure. Partly because of the support he received from his peers, and their willingness to share inside information, Dr. Anthony concluded that his experience as a doctoral student was less difficult. He articulated this sentiment in the following excerpt:

> I had this group of close friends who were supportive and nurturing so they gave me the necessary information to navigate the program. So I, you know, early on, knew about the process of selecting a major professor because I had them around me. They helped me navigate through that and gave me suggestions. And so, I had inside information, if you will, which turned out to be invaluable. You know, who to avoid, who to take, who to consider, and who not to consider. They told me things like that and it turned out to be useful information and it's information I used in ultimately selecting my major professor.

Anthony was not the only student to credit the relationship he developed with his peers for being an instrument of progress in his program; Dr. Regina held coinciding views. Dr. Regina revealed that she viewed her peers in the program as resources to each

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other. In her case, she explained that her peers collaborated, reviewed each other's work, provided feedback, and learned from each other as they strove to perfect their research.

> My colleagues, we were a true cohort working together. We didn't take all of the same classes but when it came time for dissertation, working on papers for conferences…we formed a wonderful thing called Graduate Student Research Roundtable and we would get together and students who were more advanced, they would share their work, they would practice their defense presentations, and we would help critique it.

In addition to serving as reviewers on their fellow students' work, African American doctoral students mentored each other. Dr. Joyce divulged that students benefited from the relationship they formed with more advanced students. Students mentored each other with the expectation that the mentored student would, in turn, became a member of the relay of mentors; ensuring in the process, that the newer African American doctoral students benefited from similar associations. Dr. Joyce alluded to the importance of their support group and described the mentoring process this way: "The student support group was an excellent resource…as you came in, you were mentored and part of your responsibility was to mentor someone else and, we still do that. We serve as resource[s] to each other."

A third relationship opportunity resource that some programs offered was its staff. Although this finding was not common to all programs it's existence alone is significant in that in draws attention to the fact that some programs, either knowingly or unknowingly, are effecting doctoral completion with the help of the "village" concept, a traditional education strategy in the African community. Dr. Regina, Dr. J., Dr. Rachel and Dr. Anthony, respectively, described how some program staff's involvement and interest advantaged doctoral completion for students. Dr. Regina spoke at length about her experiences with staff members in her program.

There was staff in there that became very, very close to me. They explained what I was supposed to do, they pointed me in the direction of the resources when it came time to look for a job, even helping find a real estate agent when it came time to purchase a house…They were very much [a part] of my social network, in terms of a social capital to be able to find out more about the community…they were instrumental in helping to find a place to live, who to ask about this, who to ask about that, that sort of thing…finding resources for my children. They were really curious, you know, about: what schools do you have your children in? How are they getting along at school? How are the teachers?"

Dr. J. also envisioned the staff in her program as a relationship opportunity resource, who contributed to African American doctoral students' persistence in their program through their support and encouragement. Dr. J. had this to say about her interactions with staff members in her program.

I would say the staff was very, very supportive. I mean I could be in a word processing program and some of the word processors there, especially the ones that were African Americans, oh! They would...I mean when they knew you were in the program and what department you were in, and you come in and you'd ask a question they sit up, they'd wink at you, and they'd tell you, "just hang in there, just hang in there." I would say it was very positive.

Dr. Rachel's account of her interactions with staff members in her program supports staff members' importance as a resource for doctoral completion. Although Dr. Rachel's contact with staff members was limited, she still perceived them as partners in the relationship opportunity. In fact, she described her relationship with one staff member as akin to the relationship one has with a family member. About that relationship she said:

There was one woman, who had been the secretary in our department for, I think, over thirty years. When you would come in she would talk to you. She would ask how you were doing. She would know little things about your personal life and ask you questions about that….she kinda looked after us like her kids. So I think that was nice. She was almost like a

mother figure; somebody that was checking in on you, making sure you were, ok. Yea, I think that was adding to that sense of family.

Dr. Anthony's account of his interactions with staff members in his program paralleled Dr. Rachel, Dr. J. and Dr. Regina's accounts about the staff in their programs. In Dr. Anthony's case, staff members paved the way acting as facilitators and supporters in student's efforts to achieve their goal to finish the degree. When describing his experience with staff members in his program Dr. Anthony was careful to note that his department was peopled with individuals who "followed through."

> I never had any issues with staff, especially in my program. I found them to be just overly supportive. They've been pretty much consistently the same staff. They are still there, as a matter of fact. They were there when I was a student and they were always very nice, very supportive. I would call and try to get in touch with my advisor and they would assist you and they would always call back and, you know? That is a department where people care. People followed through.

As evidenced by the previous discussions, relationships and the opportunities that ensued because of them played overwhelmingly important roles in African American doctoral students' continuance in their programs. As a program resource, relationship opportunity in doctoral education has two dimensions. Programs created the opportunity, or favorable circumstances, for participants in the program to become involved; to develop connections and affinity with each other. In turn, these alliances produced other opportunities, or chances, for progress; for students, faculty, and staff to locate and develop resources and to utilize them for students' educational achievement, emotional well-being, and the ultimate completion of their degrees.

Financial Assurances

For many students the assurances of financial assistance they received from their programs were critical to them earning their doctoral degrees. They reported that had it

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not been for graduate assistantships and other forms of financial help, they either may not have considered pursuing a doctoral degree or, would have had to attrite from their programs because of inability to pay for the degree. Stories from four participants highlight the financial dilemma that many students faced and the impact of this financial resource on doctoral completion for African American students.

Dr. Talibav gave this account of how her education would have been impacted had she not had some financial help. She described how the financial resources that was available to her was significant in that it gave her the chance to attend to her studies full time knowing that the costs of her schooling was paid for. Dr. Talibav acknowledged that without the financial assurances from her program she "couldn't have done it."

> It would have been much harder. In the end, I did have to take a lot of loans because by the time I went about four years into my fellowship [my university] pulled out any minority fellowship even if my grades were very, very good because you could not have a fellowship with any race-based initiative. So I did have to get Stafford loans (groan)…cause I had to go to school fulltime. That's how I lived and you couldn't make any money being a graduate assistant. I could not have made it. However, I still think I had a better chance because of those first four years, I didn't have to pay. I had a fellowship. I don't think I could have made it, as expensive as school was, [with] having to work and go to school and focus...I couldn't have done it because I didn't have that kind of money and I wouldn't have had the focus. Those first four years were real important because I got all my class work done. And then, I just had the research to finish writing and introduce a proposal and to finish my internship.

Dr. Regina said that financial assurance also made a positive difference in her ability to pursue the doctoral degree. She said initially she was unable to pay for her education. " I knew that I couldn't go to X university because I didn't have any money and I didn't want to go into debt; not that much debt because it was too much." She acknowledged that she may not have had the opportunity to pursue her doctoral degree

had it not been for the financial backing she received from her program at the university

where she received the degree. She explained that her program not only provided

financial resources to help pay for her education, they gave the same assurance to other

black students in her program.

> With my university, I didn't have to finance my way through my
> schooling because they only took six people per year, they fully support
> you. So, tuition was paid, fees were paid, and you had a stipend. My
> stipend was $1600-1700 a month.

Dr. Regina's program also provided opportunities so that she could earn extra

money in the summer when classes were out.

> We didn't get anything during the summer but…I would TA a course in
> the summer. We got a stipend for that. Then I took that summer job
> working in the career services program and that covered my expenses for
> the summer until I could get my stipend again. Travel was supported if
> you were presenting an article or something; that was fully supported by
> the university. You could even earn extra money working on people's
> research, faculty [member's] research.

Assurances of financial help from her program also played an important role in

Dr. Joyce earning her doctoral degree. Like other participants in the study, Dr. Joyce was

unable to independently finance her education without experiencing some difficulty. She

attributed her inability to pay for her education to community and intergenerational

socioeconomic conditions, the same reason many students from disadvantaged groups are

unable to pursue higher levels of education.

> It could have been because of the neighborhood we grew up in. We
> weren't poor but we *were poor* [her emphasis]. So in terms of finances and
> opportunities, it just was not readily available, at least, for most of the
> community…the resources were not always there.

However, with the financing from her program, her own initiative, and the help

of faculty members in her program; she had opportunities to earn extra money to

defray the remaining cost of her degree.

> When I decided to go full time, I did that knowing that I was going to get
> an assistantship which supplied, you know, stipend and decreased tuition.
> I think I had to pay for fees….I was able to do some extra curricular things
> just by looking for scholarships opportunities, for grants and such things
> which would support me going to some of these different countries and
> doing different programs.

Dr. Rachel faced similar financial hardships. Like Dr. Regina, Dr. Joyce, and Dr.

Talibav she also didn't have the wherewithal to pay for her education and her parents

"couldn't help out much financially…[even if] they [were]going to try as much as

possible to help me." Dr. Rachel credited her program for helping her to finish her

doctorate through the graduate research and teaching assistantships she received from her

program.

> I had an assistantship; it was a graduate research assistantship that I got for
> the first two years. I don't remember how much it was. I don't think it was
> much but it covered all your tuition. Then you had a little bit of a stipend. I
> mean I never really had any problems. I always tried to live with
> roommates so I could make that work. Then the last year, I had a
> combination of resources. I just did work for the department. I either taught
> a class, or [worked] as a graduate researcher on a particular research
> project. For one and a half year[s], I was involved on a particular project
> and the last semester I was there, I was doing a little bit of teaching.

Financial concerns were key features in students' accounts of their academic

experiences. Many students divulged that their programs' assurances of financial

assistance were instrumental in helping them to make the critical decision to enter

doctoral program and in continuing once they had started. Some students shared that they

would not have attempted doctoral education without those assurances. An important

thread running through their stories is the revelation that even with financial help through

graduate assistantships, personal income, stipends, other grants and scholarships, and

very thrifty budgets they completed their degrees still financially obligated for high sums of student loans.

Reassurances of Safe Spaces

The third programmatic resource which was identified as having influenced African American doctoral students' ability to complete their degree was their program's reassurances of safe space. Three sets of descriptive features characterized such safe spaces. First, they were deliberately cultivated, diverse, respectful, inclusive environments that welcomed and uplifted the whole person and where African American students were free to be vulnerable, to be critical thinkers, to challenge, to question, to reflect, be imaginative, make mistakes, and to grow. Second, within these safe spaces, students were empowered to bring smorgasbord selves: their spirituality, uniqueness, ways of knowing and becoming, idiosyncrasies, fears and doubts, strengths, weaknesses, and their talents to be validated without excuses, fear of retribution or shame. Third, faculty, students and staff in these spaces were cognizant off and attended to the intellectual, psychological, emotional, and the social and cultural aspects of students' tenure in the programs.

Several students spoke of the safe spaces in their programs and compared it to the cultures of other programs and, or, the culture in the university at large. Dr. Gap said this about the respectful relationship and the hostile-free environment that he observed in his program.

> It was a very nurturing program. A lot of doctoral programs can be adversarial. You know you have this animosity going on between, or this tension between professors and graduate students. I did not find it in my program. I did not find it in my mentor and major professor. This was an empowering, uplifting experience for me. It was a nurturing experience.

He also spoke about how his initial fear and uncertainty to enter his program changed to one of self-assuredness and empowerment after he reached the conclusion that he had the capacity to "get through the process." He credited the "nurturing environment" in his program for positively influencing the "relationship" he held with his program.

> Positively of course…I got into the program with a lot of trepidation and while I was there, I realize that I can and I will be able to get through this process. And so I became far more empowered. I became far more confident about me…my ability to complete the program. Yes, it has positively impact that relationship, that nurturing environment really got me through this process.

Dr. Regina had similar impressions about the atmosphere in her program. She noted the differences in educational philosophy between faculty in her program and other programs in the university. She ascribed faculty in her program with a philosophy that was biased towards respect and inclusion. She gave this account of her impression.

> But for the most part, the program I was in, I think the faculty had a different mindset than the rest of the college and so, I think, they are more focused on diversity, and inclusion, and setting an atmosphere of respect than maybe people outside of the educational college.

Dr. Joyce, Dr. Nina, and Dr. Anthony also spoke about the administrators in her program orientation towards diversity and students' empowerment, their penchant for making their students feel welcome, and the fact that it was noticeable to other people. Dr. Joyce said:

> I wanted to at least get started in the program. So when I met with the folks in adult education, I talked with them about my interest they were able to basically tailor the program to what I was interested in but was still consistent with adult education. Besides, I heard from some people that the faculties were very supportive of students and it was a good diverse environment to be in.

Dr. Nina spoke about the quality of the program and the opportunity it presented for her educational growth. She traced her decision to enter the program and her ability

to continue and complete the degree to her first impression that the program was a "great place, a comfortable environment." She attributed her determination not to be swayed from her decision to her conviction that faculty members within the program would support her.

> [It was] nothing but [a] pleasant, positive, and outstanding experience. I initially considered getting my doctorate in public administration and I realized that wasn't my passion and then I stumbled onto X. department. When I first visited the department, I believed I met with Dr. T. and it was that meeting with her that really said to me "this is really where I needed to be." Then after meeting with her I had a conversation with Dr. M. and that sort of secured it; kinda clinched it as well for me that yea! this is a great place, a comfortable environment. They are gonna support you through this really; really, I won't say difficult process but challenging process. When I went through [the program] there weren't a lot of students of color…but that didn't deter me from going into the program. Part of the socialization that I experienced was joining the black students organization, I not sure if it, if it's [still operating]. Hopefully, folks are still working through that program [because] it was a really good organization that connected all the students of color…Really, we shared our experiences.

Dr. Anthony felt a similar sense of security in his program as Dr. Nina, Dr. Joyce, and Dr. Regina felt in their programs. Dr. Anthony had this to say about the welcome he received, its impact on his personal development, and his persistence towards his degree.

> I came up for a visit one day and ended up interviewing with Dr. R., talking to Dr. R, before I applied, and of course, he was all inviting and welcomed me and of the rest is history. I ended up matriculating in the program….Well I became more [interested] once I get into the program it was as if education was a natural fit for me. It was as if I found this ideological, this perspective, that resonated well with me; not just on education but on life itself. And so, I wanted to do it!

The opportunity to be critical thinkers; challenge biased, status-quo thinking; reflect; and to grow were strong suits of programs that offered safe spaces as a resource for African American doctoral students to complete their degrees. For example, although Drs. Jamika, Rachel, and Angelina were oftentimes the only African American students in

their programs and, in some instances, were defending "well-accepted opinions" about people of color; nonetheless, they felt safe enough to voice their opinions. In the face of strong opinions in the literature and her frustration with her classmates designating her as the spokesman for all African Americans, Dr. Jamika nonetheless spoke up on behalf of African American children, who were depicted unfavorably in the literature. Likewise, Dr Rachel challenged her professor's assumptions that students of color were not capable of learning math, and Dr. Angelina questioned her professors' assertion that the intent in educating others was so that they could follow instructions. Instead, she offered her own critical assessment that the purpose of education was so that individuals could make informed decisions about their lives. What should be noted about these students' protests is that they were not intended so much as to challenges specific individuals but to challenge the sense of privilege that allowed Whites to create accounts that perpetrate unlikely, alien stories about people of color. For these three students who are inexorably linked to a history of oppression, the assurance of a safe space to question those privileges were critical.

The opportunity for students to be imaginative and to use their talents was also characteristics of the safe space resources that programs, who were interested in degree completion, offered their students. Dr. Gap shared how his program allowed him and other students to use their talents and imagination to facilitate a development seminar in their program.

> As a graduate assistant, one of my responsibilities was to be in charge of…a certification program and my professor who was over the program, pretty much turned over the program to myself and another student; which said to us that "we have tremendous confidence in you taking over...this was a money-making program. They were bringing in students from all over and we met five different weekends. People were paying money for

this thing and we were placed in charge of this program. So...my professors, I believe they had some degree of confidence in me. I think so.

Central to Dr. Gap's account of his responsibilities as a graduate assistant was his desire to tell his story of African Americans qualification to be in their program and to debunk the held notions that African American students enter their programs because of affirmative action laws and not because of their academic abilities.

Three program resources were identified as influencing African American doctoral students' ability to continue in historically white institutions. The resources are: the opportunity for building relationships and the chance for creating other favorable circumstances for degree completion; program's commitment to assist students with financing the degree; and program's commitment to create the kinds of environment which are conducive for students' psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Cultural Capital

This section of the chapter findings focuses on the social and cultural factors that influenced the process of doctoral completion for African American students. The overarching theme in this finding is cultural capital. Cultural capital in this finding embodies the spirit, strengths, and the norms that distinguish generations of American Blacks' struggles for the continuity and fulfillment of their race.

The social and cultural factors identified during African American doctoral students' academic tenure, and which most heavily influenced students' ability to complete their degrees were African American culture capital. Cultural capital is the capacities—knowledge, skills, acumen, strengths, resources, and talents—indigenous to black communities and some other communities of disenfranchised people. Four kinds of culture capital that contributed to this particular result were identified: actualization

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capital, stewardship capital, resistance capital, and intersubjectivity capital. Actualization capital describes the determination and the commitment exhibited by African Americans in their quest for educational, social, and economic development. This form of capital draws on the proven benefits of education and individual agency in the history of the black race. Stewardship capital stresses guardianship: the loyalty and sense of obligation among Blacks to care for, empower, and uplift each other; be they family, friends, or kin. Stewardship recognizes the importance of relationships, the strong traditions of family and fictive kinship, and the collective destiny of the black community. Resistance capital describes the multiplicity of ways African Americans call into question accepted institutions and practices that produce iniquitous conditions for oppressed people of color. It is the determination to forge an alternate path and to succeed in spite of adversity. Resistance capital draws on Blacks' resiliency and their penchant for challenging the status quo and expends assets like faith in God, spirituality, hope, and pride for its sustenance. Intersubjectivity capital includes the knowledge and other social skills acquired through shared meaning. It includes the ways of knowing and communicating gained from shared experiences. Intersubjectivity capital appropriates from the hidden ways Blacks have used, in the past, to communicate with each other in defiance of their oppressors.

The analysis of the data also revealed appendages to the major themes. First, even though actualization, stewardship, resistant, and intersubjectivity capital manifested themselves in students' interaction with their academic environment, they were not native to that environment; their gestation occurred elsewhere in the historical upheavals and day to day struggles of black people in their communities. Second, the actualization,

stewardship, resistant, and intersubjectivity capital factors present during students'

academic tenure were components of the arsenal of capacities that African American

students brought with them from their communities of family and friends to their

academic studies. An ancillary finding is that those factors were both boundless and

bounded. They were boundless in that they cut across time, space, or place and were

adaptable for use in different circumstances. They were bounded in that they drew their

strength from their source; sustenance depended partly from students' interaction with

community or intra-action with self. Conjoined with this finding is another discovery: the

benefits from students' culture capital were realizable only through their actuation.

Evidence from students' narratives identifies the various culture capital factors present

during their academic tenure.

Actualization Capital

This strength to self-actualize, to achieve their full potential was a dominant theme

emerging from the data. In all accounts, students reported that they pursued doctoral

education to meet a personal need. However, completing the degree for personal needs

was not in itself the alpha and omega of their self-actualization; rather, it was in what the

degree allowed them to do for their communities, the opportunities it created for "the

greater good", for serving and inspiring others. The relationship between personal needs

and community needs for self-actualization is a folkway of central importance, accepted

without question as a fundamental moral view of the black community. Another

fundamental view is the importance of education as a means to attain class. For African

Americans, class is not culturally understood as breeding as in a flair for fine wines, art,

theatre, old money, and idle lifestyles; rather, class is understood as being educated.

Attaining an education is emblematic of the way class is bestowed in the black community, by the black community. Essentially, class is something that is earned first, through education, and then bestowed, or approved, by the community.

The conjoining of self and community for African American students realizing their full potential is evident in Dr. Angelina, Dr. Anthony, Dr. P, Dr. Gap, Dr. J, Dr. Regina, Dr. Rachel, Dr. Jamika, Dr. Joyce, Dr. Talibav, and Dr. Nina's explanations for why they chose to pursue the doctoral degree. The degree gave Dr. Angelina the chance to start a business and to be a better teacher but it was the opportunity to advocate for parents and children in her community, that the degree gave her, which drove her passion.

> I wanted to do more to help my practice as a teacher. I had this overall dream of opening my own center, somewhat like a community center, where the major component was education. We would help students in tutoring; mostly help parents understand things that were happening in education. Help them with parent-teachers conferences and be an advocate in the community for parents and children…Also, I noticed that several of my students, specifically black students, needed more encouragement and help in motivation. I was a teacher…for a few years and I felt that my students faced a future of hopelessness. Not all of them, but some of them didn't even try to work hard. I just didn't understand where that came from and wanted to do more.

Dr. Anthony desired flexibility to pursue career opportunities in higher education but his objectives changed once he had the chance to examine the opportunities that the degree held for research about the "lived experiences" of blacks in America.

> It sparked my interest in research so I wanted a career in that direction, the professoriate; in research not just teaching but also contributing to the field…You know [it was]as though this was a natural avenue for giving voice to my own experiences. And so, it motivated me to do so. So what changed is that I didn't want this career in higher ed[ucation] and administration but I wanted it instead in the professoriate so that I can research and teach, which is where I am now.

Dr. P. said she pursued a doctoral degree partly to live up to her grandfather's expectations but mostly because she "always had an interest in working with children and families…in encouraging themselves and finding ways to keep themselves positive and encouraged." Likewise, Dr. J. returned to the classroom to earn her degree for a very personal reason. She wished to be an "example' to her son so that he understood the importance of education for young black males in the United States but, she also wanted to give that gift to other children. She said she wanted to "get a Ph.D. and work towards the empowerment of women and children" in her community.

Dr. Regina disclosed she went back to school because she sought the freedom that education offered. "The more education I get the more free I get to voice my opinion to do the work I want to do…rather than being told you must do *this! This! This*!" [her emphasis]. However, she knew that her freedom came with responsibility. She explained that completing the degree gave her the voice to address issues of inequity in schools and to question the effectiveness of Brown vs. Brown in the schooling of African American children.

> Because I have a Ph.D. and because I'm at a research institution, I can research African American family involvement and I'm looking at other people's involvement. So, sometimes it's very similar to my story. In some ways I am telling my own story and my family's story. I'm telling other people's stories; yet, similar stories.

Like Dr. Anthony and Dr. Regina, Dr. Rachel craved personal flexibility and freedom. The doctoral degree was a means to more flexible career options and an easier kind of life. However, when Dr. Rachel was confronted with the issue of whether or not African American can be educated in certain disciplines, she was galvanized to change

the trajectory of her degree major and her research to address that issue. It was her way of connecting her actualization to the community's actualization.

Dr. Joyce explained she entered the doctoral program for two reasons. She wanted to "do research and get grant funding" and she needed the academic qualifications to do so. At the same time, she wanted to make her family proud. Achieving the degree was one way to raise the educational achievement in her family, for her family.

> I always had a goal in mind to get a doctorate because no one in my family had basically gotten that high and I kinda wanted to reach some higher levels…I have a brother who has a masters and pretty much everyone one else is either high school or dropout….My mother did not graduate from high school. She went back and got her GED when she was like in her sixties or something. And so another motivation for me to go through the program was to have her see her child graduate and that was probably the biggest reward for me. That was a motivational type of thing.

Like so many of the other participants, Dr. Talibav's purpose in life was also tied to the black community. "It was two reasons" she said. She wished "to [make positive] change for children" and needed more schooling to do so and she "wanted to be able to be more financially lucrative."

Throughout the history of Black people, education has been the bridge to the self-actualization or the upward-outward mobility of people from the Diaspora; the way to attain class in their communities. The education stories of African Americans in this study reflect Blacks long association with education and the beliefs that members of the Black community, who have succeeded educationally, are duty-bound to use their education to uplift other members of their community.

Stewardship Capital

Stewardship capital was also identified as a sociocultural factor with very strong positive influences on African American doctoral students' efforts to complete their

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degrees. The data revealed that degree completion among African American students was realized partly because of the collective, diligent care; support; and consideration of family members, kinsfolk, community members, friends, student peers, and faculty members. This tendency to take personal responsibility for the well-being of members of the black community, by members of the community, has strong linkages to the history of Blacks and their struggles for survival. A noteworthy aspect of this finding is that the impact of stewardship capital on doctoral completion was sometimes latent, occurred in circuitous ways, under different circumstances, and at different periods in students' lives. The following accounts from students' narratives revealed strong evidence of stewardship capital influences in students' progress towards their degrees.

For Dr. Angelina, the impetus to pursue a doctoral degree began in her undergraduate years when one of her teachers took an extraordinary personal interest in her educational development. She methodically raised Dr. Angelina's awareness; helping her to visualize her life through different lens, to develop a love for learning, and to set her educational horizons on pursuing a doctoral degree. Dr. Angelina's description of her interactions with her teacher during her undergraduate years speaks to the stewardship her teacher exercised in Dr. Angelina's educational training.

> I think that probably stems from undergraduate work. I went to school at a HBCU and a few of my professors; one in particular was a mentor to me. I went to school with the idea that if I worked real hard I would get good grades, sort of memorize some of the information, do what I [was] asked to do and I could move forward. But her comments to me were: "there is little more depth to it. It's about how this information can really improve your life and expand your viewpoint. How does it make a difference? Why is it relative?" That seemed to impact me in specific ways but in particular, she seemed to put me in a direction that suggested that [I]needed more depth to consider how this information really impact[ed] me and how I could use it…towards my development as a scholar. She was trying to mold me into a scholar.

Another portrayal of stewardship capital working in doctoral completion is in Dr. Anthony's story about the people who gave unstintingly to help him finish his program He spoke about a committee member who, even if she was terminally ill continued on his committee until he graduated. Dr. Anthony believed she made this sacrifice for him because she felt it was that important "to get another student of color through."

> The other member of my committee was the outside member…She is deceased now. Her influence was beyond just the dissertation itself and what she gave. Her input was always good. She was obviously an excellent writer and so she gave me the most valuable input regarding editing …and her spirit, her strength of spirit! She had apparently resolved to remain a part of my committee even though she knew [she was] battling a terminal illness. And, I was just in awe. How is she able to do this? But, she did. She came to the final defense and shortly after the final defense, she passed away. And I guess…I always felt this connection to her [and] that it was important to her to get another student of color through.

Dr. Anthony also spoke about people outside his program; individuals who introduced him to the idea of engaging in doctoral work and who continued to stoke that flame of disinterest until it ignited. It is evident from Dr. Anthony's description of the exchanges that Dr. Anthony's friends realized that Dr. Anthony had potential to succeed in the doctoral education and took it upon them to nurture that potential to fruition.

> You know, a good friend of mine, he is now deceased. He finished his doctorate at the University of X. I used to live in X. I was there when he was working on it and he always encouraged me to do what he had done; to do doctoral studies, to get a doctorate. I said, why would I want to do this thing? I mean it doesn't sound like fun. Watching you, I see you go from sanity to insanity. And he would tell me all [about doctoral education]: about those exchanges; and all of those discussions; and those aha-aha moments; and those moments that entirely changed his perspectives or that, you know, resulted in a new outlook on life; that it's more than just this process, that it is an opening to something far greater and to experiencing life fuller. What an interesting way to look at this. How could you have an experience fuller than life? But I think I understand now what he was saying. It's about the opening up; not just changing the perspective once but making you always open and accepting to other perspectives that at any point, throughout life, you are willing to change your own. And I think he

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was right, And, as I talked to him more and more, we would always have those types of conversations he would always prod me and push me. So, when I encountered the likes of professional friends like K., it made it easier for me to make the decision, because I had, if you will, been pushed by a role model and friends who had done this. And so, it was a doable process to me. Even if I didn't totally understand the process, he made me understand that "if I can do this you can do this."

A similar thread is evident in Dr. Regina's account of the events that led up to her decision to enter doctoral education. Dr. Regina described the empowering wealth of stewardship capital from students' peers and faculty members that made it possible for her to enter, persist, and successfully complete her program and which prepared her for a career in academia. She spoke first about her entry into the program.

> And another thing, Dr. T. called me at home when I was in the middle of making my decision. [She said], "first of all, I want to talk to you to see if you are who you appear to be on paper and if there is anything I can do to help you make your decision." Being African American herself, she did say to me, "you know, we are forty percent African American in our department and when we get together, the faculty and the students, we really take care of each other. And, to here her talk about those things I was really [convinced] and that put me over the top to come.

Dr. Regina also spoke about her advisors acumen and ability to discern her talents, their faith in her capabilities, and like committed stewards their willingness to develop those talents, to empower her to aspire to her full potential. Their stewardship was partly instrumental in helping Dr. Regina to confidently assume her role as a fledging scholar in her program.

> Well I was a little bit discouraged but then, you know, I remember one of my colleagues saying, "you belong here" and she could tell from my passion for education. "you gonna be ok because you're passionate. You are asking questions". You know, she kept...she pointed out some things I was doing. She didn't tell me directly. But after that first semester I was in her class, there was a young lady who wanted to learn about the program… she wanted to learn about the MS program so she sat in on one of our classes. Unbeknown to me this student asked Dr. T. "is there some student that I could talk to about the program to get some insights?" And Dr. T.

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said, "you need to talk to Regina. She is very quiet in class but when she speaks, she has something to say. She is really thinking and you need to find out what she is thinking about the program." It was one semester, one course. They had this ability to see something in me that I hadn't seen myself. So that person came to my home later and we chatted about the program and she and I are like sisters now. It's funny. So, I did feel inadequate at first and I did feel discouraged along the way and I think, you know, it went up and down but that's why the sisterhood was there. I don't think I would have made it had I been by myself, had I felt totally isolated and alone after I got to meet these four women in particular.

Dr. Regina also spoke about their understanding and intuition, the patience and the care these African American women, faculty and peers, exhibited in helping her to shape the trajectory of her research agenda.

And they said "wait a minute. So right now all we want you to do is to extend your study on what have been done. We don't know very much on Black middle class families, and the ways in which they are involved, and why they are involved, and how they are involved and that is a tremendous contribution. Now keep in mind, I didn't know what a dissertation was and I came back and my sisters had said "ok Regina, take a break. Go fill out applications for jobs and we'll come back next semester." And they encouraged me to do that. So, when I came back I was like, "I know these people love me. *I know they love me* [her emphasis]. They wouldn't have poured all their energy into me if they didn't care" I know I'm ready to listen. I was over my anger; they were over their frustration with me. I wanted to listen. I got it. It was beautiful, [be]cause what they were doing was setting me up for success as an assistant professor. I have a line of inquiry that had I tried to do what I wanted to do, it wouldn't have made much sense. So now, I can go back and if I want to do work on low-income families I can. I have done two studies now, extensively, on middle class African Americans and I can see where that's tremendous. [It was] because they have that knowledge on how the academy works and what I would need to be successful as an assistant professor at a Research I university. You need to understand when I'm going to do my tenure papers, I have a trajectory. I know where my research agenda is going because they gave it to me. Thankfully, they cared enough about me it wasn't just about my dissertation. It about *where you gonna go next*, what's left out there. So [they said] instead of answering all your questions in your dissertation, lets sit back and think how do we carve this out and map where you are going? Sometimes, you have to be quiet and just let them talk. I think I became creative when I learned how to unlock the understanding of all this research—make meaning of it….critique it, and analyze it. But that was one thing, [the other was] how do you harness it

so that you can put it into a life work for yourself and that's what they helped me to do.

That profound caring, the desire of stewards to see those who are charged to their care excel, and to protect them through the process was clearly conspicuous in other students stories like: 1) Dr. Rachel's story of how her father's coaching kept her steadfast to her goal; 2) Dr. Joyce mother 's pride in her daughter's achievement; 3) Dr. J.'s account of mother encouraging her to finish her degree no matter how long it took; and 4) Dr. Gap, Dr. Jamika, Dr. Nina, and Dr. J.'s confidence in their parents' determination to give them the opportunity to get an education. First, Dr. Rachel recounts the counsel she received from her father on how to manage doctoral education so that is not consumed by it.

> My parents, my dad always was like "keep your eyes on the prize. What you do in your twenties will set the quality of your life for the rest of your life". He was always like, "do what you have to do. Get done! Focus!" I mean I wasn't always the most disciplined person. I would say certainly not in my early school and not in college. But in grad school I see the end; the light at the end of the tunnel. I think I became more like just keep my eyes on that and do what you have to do. And then my parents were very supportive. I knew very much [that] they were very proud of me and very proud that I was getting a Ph.D...In that sense, they were kinda pushing me along too. My dad has been through it and told me, "don't take things too seriously. You're not trying to write a book. You, want to get done. Once you get the Ph.D. it's what you do with it that matters."

Like Dr. Rachel's father, Dr. Joyce's mother was a major force in Dr. Joyce completing her doctoral degree. Although she could not provide the financial capital for Dr. Joyce's education she provided stewardship capital; helping to motivate and encourage Dr. Joyce through the process.

> Well again just that motivation thing. She is older and the fact that she could be proud of her children at that point in my life and in hers. I try to do things that would brighten up her day. You would have thought that she marched across the stage, so proud. You know at the little reception we

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had, she gave her little speech and she was just...it was really her day, it really wasn't mine. She was a major motivation.

Dr. P. shared how her mother's stewardship—her blend of pragmatic advice and caring love—helped her to renew her resolve to finish her degree at a point when she was in danger of leaving her program.

> Let's be realistic here. If you don't graduate you don't get a degree. You have done all this work for what? And what are you going to do with a bachelors and just a bunch of graduate hours? What are you going to buy with that? Might as well stick it out; however you have to eke by, just eke by—get it done! And, my mother, I love her…she is such a practical person but she is so wonderful. She is like" ok, what's the difference. The person you graduate first and the person who graduate last they are all called doctor. And once you graduate nobody knows the difference; they are all called doctor. And, it not to say you're of a lesser caliber, it just took you longer because you had some other stuff to do.

Dr. Gap also spoke about the collective care and contributions of family members and the many others which sustained him. I also had family members who were tremendous. I ... if [you were] to go back to my dissertation I borrowed from that proverbial phrase "it took a village" and it literally took a village for me to take my degree. Dr. Jamika remembered her mother protecting her right to an education, championing her cause. "I remember my mum fighting for me to be in advance classes. She was feeding that passion I had for learning."

Likewise, Dr. Nina shared her story of a caring mother who fought to safeguard her daughter's self-respect. She knew that in order for her daughter to have the confidence to complete her education, she needed be a whole person, to retain her self-respect. Despite Dr. Nina's pain and anguish at having to confront her high school counselor, she sent her back to the high school counselor's office so that Dr. Nina could

have the opportunity to let her counselor know how he made her feel and, in the process,

retrieve her "pride."

> It was in high school. I was looking for colleges. I was a very good student. I had gone to the counselor's office. The counselor, white male, I went to him and I said, "hey, I'm looking for colleges, I want to know what options I have before me." Instead of him presenting to me a wide range of schools, he pretty much narrowed the choices for me in this particular area. He presented technical school…that's what he presented to me. He did not present to me University o or any such like institution. I left my meeting with him feeling he [had] just lowered the expectations   I [had] set my expectations, pretty much, with high goals for myself. I left that meeting feeling defeated; never have ever felt that way before, never before that; up until that point, never, never, felt that way. I had gone home, [and] shared with my mother, you know, the hurt. As soon as I shared that with her (I was crying and all), she made me go back to the school, go right back, march myself right into his office and tell him exactly how I felt after having that meeting with him. It's taken me several years to realize, that in many respects, it was that experience that didn't necessarily fuel that pride in me but it made me realize that I need to open up my eyes. I think …to some extent, [it] put a spark in me that maybe; I can be a source of pride to other people through my experience.

Finally, stewardship capital in doctoral education manifested itself in different

ways. While some students made progress towards their degree because of the

stewardship capital of people who were vested in their success, some students used their

own desire to be stewards to motivate others to complete the degrees. This alternate use

of stewardship capital by African American doctoral students is evidenced in Dr. J's

account of how she handled the deterrents to her completing her degree. She said she

returned to school so that she could be a role model to her children and despite the

hardships that she faced she finished her degree for her children's sake.

> No matter what I was going to do it because it was important for me, for my son. When I was pregnant I was saying by the time my child is…is three I'd be finished with the program and they'd start school saying my mum is a doctor.

Stewardship capital describes the guardianship and the kinship that is traditional among members of the black community. In this section, excerpts from students' narratives attest to the prominence of stewardships in doctoral students' personal lives in their communities of family and friends, and in their programs among black faculty and students. The importance of this culture capital for African American doctoral students' progress in their programs is amplified in light of other themes that revealed this group of students faced both interpersonal and intra personal challenges to degree completion.

Resistance Capital

A third sociocultural factor influencing African American doctoral students' ability to complete their degree was resistance capital. The data revealed that students' persistence to the conclusion of the doctoral degree benefited from the traditions of resistance which characterizes the day-to-day existence of oppressed people, in general, and African Americans in particular. A central theme in the utility of resistance capital is the notion of pooled effort. Students spent, borrowed from, and at times totally relied on the resistance capital of the black community: progenitors, kinsfolk, peers, mentors, teachers and friends to realize their goal of attaining the doctoral degree. Their abilities to reject pathways in life that were prescribed for them, to seek alternatives that reflected a more accurate representation of their potentials, and to resist conditions that were not conducive to doctoral completion are common threads in students' narratives of their doctoral experiences.

Dr. Talibav divulged that finishing the degree hinged on non-academic factors like trust, curiosity, and stubbornness. However, it was her sense of resistance, resiliency, and her fighting sprit, her "never say die attitude" that she was most proud about.

Many of the things that helped me to complete wasn't academic. The things about myself [sic]...is that I'm determined. Once I decide that I'm going to do something, I feel that I'm not going to let myself down so I owe it to myself to get it done. I don't like to make promises that I can't keep. Being trustworthy is important to me. I was always curious, I was very stubborn. Like when that professor underestimated me. I don't like being underestimated. That does bug me. But as I got older I figured that I can use it to fool people. I'm like, ok, well however you want to perceive me but I know I've got everything going on….oh! [and] taking *a never say die attitude*…the majority of what my struggle was in graduate school was trying to keep up with that schedule and maintain some level of sanity and health and I was doing a very good job with that. I was still getting stuff done [be]cause there is no such thing as quit. I remember having a conversation with my dissertation chair. He was like you just look tired, you just worn out. You're doing what you have to do but just look depleted. I'm like, "there is no way I'm quitting. It may take me a longer time but there is no way I'm quitting."

In Dr. Gap 's case, even if his family had little economic means, his grandparents resisted the urge to be satisfied with their educational and economic station in life and instilled in their children the determination to change their positions in life through education.

We never had much up in my hometown but one thing that was inculcated in us was the value and belief in yourself, the belief that you can achieve whatever you set your mind to. Here I have grandparents who had only primary school education and yet they saw the need to push their grand kids and make sure that their grand kids…we go to school, [even] as poor as we were. They saw the value of a good education and those are the things....[that] even today, still I hold on to and cherish dearly.

Dr. Talibav's resistance revealed itself in her determination to pursue her career of choice. When she perceived that limitations were set for her, she became more resolute to follow her fathers' example and pursued doctoral education.

[There were] a couple things I challenge[ed]. I remember being told in school, at one point, that I should be a nurse or a teacher. I shouldn't consider being a doctor and I automatically said, "hah? You must be crazy. My dad is a doctor. I'm gonna do what I want to do. You just can't make me be a nurse like black people can't be doctors". Because, I was

aware enough to pay attention to what people [was saying]. As I got older, I saw racism and I would stop it and it would make me angry.

Dr. Anthony also spoke about his resolve to finish his degree. He attributed that resolve to his family experiences with racism, his experiences as an African American growing up in the segregated south, and his parents' insistence that he had no option but to preserve in everything that he attempted. The lesson from his experiences and his parents' teachings stayed with him as evidenced by his determination to not attrite from his program.

> My mum having lost both here parents to the clan, she could have been super bitter. But instead, what she decided to do was that she would instill in her kids, if you will, the necessary tools to survive and to be strong….She was somewhat of a remarkable woman in having lived through all of those experiences and then, having that view of race but also deciding that, you know, the way to survive is to learn to navigate, if you will, the racial climate to succeed in spite of racism. Well, I think having grown up in that era, having grown up with those experiences, I think it intensified a determination that I have to. In fact, I am the personality type that once I undertake something, I have to complete it. And I think it is because of those experiences. So, you know, we never quit any thing. You know, we never not complete anything. My parents instilled that in me. You know? So, I knew once I started the program, I was gonna complete it. It was not a choice; that was a given. That's what I was always taught and that's what you did. You know you never gave up.

Even in very difficult moments, students demonstrated defiance. Dr. J. admitted that the resignation of her committee member from her committee at a critical period in her progress towards completing her degree made her both fearful and hesitant. Even so, she managed, with help, to find the strength to combat her fear, endure, and move forward.

> I just panicked and back pedaled until my major professor kinda grounded me and, you know, told me to "take a deep breath. You are at the point in your program where either you want it or you don't."And I wanted it. I had come to far not to see the light at the end of the tunnel. So again, yet

another deep breath and replaced…found a new committee member and just kept moving forward, one foot in front of the other.

In fact, Dr. J. took her resistance one step further. She turned a situation with the potential to stymie her progress to degree completion into a motivational tool. She saw her adversity as greater motivation to continue with her education.

> I said, a setback is a set up for success and, regardless, this is my life['s] calling. This is something I was purposed for even before I was born and I'm gonna fulfill it, regardless….It made me more determined. I had a couple of incidences in the program where I was challenged. It made me more determined to do what I needed to do to stay on track, stay focused, stay and run the course.

Dr. Joyce shared two different occasions when resistance capital served her well in her pursuit of the doctoral degree. The first instance was when Dr. Joyce believed her supervisor was trying sabotage her efforts to pursue a Ph.D. Dr. Joyce's ability to go against the grain and to take a stand was evident even before Joyce entered her program. In fact, her ability to resist efforts to derail her desire to pursue a doctoral degree, in her own words, was the motivation behind her decision to enter the program.

> The Chair…who had issues all of her own, instead of decreasing my teaching time she increased my teaching time and gave other people release time so that they could go to school, rather than me….This particular person had an Ed.D. and I've always wanted a Ph.D. But because she didn't want anyone to have credentials higher than hers, she had been encouraging me, and getting other people to encourage me to get an Ed.D. And so, when I didn't go for the Ed.D. but [pursued] the Ph.D., that's when she basically tried to make things difficult. And so, that was a push and motivation for me to just go forward and do what I needed to do for me.

The second evidence of resistance capital surfaced in Dr. Joyce's account of a classroom incident during which Dr. Joyce perceived that white students' reactions to the classroom were a sign of racism. In this particular incident, Dr. Joyce chose to show

resistance by expressing her desire to "want more of a voice", something she had not

desired till then.

> It made me determined to have a voice because in most of my classes there were a few minority, a few ethnic groups, but for the most part the classes consisted of individuals from the majority population. And so, it really opened my eyes to the subtleness of racism. Whereas, these individuals were fine up until that point, when that flag issue came up I guess they couldn't hold it in any more….I also thought, this is the year 2003, 2005, whatever it was, and there are still people with these types of attitudes. And, even though I kinda knew that to be true, I hadn't experienced a lot of it. So, that was just kinda a validation that yea, those kinds of attitudes really are out there [even if] they may come from people that you wouldn't expect…I was a little bit surprised that they were so upset because [I] didn't think they were so into the confederacy and what have you. It was humorous but it was also upsetting enough to make me want more of a voice.

Resistance capital in students tenure in the program speaks to students attempt to

take control of their own lives through education. As descendants of an enslaved race

students were aware of their history and the pernicious role of racism in their lives. Like

their ancestors, they learned to cloak themselves in tenacity resisting any situation or

discourse that threatened in real or imagined ways to subordinate, oppress, victimize, or

marginalize them. This learned resistance was a valuable asset to African American

doctoral students in historically white institutions in that they transferred their resistance

to situations; both internal and external that provided a threat to their education.

Intersubjectivity Capital

The fourth sociocultural factor identified in the data as influencing African

American doctoral students' fulfillment of their degree programs was intersubjectivity

capital. The data showed that shared meaning or the common meanings that African

American students constructed about their experiences, with their peers and mentors,

played a significant role in students' capacity for navigating the intricacies of doctoral

education on the campuses of white universities. Stories and comments from students'

narratives support this finding.

For example, in her discussion about the racial makeup in her department Dr. P.

commented that she was somewhat reassured that there was some "minority" in her

department even if there were no black faculty members. For her, their presence meant

that there would be different perspectives and other people of color who may share her

interpretation of the social and cultural environment in her program.

> I was glad there was some minority presence…It's a different perspective.
> …. I felt automatically there was somebody who [would] understand my
> interpretation of, you know, the stuff that was going on. Because you
> know you discussed your interaction with the people in that department
> for years. So it's like, you know, them noticing or feeling the same kind of
> things about [a] certain situation or a certain person.

Evidence of intersubjectivity capital also surfaced in the relationship between Dr.

J. and her previous dissertation chair. Their mutual "understanding" of the situation, the

similarity in their experiences and the common meaning they made of their experiences,

influenced how the Chair handled the situation and how Dr. J. responded to her attempts

to help.

> When she left, I knew she was doing it because it was something she
> needed to do professionally but…I took it pretty hard. She was a very
> spiritual person and I am also and she would use our spirituality to keep
> me focused. And that was very, very important. She'd tell me, "you know,
> this is a part of the plan, keep the faith, trust Him. What[ever] the devil
> made for bad, God makes for good. Maybe you don't understand it now
> but trust the process." Things like that really helped. She shared some of
> the struggles that she had in her doctoral program, which was at the same
> university. That was helpful. I was inspired because she persevered and
> she is now a Dean at a top university. So I stayed hopeful…Sometimes
> things got a little dim but, you know, she'd sent me an email with
> something encouraging and we'd go on.

Intersubjectivity capital was also evident in Dr. Anthony's explanation for why he decided to enter his doctoral program in the first place. He said his decision to pursue a doctoral degree was because the educational experiences of African Americans, who grew up in the Jim Crow South, were missing from the literature. Because he also grew up in that period, had similar experiences and shared an understanding of those with many Blacks in his community, he felt compelled to use his voice to "add" their experiences to the literature, and "in so doing[,] do them justice."

> Part of my reason …for wanting to do it was because I understood that the voice[s] of people, like me, [are] missing and if I don't go and be the one to add it, it would not be there. So, I can add the experience of my parents. You know, they grew up in the Jim Crow south [and] didn't have an opportunity to complete their grade schools themselves because in the south where they weren't able to do so….they were victimized by the time, the clan and just the entire racial climate. So I understood that, you know, I can use those experiences to inform my own work and in so doing, do them justice

The sense of common experiences and shared meaning was the bond that motivated a group of African women doctoral student, at Dr. Joyce's university, to come together to encourage and support each other through their education. Dr. Joyce explained the group's existence this way:

> We also had a group called Sistahs and that group was basically African Americans, women of color, who got together. We would meet periodically for dinner just to share experiences and give tips and guidelines on how to get through, how to handle different situations, and kinda celebrate each other successes. And so, that was a very, very supportive avenue for me.

Nina also referred to the positive influence that shared meaning had on her social connections with other African doctoral students in her department. Dr. Nina explained it this way. "Within the department, I found myself primarily interacting with students of color because we connected much...much, much easier because of our experiences… I

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think you connect more, of course, with people who look like you and have similar experiences."

Like actualization, stewardship and resistance capital, intersubsectivity was birthed in the struggles of the black race and horned by shared experiences. African American doctoral students in historically white universities relied on intersubjectivity capital for navigational purposes: as a means of communicating critical unspoken information, to establish relationships, as a means of support, and to warn each other of political danger which could thwart their efforts to complete the degree.

The stories shared in this section illustrate these points: 1) actualization, stewardship, resistance, and intersubjectivity capital were part of the fundamental character of the spirit of Blacks' culture; that cultural capital if used appropriately can produce benefits for African American students and that African American recipients of the doctoral degree, who participated in this study, resorted to cultural capital to advantage them in completing their degrees.

Reconstituting Agency: Repositioning Self

The final section of this chapter focuses on the strategies, actions, and activities African American doctoral students engaged in and the resources they utilized to handle the many deterrents to degree completion they encountered on the campuses of historically white institutions.

The study revealed that African American doctoral students responded to deterrents to degree completion like racial othering, cultural dissonance, and lack of insiders' information through renewed agency and by repositioning their perceptions of their place in the university. Evidence from the data shows students used agency in three

distinct ways to change the behaviors and thought patterns that were adversely affecting

their progress in their programs. First, through interaction with others, they mined the

benefits from positive, nurturing, supportive relationships with caring family, significant

others, friends, faculty, student peers, and community members. Second, through

introspection they formed closer relationships with themselves and mentally reframed

their positioning within the university. Third, through self-help they pooled their

resources to ensure that they all graduated. Fourth, by reaffirming their reason for their

presence in their program they reasserted their determination to complete their degrees.

Mined Positive Relationship

Students indicated that the interactive, supportive relationships with family and

significant others, faulty members, student peers, and members of their communities

played powerful roles in determining how they responded to the obstacles they

encountered during their studies. African American students depended on their

relationships with loved ones, friends, and associates for mentoring, information,

nurturing, friendship, validation, and support. Not all students had access to the same

types of relationship, had the same needs, or received the same forms of support from the

same types of relationship. Nonetheless, the data overwhelmingly confirmed the benefits

from positive relationship with people who were vested in students' success were

significant in combating obstacles to degree completion. First, Dr. J. gave an account of

her immediate loved ones "presence" in her life during her studies and how their presence

helped to make her struggles bearable.

> They were very patient. They were very accommodating of me. My
> significant other… if it was going to be a particularly hard night at school,
> or if I was running late and I didn't want to drive, or I was having a bad
> day, if his schedule permitted; he'd drive to school with me and while I

was in class he'd play golf. [I felt] his presence that way. Sometimes my son would go and they would go to a movie and, you know, just kinda knowing that were in the same area or that I didn't have to drive back at night because it's a fifty mile commute…It's 100 mile round trip commute and just knowing that I didn't have to drive back at night [was comforting]. Or, if we drove back we'd stop and have an ice cream from the store or something like that, just kinda having their support. Or, when I was coming from school, I'd call my mum on my way back and say, "hey, I am on the road" and we'd talk until I got to my home, until she knew I was there. Then, I'd get off the phone. Just that kind of support from my family and my significant other was important.

Likewise, Dr. P. spoke about the sustenance she received from her family

members and how it helped her face the stresses of doctoral education.

I have a tremendous family. Oh, my Gawd! Even if they weren't tremendous people, there [are] so many of them. No matter how rough or difficult or stressful stuff got at school, I still had an oasis somewhere. If it was a friend in town, if it was a relative, even my mother or father, or a cousin's house, I had those retreat[s] and those opportunities to, like I say, relax and recharge and be around people who love me, and would look after me, and just give me a break from life [before I] go back into the fray.

Dr. Nina described how her husband's support, understanding, and the sacrifices

he made on her behalf assisted her towards completing her degree.

My husband, he was a very huge support system for me in that he allowed me to neglect him for quite some time….I was so focused in getting it done in the timeframe that I did. He allowed me to do that. He gave me the space. He created the space that was necessary.

Dr. Joyce and Dr. Regina described how their relationship with students' peers:

their friendship, support, and the bond that they had developed helped them to navigate

the challenges of doctoral education. Dr. Joyce said:

We also had a group….that was basically African Americans, women of color who got together. And, we would meet periodically for dinner just to kinda share experiences and give tips and guidelines on how to get through, and how to handle different situations and kinda celebrate each other successes. So, that was a very, very supportive avenue for me.

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Dr. Regina also revealed that a group of African American students, her "sisters" positively influenced her persistence towards degree completion. They prepared each other for the different stages of the dissertation defense by staging mock defenses. They critiqued, gave honest feedback, and generally helped each other to succeed.

> I felt grateful to be among these women…to have been with my sisters. We actually called each other, Sisters...We would have meetings off campus. Whenever somebody was getting ready to go up and defend a paper, they had to present in front of us and we would critique it. If it didn't work, if it wasn't good, they [were] not gonna sugar coat it. It's awful, let's rework it. They're not gonna let you go forward and not shine to the best of your ability.

Like Dr. Regina and other students, Dr. P. relied on faulty members and students for support, encouragement, and friendship. Dr. P divulged that the obstacles and challenges she faced did not impact her performance as a student but it did impact her as a person. However, she was able to overcome these obstacles because as she explained, "wonderfully enough, there were enough other people around me in the department and in other departments within the college of education that were encouraging and were understanding and working with me to get out of school." She further elaborated on the ways that students and faculty helped her through those obstacles.

> When I was having a bad day, or when I just didn't feel like doing anything, I had people to call upon, to talk with, to go out with, to study with, [and] to motivate me, for whatever I had to do….I had friends in another department. I did make a connection with an African American female faculty in a different department and she was on my dissertation committee as well. I had done some contact work for her on one of her grants and had basically chosen [her]. When you are in a predominately white institution if you can find another black person who is willing to befriend you and look out for you and if you have any question, if you need [any] type of advice or something [their] door is open.

Dr. Gap also gave his account of how his interactions with his peers helped him meet the challenges he encountered in his program. He spoke enthusiastically about three

African American male students, "comrades", as he called them, who upheld each other, offering support and a listening ear, as they helped each other deal with their individual experiences. He said:

> There were three of us from Metro City who were pursuing the doctorate in the department at the same time; three African American guys. And we would carpool. That helped, that helped a lot. Because, you know, I never lived in Suburban County. I lived in the city. And so driving down there, you had someone. You had the ears of someone who was going through the same experience and so that also helped me tremendously in terms of support. [There was] someone, two other people, two other guys, who were in the process, going through the same experience that I was going through. You know? And we [would] just sit there [and] lean on each other.

Dr. Nina story was similar to Dr. Gap's; she also benefited from her relationship with other Africa American doctoral students in her program. She gave accounts of a black student support group that was a tremendous resource for graduate students trying to deal with the barriers and personal challenges that they encountered in the university. She had this to say:

> I keep referencing students… this Black Student Group. I hope that organization is still functioning because it does help. It helps just to bring students who look the same, have similar experiences. Just to come together and feel like hey, this is a family and that I can do it. There were times where I know a couple of my classmates, they had some really serious family issues going on and they would have dropped out had it not been for that group of folks encouraging them. "Hey you can do it. We know this is tough." Just getting through the process, just getting through'[be]cause you can't do it alone. It would have been a lonely, a lonely, I think, experience for me if I had not been involved in that organization.

Dr. Gap and Dr. Nina revealed their friends outside their universities played important roles helping both of them in their success completing their degrees. Dr. Gap explained:

> Friends were tremendously supportive. I remember going to my barber's shop. My barber knew I was going through this. Every time I would go to

my barber's shop, he would proclaim, "oh! Here is my friend and he is going to a *doctor* soon." And those were the things that would push me, would motivate me—a supportive network outside of the school system, in the form of friends and relatives.

Dr. Nina also revealed experiences similar to Dr. Gap's experiences. In both of their experiences African Americans push for education is evident in the community's push for students' education. The sense of pride exhibited by the members of the community at one of its own hunger for education is a tradition that goes back through history to slavery and beyond. In her case a previous mentor gave her the friendship and counseling that she needed to continue in her program.

> I also had a professor, who was my very first professor, first black female professor in college. She and I remained friends after I graduated and she, pretty much, served as a mentor for me throughout my undergraduate studies. Since then, we remained really, good friends. She also was [a] huge, huge, resource for me. She would always remind [me] of the light. "The light is still shining and the light is getting brighter because you are almost at the end of the tunnel." And, she would always remind me of that.

The importance of positive relationships is clearly evident in the importance attached to its benefits. Students gave accounts of variety of ways in which they were beneficiaries of relationship and how utilizing these benefits assisted them in combating the deterrents of doctoral study. It was also evident these pools of benefits were not offerings from any one person or persons or from individuals of any particular status or influence s on students. Rather students perceived benefits in all their different positive relationships, whether they were professional or personal, and used these benefits to advance their progress through their programs.

Resorted to Introspection and Mental Reframing

Besides pursuing an interactive relationship with family and significant others, faulty members, peers, and members of their communities; an alternate way African American doctoral students dealt with deterrents to degree completion was though introspection—engaging in self-contemplation. As students progressed towards the conclusion of their degrees they: 1) became increasingly self-aware, 2) rejected external and representational definitions of self, 3) mentally reframed their positions in the institutions, 4) developed a greater sense of emotional intelligence, 5) became more engaged in self-help strategies; and 6) reaffirmed their purpose for being in their programs.

Self-awareness or personal cognizance: the capability to understand and discern one's worldview, needs, and wants in relation to others was one of the five ways African Americans doctoral students managed issues that were deterrents to them completing their degree. Dr. P's thoughtful analysis of the qualities that she brought to her program and the strategies that would get her through a doctoral program on the campus of a historically white university; is a fitting example of how students sought to increase their knowledge of themselves through their experiences, and to understand how that knowledge impacted their progress.

> Many of the things that helped me to complete wasn't academic…I'm determined. Once I decide that I'm going to do something, I feel that I'm not going to let myself down so I owe it to myself to get it done. I don't like to make promises that I can't keep. Being trustworthy is important to me. I was always curious, I was very stubborn. Like when that professor underestimated me. I don't like being underestimated. That does bug me. But as I got older I figured that I can use it to fool people. I'm like, ok, well, however you want to perceive me but I know I've got everything going on.

Dr. Nina also revealed that self-awareness played a significant role in helping her to acknowledge her fears, to speak out against the discrimination that she was subjected to and to find a way, other than denial, to address the challenges that her fears and discrimination presented to her successfully completion of her degree.

> But going back to opening my eyes…in many ways, she forced me to think it's ok to acknowledge certain things. Not to say I was afraid to do so but I think having someone in that environment…[a] black female experiencing similar things that I was experiencing...she could relate to what I was experiencing and pretty much kinda help me navigate my way through that process.

According to Dr. Nina, in spite of the obstacles that students encountered in their efforts to reach this status, doctoral completion is achievable partly because of students' ability to answer the deep questions about their purpose for seeking the degree.

> Why are you there? Why are you getting this degree? What's driving you to finish? You know [there are] a whole hosts of things that people would say but I think, fundamentally, deep down inside,…that's part of the strategy of getting it done. You gotta know within you, in yourself, why you are doing this. And it gotta be, I think, for the greater good. Some folks who have gotten it done may not have had that philosophy and they still got it done and have been really successful. [But] I think to truly value that degree you got to look within yourself and I think that's what's gonna sustain you, get you through, and that's part of the strategy of completing the degree.

A similar thread on awareness through introspection is present in Dr. Angelina retrospective account of her doctoral experience. She described how her growing awareness improved her ability to see the relationship between theory and practice and helped her to continue to pursue her degree. Reflecting on what she learned in her doctoral program she had this to say:

> Well like I said…life leads theory. So the lived experiences that you already had are in some theoretical format. You just have to feel out which lived experience fits with what theory. For me, several of my lived experiences I was able to identify within the theories…I felt like, "oh! Ok,

now I got it." That was a benefit because I can draw back from my experiences …in my past…as well as [experiences] with different family members. I was able to continue and pursue my degree.

Self-awareness also played a role in the way Dr. Regina dealt with the deterrents to doctoral completion in that it helped her to transition from a practitioner to a scholar and to understand that purposeful work held a higher calling than work merely for work sake—two steps that were necessary to realizing her purpose in life. Dr. Regina described her growing awareness this way: "It was about being African American and transitioning from this practitioner['s] mind to the scholar mind but not wanting to do work for the sake of work but wanting to do work that has purpose."

Like other students, Dr. Nina used introspection to improve her awareness about the process of doctoral education. In so doing, she finally came to her own understanding of who she was and why she decided to make the pursuit of the doctoral degree part of her life's journey.

> I think to truly value that degree you got to look within yourself and I think that's what's gonna sustain you, get you through, and that's part of the strategy of completing the degree. It a very introspective process, if you allow it to be. You can learn a lot about yourself through the process….I think as I grown older and as I reflect more on what drives me to do what I do. Where is this passion come[ing] from— going beyond what others expect, pursuing the doctorate for example?….So I think, I really, really do think it was that experience in high school; that moment that shaped how I viewed myself, where I wanted to go. And not only that, I think another major piece was my mother, my mother forcing me to go back.

Awareness through introspection is one of the ways African American students in historically white institutions (HWIs) learned to handle the deterrents to doctoral completion. Through introspection they increased their knowledge about them selves and their understating of how having that knowledge of themselves can help them to make strategic decisions to reach their goals. Additionally, awareness through introspection

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enabled them to confront their fears, answer the deep questions about their reasons for wanting the degree, and to make connections between their identity, the doctoral degree, and their life's purpose.

Mental reframing was another theme related to how African American doctoral students handled the deterrents to degree completion that they encountered in historically white universities. Mental reframing involves taking something out of one interpretation and replacing it with another (Sherman & Fredman, 1986). Through reframing, a negative thought can often be challenged, disputed, rejected, and reframed into positive, functional thoughts. Students' stories revealed that a majority of participants in this study used mental reframing throughout their period of doctoral study to reposition their perceptions of their locations in their programs; either rejecting and reframing those definitions, or simply rejecting them altogether. For example, when a faculty member told Dr. Talibav that her work was of poor quality, she sought a second opinion and found a faculty member and a publisher who validated her own assessment of her work.

> Like I said, I knew I could do it. And if he had said, no, it wasn't ready I would have made it ready. But for someone to tell me you just can't write and to give up on me and say, you just can't do this when I thought it was good. Ok, I wanted to know was I right at this, or it really wasn't good, or is it ok and I wanted someone else's opinion. Well, when he did that and it did get post, I knew they wouldn't print it if it wasn't written well.

Likewise, Dr. Nina mentally reframed the expectations that she thought others set for her. By setting her own expectations of herself, she ensured that those expectations were lofty ones well within her abilities; two criteria that she felt would enable her to "tell" her story the way she wanted it told.

> I set my expectations, pretty much, with high goals for myself….if you encounter educators, who have lower expectations of you and your expectations are significantly higher than theirs, how can you go around

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that and meet your goals and what you expect of yourself? So, I think
from that experience, I found myself thinking beyond what other people
would ordinarily. I would go beyond what's necessary.

Dr. Jamika's ability to reconceptualize what her presence in her program should

be, rather that what she thought others felt it was; in essence, to remake the "rules of

engagement" so that she too had a voice, is another example of how these former students

coped with obstacles to their progress.

I think eventually what I did was, I just got over it. I recognized that I am
different and that's ok and that's what this place needs. They need to be
exposed to people who are different….I think I accepted that I am different,
like verbally. And just basically accepted that my perspective is different
and there will be sometimes that I would need to explain myself further
and there are other situations when I wouldn't and I would have to make
that decision for myself.

Dr. Regina's efforts to define her work is also an example of African American

students' determination to define, for themselves, who they are, who they can emulate,

and who can benefit from their area of research.

We all talked about how we would have made it when our work ends up
on the kitchen table of families rather than in one of these fancy journals.
It's not about that. We understand that is what being at a research
institution is but even to this day, our work has such tremendous meaning
that I don't hear from other scholars. All of us, there was about four of us,
we all had the same two professors. We all talked about how we know we
would have made it when our work ends up on the kitchen table. I don't
hear of people talking about their work that way. For me it is a calling.

Dr. P. employed a somewhat different strategy. She chose not to give credence to

how others perceived her; but, like Dr. Jamika, she also changed the rules empowering

herself through her resistance. "Well, however you want to, perceive me. But, I know I've

got everything going on." She said she had celebrated other decried her differentness.

You just know you are different. When you walk in you know that you are different. If your folks have done a good job, you are ok with that and you show yourself as whom you are and get to know people, and all of that. No matter what they look like.

Mental reframing was a critical success element for African American students learning how to handle the deterrents to degree completion. As indicated in their narratives students called into question external and representational definition s of them, categorically rejected them and presented different versions, counter-narratives of who they were.

Additionally, analyses of data reveals that overwhelmingly, African American doctoral students developed emotional intelligence to counteract the difficulties associated with obstacles to degree completion. For African American students the added work of developing emotional intelligence was necessary not only as a means to get to know themselves but also to know others as well. An interesting aspect of this finding is that students' capacity for this competency increased as students became more and more challenged. An interesting twist to how students used their deeper knowledge of self and others was that it sharpened their ability to hide being their representational selves. In other words, they became better at not revealing their feelings and to learn which face to wear and when to wear it.

For example, Dr. P., Dr. Anthony, Dr. J., and Dr. Nina, respectively, discussed their development of emotional intelligence during their stay in their programs. Dr. P. said: "Well, I guess being in an integrated school, you learn other peoples' values and other people ways of doing things and you get more inside into the mainstream ways of thinking." Dr. Anthony elaborated on how emotional intelligence helped him to

understand and connect with some faculty members. That same "sixth sense" also helped

him to discern faculty members that he thought he needed to avoid or to be skeptical

about. He said:

> The nature of that relationship is more like guiding you as you prepare to
> go off on your own for this huge study. And so, I found that most of the
> time, faculty was pretty good at that. Some were more so distant than
> others[were] and you know…, Initially, I didn't know if it was because I,
> myself am a private person and I tend to be distant but then I did realize
> there were some who were more so distant than others. Initially, I just
> though that maybe they like some students [more] than others; but, what it
> probably mean is that they also have their own bias and their own
> personality quirks. I know that now in hindsight; but, at the time I didn't.
> So, there were faculty [members] that I was more so leery of even though
> I had not been advised to avoid them. I just couldn't read them, if you will.
> So I didn't quite know what to expect.

Developing emotional intelligence is clearly evident in Dr. J's story about of her

relationship with an international student in her cohort. As she described the

commonality in their experiences, she revealed her capacity for understanding Matusha's

feelings and motivations and to bond with her in the process. Dr. J. tells us that they both

felt isolated; culturally, emotionally, and socially alienated within their programs, both

perceived that they were treated in unfair, offensive ways by their peers and faculty in

their department because of their backgrounds (in Dr. J's case it was race and Matusha it

was national origin); and both resented how their classmates treated them.

> I'll just start with my cohort. In my cohort, we had a white female a white
> male, and a Turkish female and me, an African American female. When
> we began the course, I think everybody was a bit apprehensive. I felt
> compelled to reach out to Matusha who was the Turkish student. She and I
> felt a bit isolated….Another thing that I found as I got to know Matusha
> …was that she felt more aligned with the African American race than she
> did with the Anglo American...and was pressured...and was even asked if
> she liked black people. And was kinda, for lack of a better word, adopted
> by one person in our cohort who took it upon themselves to make sure she
> had an experience in the U.S. that was knowledgeable. So, she was invited
> to Las Vegas and invited to the home of the white female in our cohort.

While there, she was made to feel very uncomfortable because they were giving her things. If she asked if she could pay, they would tell her "no we have this." They kinda took her as though she was this poor little person who came from Turkey and didn't have any of these experiences. She actually resented it and that was something that we talked about and something that we even shared in our classes…We had a discussion and she was trying to explain what she was saying and I think people were getting a little upset or a little frustrated because they couldn't understand. I stopped and told her, "Matusha, just take your time and say to us what it is[you wish to say]" She wrote me a very beautiful note at the end of the class and, you know, thanked me for just allowing her to herself. I think that socially it was what I expected.

Dr. J. later explained that because of this understanding, because they were perceived as "red haired children" (individuals who had to navigate the throes of doctoral education on their own) by their peers; and because of the parallels in their situations in the university, she felt compelled to "reach out" to her Turkish classmate.

I felt that she was new to this country…She missed her family and she was having some separation issues and I just felt that if I could have an emphatic presence that maybe it would help her. It would give her a sense, a feeling of belonging if I could just be there in some kind of way. I though if I extend that to her it would make her feel welcome or at least comfortable…We had the opportunity to talk about it. She made the statement that we were *the red hair stepchildren* [emphasis added] in our cohort and I kinda felt the same way.

Learning to better manage ones' emotion is a subset of emotional intelligence. The more informed students became at emotional intelligence, the better they became at deciphering others and deciphering themselves. They also became more adept at not revealing their true emotions when they perceived that they were at risk to do so. For example, in explaining how she handled the situation when she perceived "blatant, blatant" discrimination by administrators at her school, Dr. Nina said this:

Well what I did ... I had to make a choice to either bring it to the forefront to the leadership's attention. In one particular instance I did because I felt that it was important to do so. After that point, I decided ...this is just my personality and the way I dealt with situations such as that. I had to pick

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and choose my battles and I decided that was not something that was worth … fight[ing]; to make a big deal out of it at that point because I knew I could still get it done— get the degree, get it paid for. And so, it would have behoove me to do what I've did , to focus on my work, do my job, do it well, and find a way to get the dissertation done, which is what I did.

Clearly, Dr. Nina realized that accusing her supervisor of discrimination was a battle she would lose, even if she had the moral and legal right to not have to endure discrimination. However, her previous bout with the issue had taught her lessons, including knowing her "battles". Consequently, she related, even if she was not happy with the situation, she chose "not to make a big deal out of it". In other words, she placed a good face on her and went about "focus[ing] on my work, do[ing] my job, and find[ing] a way to get the dissertation done."

The ability to see other perspectives; to understand each other positions; to bond or make connections through shared experiences, shared meaning, and shared goals; and to learn to mentally protect themselves served African American students well. This ability, which was born from their growing awareness of parallel trajectories in their circumstances, was a catalytic force for students ultimately completing their degrees.

Finally, self-help emerged as a powerful mechanism for African Americans doctoral students coping with obstacles to degree completion. The data shows that students, by a wide margin, either individually, or as a group, came together to provide assistance to other students. Mostly they banded together with other Black students. However, in instances where there were very few ethnic minorities in the program or university, they also extended and received help from other students of color; working together to finish their degrees. Dr. P., Dr. Anthony, Dr. Regina, and Dr. J's comments

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are four examples of the kind of self-help virtually all of the students engaged in. This

was Dr. P.'s strategy:

> Another thing that they did in my department was…to pair student
> buddies. They would pair a person in the new cohort with an existing
> student. That was a help also. My buddy was a Mexican American
> woman. Our personalities got along well too. I don't remember about us
> confiding in each other anything or feeling slighted or mistreated by
> somebody in the department but I felt that we had things in common.
> We'd talk and had common experiences, and were, you know, pretty good
> with each other, calling and keeping connected. And, I guess that
> particular woman was like that. She was like, "you are one of the few ones
> here in [a]predominantly white environment, and we're sticking together. I
> got you. I got your back." Just being a support for each other: I don't get
> this. [I] need to get this. Because they were done already, they could
> advise you on how to get it done.

Dr. Anthony used a different self-help strategy but with similar goal as Dr. P. He

described how he carpooled with another student and, so that he could have the benefit of

that student's mentoring and support they both *t*ook the same courses. This alliance

proved to be quite beneficial to Dr. Anthony because he had a "ready-made" support

group, who gave him the insider's information that he needed to navigate the everyday

intricacies of the doctoral process.

> I knew most of the people who took classes with me. I got to know them
> fairly well. I drove up from Atlanta with the same person for most of the
> time…He was further along than I was, you know. He was, at least…, I'd
> say near the end of the program and I was at the beginning. But, we still
> took several courses together—the few courses that he had left. So I sorta
> switched my course around and took the ones that he had left because I
> had somebody to take them with as well as a mentor…Because I knew
> someone fairly well and I was taking courses with people that I knew, you
> know, I had sort of a bit of a support group starting out.…They gave me
> the necessary information to navigate the program so… I knew about, for
> example, the process of selecting a major professor because I had them
> around me. They helped me navigate through that and gave me
> suggestions. And so, I had inside information, if you will, which turned
> out to be invaluable. You know, who to avoid, who to take, who to
> consider and who not to consider. They told me things like that and it

turned out to be useful information and it's information I used in ultimately selecting my major professor.

A third example of how student engaged in self-help as a response to the deterrents of doctoral education is in Dr. Regina's story. She said that being supportive students empowered each other. They helped each other with personal problems, tutored, listened, prayed, took courses together, reviewed each other's work and provided feedback and just generally "stuck together" through their time in their programs

> We lifted each other up a great deal and we were supportive of each other whether you were black or white but there was a special sisterhood that occurred with my black colleagues that came in and some that had been in there...So we helped each other with our work, with our personal lives, with things that were going on, just hang on, and try to help as much as we could .It was amazing….We prayed together…One of us went through a real tough situation. Her husband lost his job and so we picked up the slack wherever we could in terms of helping her with her work. We were going though the statistics course, which was very, very challenging for all of us. If for some reason she couldn't make it, we would have extra study sessions for each other. I think a course like statistic, we took together on purpose so we knew we were all gonna help each other make it through that. We knew that was gonna be a tough time. And then, as we got over that hurdle, we would become more specialized; but, in those early stages we took courses together, sticking together on purpose….Whenever somebody was getting ready to go up and defend a paper, they had to present in front of us and we would critique it. If it didn't work, if it wasn't good they not gonna sugar coat it. It's awful, let's rework it. They're not gonna let you go forward and not shine to the best of your ability.

Finally, Dr. J. described how doing for one's self, helped her to achieve synergy between the deterrents to degree completion that she experienced in her programs and her desire to complete her degree. She said, "We learned that if we were gonna get it...we were gonna have to get it ourselves…we would do better to help and depend on each other than getting the outside help that we needed from professors and advisors." Expanding on how that realization impacted her schooling she had this say: "It made me

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more determined…It made me more determined to do what I needed to do, to stay on track, stay focused, stay, and run the course.

The act of doing for themselves is a continuous thread in recipients of the doctoral degree narratives of their experiences while they were doctoral students. Students accomplished this first through the awareness that they had similar lived experiences and a common goal. For African Americans in predominately white institutions, survival had to be a mutual occurrence.

Reasserted Their Purpose

African American students dealt with the impediments to degree completion by reasserting their purpose for pursuing the degree. Students by a majority, consistently, and at length, spoke about the reasons that they returned to higher education to pursue a doctoral degree. In every instance, students linked their life's purpose to the degree and in almost every instance students' life' purpose was linked to service and social justice. In reasserting their purpose they drew renewed vigor to finish the degree. Dr. Regina, Dr, Joyce, Dr. Rachel, Dr. Anthony, and Dr. Nina, in that order, described how reasserting their purpose helped them to persist in their programs. Dr. Regina explained that attaining the doctoral degree was for purposes greater than the individual's purpose to extend the work of African American scholars on the lived experiences of African Americans. In essence, to debunk majoritarian myths by telling their minoritarian stories.

> It's not about you. It's a bigger purpose. There is a reason you are here.
> This work has to be told and we shared that bond. We are not doing this
> just to be professors. In fact, not all of us became professors. We are doing
> this so that we can do this work that has been started by our professors.
> And, we are here to carry on this torch.

Dr. Joyce spoke about how reaffirming her reason for her presence in her program help to crystallized her purpose, to speak out on racism and other issues of inequity that formally she had been silent about, and to be a voice for others who were not as fortunate as she was.

> It made me determined to have a voice because in most of my classes there were a few minority, a few ethnic groups, but for the most part the classes consisted of individuals from the majority population. And so it really opened my eyes to the subtleness of racism….It was humorous but it was also upsetting enough to the point...enough to make me want more of a voice…Previous to that ,I was probably more silent about issues of racism, sexism, elitism, and so I was moving more towards being a more active voice for myself and for those who were not at the table because I felt that I was at a place where maybe a lot of people will not ever have opportunity to be in and so I can be a voice for those individuals.

For Dr. Rachel reasserting her purpose meant gaining the conviction to speak and act on behalf of the issues that concerned her; to the point of changing the trajectory of her research to address inequity in education against blacks.

> I mean, no matter what you study there are implications for students of color. So, then it just sorta made me go in the direction. No matter what I end up studying because…I'm always concerned with students of color, something is gonna come out. Like the equity piece is gonna naturally come out because that is what I'm concerned about. So then, at that point, I probably end up doing something that has to do with issues of equity. So at that point, I started taking course and reading more on issue s of equity.

Anthony also reasserted his purpose and gave this explanation. "Part of my reasoning also for wanting to do it was because I understood that the voice of people like myself is missing and if I don't go and be the one to add it, it would not be there." He recognized that education was a privilege and also an expectation. Because he had the opportunity to an education that many other African Americans did not have, he was obligated to tell their story.

Finally, Dr. Angelina spoke about how speaking out on behalf of black children helped to strengthen her will to make the decision that would help her to persist in her program and to continue her work with children who are disadvantaged by the school system.

> Because I thought that was a place that we could all put our heads together and work on different research pieces for advocacy to improve the educational experiences of our black children. Most of the work that you see on black children and improvement comes from others who have the same focus on curriculum issues, the history of black education. They have that kind of focus they are all foundations oriented and I was disappointed that we couldn't get that together. Now as a black student from educational psychology, I'm glad to have had the structure and the mentoring that was there...that was available. I'm happy that the department was open to hearing some ideas about black students.

Participants in the study addressed deterrents to them completing their degrees by reasserting their purpose for initially pursuing the doctoral degree. Their reaffirmation of their purpose resulted in even firmer commitments to use their "voices" to: extend the work started by African American scholars, speak out on issues of inequity, tell the stories of African Americans lived experiences, or fight to improve the educational experiences of African American children. In the process, they found the additional motivation to finish their degrees.

Summary

The themes in this chapter reveal that African American recipients of the doctoral degrees were tested by issues related to racism, differences in culture, and access to critical information necessary for doctoral education. Central to these revelations are others equally as important: programs that are vested in producing African American doctorates facilitate opportunities, the most important of which are resources for building nurturing supporting relationship, financial help guarantees, and inclusive, empowering,

people-conscious, safe learning environments. Another revelation is the presence of cultural capital in doctoral completion. Students depended on the social and cultural capital that sustained them outside of the institution and, in many instances, propelled them to aspire to doctoral education, to sustain them within the institutions. The fourth revelation is the use of active agency as a strategy for degree completion. Students used introspection, rejected external definitions of them, engaged in self-help, and mentally re-shifted their racialized positioning in the university and their programs to ultimately become holders of the doctoral degree.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not much research effort has been directed towards understanding African American doctoral graduates' sociocultural experiences in historically white universities, the programmatic factors that contribute to their degree completion, or how knowledge about their experiences can increase their representation in the society. Accordingly, the eye of the study was focused on their lived experiences within such contexts. This final chapter is a summary of the study—the research problem, methods, findings, and conclusions. A discussion of the study's implications for theory, practice, and research in adult and higher education is also included. The chapter concludes with a summary and an afterword from the researcher and the study participants.

Summary of the Study

Doctoral education importance has spawned a profusion of empirical studies on doctoral completion (Ferrer de Valero 2001; Henning 1999; Kitteel-Limerick, 2005; Koss, 2003; Nettles & Millet, 2006); but, very few are from the vantage point of African Americans; even less are from the point of view of African Americans doctoral students in education (Bickman-Chavers, 2003; Respress, 1997; Rogers, 2006; Thompson, 2005) and none have examined the groups' social learning within doctoral education as well as the repertoire of social resources and cultural knowledge they bring to their programs. Studies on this particular group are necessary to correct the gross underrepresentation of African American recipients of the degree in U.S. society and to ensure that African

American students receive tutelage from a diverse body of faculty (WW, 2005a, 2005b). Consequently, the purpose of the study was to understand the sociocultural and programmatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of doctoral programs by African Americans at predominately white institutions of higher education. Four research questions guided the study: 1) what were the social and cultural deterrents to African American doctoral students completing their degrees? 2) What programmatic resources were identified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies? 3) What social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their degrees? 4) How did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to completion?

The substance of the four research questions were addressed from themes culled from narrative analysis of the data. Three themes were developed for the first research question, what were the social and cultural deterrents to African American doctoral students completing their degrees? Three themes were identified as social and cultural deterrents to doctoral students finishing their degrees. They were: 1) the external barriers and internal challenges of racial othering, 2) cultural dissonance and, 3) a poverty of insiders' information. The external barriers, or the interpersonal aspects of racial othering, were perceived as externally controlled, that is, they were factors endemic of the university or program's culture. The internal challenges, or the intrapersonal aspects of racial othering, were students' internal struggles because of their exposure to racism. They were autochthonal to students and, unlike the external barriers of racial othering, were controlled by the students.

Findings were also evident for research question two, what programmatic resources were dentified as shaping, or affecting, their doctoral studies? Programmatic resources which influenced African American students' doctoral studies were: relationship opportunity and the favorable conditions for attainment of students' goals, which resulted because of it; assurances of financial help; and reassurances of safe spaces for students' intellectual, psychological, and emotional well-being. The most prominent of these resources was the relationship opportunity and the additional prospects that the relationships created for students' advancement towards the completion of their doctoral degrees.

The third research question was: what social and cultural factors influenced the completion of their degrees? The theme that developed around this question was cultural capital. Specifically, the social and cultural factors identified as positively influencing African American doctoral students' tenure in their programs were self-actualization capital, stewardship capital, resistance capital, and intersubjectivity capital.

Likewise, themes were identified for the fourth research question, how did African American doctoral students learn to respond and to deal with the deterrents to degree completion? African American doctoral students learned to handle the deterrents to degree completion by reconstituting agency and repositioning self. In essence, students took control of their circumstances first by reconceptualizing their positions in the institutions through introspection, by rejecting external definitions of themselves, developing a heightened sense of emotional intelligence, self-help, and then, by reasserting their purpose for pursuing doctoral education.

In the preceding section, I addressed the themes developed from the analysis of the data. In the following section I will address the conclusions drawn from these themes and discuss each conclusion in the context of the literature. Following the discussion of the conclusions, is my discussion of the implications for theory and practice, my recommendations for research, and the chapter's summary. I conclude the chapter with my reflections and each participant's advice to African Americans doctoral hopefuls.

Conclusions and Discussions

Five major conclusions about the sociocultural and programmatic factors that contributed to the successful completion of doctoral programs by African Americans at predominately white institutions of higher education were reached. The five conclusions were: 1) to complete their doctoral degrees African American students had to overcome interpersonal and intrapersonal effects of racism; 2) resources that positively influenced doctoral education for African Americans were the supportive environments that programs created for financial help and students' intellectual, psychological, and emotional safety; 3) degree completion was influenced by students' use of cultural capital; 4) degree completion was influenced by students exercising agency: taking control of their circumstances, and redefining their positions in their universities; 5) relationships played a key role in degree completion in that they created opportunities, provided support, and were frameworks for collaboration.

African American Doctoral Students Completed Their Degrees by Overcoming Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Racism

The first conclusion is that in order for African Americans to attain degree completion they had to overcome the interpersonal and intrapersonal effects of racism.

These effects were the results of external barriers and internal challenges of racial othering; cultural dissonance; and poverty, or lack, of insiders' information that students faced. While these factors did not contribute to degree completion, in order to understand African American doctoral students' experiences of success one has to first understand the factors against which those successes were gained. The factors: racial othering, cultural dissonance, and poverty of information formed the reality against which African American doctoral students attained their degrees.

The trilogy of findings supports and simultaneously adds to previous findings on racism in education in the literature. It supports other research in that it corroborates previous findings that students of African descent experience racism in doctoral education and that the experience hampered but did not stop their progress (Barber, 2007; Chance, Ginsberg, Davis & Smith, 2004; DeNeal, 2008; Geer-Williams, 2004; Hoffer et al., 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2006; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009, Rogers, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Thurgood. et al., 2006; WW, 2005a, 2005b). It extends previous research from the perspectives that it broadens the framework for students' conceptualization of their positioning within their racialized spaces.

The findings from this inquiry reveal that racism in doctoral education has two sets of dimensions—interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions. The interpersonal dimensions are the micro, mezzo, and macro racist acts and utterances that are daily occurrences for people of color. Micro, mezzo, and macro racism in education are the carelessly unconscious, sometimes deliberate, oftentimes intentional harm that racialist Whites perpetrate on African American and other students of color. These acts are characterized by loaded markers of racism like prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and

other institutional and personal insults. The intrapersonal dimensions are the intervals of disbelief, the post-traumatic periods, when students seek to counter exposure to the effects of racism and its potency on their desire for doctoral completion and, in the process, sometimes unwittingly, temporarily, internalize the very characterizations they abhor.

The literature on racism is voluminous. From disciplines like history to sociology, psychology, anthropology, law, social work, and education, Black scholars have written about the many ways and shapes that racism plays itself out (Anderson, 2004, 2008; Foster, 2004; Guy, 2002; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009; Lynn, 2006; Ogbu 1981, Tatum, 1997) and others. Consequently, there are varied interpretations of racism. Bell (1997, 2000); Delgado, (1995); Delgado and Stefancic, (2001); Ladson-Billings (1998, 2000); Solórzano, (1998); Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso, (2000), interpret racism from a critical race perspective. What these findings bring to this critical and oppositional conversation on racism is this: Agreeably racism is a system of privilege but it was engineered and is sustained by humans; its ideology was developed by majority groups but its immutability is ensured by the existence of its victims, the "other". Racism feeds off its victims; reconstituting itself from their demoralization, oppression, and pain. However, racism dependency for sustenance on the "other" is the very thing that empowers its intended victims. They have the choice to refuse to be "othered" and to starve the beast, or to be victimized-accomplices.

This discussion also addresses the cultural dissonance deterrent factor in the findings. Researchers Guiffrida, (2006); Kuh and Love (2000); Rendon, Jalomo, and Nora (2000); and Tierney (1999) have examined culture in education and its effects on

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students of color. They argue that while integration into the culture of the institution may be appropriate for some students, its applicability to students of color is questionable. Tierney, in particular, argues that integration into the culture of the university is essentially integration into Eurocentric culture since American universities ascribe to a white culture. Furthermore, integration by itself does not necessarily assure students' success because the same set of values and expectations are not applied to all students within higher education. The findings in this study align with findings in the literature in that, students in this study expressed feelings of displacement and discomfort adjusting their ways of expressing knowledge to fit Whites ways of communicating. In fact, students perceived that the discord between their cultural ways and what they perceived were white students and faculty cultural expectations of them, placed them at a distinct disadvantage in the university.

The third deterrent to doctoral degree is the inaccessibility to insiders' information that African American students experienced. Insiders' information is non-public, cloistered information but which is critical to African Americans if they are to successfully navigate the terrains of doctoral education However, the findings in this study show that students most often than not, had limited knowledge about how to access university and program resources that would expedite degree completion. Furthermore, they were not aware of the unspoken expectations or the pitfalls: what to say, whom to say it to, when and how to say it, or who to choose for dissertation advisement and whom not to choose. In other words, they did not have knowledge about the machinery of politics that drives doctoral education and on which the degree is embedded. The study also found that these students, who were well-accomplished academically and

professionally prior to entering their programs, experienced feelings of uncertainty about their abilities to succeed and the legitimacy of their presence in their programs because of not knowing what one student called "the expectations of graduate school". Additionally, those feelings of uncertainty were similar to the self-doubt they struggled with when they perceived that they were treated differently because of their race. Another aspect, and quite likely the most critical aspect, is that African American students who had access to black faculty obtained insiders' information through them. They also received information from their black peers who were more advanced in their programs. The findings related to accessibility to critical insiders' information is supported by findings in the literature (Geer-Williams, 2004; Johnson Bailey, 2004).

An analysis of the study's findings on lack of insiders' information reveals two critical elements that beg to be addressed. The first issue is how African American students and faculty on the campuses of majority historically white institutions manage the racism factor in information inaccessibility. The second issue is institutional and program ethics in information distribution. On the issue of racism, critical race theorists posit that racism is a staple in American society, including higher education (Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2000; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, Yosso, 2000) and that a hierarchy of benefits distribution exists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Harper & Stanton, 2007). Consequently, Bell (2005) recommends that African Americans approach racism from a realist perspective. This perspective purports: rather than look to others to eradicate racism, African Americans and other people of color should devise alternative strategies to "manage" racism. I propose that black faculty members and students in this study, who were informants on

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insiders' information, were in sync with Bell, Delgado and Stefancic, and Harper and Stanton's exhortations in that they collaborated to find ways to deflect the demoralizing effects of racism.

The second issue is the ethical issue in the discourse on access to insiders' information. Whether it is viewed from a moral or an egocentric perspective, inaccessibility to information that is critical for students to complete their degrees benefits neither the student nor the program or university. Lack of information renders students powerless to make informed decisions about his or her education. Cloistering information, that programs and universities know is critical for students' success, is, at best, poor judgment and, at worst, unethical. Given that doctoral completion is now a national issue as evidenced by the recent doctoral completion intervention project by the Council of Graduate School (CGS, 2004) programs and universities are likely to be more incented to provide that information.

Another very important incentive is the fact that going forward, programs and universities' performances will be more accessible to the public through the national assessment of research doctoral programs (NRC, 2009). The availability of this information can have significant effects on doctoral student recruitment because the public will have information by which they can assess the degree completion performance of programs that they may wish to attend. Given these very powerful incentives: public scrutiny, customer choice, interest convergence, program viability, and accountability; it seems logical and wise that universities and programs would devote all of their resources, including insiders' information, to make doctoral completion happen.

Getting information to students is a must to minimize the possibilities of students'

attrition from their program and maximize the chances of degree completion.

Resources That Positively Influenced Education for African Americans were the

Supportive Environments That Programs Created for Financial Help and Students'

Intellectual, Psychological, and Emotional Safety

Supportive environments that programs created for financial help and students'

intellectual, psychological, and emotional safety were among the resources that

influenced African American doctoral students' efforts to complete their degree. The

importance of each of both resources—financial help, and safe spaces—for black

students' persistence to degree completion, have been addressed in the research literature

by (DeNeal, 2008; Gravois, 2007; Greer-Williams, 2004; Nettles & Millett, 2006;

Rogers, 2006) and (Feagin, Vera, & Imani 1996; Guiffrida , 2005; Rogers; Johnson-

Bailey, 2004) respectively. However, where the literature lacks depth is on the role of

doctoral programs as facilitators of opportunity resources for African American students

in historically white institutions (HWIs). This study contributes to knowledge in this area.

Findings indicate that programs, which produce African American doctoral completers,

do so by making opportunities and assurances available to students. Programs that

positively influenced African American doctoral students to complete their degrees: 1)

strategically cultivated these resources through the efforts of students, faculty, program

administrators, and staff; 2) informed and encouraged students to make use of such

resources; 3) supported them in the process; but 4) did not require that they use the

resources.

Financial concerns were key features in findings related to the programmatic resources that shaped African American doctoral students' studies. For many students, their programs' assurances of financial assistance were instrumental in their decision to enter doctoral program and to persist in their studies. Some students shared that they would not have attempted doctoral education without those assurances. A critical component of this finding is that even with financial help participants in this study acknowledged that they completed their degrees still financially obligated for high sums of student loans. These findings are supported in the literature on doctoral education. Gravois (2007), Hoffer et al., (2006), and Thurgood et al, (2006) document that African American doctoral students in education programs compared to white students and students from other ethnic groups are disproportionately indebted for their education even after they invest a larger share of personal income up front.

The second programmatic resource that influenced African American students to complete their degrees was their program's reassurances of safe spaces. Safe space is described in the literature (Greene, 1995; Keer, 1987) in a variety of ways; but mostly as conflict-free and exempt from growth-producing challenges. Safe spaces for African American students on the campuses of white universities were characterized by a cadre of indicators: inclusion, respect, critical thinking, collaboration, challenges to the status quo, resistance, ethic of personal accountability, imagination, and growth. In such spaces students felt empowered to be authentic and to validate their own authenticity; to manage emotions, conflicts, and doubts and to take control of their circumstances. However, the most defining characteristic about those spaces is that they were peopled with

constituencies of faculty, students, and staff who attended to the intellectual as well as the psychological, emotional, and the social and cultural aspects of its constituents.

The previous findings speak powerfully to the necessity for safe spaces for African American and other students of color on white university campuses. It was within those spaces that students brought their vortex of emotions and self-doubts; where their development as scholars, advocates, and socially-conscious researchers began to take shape; where they began to learn how to deal with the deterrents to doctoral completion, to tell space-altering stories, and to defang racism. For example, one participant perceived her professor was treating her in a marginal way by disparaging her writing ability. Rather than accept her professor's attempts to discredit her, to have her story told by the majority; she made a calculated decision to counter-story her professor's assessment of her work—she obtained another professor's assessment, and successfully published her work. Likewise, when it was apparent to another participant that black students in her class were treated in a hostile manner, her initial reaction was amusement (an indication of her self-assuredness) followed by a strong desire to speak out on social justice issues. Before that incident she had been somewhat of a bystander to issues of race and gender. When a third participant came to the conclusion that there was no synchronicity between his professor's direction for his educational goals and his own goals, he severed the relationship.

Critical race theorist Solórzano (1998), and others' call for educators to recognize the experiential knowledge of people of color and for this group to retell their stories the way they know it to be, is a call to give lie to the stories on which the ideology of racism was vetted. It is also an invitation to educators to begin to understand, analyze, and teach

about racism in education and a demand for safe spaces where that discourse can transpire. In this study, it was within those spaces that students' authentic selves interlocked with their representational selves—feelings of doubt, fear, imposterism, loneliness, tokenism, denial, perceptual distortion, and the mistrusts caused by racism—and struggling, spiraling downwards they still retained their authenticity and refused to be unfavorably racialized, or be defined. Within these spaces, educators and students can "highlight discrimination, offer radically different interpretations of policy, and challenge the universality of assumptions made about people of color" (Harper, Patton & Wooden, p. 391).

Regardless of their academic standing in white academies, whether doctoral student, faculty member, or administrator; African Americans tell familiar stories of their experiences. Parallels can be drawn between the findings in this research inquiry and findings in other empirical studies on African American students. For example, Johnson-Bailey (2004) and Rogers (2006) empirical studies identified corresponding struggles and a similar need by African Americans students in academia, for safe spaces. In the same way, analogies can be drawn between the experiences and need for safe spaces by African American doctoral students in this study and the experiences and need for academic safe space of other African Americans, on the campuses of majority or historically white universities. Authors: Benjamin (1997), in *Women in the Academy: Promises and Perils* and James and Farmer (1993), in *Spirit, Space, and Survival: Africa American Women in (White) Academy* point to this necessity. They share accounts of narratives and empirical research on African American women faculty and administrations' strives for survival on the campuses of majority white universities.

However, other scholars, also in the literature, (hooks, 1984, Sheared & Sissel, 2001) caution people of color and others who have been marginalized and relegated to the periphery to be vigilant that in their rightful need for safety they do not unconsciously make "safe spaces" unsafe for others.

Degree Completion Was Influenced by Students' Use of Cultural Capital

The third conclusion related to the factors that contributed to African American students' degree completion was this: degree completion was influenced by students' use of their cultural capital. The social and cultural concept have been examined in a variety of ways in educational research (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Nanton, 2009; Barber, 2007; Bourdieu & Passeron 1970, 1990; Coleman, 1998; DiMaggio, 1982; Farkas, 1996, Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Ogbu, 1978, 1992, 2003; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Yosso, 2005), and others. However, a significant element missing from the literature is empirical research on a breakdown of the sub-forms of embodied cultural capital, in general, and, in particular, the forms of cultural capital that positively influences African American doctoral students' progress through their doctoral programs. Embodied cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (2001) includes the practices, preferences, attitudes, etc. that one acquired or learned because off the influences of one's socialization. Scholars in the sociology of education consider this omission in the literature as an "urgent empirical task" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p.162; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). The different forms of cultural capital that African American doctoral students utilized to facilitate their degree progress speaks to this need.

Participants in this study attempts to forge ahead to degree completion was influenced by their actualization capital, stewardship capital, resistance capital, and

intersubjectivity capital. The discussion in this section addresses three of the four forms of capital; the relationship aspect of cultural capital is addressed later in the chapter.

Actualization capital describes the determination and the commitment exhibited by African Americans in their quest for educational, social, and economic development. Resistance capital describes the multiplicity of ways African Americans call into question accepted institutions and practices that produce iniquitous conditions for oppressed people of color; it is the determination to forge an alternate path and to succeed in spite of adversity. Intersubjectivity capital includes the knowledge and other social skills acquired through shared meaning; it includes the ways of knowing and communicating gained from shared experiences.

These three forms of cultural capital draw on: (1) the proven benefits of education and individual agency in the history of the black race; (2) Blacks' resiliency and their penchant for challenging the status quo, their faith in God, spirituality, hope, and sense of pride; and (3) the ways and strategies that African American have used, in the past, to communicate with each other in defiance of their oppressors. While by no means exhaustive, these forms of capital are representative of core attributes that have sustained and strengthened peoples of the Black Diaspora.

African Americans are not the only ethnic groups, or the only minority group, to use their socio or cultural norms for their educational, or, for that matter, their economic and social advancement. Findings in the literature present evidence that other ethnic groups follow similar patterns (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbush, 1995; Waldinger, 1995; Zhou 1992). However, African Americans, because of their unique lived experiences have honed the self-survival skill of looking to themselves. Their inward looking gazes

have resulted in a greater accounting of the knowledge, skills, acumen, strengths, resources, and talents that they possess and which participants, in this study, used in a variety of ways to increase their chances of becoming recipients of the doctoral degree.

Although the cultural capital identified in this study played out on the campuses of the four universities represented in the study, they were not products of their universities' social culture; rather, they were components of the total competencies that African American students took with them to their academic environments and on which they relied to navigate doctoral education. An interesting aspect of this finding is that the usefulness of these forms of capital was apparent only when students acted on them. Another aspect of the findings is that even if African Americans cultural capital were usable in different social settings and circumstances, they were bounded to their source for their strength; sustenance depended partly on students' interaction with the African American community and partly on intra-action with self. In other words, students were more effective when they used their capital in collaboration with other black faculty and peers, than when they attempted to do so individually. What this means for African American doctoral students, is that a significant resource for doctoral completion lies within their abilities to collectively recognize their cultural strengths and to capitalize on them, collectively.

Degree completion was influenced by Students' Exercising Agency: Taking Control of Their Circumstances, and Redefining Their Positions in Their Universities

African American doctoral students learned to handle the deterrents to degree completion by exercising individual agency: taking control of their circumstances, and redefining their position in their universities. Hamman (2004) purports that individuals

from disadvantaged groups have agency and that exercising that agency can be a "scathing critique" of the inequities in a racist society (p. 407). Judging by outcomes in this study, African American students exercised that agency well. Students used agency in distinct ways to change the *habitus* or the behaviors and thought patterns that were adversely affecting their progress in their programs.

Students took control of their circumstances through introspection and mental reframing. By practicing introspection they formed closer relationships with themselves. They mentally reframed their positioning within the university, rejecting both external and representational definitions of them in the process. Introspection gave rise to a number of changes in the way students approached their education. As students progressed towards the conclusion of their degrees they became more in tune with themselves in relation to their environment. They developed a keener sense of their own learning and what blackness meant on a mostly white campus. In other words, their marginalized status unleashed what hooks (1984, p. ix) referred to as an "oppositional world view". Sissel and Sheared (2001) described this view as the development of "a sensitivity to discrimination of all kinds…an ability to critically reflect on how those things affect those in the margins and on those in the center as well" (p. 5).

The development of self-awareness or personal cognizance—the capability to understand and discern one's worldview, needs, and wants in relation to that of others— was one of the four ways African American doctoral students managed issues that were deterrents to them completing their degree. A fitting example of students' growing awareness is evident in Dr. P's thoughtful analysis of the qualities that she brought to her program and the strategies that would get her through a doctoral program on the campus

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of a historically white university. It is also illustrative of how students sought to increase their knowledge of themselves through their experiences, and to understand how that knowledge impacted their progress.

Alfred (2001) points out in her study that one of the ways African America female faculty at a white research university defined their own realities was to reject stereotypical images and external definitions of them. This study on African American doctoral students on the campuses of historically white institutions revealed similar results. Students rejected external and representational definitions of self as a means to reframe their perceptions of their positioning in the university and their programs. In other words, students redefined their positions in their universities.

Other findings resulting from the study is the enhancement of students' emotional intelligence which was another strategy for redefining their position. As students progressed in their programs, their ability to identity and understand their feelings and to understand the feeling of their peers and faculty advisors, for handling their emotions in difficult situations, and for motivating their peers improved. In the literature, Goldman (1995, 1998) defines emotional intelligence as the capacity to understand others feelings and motivations and to bond with them in the process. Emotional intelligence, particularly the interpersonal aspect, draws on love and spirituality, two kinds of emotions that students identified in their experiences and on which they depended heavily. An interesting aspect of this finding is that students' capacity for this competency increased as students became more and more challenged.

A second way that students took control of their circumstances and simultaneously redefined their position in their universities was through reasserting their

purpose. So that they could better manage the obstacles which they faced, they reminded themselves of the reasons they choose to pursue doctoral education in the first instance. Remembering why they wanted the degree, proved to be a motivating force. Students by a majority spoke consistently, and at length, about the reasons that they returned to higher education to pursue a doctoral degree. In every instance, students linked their life's purpose to the degree. In almost every instance, the finding was that students' life' purpose was linked to service and social justice. This finding is in line with Rogers (2006) recommendations for how African American women doctoral students in education can be successful at doctoral study. She suggested that "African Americans should be knowledgeable about who they are and possess a clear understanding of their purpose for seeking a doctorate." In her opinion, this self knowledge would assist in decision-making and "shape a plan of action for successful doctoral program completion" (Dissertation Abstract).

Relationships Played a Key Role in Degree Completion in That They Created Opportunities and Provided Support and Frameworks for Collaboration.

The fifth conclusion drawn from the study's finding is that relationships played a key role in degree completion in that they created opportunities and provided support and frameworks for collaboration. The influences of relationship in doctoral education were evident in the findings for the four research questions with positive relationship dominating in three of the four sets of findings. For example, relationship opportunity was one of the key programmatic resources. Program administrators staffed their programs with faculty and staff members who were both: relationship opportunities and opportunity creators. In other words, faculty and staff offered themselves as a way for

students to establish relationships and through those relationships; they created other networks of relationship opportunities. Through interaction in these relationships students mined benefits like mentoring, information, nurturing, friendship, validation, and support. Those benefits were some of the factors that strongly influenced how they responded to the obstacles they encountered during their studies.

Five take-away learnings characterized relationship opportunities in the education programs that produced African American doctoral graduates. Relationship opportunities were:

1. "Warm demanders"—faculty, students peers, and staff who set high expectations for African American students while providing them with equally high support, care, and nurturing to meet those expectations.

2. Unique in their own way. They evolved under parallel circumstances and had coinciding ultimate goals; however, they each followed their own distinct developmental path.

3. Replicable in that they created other favorable relationship opportunities for students' advancement.

4. Beneficial to students and faculty alike. Students and "warm-demanders" roles had the potential to be interchangeable. Communication and cross-fertilization of ideas between paired individuals were multidirectional and professional relationships extended beyond the students' tenure in their programs.

5. Most influential on students' progress to degree completion, when they involved high levels of people contact, accountability, and commitment.

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Other evidence of relationship's gargantuan status in doctoral completion among African American students was students' use of their stewardship capital. Stewardship capital stresses guardianship: the loyalty and sense of obligation among Blacks to care for, empower, and uplift the other. In effect, African American students were armored with the tradition of stewardship, which they practiced to their advantage, among themselves, with other black faculty, staff, and their peers. This form of capital draws on the importance of relationships, the strong traditions of family and fictive kinship, and the historical collective destiny of the black community. The almost instantaneous recognition by students and faculty that one of their own needed assistance, and their willingness to see to that need, is clearly evident in these former students' accounts of their relationships with other black students and faculty.

The third evidence of relationship at work in doctoral completion among African American was their collaboration. Students practiced self-help. They banded together among themselves, and with faculty, to achieve that end. For every participant in the study, degree completion was a singular focus. They formed support and "midnight labs" (study groups); tutored one another; critiqued each other's work, offered personal advice and information, "leaned on each other", etc. and generally helped one another and, in the process, helped themselves.

Application of self-help principle is apparent in many of the studies on African Americans in education (Chance, Ginsberg, Davies, & Smith, 2004; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2008; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). In this inquiry, students' initiative to help themselves was just as apparent. Self-help proved to be a powerful mechanism for African American doctoral students coping with obstacles to degree completion.

Individually, or as a group, they came together to provide assistance, information, and support to other students. Mostly, they colloborated with other Black students and, or, received guidance and counseling from black faculty. In instances where there were very few Blacks in the program or university, they also extended help to, and received help from other students of color.

The findings that relationship was an invaluable resource for students is consistent with findings in the literature by other researchers on graduate education (Chance, Ginsberg, Davies, & Smith, 2004; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2008; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Where this study deviates, is the emphasis on individual agency. Students were very conscious their communities of relationships provided advocacy, support, and information that were critical for their progress and for which they were highly indebted. However, they were also aware that in order to reap the benefits of community resources they had to be leading, active, engaged agents in the process.

<div align="center">Implications and Recommendations</div>

The theoretical and practical implications are drawn from four components of this study: 1)findings, 2)conclusions, 3) the literature on African American doctoral students' educational experiences in historically white institutions, and 4)the literature on social and cultural capital. Both sets of implications together with recommendations for future research can inform individual and institutional practices concerning the issues that surfaced.

Implications for Theory

The findings have implications for critical race theory in doctoral education, as well as the gaps in social and cultural capital theory and program planning theory. A

critical race theory approach in education (Solórzano, 1998) challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses, and analyzes race and racism in education in both historical and contemporary contexts using interdisciplinary methods. In other words, "CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of women and men of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (p. 122). By admitting that the lived experiences among persons of color have validity, CRT scholars can view racism from a position of realism and actively work to undermine it. CRT uses counter-narratives as a way to highlight discrimination, to provide racially different interpretations of policy, and to challenge the generality of the assumptions made about people of color. This research intent was to examine doctoral completion for African American recipients of the degree focusing on the social and cultural factors that impacted its actuation, from the perspective of African American doctoral student. It also adds to the work of other researchers in the field of education, who have used critical race theory lens to bring attention to racism in education (Bowman, 2004; Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

The research inquiry also has implications for social and cultural capital theories. There are two basic assumptions of cultural theory. First, individuals are endowed with varying levels and kinds of cultural resources which, if used vigorously and appropriately, can lead to generational upward mobility. Second, schools play a pivotal role in reproducing and in determining which, and whose cultural capital leads to school success or school failure (Bourdieu, 1985). Social capital based on Bourdieu's definition, is the totality of realized and potential benefits gained from group membership. It was these applications: the vigorous use of one's cultural assets (Franklin, 2002; Lamont &

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Weininger, 2003) and the ability to secure and use resources based on "deliberate construction of sociability" from one's access to social networks (Portes, 1988, p. 3), which formed the basis of the framework for the social and cultural capital theory in this study. The findings from this study have implications for social and cultural capital theories in that they illustrate the capacity: acumen, knowledge, talents, skills and strengths; in other words, the different forms of cultural competencies that African American doctoral students brought to their studies. Second, the findings demonstrate those students' universities, and by default their programs, have power: social-cultural-economic power in determining school success and failure through their distribution of resources. A third implications, one which adds to the theory, is that relationship opportunity, coupled with a strong sense of self-awareness and the use of one's agency can mitigate the influences of schools in one's success.

A third area of theory implication is sociocultural theory. Theories on sociocultural learning suggest that human development and learning is primarily a social activity occurring simultaneously on multiple levels, between varying expanses of time, and across cultures (Alfred, 2002, 2003; Lave, 1993; Lava & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998, 1999; Wertsch, 1991). Rogoff in particular posits that from the perspective of the cultural plane learning takes place at: (1) the personal or cognitive; (2) interpersonal or intergroup level; and (3) the community/institutional or institutional/structural planes, each of which mediate and influence the other. From this viewpoint understanding one's learning experiences and development lies in one's understanding of the interrelationship between one's cognition, relationship with others, and the institutional structures in the environment in which one interacts.

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This study contributed to the theory in the adult education literature in the area of students' growth and development. It reveals that African American doctoral student's self-development was partly a result of their social learning experiences in their programs and universities and that one's social experiences influences the use of one's agency.

Another contribution to theory is what the study offers for program planning in adult education. Planners in program planning are the axis of the planning process (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). I borrow an analogy from Zander and Zander (2000) and describe them as the "board" (as in a game of chess) of the planning process. In planning programs in education, planners strategize around issues of power and values to bring stakeholders to the mythical program planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2006). Where this study contributed to this theory is in the area of logistics. It raises questions about planning program from the stakeholders' cultural perspective. When planning for ethnic minorities, who plans the program? Whose table? Where is the table positioned in relation to stakeholders' cultural perception of center-margins of the issue(s) in question? And, how is culture accounted for in determining the kinds of resources, who provides them, how are they distributed in the planning process, and who overseas the distribution of those resources? The study illustrated the capacity of African American doctoral students, who had access to the resources that aligned with their educational and their cultural needs, to effectively use those resources. The study also demonstrated students also had the capability to be planners of their own "table" and that their culture affected their planning decisions.

Implications for Practice

Besides its theoretical implications the study has practical implications as well. A most important practical implication is first, the potential to provide current and future doctoral students with additional knowledge about the complexities of doctoral education and second, to offer techniques, strategies, and tools with which to navigate the complexities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, African American doctoral students are at a disadvantage because of the tendency of holders of doctoral success information to contain it while its channeling its flow. Margaret Wheatley (1999) in her book *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering order in a chaotic world* urges that information should be shared, not hoarded and passed gingerly to a designated successor. She suggests that shared information regenerates itself helping organizations and people to defy the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Providing a forum for current and future students to learn how to navigate the complexities of doctoral education, even with its deterrents, is a practicum which will benefit then in the area of doctoral completion.

The following are some areas that African American students can examine to learn about program and university characteristics, their chances of completing their degrees and what they can do to improve those chances. While these areas not exclusive, they may provide some insights about program performance, program culture, information sharing, importance of relationship, and the kinds of resources that program offer.

1. ***Program Performance -*** Investigate: programs' overall completion rates and the completion rates for African Americans doctoral students in particular, students and students of color, in general; students average time-to-degree and time-to-

degree after coursework and prospectus; faculty research interest and the research of students who completed the programs; and program measurement of student and faculty success.

2. ***Program and University Culture -*** Examine: programs' strategies and activities for retaining students; minority enrollment in the program and university; numbers of minority faculty in the program and university; students' involvement in program activities; level of faculty-student publication and student-student publication; extent to which student success is tied to faculty performance evaluation; level of faculty involvement in students professional development; students level of involvement in faculty research; the process for choosing and changing advisors; programs activities to encourage students from minority groups to participate in their programs; and methods for student orientation.

3. ***Information sharing -*** Examine: kinds of information distribution channels; access to information; willingness to share information; importance of information sharing to the program and university; what kinds of information are shared.

4. ***Relationship -*** Investigate: availability of support groups; kinds of support groups; kinds of social activities; involvement of alumni in the program; faculties involvement in relationship building.

5. ***Resources -*** Examine: kinds of programs resources, who participate in these resources; how these resources are determined and distributed; access to career opportunities and other development opportunities.

While the previous suggestions are intended for students, discussions around these areas can be accomplished in faculty seminars at the department and university levels. Findings from these discussions can be used to improve program practices.

Drawing from these suggestions, I propose a second implication for practice. Findings from this study could be used in faculty development programs. Based on the U.S. Census population projections, "between 2005 and 2020, the minority population is expected to increase by 32 percent, compared to 4 percent for the White population. Prediction are, by the year 2020, minorities will represent 39 percent of the total population" (NCES, 2007). However, given the current racial composition of faculty members, students from ethnic minority backgrounds would be under the tutelage of a mostly white faculty (WW, 2005). Thus, the need to incorporate findings from research on ethnic minority groups in faculty development programs. Faculties who are more informed about the experiential knowledge of minority ethnic groups are better equipped to work to minimize the impact of racism in education and to facilitate around cultural issues like students ways of knowing and expressing knowledge. Distribution of this knowledge can be accomplished in different formats that are appropriate to the particular university, the programs, and faculty participants.

An example of a concrete way this finding can be used, in this regard, is to incorporate it in university faculty development programs like The University of Georgia *Initiative to Optimize Doctoral Completion*. This program is a university-wide program spear-headed by the University's Graduate School. The thrust of the program is to provide faculty and administrators with the information and support to develop the kind of quality program that ensures students finish their degree (Hoots, 2008).

These findings can also be part of the motivation to recast the kinds of information that the public and students receive. It is important that university be proactive in delivering the appropriate information effectively before students are screened for doctoral education. I propose the pre-screening stages primarily because information, or lack of it, drives students' decision to pursue or not pursue the degree. It is at this stage that the full disclosure process may be most effective because it may help students to avert serious financial and psychological upheavals; while it may help the university and staff to divert much needed resources elsewhere. In addition, a third, equally as important practical implication is that these findings may be used by philanthropic organizations, and policy makers, who are committed to minority doctoral students' success, to lend financial and moral support to that commitment.

Recommendations for Research

By far, the single biggest recommendation for research coming out of this study is the need for continuous research on the different facets of doctoral education among people of color using what See (1998, p. x) refers to as "theoretical stripes" in the conceptual frame. Theoretical stripes are parts of theories that are applicable for understanding the lived experiences of people of color. Another aspect of this recommendation is the use of narrative methodology. Some additional recommendations for research in the area of doctoral education are:

1. Interest convergence, accountability, and ROI in educating ethnic minority doctoral students. What's in it for universities?

2. Characteristics of doctoral education program planners and the impact of their planning on minority groups in doctoral programs.

3. Incorporating customer input: What can black noncompleters of the doctoral degree tell us about doctoral education?

4. The impact of the doctoral degree on the families of black doctoral students.

5. Opportunity knocks: How minorities obtain information about doctoral education.

6. Life after doctoral education for minority Ph.Ds.

7. The experiences of doctoral graduate assistants (DGA's) from ethnic minority groups.

8. Preparing Black undergraduates from historically black institutions (HBCUs) to manage doctoral education in predominately white universities.

9. Bridging the gap between doctoral education and K-12 for minority students.

10. The role of historically white universities' graduate schools in educating doctoral students from ethnic minority groups.

11. Emotion in educating the Black Ph.D.

12. Gender at work: Do African American male and female doctoral students experience doctoral education differently?

13. Charting presence: The history of Blacks in the doctorate.

14. Managing the doctoral advisor-student relationship: From the Black Ph.D perspective.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

In this chapter, I provided a summary of the study and the findings. I discussed the conclusions within the parameters of the research questions and literature germane to these findings and in the process examined how the findings annex, disjoin, or add to the bodies of literature which supported the study. I also examined implications for theory

and practice, and made recommendations for future direction in research. In concluding this chapter, the afterword reveals my reflection and the participants' advice to future doctoral students. My reflection is influenced by another student's story, the participants in this study advice was influenced by their experiences.

Afterword

 I completed my doctoral education with one of my favorite books, *Transforming Professional and Personal Life: The Art of Possibility* always close by. I would like to share it with the legions of Black students who I know will one day come to this point in their lives.

This little book speaks wonderfully to the idea of possibilities in one's life. My most favorite part of the book is the story of a teacher who gave each of his students an "A" for the course, at the beginning of the course, with only one condition attached. He asked his students to place themselves in their future and, in retrospect, write him a letter in which they report all their milestones, insights, and accomplishments as though they had already occurred. His hope was to remove the barriers, the psychological and emotional factors that stifled the "possibilities" for his students. One of his students, he reported, took his assignment quite seriously and wrote him this letter mesmerizing letter.

Dear Mr. Z

Today the world knows me. That drive of energy and intense emotion that you saw twisting and dormant inside me, yet, alas, I could not show in performance or conversation, was freed tonight in a program of new music composed for me ....The concert ended and no one stirred. A pregnant quiet. Sighs: and then applause that drowned my heart's throbbing.
I might have bowed—I cannot remember now. The clapping sustained such that I thought I might make a debut complete and celebrate the shedding of
the mask and skin
that I had constructed
to hide within,
by improvising on my own melody as an
encore –unaccompanied . What followed is
something of a blur. I forgot technique,
pretense, tradition, schooling, history—
truly even the audience.
What came from my trombone
I wholly believe was my own
Voice .....

Tucker Dublin to Mr. Z (Zander & Zander, 2000, p. 28)

Students of color you have "voice" and "possibilities" go, use them.

<center>Dr. Rachel: Graduate, 2001-2007</center>

…keep your eyes focused on why you're there. There are not going to be always people who will agree with you, or who even believe your work is important. It only matters that your advisor and *you* (her emphasis] really believe in your work. Find a support system; other graduate students who can be there for you so that you're not isolated. Make sure that when you are picking an advisor you're picking someone, who are more than just the best in the field but pick someone who you know will be supportive of you, who believes that you can get done, and who will help you.

<center>Dr. Regina: Graduate, 2001-2007</center>

  You know, you have as much right to be there as anyone else. You not there because you are black; [you're there because you are] just as qualified as anybody else…Even if you are the only African American student in your Ph,D program, you are not the only African American on campus. And you can't be too proud to look for your own.

<center>Dr. Nina: Graduate, 2001-2007</center>

..it goes back to that inner strength, it really does. Why you are getting the degree? I just don't think that degree is as meaningful, in my opinion, if you're not doing it... of course for yourself, if not the others who are gonna come along behind you. You kinda paved… youv'e carved another notch in the wood, if you will. You cut another area and made the path a little bit easier; particularly for someone who might not have considered getting a degree [but] who obviously should.

<center>Dr. Gap: Graduate, 2001-2007</center>

Don't do it alone. Understand that you are not the first person to have gone through that process. Talk to other people who have gone through the process, have gone through those experiences. Tap into these resources. Find a professor, and it doesn't have to be some one who is African American, someone who is black. Find someone who understands the unique challenges that blacks go through when they are in a predominately white institution.

<center>Dr. Jamika: Graduate, 2001-2007</center>

You have to separate [the apples] from the oranges because not everything you do, as some one told me, gets a standing ovation. Even if you deserve it, you not ever gonna get that. And so I think that if people are giving you feedback then you need to change. You

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need to be receptive to that and you need to decipher between whether someone is really trying to help or sabotage you. At least, at least, you need to learn how to listen and make that distinction.

<div align="center">Dr. Angelina: Graduate, 2001-2007</div>

…keep on working. Definitely just on waking up and working. Keep on working at it. Don't give up. Don't give up. And, always seek advice from a strong mentor. Or, better yet, just have people in you corner, you have to have people in your corner. You have to have a support system.

<div align="center">Dr. P.: Graduate 2001-2007</div>

What sense does it make to not get the degree that would help pay it back and just be all but dissertation? Go through all this trouble, have all of this time— of prayer, and power, and work invested and not.... it's called a terminal degree for a reason.

<div align="center">Dr. J.: Graduate, 2001-2007</div>

You are who you are. Your voice, your inflection, your tone it's the way it is and you don't have to change for anyone. People have to accept you for who you are.

<div align="center">Dr. Talibav, Graduate, 2001-2007</div>

Be prepared to focus on academics, and do the best that you can do and know that, know that you are as good as anybody else and to have some support. Be sure that you have some people that you can turn to when you feel down, or when you feel that you are out or that you can't compete.

<div align="center">Dr. Anthony, Graduate, 2001-2007</div>

Whenever I have the opportunity to help someone who is trying to get though this process, especially a person of color, I try to do so; it's almost like doing your part. Research is important. We all want to advance knowledge. We understand that if we want to do research, if people aren't able to do it, then we can't advance knowledge

<div align="center">Dr. Joyce, Graduate, 2001-2007</div>

Put yourself in the best environmental context that will help you be successful. And talk to your teachers, make connections because in most programs, the faculty can aid you or facilitate the process so that's it more beneficial for you and that you have a better learning experience and better opportunities after graduation. Remember the faculty can be your friends and they can be your enemies. So you just have to be observant and not

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get caught in the middle of stuff…Just kinda get to know them so that they get to know you.

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PARTICIPANT'S E-MAIL INVITATION LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant:

I am a doctoral student in the Adult Education program within the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy at The University of Georgia. I am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation study. The study is on the social and cultural factors that contributed to successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans in historically White institutions (HWIs) of higher education. My goal is to explore questions related to the social and cultural resources and competencies that influenced their progress in their programs and how they learned to respond to those influences. My hope is that the findings from this study will benefit future African American doctoral students in their quest to finish the doctorate.

Participation in the study will involve two interviews. The first interview will be face-to-face and last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The second interview will be a phone interview and will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Prior to the phone interview, you will receive a narrative summary of your responses from the first interview. The phone interview is to give you the opportunity to provide feedback on how well the narrative summary represents your responses and to discuss any other concerns that you may have.

To participate, you must meet all four (4) of the following criteria:
- African American doctoral graduate from any program within the field of education;
- graduated from an historically white institution (HWI);
- graduated with the last 2-7 years (at least two but no more than 7 years);
- must be at least 25 years of age, or older.

I believe this is an important and necessary study. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me by email, minavia1@uga.edu or telephone, (404) 447-4123, to accept.

Sincerely,

Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, & Policy
College of Education
The University of Georgia

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "DRAWING ON RESOURCES, LEARNING TO PRESERVE: SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF EDUCATION DOCTORAL PROGRAMS BY AFRICAN AMERICANS AT HISTORICALLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS". The study will be conducted by Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams from the Adult Education Program in the Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, and Policy at The University of Georgia (706- 542-2214) under the direction of Dr. Talmadge C. Guy (706-542-4015), Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, and Policy. I understand that my participation is strictly voluntary. I can refuse to participate or choose to stop participating anytime, without giving a reason, and with no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask, at anytime, to have all information about me and that can be identified as mine removed from the research record and destroyed, or returned to me.

I understand the reason for this study is to investigate the social and cultural factors that contributed to the successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans at historically white institutions of higher education. I also understand I will not benefit directly from the research. However, participation in this study may produce information that may inform doctoral students, faculty advisors, program and university administrators, and policy advisors about factors that influence doctoral completion for African American students.

By volunteering to participate in this study, I understand I am asked to do the following:
1. Give my written consent that I will participate in the study and be audiotaped during a face-to-face or phone interview.
2. Schedule an interview with the researcher at a time and place convenient to me. The interview will last 1 to 1.5 hours and will be audio taped.
3. Answer questions about my experiences during my doctoral education and the social and cultural factors that facilitated its completion.
4. Participate in a 10-15 minute member check follow up phone interview. The 10-15 minute interview will not be recorded. Prior to the phone interview, I will receive a letter, which will summarize my responses to the interview questions in the initial interview. The letter will also include a request for confirmation of a time and date for the follow-up interview with the researcher. During the follow up interview, I may be asked to clarify information from the initial interview and will be asked to give feed back on how well the contents of the letter represent my responses to the interview questions.

I understand that no information that identifies me will be shared with others outside of the research and all identifying information will be removed from the data and replaced with pseudonyms, at transcription. I understand I can provide the researcher with a pseudonym for use in the study. In the event I do not provide a pseudonym, I will be given one. I also understand that any information that links me to a pseudonym used in this research, and all tape recordings of the interview, will be destroyed once the study is complete.

I understand that the researcher on this project can answer any questions about the research project prior to or during the research. The researcher can be contacted by phone at (404) 447-4123 or via email at minavia1@uga.edu

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this statement for my records.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator: Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams   Date

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

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

PARTICIPANT'S DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Project Title: Drawing on Resources, Learning to Persevere:
                               Sociocultural Factors that Contributed to Successful
                               Completion of Education Doctoral Programs by African
                               Americans at Historically White Institutions

Investigator: Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams under the direction of Dr.
                               Talmadge C. Guy.

The information collected will be used solely for completing the dissertation research
project identified above as partial fulfillment of requirements for the Ph. D. degree at the
University of Georgia.

Please complete the form by providing the requested information.

Name: [   ]

Contact Information:

(a) E-Mail: [   ]   (b) Telephone: [   ]

Pseudonym (for the research): [   ]

Gender: Male [   ]   Female [   ]

Age: 25-30 [   ]   31-35 [   ]   36-40 [   ]   41-45 [   ]   45+ [   ]

1. Are you employed?   Yes: [   ]   No: [   ]

2. What is your profession? [   ]

3. (a) From which university did you receive your doctoral degree? [   ]

    (b) Is this university a historically white institution? [   ]

4. Did you graduate from the college of education? [   ]

5. From what program did you graduate? [   ]

6. Did you attend your program full or part time? [   ]

7. What is the average length of the program? [_____]

8. What year did you graduate? [_____]

9. How many years did you attend this university? [_____]

10. How many years did you attend this program? [_____]

11. How many doctoral programs did you attend? [_____]

12. How long did it take to complete the degree after you finished coursework? [_____]

13. How long did it take to complete the degree after you entered candidacy? [_____]

14. From which school did you receive your undergraduate degree? [_____]

15. In what region of the United States is the school where you obtained your

    undergraduate degree located?

    a) Northeast: [____]   Southeast: [____]   Northwest [____]

    b) Southwest: [____]   Midwest: [____]   Other: [____]

    c) Is this a historically white institution? Yes [____]   No [____]

16. Did you receive a Masters degree? Yes [____]   No [____]

    If yes, from which school did you receive your Masters degree? [_____]

17. In what region of the United States is the school where you obtained your Masters

    degree located?

    a) Northeast: [____]   Southeast: [____]   Northwest: [____]

    b) Southwest: [____]   Midwest: [____]   Other: [____]

    c) Is this a historically white institution? Yes [____]   No [____]

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Why did you choose to pursue your doctorate?

2. What does education mean to you?

3. Why did you choose your program/university?

4. Describe your social experiences with peers?
   a. How would you categorize these experiences?
   b. How did you interpret your interactions?
   c. How did your interactions impact your schooling?

5. Describe your social experiences with faculty
   a. How would you categorize these experiences?
   b. How did you interpret your interactions?
   c. How did your interactions impact your schooling?

6. Describe your social experiences with staff?
   a. How would you categorize these experiences?
   b. How did you interpret your interactions?
   c. How did your interactions impact your schooling?

7. How did your teachers relate to you?

8. How do you think they regarded you?

9. Tell me about the resources that were available to you in your program.

10. Tell me about the actions or strategies that you may have taken during your doctoral program to help you complete your degree?

11. Who are the people that influenced you to complete your degree?

12. What were the events that influenced you to complete your degree?

13. What were the expectations or values in your home community regarding education?

14. What were the similarities and differences in the way you were socialized in graduate school and in your communities?

15. Expand on some of the advantages, disadvantages and obstacles because of the differences in the ways you were socialized.

16. How did you handle those moments when you realized that your two worlds were conflicting dissonance?

17. Is there anything you would like to add about your academic experiences in your doctoral program?

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT E-MAIL MEMBER CHECK LETTER

Dear Participant:

After many months, I have finally completed summaries of all study participants'
narratives. I am attaching a summary of your narrative for your review. I would like
your feedback on how well I have captured the information you shared with me. If you
have a preference on the time/date to contact you, please let me know; otherwise, I will
call you within a few days for your feedback.

Thank you for your time and contribution this research.

Sincerely,

Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams

APPENDIX F

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FOLLOW UP LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant:

You indicated your interest in participating in research on the social and cultural factors that contributed to successful completion of education doctoral programs by African Americans in historically white institutions (HWIs) of higher education. I am sending you a participant demographic profile and, a consent form. Please do the following:

- complete and return the participant demographic profile by email to minavia@uga.edu by 1/15/09;
- print and sign two copies of the consent form.

Once I receive the demographic profile, I will contact you to set an appointment for an interview, at your convenience. I will collect one copy of the signed consent form when we meet for the interview.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Minavia Guadeloupe-Williams, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Lifelong Learning, Administration, & Policy
College of Education
The University of Georgia