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Consciously Becoming Black: A Phenomenological Exploration of Black Sub-Saharan African International Students' Racial Identity Development at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the American South

Tanyaradzwa Chipo Mandishona
University of Southern Mississippi

Consciously Becoming Black: A Phenomenological Exploration of Black

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by

Tanyaradzwa Chipo Mandishona

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Approved by:

Dr. Eric Platt, Committee Chair
Dr. Lilian Hill
Dr. Kyna Shelley
Dr. Ann E. Blankenship

_____ _____ _____
Dr. Eric Platt   Dr. Lilian Hill   Dr. Karen S. Coats
Committee Chair   Department Chair   Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

Research about the experiences of Black international students studying in the United States is limited and often grouped with the experiences of all international students. While all international students share similar experiences and difficulties adjusting to their lives in the United States, Black international students have a unique experience based on their race and the historical connection they share with their Black American peers. Many Black sub-Saharan African international students are raised in countries where race is not a significant identity and therefore do not view race as significant part of their identity. However, race is a salient part of Black Americans' identities because of its historical use to marginalize the Black population. Furthermore, many of these students lack the knowledge of the history of slavery in the American South and the economic, legal, and social consequences it had on the Black community. Many international students are also unaware of the significance of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

The purpose of this study was to explore the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students attending HBCUs in the former Confederate states and the influential institutional and regional factors in this development. Using a phenomenological approach to qualitative research data was gathered from nine students at seven different institutions using semi-structured interviews and follow-up journal questions. Seven themes emerged from the analysis of this data. These themes are 1) Pre-arrival knowledge and perceptions, 2) Race salience, 3) Important identities, 4) Learning the environment, 5) Encounters in the United States, 6) Friendships and peer interaction, and 7) Institutional support.

Most participants in this study did not experience a change in the significance of race. However, all participants acknowledged being aware and conscious of their race and its significance in American society. Factors that influenced participants understanding of race include the curriculum at their institutions, campus events, interactions with peers and faculty, and police brutality. Additionally, participants described a lack of inclusion and social support from their institutions. Implications for institutions and recommendations for future research are provided.

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DEDICATION

None of this would have been possible without the grace and provision of the Lord, who continually provided for my every need throughout this journey. I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Gibson and Susan, who I cannot begin to thank for their sacrifices. I know it wasn't easy to let your daughter move to the other side of the world to pursue her education. Thank you both for trusting me, believing in me, and allowing me to follow my heart even when it didn't make sense to you. I also dedicate this dissertation to my boyfriend, Justin Hardaway, whose love and support made the hardest days easier to conquer. Thank you for being my rock, my shoulder to cry on, my biggest cheerleader, and the best part of the day. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to the loving memory of my maternal grandfather, Joel Mapira, who passed away in 2010 and was the most incredible grandparent. Sekuru, thank you for the 22 years of memories, unconditional love and support you were able me. I hope your "American girl" has made you proud. They say it takes a village to raise a child and I think it also took a village of supporters to get me through this journey. To all my friends, extended family, faculty, supervisors, and students, I cannot thank you enough for encouraging, motivating, and believing in me. I will forever be indebted to you all for your support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HBCU   Historically Black college and university

PWI   Predominantly White institution

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

College and university campuses are hubs of diversity and multiculturalism, providing an ideal location for students, faculty, staff, and administrators from around the world to come together to exchange ideas, thoughts, and learn from each other's life experiences. The United States serves as the top destination for students desiring to further their education as this country provides the most opportunities for students (UNESCO, 2016). This has resulted in the population of international students having a more noticeable presence on college and university campuses across the country (Rai, 2002). Each year the Institute of International Education (IIE), a division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, publishes Open Doors reports detailing the changes in the population of international students and scholars in the United States. According to these Open Doors reports, from the 1948-49 academic year to the 2016-17 academic year, the population of international students rose from 25,464 students to 1,078,822 students, with an increase of almost 500,000 students in the last decade alone (Institute of International Education-IIE, 2017b). This data includes individuals who entered the United States on F1 (student) and J1 (exchange visitor) visa types. The 2015-2016 data show that 66.1% of this population hails from Asia, 10.4% from the Middle East and North Africa, 8.8% from Europe, 8.1% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 3.4% from sub-Saharan African, 2.6% from North America, and 0.7% from Oceania (IIE, 2016). The disproportionately substantial number of Asian international students has led to most research focused on the experiences of international students from that region, with very little focus on the experiences of those students that come from sub-Saharan

Africa, particularly those who identify as Black. Therefore, this study will focus on the experiences of Black students from sub-Saharan Africa.

The emphasis on the experiences of Black students from sub-Saharan Africa is intentional and based on the historical connection between sub-Saharan Africa and the American South. The forceful transportation and enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans in the Caribbean Islands and the Americas created a connection between the three regions (Alex-Assensoh, 2009). The residual effects of this enslavement have created a unique dynamic between Black individuals born in sub-Saharan Africa and Black Americans. Black Americans often blame Black Africans for the slave trade, an idea that was promoted by misinformation from slave-owners (Uzoigwe, 2008). Additionally, because of the historic emphasis placed on race in the U.S., Black Americans place more importance on their race than do Black individuals from Africa (Alex-Assensoh, 2009; Uzoigwe, 2008). These effects are most deeply ingrained in the history of the South because of the substantial number of slaves that populated this region (O'Connell, 2012). Following the emancipation of slaves in 1863, Black Americans struggled to gain prominence because of the limited social and economic resources available to them (Wilkins, Whiting, Watson, Russon & Moncrief, 2013). Meanwhile, Southern slave owners reconstructed social dynamics and structures of power/control through sharecropping, leasing prisoners, lynching, and Jim Crow laws that continued to benefit former slave owners and their families while further disadvantaging former slaves and their descendants throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth (Blackmon, 2008; O'Connell, 2012). Some of these racially-based disadvantages are still prevalent in American society today. Black Americans in the

South have a limited ability to attain the same level of freedom as their White counterparts because of limited access to resources and opportunities such as employment, education, housing, healthcare, and justice (Berlin, 2004). As such, the Black population experiences high levels of poverty (Walters, 2012; Berlin, 2004).

For the first half of the twentieth century, Africans in sub-Saharan Africa and Black Americans had little knowledge of each other (Uzoigwe, 2008). American leadership and European colonial leaders in sub-Saharan Africa created misconceptions between Black Americans and Black Africans by limiting access to information for both groups. Through heavily controlled information in schools, books, movies and other media American leadership and European colonial leaders perpetuated false narratives in efforts to alienate the two groups. This was a tactic to maintain American/European dominance over the two populations (Uzoigwe, 2008). Communication and relations between the two groups improved due to the Civil Rights Movement in America and the widespread gaining of independence by many African countries in the 1950s and 1960s (Franklin, 2002; Uzoigwe, 2008). However, despite this improvement many Black Americans still had misunderstandings about the involvement of sub-Saharan Africans in the slave trade, including the belief that sub-Saharan Africans willingly sold their ancestors into slavery (Uzoigwe, 2008).

With the popularity of the United States as a destination for international students' educational attainment (UNESCO, 2016), examining how these misconceptions affect the experience of Black students who hail from geographic regions that historically connected to the history of slavery is important.

Sub-Saharan African International Students

According to Open Doors data, in 2015-16 the population of international students hailing from sub-Saharan Africa made up 3.4% of the total population of international students respectively (IIE, 2016). Although the number of students from this region is small in comparison to students from Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America, the population of students from sub-Saharan Africa has seen a steady annual increase since 2011-12 academic year with a 5.3% increase from 2014-15 academic year to the 2015-16 academic year, (IIE, 2016). In addition to being a growing population in the United States, research by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that students from sub-Saharan Africa are second on the list of students who are willing to travel abroad to pursue their higher education (UNESCO, 2016).

Despite this willingness to travel abroad for higher education and the growth in enrollment, research about students from sub-Saharan Africa has remained minimal, and their experiences are often blanketed under the overall findings about the larger international student population. Research about international students reveals a wide range of challenges that are a direct result of their relocation. These challenges include academic issues such as language barriers, difficulties adjusting to American teaching and assessment styles and discrimination in the classroom (Hye Yeong, 2011; Karrupan & Barari, 2011; Quiñones, 2013; Yan & Berliner, 2009). Outside of the classroom international students have reported difficulties adjusting to the new climate, food, and culture, concerns about their finances, immigration restrictions, discrimination,

homesickness, loneliness, depression, and isolation (Blake, 2006; Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell & Utsey, 2005; McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

While these issues are indeed characteristic of the experiences of Black international students, they have a distinctive trait that creates a separation in experiences from other international students, their race. Most students from sub-Saharan Africa identify as Black and therefore share this physical trait with a sizeable proportion of American citizens. Although White international students also share their racial identity with a sizeable portion of Americans, they do not encounter the same negative experiences as their Black fellow international students (Lee & Rice, 2007). This shared racial characteristic creates unique circumstances for Black international students because of the history of enslavement of Black individuals in the United States (Manyika, 2000). This shared characteristic often makes it more difficult to identify them as international students. In their 2012 study, Joseph and Baker explained that Black Caribbean immigrants can be described as invisible because they are often mistaken for Black Americans. The same is true of Black African immigrants. This can result in Black Americans expecting their Black African and Caribbean peers to act and think like them despite their international status and background. These unique circumstances created by this shared characteristic call for a deeper examination of their sojourn and an exploration of the identity development they experience as it relates to their race.

Race and Racial Identity Development

The American definition of Black is a social construct created in the 1650s by White lawmakers in the southern states to establish a legal pathway to enslave Africans (Davis, 1991; Blackmon, 2008). By establishing that Blacks, or anyone of Black heritage,

were inferior, lawmakers could legally create a slave economy (Blackmon, 2008). This idea that the White race was superior to other races served as the cornerstone for the mistreatment of the Black population in America for centuries. Although a similar system developed in South Africa (Davis, 1991), other sub-Saharan African countries do not have a history of racial division to the extent of the United States. Because of this many international students have not experienced racial division and do not place important on their race.

Research on the racial identity development of international students is minimal, with the majority focusing on the development of Asian international students. With regards to the salience of race as a part of identity research indicates that for Asian international students, areas of identity such as race and class that were not central parts of identity prior to traveling to the United States become central upon arrival, thus forcing the renegotiation of those aspects of self (Ghosh & Lu, 2003). Studies of Black international students have found this to be true of this population as well. Except for international students from South Africa, most Black international students raised in majority Black countries have not faced race-based discrimination to the extent of many Black Americans. Seekings (2008) explains that race is still a key factor in South Africa because of the ongoing racial separation stemming from apartheid. However, for students from other African countries, once in the United States where racial discrimination is more openly discussed and experienced, their race becomes a more salient part of their identity, particularly as their time in the country progresses (Phinney & Onwughalu, 1996). This is consistent with the findings of Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), who in their Black identity development research found that adult individuals with "low race

salience" or "internalized racism" will go through a sector called Nigrescence Recycling during which they will encounter with a situation or experience that causes them to question their Black identity. For Black international students, this would be their relocation to the United States and their first-hand contact with American culture and the importance of blackness. This exposure to the importance of race creates a new identity that is significantly different from that of their Black American peers raised in society that places importance on race. Because of this historical context, Black Americans are more conscious of racial discrimination and are accustomed to being undervalued because of their race (Phinney & Onwughalu, 1996). In contrast, Black international students raised in predominantly Black societies have a different worldview with regards to the importance of race. European settlers in both the United States and Africa heavily influenced this difference in worldview. In his 1992 research, Ghanaian scholar Anthony Kwame Appiah described this influence, explaining that colonization in Africa forced cultural, ethnic, geographical, and national identities to become more salient for Africans, while the slavery and the social structures that stemmed from it made race the most salient aspect of identity for Black Americans (Alex-Assensoh, 2009). Consequently, the differences in how they view race often creates tension between the two groups. This tension is often more noticeable when Black Americans and Black international students interact at institutions of higher learning.

A 2013 study of African students in Missouri, which was historically part of the American South, found that these students have little knowledge and understanding of the history of Black Americans and have a significantly different view of blackness compared to their Black American peers. Participants in this study felt that racism is

inflated, and they often distanced themselves from race-related protests (Manguvo, 2013). These inherently different opinions about racial matters can be problematic for Black international students, particularly in their interactions with Black Americans. A 2000 study by Manyika of African students studying in the United Kingdom and the United States determined that the relationships between Black international students and Black Americans are notably strained because of misunderstandings about the significance of race in their lives. These misunderstandings and strained relationships create a unique challenge for these international students to overcome during their time in the United States. Because of this, there is a need to examine the influence that these misunderstandings and strained relationships have on the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students. This is particularly important in the context of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), institutions that promote and celebrate Blackness, and especially those in the American South, where a large majority of these institutions are located.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The primary purpose of establishing HBCUs was to provide educational opportunities for formerly enslaved Black Americans. To avoid integrating already established all-White institutions, Christian missionaries established private HBCUs. The second Morrill Act of 1890 created public HBCUs (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom & Bowman, 2010). The sizeable population of Black Americans in the Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast regions of the United States resulted in the creation of most HBCUs in those areas (Evans, Evans & Evans, 2002), with a large majority in the southern states. In fact, of the 102 accredited HBCUs (including community colleges), 82

are in the former Confederate States of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). With the deep-rooted racism that was representative of the American South, HBCUs became pillars of strength and symbols of opportunity for the Black community (Anderson, 2010).

The value of HBCUs is undeniable. Along with other Minority-Serving Institutions, these colleges and universities provide otherwise unavailable educational opportunities for minority groups in American society (Baez, Gasman & Turner, 2008). HBCUs have historically offered lower tuition rates than their predominantly White institution (PWI) counterparts, which is a result of serving a historically lower income population, making them more accessible to the Black community. HBCUs are also renowned for their nurturing, majority Black environments that are conducive to the success and achievement of Black Americans (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom & Bowman, 2010). Research indicates that Black students at HBCUs have an overall more satisfactory college experience, have higher self-esteem, and experience more holistic development (Bridges, Kinzie, Laird & Kuh, 2008). Additionally, because of higher levels of interaction with faculty than their peers at PWIs, Black students at HBCUs are more likely to be successful than their Black peers at PWIs (Bridges, Kinzie, Laird & Kuh, 2008; Chen, Ingram, & Davis, 2014). Despite their history as all-Black institutions, HBCUs have become more integrated as more students who do not identify as Black enroll, with approximately 13% of students identifying as White (Gasman & Tudico, 2008). HBCUs have also become home to a considerable number of international

students; however, research about their experiences has remained limited (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom & Bowman, 2010).

Currently, only two studies examine the experiences of Black international students at HBCUs. One study, conducted at Delaware State University, examined the challenges faced by this population as they adjusted to their new environment and their coping strategies (Blake, 2006). Some of the findings detail African students experiencing ridicule for their accents as well as being stereotyped as lower class because of negative representation of Africa in the media. Students reported that they coped with these stressors by not speaking during class discussions and by sticking with fellow African students (Blake, 2006). The second study, conducted with participants at HBCUs in the northeast region of the United States, examined how sociocultural factors influenced psychological adjustment (Quiñones, 2013). The study found several factors that influenced adjustment including perceived prejudice and social support. The participants also indicated that they rely on fellow Black students for support as they cope with the adjustment challenges (Quiñones, 2013).

Both studies, although illustrative of the adjustment challenges and experiences of Black international students at HBCUs, were conducted in the northeastern region of the United States and excluded the American South. Because the southern United States is home to most HBCUs and has the deepest history of racism, it is important to focus on the development of Black international students in that specific context. Neither study focused on the influence of race salience and acculturation on the development of Black international students. Although the Blake (2006) and Quiñones (2013) studies have provided much needed insight into the experiences of Black international students at

HBCUs, neither account for cross-cultural psychology. Thus, this study aims to explore the role that acculturation, and particularly the realization of the importance of race in America, plays in the racial identity development of Black international students from a cross-cultural psychology perspective.

Conceptual Framework

One of the main aims of cross-cultural psychology is to understand the changes that occur within individuals and/or groups when they experience a change in culture. Founded in cross-cultural psychology, Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) provides a method for understanding the diverse ways acculturation affects immigrants. Berry (2005) defined acculturation as "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (p. 698). One of the key features of Berry's model is the distinction of two separate sets of consequences for immigrants. At the population level, cultural changes that occur relate to social, economic, and political factors, whereas on the individual level, cultural changes relate more to personal characteristics such behavior, identity, and attitudes of the individual immigrant (Berry, 1990). Although population level factors have an influence on individual changes, this study will focus on individual changes.

Even though the term acculturation has been used as a blanket term to describe cultural changes at the population and individual levels, the results of these changes are inherently different at each level. In 1967, Graves developed the term "psychological acculturation" (p. 337) which describes the "changes an individual experiences as a result of being in contact with other cultures and participating in the process of acculturation"

(Berry, 1990, p. 203). In addition to the influence of changes that occur at the population

level, external factors such as the culture of the host nation and the ideas and values from

the individual's home nation that may be maintained or adapted to fit the host culture

influence psychological acculturation (Berry, 1990).

Berry's model (1997) describes a five-stage process for psychological

acculturation. These stages are acculturation experience, appraisal of the experience,

strategies, immediate effect, and long-term outcomes. During the third stage, strategies,

individuals decide how they want to cope with their experiences. During this stage, the

elements of choice and attitude frame the options for coping. Berry (1990; 1997) asserts

that acculturation is not a linear process that ends with non-dominant groups (e.g.

immigrants, international students) fully assimilating to the norms and culture of the

dominant group. Instead, individuals can choose how they would like to relate to the host

culture (acculturation attitude) (Berry, 1990). The result of the interaction between choice

and attitude presents two issues for immigrant populations. The first issue focuses on how

much of their traditional culture and identity they want to keep (cultural maintenance).

The second issue focuses on the choice to interact with the dominant group or to remain

close with those of a similar cultural background (intercultural contact) (Berry, 1997;

2001).

The interaction of these choices results in four strategies for the coping with

acculturation known as acculturation strategies. These strategies are assimilation,

separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 1997;2001). Individuals who have

little to no desire to retain their traditional culture and values and want to have high levels

of engagement with the dominant culture fall in the assimilation category. Conversely,

individuals who have an intense desire to preserve their traditional culture and values and want little to no engagement with the dominant culture fall into the separation category. The integration category describes those who are in the middle and have a desire to both retain their own culture and interact with the host culture. The marginalization category describes individuals who have little to no desire to retain their culture nor do they have any interest in interactions with the host culture (Berry, 1990). The potential immediate effect of acculturative stress and eventual long-term adaptation follow these choices. For Black international students, the choices made regarding cultural maintenance and intercultural contact, and therefore acculturation strategy and subsequent acculturative stress, could have a direct influence on their identity development. As the level of contact with Black Americans and the level of involvement in the HBCU culture increases, these students will inevitably experience a change in their views of self and their race.

Purpose of the Study

International students are a heavily recruited population because of the amount of revenue they bring to their institutions. To retain and continue to recruit these students, it is important that colleges and universities provide adequate support (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999). The primary goal of this study was to determine how HBCUs can provide sufficient support to Black international students as they negotiate their racial identity. This study explored the choices that succeed the initial enrollment decision and how subsequent choices influence racial identity development. The researcher intended to determine the extent to which race was a central part of the identity of Black international students prior to their migration to the United States, and the extent to which this salience changed over the duration of their stay. The researcher

also intended to explore the combined influence that the HBCU culture and the history of racism in the American South had on the racial identity development of the participants. Finally, the researcher examined the influence that the differences in views and significance of Blackness had on the relationships between Black sub-Saharan African international students and their Black American peers. By exploring the acculturative experiences that influence racial identity development, this study identified various ways HBCUs can support Black international students through the process of racial identity development.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. Do Black sub-Saharan African international students experience a change in their racial identity after relocating to the United States?

2. In what ways does the culture of HBCUs influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

3. In what ways do the relationships between Black sub-Saharan African international students and Black American students at HBCUs affect the racial identity development of Black international students?

4. How do experiences with regional racism influence the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students?

Methodology

This study used qualitative methodology, specifically a phenomenological approach. Sharan B. Merriam (2009) explained that the purpose of phenomenology is to explore the meaning that individuals make of their experiences and how the lessons

14

learned become part of their reality. Phenomenology also allows researchers to demystify complicated life experiences, so they can gain a better understanding of these experiences (van Manen, 1990). Because acculturation is a complicated, multidimensional experience, a phenomenological approach was best suited for this study.

Criterion sampling was used to purposefully select Black sub-Saharan African international students attending HBCUs in the American South. Using combination of a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) and follow-up journal prompts (Appendix B), participants were asked about their level of race salience prior to their arrival in the United States as well as their current level of race salience. Participants were also asked about their experiences at their respective institutions, their interactions with Black American peers, and their experiences with racism. These questions were used to explain the racial identity development of the participants and ascertain what programs HBCUs can develop to better assist this student population with the transition.

Definition of Terms

- Acculturation - "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2005, p. 698).

- Acculturative stress – "a reduction in the health status of individuals and may include physical, psychological and social aspects" (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987, p. 493).

- Black – "A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa" (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) – Any college created before 1964 with the primary of providing educational opportunities for Black Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 2016c)

- International student – For the purposes of this study an international student is defined as "an individual with a non-United States educational and cultural background who came to the United States for the purpose of getting an education and entered the country on a student visa." (Tincu, 2008, p. 7)

- F-1 visa – A non-immigrant visa issued to international students to pursue education in the United States. This includes study at a university or college, high school, private elementary school, seminary, conservatory, or other academic programs such as language training programs. (United States Department of State, 2016b)

- Racial identity – "A sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1993, p.3).

- Sub-Saharan Africa – All countries in Africa excluding north Africa. Sudan is part of sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations Statistics Division, 2013). These countries are Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Reunion, Rwanda, Saint Helena, São Tomé & Principe,

Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Delimitations

To allow for a focus on the experiences of Black international students several boundaries were set for this study. The participants were limited to Black sub-Saharan African international students in the southern United States. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to students of a similar description studying in different regions of the United States. The participants were Black students who originated from sub-Saharan Africa, as such, the experiences of Black American, North African, and White African students were not be studied. The participants were limited to those who are in the United States specifically for higher education pursuits and excluded Black students from the region of interest that emigrated to the United States as children or those of African heritage born in the United States.

Limitations

As with all research, this study was subject to limitations. First, the researcher's experience as a Black international student may have affected her perspective and understanding of the participants' experiences. Second, the sample was not representative of the Black international student population in the South because of cultural differences between different countries. Finally, participants were enrolled in different HBCUs in different states therefore, the unique culture of each individual institution and state may have an influence on their experiences.

Assumptions

It was assumed that Black sub-Saharan African international students will continue to enroll in HBCUs. It was also assumed that participants were honest about their experiences and provided detail in their responses to the interview questions and journal prompts. Additionally, it was assumed that participants and the researcher established trust allowing participants to feel comfortable discussing their experiences.

Justification of the Study

Research about the unique experiences of Black international students is very limited. Moreover, the experiences of Black international students at HBCUs, particularly those institutions in the American South are even less researched. In the last three to four years, national debate and discussion regarding race relations in America, particularly anti-Black racism, has increased with the main question being whether the United States has moved beyond its racially tense past or if racism is still part of modern society. These debates and discussions were triggered by incidents such as the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Renisha McBride, and Michael Brown, all of whom were Black individuals killed by White individuals, and the racially motivated mass murder at a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina by a self-described White supremacist (Capehart, 2015; Workman & Kannapell, 2015).

These events prompted the formation and growth of the Black Lives Matter movement, a modern day civil rights movement aimed at fighting injustice and systemic racism in America (Day, 2015). In the last couple of years, the discussion has moved to college campuses with protests led by Black students at institutions such as the University of Missouri in Columbia, Ithaca College. Students at these campuses were

protesting the lack of diversity and treatment of Black students with several other

institutions protesting in solidarity (Jaschik, 2015; Hartocollis & Bidgood, 2015). In the

American South, these discussions have centered on the use of the Confederate symbols

in state flags such as the Mississippi state flag, and other public arenas and the negative

history associated with the Confederacy. States such as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida,

Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee have state flags that contain

Confederate symbols (Diamond & Scott, 2015). All southern states have confederate

symbols such as carvings and statues of Confederate leaders at public parks and

universities, while others allow Confederate flag license tags or Confederate school

mascots (Ellis & Yan, 2015).

These race-related discussions may not be familiar to many Black international

students. These students may be ill-prepared for the historic and sociocultural context of

the American South and will, therefore, have a more challenging time adjusting.

Research has shown that these students often lack knowledge about the history of racism

in America, particularly the severity of racism in the American South and, will often

distance themselves from any discussions and protests (Manguvo, 2013). However, in an

HBCU environment it may be difficult to do so. Because Black international students

look like their Black American peers, it is possible that they may feel pressured to relate

and engage in protests and discussions despite their individual views on the importance

of race. It is therefore important to explore the influence that this potential pressure has

and the connections to racial identity development to properly support these students

through this process. With the increased speed of communication, particularly through

social media sites, international students can easily share their negative experiences with

family and friends, all of whom may be prospective students for their institutions (Peterson, et al., 1999). To avoid the risk of reduced enrollment and retention, and to increase international student success HBCUs need to ensure that their international students feel adequately supported as they navigate their new life in the United States. This study aims to identify ways to provide this support.

Summary

Most current research about the international student population in the United States is skewed towards the experiences of Asian students. Although some of the findings from this research have been supported by the studies of black international students, the unique racial and historical connections between these students from sub-Saharan Africa and their Black American peers created a need for a deeper inquiry into the effect the college experience has on the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students. The contexts of the American South and HBCUs located in that region were understudied but are especially important because of their historical and cultural relevance to the Black community. This study explored the acculturative experiences of Black international students at HBCUs in the American South and, the influence of interactions with Black American peers on the racial identity development of Black international students. Previous research indicated that Black international students were often unaware of the history of racism in the United States and will avoid participation in related discussions and protests (Manguvo, 2013). However, in the context of HBCUs in the American South this may be lead to negative interactions with their Black American peers and a potentially negative experience. This study provides insight into how this lack of knowledge and hesitance to participate

impacts the experiences and development of Black international students. This is helpful for higher education professionals, particularly those in admissions and international student support services who are in direct contact with this population. The information garnered from this study should assist in the inclusion of information in orientation sessions or the development of programs that may help Black international students better understand the history of the American South and the value of their HBCU.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the changes in race salience for Black sub-Saharan African international students during their time at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the southern United States. Because race relations in the United States, particularly regarding anti-Black racism, are a current discussion topic nationwide, understanding how international students who are unfamiliar with the history of slavery and racial discrimination cope and acclimate themselves to their new environment will provide insight and opportunities for the development of support programs for these students. This study will be framed by Berry's Acculturation Model (1997), which provides a guide for understanding acculturation experiences of migrants and the subsequent changes that occur with individuals as they adjust to a new culture.

The following literature review examined five topics that were critical to understanding the context and importance of this study. This literature review begins with an overview of key research findings of the international student experience. Researchers have identified several barriers to adjustment for the international student population which fall into two categories: academic adjustment issues and social/cultural adjustment issues. These issues, which are a direct result of the acculturation associated with the international student sojourn, can lead international students to reevaluate their identities and make adjustments to their identities. The identities that are most often affected by acculturation are cultural, ethnic/national, and racial identities. This section will describe current research findings of these identities. Second, a brief history of acculturation research and an explanation of the selected framework, Berry's Acculturation Model

(1997), is provided. Much of acculturation research focuses on the acculturation of a large group. However, this framework provides a model for understanding the acculturation process on an individual level rooted in cross-cultural psychology.

Third, to begin to create the context of this study, a summative history of the southern United States and the current state of race relations in the United States is presented. Understanding the racial structure of the host society and how one fits into that structure is an integral part of acculturation (Shell-Weiss, 2009). As such, the slave history of the southern United States and the impact of this history on the Black population is emphasized. The fourth section highlights the connective history of the United States and sub-Saharan Africa through the Atlantic Slave Trade. However, the abolition of slavery severed this connection. This section explores how this disconnection affects interactions between the Black populations from these areas. The last section provides a summative history of the creation of HBCUs and their current state to deepen the understanding of the specific educational context in which Black international students find themselves. The section concludes with a summary of two key studies of the Black international student experience at HBCUs.

International Students in the United States

The United States has historically been a popular choice for students desiring to further their education because of the numerous opportunities available (Selvadurai, 1998; Erichsen & Bolliger, 2010). The multitude of opportunities has increased the number of international students on college and university campuses across the country (Rai, 2002). Per the Open Doors reports published annually by the Institute for International Education (IIE), the international student population grew by over 900,000

between the 1948-49 and 2016-17 academic years (IIE, 2017b). Between the 2006-2007

and 2016-2017 academic years, the number of international students increased by nearly

500,000 (IIE, 2017b). This steady growth of international students has significant benefits

for the institutions enrolling them. International students are a significant source of

revenue for colleges and universities, local economies, and the national economy. The

National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) reported that in 2015,

international students contributed $32.8 billion to the U.S. economy. Of this total

contribution, international students enrolled at institutions located in the former

Confederate states generated $3.2 billion (NAFSA, 2016). Second, international students

bring a different perspective to class discussions and allow for incorporation of different

views and experiences. Their different perspective creates opportunities for American

students to learn different viewpoints and to gain a deeper understanding of the global

world (Rai, 2002; NAFSA, 2016). Third, international students often rely on scholarships

and institutional assistance to fund their education. Because of this, they are more willing

than their American peers to take on teaching assistant positions. This increases the

ability of academic departments to provide adequate course offerings (Peterson, Briggs,

Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999).

Despite the benefits that international students provide to their campuses, the

members of the population face several challenges because of their sojourn. The growth

of the international student population garnered interest in understanding the population

and their various challenges (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker & Al-Timimi, 2004).

Numerous studies have been conducted to provide information that allows colleges and

universities to better serve their international student populations (Chen, 1999; Hye

Yeong, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Although most of the research has focused on the experiences of Asian international students, studies of other ethnicities, including African, Caribbean, and Latin American international students revealed similar findings (Constantine, Okazaki & Utsey, 2004; Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell & Utsey, 2005). In addition to the overarching concern of language barriers, the main challenges fall into the following two categories: academic adjustment issues and social/cultural adjustment issues (Chen, 1999).

Academic Adjustment Issues

Language barriers are the main adjustment issue for international students (Selvadurai, 1998). Because English language use is essential to functioning in American society (both academically and socially), poor language skills can lead to a myriad of problems for non-native English speaking international students. Studies have found that poor English skills can result in low self-esteem, anxiety, elevated stress levels, depression, and poor academic performance (Chen, 1999; Constantine, Okazaki & Utsey, 2004; Selvadurai, 1998). Admissions protocol for non-native English speaking international students requires that they take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to measure English language ability. Many international students can pass this test, but testing success is not necessarily indicative of their ability to adjust to the daily use of English, particularly in academic settings (Selvadurai, 1998). Minimal English language skills have resulted in incomplete class assignments, mainly writing assignments and oral presentations (Hye Yeong, 2011; Yan & Berliner, 2009). Moreover, difficulty speaking English negatively affects interactions with faculty. In Yan and Berliner's 2009 study of Chinese graduate students, participants reported that their lack

of English language skills made interactions with faculty uncomfortable and awkward, both in and out of the classroom. Thus, these students avoid interacting with their professors, making it challenging to build essential relationships.

Other academic adjustment issues include challenges related to pedagogy and curricula. Adjusting to the American educational system is one of the most challenging transitions for international students because of the unique style of instruction used in the United States. Many international students gained their primary and secondary education in instructional systems fashioned after the British model. The British model of education requires that students take classes solely in their academic field, whereas the American system is more flexible and requires students to take courses across disciplines (Selvadurai, 1998). This liberal approach can often be confusing and frustrating for international students (Selvadurai, 1998). Additionally, American teaching styles are more informal and relaxed than most international students are accustomed to (Chen, 1999). International students may perceive behaviors such as eating and drinking in class and addressing faculty by their first names as disrespectful. The use of group discussion, self-directed learning, objective testing methods, and presentations in teaching can also limit the ability of international students to properly learn course content (Chen, 1999; Hye Yeong, 2011; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Selvadurai, 1998). Moreover, international students have expressed that adjusting to American academic standards, particularly plagiarism and academic dishonesty policies, is difficult because of a lack of general policy comprehension (Xiaojing, Shijuan, Seung-hee, & Magjuka, 2010). Similarly, lack of cultural relevance and ability to relate to course material presented academic challenges for international students (McDowell, Fang, Kosutic & Griggs, 2012; Erichsen

26

& Bolliger, 2011;). Participants in a 2012 study of international students enrolled in family studies/family therapy graduate programs noted a lack of foreign materials and expressed concerns about the transferability of knowledge to their homeland cultures. Participants lamented that, while they were well-versed in how theories applied to American society, faculty members did not take time to explain how the theories discussed in class were applicable in the international students' home countries (McDowell, Fang, Kosutic, & Griggs, 2012).

Social Adjustment Issues

In addition to curricular and academic policy issues, social/cultural adjustment issues can include loneliness and isolation, financial problems, immigration restrictions, and racial discrimination. Loneliness and isolation, for instance, can be self-imposed or a result of purposeful exclusion by American peers (Chen 1999; Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). These feelings of isolation and loneliness result from a range of experiences including exclusion by their American peers, lack of diversity in academic departments, lack of transportation and inability to call their family due to the cost of international calls (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010). Financial problems are a significant challenge for international students. Because immigration laws limit international students' employment to on-campus jobs many of them struggle to pay for essentials, including living expenses, tuition, and healthcare (Chen, 1999; Constantine, et al., 2005; Sherry et al., 2010). On-campus jobs are often insufficient and competitive so the likelihood of finding jobs declines (Sherry et al., 2010). Other students have complained about the credit-based system in the United States and the difficulties in establishing credit as a foreigner (Joseph & Baker, 2012).

Finally, several studies have shown that international students, particularly international students of color, face racial discrimination and prejudice. This discrimination is often based on negative stereotypes that Americans have regarding people from other geographic regions/countries (Chen, 1999). The participants in Constantine et al.'s (2005) study of African international students explained that they are often viewed as having minimal intelligence by their White American peers. The same participants also described being referred to using racial slurs and other derogatory terms by their White American peers. Experiencing racial discrimination can intensify mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, that international students may already experience because of the acculturation process (Constantine et al., 2005). Black international students look like Black Americans and are, therefore, often mistaken as such (Manyika, 2000). Given the history of discrimination and racism towards Black people in America, Black international students may experience a more intense, deep-rooted form of racism than international students of different races (Constantine, et al., 2004; Manyika, 2000). Because Black international students are often unaware of the weight that race carries in the United States, adjusting to the importance of this identity can increase acculturative stress. This study will explore the racial identity development among Black international students, and the adjustments students make to American perceptions of the salience of race.

Identity Development

The acculturation process can often result in changes in identity for the nondominant or minority group (DeVos, 1980; Phinney, 2003). Before acculturation and continuing into the initial stages of acculturation, identity is often rooted in the culture of

28

origin. However, as the acculturation process progresses, and individuals deal with

acculturative stress, identity changes will occur (Berry, 1990). The identities most

affected by the acculturation process are cultural, ethnic/national and racial identities.

 Cultural identity. The drastic shift in culture that occurs because of an

international sojourn has many negative and positive implications for international

students. The change in cultural norms can force international students to reevaluate and

reinvent themselves. Research on international students studying in the United Kingdom

revealed that being in a foreign country allowed students to develop areas of their

individuality that had been hindered due to cultural expectations and family or work

responsibilities (Brown & Brown, 2009). However, within the individualistic nature of

the western, American culture students can discover their individuality (Brown & Brown,

2009). Other research has shown that during time spent abroad, international students

develop a separate or hybrid identity to accommodate the host culture and their home

culture. In a study of international students enrolled at Australian universities, Koehne

(2005) found that participants developed a hybrid identity that was shaped by the cultural

changes that occurred during relocation and acculturation. This hybrid identity gave the

students an opportunity to reconstruct their individuality. However, despite this hybrid

identity, international students still felt like strangers in Australia as well (Koehne, 2005).

However, even with new freedoms and identities, it is increasingly difficult for

international students to maintain their new identity and relate to their home countries

and culture upon their return home (Brown & Brown, 2009; Koehne, 2005). This

juxtaposition of identities often results in imposter feelings in countries that were once

their home (Koehne, 2005). Furthermore, change in cultural identity is often birthed by

the realization of changes in societal power differentials, which forces international students to renegotiate and redevelop their identity to fit the existing culture as well as to combat negative stereotypes (Hsieh, 2006). Participants in that study explained that their identity is defined by themselves and not by stereotypes placed on them by American society (Hsieh, 2006).

Ethnic and national identity. A second identity that can change during an international sojourn and the accompanying acculturation processes is ethnic or national identity. Ethnic identity refers to an individual's membership in an ethnic group based on factors such as race, nationality, culture, language, and religion (Phinney, 2003). Ethnic identity develops as people begin to make sense of how their specific ethnicity fits into the broader societal context (Phinney, 2003). Studies have shown that upon arrival in the United States, or the foreign country selected for higher education, international students develop a stronger sense of national pride, and their nationality becomes more central to their identity (Brown & Brown, 2013; Hume, 2008). Researchers have found explanations for this stronger sense of national pride. First, many international students often attend institutions located in areas where they do not have access to fellow countrymen and, as part of the acculturation and identity development process, their ethnic and national identity becomes a central issue as it concerns their personal development (Hume, 2008; Ghosh & Lu, 2003). In a study of African international students enrolled in institutions of higher learning in two racially different cities, Eugene, Oregon, and Washington, D.C., Hume (2008) found that institutional location was an integral part of the maintenance and development of ethnic and national identity. For example, students in Washington D.C., where there is a significant population of Africans

30

and numerous African businesses, acculturation was more natural because of the numerous opportunities for interactions with fellow Africans including church, social gatherings, and nightclubs. Being able to interact with fellow Africans regularly made the maintenance of ethnic and national identities easier because ties to their culture of origin were not entirely severed. However, for the students in Eugene, Oregon, such opportunities were not present. Thus, they faced difficulties maintaining their cultural language and traditions, particularly if their ethnic and national identities had not fully developed before relocating to the United States (Hume, 2008). Because of the limited number of interactions with people of the same ethnic origin, national identity became more important for those students in Oregon (Hume, 2008).

Second, international students often become defensive when faced with negative stereotypes associated with their nations of origin (Brown & Brown, 2013). A participant in a study of international students in England conducted by Brown and Brown (2013) explained that being attacked verbally based on her national heritage forced her to become defensive and, thus, strengthened her national identity. For another participant, misconceptions about her native countries reignited her national pride and identity and gave her an opportunity to educate locals about her country and dispel misconceptions. Negative stereotypes and experiences of discrimination are essential factors in the identity development of international students (Hsieh, 2006).

Racial identity. The literature on international student racial identity development is minimal. Existing research shows that issues centered on racism and other negative aspects of racial identity have an adverse effect on college student well-being (Brown & Jones, 2013). Additionally, students with positive views of their ethnic and racial groups

are in a better mental state than those who view their race negatively (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010). Regarding the importance of race as a central tenant of identity, research indicates that race and social class were not core parts of identity before traveling to the United States. Afterwards, however, it became central—thus students were forced to renegotiate related aspects of self-identity related to race (Ghosh & Lu, 2003).

In a dissertation that examined identity negotiation among White and Black African international students studying in the United States and the United Kingdom, Manyika (2000) identified several factors that influenced the changes in the identities of these students. One of the most significant factors was the background knowledge students had about the people in their host society and the construct of race as it applied to that specific society. This background knowledge was influenced by the participants' socioeconomic status, prior educational institutions, and the level of access to western culture via the media or first-hand experience from travel before attending university. Students who had been exposed to western racial constructs were more familiar with the significance of race in their host country. With regards to how students negotiated their racial identities in the context of their host country's racially-divided society, Manyika (2000) found that the negotiation process involved a constant interaction of the following three factors: individual backgrounds, the desired image student's wish to portray to their peers, and responses of said peers. Although this study provided insight into the racial identity development of African international students, the context of HBCUs and the racially-charged history of the southern United States is not adequately addressed. Specifically, the influence that this context and the acculturation associated with the international student experience have on the overall well-being of international students.

32

Acculturation Research

The phenomenon of acculturation is one that can be traced back to some of the earliest discoveries about the human experience. Findings dating back to the B.C. era have revealed indications of laws established in Mesopotamia to conserve customs and culture from change and, documentation of acculturation policies that were adapted to allow for the inclusion, rather than exclusion, of Nubians in ancient Egyptian society (Rudmin, 2003). The history of the United States is particularly rich in examples of acculturation. From the settlement of individuals from Western Europe to the dislocation of Native Americans and the enslavement of individuals from Africa and the Caribbean, the history of cultural integration is at the core of U.S. history (Rudmin, 2003). Although acculturation has historically been acknowledged as pertinent, the study of the phenomenon and its consequences for migrants and their host nations has become more relevant. This increased interest is due to increased immigration, better communication between cultures because of new technology and, trade agreements that allow for international business dealings (Rudmin, 2003; Trimble, 2003).

The earliest inquiries about acculturation originated from an interest in the effects of colonization. Historically, anthropologists have been credited for acculturation research; however additional research has been conducted by sociologists, psychologists, educators, and social workers (Trimble, 2003). Because of the different approaches to studying acculturation within these fields of study, the Social Science Research Council tasked researchers Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits with defining the term and determining future research opportunities. In their 1936 research, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits established that "acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result

when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149). As described in this definition, acculturation can occur in both the dominant group (host society) and the nondominant group (immigrants, refugees, international students). However, the phenomenon is more likely to result in changes in the nondominant group (Berry, 1997). As a result, this is the group that has been the focus of much research. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) determined that acculturation can be both a voluntary or involuntary process and can occur in situations where there is either social and political inequality or equality. Three potential results of acculturation were determined: acceptance occurs when individuals lose their original culture and adopt the new culture, adaptation occurs when individuals combine elements of both the old and new cultures to create a blended culture, and reaction results in individuals maintaining their original culture (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

Following the continued interest in the study of acculturation, the Social Science Research Council (1954) revisited the Redfield, Linton and Herskovits definition and created the following definition:

Acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of

34

value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 974)

Both definitions focused on the influence of acculturation on a group, rather than its effect on individuals. Recognizing this gap, in Graves (1967) developed the term "psychological acculturation" (p. 337) to describe the changes that occur in individuals as they go through the acculturation process (Berry, 1990). Following research on the two distinct levels of acculturation, Berry (1997) developed an acculturation model to serve as a framework for understanding the changes that occur on both levels.

Berry's Acculturation Model

The acculturation model is based in the field of cross-cultural psychology, which studies links between culture and behavior (Berry, 1997). The model consists of two acculturative levels: cultural or group level acculturation and psychological or individual level acculturation. This separation of levels is rooted in cross-cultural psychology beliefs that (1) individual behavioral changes are influenced by the broader cultural context and (2) people experience acculturation at varying speeds and to different extents (Berry, 2003; 2005). At the group level, acculturation of the nondominant group is influenced by factors from both the culture/society of origin and the host society. Influential factors from the host society include the attitudes and perceptions of host members towards immigrants, and the amount of support and inclusion offered by the host population. Influential factors from the society of origin include the political and economic climate as well as the demography of the society (Berry, 1997). Group level acculturation can result in changes in the physical, biological, economic, social, and cultural aspects of the

nondominant group. These changes affect the psychological acculturation experienced by the individual members of the acculturating group (Berry, 1997).

Individual psychological acculturation consists of five stages: acculturation experience, appraisal of the experience, strategies, immediate effect, and long-term outcomes. The acculturation experience stage includes the intercultural contact that occurs when individuals become members of two cultures. During the experience appraisal stage, acculturating individuals begin to process their lived encounters, leading to either behavioral shifts or acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is "a reduction in the health status of individuals and may include physical, psychological and social aspects" (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987, p. 493). Acculturative stress is unique to the process because the sources of the reported stressors are a direct result of an arduous acculturation process characterized by significant adjustment difficulties (Berry, 1990; 1997; 2005). High levels of acculturative stress put individuals at risk of severe mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, as well as identity crises, feelings of exclusion, and poor physical health (Berry, 1990). If the acculturation process is relatively free of stressors, individuals make the necessary adjustments to fit into the host society.

The third stage, strategies, explains how individuals choose to cope. Because individual level acculturation is a multidimensional process in which personal lived experiences change on multiple levels, Berry described two dimensions that influence the acculturating strategies of individuals. The first dimension concerns the choice to maintain the heritage and identity of one's culture of origin while, the second dimension concerns the extent of participation individuals choose to engage in while residing in the

36

host culture (Berry, 2003). The decisions made in these two dimensions result in four strategies, rooted in the hypothesis that nondominant groups and their members have the autonomy to choose their methods of acculturation. The assimilation strategy is a result of an individual choice to relinquish their cultural identity and fully engage with the host culture (Berry, 1997). Separation occurs when individuals decide to conserve their cultural identity and distance themselves from the host culture. Integration, the most commonly selected strategy, is the result of individuals choosing to simultaneously conserve their cultural identity and interact with the host culture, creating a blended identity. This strategy is only effective when the dominant culture is inclusive and welcoming of the acculturating group/individual (Berry, 1997). Marginalization occurs when neither cultural conservation nor interaction with the host culture appeals to individuals going through the acculturation process (Berry, 2003).

To account for situations where the dominant group has certain expectations or applies pressure to the nondominant group, Berry deemed that a third dimension is necessary. When the dominant group forces the separation strategy, segregation is said to have occurred. When the dominant group welcomes the choice of assimilation, a "melting pot," develops, however, when the dominant group forces assimilation, it is described as a "pressure cooker." Finally, when marginalization is forced, it is described as exclusion (Berry, 2005).

Several group and individual level factors affect the selection of acculturation strategies. On the group level, the reason for moving to a different culture leads to specific strategy choices. Individuals, such as international students, who willingly relocate are more likely to choose an assimilation or integration approach to their

acculturative process (Berry, 2003). On the other hand, distinguishing characteristics such as race and having other individuals of the same origin in close proximity may lead to the selection of separation. On the individual or psychological level, the connection between the two cultures and the experiences that result from that contact influence the selection of acculturation strategies. Separation is the most common strategy chosen when ethnic and cultural identities are in question. Assimilation is the strategy of choice when national identity is the focus. When both ethnic/cultural and national identities are in question, acculturating individuals usually choose the integration strategy and, when no specific identity is in question, the selection of marginalization is most common (Berry, 2003).

The fourth stage, immediate effects, explains the significant psychological and emotional effects of the acculturation strategies. When stress levels are low, and individuals quickly overcome challenges, acculturation has positive results. When stress levels are moderately high, and individuals have trouble overcoming challenges, acculturation can have adverse effects. When individuals face significant problems and are unable to overcome acculturation challenges, they are likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Berry, 1997). The fifth and final stage of psychological acculturation is long-term outcomes or adaptation. Adaptation occurs in two aspects, psychological and sociocultural. Psychological adaptation refers to internal factors such as identity, mental health, self-esteem, and overall contentment with the adjustments (Berry, 1997).

A fundamental premise of Berry's model is that an understanding of the historical and cultural backgrounds of both the dominant and nondominant groups is

necessary to comprehend the psychological acculturation of individuals properly. In conjunction with this background knowledge, an understanding of the context of the interaction between the groups and the resulting consequences is essential. (Berry, 2003). This allows for an understanding of the cultures that have shaped the interacting individuals and provides a lens for cultural comparison (Berry, 1997). The next section focuses on the history of both the Black American and Black international student populations, the HBCU context, and current research on the results of interactions between the two groups within higher education settings.

U.S. Historical Context: The American South

To properly study the acculturation of nondominant groups, it is necessary to understand the historical, social, and cultural context of their host society (Berry, 1997). With regards to the Southern region of the United States, the location of this study and where slavery was most prominent, this entails reviewing the history of slavery. Additionally, an examination of how race has defined the treatment and experiences of the Black population throughout American history leading to the current discussions, protests, and calls for the end of racial inequality. The following section provides an overview of this history, beginning with slavery and post-emancipation society, through to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and concludes with current discussions regarding race relations and modern civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter.

Slavery and Post-Emancipation South

The historical presence of Blacks in the United States began before the formal creation of the nation as an autonomous entity, separate from Great Britain. In 1607, the first known shipment, and subsequent enslavement, of Africans in the U.S. occurred in

the British Colony of Virginia (Herndon, 2013). Over the next two hundred years, nearly

12 million Africans were shipped to the United States as slaves. Due to poor travel

conditions on the ships, 1.8 million died while at sea, leaving approximately 10.7 million

to arrive in the United States to be enslaved. Although most slaves were captives from the

coast of West Africa, a smaller number came to America via the Caribbean Islands,

where the slave population constituted approximately 90% of the population (Sublette &

Sublette, 2016; Davis, 2006). The ownership of slaves was the cornerstone of southern

plantation success. Due to the wealth amassed by slavery, southern plantation owners

were well connected to prominent government officials or held political positions

themselves, which allowed them to ensure that slavery, and their wealth, could continue

(Hammond, 2012; Sublette & Sublette, 2016). In fact, by the time of secession, 35% of

the South's population consisted of slaves, and two-thirds of American millionaires were

residents of the South, and their wealth was mainly in the form of slaves (Sublette &

Sublette, 2016; O'Connell, 2012). As the African population grew in America, it became

increasingly necessary to the White slaveowners to ensure that their slaves continued to

be viewed and treated as inferior. As such, the concept of race was used to enforce the

inferiority of Blacks and to legally refuse them fundamental rights and privileges, such as

voting, jury duty, and purchasing and owning land (Herndon, 2013).

Following the end of the Civil War in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was

signed, signifying the end of formalized slavery. As a crucial step to providing newly

freed slaves with citizenship and the protection awarded to all American citizens, the

Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868 (Kuznicki, 2009). The following year, Black

men were awarded the right to vote through the establishment of the Fifteenth

Amendment. These new rights for Black men, who were legally inferior for years, were met with opposition from White supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) (Herndon, 2013). In response to the KKK's lynching of Blacks, nineteenth-century White civil rights proponents and Black activists including W.E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells met and established the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on February 12, 1909. The NAACP's primary purpose was to foster the maintenance and continuance of Black Civil Rights (NAACP, 2017).

Despite the NAACP's efforts, vestiges of slavery remained, particularly in the American South. Although slavery was illegal across the United States, the discrimination and prejudice that undergirded slavery continued to thrive (Kuznicki, 2009). Following the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, Southern plantations could no longer operate with slave labor. Because slavery had been such a valuable economic asset, southern plantation owners found themselves looking for ways to reestablish their forced-labor economy (Blackmon, 2008). Former slave owners and their legislators found a loophole in the Thirteenth Amendment that allowed for peonage of prisoners. This loophole allowed for the creation of laws that increased the incarceration of Blacks, thus providing a source of cheap labor for plantations, railroads, and mines. These laws included vagrancy and, in Mississippi, requiring free Blacks to be formally employed by Whites (Blackmon, 2008). Blacks in the South also faced oppression from Jim Crow segregationist laws that were stricter than slavery (Herndon, 2013; Kuznicki, 2009). These laws, which were dependent on the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, reinforced "separate but equal" doctrine and segregated the races (Davis, 1991; Kuznicki, 2009). The new laws placed Blacks at a significant disadvantage by mandating

segregated facilities based on race that, in turn, created enhanced economic, social, and educational barriers that would last indefinitely (Herndon, 2013).

The Civil Rights Era

The Civil Rights movement started in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. The primary purpose of the movement was to abolish the remaining aspects of slavery and segregationist laws and move towards an equal society, particularly in the American South where segregation laws remained prevalent (Herndon, 2013). Some of the most significant Civil Rights era victories included the *Brown v. Board of Education* legal case of 1954, in the Supreme Court held public schools to be unconstitutional. In 1955, three noteworthy events aided the fight for equal right. These events were Rosa Park's refusal to give up her seat on the bus to a White passenger and Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King and the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott. Finally, the 1957 directive by then President Eisenhower to have federal agents accompany Black students to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas after officials refused to obey federal desegregation orders (Herndon, 2013). Perhaps the most significant victory was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Not long after, Black citizens won the right vote by the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Both the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act led to an increase in the election of Black Americans to government positions (Herndon, 2013).

Modern Race Relations

Despite the victories of the Civil Rights era, the U.S. Black population has continued to experience the long-lasting effects of slavery, racism, and segregation laws. In the Southern states, Blacks are disproportionally disadvantaged with regards to poverty, wealth, criminal justice, education, and employment than their White

42

counterparts (O'Connell, 2012; Herndon, 2013). The criminal justice system seems to possess the most evident structure of racism. According to research from the Pew Research Center, there are significant disparities between the American population and the prison population. Despite constituting only 12% of the population, Black Americans constituted 33% of the prison population. Conversely, White Americans made up 64% of the population but only 30% of the prison population (Gramlich, 2018). Additionally, the rate of imprisonment of Black American males is more than five times that of their White counterparts, and Black American females are imprisoned twice as much as their White female counterparts (NAACP, 2018). Rickford (2016) argues that structural racism within the criminal justice system serves as a replacement for the now illegal Jim Crow segregation laws.

In addition to the longstanding effects of slavery, there is currently a national conversation about the state of race relations in the United States. Following the election of President Barack Obama as the first Black president, many people believed the racially charged past of America could be forgotten, and the country could start a new chapter with all races united as equals (Ponds, 2013; Herndon, 2013). However, since President Obama's election, racial tensions appear to have increased, with a strong focus on police brutality and racial injustice in the criminal justice system. Following the 2013 murder of a Black Florida teen, Trayvon Martin, and the subsequent acquittal of his alleged murderer, a grassroots activist movement called Black Lives Matter was formed (Dennis, 2016). The movement, which is comparable to the Civil Rights era movements such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, started as a social media hashtag to lament the lack of justice for the deceased teen and the racial disparities present in the

criminal justice system. Black Lives Matter gained strength the following year after

another Black teenager, Michael Brown, was killed by a police officer in Ferguson,

Missouri (Rickford, 2016). Since then, several incidents involving law enforcement

officers and Black victims, including the deaths of Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, and Freddie

Gray have prompted protests and a nationwide discussion and call for criminal justice

reform (Dennis, 2016). The American South had managed to stay out of this national

discussion until racially charge incidents involving both police officers and White

supremacists began to occur in the region. These incidents included the death of Sandra

Bland in a Texas jail; the shooting of Walter Scott by a police officer in North

Charleston, South Carolina; the physical assault of a Black female teenager by a police

officer in McKinney; Texas; the shooting of nine Black churchgoers at the Emmanuel

African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina; the physical assault

of a Black teenager by a school police officer in South Carolina; the death of Alton

Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and the death of Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte,

North Carolina (Dennis, 2016; McLeod, 2016; Fausset, Perez-Pena & Robertson, 2016;

Bellware, 2016; Schmidt & Apuzzo, 2015).

Despite the recent increase in incidents of police brutality in the American South,

the region has faced other discussions about its racism-plagued history and associated

symbols that remain present. The use of the Confederate flag and other Confederate

images in states such as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North

Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, has triggered discussions about its removal due

to its connection to a history of racism and oppression (Berlin, 2004; Diamond & Scott,

2015). Additionally, memories of the Confederacy and its leaders are commemorated in

the names of several public schools, school mascots, and state parks (Berlin, 2004; Ellis

& Yan, 2015).

Recent interest in revisiting the history of slavery in the South has added to the

national debate. Both large screen and small screen movies, as well as prominent T.V.

series, have been released depicting the harsh realities of slavery (Berlin, 2004). These

movies include *12 Years A Slave*, *Django Unchained*, *The Birth of a Nation*, as well as

TV shows such as *Roots* and *Underground*. These national incidents and debates, coupled

with the surge in slave movies provide a learning opportunity for Black sub-Saharan

African international students who, although their ancestral history connects them to

slavery in America, may not be aware of the significance of history to their Black

American peers.

<center>Connective History of Africa and the Caribbean</center>

The slave trade between Africa, the Caribbean and, subsequently the United

States, can be traced back to the Portuguese plantation system in the Latin American

territory of Brazil. In the mid-to-late 1500s, the Portuguese relocated their sugar

plantations from their Atlantic island locations to Brazil (Davis, 2006). This relocation of

sugar production and desire for continued profitability required the transportation of

additional labor in the form of African slaves to Brazil and thus, marked the beginning of

the Atlantic Slave Trade system. Later, the desire of the Dutch to gain independence from

Spain profoundly influenced the expansion of the system. Following their independence

from Spanish rule in 1609, the Dutch fought several battles against the Portuguese and

successfully captured Portuguese sugar plantations in Brazil along with several major

slave-capturing hubs along the West African coast (Davis, 2006; Klein, 1986). These

<center>45</center>

hubs were in present-day Ghana, and down the coast to present-day Angola. By successfully capturing such a vast area of slave supply, the Dutch established themselves as a slave trading superpower and began to supply slaves to the sugar plantations in the British and French colonies in the Caribbean, including Martinique, Barbados, Jamaica, and Saint Domingue (Klein, 1986).

The importation of Africans to the Caribbean resulted in a rapid increase in the Black population in the region. The imported plantation slaves had a low life expectancy of only seven years from their arrival time, and the continuous importation of Africans was necessary to maintain productivity on sugar plantations (Davis, 2006). By the 1780s, the African population in most European colonies was more significant than the White population (Klein, 1986). French-owned Saint Domingue, which housed one of the most productive and profitable sugar, coffee, and cotton plantation systems, became the home of 452,000 enslaved Africans compared to only 40,000 White individuals and 28,000 free Black individuals (Hunt, 1988). This sizeable African population would soon become problematic for Saint Domingue. The continuous importation of Africans gave Caribbean slaves the ability to maintain their cultures and traditions. They continued to communicate in their native languages and use their native religious practices including voodoo to band together to rebel against their owners (Hunt, 1988). The most successful rebellion was the 1791 Revolution that resulted at the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

In 1789 the French Revolution began as result of frustration and disgruntlement with the class system and differences between the classes in France. Similar frustrations were present in the French colony of Saint Domingue. Planters were unable to trade their crops to other nations because of strict trade limitations and, those of mixed heritage were

displeased with their inferior treatment and lack of privileges (Hunt, 1988). The tension

between the two groups almost resulted in a civil war in Saint Domingue. The enslaved

Africans on the island took notice of the tensions and used them as inspiration for their

fight for freedom (Hunt, 1988). In August 1791, enslaved Africans in Saint Domingue

began a violent, 13-year rebellion against their White owners (Hunt, 1988; Sublette &

Sublette, 2016). The revolt gained momentum quickly and, by September 1791, over 250

sugar plantations and many coffee plantations were demolished (Hunt, 1988). Over the

course of the revolution, the slaves battled and conquered their slave owners and

European armies and successfully ended slavery on the island (Davis, 2006). The

revolution lasted until January 1, 1804, when the island gained independence from France

and became the Republic of Haiti (Sublette & Sublette, 2016).

The Haitian Revolution had both economic and population ramifications for

Western slaveholding societies, particularly the United States (Klein, 1986). News of the

violent revolution and the deaths of slave owners spread quickly to slaveholders in

America via publications sent out by refugee Dominguan slave owners who had made

their way to Louisiana and American cities on the Atlantic coast. Enslaved Blacks in

America learned of the revolution through conversations their owners had and through

slave communications (Sublette & Sublette, 2016). Southern slave owners were afraid

that slaves in their region would replicate the Haitian revolution. They blamed the

maintenance of African heritage for the 1791 revolution, arguing that the continual

importation of Africans had allowed for cultural maintenance and population increase,

and, if enslaved Blacks no longer had ties to their original cultures, the potential for

uprisings would be reduced. Therefore, many Southern Americans pushed for the abolition of the African slave trade (Hunt, 1988).

In 1808, the importation of slaves from all foreign nations was prohibited in the United States, however, because slaves were an integral part of society, particularly in the South, slave owners had to find a new way to continue increasing the slave population. This need to maintain their slave supply led to the growth of slave breeding. Although slave traders in the state of Virginia had been breeding slaves since the 17th century, the abolition of the African slave trade allowed for the expansion of slave breeding. Several plantations were established with the purpose of supplying slaves to agricultural plantations (Sublette & Sublette, 2016). Between 1820 and 1860, breeding led to the slave population increasing from 1.5 million to 4 million (Davis, 2006). Breeding of slaves also gave way to the expansion of the internal slave trade. Black slaves traveled by ship along the Atlantic Coast to slave trading hubs including Norfolk, Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah or Gulf of Mexico slave trading ports including St. Petersburg, New Orleans, and Galveston. Other slaves traveled on land and were traded in places including Natchez, Nashville, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Baton Rouge (Davis, 2006). Although this internal slave trade was profitable for slave breeders, traders, and plantation owner, it resulted in much suffering for the slaves. In addition to the separation of families and the abuse of female slaves, the expansion of the slave breeding industry resulted in enslaved Blacks losing their connections to their African culture and assimilating to the way of their life their slave owners desired (Sublette & Sublette, 2016). The effects of this disconnection lingered for decades and had affected the

relationships and interactions between Black Americans and African immigrants (Uzoigwe, 2008).

<p style="text-align:center">Relationship between Black Americans and Black Immigrants</p>

Decades of misinformation has tainted the relationship between Black Americans and Africans, including those who have migrated to the United States. For the decades following the abolition of slavery and the subsequent emancipation of slaves, there was limited communication between Africans who remained in Africa and the ancestors of those captured for slavery. White Americans and European settlers in Africa intentionally implemented this breakdown of communication to alienate the groups from each other (Uzoigwe, 2008). The little information that the groups had about the other was propaganda used to push a negative narrative (Uzoigwe, 2008). Many Black Americans viewed the African continent and its inhabitants as uncivilized (Jacobs, 1981). Similarly, Africans viewed Black Americans as inferior (Uzoigwe, 2008). Although communication between the two groups improved during the Civil Rights Movement and after many African countries gained their independence from their colonizers, negative ideas lingered in both camps. Black Americans harbored animosity towards Africans because of misinformation that blamed the slave trade on Africans and not Europeans. Africans harbored resentment about the lack of assistance from Black Americans during colonial times. Black American's countered that claim with the argument that they were fighting against racism and discrimination at the same time as Africans were fighting for their independence (Uzoigwe, 2008).

Another point of contention between Black Americans and African immigrants has been racial identity. African diaspora researcher Yvette Alex-Assenhoh explains that

despite the historical connection between the two groups, their different histories under European control influenced the base of their identity (2009). For Africans, nationality and ethnicity are the cornerstones of their identities. This is because European colonization in Africa did not restrict the maintenance of culture and traditions in the same manner that White Americans and the abolition of slavery did for Black Americans. Because of the disconnection from their African heritage, and the prolonged use of race to categorize individuals, Black Americans base a large part of their identity on their race (Alex-Assensoh, 2009). Historian Godfrey Uzoigwe (2008), whose research also focuses on the African diaspora, explains that when Africans emigrate to the United States, they tend to self-identify as Kenyan-American or Nigerian-American and not Black or African-American as is the norm in Black American culture. In the case of Black sub-Saharan African international students from Africa, this creates a disconnect between themselves and their Black American peers.

Studies of Black African international students have revealed tensions between them and their Black American peers (Manyika, 2000; Manguvo, 2013). Because of their race, there is often an expectation that Black international students will behave like Black Americans and understand particular cultural and historical references. However, Black international students are often unaware of the American history of racial oppression and, are therefore unable to relate to their Black American peers. This leads them to distance themselves from protests or fights for equality (Manguvo, 2013). This is in line with Berry's (1997) description of selecting a separation strategy to cope with cultural changes. Participants in Manyika's (2000) dissertation study of African international students in the United States and the United Kingdom explained that because their race

was not their central focus, nor did they always discuss the oppression their race has experienced, they received better treatment from White Americans than their Black American peers received. This lack of culturally-specific knowledge and favoritism adds to existing tensions experienced between the two populations (Manyika, 2000). There is potential for the strengthening of these tensions when these international students find themselves at HBCUs, which are renowned for their foundation in and the celebration of Blackness.

<div align="center">Historically Black Colleges and Universities</div>

The importance and value of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to the Black community in the United States is undeniable. HBCUs are arenas for the celebration of Black culture, connections to the community, and centers for the development and preparation of future generations (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007). The significance of these institutions is rooted in the history of enslavement. Following the 1791 Haitian Revolution, several southern states passed laws that made it illegal for slaves to learn how to read and write (Anderson, 2010). Southerners' fear that literate slaves could correspond with other slaves at different plantations and create plans to rebel dictated the need for a literacy ban. Additionally, the ability to read created the potential for slaves to learn about ways of life that contradicted their enslavement (Butchart, 2010). After emancipation, salves could legally attain an education. Slaves viewed the prospect to earn an education as a symbol of independence and equality, and an opportunity to overcome the ramifications of slavery and restrictions placed on them by post-slavery American society (Anderson, 2010; Butchart, 2010).

Slaves in the South had always understood and appreciated the value of education. Despite legal restrictions, many Blacks in the South had secretly established their schools with Black teachers before emancipation. A superintendent for the Freedmen's Bureau, who had been tasked with establishing schools for freed Blacks discovered such schools in Fortress Monroe, Virginia, New Orleans, Louisiana, Savannah, Georgia, and other towns across the South (Anderson, 2010). After emancipation, schools for freed slaves were legally established and thus, led to the beginnings of HBCUs in the South (Allen, et al., 2007).

The northern United States appeared to be more receptive to the idea of educated Blacks. As a result, the establishment of the first HBCUs, Lincoln University (1837) and Cheyney University (1854) in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University (1856) in Ohio for the education of free Blacks occurred in the North (Redd, 1998). Following the end of the Civil War, the government created the Freedmen's Bureau whose purpose was to create educational institutions for newly freed men, women, and children in the South (Anderson, 2010). With the assistance of both White and Black religious missionary organizations, the Freedmen's Bureau established several private educational institutions throughout the American South. White religious groups such as the American Missionary Association, Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) assisted in the establishment of Dillard University (by merging Straight College and New Orleans University), Morehouse College, Fisk University, Talladega College, Tougaloo College, Clark University, Morehouse College, Shaw University, and St. Augustine's College. Black churches associated such as the African Methodist Episcopal church and churches

associated with the ABHMS assisted with creating Morris Brown College, Paul Quinn College, Selma University, Shorter College, Livingstone College, and Allen University (Anderson 2010; Redd, 1998). Although these religious organizations had differing opinions with regards to curriculum and institutional purpose, they all agreed that their institutions should prepare students for participation in politics to help better the Black community (Anderson, 2010).

To provide publicly funded institutions of higher education for Black Americans, the U.S. government passed the Second Morrill Act in 1890, which required states with segregation laws to distribute federal funds to create colleges for the Black population evenly. The Act led to the creation of an additional nineteen Black colleges that served as land-grant institutions (Redd, 1998). These institutions provided more significant opportunities for Black Southerners to attain higher education. However, due to the Jim Crow laws that governed the South, these institutions were often underfunded, understaffed, and had facilities that paled in quality compared to those at White-only institutions (Thelin, 2011).

Over the subsequent decades, HBCUs continued to flourish and, by 1927, there were 77 Black colleges across the United States (Redd, 1998). Despite having the purpose of educating the Black population, HBCUs have welcomed racially and ethnically diverse students since their inception (Redd, 1998). However, the victory of *Brown v. Board of Education* presented HBCUs with a new challenge. Because this case ruled separate K-12 education system to be unconstitutional, Black students had the additional option of attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs). This newfound option meant that HBCUs had to compete with PWIs for Black students ("Historical

Origins of HBCUs," 2010), which ultimately led to reduced enrollments in the late 1960s through the early 1970s (Avery, 2009).

Following desegregation, the role and necessity of HBCUs came into question. Despite data showing that HBCUs produced a sizeable number of science and engineering doctoral students, critics argued that, in addition to Black students having access to PWIs, the current post-racism period in America deemed HBCUs no longer relevant (Cantey, Bland, Mack & Joy-Davis, 2013). In addition to defending their role in higher education, HBCUs faced operational challenges particularly as they related to funding and accreditation. Many public HBCUs have experienced less external support than their PWI counterparts and therefore rely heavily on tuition dollars, federal aid programs, and performance-based state appropriations that often fluctuate, leaving these institutions struggling financially (Cantey, Bland, Mack, & Joy-Davis, 2013). Furthermore, despite having a culture of academic excellence, many HBCUs have academic programs that lack accreditation. This lack of accreditation has led to decreases in both credentialed faculty and quality students (Cantey, Bland, Mack & Joy-Davis, 2013). For example, Morris Brown College lost accreditation in 2002 due to poor monetary management, institutional ineffectiveness, and poor record keeping (Baylor, 2010). This loss of accreditation resulted in reduced enrollment and the college is still working towards regaining accreditation. Other HBCUs currently fighting accreditation issues include Bennett College, Saint Augustine's University, and Saint Philip's College ("Three HBCUs Face Accreditation Issues," 2016).

Despite such challenges, HBCUs boast many positive attributes including supportive environments, social activism by students and faculty, and diverse campus

communities. Research on the experiences of Black American students attending HBCUs shows that Black American students at HBCUs are more successful and satisfied than those attending PWIs (Allen, 1992; Bridges, Kinzie, Laird & Kuh, 2008; Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010). Allen (1992) argues that student success is based on both individual student traits as well as the campus environment, which includes factors such as quality of life, racial climate, faculty interactions, and social support systems. Black American students at PWIs reported experiencing alienation, racism, and general segregation, while those at HBCUs had an experience of support, inclusion, and engagement (Allen, 1992), creating an environment that is conducive to success. Students at HBCUs have reported feeling that their Black professors set high expectations for them are available to assist and provide support. Others reported that they find additional motivation from seeing other students who look like them working diligently to achieve their academic goals (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Additionally, student affairs professionals at HBCUs have reported feeling more like relatives to their students than just college administrators (Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006), reiterating the supportive nature of these institutions. Overall, Black American students at HBCUs are more satisfied with their college experience, report higher self-esteem, and experience more holistic development. Additionally, because of the higher level of faculty interaction at HBCUs than experienced at PWIs, students at HBCUs are more likely to be academically successful (Bridges, Kinzie, Laird & Kuh, 2008).

During times of social change, students, and faculty at HBCUs have historically played a vital role in the progress of social change movements. During the Civil Rights

55

movement, via curriculum and extracurricular development opportunities, HBCUs

provided students with the tools and knowledge needed to be active agents of change.

With the assistance of the HBCUs also provided students with safe spaces to formulate

their plans for activism (Williamson, 2008). For example, students attending Tougaloo

College and Jackson State University in Mississippi used their campuses to organize their

efforts. Assisted by the NAACP and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a

group of students known as the Tougaloo Nine organized a sit-in at the White only

Jackson Municipal Library. As a privately funded institution, the administrators at

Tougaloo College expressed their support for their students' activism and allowed them

to use their institutional space to prepare their protests. Students at Jackson State had

limited ability to participate in similar protests because of the public nature of the

institution. However, students organized their off-campus participation using established

groups such as the Student Government Association (Williamson, 2008). Students at

other HBCUs, such as North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College and Fisk

University, spoke out against Jim Crow laws and the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam

War by staging protests and sit-ins (Avery, 2009; Allen & Jewell, 2002). International

students at Fisk University were instrumental in the fight against southern racism and

segregation during Civil Rights (Gasman & Nguyen, 2015). Through the international

education policies of former Fisk president Charles S. Johnson, the international student

population at Fisk grew quite rapidly. With this growth came different perspectives and

questions about race relations in the United States from the international students who

were not accustomed to segregated societies. Following the influence of their

international peers, Black American students at Fisk began to question segregation laws and joined the fight for equal rights (Gasman, 2005).

Although the descriptor "historically Black" fosters the assumption that these institutions only serve the Black population, HBCUs have historically opened their doors to racially and ethnically diverse student groups (Jewell, 2002). Many HBCU founders were White, and their children attended HBCUs for their higher education (Gasman & Nguyen, 2015). This openness to racial diversity continues today. Currently, 83% of the HBCU population is Black, 13% is White, 3 % is Hispanic, and 1% is Asian (Lee, 2015). HBCUs are also making more efforts to increase the diversity of their student/faculty populations based on sexual orientation, religion, and international status (Lee, 2015; Gasman & Nguyen, 2015). Despite extra efforts to recruit international students, there is limited research on their experiences at HBCUs.

International Students at HBCUs

Currently, only two studies have focused on the experiences of Black international students attending HBCUs, both of which examined student adjustment. The first study, conducted in 2004 by Blake, examined the reasons for adjustment issues experienced by African students attending Delaware State University. Using a mixed methodological approach, the study also aimed to examine the level of influence that "length of stay" and "institutional support" had on the cultural adjustment of 57 students. Contrary to other studies conducted on international students' experiences, the participants in this study expressed that language was not a significant barrier to their adjustment due to being native English-speakers. Length of stay was also not a significant factor in adjustment for most participants. Instead, the seemingly endless nature of their

F1 immigration visa status, and their accents and the ridicule and discrimination that accompanied sounding different were the most influential factors in their adjustment. Thus, most participants chose not to speak during class discussions as a coping mechanism. In addition to experiencing other typical adjustment problems such as racial discrimination, financial problems, and immigration prohibitions, participants also lamented being viewed as "lower class" because of American perceptions of Africa based on negative images seen in the media. Finally, participants expressed disappointment in the lack of support provided by college/university offices of international student services/affairs. This was mainly linked to lack of holiday housing during school closures and the lack of engagement and connection they felt with the university. This lack of support left them alone to adjust to the new culture and subsequent lifestyle (Blake, 2006).

The second study, conducted in 2013 by Quiñones, explored the psychological aspects of adjustment on international students of African descent, specifically those from Africa and the Caribbean islands. The purpose of this dissertation study was to examine the relationship between sociocultural factors such as acculturation, social support, prejudice, and participant mental health (Quiñones, 2013). 151 students attending HBCUs in the Mid-Atlantic region participated in this mixed methods study. In addition to general challenges such as homesickness, financial problems, and adjustment to American teaching styles, the participants expressed that prejudice and social support were significant factors faced during their cultural adjustment. Contrary to Blake's 2004 study in which length of stay was not a significant adjustment factor, a more extended residency in the United States resulted in more time to adjust to cultural norms. Quiñones

(2013) also found that the level of acculturation experienced by participants was related to their willingness to acknowledge personal anxiety symptoms. Many participants sought comfort from their fellow international students and chose to distance themselves from their American peers/culture as another coping strategy. The selection of limited interaction with American peers is in line with the separation strategy explained by Berry (1997).

Although both previously mentioned studies provide vital insight into the experiences of Black international students at HBCUs, neither study explores the identity development that occurs in response to acculturative stress. Both studies identify either racial discrimination or perceived prejudice as a stressor and factor of adjustment. However, the impact of this stressor on individual growth and racial identity development is not examined. As such, this study aims to fill this gap.

<center>Black Identity Development</center>

A seminal work in the research of Black identity development is Cross and Fhagen-Smith's Life Span Model of Black Identity Development (2001). This model describes three patterns of developing a healthy Black identity, or Nigresence, that occurs over six sectors in life for Black Americans; infancy and childhood, pre-adolescence, adolescence, early adulthood, adult Nigresence, and Nigresence recycling (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001). Nigresence Pattern A starts at infancy and culminates in adolescence; Nigresence Pattern B is a conversion experience that occurs in adulthood and Nigresence Pattern C involves the continued recycling over the course of one's life. For Black international students who may not have placed importance on their race

<center>59</center>

throughout their lives, Nigresence pattern B is likely to shape their Black identity during

Early Adulthood, and Adulthood, respectively (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2001).

During the Early Adulthood, young Black adults will fall into one of three identity

groups: (1) high race salience for individuals who have been raised to place high

importance of their race; (2) low race salience while individuals who have been raised to

place importance on other aspects of their identities; and (3) internalized racism for

individuals who have been exposed to and believe the negative stereotypes and beliefs

about the Black race and therefore, have an unfavourable view of themselves (Cross &

Fhagen-Smith, 2001). The group in which individuals fall as young adults is dependent

upon their upbringing, family values, and adolescent experiences. Young Black adults

with low race salience or internalized racism have the potential to experience Adult

Nigresence conversion in the Adulthood. During Adult Nigrescence, individuals

encounter an experience or situation that causes them to reevaluate the low importance

they place on their race or the hatred they have for themselves. Upon reevaluation,

individuals may choose to commit race to a position of more significance in their identity

(Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001). The conversion process results in three distinct types of

Black identity: (1) Black Nationalist/Afrocentric in which being Black is the most

important identity (2) Bicultural in which equal significance is given to race and

nationality, and (3) Multicultural in which race is one of many aspects of identity (Cross

& Fhagen-Smith, 2001).

Although the Black Identity Development model developed from research of

Black Americans, the Adult Nigresence sector could apply to Black international

students. Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) model explains that an experience or

"encounter" in adulthood is the trigger for reevaluation of racial identity and development of high race salience for individuals who have not placed importance on their race during their formative years. For Black international students enrolled at HBCUs, this trigger could be relocating to the United States to enroll in institutions that emphasize celebrating Blackness and the accompanying acculturative experiences. Acculturation research shows that individuals going through the process are likely to experience racism and discrimination, particularly if they relocate to societies during a period of social change (Trimble, 2003). Given the current state of race relations and the prominence of movements against racism, learning the history of the southern United States could be an additional trigger for reevaluation of racial identity. Research about the international student population has also revealed that experiences with racism and discrimination are common (Chen, 1999; Manyika, 2000; Constantine et al., 2004; Constantine et al., 2005). These encounters with racism and discrimination have a significant impact on acculturation, acculturative stress, and adaptation (Trimble, 2003). Therefore, to better support Black international students as they adapt an understanding of the influence of acculturation on racial identity is necessary.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The current research on the experience of international students clarifies the challenges that face the population when they make the journey to the United States. However, given the current and historical racial climate in the United States (particularly the American South), the experience of Black international students is changing, and needs to be researched to support these students better. Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) highlights the importance of understanding the historical context of the host

society and, the connections between the nondominant group and the host society. The connection between Black African international students reaches back to the American history of slavery. However, over time these ties were severed. Although Black international students share their race with their Black American peers, they possess a limited understanding of their historical connection, thus creating tensions between these two groups of students and adding to the acculturative stress of Black international students. This stress could be heightened at HBCUs where the celebration of blackness is central to the history of these institutions.

Like Berry's (1997) assertion that history and context is an integral part of the acculturation process, Manyika's (2000) study emphasizes the importance of time and place in understanding the identity development of international students. The current national discussions about racial injustice have made this a unique time for Black international students to study in the United States. In addition to dealing with typical acculturation issues, Black international students now find themselves having to learn about and adjust to the remnants of the slave history of the country. This added pressure to understand the history is an underexamined area of the Black international student acculturation experience. The southern United States has a particularly rich history of injustice and discrimination based on race. Although many strides have been made to repair the damage done by slavery and erase its remnants, racial tensions are at an all-time high. Additionally, the specific context of HBCUs and their celebration of blackness may be foreign to Black international students. HBCUs are known for their social activism and supportive environments (Allen, 1992; Gasman & Palmer, 2008; Avery, 2009; Gasman & Nguyen, 2015). However, research has shown that Black international

students at these institutions tend to stick with fellow international students to cope with discrimination from Black American peers (Blake, 2006; Quiñones, 2013).

Because of the current time in American history and the unique context of HBCUs, this study aims to understand how Black international students that have found themselves at HBCUs in a pivotal time in American history, in a region of the country that is historically known for racial discrimination, experience changes in their racial identity. Additionally, this study aims to understand how changes in race salience during the acculturation process and the choices made by Black international students influence the overall experience of Black international students at HBCUs in the southern United States. Furthermore, this study aimed to ascertain what measures need to be taken by these institutions to provide better support for a population of students that is racially similar to the majority of the student population but whose backgrounds and upbringing present a different lens and set of needs.

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of acculturation and the resulting adjustment strategies on the racial identity development of Black international students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the southern United States. The research questions for this study were:

1. Do Black sub-Saharan African international students experience a change in their racial identity after relocating to the United States?

2. In what ways does the culture of HBCUs influence on the racial identity development of Black international students?

3. How do the relationships between Black international students and Black American students at HBCUs affect the racial identity development of Black international students?

4. How do experiences with regional racism influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

Per Berry (1997), several elements are present before individuals begin the acculturation process and others that become prevalent during the process that researchers should acknowledge in studies of acculturation and the subsequent adjustment. Some of the elements that are present before acculturation include group level variables such as the demographics of the native country, social support, and multicultural attitudes in the host nation and, individual variables such as reasons for immigration, cultural differences, and personality (Berry, 1997). Berry (1997) found social support and the prevalence of and experiences with discrimination in the host society as most influential during acculturation. Therefore, this study's research questions

were designed to examine the influence of these factors on racial identity in the specific context of HBCUs in the southern United States.

The first research question was aimed to determine if a change in view and salience of race occurs after relocating to the United States. The purpose of the second question was to determine the influence of the HBCU context on racial identity development. This is a context that had been unexamined. Previous studies about the international student experience have determined that social support is a critical factor in reducing acculturative stress, mainly support from American peers (Mori, 2000; Poyrazil, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004). Because other studies have identified tensions between Black American and Black international student groups (Manyika, 2000; Manguvo, 2013), the third research question examined the influence of these tensions on perceived social support and thus, acculturation. The fourth question explored the influence of the regional context and experiences with discrimination and prejudice on racial identity development. The methodology that was best suited to answer these questions is qualitative methods, specifically a phenomenological approach.

<div align="center">Phenomenological Approach</div>

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research was used for this study. van Manen (1990) explains that the purpose of phenomenology is to clarify experiences that often seem complicated and provide a linguistic representation of the experience. Phenomenology places emphasis on exploring individuals' experiences, the meaning that they make of these experiences and how the lessons learned become part of their reality (Merriam, 2009; Wertz, 2011). Unlike other approaches to qualitative research, the

purpose of phenomenology is to describe in rich detail the experiences of individuals instead of deriving explanations from these experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Acculturation is a complex, lived experience through which individuals adjust their worldview. In a study of the acculturation experiences of Mexican immigrants to the United States, Skuza (2007) advocated for the use of phenomenology when studying acculturation. Skuza (2007) explained that a phenomenological approach allows researchers to gain a more detailed understanding of the complex and multidimensional nature of acculturation by viewing it as something that is lived, instead of categorizing it as an isolated experience disconnected from humanity. This study focused on the complex phenomenon of acculturation with the added intricacies of being Black in the American South. Thus phenomenology is best suited.

Participants

A principal factor in phenomenological research is that all participants need to have experienced the phenomenon that is the subject of the research (Creswell, 2013). Criterion sampling was used to select a sample of nine individuals. Criterion sampling technique allows for the selection of participants who meet specific criteria (Creswell, 2013). A total of nine, Black sub-Saharan international students participated in this study. Of this sample four participants identified as female and five participants identified as male. Four participants were undergraduate students, ranging from rising sophomores to graduating seniors. Five participants were graduate students, with two pursuing master's degrees and three pursuing doctoral degrees. The ages of participants ranged from early twenties to early thirties. Collectively, participants represented seven different HBCUs located in Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Participants

represented five different sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia. Participants' length of time in the United States ranged from two semesters to seven years.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Permission to conduct this study was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Southern Mississippi. Once permission was received, approval was also sought from several HBCUs. Approximately 45 four-year HBCUs, both private and public, were emailed requesting information regarding approval procedures and participant recruitment requests and pursuance of approval was based on responses to these requests and the requirements of each institution. Because part of the confidentiality agreement with participants included omitting institution names, these approval letters have been omitted from the appendices. Once each institution granted permission, directors of international student services or international student advisors were asked to send the recruitment email (Appendix C) to students who met the criteria. Qualified participants were asked to contact the researcher via email if they were interested in participating in the study.

Once interest has been expressed, an interview time was scheduled, and participants were emailed a link to an online consent form made through Qualtrics to review and electronically sign. To respect the participants' time and resources, an online consent form was used as it provided the most convenience and did not require them to print, scan and email the signed form. Participants were emailed a PDF copy of their signed consent form for their records. Participants also sent their Skype contact information to the researcher so that requests could be sent and approved before the

interview date. On the day of the interview, the researcher reviewed the consent form with each participant, explained the purpose of the study, the data collection process, how the data was to be used, and answered any questions. Data was collected using interviews and participant journals.

Interviews

Data for phenomenological research is best obtained using interviews (Creswell, 2013). Thus this study utilized a responsive interviewing style as the primary data collection method. Rubin & Rubin (2005) describe this style as a method to gather in-depth information about participants' perception of their experiences and worldview. To be successful in its goal of obtaining detailed descriptions of experiences, this model relies on the relationship formed between the researcher and participants and, the depth and flexibility of the research design. Responsive, or in-depth, interviewing is based on interpretive constructionist theory, which explains that different individuals will view the same phenomenon through different lenses, influenced by one's culture and background (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Additionally, with the influence of critical theory and research, responsive interviewing allows individuals in marginalized groups to tell their stories in their own words and presents the opportunity for the creation of a solution to any problems those in marginalized groups face (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

A combination of more and less structured questions, (Appendix A) was used to allow for adequate exploration of the phenomenon. Follow-up questions were asked to elicit further explanation and clarification as needed. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour long and were conducted using Skype, a downloadable software which allows individuals to make video and voice calls on computers, tablets, and mobile

phones (Skype, 2017). To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, the researcher

ensured she was in a quiet and private setting for each interview. All interviews were

recorded using Amolto, a downloadable software designed for high-quality recording of

Skype calls (Amolto, 2017). Permission to record was obtained from each participant

before asking questions and, participants were informed when recording started and when

it ended. Notes will also be taken during interviews to note any changes in facial

expressions or body language.

Journals

Merriam (2009) explains that using researcher-generated documents such as

participant journals provide qualitative researchers with additional insight into the

experiences of the participants. Following the interview, participants were emailed a few

follow-up reflection questions (Appendix B) to consider. These prompts allowed

participants to record any thoughts or experiences that occur after the interview. Five

participants emailed their responses to the researcher.

Data Storage

Transcribed interviews and participant journals were stored on the researcher's

password-protected laptop computer. All files were saved without participant

identification information. Hard copies of all interviews and journals will be used for

analysis and were stored in a secured location in the participants' home office space.

Additionally, names of institutions were removed, and names of other individuals

mentioned by participants were changed.

Data Analysis

Before analysis, interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, with the exclusion of some fillers such um and uh. Several phenomenological data analysis techniques were used to analyze both the interview transcriptions and the participant journals. The first technique was époche and bracketing to reduce the influence of personal biases. Second, the researcher used phenomenological reduction. This is "the process of continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself" (Merriam, 2009, p. 26). The researcher also used horizontalization. This required carefully reading through each interview transcription and participant journal and, coding and highlighting statements that showed how the participants acculturation experiences while attending HBCUs shaped their racial identity. Structural coding, which allows for preliminary labeling of data was used to label portions of interview transcripts and participants journals (Saldaña, 2016). Each statement was given an equal amount of weight (Creswell, 2013). These significant codes were grouped by shared characteristics and relevance to the phenomenon, and final themes were identified. These final themes were used to create an overall description of the acculturation phenomenon as the participants experienced it.

Trustworthiness, Dependability, and Ethics

As with all research, the primary purpose of this study is to add knowledge to the higher education field that is trustworthy and dependable and ensures the protection and respect of participants (Merriam, 2009). The following steps were taken to ensure that this study produces trustworthy results and addresses the ethical issues that may occur.

Trustworthiness and Dependability

To ensure the findings of this study were trustworthy and dependable, the researcher used methods triangulation, which involved using different methods of data collection. Semi-structured interviews and journals served as the sources of data. This allowed the researcher to check what participants say in the interviews against the post-interview journals. The researcher also used respondent validation. This was a vital way of guaranteeing that the researcher's interpretation of the participants' responses represents their actual experiences (Merriam, 2009). Following analysis, participants were emailed a list of themes and their quotes that were directly relevant to the themes. Participants were also emailed a copy of their interview transcript with the selected quotes highlighted. Participants were asked to give feedback to ensure that the researcher's interpretation rang true of their experience.

Another method that was used to enhance the dependability of this study will be adequate data collection. As suggested by Merriam (2009), the researcher continued to conduct interviews until data saturation was reached. Finally, as previously mentioned, the researcher ensured maximum variation by seeking a diverse group of participants to increase the applicability of the findings to diverse groups of people (Merriam, 2009). In addition to equally representing males and females and the different origins of participants, age and education level were also be considered.

Ethical Issues

The data collection phase of qualitative research has the potential for several ethical issues (Creswell, 2013). The researcher addressed each of these issues to the best of her abilities. First, the privacy and confidentiality of participants need to be respected

(Christians, 2011). To protect the identity of participants and ensure confidentiality, participants were asked to self-select their pseudonyms. Additionally, participants are not identified by the specific institution they attend but only by the state in which the institution is located and demographic identifiers such as country of origin, age, gender, academic classification, and field of study. Second, ethical standards in qualitative research require that human freedom is protected. This can be done by ensuring participants are not coerced and are well informed before their participation (Christians, 2011). Participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were provided with all the necessary information before confirming their participation. While reviewing the informed consent form with the participants, the researcher ensured that a detailed explanation of the potential benefits and risks was provided to each participant and that each participant was aware of his or her right to withdraw from the study at any point.

<div align="center">Positionality</div>

One of the most critical ethical issues in phenomenological research is the positionality and experiences of the researcher. Most phenomenological research is inspired by firsthand experiences with and connections to the phenomenon and the desire to discover if these experiences are shared by others who have experienced the same phenomenon (van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). The personal nature of this inspiration gives way to potential biases that must be acknowledged. Merriam (2009) describes the process of becoming aware of one's experiences, views, and judgments as epoche.

I am a Black international student born and raised in Zimbabwe. I attended only predominantly White institutions (PWI) in Mississippi for my post-secondary educational

career; one for my bachelor's and master's degrees and another for my doctoral degree and have had some experiences during that time that led to the questioning of my own racial identity, decisions, and adjustments pertaining to the importance of my racial identity. One particular incident during my freshman year in which a Black American male upperclassman accused me of viewing myself as White because my friend group consisted of mostly White Americans planted a seed about the importance of race in America. As my years in the U.S. progressed and the events surrounding police brutality and discussions about America's history of racial tensions became mainstream, I decided to evaluate my own identities and adjust my views of self, culminating in race now being an essential part of my daily life. Although I share some traits with the participants and my experiences may be like those of the participants it is essential that I keep an open and objective mind throughout the data collection and analysis. This will be done by setting aside, or bracketing, any judgments, and expectations for results to allow for the true essence of the participants' experiences to be discovered (Merriam, 2009).

Summary

Acculturation is an intricate experience that is influenced by several personal and cultural factors (Skuza, 2007; Berry, 1997). Because it is a multidimensional experience, qualitative methodology is best suited as this type of methodology allows participants to describe their experiences in detail, in their own words. This study employed a phenomenological approach specifically. This approach grants the researcher the ability to understand the meaning better than the participants place on their experiences at HBCUs, and how this affects their daily lives and individual development.

Criterion sampling was used to select participants enrolled in HBCUs in the South. Berry (1997) identified age, length of stay, gender, and culture as influential factors during acculturation. The sampling techniques ensured representation of these factors to examine their influence. Data was collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews and participant journals, with caution taken to protect the privacy and safety of participants. The researcher analyzed both data sources. From this analysis themes that are representative of the acculturative experiences and resulting racial identity development were identified.

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the changes in racial identity experienced by Black, sub-Saharan African international students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the American South. Using a phenomenological approach to qualitative research, this study sought to understand how these students acclimated themselves not only to their institutions but also to the South. This study addressed the following questions:

1. Do Black sub-Saharan African international students experience a change in their racial identity after relocating to the United States?

2. In what ways does the culture of HBCUs influence the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students?

3. In what ways do the relationships between Black international students and Black American students at HBCUs affect the racial identity development of Black international students?

4. How do experiences with regional racism influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

After analyzing the interview transcriptions and participant journals using the methods described in Chapter III, the researcher identified seven major themes that best captured the lived experiences of participants as they adjusted to their life as students in the United States. This chapter explains each of these themes at length. Chapter V provides answers to the research questions, implications of this research, and directions for future research.

Participants

A total of nine Black, sub-Saharan African international students participated in this study. These students represent five different sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia. Collectively, the participants were enrolled at seven different HBCUs located in five states: Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Four of the participants identified as female and five identified as male. Four participants were undergraduate students, and five participants were graduate students, with their ages ranging from late teens to early thirties. Participants self-selected their pseudonyms. Additionally, any personal information or specific details such as institution names, that were linkable to individual participants have been omitted.

Participant Descriptions

This section provides descriptions of the participants in this study. Some details included such as campus involvement and religious beliefs emerged as significant factors in their overall experiences and their racial identity development.

Judith is a Ugandan female studying in Louisiana. She has been in the U.S. for six years. She completed her undergraduate studies at her HBCU and is currently pursuing a master's degree at the same institution.

Kweku is a Ghanaian male studying in Tennessee. He is a STEM major and has been in the U.S. for two years. At the time of our interview, he was a rising junior.

Miriam is an Ethiopian female of Muslim faith in her early twenties. At the time of our interview, she was a rising sophomore and had been attending her HBCU in South

Carolina for nine months. She is a STEM major involved in on and off campus volunteer work.

Patience is a Nigerian female in her late twenties studying education. She resides in Texas and is currently pursuing her second master's degree. Before moving to the U.S., she earned her undergraduate degree in Nigeria. At the time of our interview, she had been in the U.S. for three years. She has attended her HBCU for both of her master's degrees.

Paul is a Nigerian male in his early thirties studying in Texas. He is a graduate student in education and has been in the U.S. for seven years. Before moving to the U.S., Paul studied in Asia for seven years and earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. He has also received a master's degree from his current HBCU where he has been involved in some student organizations.

Ricky is a Ghanaian male in his early twenties studying a STEM subject in Tennessee. During his undergraduate career he has been involved in a couple of student organizations. At the time of our interview, Ricky was a graduating senior who had been in the U.S. for four years. Although his studies have primarily been at his HBCU, Ricky has also visited predominantly White institutions in California and New York.

Shaka is a Zambian male in his mid-twenties majoring in a STEM field. At the time of our interview, he was a rising senior in Tennessee and had been in the U.S and at his HBCU for three years. During his time at his institution, he has been involved in a few campus organizations and currently serves as the president of two student organizations.

Simi is a Nigerian female in her early thirties. She is a graduate student in a STEM major in Texas. At the time of our interview, Simi had been in the U.S. for ten months. Before coming to the U.S. for graduate school, she worked in Nigeria.

Ta is a Nigerian male in his early thirties pursuing a doctoral degree in a STEM major in North Carolina. At the time of our interview, he had been in the U.S. for six years. Before enrolling in his doctoral program, he earned a master's degree from a predominantly White institution (PWI) in Tennessee.

Major Themes

After a thorough analysis of interview transcripts and participant journals, seven themes emerged that captured participants' experiences at their respective HBCUs located in the American South and the effect that these experiences had on their racial identity. These themes are:

1. Pre-arrival Knowledge and Perceptions – "I assumed they had dealt with it and moved on."

2. Race Salience – "It was only in America that I realized I was Black.": Race Salience

3. Important Identities – "If I have the option to say African, I'll check that."

4. Learning the Environment – "Being Black in America is not only by birth, it's also by culture and behavior."

5. Encounters in the United States – "I think that was when I had the paradigm shift."

6. Friendships and Peer Interactions – "There's an unwritten code that you have to stick together."

7. Institutional Support – "I was lucky to have friends to help me."

Both acculturation and racial identity development are processes that are unique to the individuals experiencing them. Berry (2005) explained that people experience acculturation at varying speeds and to different extents. Likewise, Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) Life Span Model of Black Identity shows three separate ways in which individuals develop a healthy Black identity; Pattern A starts in infancy and culminates in adulthood, Pattern B is a "conversion experience" that occurs in adulthood, and Pattern C is continuous growth that continues through one's adult life. For Black sub-Saharan international students who were not taught any lessons about Blackness during their formative years, Pattern B is the way through which they are likely to develop their Black identity. To account for the uniqueness of these processes, the researcher determined that the emergent themes best described the racial identity-related experiences of the participants, beginning with before they arrived in the U.S. The order of the themes is reflective of the developmental process participants described during their interviews. The first four themes describe the process in which the participants gained a deeper understanding of the racial climate in the American South and their application of this knowledge to their individuality. Themes 5-7 describe influential factors and experiences in the overall acculturative process related to race and general adjustment to life in the U.S. and their respective institutions. Each theme includes sub-categories which are described in the following section.

Pre-arrival Knowledge and Perceptions:
"I assumed they had dealt with it and moved on."
In order to ascertain any changes experienced by participants, it was essential to gauge particpants' level of awareness regarding their American educational and societal

environments before their arrival. Interviews began with questions regarding participants'

knowledge about the history of the American South and the significance of HBCUs to the

Black American community. Moreover, participants were asked about their reasons for

selecting their particular institution. Most participants admitted to having little to no

knowledge of the history of the American South or HBCUs. Additionally, all participants

admitted that the basis of their enrollment at their HBCUs was not because the

institutions' population was majority Black but rather for a variety of other reasons. The

first theme has been divided into three sub-categories to explain the participants' (1) pre-

arrival knowledge of the American South, (2) pre-arrival knowledge about HBCUs, and

(3) reasoning for their college choice.

Pre-arrival Knowledge of Southern History

The depth of knowledge that participants had about the history of slavery in the

American South varied. Discussions with the participants revealed that most of these

students relocated to the American South solely for the purposes of pursuing higher

education and did not possess a detailed understanding of the South's historical context.

For example, Miriam admitted to having minimal knowledge about slavery, while Paul

based his understanding on TV depictions which he did not believe to be truthful. Paul

explained:

> The few things that I knew was what I saw on TV and even then, it was just on
>
> TV and so to me, I didn't really necessarily believe or think that it was real or that
>
> it had actually happened.

For others, like Shaka and Ricky, their knowledge was limited to the beginnings of

slavery, specifically the Atlantic Slave trade. However, Ricky acknowledged not

knowing what happened to Africans once they arrived in the U.S. Ta explained that he

had a general understanding of Southern history and the treatment of Black people in the

region. He stated:

> Well, I had an idea, but I didn't really have much details about it when I was still
>
> back home in Nigeria. So, I knew a lot of, a few places in the South were really
>
> notorious for discrimination and intimidation of Blacks and things like that
>
> historically.

Other participants had in-depth knowledge regarding the topic of slavery in

America. For example, Simi acknowledged that her interest in history aided in her

understanding the history of the American South before her arrival. Similarly, Kweku

also acknowledged that personal interest in the history of slavery and Black American

history allowed him to have a deeper understanding. He explained:

> I knew much about it because I used to watch . . . the only movies I was interested
>
> in was like the slavery movies and all that. So, I knew much about how slavery
>
> was and the emancipation proclamation and after that segregation and how Martin
>
> Luther King and his people also came in the scene in the 1960s. I knew much
>
> about that. But I didn't know much about Malcolm X, so I got to know about
>
> Malcolm X's role when I got here.

Other participants explained that while they were aware of the history of slavery

in the U.S., they did not realize that the residual effects of that period were still felt today.

For example, Patience acknowledged that while she was aware that slavery had existed in

the U.S., she assumed that the country had progressed. Similarly, Judith explained that

while American history was not taught in primary and secondary education in Uganda,

she assumed what she read in books and saw on TV was all historical and made for entertainment, stating "It's like, something you read in books, it's history. So, you just think it's history. I never really like paid too much attention but coming here, you find the actual effects of it still going."

The variations in knowledge described above indicate that each participant arrived in the U.S. with different depths of understanding of the context in which they would live for the duration of their studies. For many of the participants, the selection of the South was not a choice based on the desire to attend a university in the South as opposed to other regions of the country, but one based on reasons explained in the next section.

Pre-arrival Knowledge of HBCUs

Unlike the varying knowledge of the American South, most participants lacked knowledge about HBCUs. Six of the nine participants were unaware that their institutions were HBCUs when they submitted admissions applications. The realization of the institutional type came at a later time, for some upon arrival and others as they prepared for their arrival. For example, when asked about his reason for selecting his HBCU, Paul explained that although he had applied to other institutions, including PWIs in Texas and other states, the realization that he had been granted admissions to an HBCU came during his preparation for his visit to the American Embassy for his visa interview. He shared:

> So, when I got my admissions to come to [HBCU] I had to kinda learn. You
> know, go online onto the web and just read about it just for the visa interview
> process, going for the interview at the American Embassy because I know they
> always ask you these things, so I did read. That's the first time I saw the word
> HBCU. I really never knew what it was. In my mind I'm thinking America,

American university is universities, I didn't know there was this differentiation of these universities and what they are and their purpose and what they serve as, I really did not.

Other participants echoed this lack of knowledge of the distinct types of institutions in the U.S. Patience explained that she was unaware that there were several types of higher education institutions until she arrived in Texas. Similarly, when I asked Ricky about his college application and selection process and whether he had only considered attending HBCUs, he stated, "Yeah, I did, and I actually didn't know the difference between HBCUs and other colleges back then." Kweku based his understanding about HBCUs on the terminology used to describe the institutions. After he explained how he selected his institution, I asked Kweku whether he was aware that he had applied to an HBCU at the time. He explained:

Yes. I knew it was an HBCU, but I didn't, I didn't know what to really expect in an HBCU. I thought it was a *historically* Black so maybe it was previously Black, but now it's normal. But I realized it's the same, majority Black people when I got here.

Since participants were unaware of the type of institution to which they had sought admission, it was clear that they also did not understand the significance of their institutions until they arrived. Because of this, it was important to gain an understanding of the factors that led to them selecting their institutions.

College Choice

The participants expressed numerous reasons for selecting their institutions, none of which were because their institutions were HBCUs. For some, being close to family

was a key factor. For example, Patience's sister lived in the same city as her HBCU. Although she did apply to a PWI in that same city, she chose the HBCU because that application was accepted first. Similarly, Judith had a relative in the same city as her HBCU and received that admissions decision first. Like Patience and Judith, Paul and Miriam chose their respective HBCUs because their siblings had attended their institutions. For others, the reasons were twofold; being close to friends from back home coupled with receiving financial assistance from the institution helped in their decision making. For example, the guarantee of a graduate assistantship and having friends from home already attending her HBCU aided Simi's decision making. Similarly, Ricky based his decision on the award of a full scholarship and the fact that a childhood friend attended that institution, which would make adjusting to the new environment more manageable. For Ta, his college choice was also twofold; based on the recommendation of a friend and the fact that his HBCU offered his desired academic program. Ta also explored two other institutions, both PWIs, with similar programs but selected the HBCU because of the support he witnessed during the admissions process. This support is discussed in a later section.

<div align="center">

Race Salience
"It was only in America that I realized I was Black."
</div>

This theme describes the views of race held by the participants before their arrival in the U.S. and at the time of our interviews. Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), described race salience as the importance individuals place on race. According to their Life Span Model of Black Identity Development, individuals with low race salience place little to no importance on race as a factor in how one identifies, beyond being a "demographic fact" (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2001, p. 252). Individuals with high race salience place

foremost importance on their racial identity. There was a distinct difference between how participants described views of race in their home countries and how they consequently thought about and viewed race after having been in the U.S. This theme was sub-categorized to show these differences.

Race in Home Country

This subtheme emerged based on how participants spoke about their views of race in their respective home countries. Participants were asked to describe how race or being Black in their home country differed from being Black in the U.S. This question was always met with either a brief laugh or a pause as they figured out how best to answer a question that their responses showed had an obvious response. All participants explained that being Black did not mean anything in their home countries because most of the population is Black. Some, like Patience, offered simple answers, beginning her response with, "I didn't even know I was Black until I got here. I was just a Nigerian." In the same vein, Judith explained, "in Uganda, I don't think race means anything for real. Maybe because almost all of us are Black." Shaka, a rising senior, offered a more detailed response with intermittent laughter and pauses, explaining the insignificance of race in Zambia by saying,

> Well, [laughs] being Black in Zambia is, I don't know, being human [laughs].
> Like, you're Black, we're all Black! [laughs] Like there's not much of a
> difference. Like you know, I'm Black, my neighbor's Black. When I see a White
> person, it's like 'oh, there's a White person.' It's more of a . . . everybody's Black
> so [pause] you're not conscious that you're Black if that makes sense.

85

Everybody's Black; it's just a normal thing, so you're not aware that you're

Black.

This idea of low race salience in one's home country is one that would continue to

emerge when discussing how participants' views and consciousness of race changed after

relocating to the U.S. to pursue higher education. This idea of race consciousness is

discussed in the next subtheme.

When discussing the important of race in her home country, Simi chose to focus

on the diversity of Nigeria to highlight the insignificance of race. While explaining that

the country is full of foreigners, who pose no threat to native Nigerians, she explained,

"I didn't really notice the race part in Nigeria. I see White people; I see Indians, I

see Chinese [people], I see a lot of people every day especially because I work in

the banking industry. But it's Nigeria, so we're all Nigerian. We're mostly . . .

everybody's Black. Everybody's practically just everybody. Race is not actually

obvious."

Miriam, a rising sophomore from Ethiopia, gave a unique response to the question

about the differences in race salience. When asked if she identified as a Black woman,

Miriam said she did not but instead, identified herself as "African." When asked to

elaborate, she gave an example of having to fill out evaluation sheets at events on which

there was a question about ethnicity and "African American" or Black was an option.

Miriam explained that she did not understand what that meant and didn't think Black was

an ethnicity. Therefore she chooses to say she is African. After rephrasing the intended

question and explaining that individuals with skin color that is of a darker shade like hers

and mine are considered Black, I asked Miriam how Ethiopians categorized themselves, to which she responded.

> They don't [categorize themselves]. Because like I said I never knew anything of this until I came here. Like I had no idea it was this important to people, the color skin, and people are defined with it. Because in Africa, I've lived in two, three countries in Africa, we're all Black, and we don't say 'this is Black,' even though there are fair colored people and Black, you know, we have different but at the same time, it's Africa, Africa is Africa.

The importance of ethnic identity and, in some cases, national identity, was a reoccurring theme amongst participants when discussing how they identified themselves. Paul echoed the thoughts Miriam expressed, saying "Everybody's Black or everybody's a lighter shade of Black or we just know we're all Black. Or we're Africans, let me put it that way." The importance of ethnicity and nationality to many participants is discussed in detail under the next major theme.

   Classism, Ethnicity, and Tribalism. As part of their explanations of the insignificance of race in their native countries, some participants offered other demographics by which their citizens in their countries separate themselves, including class and tribe/ethnic group. While describing how race in the U.S. and his home country of Nigeria are very different, Paul explained that although White people are present in Nigeria, they do not have any power and therefore are not viewed as racially superior. Instead, classism is how some Nigerians may view themselves as superior to others. Paul stated:

There might be such things as . . . maybe supremacy in terms of you know the

elite and the middle class and the lower class and all that. But as far as racism, as

far as race there's really nothing like that in Nigeria. Everyone . . . you're Black,

either you're a lighter shade, or you're a darker shade."

Fellow Nigerians Ta and Simi offered different takes on citizen categorization or

separation in Nigeria. When I asked Ta, a doctoral student, about his opinion on the

differences in the views of race in Nigeria and the U.S., he explained that the while the

color of one's skin was not the basis for discrimination in Nigeria, ethnicity often was.

He stated:

Well, I think it depends on the perspective from which you look at it because even

in Nigeria, it's not really the . . . well, there's still racial discrimination, but it's

not in the context of the skin complexion. It's more gonna be cultural or ethnicity,

ethnic racism. So, there's still, even back home there's still some form of

discrimination based on your ethnicity and things like that. So, or which region of

the country you're from, yeah.

Likewise, Simi hinted at tribalism being the separating characteristic in Nigeria. When

asked what the differences between being Black meant in Nigeria and the U.S., she began

her response by explaining:

Nothing in Nigeria because we're all Black. Yeah, it means nothing to me in

Nigeria. I'm at home; home is home, so nobody's going to make you feel not at

home in your home. Yeah, we have terrorism, we have a little bit of tribalism, not

racism. There's a difference. There's tribalism, but since we're talking about race,

nah, there's nothing like that in Nigeria."

Ghanaian participants offered similar alternatives to race. Ricky, an undergraduate student, explained that because all Ghanaians are Black, it is not a significant factor. If disagreements do occur amongst Ghanaians, ethnic differences are usually the root cause. Similarly, Kweku, a rising junior, focused on separation by tribe. In response to the question of what does being Black in Ghana mean versus being Black in America, Kweku explained that understanding that one's race is significant is complicated when most of your compatriots are Black, therefore, pointing out race is redundant. However, because tribes are important, Ghanaians may easily identify with their tribes. He explained:

> In Ghana, we . . . you don't have the perception about race. Although we have tribalism, so I don't know. Because in Ghana we're all, almost all of us are Black so you even . . . it's hard to know you're Black when you're in Ghana because everyone is Black. But maybe in Ghana, you may say I'm an Ashanti or a Fante or a Guan for that, so I don't know how I should answer. Being Black in general, in Ghana I didn't have any perception of being Black, it was only in America that I realized I was Black."

The realization of race and its meaning came about in the U.S. for all participants. The results are discussed in the following section. Overall, all participants agreed that race was not significant in their home countries nor was it a factor they considered when thinking about their identities. It is also important to note that none of the participants expressed having any negative perceptions of their race. The next sub-theme discusses how participants spoke about their experiences with race after relocating to the U.S. and

residing in a country where race is central to its culture and institutions of higher education, particualrly HBCUs where race is celebrated.

Post-arrival Race Salience

Participants' experiences with race salience after arriving and living in the U.S. varied and ultimately depended on how participants dealt with their new-found knowledge regarding the significance of race in America. Some participants did not let their environment influence them, while others acknowledged finding a sense of pride in their race that had not existed before. All of the participants, however, agreed that being in the U.S. and attending an HBCU made them aware and more conscious of the importance of race. The third stage of Berry's Acculturation Model (1997), strategies, describes how individuals choose to cope once they have taken time to process their experiences. A discussion of the different ways participants spoke about how they coped with being in a racialized environment and, how they chose to let the environment affect their views of their Blackness is provided below.

No change in race salience. Judith, a graduate student in Louisiana, was clear that her perspective on race has not changed. She has resided in the U.S. for six years and attended the same HBCU for her undergraduate studies. Judith attributed the lack of change in racial identity to not having any negative racially-based experiences. She explained, "when I was home race never mattered to me and coming here I don't see the reason why it should matter. Because so far, I haven't experienced any racism. I guess that's why for me it's not important maybe until it affects me."

Ta, a doctoral student in North Carolina, also acknowledged not experiencing a change in his racial identity. He has also been in the U.S. for six years and attended a

predominantly White institution in Tennessee before attending his HBCU. When asked if he considers his race now, having lived in the U.S., he explained that the importance of race is contextual for him.

> I don't; I don't really consider it as a factor. Though sometimes, well I think it depends on the context in which you look at it or the situation. So, I wouldn't really say I consider it, and I wouldn't say I don't really consider it. So, it's more of like in between depending on the situation.

When asked for an example of a situation in which he would consider his race, Ta named minority specific scholarships in which his race could be an advantage. Similarly, Shaka, a rising senior in Tennessee, explained that his views on race are contextual. When asked if he has changed the way he views his race, Shaka described being more aware of the "degrees of being Black" specifically regarding mixed race individuals with Black ancestry and how that applied to him since he has European ancestry and therefore may not be 100% Black. However, he stated, "I can say, I still see myself as the same Black person."

Higher race salience. Some participants expressed feeling that their race was more important to them after having lived in the U.S. The timing and extent of this change was unique for each participant, as is common in the acculturation process. Ricky, a graduating senior studying in Tennessee, explained that the realization of race began before his arrival in the U.S. After discussing Ghanaians views of race, Ricky was asked if race had been important to him while he was still in his home country. He explained that he began thinking about the influence his race could have on his experience in the U.S. He stated:

91

So, when the thought of having to go outside of Ghana started kicking in, I had to

start thinking of the possibility that me being Black could either lead to my

success or otherwise, you know. So, it started becoming important to me. But

thankfully in an HBCU environment, I didn't have to worry too much.

Other participants also expressed feeling safe in one's race or not having "to worry too

much" about race while attending a HBCU. This idea is discussed further in Theme 4. In

a follow up to the aforementioned question, Ricky was asked if being Black is more

important to him now, having been enrolled in a HBCU for four years. He responded, "I

think it definitely is more important to me now because it makes me aware of who I am

in my environment and how I should act and what to look out for in terms of

opportunities." A few participants revealed that part of learning the importance of race

included learning the advantages and disadvantages of being Black in the U.S. These are

discussed in the section on learning about race.

Paul attributed the change in the importance of race partially to attending an

HBCU and partially to the climate in the U.S. When asked if race was more important to

him now than before being in the U.S., he responded that it was and credited that to the

"environment that I'm in." When I clarified if he was talking about the HBCU

environment specifically, he elaborated,

Yeah, the HBCU environment and just being in the United States of America in

general because it's the environment and it's what's going on right now. It's the

norm; there's this differentiation of, between, of us as you know as human beings,

it's White, it's Black, and that's what it is. So yeah being in the environment that

I'm in I kinda identify as Black just because it's what's going on right now.

92

To get more details about any experiences or incidents that led to this realization, Paul was asked if any specific incidents in the environment led to race becoming more important to him. The following is an excerpt from his response. He stated:

> I would say for me it just happened. Well, from my experiences as far as having to go through registration processes, going to the DMV to get a license, or going to different offices and filling different forms out, you have to identify as something. And if . . . I would love to identify as Nigerian if I had that option or I would love to always identify as African if I had that option. But you don't always have that option when you go to these different places to do these different things. So, the one common option that has always been there is Black.

Other participants shared this sense of not necessarily wanting to adapt to the views and applications of race in the U.S. Participants like Paul, and Simi, who stated "So, being Black is more important to me now than ever. And I'm more aware. I don't want to be, but I am more aware of it," did not desire for race to be more important to them but felt obligated to because of the racialized climate in the U.S. Similarly, Patience, who did express that race had not become "the center of my life", shared the feelings of being obligated to think about her race. While discussing the impact Sandra Bland, a Black woman who died in a Texas jail following her arrest after a traffic stop, had on her, Patience stated, "So, like it or not, I think being here kind of…it becomes one of the, you know, things you have to think about whether you want to or not." Berry (2005) described feeling pressured to assimilate into the host society as being a "pressure cooker." In her journal, Patience elaborated further on how her experiences at her HBCU

have helped her to be more aware of her race but also reminded her that despite identifying as Nigerian, being Black must be more important in the U.S. She wrote:

I have always identified with my ethnicity, but I have become conscious of my race and what it means in the US. I have come to understand that race is important as a Black person living here and it determines almost everything I do. I have to deal with other people's preconceived notions of me based on my skin color and nothing more. I think that my time at my college has brought me to the knowledge that I am Black before anything else. Listening to discussions in the classroom from African Americans about their identity and race has made me empathetic to their history and who they have become or becoming. I know who I am in terms of my identity and ethnicity, but I find myself constantly reminding myself that I have to identify as Black before I identify with my ethnicity.

For participants who felt that race may not have been more important to them now, they still acknowledged their awareness of race and its importance in the U.S.

Awareness and Appreciation of Race. Becoming aware or conscious of race and the importance placed on it in the U.S. was a common thread in most interviews, even among those who acknowledged not experiencing a change in their racial identity. For example, Judith, who said she did not see a reason why race should be important to her, acknowledged that the environment calls for one to be aware. She stated:

Yeah, I'm from Africa, coming here I never really took into consideration what's my race. Of course, I knew I'm African, that's the only thing that mattered. So, coming here, especially if you follow the politics around, then you come to know you're actually Black. For me, I don't really pay attention to it. I know I'm

94

African, so me being here and being Black, it hasn't changed. The only thing is just to be aware of my race being here, that's all.

Despite feeling pressured by the environment to identify by her race first, Patience acknowledged having a new sense of appreciation for her race because of living in the U.S. When asked if being Black is more important to her now she responded,

I don't know that I would say that it's important to me because I don't know if I've really thought about it from that angle. But what I've come to appreciate, I've come to appreciate being Black more because it's the color of my skin and I can't change it. So, I have to learn to, I've learned, well not I have to, I think I've learned, even though I think I continue to learn every day, but I think what I've learned, what has become different in the last three-plus years is I appreciate being Black more now. I do. And I don't let anyone tell me any different.

Later in the interview when responding to a question about the influence all her experiences at her HBCU and in Texas have had on her, she reiterated her appreciation and awareness of race. She explained:

So, I find myself, you know, suddenly looking at things that are Black and finding the beauty in it. Before it wasn't that I saw it as ugly, I just never paid attention to it, but now I find that I pay attention to stuff like that.

Simi echoed a similar appreciation of her race. While explaining why race has become more important to her now, she used her relationship as an example of why. She explained that being in an interracial relationship with a White man often places her in environments, like restaurants, where she is the only Black person. Despite the

judgmental glances they received from other patrons, her pride in her race became stronger. She said:

> Because we walk together, and people give us the look; good look, bad look, I don't care, but we get a lot of . . . I walk into a place, and I'm proud to be Black. You get proud. It's either you don't like yourself for being Black, or you become very proud of yourself. And I think I've seen too many Black people do great things to not to be proud of myself. So being here in the States I'm so proud of myself, I'm so proud of my race. It's never have been more important to be Black than now.

> For Kweku and Miriam, their awareness of the importance of race in the U.S. led to curiosity and a desire for knowledge about their own racial identity. In her journal, Miriam, who struggled with identifying as Black, admitted that attending a HBCU piqued her curiosity and produced a desire to learn more about race. She explained, "It has influenced me a lot. It really made me curious and to search more on my identity and race." Similarly, when Kweku was asked if being Black was more important to him now, he expressed distrust in the lessons he had learned about his race and a desire to learn the truth about his Black heritage. He discussed:

> "I'm beginning to learn more about my heritage and all that. I sometimes I really reflect on what it means to be Black and what, what we were told in our history and sometimes I'm realizing they were not true and all that. I'm beginning to really think about race but not in a point that maybe I'm superior to someone, but I just wanna know much about my history and who I am."

Although the changes in the views of Blackness varied by participant, there was a consensus that being in the U.S. and studying at a HBCU made participants more aware of their race and the value it holds. However, despite this awareness, ethnic, national, and religious identities were also crucial to the participants.

<div align="center">

Important Identities

"If I have the option to say African, I'll check that."
</div>

Previous studies of the international sojourn found that while studying in foreign countries, students develop a stronger sense of pride in their national and ethnic identities (Brown & Brown, 2013; Hume, 2008). These studies found that this occurs for a couple of reasons. First, students who attended institutions in areas where they had limited interactions with fellow compatriots found it difficult to maintain their culture. As a result, national and ethnic identities became stronger (Brown & Brown, 2013; Ghosh & Lu, 2003). Second, when faced with negative stereotypes about their home countries, students often became defensive of their homelands leading them to develop stronger national and ethnic identities (Brown & Brown, 2013). Participants in this study acknowledged that their ethnicity became more important to their identities and several expressed that they preferred to identify by their ethnicity. Religious identity was important for one participant who was of Muslim faith. The third theme explores how participants reflected on the importance of their ethnic/national and religious identities.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity refers to an individual's membership in an ethnic group based on factors such as race, nationality, culture, language, and religion (Phinney, 2003). Most participants in this study agreed that their ethnic identities were more important to them, however, the reasons for this varied. For example, Miriam, who struggled with

<div align="center">97</div>

identifying as being Black, felt that her ethnicity seemed always to be significant. She stated, "Like when we're taking classes they say, 'like me and you, we're all Black' and everything. I'm like, no I'm not Black, I'm African." For Shaka, the strengthening of his ethnic identity stemmed from having to defend Zambia and Africa in general from negative stereotypes.

For others, the homogeneousness of race at their institutions made their ethnic pride stronger. Several of the participants stated that because everyone at their institutions were Black, their ethnicity differentiated them from the rest of the student population. Responding to a journal question about whether he identified with his race or ethnicity more, Ricky wrote,

"My ethnicity, because I believe a bigger part of me as an individual due to my ethnic values and culture. Although I would admit that my race is a significant part of me, I try not to think of that as the reasons why people do or do not treat me in a certain way. In my college, my ethnicity is often associated with hard work, perseverance, and academic prowess and since almost everyone in my college is of the same race, the race factor always cancels out. As a result, I had the tendency to identify with my ethnicity more than my race."

Paul echoed this sentiment. During his interview, while explaining how attending an HBCU has influenced his view of his Blackness, he stated,

"Of course, if someone asks me a question "What are you?" or they ask you to fill a form if I'm going to . . . if I have the option to say African, I'll check that. But if there's no option, I'll just say Black."

98

Paul elaborated on this further in his response to the journal question about identifying with race or ethnicity. He explained how identifying with his ethnicity was a grounding factor that allowed him not to lose his connection to his home nation. He wrote:

> Studying in an HBCU and being majorly around people of similar race to me (Black or African American or dark skinned), I mostly identify with ethnicity, mostly because this is what differentiates the people of the Black race. Now if I were to be among a mixed crowd of different races, I would identify with my race more than ethnicity. Being able to identify with my ethnicity gives me a sense of belonging, this identity means finding myself, my culture, my roots; being able to make that connection.

Identifying actively with ethnicity seemed new for Kweku, something that developed because of his environment. When asked if being Black was more important to him now he explained, "Being African, it's like . . . even although I'm Black sometimes within the Black community, I still feel out of place sometimes. But being African in general means a lot to me now." When asked why he thought that was, he explained,

> I don't know but maybe it's because sometimes I'm so different, I'm the only odd person and all that so. I realize when you're not . . . you're around people who are not like you, things that make you different really stand out and makes you think about it a lot. I remember in Ghana I never used my ethnicity as an introduction "oh I'm African," but now it sometime is in my first five sentences I have to mention something about being African.

Unlike Kweku, ethnicity was something that Ta always identified with more because that is how Nigerians identify themselves. He wrote,

I identify more with my ethnicity than race. This stems from my origin, as a

Nigerian, wherein the issue of differences arises in the context of cultural/ethnic

affiliation rather than race; race being viewed in terms of a larger context of color

of skin. The ethnic identity means more of cultural, language, family, and

traditional factors. I, however, do not believe that my time in college/university

has influenced this perspective because these views are intrinsic and have

foundationally been built based on my background, from childhood.

Religious Identity

Miriam is a rising sophomore studying in South Carolina. She is from Ethiopia

and of Muslim faith. She was wearing her hijab throughout the interview though neither

one of us mentioned it. After stating that she had not experienced any racism on campus,

she interjected as the next question was asked to state, "I'm a Muslim." She continued,

So, I put on my hijab, that is an additional point for me. Right? So, whenever I

walk, I see everyone looking at me like 'what the heck is she doing?' giving me

the look. Even outside, I feel it, I see it.

In a follow up, she was asked if she felt that her religious identity resulted in more

judgment than her race. Miriam acknowledged that because everyone around her on

campus is Black her religious identity and the fact that she wore a hijab set her apart from

others.

As the discussion continued and the topic of the current political climate and the

impact the climate had on her experience arose, Miriam expressed a fear of being Muslim

in America:

Like I said, whenever I'm walking people look at me like what, you know. Even

though I'm with the international students, I'm different because I've got my

hijab on. And I see people looking at me even on the streets and everything, and

I'm kind of scared, to be frank.

She was clear that nothing has happened that has threatened her safety. Therefore,

she hasn't felt the need to tell any of the faculty and staff at her institution about her

fears. Miriam, who struggled to identify as Black, noted that she felt safe in her

Blackness at her HBCU. However, the intersection of her racial and religious identities

presented a challenge for her given the political climate and the negative views of those

of Muslim faith. According to Berry (1997), the attitudes and perceptions of the host

society towards immigrants can affect the acculturation of those in the nondominant

group. This effect was evident in Miriam's case.

Learning the Environment
"Being Black in America is not only by birth, it's also by culture and behavior."

The fourth theme discusses the different areas in which participants gained a

deeper understanding of their environment. Three areas were identified that described

what participants learned about as they adjusted to their new life in the American South.

These areas included learning about, (1) life as an international student; (2) southern

history and HBCUs; and (3) race in America. According to Berry (1997), the first stage

of individual psychological acculturation is the acculturation experience which includes

the intercultural contact between individuals of two cultures. The learning areas identified

in this section are a result of the contact between the participants and their fellow

students, faculty, and staff at their HBCUs and in their respective cities and states.

Life as an International Student

This subtheme described the different experiences related to general life as an international student and the adjustment decisions made by participants to survive. Each participants' adjustment challenges varied. However, all were reflective of previous research (Chen, 1999; Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010; Hye Yeong, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Examples of challenges described by participants included the flexibility of the American education system, time differences, homesickness, language barriers, cultural differences, climate, alienation, and loneliness. For example, using the analogy of being in someone else's house, Shaka, a rising senior, described a lack of belonging in his first couple of years.

> I really don't have words for it but coming from Zambia to America, people were different in terms of culture, and it didn't really feel like home. So, I always felt as if . . . have you ever had that experience where you feel as if you're in someone else's house? Yeah. I felt like I was in someone else's house. It really felt weird for my first, I think for a year and a half. I never really felt at home in the United States.

He continued describing adjustment issues he had experienced, such as adjusting to American cuisine and the unwanted attention associated with having an accent, both of which were reflective of findings in literature referenced in Chapter II (Chen, 1999; Hye Yeong, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). The most significant struggles for him, however, were related to culture and interacting with people. He explained subconsciously feeling unwanted and struggling to gain respect from his peers until he was able to prove his academic prowess. He explained:

I felt alienated somehow. Yeah, I felt alienated, so it took me a while to get to know the people and for the people to respect me. Because when you're an international student, I don't know, there's always this, even though they're Black people, sometimes there's always this . . . distancing. Like they kind of distance themselves from you. Not literally. There's always people that are nice. But there's this atmosphere that's created that you're from another place. You're not from here. Yeah, exactly, that's the atmosphere that the people create like you're not from here. So, it took a while for people to know me and respect me. Probably because of the grades. You know when you get good grades people respect you and what not.

Ricky, a graduating senior, echoed this feeling of being different despite being of the same race as his peers. In addition to struggling to understand Black American vernacular during his first semester, he described feeling twice as minoritized at the intersection of his race and international student status.

And some of the other challenges is that [pause] you know at an HBCU we're all Black but also being an African you're seen differently. I don't want to say a lower-class Black, but you probably get what I'm trying to say. It's like they're in a better position than us economically, financially, you know, so it's like we are the minority among the minorities in the U.S. you know.

Despite this feeling, Ricky realized that he had an opportunity to learn more about his environment and the culture which subsequently allowed him to acclimate. He explained, "And I also had to learn some things from them because there's a difference in culture and you know I had to learn how the American culture is and try to blend in." When

103

asked why he felt it was essential to learn about American culture, Ricky explained that learning was paramount to his adjustment. He stated:

> Well, because if that doesn't happen, if I don't learn, then 1) I won't have friends; 2) I'll be seen as weird, and nobody wants that. The best compromise you have to come from you know, the minority or the individual, which is me. I can't expect the whole American culture to change just to accommodate me. So that's why I had to.

Ricky's response to feeling marginalized and his decision to learn about the culture around him is reflective of the appraisal of the experience stage of individual psychological acculturation. According to Berry (1997) during this stage individuals process their lived experiences which leads to behavioral shifts or acculturative stress. Ricky, who admitted to being reserved in the beginning, appeared to realize that to overcome some of the feelings of exclusion he had to make changes. He made concerted efforts to become involved on campus which allowed him to form relationships with his peers and bridge the cultural gap.

In addition to general adjustment challenges, participants also described learning and dealing with Americans' misconceptions about international students. For example, Shaka lamented about the negative perceptions that some Americans may have about immigrants, particularly the notion that people leave their home nations to struggle. He explained:

> Like . . . as an immigrant here people think, there are many negative notions that are expressed. For example, people think immigrants come here to be on welfare, which is extremely offensive. Trust me, I came from a poor background, and I

didn't come to America to be poor, I didn't come to America to be on welfare.

Like I didn't . . . I came here to get an education, you know, and then proceed to

go to medical school and to make a good life for myself. No student comes here

to be on welfare.

Shaka continued explaining that the life of an F1 student was far more difficult than that

of a Black American or any other citizen of the U.S. He reflected on some of these

hardships, specifically financial hardships, and attributed his successes, and the

accomplishments of his peers, to self-motivation and hard work.

In order for us to do things, we work harder, in order for me to go to medical

school because I can say about 95% of medical schools don't give scholarships to

international students as well as you know loans you have to have a cosigner and

what not and this and that. We don't even get federal loans, and people assume

that we get stuff here for free when we actually work harder. And that's the

reason we end up getting good jobs and everything because we have to be better

in order for us to survive in the States. So, if life is harder for any citizen here, it's

ten times harder for an international student, but people don't really know that.

Kweku shared the sentiment of having to work harder to be successful as an

international student. He spoke about on the limited opportunities available to

international students which results in international students competing against each other

for the same opportunities.

You have to work harder because if there are a hundred opportunities,

international students qualify for like 5-10 and so we compete against each other.

Every international student here technically knows why they're here. They

wouldn't leave their nations just to come here and slack, so we have to work

harder in order to be competitive. But most of the opportunities you don't qualify

for because you're not an international student or it's funded by the NSF and

others. For the few that you qualify for you have to be one of the best or else you

wouldn't get it.

Learning about Southern History and HBCUs

This subcategory focused on how participants learned about the American South

and the significance of HBCUs. As addressed in the first theme, only three of the nine

participants had detailed knowledge about the history of slavery in the South. Morevoer,

only three of the nine participants knew their institutions were designated as HBCUs

when they applied. Collectively, however, none of the participants were aware of the

historical significance of the institutions they attended. Because of their limited

knowledge, it was important to identify how, and if, participants gained knowledge of the

history of their educational environment. Findings indicated that participants did, in fact,

learn about the history of the American South. However, the methods of knowledge

acquisition varied depending on academic classification. Undergraduate students were

more likely to learn in the classroom either through a required history course or other

class assignments, whereas graduate students were more likely to engage in self-directed

learning.

In addition to required and self-directed learning, participants attributed some of

the knowledge they gained to attending an HBCU and being able to learn from events,

Black American faculty, and their Black American peers. For example, Ricky, who used

research for class assignments as a method to learn, explained that his HBCU observed

holidays and hosted different events pertaining to slavery, all of which included an educational aspect. Similarly, at Paul's institution hearing his faculty members and classmates discuss different historical figures and events provided him with subjects for his own research and self-directed learning.

So, I really technically didn't know anything. I didn't do any history class. Everything that I know I just learned being in class, especially the month of February that's when everybody gets, you know, the whole Black history month where you start hearing different things, different stories. Professors are coming to class and just, you know, just having conversations about different things, about this person and that person and just hearing people chime in and saying different things and their opinions. I go back, and you know, just take a few notes and just go back and read the notes and learn about these things for myself later on. So that's pretty much how I know what I know.

With regards to learning about the history and significance of HBCUs, attendance seemed to be the best teacher. Whether it was through research for class assignments, discussions in class or campus events, participants described learning about the history and significance of their institutions in ways that would not necessarily have occurred had they attended a different institutional type. For example, Shaka explained that there was intentionality in teaching the history and significance of HBCUs at his institution. Whether it was through interactions with faculty and staff members or events hosted on campus, he acknowledged that educational opportunities were abundant. Others echoed the intentionality described by Shaka. For example, Simi described learning the history of her HBCU via a video played during her assistantship orientation. The time dedicated to

teaching students the history of their institution gave her a more profound sense of appreciation for her institution and pride in her decision to attend.

Some participants offered their opinions on why their institutions and others like it were significant. Their articulations focused on the access to and opportunities for higher education provided by their institutions, as well as the environment. For example, Ricky described HBCUs as giving students a safe space to be themselves without fear of judgment. He explained:

> I think I know why they were created because the Blacks at that time had to get an education, and since they were segregated from the other races, they had to find a way to give them that education they deserved. That's I think how come HBCUs came to existence. Why they are significant . . . they are really significant I should say because it makes a lot of people comfortable in their environment with people who are like them, people who think or act like them. It makes them comfortable, and it makes them more happy to do what they want to do, rather than feeling oppressed, or you know, not feeling like they're themselves in a different environment."

Overall, participants described learning more about their environment, both regional and institutional. One of the journal questions asked participants if, given the opportunity, they would attend the same institution. Of the five who submitted responses, two expressed that they would explore different opportunities, one based on the limited course offerings at their institution and the other to experience something different. The other three stated they would return to their HBCUs for reasons such as the culture, traditions, events, family atmosphere, close-knit community, and access to fellow

Africans. Most of these reasons have been highlighted in literature as reasons why HBCUs are significant (Allen, 1992).

Learning about Race

This subtheme describes lessons that participants learned pertaining to race. As described in the race salience theme, most participants, regardless of whether they felt that race was significant to their identity, acknowledged that they were presently more conscious of race and its meaning in America.

Shaka's realization about race included ideas that being Black in America is more complicated than the color of one's skin. He described learning that being Black in America is also about culture, behavior, and preferences. While describing the differences between being Black in Zambia and in the U.S., he hesitantly stated that the behaviors of Black people are "regulated by White people." When asked to explain what he meant, he stated,

> The difference is that 1) Black people in America are conscious that they're Black due to you know racism, stereotypes. As I said, the behaviors of Black people are regulated by White people in terms of Black people can't have certain hairstyles, Black people are portrayed as criminals and what not. So, Black people have to act a certain way. Black people have to talk differently on the phone, so they sound White because they don't wanna be discriminated against. What else? When you go to work you have to talk a certain way, you have to walk a certain way. When you go into a room, you're conscious that you're a Black person and you're also conscious of the negative connotations or rather, negative notions or whatever you may call them against Black people.

He continued by stating that being Black in America means battling stereotypes and behaving in a particular way to negate these stereotypes, a phenomenon that isn't present in Zambia. He explained:

> The difference between being Black here and being Black in Zambia is that in Zambia I'm basically . . . I'm not even aware that I'm Black; I know I'm Black, but it's not a major thing. I don't focus on my race; I don't have any stereotype against me. I only have to make sure my character is good, my behavior is good, and I'm dressed up appropriately. But here in America, it's different because you're conscious that you're Black and you know that there are many stereotypes and you know there are negative thoughts concerning Black people. I'm talking about in relation to America in general. So here in America you're conscious that you're Black, you have to act a certain way because you're basically . . . you're oppressed in some way. Not in some way, you're basically oppressed, and you're the minority, so you have act a certain way and do things a certain way.

In addition to dealing with pressures from outside the Black community and fighting negative racial stereotypes, Shaka also described pressures within the Black community. He described the cultural expectations that accompanied being Black in the U.S., including musical taste and vernacular. He stated:

> Being Black back home is like I said, it's normal. You just happen to be Black. There's no cultural . . . you don't have to behave a certain way in order for you to be considered Black. But in America, you have to act and talk a certain way in order for you to be considered Black. For example, if you like pop music you won't be considered Black. You gotta love hip-hop to be considered Black. You

gotta love soul and jazz, the likes of B.B. King and whatnot if you're to be

considered Black. If you talk a certain way you'll be considered, why do you talk

White? So basically, back home you're just Black because you're Black. Because

that's the way you were born. But here, you know, there's cultural affiliations,

you have to behave a certain way, you have to listen to a certain type of music,

and you have to associate with certain people in order for you to be considered

Black. So being Black in America is not only by birth, it's also by . . . I don't

know what word to use, culture, behavior, or whatever.

What Shaka described is a very nuanced view of race. Although, as described in

the race salience theme, he stated unequivocally that, apart from being curious about the

percentage of his Blackness, he still sees himself as "the same Black person," Shaka

demonstrated an understanding of the various aspects of being Black in America. These

lessons appeared to be from observation and interactions with his Black American peers.

Ricky, a graduating senior in Tennessee, shared Shaka's views that being Black

included behaving a particular way to negate negative stereotypes. While explaining that

race is more important to him now, he explained that having an awareness of race

allowed him to understand how he is perceived in his environment and how to behave

accordingly. Providing an example of how he should act he said,

Well, so for example, if I'm in casual clothes like this you know, and I'm walking

around a dangerous neighborhood, you know, I would definitely be extra careful.

I mean I should be careful anyways, but you compare that to somebody, like a

Black person in a suit and tie walking in the same area. If the police happen to be

driving by in both instances, you know, what are the chances that they may stop,

and you know, maybe question the guy in casual clothes versus the one in the suit? And I'm not saying that I have to be in a suit all the time you know, but it's being conscious of my environment and acting accordingly.

Judith, a graduate student in Louisiana, focused on the value that race holds in America. While describing the differences in what race means in the U.S. and in her home country of Uganda, she explained that race appeared to be "some kind of a commodity here or something economic." When asked for an explanation she stated,

Everything is based on race, you know. At home rarely somebody asks you what's your race. Here, it's everything. Like when you're applying for a job there's a question down there, they're asking you what's your race. Like what? How is race even have to do with, my capabilities and anything else for that matter? So, it's like something economic I think that's why it matters too much here.

For Paul, a doctoral student in Texas who described feeling pressured to identify as Black, he learned about race from listening to his Black American classmates. By listening to their experiences, Paul came to the realization that to the unknowing individual his skin color puts him in the same category as his Black American peers although he is Nigerian.

I will say from listening to them or from understanding what they said I feel like I'm a part of them in a way because I'm here now and we're the same skin color so the White person or the other person . . . the White person may not necessarily know the difference between me and another Black person who is from here. So, keeping that in mind, I'm already beginning to identify, keeping this in my head

and letting myself know that I could be in their shoes one day, even though I'm not necessarily an African American. So, I don't keep letting myself.

In the same statement above, Paul reiterated the feeling of being forced to identify as Black that resulted from realizing that the concept of race in America applied to him as well despite being a foreigner.

Other participants described learning about the disparities between races, specifically between Black and White Americans. For example, Kweku described visiting "White communities" and noting the differences between the predominantly Black area in which his HBCU is located. This served as an indirect lesson in racial inequality. Judith noticed differences in worldviews between Black and White Americans and attributed the tensions in the country to the fear between the two. She explained:

So, for me what I've seen is like an observation. I feel like the Black and White are two people living in the same country but differently. They're different people or two worlds living in the same country, that's what it is. So, I guess one is afraid of the other. I think it's that fear that breeds everything else. Until both races interact with each other on a daily basis, fear and mistrust will never go away.

Overall, participants learned a variety of lessons about the value and significance of race in America, as well as the stereotypes and expectations placed on Black people. Some of these lessons were learned through observations and experiences, while others were learned from discussions and interactions with Black American peers. The next theme focused on specific incidents, situations, and opinions that participants encountered in the U.S. and how these encounters influenced their views on race and overall experience.

113

Encounters in the United States
"I think that was when I had the paradigm shift."
In Section 5 of their Life-Span Model of Black Identity Development, Cross and

Fhagen-Smith (2001) described encounters as a disruption "that challenges the person to

rethink her or his attitudes, feelings, and behavior concerning race and Black culture" (p.

262). These encounters are part of the Nigresence Conversion Process which is likely to

occur for individuals with low race salience, like the participants in this study, or

individuals with internalized racism. For Black individuals who hold negative

perceptions of their race or do not identify racially, these encounters can allow them to

view their Blackness more positively (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001). Similarly, the first

stage of individual psychological acculturation described by Berry (1997) is the

acculturation experience, which involves contact between two cultures. This contact,

which in and of itself is a disruption to the lives of acculturating individuals, could

include situations that challenge acculturating individuals' thoughts about a variety of

issues such as, race. The encounters or experiences identified in this study include racism,

police brutality, Americans' views of immigrants, and Americans' misconceptions of

international students. This theme described participants' experiences within the

aforementioned subcategories and their responses.

Experiences with Racism

Literature suggests that Black international students who racially resemble their

Black American peers are more likely to experience racism or prejudice, and racial

discrimination than other groups of international students (Constantine, Okazaki, &

Utsey, 2004; Manyika, 2000). Findings from this study indicated that participants'

experiences varied; with some participants indicating that racism was not an issue, while

114

others noted being indirectly affected by racism, and others discussed having direct experiences with racism. Only two participants described directly experiencing an incident that they deemed to be racist in nature. Simi described being involved in a car accident with a White woman. Despite not being at fault, she was found liable for the accident because she had to be transported to the hospital and was unable to provide a statement. As she recalled this incident, she concluded: "So, if there's any awakening that I was supposed to have for my color I think that was one."

Experiences with racism were not a new concept for Paul. Before moving to the U.S., he studied and lived in a country in Asia with a history of colorism and racism between its citizens. He recalled times where racial slurs were yelled at him. In the U.S., Paul described visiting a restaurant near a PWI in his city with family members and receiving less than stellar service, which he attributed to his race and the race of those in his group. He described a hostile server who served other patrons and seemed to ignore his table. Despite his experiences in Asia and in the U.S., Paul admitted that he has learned to expect the worst so in the event he does experience racism, he is able to maintain his calm. He explained:

> I'm the type of person who, if I'm going somewhere I'm getting ready for it, you know I'm getting ready just in case you know, I'm getting ready for different types of things, just in case. So, in the event that it actually happens, I'll be like I was ready, and I was prepared.

Others who had not directly experienced racism did have reactions to the thought of racist encounters. For example, Shaka was clear that he had not experienced a racist incident but witnessed institutional racism. He described finding inspiration in racism and

115

using it as motivation to do his part of developing Africa in hopes that development would garner respect for the continent. He explained:

> So, personally [pause] racism and being treated badly because of my race or seeing someone being treated badly inspires me to, you know . . . I'm a Zambian at heart. I'm an African at heart. So, when I see someone else being shot like you know Sterling, or Trayvon Martin, or whatever, when I see someone being unjustly killed or whatever because of their race, it makes me want to go back and develop Africa. Because I believe if Africa was developed if Africa was an awesome continent, the best continent in the world, the respect that other races have towards us would increase.

Later in the interview, Shaka described additional effects that seeing racism has had on him. He described coming to the realization that overcoming institutional racism would require him to work harder to be competitive and successful in the U.S.

Judith, Ricky, and Kweku expressed not having experienced any racism, with Ricky acknowledging that if he had, he was unaware because he does not pay attention to things of that nature. Similarly, Kweku admitted to not seeing racism, both overt and institutional. He explained that his Black American peers often point out his naiveté or obliviousness to racial issues, explaining,

> They always tell me I'm in a bubble. Because sometimes they talk about race and I argue the opposite, that things are better. And they talk about the prison system and all that. So sometimes the way they see oppression I don't even see it that way, and they always tell me 'You're in a bubble! You were in Africa, most of them were Black, you came to an HBCU, most of us are Black, so you've been

shielded. Right after school, you're going to experience what we're talking

about.' I've never experienced it so.

The observations of Kweku's classmates are indicative of the overall experiences

of participants with regards to racism. Findings indicated that any experiences with

racism described by participants occurred off-campus. Apart from general and cultural

misunderstandings between the participants and their Black American peers, there

seemed to be no racially charged incidents that occurred on their respective campuses. As

such, the HBCU environment provided participants with a shield from racism.

Police Brutality

This subtheme focused on the effects of police brutality on participants. Since

2013 there have been repeated fatal incidents involving police officers and Black victims

documented on social media and by mainstream media. The participants' length of time

in the U.S. ranged from seven years to nine months, and therefore they have all been in

the U.S. at the height of these incidents and the subsequent activist movement, Black

Lives Matter. It is important to note that none of the participants indicated having any

interactions with police in the U.S. that turned violent. However, several participants

expressed that the reports of incidents of police brutality had affected them.

Patience, who had been living and studying in Texas for three and a half years at

the time of her interview, described the arrest and subsequent death of Sandra Bland, one

of the first Black female victims documented by mainstream and social media, as a

critical factor in the change in her views of race. Although the flood of videos on social

media of male victims affected Patience, she admitted that the realization that she could

117

also be a victim of police brutality came with seeing a fellow Black woman as a victim. She explained:

> Well, I think that was when I had the paradigm shift, which is I don't even think I should call it a paradigm shift because it's kind of negative. But you know there was a whole lot happening within a period of time. So, I go on Facebook, and I see all these videos and you know I turn on the news and it's the same thing, and I try to, every time I go on the internet, I see these images and videos and you know commenting, so it's in my consciousness. But I don't think it really hit home until Sandra Bland happened.

Echoing Patience's realization, Paul described coming to terms with the fact that his nationality is indistinguishable and thus his race alone puts him at the same risk of being the next victim of police brutality as his Black American peers. He explained:

> Now that we've been here, I've lived here since 2010, I've kinda identified as Black which is what we've been talking about. So, I'm pretty much more liable to be the next Freddie Gray, to be the next Trayvon Martin, to be the next Michael Brown. I am because of my skin color, even though I may not necessarily be an African American which is also what we've been talking about the whole time.

Paul went on to describe having conversations with his brothers and African friends about how to conduct themselves in the event the police stop them. For both Paul and Patience, the effects of police brutality meant having to think about their race in ways they had not previously considered. Both indicated at different points during their interviews and journals that their ethnicity was a vital part of their identity but seemed to

understand that their race was the most visible part of their identity and acknowledged the risks of potential violence associated with their Blackness.

For other participants, reports of police brutality resulted in a reevaluation of how they conduct themselves and being intentional about being more careful than usual. For example, Ta, who has studied and lived in Tennessee and North Carolina, explained that he must be more careful while driving and interacting with police to be able to maintain some control over how any interactions could end. He stated:

Well, it's only made me more cautious of my environment in terms of police

relations now, so I try to . . . I try to be more cautious if I'm on the road. Well,

I've never been stopped by the police, but if the police stopped me then I'll be

more careful and more vigilant as to how events are going to play out themselves

so.

Similarly, Ricky expressed having to be more cautious in his daily life, mainly because his institution is an unsafe area. He alluded to how mistaken identity could easily have negative consequences, and thus he had to be more careful. He explained:

I mean, anytime I'm away from my dorm room or my comfort zone I have to be

really, really careful. And unfortunately, [HBCU] is in an area where it's not very

kind of safe. You know you have two streets here that you hear gunshots

sometimes and things like that, so I definitely know if I have to go that way then I

have to behave you know. Because you can be mistakenly, you know, seen as

maybe somebody from this neighborhood, maybe how you dress, how you walk,

how you talk may draw attention to some police who is just on a normal run

through the neighborhood not really looking for something but then since

119

portraying traits that look like you might be a suspect for something then they stop you or something like that. So yeah, I try to be very careful in my behavior and my outlook.

Overall, despite not having any physical experiences with police, the emotional burden of reading and seeing other Black people fall victim to police brutality seemed to have an adverse effect on participants. Some participants indicated that they could see themselves as potential victims and this warranted a more calculated and intentional way of presenting themselves in public.

<div align="center">Friendships and Peer Interactions
"There's an unwritten code that you have to stick together."</div>

This theme focused on the friendships and interactions participants described with both their fellow international students and their Black American peers at their respective institutions. According to Berry (1997), the amount of support and inclusion offered by the host population influences the acculturation of acculturating individuals. This theme focused on the micro level support of their peers, both international and American. Participants overwhelmingly acknowledged having stronger friendships and better interactions with fellow international students. However, their interactions with their Black American peers varied in strength and frequency.

Friendships with Fellow International Students

Most participants acknowledged that most of their close friends were fellow international students and, in most cases, fellow Africans. Most participants described forming an automatic connection with fellow Africans which resulted in the establishment of solid friendships and support systems. The friendships with fellow Africans seemed to provide solace for participants during a difficult transition. For

example, Shaka, a rising senior who described his initial years in the U.S. as feeling like

an unwanted guest in someone's home, praised his closest African friends, one Zambian

and one Zimbabwean, for providing a safe space where he could be himself without fear

of judgment or the stresses associated with adjusting to life in the U.S. He explained:

> I don't know if it was just me, or it was an unconscious atmosphere that was
>
> created, but I always felt alone and having these guys gave me, it provided a
>
> home. You know, when you go out there you feel alienated, when you go out
>
> there all eyes on you when you speak, everyone treats you a different way. It just
>
> felt good and felt comforting to speak with someone or hang around with
>
> someone who comes from the same place as you do. So, it didn't necessarily have
>
> to be Zambia, you know, just Africa in general. It provided an atmosphere that
>
> made it easy; it lessened the burden. So even though I go out there, go to class,
>
> it's like I had a time to relax. It's more of a, as if it's a soccer match and then you
>
> take a break, and then you go back. So, it felt like that. It felt like I had to put on a
>
> show. I had to change my accent in order for people to understand what I was
>
> saying. So just going back to my room and just being free and hanging out with
>
> people who came from the same place as I did, it kind of gave me a break from
>
> the struggle. So even though I was struggling to adjust, having people that came
>
> from where I came from gave me some time to recuperate.

Later, Shaka described the uniqueness of his friendships with Africans. While describing

his friend group, Shaka explained that although the nationalities of the people he

considered his close friends were diverse, building friendships with other Africans was

effortless because as people going through the same thing, they automatically understood each other. He explained:

I've got a lot of African American friends, and I do have African American close friends, but there's always that special kind of friendship that I have with people that come from home. It's just automatic. I know they feel me and I feel them, they understand me, and I understand them, so it's like it's different.

Several other participants shared the experience of automatically building connections with fellow Africans. Like Shaka, Paul, Patience, and Kweku also explained that the ease of friendships with fellow Africans was a result of a mutual understanding and relatability. Paul's friend group consisted of some Kenyans, Cameroonians, Nigerians, and a few from the Middle East. While describing why he thought his friend group consisted of Africans, Paul noted that it was natural for people to want to connect with people that are like themselves. He explained, "First of all, I think it's just natural, when you go somewhere you just identify with someone that you identify . . . you're friends with people that you identify with first." Paul noted that building friendships with people experiencing the same challenges provides a support system and network of people to call on during his toughest times in the U.S.

Patience shared this view of finding people you identify with to help with the transition. While describing challenges she experienced after her arrival, Patience described a natural way of identifying fellow Nigerians and the ease of forming a friendship. She explained:

You end up finding other people from your country, and you know all of a sudden, it's . . . there's this unwritten code that you have to stick together [laughs]

122

because these people already understand where you're coming from; you don't

really have to explain and re-explain yourself to them, so that makes it easier as

opposed to looking for maybe African Americans or Asian Americans or whoever

you find. You see this person, and you're just like this person looks like my

countryman, and the person is looking at you somehow, and you guys smile, and

all of a sudden you find out you're from the same country.

Patience recalled meeting a handful of Nigerians during orientation and relying on them

to cope with the transition challenges. She described exchanging phone numbers and

Facebook information, so they could maintain contact.

Kweku, a rising junior, acknowledged having a mixed group of friends but the

majority were international students. For Kweku the connection with his international

friends was more than just sharing international student status, but also having similar

upbringings. He explained:

When we got here first we could relate with each other; I don't know. Although

we're from different places, Ghana, Nigeria, Nepal, we still had, like we had a

sense of what growing up in a poverty-stricken place was, and like our education

systems and all that were kind of pretty similar, so we could relate with each other

better than the Americans.

Friendships and Interactions with Black Americans

Literature suggests that relations between Africans and Black Americans are filled

with tension because of propaganda implemented during and after the slave trade

(Uzoigwe, 2008) Studies of Black African international students on American college

campuses reflected similar tension resulting from a misunderstanding or lack of

knowledge of cultural and historical references (Manyika, 2000; Manguvo, 2013).

Participants in this study indicated mixed interactions and friendships with Black

American students on their respective campuses. Some described having good

interactions but did not consider any Black Americans to be among their close friends.

Others described a disconnect and misunderstanding between themselves and their Black

American peers.

Miriam, a rising sophomore whose close friend group consisted of Africans, noted

having trouble connecting with the Black Americans on her campus. She attributed these

troubles to cultural differences and admitted she was afraid. When asked to elaborate on

her fear, Miriam explained,

> They might not understand how I feel, how I think. Like for them to be acting the
>
> way I act it may be White, but for me, it may not be. So, I can't go and confront
>
> them that this is wrong.

Miriam gave an example of clothing preferences. She explained that if she tried to voice

to one of her female Black American peers that she did not agree with her choice in

clothing and suggest a more conservative attire, she wouldn't be comfortable doing so.

However, if she addressed the same or different issue with her African friend, there

would not be a misunderstanding.

Shaka, a rising senior, acknowledged that he had good interactions with Black

Americans and had plenty of Black American friends, several of whom he considered to

be close. However, he noticed divisions between Black Africans and Black Americans.

While describing why his racial identity had not become more central to his identity, he

explained,

124

But, you know, we're still divided, in terms of African Americans and Africans.

African Americans view, and these are my own words and my experiences . . .

some and not all, some African Americans view Africans are dumb. They

perceive Africans to be dumb. And some Africans perceive themselves to be

superior in comparison to African Americas; they see themselves to be more

Black and some of them feel as if African Americans are lazy. So, there's this

battle and division that's risen between African Americans and Africans.

Shaka's observations are reflective of findings in literature detailed in Chapter II (Jacobs,

1981). However, despite his observations, Shaka remained hopeful for the future of

relations between Black Africans and Black Americans. He was adamant that if Black

Africans and Black Americans unified with a common goal of developing Africa, Black

people would gain a level of respect that he thought was lacking. He stated:

"if Africans and African Americans could work together, I really think we could

make a big difference. You know, we know Africa is one of the largest, if not the

largest producer of natural resources; all those natural resources are squandered

and what not. If we could really work together and develop the continent . . . I

really strongly feel that if we were to work together and develop the continent and

have a home. Black people in America don't know that they don't . . . America is

awesome and whatever, but this is not the home for Black people. Like Black

people have been trying for ages and ages to become accepted in America and

even up to date they're not really accepted, they've been alienated. You know you

hear comments "Go back to Africa" and what not. I'm not saying Black people

should move back to Africa, no. What I'm saying is if Black people were to work

together, you know get through the cultural differences and whatnot and develop

Africa I personally strongly feel that Black people would gain respect.

Ricky and Paul attributed their positive interactions with their Black American peers to a mutual willingness to learn about each other's cultures. Ricky, who described himself as initially very reserved, acknowledged that his interactions with his Black American peers have improved over the last four years. He attributed the improvement to getting involved with campus organizations and taking the initiative to pursue interactions with Black Americans. The aforementioned allowed him to build friendships and understanding. He explained:

But having to be in such groups as [Programming Board] with them and different groups, even more different, you know different groups than that has helped me interact with them and to understand how they do things and you know, we become friends, start friendships and so you realize you're saying some things they say, you know using some of their slang and all that. So, it's been very helpful.

Research indicates that involvement is a critical factor in the adjustment and success of college students (Astin, 1985; Webber, Krylow & Zhang, 2013). Ricky's involvement in several organizations presented him with an opportunity to interact with peers that he usually would not have interacted with and allowed him to bridge cultural barriers.

Paul attributed his positive interactions with his Black American peers to a combination of his initiative, their willingness to learn about his culture and, the inclusive atmosphere on his campus. At the beginning of his time at his HBCU, Paul described a lack of inclusion and representation of international students in campus life. However, as

126

more international students enrolled they were able to form a functioning international students' organization which eventually led to international students becoming involved in other aspects of campus life such as the Student Government Association. After these initial steps to create spaces for international students to be involved and included in campus life, he noticed a shift in his Black American peers' desire to learn about his culture. He explained:

> The good thing about, especially [HBCU] is, remember what I said there's this spirit of inclusion. So, for example, if I'm walking on campus and if I have a dashiki on, they want, they're excited about it. They want to understand more about it, they want to see where did this come from. So, the fact that they themselves are willing, that interaction was easygoing. It was, you know, you have a conversation, you discuss, and you know, most people they're so excited about the fact that, I mean most of them have this confusion about, you know, 'what is Africa', 'what's in Africa' but they want to know, they want to know. They show you that they're confused, they don't know about it, but they *want* to know. And so yeah, they're ready to have conversations, have discussions. You know, it's fun to talk to them because they want to learn about my culture and they like the fact that I'm here learning their culture and they just wanna know what is it like being in Nigeria or what is it like in Africa and do y'all do this, do y'all do that so we have conversations like that in that sense as far as culture goes.

This willingness of both parties to learn from each has aided in misunderstandings in class discussions. Paul described disagreements in class as the only negative interactions

he has had with his Black American peers. However, listening to one another and respecting different opinions allowed them to overcome the disagreements.

The classroom provided a space for Patience to get to know her Black American peers. While she does not consider herself to have any close Black American friends, she described her interactions with them as good. Patience recalled a professor asking her and another African classmate what they thought of Black Americans and allowed the Black American students in the class to share their perceptions of Africa. She admitted that based on what she had seen in the media she had a negative image of Black Americans. However, after interacting with them on campus, she realized the media images were not all true and realized it was important to not judge an individual by the adverse actions of a few in the group. She explained:

I think the professor asked us, asked them what their notion of Africa was and asked us what our notion of this country with African Americans was before we got here and all that. So, before I got here, I used to think of African Americans in terms of gangs, thugs, drugs, you know robbery and whatever that was bad. But then after I, again I didn't know the school was a Black school until I got here. So after I got here my first take was hmm, they do wanna go to school so why do I always see on the news that they're this and they're that, you know? So, I had my notions, but after I got here, I realized that it wasn't the Black community, it was individuals. Every community has bad people or good people or whatever. So, I had to make like a U-turn and not just see them as bad people but as individuals who want the same things that I want in life. So as soon as I got to that point, I think . . . when I talk to them now, I talk to them open-minded. So, I would say

that my interactions with them, I think it's pretty good. But the only thing that I

know that I do, and I do it with everybody, is where I come from you say to "give

someone a longhand," you know like don't judge people until they do something

to you personally. So yeah, I work with them, I take classes with them, pretty

much see them every day

Patience demonstrated the power that media images have on perceptions of a group.

Literature shows that propaganda implemented after the slave trade was used to push a

negative narrative of the other group (Uzoigwe, 2008). Patience reiterated the importance

and value of facilitating one-on-one conversations and open dialogue between Black

Americans and Black Africans to overcome barriers that have been standing for years.

<p align="center">Institutional Support
"I was lucky to have friends to help me."</p>

The final theme focused on the support provided to participants by their

respective institutions. According to Berry (1997) the support and inclusion offered by

the host population influences acculturation. This theme focused on the macro level

support offered by the HBCUs, specifically by the faculty and staff employed at these

institutions. Participants indicated that while their institutions provided adequate

immigration support, there was a lack of social support from the institution. Additionally,

outside of the designated international student office, other campus officials lacked

knowledge of the international student experience. Participants also noted that

international students lacked similar opportunities and recognition as their American

peers.

Participants acknowledged that the international student office at their respective

institutions provided adequate immigration support by ensuring that participants followed

<p align="center">129</p>

the rules and regulations of their F1 student visa status. However, other staff employed by the various institutions lacked knowledge of the international student experience. Judith described being able to rely on the international student office at her HBCU for guidance. However, she noted that outside of that, no other office could offer aid. She explained:

> As far as the university goes, as an international student, we have an office where we go to, whenever we need to know or do anything like maintaining your status. Especially when you just come here, you are a new person; you don't know what to do when the need arises. It's those advisors in that particular office that knows everything about what an international student is supposed to do when we are here especially attending classes. Other than that, any other office they don't know anything related to international students.

Despite the lack of knowledge of other offices on campus, Judith acknowledged that she could rely on the African faculty members at her institution for support when needed.

Patience also described a lack of knowledge about international students at her institutions. She recalled being the first international student ever enrolled in one of her classes and having to guide her professor through some paperwork she needed to retain her student status, something she never had to do with the international student office.

With regards to race, most participants agreed that their HBCUs did not provide much support or spaces for learning about race relations in the U.S. Most of the undergraduate participants received opportunities to learn the history of slavery in the American South either through a required history class or research for a class assignment pertaining to Black history. On the other hand, graduate student participants noted that they acquired their knowledge about the history of the American South and race relations

from their own research and observations. Paul lamented about this in his journal.

Responding to the question about adjustment support specific to race relations, Paul

wrote,

> The first persons of contact for all international students that enroll at [HBCU] are
> the admissions personnel at the international students' office; they stay connected
> with all international students from the start till the finish. Undergraduate students
> benefit from this and from a lot of other race-related seminars or functions that are
> organized and scheduled mostly when the majority of them are out of their
> respective classes. At this time, however, graduate classes are just getting in
> session. Keeping in mind that I joined [HBCU E] as a Graduate Student, I really
> did not benefit from these programs or seminars or meet and greets. In a way,
> graduate students at [HBCU E] are typically left to fend for themselves because
> there is this belief that they ought to be able to fend for themselves irrespective of
> anything else.

Ricky, an undergraduate student, spoke positively about his institution's provision

of support in understanding the racial climate of the U.S. In his journal, Ricky

acknowledged that his HBCU had provided adequate opportunities for him to learn about

the race relations in the U.S. and the history behind the current state. He also praised the

institution for allowing him to develop skills that would benefit him once he left the

comfort of his mostly Black university. He wrote:

> My university has been a source of great support to help me adjust to the racial
> environment in the United States in that it educates us on the roots of racism, the
> fight for civil rights and similar topics. Also, in order to help most of its students

become successful in the multi-racial world, my university has initiatives that help

students develop themselves professionally and be as competitive as races when it

comes to academic and career opportunities.

In addition, Ricky also mentioned that the small size of his institution allowed him to

form close bonds with faculty and students which provided accountability and additional

support during any tough times.

Apart from support with immigration affairs and learning about the history of the

American South and race relations, some participants suggested other areas in their

institutions where they felt they needed further assistance. For example, while Shaka

made it clear that there were several people at his institution who had gone above and

beyond to help the international student population, there were other areas in which he

could have used more support, such as summer housing, campus employment, and

internships. He suggested the creation of an international student affairs office to assist

students with these matters specifically. He suggested:

> If they could, like I said, open a department for international students that kind of
>
> helps them figure their lives out, figure out where they're going to stay in the
>
> summer, help them get jobs within the campus or what not. Or try help them have
>
> funding of some sort to help them get by, just something, you know. Even like a
>
> program to help international students adjust you know. Such things would have
>
> been very helpful. For me I was lucky because I had international student friends
>
> from Zambia and Zimbabwe, so they are the ones who taught me 'okay Shaka
>
> don't take these classes, you don't need them, these are developmental classes.'
>
> Or they'll say 'okay Shaka you're supposed to apply for internships. If you don't

apply for internships, your résumé won't look good.' I was lucky to have friends

that helped me. Whereas if these friends didn't help me I probably wouldn't have

known about internships and for me, that would've been . . . maybe I would've

known because I've got friends all over the country. But basically, it was easier

for me to quickly get on my feet because I had friends. It would have been much

better if we had an international student department that could advise you and

help you and get you up to speed to what you're required to do.

Miriam shared this desire for assistance with opportunities for success. She

lamented about the lack of availability of internships for international students and

expressed a desire for her HBCU to help international students find opportunities for

which they qualify. She stated:

Whenever we try to work or even apply for internships it's only for only citizens,

and we're not citizens so we can't, we don't get anything. It's really hard for us to

get internships and work. I wish they would give us opportunities and expose us

to such things a lot.

Kweku's suggestions for additional support from his HBCU included assistance

with language. Coming from Ghana, where British English was the norm, he struggled to

adjust to using and understanding American English in his daily life. He suggested

including a session that provided translations for commonly used phrases, which he

thinks would have alleviated some of the stress of adjusting. He explained:

For the cafeteria, knowing that not everyone is an American and trying to provide

international options. And also, maybe for . . . you realize American English is so

different from British English, I think maybe in our first weeks they should kind

133

of try to find words that mean differently here in America and maybe during our orientation as international students they'll be like "hey, pants in Ghana mean this because you're speaking like British English, but when you come here it means this." Now they expect us to know sometimes if you don't really know it makes conversation harder. I remember I came here and these people used line "I'm in the line," in Ghana you say, "I'm in a queue" so I got . . . I remember I went . . . there was a line and I said, 'who is the last in this queue?' and everyone was looking at me, and no one could understand. So, I think trying to find what we say differently in British English would help us adjust more, like better to the environment.

The lack of inclusion and involvement of international students at her campus was an issue presented by Patience. Although she felt that her institution had made strides towards improvement, there was still a long way to go. She recalled a time when the international student office planned an international festival, however, international students were not made aware until the invitation was emailed to the campus community. She explained:

They used to have a . . . they've always had international festivals, but you don't even find international students there. Because it's like the school wakes up one morning and you get an email it's international festival whatever, and the students are like oh we didn't even know they were doing something like this. Like we, some of the students, we're like we should be a part of it. I mean if you people want to celebrate us then bring us into the organizing, into the planning and stuff like that.

134

She acknowledged that she has seen improvement over the last year and commended the international student advisor for being intentional about the inclusion and involvement of international students.

Overall, participants felt their institutions met the requirements for ensuring they remained in status and did not violate any immigration laws. However, some participants felt that their institutions could provide additional support to help their international student populations adjust to different aspects of life in the U.S. such as race relations, employment, and scholarships.

Summary of Findings

This chapter discussed the seven themes identified during data analysis. Theme one, pre-arrival knowledge and perceptions described participants' knowledge and perceptions of southern history, HBCUs, and the reasons for their college choice. Most participants had limited knowledge of the American South and HBCUs and selected their colleges based on proximity to family and friends and financial assistance offered by their respective institutions. Theme two, race salience, described the significance participants place on their racial identity before and after their relocation to the U.S. Findings showed that prior to arriving in the U.S. participants did not consider race to be an important part of their identity. However, after living and studying in the U.S., participants were more aware and conscious of their race, and its value in the U.S. and, for some, race became more important to their identity. Theme three, important identities, described other identities that were of greater significance to participants. These identities were national/ethnic identities and religious identity. Theme four, learning the environment, described the various ways participants learned about southern history,

HBCUs, and race. Participants learned about southern history through a required class or research for a class, or through their own research stemming from their curiosity. Participants learned about the significance of HBCUs by attending and being immersed in the HBCU culture. Participants learned about race through observations and discussions with their Black American peers.

Theme five, encounters in the United States, described experiences that changed participants' views of their race. These experiences included racism and the effects of police brutality. Theme six, friendships and peer interaction, focused on the relationships between participants and their fellow international students as well as their relationships with their Black American peers. Participants noted that it was easier to build friendships with other international students because of a mutual understanding. Theme seven, institutional support, discussed the type of support participants received from their respective institutions. Participants commended their institutions for providing adequate immigration support, but most did not feel that their HBCUs provided much assistance with understanding the racial climate of the U.S. However, some suggested other areas in which their institutions could have provided additional support such as having an office whose specific role is to assist international students with the adjustment process.

The following chapter will utilize these themes to answer the research questions and discuss how the findings of this study can inform practice, so institutions are better able to meet the needs of their Black sub-Saharan African international student population. Recommendations for future research areas also be provided.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students enrolled at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the American South. Framed by Berry's Acculturation Model (1997), which describes a five-stage model for individual psychological acculturation, this study examined the changes in the significance of race in the identities of participants and, the regional and institutional factors that influenced these changes. The specific questions addressed in this study were:

1. Do Black sub-Saharan African international students experience a change in their racial identity after relocating to the United States?

2. In what ways does the culture of HBCUs influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

3. In what ways do the relationships between Black international students and Black American students at HBCUs affect the racial identity development of Black international students?

4. How do experiences with regional racism influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

Using a phenomenological approach to qualitative research data were gathered from semi-structured interviews and follow-up journal questions with nine participants studying at HBCUs in the American South. Following analysis of interview and journal data, the researcher identified seven themes that best described the lived experiences of participants. These themes are:

1. Pre-arrival Knowledge and Perceptions – "I assumed they had dealt with it and moved on."

2. Race Salience – "It was only in America that I realized I was Black."

3. Important Identities – "If I have the option to say African, I'll check that."

4. Learning the Environment – "Being Black in America is not only by birth, it's also by culture and behavior."

5. Encounters in the United States – "I think that was when I had the paradigm shift."

6. Friendships and Peer Interactions – "There's an unwritten code that you have to stick together."

7. Institutional Support – "I was lucky to have friends to help me."

This chapter utilizes these themes to address the aforementioned research questions, provide implications for higher education, and directions for future research.

<div align="center">Research Question 1</div>

Do Black sub-Saharan African international students experience a change in their racial identity after relocating to the United States?

Findings indicated that changes in the significance of race varied among participants. As described in the second theme, Race Salience, all participants indicated that in their home countries race was not a significant identity and was therefore not important to them personally before moving to the U.S. This corroborated literature that African immigrants do not view the world through the lens of race as Black Americans do (Alex-Assensoh, 2009). However, after residing and studying in the U.S., participants had different opinions of how important race was to them. In the same theme, three

<div align="center">138</div>

participants indicated that race had become more important to them, although their reasons for this varied. The remaining six participants indicated that race had not become more important to them. While changes in race salience were not universal among participants, all participants acknowledged being aware of the significance of race in the U.S after their arrival, albeit to various levels of awareness.

Regardless of the various levels of importance participants placed on their race after relocating to the U.S., there was a consensus that ethnic and national identities became more important after residing in the U.S. Several participants spoke about how being at a racially homogeneous institution such as an HBCU, the factor that set them apart from their peers was their ethnicity/nationality. Ricky, a Ghanaian graduating senior in Tennessee, wrote in his journal,

> My ethnicity [is more important], because I believe a bigger part of me as an individual due to my ethnic values and culture. Although I would admit that my race is a significant part of me, I try not to think of that as the reasons why people do or do not treat me in a certain way. In my college, my ethnicity is often associated with hard work, perseverance, and academic prowess and since almost everyone in my college is of the same race, the race factor always cancels out. As a result, I had the tendency to identify with my ethnicity more than my race.

Other participants spoke about being "othered" by their peers, thus leading them to value their nationality and ethnicity more, particularly in situations where participants had to defend their ethnicity from negative stereotypes. Previous research suggested that this experience is common for international students (Hume, 2008; Ghosh & Lu, 2003; Brown & Brown, 2013).

139

From an acculturation perspective, choosing to maintain cultural identity provides acculturating individuals with the choice of separation or integration strategies to cope with their experiences (Berry, 1997). The ultimate choice of which strategy participants employed depended on the level of interaction they desired to have with their Black American peers. In both the Learning the Environment and Friendships and Peer Interaction theme, interacting with peers served as a way for participants to learn the significance of race in America. The three participants that indicated that race had become more important to them also indicated that they had positive interactions with their peers. One of these participants, Paul, explained that listening to his peers discuss their experiences of being Black in America led him to the realization that the burden of being Black in the U.S. applied to him as well, despite not being a citizen.

<div align="center">Research Question 2</div>

In what ways does the culture of HBCUs influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

Before submitting their admission applications, most participants in this study were unaware of the history and significance of HBCUs to the Black American community. Most learned about their specific institutions and the broader institutional type upon arrival. Overall, HBCUs provided participants with several opportunities to learn about the importance of race in America and the Black experience in the U.S. First, the classroom served as an arena for learning with undergraduate participants learning about Black history through required classes and assignments while graduate participants learned through discussions. Second, some participants described campus events, particularly during Black History Month, that provided additional education about being

Black in the U.S. Finally, interactions with their Black American peers and faculty both in and out of the classroom gave participants additional opportunities to learn about the significance of race in America.

Through the aforementioned ways, participants highlighted how intentional HBCUs are about ensuring all students are knowledgeable of the history of their institutions and Black people in the U.S. Although this intentionality did not result in all participants developing a higher level of race salience, it most certainly contributed to their awareness and consciousness of being Black in the U.S. in ways that attending a PWI would not.

Despite being intentional in educating students about Black history, many participants discussed a lack of social support and inclusion from their institutions. Although HBCUs are known for their support and inclusion (Allen, 1992), from most participants' experiences, this support and inclusion did not extend fully to international students. Feeling excluded and unsupported resulted in them relying on their fellow international students for support and thus, in many ways, limited the amount of contact they have with the culture at their institutions beyond classroom requirements. Berry (1997) asserts that the amount of support and inclusion provided by the host society influences acculturation of individuals. Additionally, individuals who choose to engage in the culture of their host society and build relationships are more likely to choose an assimilation strategy or integration strategy. In this study, the researcher considered both the HBCUs and the American South as the host society. The limited social support and inclusion from HBCUs reduced participants desire to engage in the culture of their HBCUs resulting in their withdrawal into their self-created cultural groups.

The majority Black population of HBCUs certainly provided a safe space for Black sub-Saharan international students to learn the nuances of being Black in the U.S. However, the saturation in and celebration of Black culture at HBCUs gave students a filtered glance at what it means to be Black in the U.S. and limits the understanding of the Black experience in the American South. Kweku, a Ghanaian rising junior in Tennessee, described an observation made by one of his Black American peers who explained that the HBCU environment protected Kweku from the realities of being Black in America. Kweku recalled this observation, stating:

> They always tell me I'm in a bubble. Because sometimes they talk about race and I argue the opposite, that things are better. And they talk about the prison system and all that. So sometimes the way they see oppression I don't even see it that way, and they always tell me 'You're in a bubble! You were in Africa, most of them were black, you came to an HBCU, most of us are black, so you've been shielded. Right after school, you're going to experience what we're talking about.

Overall, HBCUs provided participants with numerous opportunities to learn about Black History and being Black in the United States. Participants acknowledged that their institutions were intentional in educating their students through classroom assignments, discussions, or campus events. However, the lack of inclusion and support for international students negated the influence that this exposure to Black culture would have on participants.

Research Question 3

In what ways do the relationships between Black international students and Black

American students at HBCUs affect the racial identity development of Black international

students?

The amount and depth of interactions with Black American peers were an

influential factor in the changes of race salience among participants. Participants that

described having good interactions and relationships with their Black American peers and

actively engaged in conversations with them exhibited either a change in race salience or

a deeper understanding of what it means to be Black in the U.S. than those who did not

interact with their Black American peers. Actively engaging in discussions with their

peers allowed participants to learn from the firsthand experiences of their peers. For

example, Paul described that class discussions with peers about their experiences as

Black Americans were instrumental in deepening his understanding of race in the U.S.

and how the issues associated with being Black in the U.S. applied to him despite not

being an American citizen. Additionally, the willingness of Paul's peers to learn about

and understand his culture allowed for the building of rapport and the setting of a

foundation for mutual exchange and learning.

On the other hand, most participants who described having limited interactions

with their Black American peers did not exhibit as deep an understanding of race in the

U.S. as those who regularly interacted with their Black American peers, nor did they

experience a change in race salience. Several participants exhibited their understanding of

race in the U.S. in their articulation of the different ways this construct manifests itself

socially, economically, and legally in American life. Many of these articulations were

reminiscent of the foundation of Critical Race Theory which explains that race and

racism is a deeply rooted part of life in the United States and the influence racism has on

the legal system (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor, 1998). Critical Race Theory also asserts

that storytelling is a crucial method for fighting racial stereotypes and power structures

(Taylor, 1998). Participants who engaged in discussions with their Black American peers

were able to learn from the first-hand experiences of their peers, dispel any negative

stereotypes they held about Black Americans, and were better able to articulate the

meaning of race in the U.S. than the participants who did not engage with their peers.

This reiterates the significance of intercultural contact in the acculturation process,

specifically in the selection of coping strategies. Participants who engaged in dialogue

and formed connections with their Black American peers chose an integration strategy in

which both their race and national/ethnic were important to them. Conversely,

participants who did not form good relationships with their Black American peers were

more likely to choose a separation strategy in which they distanced themselves from the

importance placed on race in the U.S. and maintained and strengthened their

ethnic/national identity.

Literature suggests that tension between Black Americans and Black Africans is

typical because of Africans' lack of knowledge of the racial oppression of Black

Americans and the insignificance of race in their identities (Manguvo, 2013; Manyika,

2000). While the lack of knowledge of the history of slavery in the American South was

indeed true for most participants in the study, there were no significant tensions reported

by participants. Instead, participants' inclination to form friendships with their fellow

international students was based on culture and a connection in the shared experience of

being an international student. These friendships limited the need for participants to interact with their Black American peers resulting in them forming a stronger national/ethnic identity instead of racial identity.

<div align="center">Research Question 4</div>

How do experiences with regional racism influence the racial identity development of Black international students?

Findings indicated that regional racism was not an influential factor in the racial identity development of participants. This is partially because attending racially homogenous institutions limited the possibilities for racial discrimination on campus. Off-campus experiences with racism were also limited with only two participants noting specific experiences with racism. One participant, Simi, cited her experience with racism as the "awakening that I was supposed to have for my color." Another participant, Paul, noted that his experiences with racism while he was studying in Asia prepared him to deal with the situation he encountered in the United States. Despite indications in literature that Black international students are more likely to encounter racial discrimination than other races of international students (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004; Manyika, 2000), most participants in this study did not have any direct experiences with racism. Therefore, it is difficult to include racism as a factor that led to a change in racial identity.

In their Lifespan Model of Black Identity Development, Cross & Fhagen-Smith (2001) describe an encounter as a disturbance that forces a Black individual to examine their thoughts and views of their race and Black culture. Although experiences with racism were limited, participants described other encounters that challenged their views.

These encounters include police brutality, Americans' views of immigrants, and Americans' misconceptions of international students.

No participants described having an encounter with American police officers that turned violent, in fact, only one participant had ever had direct contact with police officers and only after a car accident. Despite not having any direct encounters, some participants noted that the stories of police brutality catalyzed their understanding of the construct of race in the U.S. and, understanding that it applies to them. This understanding added to the level of awareness and consciousness of race for some participants. Hearing and reading about Americans' views of immigrants (i.e., immigrants taking jobs and benefitting from welfare) and misconceptions of international students (i.e., international students taking scholarship money from domestic students) made many participants prouder of their ethnic/national identities, resulting in a strengthening of those identities.

From an acculturation perspective, the encounters described by participants reiterate the importance of inclusion by the host society and the attitudes and perceptions of host members towards immigrants (Berry, 1997). For participants in this study, the combination of negative aspects of the host society such as racism, police brutality, and misconceptions about immigrants and international students increased their awareness of racial issues while simultaneously alienating them. This resulted in a stronger sense of ethnic/national pride.

<div align="center">What Do These Findings Mean?</div>

The findings of this study indicated that most participants do not experience a change in race salience leading to their racial identity becoming more significant to them.

Instead, through a combination of factors at their HBCUs, in the American South, and nationally, participants only became more aware and conscious of the significance race in the U.S. Most participants were raised in countries that were not able to a

Additionally, through the same combination of factors, all participants acknowledge developing a stronger sense of pride in their ethnic and national identities, as these are the identities that separate them from their peers at their HBCUs. Having gained an understanding of what it means to be Black in the U.S., some participants wrestled with their newfound awareness of race, mainly that race is the characteristic that they would be judged on by others and not their national identity. W.E.B Du Bois described this conflict of identities in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* in which he wrote:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (1903/2007, p. 34)

Although Dubois is referring to the struggle of being American and Black, the concept of double-consciousness is also applicable to Black sub-Saharan African international students who struggle to negotiate the identity that is most important to them and the separate identity which their host society deems most important.

In their Lifespan Model of Black Identity Development, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) suggested that adult Nigresence, the identity development process that occurs in

147

adulthood rather than as a result of childhood influences, happens in individuals with low race salience or "internalized racism." However, participants were not raised to downplay their race intentionally or with negative perceptions of their race. Rather, they were raised in societies where race was not taken into consideration because it held no value in that context. Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) also describe an "encounter" or situation that challenges Black individuals to reexamine their thoughts about their race catalyzes a change in race salience and the development of a healthy Black identity. Findings of this study suggest that living and studying in the American South and attending HBCUs indeed served as this encounter, with reports of police brutality in the media and experiences with or understanding of racism increasing participants' awareness and consciousness of racial issues in the United States. However, acculturative factors not accounted for in the Black Identity Development Model also play a significant role in the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan international African students.

First, the inclusion and support of the host society play a vital role in the development of a healthy Black identity. In the context of this study, the host society is both the HBCU and the state/region. Overall, participants did not feel included on their campuses and received limited social support from their institutions. There is a lack of representation and acknowledgment of international students cultural and academic contributions to their institutions. Additionally, support for international students is limited to ensuring these students meet all legal and immigration requirements of their visa status. As a result, they rely heavily on their fellow international students for support, resulting in limited contact with Black culture at their institutions.

A second acculturative factor that contributes to the racial identity development of Black sub-Saharan African international students are the attitudes and perceptions of the host society towards immigrants. The current rhetoric about immigrants (i.e., immigrants benefitting from welfare and taking American jobs) and misconceptions about international students (i.e., international students taking scholarship money from American students) served as an alienating factor for participants who described having to work harder for limited opportunities. This alienation again caused many participants to withdraw into their international student friend groups for support.

In the description of Berry's Acculturation Model in chapter II, it was noted that acculturating individuals choose between four strategies to cope with their experiences in their host society. These strategies are assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. The combination of these factors resulted in most participants selecting separation strategy, which is the result of limited contact with the host culture and the choice to maintain the value of their home nation (Berry, 1997). In the context of this study, choosing a separation strategy means holding on to ethnic/national identity and not applying the ideas of race to themselves. Although all participants acknowledge being aware of racial issues and the importance placed on race in the U.S., only three describe race becoming more important to them. These three participants appear to select an integration strategy, which means holding on to their ethnic/national identity but also taking on and applying the construct of race to themselves.

Limitations

The sample for this study is not representative of the Black sub-Saharan African international student population in the American. Six of the nine participants hailed from

western Africa, with two from Ghana and four from Nigeria. The limited representation of other regions of sub-Saharan Africa, southern, eastern, and central, does not provide adequate representation of the cultural differences between regions. Additionally, only five of the thirteen former Confederate States were represented by the locations of the HBCUs attended by participants. Although the thirteen former Confederate states are historically connected, some states, notably Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Florida, which were not represented in this sample have deeper roots in the slave history of the American South. Furthermore, six of the nine participants were STEM majors resulting in a limited representation of other fields of study. However, data on international students' fields of study indicate that the majority of international students enrolled in American colleges and universities are pursuing degrees in STEM subjects (Institute of International Education, 2017a). Therefore, the proportion of participants in STEM majors is reflective of the international student population.

<p align="center">Implications for Higher Education</p>

Several implications can be drawn from this study. Although the study's participants attended HBCUs, the researcher believes that these implications are not only applicable to HBCUs, but to all types of institutions of higher learning with international students in attendance. First, some participants described a lack of inclusion and recognition of international students in the culture of the institutions. Since inclusion is a crucial factor in the acculturation and integration of international students, it is essential for colleges and universities to find ways to ensure international students are included and acknowledged as valuable members of their campus communities. Examples of inclusion include hosting events to highlight students' cultures such as food or cultural

fairs, displaying flags of student's home countries represented in the high traffic areas such as student unions, and maintaining an active international student organization. Additionally, including the histories of sub-Saharan African countries in Black History Month celebrations can add to inclusion of international students from that region. Many Black History Month celebrations rightfully focus one the history and accomplishments of Black Americans but incorporating the histories of African countries will allow international students to showcase their countries and allow American students to learn more about their African heritage.

Findings also indicated that engagement and dialogue with Black American peers provided international students with opportunities to learn about race and racial issues from their peers' experiences. Creating intentional opportunities for engagement and dialogue will help bridge the gap of misunderstanding and build rapport between the two groups of students which will increase the desire for intercultural contact on the part of international students. In the classroom, faculty can incorporate discussions that allow international students to share aspects of their culture as it relates to class material. Outside of the classroom, student affairs professionals can create opportunities for dialogue between these two groups of students. For example, creating an on-campus voluntary cultural exchange program in which an international student is paired with an American student with the intention of a mutual exchange of culture, or living learning communities with a cultural exchange emphasis. Additionally, hosting events that allow for open dialogue about race and racial issues.

Many participants indicated that they were unaware of the significance of HBCUs nor did they know that they had applied to HBCUs. This highlights a miscommunication

between admissions procedures and international student applicants. Admissions departments can include a brief description of their institutions on their website or on the application to give international students a basic understanding of the institutional type. Alternatively, institutions could consider adding a question on the application about why the applicant wants to attend an HBCU. Additionally, external organizations such as Education USA which assist international students with the college admissions process (United States Department of State, 2016a) can ensure that they provide applicants with detailed information about the institutions to which they are applying. Similarly, information about the history and significance of HBCUs can be incorporated into international student orientation sessions.

Participants mentioned that besides the international student offices, other campus departments had little to no knowledge about the international student experience, including their legal and immigration requirements. This lack of knowledge limited the ability of other faculty and staff to support international students. To ensure that all faculty and staff have base level knowledge about international students' requirements institutions can incorporate a brief session during new employee orientation or provide employees with an information sheet to keep for their reference.

<div align="center">Directions for Future Research</div>

There are still many aspects of the international student experience that need to be examined. First, this study found that HBCUs provide a safe and shielded atmosphere for Black sub-Saharan international students to learn about the significance of race in the U.S. Attending institutions with a majority Black student population limited participants' exposure to racial discrimination on-campus. Therefore, an examination of the

experiences of Black sub-Saharan African international students at PWIs in the American South and specifically the influence attending these PWIs have on their racial identity is needed. Current literature states that Black international students are more likely to experience racial discrimination than other groups of international students (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004; Manyika, 2000). Additionally, many PWIs in the American South and their surrounding communities are home to monuments of the Confederate South in the form of statues, buildings among others (Bauman & Turnage, 2017). Current debates about and protests against the removal of these monuments add a factor that is not present at HBCUs. Therefore, an exploration of the experiences of Black sub-Saharan African international students at PWIs would provide much-needed insight into how attending a PWI in the American South influences the racial identity development of these students. Additionally, this study can be replicated with a sample of Black Caribbean international students.

Many participants described the limited scope of support provided by their international student offices. Many international student services focus their support efforts on the legal and immigration aspects of the international student sojourn. However, the needs of international students extend further. It is recommended that research be conducted to examine whether the support provided by international student offices and the needs of international students. Additionally, researchers can examine the financial and human resource feasibility of increasing the scope of services for these offices.

One participant, Miriam, identified as Muslim. Although her safety has not been threatened, she described feeling unsafe because of the anti-Muslim rhetoric in the U.S.

Additionally, Miriam explained that she felt she stood out more at her HBCU because of her religious beliefs. Because students such as this are minoritized on multiple identities (immigrant status, race, and religion), an exploration of Black Muslim international students should be conducted to gain insight into their experiences and how best to support these students as they navigate the intersections of these identities.

Some participants were actively involved in organizations on their campuses including SGA, international student organizations, ethnic organizations, and programming board. This involvement provided additional opportunities to engage with their Black American peers and thus deepened their understanding of being Black in the U.S. It is recommended that researchers explore the influence that involvement has on not only the racial identity development of Black international students but, also their overall acculturation and adjustment to life in the U.S.

Conclusion

This study explored the racial identity of Black sub-Saharan international students attending HBCUs in the American South. Framed by Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) and using a phenomenological approach to qualitative research, this study examined the institutional and regional factors that influenced the racial identity development of these students. Following analysis of interview and participant journal data, seven themes emerged. These themes were 1) Pre-arrival Knowledge and Perceptions, 2) Race Salience, 3) Important Identities, 4) Learning the Environment, 5) Encounters in the United States, 6) Friendships and Peer Interaction, and 7) Institutional Support. Findings indicated that most participants do not experience a change in race salience in which race becomes a key factor of their identity. However, participants become more aware and

154

conscious of the significance of race in the American context. Additionally, this study reiterated the uniqueness of acculturation and racial identity development to each person going through them. The decision to integrate a new understanding of the meaning of race while balancing the struggles of being an international student is profoundly personal and affected by a combination of numerous factors. While university staff and faculty cannot control whether Black sub-Saharan African international students develop higher race salience and become fully engaged in the fight for equality, there is an opportunity for dialogue to provide these students with tools to survive in a society where they too can be affected weight placed on race in the U.S.

APPENDIX A – Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself: where you're from, your age, your major and

    classification, and how long you've been in the U.S.

2. What made you choose to attend your HBCU in the southern United States?

3. What do you like the most about your HBCU?

4. What was the most difficult part of adjusting to your institution?

    a.   How did you cope with this challenge?

5. What would you say was the most difficult part of adjusting to the South?

    a.   How did you cope with this challenge?

6. In what ways did the challenges of adjusting to the South and adjusting to

    your institution relate to each other?

7. Prior to your arrival, how much knowledge would you say you had about the

    history of slavery in the southern United States?

8. How much would you say you knew about the history and significance of

    HBCUs?

9. Do you feel that you know more about slavery and HBCUs now?

    a.   (If yes) What was the main source of information you used to gain

    this knowledge?

10. How does race in America compare to race in your home country?

11. How important is being black to you now compared to when you first arrived

    in America?

12. (If there is a difference) Can you describe any experiences at your HBCU that

    you think changed the importance of race to you?

a.   (If there is no difference) How do you think you were able to maintain the views of race from your home country?

13. How would you describe your interactions with Black Americans on-campus?

14. How would you describe your group of friends on campus in terms of race and nationality?

15. Can you describe a time you experienced racism on-campus or off-campus? How did you respond?

16. How do you think the current political climate, particularly thoughts about immigrants, has influenced your experiences?

17. Thinking about my previous questions about your interactions with peers, racism, and racial identity, how would you say these experiences have affected you academically, socially, and mentally?

18. Thinking about my previous questions about your interactions with peers, racism, and racial identity, how much support do you feel your institution provided while you adjusted to these aspects of life in the United States?

APPENDIX B – Journal Prompts

In the next week, take two or three days to reflect on our interview. After a few days, use the prompts below to write at least two paragraphs per prompt describing your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. If there are any other thoughts or experiences you would like to share, include those in the space provided below. Please type your responses in this word document. When you have completed your responses, email them to me at tanyaradzwa.mandishona@usm.edu

1. Which do you identify with more: your race or ethnicity? What does this identity mean to you? How do you think your time at your college/university has influenced this view?

2. Has your university provided any more adjustment support? What are some ways your institution supported you as you adjusted to race relations in America? Are there any other ways you wish they would have supported you?

3. If given the opportunity, would you choose to attend the same college/university in the South? What experiences have led you to think this?

Hello,

My name is Tanya Mandishona and I am a Zimbabwean PhD candidate in the Higher Education Administration program at The University of Southern Mississippi. For my dissertation study, I am researching the experiences of Black international students from sub-Saharan Africa enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the southern United States, and how this experience shapes their views of being Black. I am looking for 1 or 2 international students from your institution to participate in a 30-minute to 1-hour long interview with me via Skype or other video-conferencing software.

I am looking for Black undergraduate or graduate international students on F1 visas who have been in the U.S. for a minimum of one full semester and were born and raised in one of the following countries:
Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Reunion, Rwanda, Saint Helena, São Tomé & Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, or Zimbabwe.

If you meet the criteria above and are interested in participating in this study, or, would like more information, please email me at tanyaradzwa.mandishona@usm.edu

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Tanya Mandishona

APPENDIX D – IRB Approval Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17040409
PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the Racial Identity Develoment of Black International Students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Southern United States
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Tanyaradzwa Mandishona
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Research and Administration
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/10/2017 to 04/09/2018
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

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