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BLACK AND FOREIGN:
HAITIAN IMMIGRANT IDENTITIES AND WELL-BEING IN AMERICA

by

MOLLIE INNOCENT-CUPID

Under the Direction of Eric R. Wright, PhD

ABSTRACT

Black Immigrants who come from Black majority nations must face a unique assimilation to the United States' racial hierarchy, which places them at the bottom as a racial minority. While theoretical models address the double-consciousness of being a Black American, racial identity models fail to address the identity negotiations of this "invisible immigrant" (Bryce-Laborte 1972) minority group. Black Immigrants experience a deterioration in mental health as they increase their exposure to American society. This trend continues with each subsequent generation, causing second and third generations to display significantly poorer health than Non-Black immigrants.

Haitian Immigrants, who are considered one of the largest groups of Black immigrants in the United States, are more vulnerable to this deterioration, and have faced a stigmatized identity in America. Current research fails to capture the unique experience of Haitian Immigrants and their identity negotiation as it relates to their mental well-being. Through in-depth interviews with first- and second-generation Haitian Immigrant identities in metro-Atlanta, this exploratory study, using a symbolic interactionist lens, seeks to understand the identity developments, conflicts, perspectives, and presentations in response to the looking glass experiences of discrimination and negative media exposure.

Findings from this study indicate that Haitian immigrants tend to adopt a bi-cultural approach to their identity, and despite childhood bullying, discrimination, and negative media portrayals throughout their life, they continue to struggle with mild symptoms of psychological distress, and possibly mental illness. Furthermore, the participants in this study display a series of protective measures or coping skills such as avoidance, distrust, and references to ancestry that mediate the impact of society's treatment of minorities on their mental wellness. This initial ethnography serves to increase cultural awareness with mental health professionals, to contribute to the limited research on Haitian immigrants residing in Atlanta, and to shed light on the unique racial identity formation of Black immigrants, with the hopes to galvanize future studies, designed to expand upon other immigrants from Black-majority societies.

INDEX WORDS: Identity, Black immigrant, Mental health, Haitian, Double-consciousness, Race

BLACK AND FOREIGN:
HAITIAN IMMIGRANT IDENTITIES AND WELL-BEING IN AMERICA

by

MOLLIE INNOCENT-CUPID

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2021

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2021

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HAITIAN IMMIGRANT IDENTITIES AND WELL-BEING IN AMERICA

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May 2021

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my darling husband, Andersen Cupid, whose commitment to my vision, whose unwavering support and motivation, and whose care for both me and our children throughout the past six years of doctoral studies has permitted the tenacity and unyielding focus required to complete this project. For my sun and my star, Sébastien and Claire, I pray that this work serves to inspire you to always push towards your dreams.

This work is also dedicated to the ancestors who came before me, whose unparalleled strengths allowed them to face insurmountable odds and whose fearlessness set forth a legacy of resilience and pride.

Bondye Bon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful for the kind pedagogy and often wise counsel from Eric Wright, which started six years ago, in my very first course at Georgia State University course, Sociology of Mental Health. Thank you to Don Reitzes whose research on identity is what drew me to GSU, and I am thankful that years after starting the program that I have the privilege of you being on my committee. In addition, many thanks to Kathryn Kozaitis for her experience and shared interest in working with immigrants. I am grateful to you all for being a part of my committee.

I would also like to acknowledge all the participants in this study. This project could not have happened without you. Through the sharing of your stories, I hope that this work will contribute to a more culturally conscious future.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As first-generation Black¹ immigrants assimilate to American society and culture, the more mentally unwell they become (Williams et al. 2007). The way in which Black Immigrants are perceived in the United States, without evidence of the contrary (language, dress, etc.), is by default to assume that they are Native-Black (Butterfield 2004; Bashi and McDaniel 1997) despite their racial/ethnic identity. As a result of this categorization, they experience a minority status after coming to America. Compared to their White counterparts, second-generation Black Immigrants generally are far less successful (Kasinitz, 2008), indicating a unique assimilation process for “non-White” immigrants due to their minority status. Although there are lower occurrences of diagnosable mental illness (Breslau 2006), when compared to Whites, Blacks in America report poorer psychological well-being (less happiness, poorer life satisfaction and more pessimism) (Hughes 1998), and higher rates of psychological distress (Williams 1999). Due to their majority-Black home countries, identities of many Black immigrants are not centered around race prior to their emigration to the United States (Bailey 2002; Rogers 2006), causing this shift to a minority racialized status to serve as an experience of downward mobility². First generation Black immigrants tend to have less mental health issues compared to second and third generations; furthermore third generation immigrants have significantly poorer mental health when compared to the first generation (Williams et. al. 2007). In addition, the children of Black Immigrants must also cope with the tension of their parents’ negative stereotypes of Black

¹ The word “Black” will be capitalized throughout this text, whenever it is used to reference race/ethnicity. While authors disagree on whether or not to capitalize the word, in this text it is not merely a reference of skin color, but used to refer to a unique culture, experience, and specific group of people. The capitalization allows for a distinction between the color and the people.

² Herbert Gans (1992) uses the term “second generation decline” instead of downward mobility to reflect the unemployment, racial discrimination, and fewer opportunities that second generation immigrants experience compared to their immigrant parents. Zhou (1993) argues that individuals resist acculturation in order to increase the likelihood of upward mobility.

Americans (Waters 1994), while simultaneously acculturating as a Black person born in America. With race as one of the most salient identities in the United States (Jaret and Reitzes 1999), it is likely that the identity of Black Immigrants is a crucial factor when examining the mental well-being of this population.

Black Immigrants must adjust to a racial identity and culture that does not necessarily align with their perception of themselves, and depending on identity perception and salience may serve as a risk to their mental health (Thoits 2013). Salience refers to the hierarchical organization of identities, which serves as an internal blueprint, causing people to understand and define situations that permit them to act out one identity across multiple situations (Stryker et al 1994). Although the term “identity” is a reference to the self as it relates to others and roles within the social system (Thoits 1986), this paper will also explore the self-concept, which defined by Rosenberg (1979) is “the totality of an individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (1979:7). The self-concept that we develop from the meanings and “self-feelings” of the social interactions (Cooley 1902) drive our behaviors (Stryker 1994; Burke and Stets 2009). For Black Immigrants, as they develop meaning of their minority status, it is likely that they engage in a set of behaviors referred to as “identity negotiation,” which is designed to maintain congruency between identity and behavior (Swann 1987). Essentially, we do not passively assimilate to others’ expectations, but instead engage in behaviors in which we decide the significance or insignificance of the looking glass, present counternarratives through our behaviors and presentation across spaces, and attempt to get others to see us as we see ourselves (Swann 2005). This negotiation process, from the behaviorist perspective of symbolic interactionism, is understood to invoke feelings of autonomy and competence, feelings of belonging and control (Swann and Bosson 2010). For example, previous research on role-

identities (e.g.: parent, teacher, friend) indicate that these identities provide a sense of purpose and meaning, which in turn protect against “existential despair,” yielding positive mental and physical health outcomes (Thoits 2012). In addition, racial identity for Blacks has been shown to be directly related to self-esteem (Demo & Hughes 1990; Porter & Washington 1979) and overall psychological well-being (Resnicow and Gaddy, 1997; Whaley 1993). Depending on the racial and ethnic identity salience of Black Immigrants, and the “self-feelings” from the looking glass process, the resulting behaviors of identity negotiation or “identity work” of immigrants serve to protect their mental wellness.

This identity negotiation process is a response to the new exposure to racial discourse, narratives, stereotypes, violence, and/or celebration (Awokoya 2012), causing them to approximate or distance themselves from the Native Black population. Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States, highlights his own experience of identity negotiation as a second-generation Black immigrant in his memoir. Not only is Obama bi-racial, but his father was an immigrant (Kenyan-born). In his memoir, which he describes as a “journey of discovery,” he shares his experience of being attacked for not being Black “enough” and his experience of being treated as a Black man, but also choosing to be Black. One significant factor in his racial identity development is limited exposure to an African American community in Hawaii paired with exposure of images and stereotypes through the media (Obama 1995). There has been extensive research on the mental health implications related to direct encounters with discrimination, but very little research on the negative portrayals of Black individuals on people on their mental well-being. The more salient an identity, the more prone individuals are to relate to the experiences of another, even if it were a stranger. With the increased visibility afforded through social media, and the increased access to news and “viral” clips on smart phones, it is

likely that individuals are more exposed to media portrayals of Black people than they have been before. Police brutality, in particular when the victim is an unarmed Black man, lead to viral stories, making names such as Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown and most recently, George Floyd household names. A recent study indicates that exposure to police killings of unarmed Black men has a corrosive effect on the mental health of the Black population (Venkataramani, 2018). The goal of this study is to further explore and understand how media, as a part of the looking glass experience, impacts identity negotiation, related coping skills and behaviors serves to protect mental health and wellness.

Unfortunately, as a result of monolithic racial grouping, there is very limited research that captures the culturally distinct experiences of various groups of Black Immigrants or acknowledges the diversity of the Black population in America. There has been an influx of Black migrants to the United States influenced by civil rights progress in the 1950's (Kasinitz 1992), which indicates that attention to this group is becoming more important to understanding what it means to be "Black in America," and the resulting mental health implications. The Black immigrant population has increased fivefold since 1980, with one in ten Blacks being foreign-born in the United States today (Pew Research Center, 2018). Existing research on Black immigrant groups combines Blacks from Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America together, regardless of background, which fails to capture their unique experiences. For instance, Haitian Immigrants, in particular, who were the second-largest Black immigrant population in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2018), have experienced significant stigma related to their identity, from stereotypes of doing voodoo and having HIV. A study on Haitian-American women showed feelings of self-doubt, low self-esteem and difficulties with intimate relationships as a result of having the AIDS stigma attached to their identity (Santana and Dancy 2006). This is indicative

of a need for further research, and the importance for social scientists to pay attention to specific Black immigrant identities as it relates to political discourse, policy, and culturally competent treatment. Due to their stigmatized identity, and the author's proximity to the culture, Haitian immigrants are the chosen Black immigrant population for this study, with a focus on the identity negotiation process that impacts their mental well-being.

Regardless of their proximity or distance to Black Americans with their self-identity, Black immigrants are still at increased risk due to their race. For instance, Black immigrants are more susceptible to deportation (Black Alliance for Just Immigration 2016), as they face the same over policing as the native-born Black populations. One of the central debates during Trump's campaign and presidency was the topic of immigration. However, this conversation often centers around the "brown" migrant, and rarely does it ever acknowledge the Black one. As a result of the 7.0 earthquake that devastated the country in 2010, almost 60,000 Haitians sought refuge in the United States and were awarded temporary protective status. Yet during his presidency, Trump put action behind his xenophobic assertions and announced that Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals would be set to abruptly expire in July of 2019. If it were not for a lawsuit (*Saget v. Trump*) that declared this decision as unlawful, many Haitian immigrants would have faced deportation. According to the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES), while only 7.2% of immigrants are Black, 20.3% of those facing criminal deportation consist of Black immigrants. According to the Texas-based organization, RAICES, in June of 2020, 44% of families at the Karnes County residential center were Haitian immigrants. This vulnerable population's invisibility puts them at increased risk of a "prison to deportation pipeline," one additional step beyond the current risk for Black Americans. Therefore, Haitian immigrants struggle with the real consequences of their

immigrant status, which is exacerbated by their skin color, which is often unaddressed in current research. They must navigate two stigmatized identities, and develop methods to cope and negotiate their racial and ethnic identity based on their experience of America through lived experiences and the media.

The “identity negotiation” process captured in this study is initiated by double-consciousness, which may (or may not) trigger identity conflict for this foreign Black population who have a preconceived understanding of race. This racial awareness then informs the looking glass experiences of media exposure and discrimination within the American white racial frame. These experiences often establish an understanding of a stigmatized identity, thus triggering an identity negotiation process and the further development of the self-concept. This identity negotiation process and “self-feelings” from the looking glass directly moderates mental wellness. The etiology of mental health in both the fields of psychology and sociology are understood to be influenced by the self-concept (Erikson 1963) and self-esteem (Rosenberg 1979). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), “feelings of worthlessness” and “self esteem” are criterion for various clinical disorders (APA, 2013). There is also new “alternative” model for personality disorders that identifies the “self” as a key element for personality functioning, which includes self-esteem as a representative of health. For the purpose of this study, mental well-being will be assessed by a positive self-concept (specifically, racial/ethnic identity), the absence of identity conflict, and depressive symptoms.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This dissertation utilizes a behaviorist symbolic interactionist perspective to further understand the nuances of identity negotiation for Haitian Immigrants and it’s impact on mental

well-being, including the context surrounding double-consciousness, meanings elicited from the looking glass within a white racial frame, stigma and social group identity. The terms African American, Black-American and Native-Born Black are utilized interchangeably. The terms Black-Immigrant and Foreign-Born Black are also synonymous. In this project, I will utilize various terms such as self-concept, souls, and identity in the discussion of theory to remain true to the theorists' original intent. While these concepts are different, they share a common reference to self-awareness. More importantly, I offer this qualitative study to better understand the mental health symptoms of Haitian Immigrants who are faced with both a new racial minority status and stigmatized immigrant identity during assimilation and media exposure. My primary research expectation³ (RE1) is to find higher levels of psychological distress with second generation immigrants compared to the first generation, mirroring previous studies on Black Immigrants. As I explore how identity plays a role in mental wellness, I also expect to find evidence of racial double-consciousness in both generations, with the first generation having this racial exposure post-migration, likely leading to the presence of identity conflict in both generations (RE2). As a result of stigmatized identities understood through looking glass experiences of media and discrimination, I expect an identity negotiation which involves distancing from Black Americans and a more salient ethnic identity. This will likely be more evident in the first generation, serving as a protective factor for mental wellness (RE3). Through a more profound understanding of the Haitian immigrant identity, this study can both extend social theory regarding race-related identity and mental health and, more important, implement strategies to improve the mental well-being of an increasingly diverse Black population in America.

³ I utilize the term "research expectation" in reference to this exploratory qualitative study in lieu of the positivist approach of hypothesis testing used with quantitative research (Sullivan and Sargeant 201).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Black Immigrants & Mental Well-Being

Many Black immigrants voluntarily emigrate to the United States from Black-majority homelands which often evokes a significantly different reaction to the racialized exclusion and discrimination when compared to Native Blacks (Waters 1994). This section illustrates the Black Immigrant experience based on current research, and the factors that impact their mental wellness. In addition to coming from Black majority cultures, their immigration status impacts how immigrants make meaning of the racial dynamics in America. “Free” or voluntary migration is often understood, using a value-expectancy model, driven by “push” and “pull” factors, or collection of incentives and deterrents that inevitably motivates groups to migrate (Petersen 1958). The difference between “involuntary” immigrants or refugees and voluntary migrants is that involuntary immigrants’ options are far more limited, often referred to as a “forced” migration (Kunz 1981). Refugees then by definition face more trauma and (Cohon 1981) and threats to their psychological well-being (Boise et al., 2013; Ho, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013; Venters & Gany, 2011). Motivation for migration include pursuit of wealth, social mobility, family influences, and autonomy, with the belief that behavioral changes will inevitably lead to these goals (GH DeJong 1981). Through education, they believe that they will gain financial wealth (Rong & Fitchett 2008). Therefore, even when faced with negative feedback post-migration, immigrants will still remain committed to their decision to migrate (GH DeJong 1981). In the United States, when they are exposed to racial discrimination, Black Immigrants continue to believe that education, hard work, and maintaining culture from the homeland will circumvent it (Awokoya 2012). Despite this commitment to stay in a foreign country, and the belief that behavior will directly impact their surrounding environment, mental health is one of

the top challenges facing African immigrants in the United States (Ho et al., 2013; Venters et al., 2011). Haitians have come to the United States as economic refugees (Helton 1992), political refugees, and as asylum -seekers from natural disasters (US Dept Homeland Security, 2018), making them an ideal population to study in this research.

Although the social hierarchy in Black-majority nations is often delineated by class (Stone 1972), caste, tribes, and ethnic groups (Tamari 1991), White supremacy is not a new concept for Black Immigrants. It is an unavoidable part of Black history. Because of colonization, enslavement, and globalization, there has been a quest to bring “civilization” to people of color (Allen 2001). White-supremacist concepts such as colorism, are a part of the culture of many Black nations (Charles 2011; Monroe 2018), resulting in a hierarchy within a homogenous race, placing those who are closer in likeness to Whiteness are deemed superior (Walker 1982). Western media has often portrayed Africans as less civilized, impoverished, and primitive (Awokoya 2009; Awokoya & Harushimana 2011). However, Black Immigrants are not accustomed to the sense of “racial isolation and despair” that Native Blacks in America experience (Patterson 1972) and the significance surrounding a racialized identity. They also do not experience race as a dichotomous fact, making a Black identity synonymous with being positioned opposite to, and by definition, “not White” (Ogbu 1987). The emphasis on race as a determining factor makes the transition to the United States more difficult (Rong & Fitchett, 2008). It is important to also note that not all Black migrant groups experience the same racial identity development in White-majority nations. Foner (1985) found that Jamaicans are more likely to resist assimilation and maintain an ethnic identity in the United States than in Britain, supporting Okamura’s (1981) conclusion that ethnicity is situational, and highlighting the impact of America’s racial hierarchy on Black Immigrant identity. This causes a unique cultural

assimilation process for Black Immigrants, one which causes confusion when faced with discrimination from Whites despite having achieved middle-class status, paired with discrimination and rejection from Black Natives, regardless of the shared color (Akinsulure-Smith, 2017).

While Black Immigrants may initially have less exposure and/or desire to socialize with Black Americans upon their arrival to the United States (Vickerman 1999), as they begin to assimilate, there is a risk of downward mobility. The theory of segmented assimilation, as a contrast to the traditionally White immigrant straight-line assimilation of upward mobility, introduces a possibility for either ascending to the middle class or descending into the racialized lower class of society, especially when faced with racial discrimination (Waters et. al. 2010). Furthermore, even those who share the same ethnic background, but have phenotypically different features experience different opportunities for mobility. Those with a fairer complexion are seen as more attractive (Hill 2002), less threatening (Viglione et al. 2011), and more intelligent than dark-skinned individuals, despite less education (Harrison & Thomas 2009). The freedom of racial fluidity allows fair-skinned individuals to take advantage of opportunities that their darker counterparts cannot, through passing maneuvers. From 2000 to 2010, the Census showed a drop in the number of Latinx individuals who identify as Black Hispanic, while the percentage of White-identified Hispanics increased (Fergus 2016). This suggests opportunistic behavior while also reflecting attitudes of aversion to the Black racial identity. Black Immigrants further experience racial dynamics differently based on their social class. Working-class Black Immigrants are more likely to experience no differences in the way they are treated than the Native Blacks who are in closer proximity. They more quickly identify with Native Blacks than middle-class Black Immigrants (Rong & Fitchett, 2008). Although Black Immigrants' mental

health deteriorates over time with assimilation, interestingly, a salient group identity results in higher self-esteem and less depression (Hughes et al. 2015).

Despite the barriers faced by first generation immigrants, their established adult identities, rooted in their home country, and the optimism related to their decision to migrate, initially puts them at an advantage over youth immigrants, or children of immigrants (Suarez-Orozco 2011). As Black Immigrants become more assimilated to the United States culture, by the third generation, the high school dropout rates have increased (Zhou 2003), and their mental well-being has decreased (Williams et al 2007). Furthermore, youth immigrants, or children of immigrants have to navigate an identity that is often between-worlds, between what is self-identified and what is ascribed or imposed (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). In the Harvard Immigration Project, more than half of immigrant youth felt that Americans had a bad perception of immigrants, with many negative stereotypes (Suarez-Orozco), which are reiterated by their immigrant parents who fear their downward assimilation by identifying as Black American (James 1997). The younger they were at the time of immigration, and the longer they stay in the United States after migration, the increased rate of psychiatric disorders.

Undoubtedly, research shows that compared to the U.S. population, immigrants arrive with superior mental health, and are less likely to be diagnosed with any psychiatric disorder. However, for those who emigrate as children, or those identified as second or third generation, their psychiatric disorders mirror that of the Native-Born Americans (Salas-Wright et al. 2018). Research has shown that the longer Black Immigrants stay in the United States, and the more generations removed from the home-country, Black Immigrants' overall mental health gets worse over-time, to become more in alignment with the poor mental health of Native Blacks (Williams et. al. 2007); this is likely due to the adjustment to a minority status (Case & Hunter

2014; Williams 2007; Anderson 2015). Third generation Caribbean immigrants showed the highest rate of psychiatric disorders, particularly men (Williams et. al 2007). There were also some gender differences in this same study, where Caribbean women showed lower odds of psychiatric disorders compared to African American women. The research conducted on Black immigrants clearly points to an assimilation process when confronted to the racial dynamics that is unique to the United States, a reluctance to identify as a minority, and a direct relationship with ethnicity and mental health.

By focusing on the theoretically peak period of adjustment for immigrants, after they've spent enough time in the United States to be exposed to the racialized culture, and second-generation immigrants, I will be more likely to capture this complex social psychological process and its impact on psychological distress. Haitians, as both voluntary and involuntary immigrants who may have experienced refugee trauma, and who experience the dual-minority status of a Black immigrant with Haitian-specific stigma serve as an ideal population to assess mental wellness and identity negotiation. This study seeks to explore the identity-related factors that cause increased psychological distress from the first to second generation of Haitian immigrants, with the anticipation of higher distress through generations (RE1). Based on theory, I anticipate that the looking glass exposure to (1) images of negative stereotypes, violence, and discrimination towards Blacks in the news and social media, (2) paired with the double-conscious experience of phenotypic identification of Native-Blacks leads to (3) an increased saliency of a racial minority identity, which results in (4) psychological distress. This literature review aims to unpack all of these components as they relate to mental well-being.

2.2 Haitians in the United States

In order to understand this population, it is important to first start with the history of Haitians and the U.S. This section serves to shed light on policies, stereotypes, migration patterns, and the identities of Haitian Immigrants. The “Hart-Celler” or Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated the National Origins Formula, which established quotas on immigration based on countries of origin. This allowed for increased opportunities of emigration from Africa and Asia. Furthermore, in order to increase the diversity in the immigrant population, the Diversity Visa program, which is a part of the Immigration Act of 1990 allows for visas to be distributed to immigrants with a high school diploma or two years of professional experience to people who have low rates of immigration. With an increase in immigration, stereotypes and new race relations developed. With what he has called an “immigration crisis”, Trump has called to end the diversity visa program, in exchange for a merit-based system during a Conservative Political Action Conference, citing concern for “horrendous” people (Trump 2018). Haitians are not unfamiliar with negative stereotypes in America. In the 1970’s and 1980’s, Haitians were painted as poverty-stricken (HIV) disease-carrying criminal refugees who practiced Black magic (Stepick, 1998). Due to the 7.0 magnitude earthquake of 2010, approximately 46,000 Haitian immigrants received Temporary Protected Status as of 2018 (US Dept Homeland Security, 2018). This protected status was set to expire July 22, 2019, but has been extended (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2018). In addition, the Trump administration is planning to end a Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) program, which allowed family members who were awaiting their permanent resident or “green card” in the United States and will only allow this on a case-by-case basis (USCIS 2019).

As it relates to identity, during the time period of high stigma, Haitians, especially second-generation immigrants would try to hide their immigrant identity and try to assimilate with African Americans (Waters 1999). They faced bullying and discrimination from all races, including African Americans, forcing them to maintain friendships with mostly other Haitians (Feranandez-Kelly and Schaufler 1994). In Waters' (1999) study of West Indians in New York, she described that many ethnic groups were referred to in both negative and positive terms, however Haitians had the worst reputation. She states, "The Haitians were described as noisy, not dressing well, not bathing enough, smelling bad, and living like savages in dirt and squalor, with many people to one room" (1999: 60). She elaborates that conflicts between Haitians and other ethnic groups were further exacerbated by the language barrier.

Despite the fact that there are fewer Haitian immigrants than Jamaicans, they have received more media attention, especially in South Florida. First generation immigrants feared their children losing their connection to their Haitian roots (Stepick and Dutton Stepick 1994). Stepick's (2001) ethnography about Haitians in Miami highlights "cultural dissonance" as one of the key factors that influence Haitians' shifting self-identity. This dissonance occurs between second-generation youth and their parents, between youth and their Native Black peers, and between youth and their teachers. Second-generation immigrant youth in Miami also reported a higher level of embarrassment and parent-child conflict than other immigrants. This, in turn, leads to feelings of alienation and depression. He noted a lack of ethnic awareness in adolescents that over time seemed to evolve into a less-assimilated identity, from American to Haitian-American, or from Haitian-American to simply Haitian. Interestingly, those who attended predominantly Black schools were more prone to distinguish themselves as Haitian.

In Stepick's research on Haitian Immigrants (1998) he identified various barriers when surveying Haitian immigrants, including lack of trust from those who were undocumented who feared exposure, the language barrier for recently emigrated respondents, and unfamiliarity with surveys. In order to build trust and to successfully increase participant engagement, researchers provided Haitians with a list of organizations that provide services for Haitians or pay for participation. Stepick describes a reciprocal relationship with Haitians and informal support systems, (specifically family members) that allows for resources and services including linkage to jobs, loans, and childcare. In addition to the chain migration trends, the Haitian culture allows for the association of "cousin" or "auntie" for family friends, neighbors, and others with whom they've developed close relationships. Furthermore, while relationships with the Haitian community in the United States helps with resources, there is an obligation to maintain their ties to family back home. Those who stay in the U.S. for longer periods have less connection to Haiti.

Based on previous research of Black Immigrants, and the lack of racial salience in their home country, I anticipate that Haitians come to understand what it means to be Black through exposure in their communities, and in the media. Due to the racialized society in America, this occurs through the lens of a White racial frame in which there is chronic negative portrayals of minority groups. This next section will serve to illustrate the racialized experience of the media, and the impact of media on mental wellness. I believe this to be a crucial component to understanding a stigmatized identity, which I anticipate will result in distancing from the minority identity of being Black (RE3). Research has shown that Haitians start to develop the same stereotypes towards these minority groups as a means to distance themselves from them (Waters 1999).

2.3 Media Within The White Racial Frame

Television, books, and newspaper are considered to be the more traditional media and is not only a reflection of society, but also responsible for shaping its culture. The way in which Blacks are presented in the media has an impact on how Black Immigrants view themselves and how they engage with Native Blacks (Awokoya 2012). They are not only bombarded with the negative stereotypes of Black Americans (Asante 2016), but also the negative portrayal of underdeveloped and “primitive” Foreign Black countries and cultures (Traore & Lukens 2006). Ethnic minorities are portrayed as poor and violent criminals (Dixon & Linz 2000; Gillian & Iyengar 2000). Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States has built a platform on White Supremacist statements, with hate speech targeting Black and brown people, especially immigrants. He started a “Birther” conspiracy, questioning the first Black presidents’ authenticity as an American, he referred to Mexicans as terrorists, and described African countries, Haiti, and El Salvador as “shitholes” (McHendry, 2018). Furthermore, his White supremacy is not only communicated in the things that are explicitly stated about Black and Brown immigrants, but by the silence when explicit racism occurs and the refusal to condemn it.

Social media has been an evolution from a historically and predominately one-way communication, to one that allows interaction between users. Social media allows its users to express an online identity to others, allowing for a process of identity performance and validation. Online identity construction is directly correlated to offline identities, and impacts self-esteem (Valkenburg & Peter 2011). Race-related conversations on social media allow ethnic-minority youth an opportunity to express their self-concept (Manago 2015). Research has shown that social media users’ ability to filter out negative information enhances a positive self-image (Gentile, Twenge, Freeman & Campbell 2012; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Kim & Lee,

2011). Therefore, research shows that politics, news, and social media impact identity, however it remains unclear how Black Immigrant identity is affected by these exposures.

It is also worth noting that perceived discrimination towards other minority groups still seems to have a negative impact on people of color. Rousseau et. al. (2011) examined the impact of a major sociopolitical event, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, on two immigrant groups: Muslim/Arabs and Black Haitians. The cross-sample assessed psychological distress of Arab or Muslim-identified immigrants and Black Haitian Immigrants pre- and post- the 9/11 attacks. Both groups reported a significant increase in perceived discrimination from 1998 to 2007, with related psychological distress. For those Black-Immigrant Haitians, this could mean that poor minority-majority political relations still impact them, even though they do not identify with the Arab or Muslim identity.

This previous research on Haitians was done in the nineties, when stigma was heightened, and shows varying assimilation patterns based on generation status and the demographics of the surrounding community. Due to their stigmatized identities, Haitians are rejected from their fellow West Indian peers (Waters 1999), and do not see themselves as “Black.” In fact, according to the 1990 census results, 70% of those who selected “other” in the race category were from ethnic subgroups, including Haitians (McKenny and Cresce 1992). This relationship with the “Black” identity label, is what gives way to a unique double-consciousness experience when exposed to race in America for both first and second-generation immigrants. As a result of stigmatized identities understood through looking glass experiences of media and discrimination, I expect this to play a role in identity negotiation (RE3). The next section illustrates the awareness and development of a racial identity through the lens of others, and how it relates to the various theories around the self-concept.

2.4 Black Identity & Double-Consciousness

W.E.B DuBois set the foundation of sociological theory pertaining to the development of Black Identities in *The Soul of Black Folk* (1897). He shares his own personal experience during his “boyhood” when he developed “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (1897:194). Sociological theorists posit that we learn who we are from the people around us. Children grasp the importance of social interaction early on in life, developing their own thoughts and feelings that are strongly influenced by their primary familial group (Cooley 1902). Cooley’s “looking glass self” is an essential mechanism that is employed by all individuals in the process of the development of an active and social self. Charles Horton Cooley (1902) developed this concept with a three-stage model: an awareness of how others perceive an individual, that individual’s interest in others’ judgment of him, and the resulting self-feeling. Although this process involves selectivity, based on the individual’s evaluation of the significance of the looking glass source (Reitzes 1980), due to the omnipresence of the white racial frame, meanings and interpretation of social interaction are taught and learned through that lens, thus yielding a racialized self-concept. DuBois’ understanding of his own self-concept was a sense of “double-consciousness,” an experience that all Blacks develop when they are confronted with “certain suddenness that [he] was different from others” (1994:2). The concept of double-consciousness is a mental state of having multiple identities, or what DuBois referred to as “two-ness”; an internal sense of self with a contradictory perception that society has about oneself. It was an awareness of White society’s negative appraisal of Blacks in contrast to the accomplishments of Blacks.

Within the same decade that DuBois was theorizing about different “souls”, psychologist William James (1910) asserted that an individual had at least three types of self: the material, the

social, and spiritual, all of which were a reflection of society. He understood the material self to be reflective of our possessions, our social self to be the recognition we receive from others, and the spiritual self which is more of an abstract representation of our consciousness. James theorized that individuals had “as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (James 1910:294), meaning that with different situations and public perception, there is potential for multiple identities. Similar to DuBois, James does theorize about conflict between identities, specifically related to the gap between the real self and the ideal self, and how that gap poses a risk to positive self-esteem. While DuBois felt that contrasting identities were irreconcilable, James suggested that by eliminating ostentatiousness, an individual will develop better “self-feelings.” James utilized examples in his text to illustrate this point, utilizing examples related to social and material identities: an individual who has lost his money, and a boxer who is not as skilled as he would like. James viewed the spiritual self as a stable conscience, and more important and therefore more rewarding than material and social selves. Just as DuBois understood the “soul” to be one’s understanding of himself, James believed that the spiritual self superseded all other selves. It remains unclear how one is to reconcile a gap within the spiritual identity. If according to DuBois, the cause of two-ness was due to White social expectations, would James assert that in order to establish positive “self-feelings,” Blacks should eliminate the need to impress (White) others?

In “Black Skin White Masks,” psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (1952) may have supported this idea of low self-esteem related to the need to impress. Fanon’s psychological approach of understanding race relations speaks to a neurosis among Blacks that is developed from exposure to a colonized world. He states, “a normal Negro child, having grown up in a normal Negro

family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact of the White world." (1967:143).

Researchers Clark and Clark (1947) revealed that young Black children were able to use dolls to express that Whiteness had a higher value than Blackness. While Black children under the age of 10 still show lower levels of self-esteem, since Clark and Clark's original study many studies have contradicted this claim and have shown that Black individuals actually have higher self-esteem than Whites (Twenge and Crocker 2002). This no longer supports the internalization that Fanon defines the fear and hatred of Blacks as "negrophobia", or the "collapse of the ego" (1967:132), causing Blacks to behave in a manner that is considered pleasing to Whites in order to elevate status and to cope with their own inferiority complex (1952). While there may be other factors at play such as group identity salience and positive in-group identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986, referenced in section 2.8), the shift in self-esteem may also be due to the selectivity of the looking glass (Porter and Washington 1979). Nonetheless, both DuBois and Fanon understand that the development of self initiated by a stigmatized looking glass in America, a standard that is based on Whiteness, which results in double-consciousness and resulting self-feelings.

Some may argue that due to the many identities within an individual, race may not have the significant impact on self-esteem and well-being that DuBois and Fanon claim because other identities may be more significant to the individual (Stryker 1968; Jaret and Reitzes 1999). While racial identity is something that cannot be easily eschewed (outside of "passing") identity development is not a passive process. Symbolic interactionism does not view humans merely as "factors" but instead as actors in motion (Blumer 1969). According to Stryker's definition of salience, individuals consciously and unconsciously rank their internal identities, and the higher an identity is ranked, the more committed an individual is to act out that identity (1968). This process "does not require a self-conscious or self-aware actor," indicating that individuals behave

or perform in ways that maintain their identities (Stryker 1994). Based on the theories of the looking glass and double-consciousness, I believe that for Black Immigrants who come from countries and cultures where race is not a salient identity, their interaction with a racialized society may cause a redefinition of their identity salience based on different meanings and interpretations regarding race and/or ethnicity. The self-feelings resulting from these meanings and interpretations may cause an identity conflict as individuals attempt to navigate the stigma of both ethnicity and race (RE2).

This leads to the question: how salient is the Black identity in America? Race in America is considered by many to be a “master” identity (Burke 2014; Omi and Winant 2015), which cannot be outgrown, or assimilated away, or made less evident due to its high visibility. Therefore, it could be assumed that Blackness is often a salient identity for Blacks. However, since identities are developed through social interactions, the relative salience of racial identities is further impacted by the meanings that are prevalent in a given context. For Black students at predominantly White institutions, they are three times more likely to identify themselves racially than their White counterparts, and are twice as likely to list race compared to their Black counterparts at historically Black universities (Steck et al. 2003). The environment of predominantly White institutions often treats Black students as “others” therefore resulting in increased awareness of a racialized identity (Feagin 1992), therefore they are forced to have a higher racial identity salience due to their status. Yet, Whites who are in the minority at HBCUs were less likely to identify racially which indicates that race for both Blacks and Whites becomes more evident only when there are oppressive systems or factors at play, and there is a feeling of disadvantage. More than any other race, Blacks view their racial-ethnic identity as “very important” to their self-concept, almost four times as important than Whites when it comes to

that identity at the workplace (Jaret and Reitzes 1999). It should be noted that when comparing multiple identities, gender has been identified as the most salient identity across all races (Jaret and Reitzes 1999), however the White dominant social structure provides an oppressive context, that causes minority racial identities to be more significant in all spaces (Steck et a. 2003).

2.5 The Self-Concept & The Looking Glass

DuBois (1920) understands his identity formation to be a process that is experienced in contrast to Whites. He describes Blacks living with a stigmatized identity as living “within the veil.” This term elaborates the experience of double-consciousness, describing the veil as the darker skin that Blacks wear, showing a distinct difference in comparison to White counterparts. The veil is viewed as a “problem” in American society, demarcating a separation from the unproblematic American; this veil prohibits Blacks from being able to establish a clear sense of their true selves due to the stigmatized identity that has been ascribed by White America.

While Cooley does not discuss race, the tool of the looking glass is based on the White racial frame, a term coined by Joe Feagin (2006). Feagin defined five elements of the White racial frame: racial stereotypes, racial narratives and interpretations, racial images, racialized looking glass self, and a self-concept through a White racial lens. Utilizing a symbolic interactionist perspective, Blacks understand who they are from the point of view of others, and learn the social attitudes and expectations of themselves as the “generalized other” (Mead 1934). Based on the premise that we live in a White dominant society, the everyday narrative (whether through media, expressed stereotypes, or certain policies put into place), or “White racial frame,” establishes certain expectations for people of color. It is this White racial frame that attaches stigma to the Black identity in America, yet the internalization of this stigma has been debated (Twenge and Crocker 2002).

As previously stated, the process of identity formation is not a passive one. In fact, with Cooley's looking glass concept, it is a tool that is utilized selectively and based on social significance to the user. Reitzes and Burke (1980) highlighted three important factors related to the selectivity of invoking the looking glass. First, this tool is used based on the individual's own assessment of the significance of the person from whom the individual is trying to ascertain their evaluation. For example, a musician may not invoke the looking glass from his math teacher, because that person is not significant in his evaluation of his self as a musician. Secondly, individuals are interested in responses from select significant others, not all. Lastly, individuals have the ability to discern if the perceived evaluation from significant others is in alignment with their own concept of self. The selective approach of using the looking glass self is in true symbolic interactionist form; however, from an understanding that race in America is a social construct designed to create and maintain oppression, this causes an uneven racial dynamic for the looking glass. This limits the selectivity of a minority race to implement the looking glass tool. Cooley does not go into specific detail about the determination of whom is considered to be a "significant" other, however those in power strive to maintain a hegemonic, White-centered society and oppression. For example, in the education system despite an increasingly diverse population, the teachers remain predominantly White and female (Goodwin 2002; Sleeter 2001). Hence, DuBois' experience of a racialized America through the lens of a young Black man yielded a double-consciousness due to the narrative of the dominant society. It seems that due to the salience of race, as a part of their identity negotiation, Blacks have no other choice but to face the stigma that is presented in society through media and interpersonal experience; I anticipate this to be a factor in the psychological distress experienced by Black Immigrants over time (RE1).

2.5.1 Identity Conflict & Negotiation

As a result of the looking glass experience and understanding the meaning of their minority status, individuals usually engage in a process of identity negotiation in which they seek to reconcile their self-concept with the perception of society. For instance, Black Immigrants have often felt like ambassadors, to disprove negative stereotypes about their country (Asante 2012), a term that Feagin (2010) would call a “counter-frame” that critical race theorists have referred to as a “counternarrative.” (These concepts will be discussed further in the subsequent section.) Both psychologists and sociologists have attempted to explain the identity negotiation process through various (social) identity theories, all of whom warned about the psychological (or self-esteem) impact of a failed reconciliation. DuBois introduces the idea of multiple selves, a sense of “two-ness” that is developed as a result of being viewed with “contempt and pity” (1903). DuBois theorizes that Blacks will always have to struggle with being Black and American, spending a lifetime trying to unsuccessfully reconcile these two souls. DuBois believed that Blacks did not have their own true sense of consciousness, but instead had to see themselves through the lens of the White dominant society. DuBois notes that the African American “always 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” (DuBois, 1897: 194). James (1910), in non-racial terms, identified the main driving force of identity negotiation is the “self-feeling” which is determined by “ones actual success or failure, and the good or bad actual position one holds in the world” (1910:307). He even goes as far as saying that the incongruence is evident in “lunatic asylums” and recommends that in order to achieve emotional health, one must establish a balance between the actual and the “potential” or “ideal” self. Similarly Erikson (1968) described a fifth state of

psychosocial development (identity versus role confusion) in which individuals are at risk of psychological distress not being able to answer the “Who Am I” question, and not knowing how they fit in society. As we explore the identity negotiation of the racial and ethnic identity, we must understand them to be social identities, and a form of membership to an in-group. A racial identity is understood to be a self-concept and connection to the Black racial group (Sellers et. Al. 1998), and an ethnic identity has been similarly defined as a “sense of belonging to an ethnic group, and the part of one’s thinking, perceptions, feelings and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership” (Rotheram and Phinney 1987:13). Black Immigrants’ inability to reconcile their experience of double-consciousness, two-ness, or potential identity conflict with their membership to these groups puts them at risk of psychological distress.

Many racial identity process models attempted to address this process of conflict and reconciliation, based on the theory that the stigma from the looking glass is internalized and integrated into the self-concept. However, these models reflect the African-American experience, and start with a double consciousness feeling of White superiority and self-hatred (Thomas 1968; Cross 1971; Jackson 1975) which ends in a “hatred of the pale world” as Blacks develop anger and bitterness as they discover that they will never be granted the same opportunities as Whites. An ethnic minority identity development model which more closely resembles the Black immigrant experience was developed by Kevin Nadal (2004) for Filipino Americans. According to Nadal, Filipino Americans start with an ethnic awareness, due to the insulation of childhood that allows exposure primarily to the culture and influence of the immediate family. When exposed to other cultures, they attempt to assimilate to the dominant group, and develop a hatred towards self and other minority group members. The third stage is an awakening to social political consciousness in which the individual recognizes oppression of the dominant culture

and develops negativity towards the White culture. The next stage is a pan ethnic Asian American consciousness in an effort to find a sense of belonging. In the quest for power in numbers, Filipinos become aware of their invisibility within the Asian American consciousness and develop an ethnocentric consciousness. The final stage of racial identity formation with this model is incorporation, a feeling of satisfaction with one's own culture and an appreciation for all others. Kim's (1981, 2001) Asian Identity Development Model goes through similar stages. The first stage is an ethnic awareness, followed by White identification and an attempt to assimilate to Whiteness. A third stage is an awakening to political consciousness through a deeper understanding of discrimination, followed by a redirection to Asian American consciousness where there is a sense of pride through familial and social networks. However these identity models are flawed in that the identity negotiation process is non-linear, as identity is understood to be an ongoing process of negotiation.

Racial identity negotiation for Black Immigrants must account for the relationship between their primary or most salient identity and how that interacts with race as they assimilate to a race-conscious country, while taking into account the unique stressors related to immigration. For Black Immigrants, while they are exposed to different racial groups, their identity is not opposite of or anti-White, just different (Ogbu, 1987). In addition to the perception of being "just different", minority immigrants perceive discrimination and prejudice as an expected reaction to outsiders (Gibson 1988). This shows a void in the understanding of the complex Foreign-Black experience in their identity negotiation in the United States. Godfried Asante's (2012) text "Becoming 'Black' in America: Exploring Racial Identity Development of African Immigrants" explores the experience of how sub-Saharan Africans experience, negotiate, and resist the Black identity in the United States. Asante highlights that the social stratification in

Africa is clannism, a separation of nobles and non-nobles as opposed to a racial identity. Similarly, Haitians prioritize socioeconomic status and education over race, and as a reflection of success (Doucet and Suarez-Orozco). An understanding of what it meant to be Black developed through their interactions with both Black and White immigrants. Black immigrants come from a society in which race is not salient, and enter a culture in which it is perceived as dichotomous. Due to their differences, they are often accused of “acting white” (Asante 2012, Navarette’s 1993, Fordham and Ogbu 1986).

While there are many opportunities for identity conflict due to the differences in meaning and salience related to racial identities, immigrants are not required to choose one identity over another. Some immigrants may choose to identify with the mainstream culture and eschew their ethnic identity (Berry 1997), others may embrace their new minority status (Portes 1993) and others will opt to distance themselves from African-Americans (Waters 1999). However, immigrants who have the ability to negotiate a bi-cultural identity in a manner that is harmonious also have less depression and anxiety (Tikhonov, Espinosa and Huynh 2019).

2.5.2 Managing Stigma & Presenting Counternarratives

One important aspect of identity negotiation is According to Goffman (1963), in an effort to manage their stigma, individuals seek to abscond their stigmatized status. One social strategy is “passing” (Rohy 1996), a strategic performance for the purposes of masking stigma and for acceptance in an oppressive environment (Brown 1991). There is a cost-benefit analysis to passing. There are different types of passing strategies including disassociation (Ponse 1976; Spradlin 1995) where an individual behaves as if he is not a part of the stigmatized group, omission, or “dodging” (Spradlin 1995) where individuals chose to withhold information that

would reveal their stigmatized status, or mutual pretense in which individuals engage in a way in which the stigma exists as a shared secret (Spradlin 1995).

Passing, however can be interpreted as an act of resistance or a form of “internalized oppression” (Beard & Glickhauf 1994). Black Immigrants choosing to pass as Black may be viewed as a form of resistance from an oppressed position to benefit from resource such as affirmative action (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Second-generation immigrants who have the ability to pass by changing the way they talk or act, and as a result are able to pass as having a Black, Immigrant, and sometimes White identity (Waters 1994). This passing does not mean assimilation, but rather wearing a mask as a form of protection (Kanuha 1999). This component of performance and wearing masks indicates that the passing behavior is an important part of negotiation with a stigmatized identity; the appearance of assimilation does not mean true identity change.

Erving Goffman (1963) defines a social identity as anticipating one’s category and attributes; these become expectations that do not surface until they are challenged with unexpected attributes through social interaction. Goffman defines a virtual social identity and an actual identity which aligns with DuBois’ concept of double-consciousness for a Black man in America. It is when the person in our mind is viewed as less desirable, he becomes discredited and “tainted” or “stained,” as described by DuBois. Goffman puts stigma in three different categories: physical deformities, character flaws and tribal stigmas of race, nationality, and religion. Only with the tribal category can stigma be “transmitted” through generations. Haitians have faced a stigmatized identity for years, being labelled as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (World Bank 2019), identified by the CDC as a group of people unfit to donate

blood for the first time in history due to AIDS (Curran 2011), and a “shithole” country (McHendry, 2018).

Snow and Anderson (1987) in their work on stigmatized identities chose to “disaggregate” identities into social and personal identities. Social identities are defined as identities that are placed upon individuals so that they are viewed as social objects while personal identities are self-attributed. This again highlights the importance of actors having the autonomy to decide their own identities distinct from those imposed by society. Considering that identity development is not a passive process, there is “work” that goes into its formation. According to Snow and Anderson, our behaviors or our “identity work” is driven to feel a sense of cohesiveness with one’s self-idea and imputed identities, which yields one’s self-concept. Audre Lorde (1992) asked, “Am I to be cursed forever with becoming someone else on my way to myself?” Snow and Anderson’s (1987) work with the homeless showed that even the most disenfranchised individuals were motivated by a positive self-image, and as part of their identity work, they engaged in three types of “identity talk”: distancing, embracement, and fictive storytelling. Distancing allows this stigmatized population to reject traits or characteristics that are inconsistent with the self-concept. Embracement is the acceptance of aspects that are congruent with the self and personal identity. Finally, fictive storytelling is a combination of embellishments and future-oriented fabrications related to accomplishments. For Black Immigrants who come to the United States, often for better opportunities for themselves and their family, the process of identity work is particularly crucial for upward mobility. They often speak in a way that rejects the stereotypes of Black America while attributing superior characteristics (hard-working and ambitious) with their ethnic or national identity and culture (Waters 1994). These tools of identity work are evident as Black Immigrants seek to distance

themselves from the stigma of the Black (American) identity (Vickerman 1999). This identity work described by Snow and Anderson is very similar to critical race theory's uses the term "counternarrative" as a method of presenting an alternate story that disrupts the white racial frame and challenges racism (Solorzano and Yosso 2002). I anticipate participants in this study to mirror previous research in which they aim to maintain an out-group status and a distinction from Black Americans in an effort to protect their mental wellness (RE3).

2.6 Social/Group Identity: "The In-Group"

Individuals use social comparisons in ways that will allow them to either relate more closely or distance themselves from certain social groups (Tajfel 1981). The African American racial group identity is a fairly rigid and stable one, meaning that it remains as a consistently lower social status, and has relatively impermeable boundaries. This rigidity is evident through Native Blacks being "stuck in place" across generations; not only do they have the lowest rates of upward mobility compared to other racial groups, but they have the highest rates of downward mobility compared to other groups (Chetty 2018). In fact, when a Native Black boy and a White boy grow up in the same neighborhood, with comparable income, the income gap still develops during adulthood, with Blacks making less than Whites. (Chetty 2018)

Hughes (1998) identifies typical "low status strategies" that can be employed to attain a positive social identity, however, it is unclear how effective they can be. The three strategies include: individual mobility, social competition, and social creativity. Mobility is escaping or disaffiliating with the current group, and moving to a group of higher status, which is impossible for African Americans. Social competition is through improving the group's material or legal standing; while this tactic is possible, is it not always effective when it comes to the lower social

standing of African Americans. Finally, social creativity is claiming positive characteristics and disavowing negative ones, which is a very commonly used strategy for African Americans.

Low status strategies highlight how Black Immigrants negotiate their identities to become in-group or out-group with the Black American social group identity. Black Immigrants become aware of the status of being Black in America through mainstream stereotypes, identifying Blacks as lazy, criminal, and not family oriented (Adeleke 2004, Waters 1994). Furthermore, for Black Immigrants from the West Indies, there is a preferential experience when they maintain their ethnic identity to Whites (Vickerman 2001; Waters 1999). Immigrants attempt to achieve “Whiteness” by distancing themselves from Black Americans for upward mobility (Roediger 1994, 2005). This distancing is not only psychological, but also physical, with many Black Immigrants living in the suburbs as opposed to the densely Native-Black inner city (Rong & Fitchett 2008). Choosing to have an ethnic identity, however, may be received as irrelevant or divisive (Krasnitz 1992; Waters 1999). Black Immigrants rely on the news media to understand race relations in the United States, which sometimes means preparing their children for the barriers they may face for being perceived as Black in America (Awokoya 2012). Parents of Black Immigrants dissuade assimilation or affiliation with the stereotype of Black American culture (Awokoya 2012). Second generation immigrants often grow up with parent expectations to continue ethnic and cultural practices from their home country (Awokoya 2012), contrasted with pressure from their peers to assimilate or become more “Americanized” which cause a sense of duality. Second generation immigrants adopt one of three identities: African American, ethnic American or an immigrant identity (Waters 1999).

However, some second-generation Haitians have often attempted to “cover up” their background to avoid stigma (Stepick 1998; Zephir 2001). Children of immigrants often feel

“between” identities and have to cope with “ethnic authenticity” tests (Pyke & Dang 2003) to validate their identity choice. Fear of these tests cause some Black Immigrant children to decrease their interaction with their ethnic peers (Awokoya 2012). Choosing to maintain an ethnic identity or a racial identity is not as simple as acknowledging a label. Immigrants learned that being Black meant more than possessing the Black skin color, but being knowledgeable about Hip-Hop, how to walk and talk, and understanding popular Black culture (Awokoya 2012).

According to Burke and Stets (2009) who theorized about three distinct types of identities (role, social, and personal) race and ethnicity would be considered a social identity, and social identity in particular has the strongest impact on self-worth. Therefore, although race is a fairly rigid label for people of color, unlike DuBois and Fanon’s assertion that there could be no reconciliation between the inferior identity and the ideal sense of self, there is agency in managing the meaning of marginalized, stigmatized, or oppressed identities (Snow & Anderson 1987; Goffman 1963). Racial group identification has been defined as belonging to a status group, and associated feelings with being a part of that group (Gurin, Millier and Gurin 1980). Black Immigrants experience racial discrimination just like Native-Blacks (Rong & Brown 2002; Waters 1994). The desire to feel good about themselves drives them to feel good about the group (Tajfel 1981). The measurement of racial group identification is different than salience measurement in that it measures the closeness that an individual feel with their racial group. Research shows that there are multiple factors that impact closeness to the Black racial group (Habecker 2017). Both rural and southern Blacks generally have a stronger racial group identity, while an increase in education and income leads to a decrease in racial group identity (Broman, Neighbors and Jackson 2001). With better understanding of discrimination and inequalities in the

United States, there is an increase in solidarity with Native Blacks through a racialized identity (Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999).

What Snow and Anderson (1987) discovered as identity talk was the existence of a counter narrative, or what Feagin (2010) would define as a “counter-framing” for people of color. In order to challenge the (White) dominant narrative, counter-framing is defined as highlighting present and historical strengths, critique of social norms, highlighting hypocrisy within structural racist policies, and a call to revolutionary action. One of the major tenets of racial formation theory is that various racial acts within society cannot be viewed as isolated, but under the umbrella of the racialized social system, in an effort to enforce or challenge that system. Similar to the White racial frame, “racial projects,” as defined by Omi and Winant (2015), permeate our society, both large and small, making the understanding of race to be “common sense.” Projects reveal how race is organized, and determines the racial rules of engagement in society. These projects can be as big as a revolution, or as small as a microaggression. For example, one racial project that has taken hold in the Black community has been on Black beauty. Although a “Black is Beautiful” movement started in the 1960’s, there was a natural hair movement in the 2000s that sparked social, political and economic change. Dominant culture dictated straight and “neat” hair; this was a way to control Black bodies both socially and economically, as certain workplaces maintained racist guidelines on appearance. This racial project challenged the beauty norms, triggered a 34% decline in relaxers since 2009 (Sidibe 2015) while increasing the market of Black beauty supplies, while also advocating for changes in racist regulations such as “unauthorized hairstyles” outlined by the U.S. Military (Rhodan 2004). Racial projects are what allows for fluidity in racial concepts over time and space. Despite the fact that racial/social identities may be influenced by negative assessments of

others, for those who belong to lower status groups, a process known as “social creativity” occurs, where individuals produce and internalize positive ingroup definitions (Ellemers and Haslam 2012; Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk 1999; Tajfel and Turner 1986). The White racial frame impacts identity work, which in turn feeds into racial projects and social creativity for counter-framing in society. Racial identity development and its related work is not an individual experience, but directly impacts the social group as a whole.

In a world in which the dominant narrative is from the perspective of Whites as the social “norm,” as people of color develop their sense of identity, they quickly realize that they are the “other.” Mead’s (1934) understanding of interpersonal relationships is based on signs and symbols in society. Signs are actions and reactions that do not have explicit meanings behind them nor do they require awareness or understanding. Symbols, however, are actions that generate the same meaning between the actor and receiver. Individuals learn who they are, as a social symbol through a series of interactions. That social symbol, once understood as a role, is what Mead defines as the “generalized other.” Whether they chose to hold onto their nationality, an ethnic identity or a racial identity, immigrants cannot escape the racialized stratification within the United States (Williams 1996). Although race is a social construct that can be created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed (Omi and Winant 1986), racial inequality has real consequences in the United States that is demonstrated through income inequality (Shapiro 2013), health disparity (Phelan et. al 2015), and residential segregation (Massey 1988).

2.7 What the Research Tells Us

Haitians are at a high risk due of psychological distress due to the stigma related to their ethnicity. This includes being labelled as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (World Bank 2019), labelled by the CDC as carrying AIDS (Curran 2011), and identified as a “shithole”

country (McHendry, 2018). The impact of this stigma has already been shown to have negative impacts on self-esteem and intimate relationships (Santana and Dancy 2006). For those who are refugees, they are at higher risk of trauma (Cohon 1981) and threats to their psychological well-being (Boise et al., 2013; Ho, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013; Venters & Gany, 2011). Haitians have also been victims of bullying (Waters 1999), causing second-generation Haitians to express feelings of embarrassment related to their identity (Stepick 2001). While there is a dearth of research on Haitian mental wellness, this population is ideal in better understanding the deterioration in mental health that Black Immigrants experience (Williams 2007), specifically related to their identity negotiation.

Black immigrants become witness to anti-Blackness through negative portrayals of Black people through the white superiority lens of the media, and exposure to a racialized society. Although the reflections of society does have a direct impact on psychological distress, as evidenced by increased psychological distress in Haitians as a reaction to anti-Muslim post 9/11 attitudes (Rousseau et. al. 2011), selectivity in utilizing the looking glass is likely a protective measure for self-esteem (Porter and Washington 1979). Haitians, who likely have a low racial identity salience due to their Black-majority homeland (Patterson 1972), are still confronted with a double-consciousness in which they must negotiate their identity within the racialized lens of American society. Despite being ascribed as Black due to their phenotype, immigrants negotiate their identity through segmented assimilation, maintaining or losing their ethnic identity, and establishing proximity or distance to Black Americans. This identity is evident in census behavior, which shows a decrease in Latinos identifying as Black (Fergus 2016), and Haitians selecting “other” instead of Black (McKenny and Cresce 1992). Although the decision to write “Haitian” instead of Black may be understood as a salient ethnic identity, research has shown

that Haitians develop their own stereotypes of minorities in America (Waters 1999), reflecting distancing behavior described by Snow and Anderson (1987) to negotiate their stigmatized racial identity.

We understand the self-concept to be driven by the feelings that emerge, and the need for congruence between the understanding of oneself, and the perception of others. This is illustrated through James' (1910) work indicating the need to be viewed as successful in the world, and DuBois' need to reconcile the feeling of twoness that emerges as a result of their Black Skin (DuBois 1897). Haitian immigrants are at risk of identity conflict when confronted with a racial identity, which is understood to be a connection to the Black racial group (Sellers et. al. 1998). This conflict is likely magnified in the second-generation who are more exposed to the Black American community than their parents (Waters 1999). This puts Haitian immigrants in a position to eschew their ethnic identity or to maintain it, which seems to be dependent on their surrounding community. Just as Blacks at predominately White institutions are twice as likely to have a strong racial identity than Blacks attending HBCUs (Steck et al. 2003), Haitians students in predominately Black schools were more likely to maintain an ethnic identity (Stepick 2001).

Based on the definitions of racial and ethnic identities, this identity negotiation process is not simply how individuals view themselves, but how they perceive themselves in relationship to others as in-group or out-group. In addition to selectivity with the looking glass, and motivation to seek identity congruence (and salience) that presents positive self-feelings, individuals further seek interactions and relationships that verify their self-concept (Swann 1992), thus impacting the social circles that Haitians prefer. The development of a salient racial identity is tied to self-esteem (Demo & Hughes 1990; Porter & Washington 1979), and a salient group been correlated with less depression (Hughes et al. 2015). Depending on the place of migration, Haitian

immigrants may have the opportunity to develop the “informal supports” referenced in Stepick’s (1998) study in Florida, or instead may be negatively impacted by the ending of the Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) program (USCIS 2019), thus requiring them to look beyond their ethnic community for support. Ultimately, the failure of a Haitian immigrant to negotiate their identity around the stigma from both the ethnic and racial lens puts them at increased risk for psychological distress.

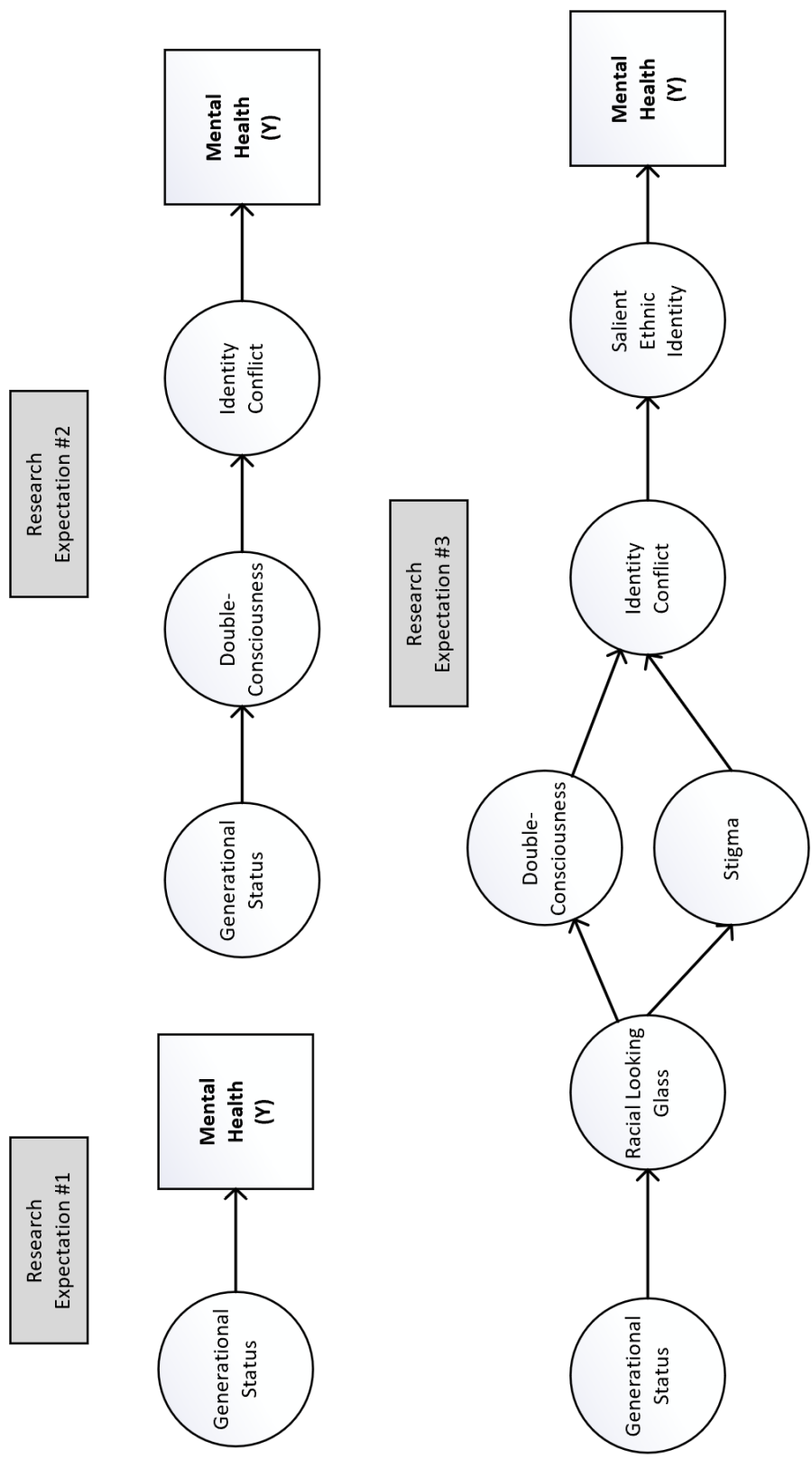
Although this study’s intent is to understand the deterioration of mental health that occurs over time and through generations for Black Immigrants (Williams 2007), there are many resilience factors that protect mental wellness. The history of segmented assimilation for Black immigrants (Waters et. al 2010) illustrates autonomy with identity negotiation. Haitian immigrants may not experience the conflict of having to choose one identity over another, and instead present a bicultural identity. Thus, instead of the distancing identity work defined by Snow and Anderson (1987), Haitian immigrants may instead chose to embrace the positive aspect of both their racial and ethnic identity that align with their self concept. Similarly, the looking glass allows for flexibility in that the individual is selective, a technique implemented by African-American youth has been presented as the reason for higher self-esteem (Twenge and Crooker 2002). Finally, a salient ethnic identity that is shown in Haitian census choices is also a protective factor for mental health (Mossakowski 2003), so although they are faced with the double-consciousness in their assimilation to a racialized society, they are not passive in their experiences and through identity negotiation may be able to develop coping strategies to manage the stigma.

With this research, I anticipate to observe double-consciousness due to race emerge after migration for first generation immigrants, and at a much earlier age for second-generation

immigrants due to exposure and assimilation to American society. Their exposure from childhood bullying, discrimination and media will likely lead to self-feelings causing an identity negotiation in which individuals will chose to distance themselves from either their ethnic group or their racial group (RE3). This is based on their perception of the significance of the looking glass and their understanding of their identity as a stigma or as a “risk.” This assessment of their identity will also impact the way in which they present their identity across salience, which will reflect their salience. This identity salience will in turn directly impact their mental well-being.

2.8 Research Expectations

To recap, there are three research expectations based on literature and theory that influence and impact one another. My primary research expectation (RE1) is to find higher levels of psychological distress with second generation immigrants compared to the first generation, mirroring previous studies on Black Immigrants. Since previous research looks at the border Black Immigrant or Caribbean groups, this will contribute to mental health research for this stigmatized population. As I explore how identity plays a role in mental wellness, I also expect to find evidence of racial double-consciousness in both generations, with the first generation having this racial exposure post-migration, likely leading to the presence of identity conflict in both generations (RE2). I anticipate that the second-generation is more prone to this identity conflict due to their earlier exposure to double-consciousness. As a result of stigmatized identities understood through looking glass experiences of media and discrimination, I expect an identity negotiation which involves distancing from Black Americans and a more salient ethnic identity. This will likely be more evident in the first generation, serving as a protective factor for mental wellness (RE3).



3 METHODS

This study explores the mental wellness of first and second-generation Haitian immigrants as they negotiate a stigmatized racial and ethnic identity through the reflection of the media and exposure to discrimination. This qualitative approach elicits the unique perspectives and experiences of Haitian immigrants residing in the metro-Atlanta area through individual interviews and open-ended questioning. Interviews are designed to explore racial and ethnic awareness (double-consciousness), media exposure and discrimination, social circles (in-group/social identity), identity presentation across spaces and presence of identity conflict (identity negotiation), and the impact of these identity experiences and perspectives on mental well-being. This chapter details the recruiting process, data collection, coding, and basic data analysis in order to accomplish this objective.

For the purpose of this study, “Haitian Immigrant” refers to both first- and second-generation individuals. The individuals who were recruited for this study were either born in Haiti, or had at least one parent who was born in Haiti. The majority of Haitians are viewed as African American due to the color of their skin, and those with the darkest skin are more readily targeted for racial discrimination (Maddox & Gray 2002). Due to the likelihood of these experiences triggering double-consciousness or identity conflict, and therefore negatively impacting their mental wellness, these participants are targeted with screening questions, including, “Have you ever been identified as a Black person in America?” This question was carefully worded in such a way that regardless of how the participant viewed himself, as Black or non-Black, his experiences would still be captured through the interviewing process.

This study focuses on two groups with the aim of targeting a population likely experiencing higher levels of psychological distress based on prior research: 1) first generation

immigrants over the age of 18 who have been in the United States for more than 10 years and 2) second-generation young adults over the age of 18. Research indicates that the distress experienced by Black Immigrants seems to increase after 10 years, due to increased exposure to the U.S. culture. For second-generations individuals, being born in the United States, they are hypothesized to have higher levels of distress due to having been exposed to an ethnic identity through their parents, and quickly immersed in a racialized society and categorized as a minority (Case & Hunter 2014; Williams 2007; Anderson 2015). For both groups, the longer the exposure to a racialized society, and as a result experiences of stigma, bullying, discrimination, and a negative perception of the “generalized other,” the more at risk they are to mental health deterioration, which by the third generation mirrors the poorer mental health of Native Black Americans.

Traditional random sampling would be both challenging and impractical for this research. There would be difficulty accessing a comprehensive list of Haitian Immigrants, who may be undocumented, or suspicious of others. Furthermore, typical race and ethnic questionnaires do not capture Haitian Immigrant data. Purposeful sampling allows for depth with a smaller “information-rich” sample size in contrast to a larger generalizable sample that is often needed for quantitative research (Patton 1990). In order to target this specific group, I focus on the Metro-Atlanta area. Atlanta has often been referred to as the “Black Mecca,” (Bullard 2007), with Native Blacks as the largest minority, a population that is steadily increasing. Atlanta is also home to numerous Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Blacks hold political power. This Black-rich community serves as an ideal setting for this study; while phenotypically, it may be similar for Haitian Immigrants, it is the ideal setting to explore the nuances of Black Identity development. Early Haitian migrants emigrated to New York as

opposed to the much closer (and warmer) Miami due to a more welcoming community in the North compared to the South (Buchanan 1979), yet Miami is now home to the largest Haitian population (Census 2018). Therefore, researchers have been drawn to these Haitian “hot spots,” in Miami (Stepeck), New York (Waters) and even the Midwest (Woldemikael 1989), however they have overlooked Atlanta, Georgia. However, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates there was an average of 612 first generation Haitians over the past 5 years in the Metro-Atlanta Area; this compares to almost 13,000 in the state of Georgia (Census 2018). Although Atlanta is not the first stop for Haitians, Atlanta serves as a transportation hub, with multiple highways and a large airport to facilitate easy migration, which likely accounts for the 33 to 48% of “transplants” in the Metro-Atlanta area (Census 2018). Haitians in Georgia have already developed a footprint in Georgia, with various community organizations that include the Haitian Consulate in Buckhead, the Good Samaritan Haitian Alliance Church in Lawrenceville, Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Decatur, Georgia Haitian American Association, and the Haitian American Coalition for Economic Empowerment in Tucker. The lack of existing research and the evident presence of Haitian immigrants makes Atlanta an ideal location for this study.

3.1 Recruiting

According to Glaser and Straus (1967), determining the sample size needed for a qualitative study depends on theoretical saturation, where additional data no longer provides new or improved information. This requires continuous analysis of current data while obtaining new data. One significant factor that impacts sample size is the homogeneity of the population; the more homogenous a population is, the less variation, and therefore the lesser the need for a large sample size (Kuzel 1992). Some researchers assert that with a homogenous group with “narrow

objectives,” a sample of approximately twelve respondents should yield theoretical saturation (Guest et. al 2006). Furthermore, the topic of study impacts the sampling as well so that the consensus analysis, which is focused on information accuracy, can be achieved with a very small sample (Romney, Batchelder, and Weller 1986), however phenomenological research that focuses on experiences and perceptions would require a larger sample. Due to the experiential focus of the lived Haitian experience and the emphasis on ascertaining identity meaning as it relates to mental health, this study would be best described as ethnographic in nature. The original target sample was 40 participants, accounting for gender and generation status, yielding 10 in each cell. The first generation Black Caribbeans had lower rates of mental illness compared to the second generation, and the men had lower rates of mental illness compared to women (Williams 2007), which made these factors important for further exploration during this study. Through recruiting efforts, in anticipation of barriers and unkept scheduled interviews, more interviews were scheduled than needed, yielding a final sample of 44 participants.

There were concerns about two aspects of this research that may have impacted participants’ response rate: (1) stigma related to psychological distress and (2) stigma related to immigrant status in the current political climate. According to the *New York Times* (2018), there has been a 13% increase in deportations from 2017 to 2018, due to a policy that does not prioritize deporting those with criminal backgrounds. Undocumented people would likely have perceived a great risk in coming forward to participate in this study. In an effort to address these barriers, I made every attempt to protect all participants. For example, the actual signing of a consent form may make immigrants uneasy about having to sign a document for an interview (Pernice 1994). Therefore, I requested that the requirement of a signed consent should be waived for participants in this study to reduce any connection to the respondents through their

signatures. The IRB approved this request, and the study was approved by the IRB on November 5, 2019, with this condition. All participants were e-mailed the consent form prior to the date of the interview. At the time of the interview, the first few minutes was spent reviewing the consent form, and answering any participants' questions about the study. Participants were informed about their rights as a participant, that the study was voluntary, that the interview could be terminated at any time, and that they were not obligated to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable. Participants were also informed that they would be assigned a pseudonym and the recorded interview would be destroyed once transcribed. Although some participants spoke freely about their citizenship, there were no questions posed to the participants about their status.

One key component to this research is the experience of Black Immigrants with the portrayal of Black Americans in (social) media. Therefore, the most appropriate method of advertising for this study was by reaching individuals who were already engaged on a social media platform. Research shows that Facebook, for example, is a useful tool to initiate contact (Bhatia-Lin et al. 2009), especially for minorities who may rely on their smartphones for internet access (Pew Research 2015). Advertising on common social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) allowed for easy access to respondents who are interested in participating in the study. Additionally, organizations with listservs were invited to disseminate the research information to their members. In an effort to attract participants, flyers were titled "Black and Foreign: Stories of 1st and 2nd Generation Identities" (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). I intentionally used the word "us" in regards to sharing stories on the fliers in order to establish a sense of commonality, and to assuage potential distrust or paranoia that already exists in the Black community regarding research. There was an option to respond via social media, e-mail or call a

separate number. I maintained a separate phone line exclusively designated for the study. Offering a monetary incentive has historically been proven to increase response rates. In an effort to create an incentive, but also to not create a sense of coercion, participants were compensated with a \$20 Amazon gift card for completing an in-person or video interview.

An Instagram and Facebook account called “HaitianVoices” was created on November 6, the day after IRB approval, in order to engage the Haitian population online, and connect to established platforms, including “Young Atlanta Haitians,” “Atlanta for Haiti,” “Haitians_in_georgia,” “Kaje Travels” and “Haitian Americans,” which collectively had thousands of followers. Three of the above platforms agreed to post the flyer in their Instagram stories, meaning the flyer for the study was visible for a period of 24 hours to any of their followers who opted to view their story. Although this was less desirable to have a time-limited post as opposed to a more permanent post on the page’s feed, these pages had far more exposure than the new HaitianVoices page. Another effort to engage potential participants was through reposting photos on the HaitianVoices page, or posting questions to engage conversation. Questions included “Are you checking African American or Other,” and “What is something that can get your “Haitian Card” revoked?” and “What Haitian Superstition have you held onto?” There were a total of 31 posts published on Instagram, and 30 on Facebook during the period of the study. Flyers were posted on both platforms approximately 4 times. Those who liked or commented on the flyer posts were sent a Direct Message or “DM” via Facebook and Instagram, asking if they would be interested in participating. A screenshot of the Haitian Voices Instagram feed is in Figure 3.3.

There were two flyers disseminated to attract both individuals with a strong Black or African American identity, and a strong Haitian identity. The first flyer (Figure 3.1) had vibrant

blue and red dominant colors, with a large Haitian flag and was disseminated through the duration of the study. A second flyer (Figure 3.2) was created and shared on the Instagram page in February. The second flyer had the same text, however the colors were primarily Black and red, with a large fist in the center of the flyer. Thereafter, both flyers were shared for the duration of the study. The goal of these two different flyers was to draw the attention of different individuals who have different concepts of self. E-mails were sent within Georgia State University to the Black Student Alliance, CARIBSA, and the Multicultural Center and the Sociology Listserv. E-Mails were also sent to (predominately) Black or Haitian organizations, including the GA Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce, St. Peter and Paul church, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, ServeHaiti and a class at Kennesaw State University. Twenty-two participants, not including the above, found the study via social media. Only two participants responded to an e-mail. All other participants were referred by friends, family members or colleagues. One participant who was on the board of ServeHaiti, and also a member of a soccer league successfully referred 5 additional participants, four of which were also coaches and one of which was his sister. Another participant who found the study online recruited her husband, who in turn recruited his sister.

Limitations in recruiting includes those who are illiterate and unable to read the flyer for participants. Furthermore, those who spoke French only could not participate in the study (although none attempted). Due to the primarily electronic methods for recruiting, those with limited to no internet access or social media presence were less likely to be privy to this study. It is also likely that those who do not have a strong ethnic identity and instead identify as Black or African American may not reply to the call for participants. Furthermore, participants who participated in this study may also be familiar with research participation. The very first

participant referenced having just participated in a study, and the second participant shared that she felt inclined to participate because she had to do research herself in her Master's program. Three additional participants disclosed their familiarity with research as well, which likely motivated their participation.

Georgia State University

BLACK AND FOREIGN

HAITIAN IDENTITIES AND WELL-BEING IN AMERICA

PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY BY DOING AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW SO WE CAN LEARN MORE AND UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITIES OF BLACK IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

ANYONE WHO IS ATLEAST 18 YEARS OLD AND HAS ONE OR MORE IMMIGRANT PARENT OF HAITIAN DESCENT

WHAT WILL I GET?

EVERY PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE AN AMAZON GIFT CARD UPON COMPLETION OF THE INTERVIEW

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

CALL OR TEXT (770) 712-1380
OR EMAIL HAITIANVOICES@GMAIL.COM

FOLLOW US HAITIANVOICES

Figure 3.1 Black & Foreign Flyer A

BLACK AND FOREIGN

IDENTITIES AND WELL-BEING IN AMERICA

PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY BY DOING AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW SO WE CAN LEARN MORE AND UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITIES OF BLACK IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT WILL I GET?

EVERY PARTICIPANT WILL RECEIVE AN AMAZON GIFT CARD UPON COMPLETION OF THE INTERVIEW

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

ANYONE WHO IS ATLEAST 18 YEARS OLD AND HAS (1) OR MORE IMMIGRANT PARENT OF HAITIAN DESCENT

FOLLOW US
@HAITIANVOICES

SIGN UP NOW!
SEND AN EMAIL TO
MINNOCENTCUPID1@STUDENT.GSU.EDU

Figure 3.2 Black and Foreign Flyer B



Figure 3.2 HaitianVoices Instagram

3.2 Interviews

In alignment with a symbolic interactionist approach, the qualitative interviewing approach for this study allows for participants to make meaning of their experiences as opposed to relying on the researcher to utilize respondents solely as sources of information (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Through an in-depth interview, a difference in perspective caused by various experiences (Holstein and Gubrium 1995) can be captured in a way that a quantitative longitudinal study could not. Herbert Blumer, the father of symbolic interactionism, expressed frustration at researcher's obsession with overly elaborate and logical mathematical models and an "input-output" analysis and describes this as "grossly inadequate on the simple ground that they deal with only a limited aspect of the full act of scientific inquiry" (Blumer 1969:27). He is critical in that methods are merely the tools used to understand the world around us, therefore research value lies in our successful ability to adequately analyze that world, not just in the methods alone. He challenges the canonical belief that by adhering to one "proper" method or protocol, it automatically validates the results. Blumer (1969) explicitly warns against "forcing research" and "bending the empirical world" to fit protocol or "catchy theories".

As a contrast to the rigid process to research, Blumer encouraged exploratory study, such as this one, where through a flexible and evolutionary research process, the researcher is able to sharpen understanding with more targeted data points. After exploration, he advocates for a critical "inspection," involving analysis of the data from a non-prescriptive and creative approach to asking questions ("flexible probing") about the data. One of the significant reasons behind these research flaws is that the researcher is often not intimately familiar with the research

subject, and is an outsider; it's due to this lack of familiarity that researchers make the error of broad statements. They simply don't know what they do not know. Identity is further expressed through the establishment and reinforcing of boundaries that distinguish in-group versus out-group rights to culture. Anderson (1996) in his study "Code of the Street," recognized that language, dress, and music was performed in alignment with expected identity performance, and that it was equally important to view the permeability of those boundaries. This permeability is an important aspect to capture as a part of the identity negotiation work. Although, an ethnographic approach involving participant observation would have allowed for a richer experience by allowing the researcher to better grasp what is considered to be meaningful, and the situational nature of identity (Hannabuss 2000), due to COVID-19 limitations, observation was limited to social media exposure. I followed various Haitian platforms that displayed videos, memes, and current events for the United States and Haiti. These platforms served as a repository of cultural references with comments from various generations of Haitians, replying in a mixture of English and Kreyòl⁴. This exposure allowed me to plug in and engage with current Haitian issues, news, and pop culture.

While my background as a second-generation Haitian-American likely resulted in a deeper understanding of the identity experience of Black Immigrants, in alignment with Cooley's theory of the looking glass self, my presence likely impacted the research environment, and may also have effected how an individual presents their identity. Gaining trust and building rapport is essential for transparency during an in-depth interview (Fontana & Frey 1994). Instead of simply viewing respondents as sources of information, it's the responsibility of the researcher to take into account the socio-historical experience of the respondent to include age, gender and race.

⁴ This text uses the original and authentic Kreyòl spelling as opposed to "Haitian Creole."

While I do hope to have earned trust by connecting with the respondents (Fontana 1977), despite my potential “in-group” status, I hope to have presented myself as a "learner" (Wax 1960).

During all interviews, I aimed to maintain curiosity through an “attitude of strangeness” and inquiring about ordinary things so as not to assume or presuppose my own meaning to the respondent’s experiences (Lofland and Lofland 1995).

I presented as a dark-skinned, Black Haitian-American woman in graduate school. These factors likely had an influence on participants in how they chose to communicate, or comfort level during the interview. Although I was prepared to do interviews in Kreyòl, participants opted to do the interview in English. However, many participants occasionally slipped into speaking Kreyòl during the interviews. This usually happened seamlessly, without asking for permission or to clarify understanding. Despite our shared race and ethnicity, I had to often prompt a follow-up to questions for further elaboration to prevent the assumption of shared cultural understanding. Participants felt comfortable enough to reference my age, gender, my natural hair, and my skin complexion as a way to connect in reference to a shared experience. As a second-generation Haitian immigrant, I was accepted as an “in-group” member, therefore garnering more trust than an “outsider.” For instance, when asked about his exposure to social media, a participant expressed “not as much as you young folks,” presuming that my age predisposed me to more social media exposure. The same participant expressed his disdain for Black women feeling pressured to wear weaves or to press their hair, whereas another referenced my natural hair as a “crown.” These comments may not have been expressed had I worn my hair in an altered state. One participant mentioned “you and I cannot escape,” in reference to our dark complexion as it relates to racial discrimination. The most significant reference to in-group/out-group status was at the end of an interview, after which I encouraged a participant to pass on the

research flyer for interviews in English or Kreyòl. This participant had had some difficulty expressing herself through the duration of the interview, and it wasn't until after I disclosed my ability to speak Kreyòl that she recognized my Haitian background. She expressed that although she considered Black Americans her "people," she was cautious with her word choice and manner of expressing herself. From that interview forward, I included my Haitian identity as a part of my introduction at the beginning of all interviews.

Once an individual responded to the flyer, they completed a pre-screening to ensure that they met criteria to participate in the survey. Phone-screenings (Appendix A.1) were done via telephone, and if a candidate was considered eligible, an in-person interview was scheduled when permitted until April 1, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is further explained in the next section. Using a grounded theory interviewing approach, questions serve to capture "what is happening here?" (Glaser 1978) and understanding respondent's meaning of their racial-identity experience. Rubin and Rubin (1995) recommend three kinds of interview questions: main quotations, probes and follow-up questions. Warren (2002) encourages a set of interview questions to include approximately three icebreaking questions, and up to eight key questions during an in-depth interview. Charmaz (2012) argues that a researcher's first question may be sufficient for an entire interview, if it is one that cause stories to "tumble out." Jack Douglas (1985) described "creative interviewing" where the interviewer builds rapport with the respondent by sharing things that are familiar through disclosure. Flexibility is encouraged in order to "go with the flow" and follow informative digressions from the main questions, while still remaining some control over the interview. Ending questions are designed to put the respondent at ease and return to a "normal conversation level" (Charmaz 2012).

I utilized a set of questions to serve as a guide for all interviews. These questions serve as a guide to allow for an interaction with the respondent that engenders the sharing of personal stories related to the research interests. The questions were designed to target racial and ethnic identity presentation, double-consciousness, the experience of the looking glass, and mental wellness. I allowed flexibility, in allowing the conversation to flow organically, and asking questions as the interview evolved in no particular order. As appropriate, additional questions emerged to allow for the participant to elaborate further on their experiences. See Appendix A.2 for interview questions.

In an effort to capture the psychological stress related to an identity shift from a majority to minority identity status, the shift in identity salience, and/or conflict between identities for Haitian Immigrants, this study utilizes narrative research. Narrative qualitative research allows for people to express their own unique experiences, and for the researcher to understand human behavior as it relates to the context (Moen 2006). Since this study is exploratory by nature, taking a narrative sets up future sociologists to answer specific questions about the Haitian Immigrant identity experience (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998). Narrative research has been used for storytelling to further extend racial concepts in Critical Race Theory, which makes it a perfect fit for this population. Furthermore, exploring existing datasets through quantitative research proved to be inadequate at getting to the heart of the Black Immigrant identity experience. After reviewing GSS data, questions related to race relations were asked during heightened racial tension, both in 1983 and 1994. Both of these periods, there were numerous riots involving people of color relating to police brutality. Unfortunately, these questions were asked only once, and were not asked again.

In order to assess for mental wellness, I embedded well-being questions within the open-ended interview such as “Do you find that you are having any issues with sleeping, eating, physical aches or discomforts in the past year?” and “Has there been any change in use of drugs or alcohol in the past year?” Haitians tend to view wellness as a reflection of their ability to work (DeSantis 1993), and express illness in terms of somatic symptoms: feeling empty or heavy-headed, insomnia, distractibility, fatigue, low energy and poor appetite (WHO/PAHO 2010), so I focused on physiological symptoms. However, due to limited responses that often consisted of the one-word “no” response from the first sixteen participants, I added the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) to provide some more robust questioning. This screening tool assesses for symptom severity for depression but utilizes physiological symptoms as a part of the screening. Questions include, “Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much?” and “Feeling tired or having little energy?” “Poor appetite or overeating?” “Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or so fidgety or restless that you have been moving a lot more than usual?” Starting with the 17th participant, they were asked the questionnaire questions aloud and provided verbal responses during the interview. For those who did not receive the PHQ-9 in person, they were sent a Survey Monkey questionnaire. In addition to the questionnaire, due to the shelter in place orders and the increase of COVID, participants were also asked “How much would you say the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your mental and emotional well-being?” and were presented with the options: Not At All, Minimal Impact, Moderate Impact & Significant Impact. This COVID question was added in the event that the

pandemic impacted participants' mental wellness. All participants with the exception of one completed the screening tool.

Interviews were recorded via electronic voice recorder for both in person and video interviews. Once interviews were completed, they were be uploaded daily into a password-protected computer and secured by converting it into an encrypted file. Once the manual

PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (PHQ-9)

ID #: _____ DATE: _____

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?
(use "✓" to indicate your answer)

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite —being so figety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself	0	1	2	3

add columns + +

(Healthcare professional: For interpretation of TOTAL, please refer to accompanying scoring card). TOTAL:

Figure 3.3 PHQ-9

transcription process was completed and scrubbed for any identifying information, the original

audio file was destroyed. Respondents are only be identified by an assigned pseudonym and an interview number.

3.3 Climate

A total of 44 Interviews took place from December 7, 2019 to June 18, 2020. During this time, there was a COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic that caused a shift in data collection from in person interviews to video interviews as of April 1, 2020. A total of 20 (45.5%) interviews were conducted in person, while 24 (54.5%) were done using a GoToMeeting platform. Updated research protocols were submitted to IRB, and approval was granted for video interviews. The ability to do interviews via video removed scheduling limitations, and allowed for more frequent interviews scheduled during the weekday and weekend.

COVID-19 had some serious impacts on individuals across the state and the nation, with lay-offs, furloughs, and stay at home orders. Governor Brian Kemp issued an executive order to “shelter in place” on April 2, 2020. On June 29, 2020 the governor signed two executive orders extending the Public Health State of Emergency and COVID-19 safety measures. This order banned gatherings of more than 50 people unless there is six feet between each person, mandatory criteria for businesses and sheltering in place for the medically fragile and those living in long-term care facilities. In the early stages of the research, on March 1st, Georgia had its first positive COVID-19 case. By the end of the study in mid-June, the 7-day moving average was 887, reflecting a significant surge of positive cases over the course of 5 months according to the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH 2020).

In addition to a nationwide pandemic, there were a series of killings and racially charged incidents that gained nationwide attention. In early May, there was a viral video of a 25-year-old man, Ahmaud Arbery who was chased down by three armed White supremacists in trucks while

jogging. While this incident happened in February, the video, which was filmed by the third accomplice, was not released until early May. At the time that the video went viral, none of the assailants had been arrested. Only a few weeks later, in New York City, a woman Amy Cooper was caught on camera falsely reporting to the police that a Black man had threatened her and her dog. This exaggerated reaction and false statement was in response to a man Black man asking her to leash her dog, as is required at the park. The video of Amy Cooper also went viral and was connected to the case of the “Central Park Five” which occurred at the same location 30 years prior, where five young Black men were falsely charged with aggravated assault and rape of a White female jogger, and served as a reminder of injustice often experienced by Black men.

On that same Memorial Day Weekend, another video went viral. This video showed a Black man, George Floyd from Minneapolis, Minnesota, on the ground, yelling that he could not breathe while an officer had his knee pinned to his neck while another officer stood nearby without intervention. This went on for a full eight minutes, and no aid was rendered. Later, another video from a different angle revealed that there were two other officers on top of the man’s lower body, pinning him to the ground. Floyd’s death served as a breaking point for widespread outrage and triggered Black Lives Matter protests across the world. There were multiple protests in Atlanta, some of which turned to riots and property destruction. As a result, Mayor Keisha Bottoms imposed an 9pm curfew starting on May 30th. On the same night of the curfew, two Atlanta officers chased a car, broke the window, and tased two college students and aiming a gun at them. The officers were subsequently fired and face aggravated assault charges at due to the unwarranted and unnecessary force. Two weeks later, an officer shot and killed 27 year old Rayshard Brooks who was intoxicated and had fallen asleep in a Wendy’s drive-thru in Atlanta. The bodycam footage was shared on social media and the news, showing an extended

conversation between Brooks and the officer, an attempted arrest, a tussle in which Brooks obtained possession of the taser and proceeded to run away. At this time, he was shot in the back and did not survive his injuries. Prosecutors are asserting that the officers kicked and stood on Brooks' shoulder after he was shot (NY Times 2020). This then triggered more protests in Atlanta.

Furthermore, in late May, Netflix released a *History 101* documentary series on its streaming platform. The ninth episode of this series, titled "AIDS" stated that Haiti was at the center of the AIDS epidemic that then spread to the U.S. There was a social media campaign to contact Netflix and demand that the episode be removed. This was spearheaded by a popular social media page called "L'Union Suite" with over 150,000 followers. Shortly after, on June 6, 2020, Netflix removed the episode. This connection of AIDS to Haiti is not a new one for the Haitian community. In April 1990, thousands of Haitians walked across the Brooklyn Bridge to protest the FDA's recommendation that Haitians be restricted from donating blood because they were identified as a high-risk group for AIDS. The CDC at the time had identified the 4-H's as risk factors for AIDS: Haitians, homosexuals, hemophiliacs, and hypodermic-needle users.

Finally, despite having the headquarters of the Centers for Disease Control located in Atlanta, Georgia governor Kemp received criticism for his management of the pandemic. As of May, the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly* report from the CDC identified that hundreds of people had been hospitalized for COVID-19, 83% of those people were Black (CDC 2020). While this did not include the likelihood of death, it still caused concern in the Black community.

3.4 Participants

There were a total of 44 first- and second- generation participants, with 18 men (40.9%) and twenty-six women (26%). The majority of participants migrated to Georgia, as only two

participants were born and raised in the metro-Atlanta area. Thirty-three participants (33%) came from the Northeast and ten came from the Southeast (23.4%). All participants were Georgia residents and represent nine different counties. The largest number of participants came from Cobb County (29.5%), followed by Fulton County (15.9%). The average age for all participants was 35.4 years, with a standard deviation of 10.24. All participants had a high school education, with the majority of them having attained a Bachelor's degree (34.8%), followed by a Master's degree (23.3%). The average gross household income was \$98,232, with a standard deviation of \$70,176. The majority of this sample maintain an ethnic identity, and identify as "Haitian" (50%), followed by "Black Haitian" (13.6%) and Haitian-American (11.4%).

The first generation sample consisted of thirteen men (56.5%) and ten women (43.5%). The average age of migration to the United States was 9.9 years of age, and a standard deviation of 5.82. The majority of participants emigrated to the United States during childhood, however two participants had initially come to the US as young children but returned to Haiti and came back to live in the United States as adults. Therefore, their age of migration was counted as adults. Most first generation participants were born in Haiti, with the exception of two individuals who were born in Canada and the Bahamas. The average age for first-generation participants was 40.4 years of age, with a standard deviation of 10.04. The average gross household income was \$125,681, with a standard deviation of \$76,712. The majority of participants had received a higher level of education, with 40.9% having a Bachelor's degree and 27.2% with a Master's degree. There were minor differences between first-generation men and women in the first generation. The women were slightly younger than the men, with an average of 39.3 years compared to 41.3 years for men. Women on average migrated slightly early than the men, at the age of 7.4 years of age, compared to the men at 11.8 years. Women had a lower

household income, averaging \$115,000 per year compared to the \$133,000 average for the men. It is worth noting that the majority of the women completed their interview during a time of COVID-19 quarantine, whereas the majority of the men were interviewed prior to quarantine.

The second generation sample consisted of five men (23.8%) and sixteen women (76.2%). The average age was 28.2 years of age, with a 5.35 standard deviation. The average gross household income was \$69,476 with a standard deviation of 45,569. All participants received at the least “some college” education, with 28.5% having attained an Associate’s Degree and 28.5% having attained a Master’s Degree. Gendered differences within the second-generation include age and household income. Second generation women were slightly younger than the men, averaging 26.5 years of age compared to the 30 year average for men. In addition, women had a gross household income of \$96,666, much higher than the \$58,400 average for men.

There were some notable differences between first and second generations. On average, the second generation participants were 12.2 years younger than the first generation. While the first generation is fairly balanced, the second-generation has the voice of mostly women. Although all participants had achieved at least a high school education, the second generation only 47.6% achieved a Bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 72.7% of first generation participants. While the majority of the second-generation also identified with an ethnic identity with most identifying as “Haitian” (42.9%), this was the only group who had a small sample who identified as African American (14.3%).

Table 1 Descriptives

		1 st Generation		2 nd Generation		All Participants	
		%(N)	M(SD)	%(N)	M(SD)	%(N)	M(SD)
Gender Category	Men	56.52 (13)		23.81 (5)		40.90 (18)	
	Women	43.48 (10)		76.19 (16)		59.09 (26)	
Age			40.43 (10.04)		28.19 (5.35)		35.35 (10.24)
Age of First Racial Awareness	Childhood (12 & Under)	45.45 (10)		90.47 (19)		67.44 (29)	
	Teenage (13 – 17yrs)	18.18 (4)		4.76 (1)		11.63 (5)	
	Adulthood (18+)	36.36 (8)		4.76 (1)		20.93 (9)	
“What Are You” Identity	Black	13.04 (3)		19.05 (4)		15.91 (7)	
	African American			14.29 (3)		6.81 (3)	
	Black Haitian	17.39 (4)		9.52 (2)		13.64 (6)	
	Haitian	56.52 (13)		42.86 (9)		50.00 (22)	
	Haitian-American	13.04 (3)		9.52 (2)		11.36 (5)	
	Israelite Haitian			4.76 (1)		2.27 (1)	
Ethnic Identity Represented Across Spaces	Yes	91.30 (21)		88.89 (16)		90.24 (37)	
	No	8.70 (2)		11.11 (2)		9.76 (4)	
Ethnic Identity Perception	Risk	13.64 (3)		27.78 (5)		20.00 (8)	
	Mixed	22.72 (5)		11.11 (2)		17.50 (7)	
	Neither Risk or Protective	13.64 (3)		22.22 (4)		17.50 (7)	
	Protective	50.00 (11)		38.89 (7)		45.00 (18)	

		1 st Generation		2 nd Generation		All Participants	
		(N)	% (SD) M	(N)	% (SD) M	(N)	% (SD) M
Counternarrative Pressure	Yes	59.09 (13)		57.14 (8)		58.33 (21)	
	Mixed	4.55 (1)		7.14 (1)		5.56 (2)	
	No	18.18 (4)		14.29 (2)		16.67 (6)	
	“Not Pressure”	18.18 (4)		21.43 (3)		19.44 (7)	
Household Income							
			\$125,681 (76,712)		\$69,476 (45,569)		\$98,232 (70,716)
Highest Education	High School	4.55 (1)		0.00		2.33 (1)	
	Some College	13.64 (3)		23.81 (5)		14.60 (8)	
	Associates	9.09 (2)		28.57 (6)		14.60 (8)	
	Bachelors	40.90 (9)		28.57 (6)		34.88 (15)	
	Masters	27.27 (6)		19.05 (4)		23.26 (10)	
	Doctorate	4.55 (1)		0.00		2.33 (1)	
Place of Birth/Migration	Northeast	73.91 (17)		80.00 (16)		76.74 (33)	
	Southeast	26.09 (6)		20.00 (4)		23.35 (10)	
Age at Migration			9.87 (5.82)		N/A		N/A
County of Residence	Cherokee	4.35 (1)		0.00		2.27 (1)	
	Clayton	13.04 (3)		9.52 (2)		11.36 (5)	
	Cobb	26.09 (6)		33.33 (7)		29.55 (13)	
	DeKalb	0.00		23.81 (5)		11.36 (5)	
	Douglas	13.04 (3)		0.00		6.82 (3)	
	Fulton	17.39 (4)		14.29 (3)		15.90 (7)	
	Gwinnett	17.39 (4)		9.52 (2)		13.63 (6)	
	Hall	4.35 (1)		0.00		2.27 (1)	
Henry	4.35 (1)		9.52 (2)		6.82 (3)		
PHQ-9 Average			5.43 (5.10)		6.25 (4.32)		5.81(4.77)
PHQ-9 Score	(0-4) Minimal/None	52.17 (12)		50.00 (10)		51.16 (22)	
	(5-9) Mild	30.43 (7)		25.00 (5)		27.90 (12)	
	(10-14) Moderate	8.70 (2)		25.00 (5)		16.28 (7)	

(15-19)	8.70 (2)		0.00		4.65 (2)	
Mod. Severe						
(20-27) Severe	0.00		0.00		0.00	

3.5 Coding

Blumer warns against interpreting data through a single-minded perspective, such as Parsons' functionalism, conflict process or game theory. Data were analyzed utilizing grounded theory research (Charmaz 2006) to identify experiential themes as they emerged. A grounded theory approach would require 20 to 30 participants in order to reach saturation, with an ability to do in-depth interviews. According to Glaser (1978), grounded theory involves a process of simultaneous coding and theoretical sampling to adjust for deductive data processing. The coding of the qualitative data is an inductive process, utilizing one set of observed data to meticulously comparing and in turn, inform the next set of analysis. From a true symbolic interactionist perspective that understands the importance of meanings from interaction, the constructivist approach of grounded theory coding is for the purpose of expanding knowledge through a deeper understanding of phenomena (Charmaz 2012). Therefore, interview questions were designed to elicit the thoughts, feelings and actions related to an individual's experience as a first or second-generation Black Immigrant.

There are two stages to coding with grounded theory (1) open coding where preliminary interpretations of the data are made and (2) focused coding based on themes that have emerged (Glaser 1992). I primarily utilized the NVivo platform afforded through Georgia State University to review and code transcripts, supplemented with an excel spreadsheet which allowed me to track themes across individuals and easily filter based on various parameters such as generation status, age, and gender. During the open coding phase, interviews were coded based on their response to the interview questions. For example, the responses to "What are you," were coded

as “Identity – What are You” and responses to the question about the census were coded as “Identity – Census.” Responses to the question about their first awareness of a racial identity were coded as “First Racial Awareness.” These interview questions had been designed to explore identity development, negotiations, conflict, and presentation, and are coded in an effort to create a map between identity and mental wellness.

There was a total of about fifteen broad codes that were direct responses to interview questions, resulting in these codes being reflected in almost all interviews. Coding was done within specific groups in order to observe trends within a generation and gender groups. The coding process was initiated with first generation men, followed by first generation women. After analyzing themes across the first generation, second-generation men and women’s responses were coded using the same process. As various themes emerged in later coding, I returned to earlier interviews and reviewed the transcripts to explore if those themes were present or absent. Once broad codes were constructed, I coded each selection one at a time to identify additional themes and codes. For instance, within the response for first racial awareness, bullying came up the most often during that response. Other themes such as “parenting and upbringing” were spread across multiple categories, including value on education, first racial awareness, friendships, and Haitian Identity as Risk or Protective.

Within the context of answering questions, or natural segues into additional elaboration and storytelling, there were multiple themes that emerged and were present across multiple interviews. These themes included: identity label meanings (28 interviews), cultural differences (21), bullying (20), parenting and upbringing (19) police brutality (18), avoidance (17), Haitian revolution (14) romantic relationships (13), pride (12), move to Georgia (11). These themes were

coded based on explicit expression of these topics, and not for sentiments interpreted by the interviewer. For example, the code for pride was not based on phrases that conveyed pride, but instead the specific use of the words “pride” or “proud” during the interview. And the code for avoidance was based on participants explicitly expressing that they decreased exposure or fully eliminated exposure to the media in response to negative representation. Furthermore, in an effort to adequately address the research question, I used “sensitizing concepts” (Blumer 1969) including: identity, first racial awareness (double-consciousness), stigma (looking glass), social circles (social identity), identity meaning (identity negotiation) and emotional reactions (mental wellness).

In an effort to assess for mental wellness, in addition to the PHQ-9 screening tool, I coded all interviews for any negative emotional expressions to explore the level of distress expressed outside of the screening tool. During this coding process, I intentionally searched for non-clinical terms, although clinical terms such as “anxiety” were included in the coding. Terms for the emotional expression coding included: hurt, upset, frustrated, pissed, bothered, angry, sad, tiring, disappointed, stressed, and hurt. Non-specific reference to emotions were captured as well including phrases such as “I felt that,” “It affected me” and “it hit hard.” I then counted the frequency of these emotional expressions, and they ranged from zero to fifteen. While this is not a formal clinical screening tool for mental illness, I sought to capture emotional responses that emerged through the duration of a 45 – 60-minute interview that focused on racial identity, discrimination, media representation, and identity conflict. Through this approach, I anticipated to better capture the emotional responses to identity-related issues, which provided a more acute assessment than the clinical, symptom-centered PHQ-9 questions, and a broader time period, than the PHQ-9 which only looks at a 2-week period.

Through this coding process, and assigning an emotional count to each participant, on average, across all interviews, participants had a negative emotional expression 4.73 times. Twenty participants (45.5%) were the least expressive, with 0 to 3 negative emotion words verbalized during their interview. They were evenly split, with 10 each falling into the first- and second-generation categories. Thirty-five percent were men, and the remaining sixty-five percent were women. Furthermore, as a comparison, the majority of these participants (75%) were considered to have minimal to no symptom severity on the PHQ-9 score. For the eleven participants who were the most expressive, ranging from 7 to 15 negative emotion words during the interview, six (54.5%) were in the first generation and five (45.4%) were in the second generation. Thirty-six percent were men, and the remaining sixty-three percent were women. As a comparison, the majority of participants (54.5%) in this group were considered mild on the PHQ-9 scoring. It is worth noting that 27% of participants in this group had moderate to moderate-severe symptoms according to the PHQ-9 as well.

Coding was an iterative process, as interviews were coded multiple times to explore if there were emerging trends. These emerging codes were also related back to sociological theory referenced in the literature review.

Table 2 Coding Descriptions

Name of Code	# of Interviews	Code description/Interview question & Elaboration
Double-Consciousness (Identity Development)	43	Tell me about your very first experience of race in the United States, and how it impacted you. (When did you have your first a-ha moment that your skin color had a meaning?)
Identity – What Are You? (Self Identity)	44	How do you identify yourself from a racial/ethnic standpoint. (So if I say, “Hey, what are you?” What do you say?)
Black & Foreign (Identity Meaning)	36	What does it mean to you to be both Black and have foreign roots in the United States?
“Census” Identity (Identity Presentation)	36	If you are filling out a Census-like form, and then then says there White, African American, Asian, other, what do you fill out?
Ethnic Identity Across Spaces (Identity Presentation)	39	Do you have the opportunity to present your Haitian identity across spaces? Work, school, home, church, and your social circles?
Counternarrative Pressure (Identity Presentation)	35	Do you feel that there is an added pressure to be the ideal representative, whether it’s for being Haitian or being Black?
Black in the Media (The Looking Glass)	44	Describe your experience with viewing Black people in the media and how does that impact your mood or stress levels if at all?
Discrimination (Looking Glass)	37	Can you tell me about a time where you felt discriminated against?
Ethnic Identity as Risk or Protective Factor (The Looking Glass)	40	In what was do you feel that your identity has exposed you to more risk, or protected you, or both?
Identity Label Meanings & Definitions	28	Descriptions of what it means to be “Black” or “African American” or “Haitian.”
Identity Conflict	42	Tell me about a time where you might’ve felt conflict with your identity. (The conflictual feeling of like who am I? am I this am I that? Maybe causing you to draw closer or distance yourself from a group of people?)
Friendships (In-Group Identity)	40	How would you describe your friend circle from a racial/ethnic standpoint?
Romantic Relationships	13	Reference to spouses, significant others and dating or romantic relationships
Cultural Differences (Out-Group Identity)	21	Cultural differences between Haitian immigrants and African Americans
Police Brutality	18	Violence between police officers and the Black population
White Supremacy/Conspiracy (Distrust)	22	Reference to “programming,” “propaganda,” or an agenda driven by an agenda to intentionally maintain the minority status of Black people.
Bullying	20	Physical or emotional attacks or ostracizing from peers during childhood.
Parenting & Upbringing	19	References to parenting, family values, childhood community, discipline, directives, and observations.
Haitian Ancestors	16	Reference to the Haitian revolution/independence, history or people who came before them.
Pride	12	Any utilization of the terms “proud” or “pride.”
Move to Georgia	11	Any reference to the move to Georgia and it’s impact

3.6 Concept Map

The concept map in Figure 3.5 illustrates how various factors interact with one another, and outlines the organization of the next four analysis chapters. Early identity experiences, are captured through the understanding of the following factors: understanding race in the country of origin (generation status), the exposure to their surrounding community, and the first experience of racial awareness (double-consciousness.) Participants often have an early perception of who they are based on their upbringing and exposure to diversity within their community. These early identity experiences, outlined in Chapter 4, tie back to both DuBois' (1897) concept of double-consciousness and Nadal's (2004) racial identity model in which parenting and upbringing lends itself to a primarily ethnic identity, however with exposure to predominately White spaces, individuals experience a double-consciousness in which they become aware of their Black identity. Some come to the realization of racial differences merely through observation, whereas others develop an understanding of who they are through looking glass experiences of bullying, discrimination and the media. These serve as moderating factors for double-consciousness.

Once the Black identity becomes a part of an individual's self-concept through double-consciousness, the experiences of the looking glass cause this identity to become even more salient. For many, it is the looking glass experience, such a bullying, that leads to an awareness of their race during early childhood. However through adulthood, participants experience discrimination as well as the media portrayals of a "generalized other" which allows participants understand who they are through the lens of society. Chapter 5 reflects the interaction between participants and the looking glass, in alignment with the first two of Cooley's three stages: (1) an awareness of how others perceive an individual and (2) that individual's interest in others'

judgment of him. Education, both formal and informal, serves as a mediating factor for the looking glass experience in two ways: (1) awareness and distrust of a narrative portrayed through the White racial frame (2) achievement of status. With more education and awareness of history, participants have a higher likelihood to distrust and avoid the media, and outright reject the looking glass portrayal of the generalized other. This distrust and avoidance serves as a mediating factor for the perception of the participant's ethnicity as a risk or a protective factor. Perception of their identity as a risk or protective factor also drives how participants chose to present their identity across spaces. It is worth noting that Haitians put a strong value on accomplishment through education, which also doubles as a counternarrative to the negative images of Blacks in the media.

These factors and experiences culminate to an identity meaning, presentation and self-concept is captured in Chapter 6. Participants develop a bi-cultural sense of "Who am I?," which is how they call themselves, how they refer to themselves on paper, and how they inform others about their identity. This salience also impacts the feeling of counternarrative pressures, identity presentation across spaces, and in-group identities, determined by participants' social circles.

The third stage of Cooley's looking glass is a person's resulting self-feeling, which gets to the root of the research question: How does the ethnic and racial identity of Haitian immigrants is assessed in Chapter 7 by analyzing symptoms and expression of mental wellness. Mental wellness is assessed through coding of emotional language used throughout the interview, which is supported by the PHQ-9.

A notable factor that emerged through the coding process were references to the courage of ancestors, both the ones who were a part of the Haitian revolution, and their parents or family

members who demonstrated their own resilience and strength. There was evidence of deep meaning and pride related to their heritage, and an understanding of their identity. These factors, paired with counternarrative pressure present as an identity role, in which there is purpose related to who they are, thus strengthening their mental wellness. What is referred to as intergenerational resilience is outlined in Chapter 8.

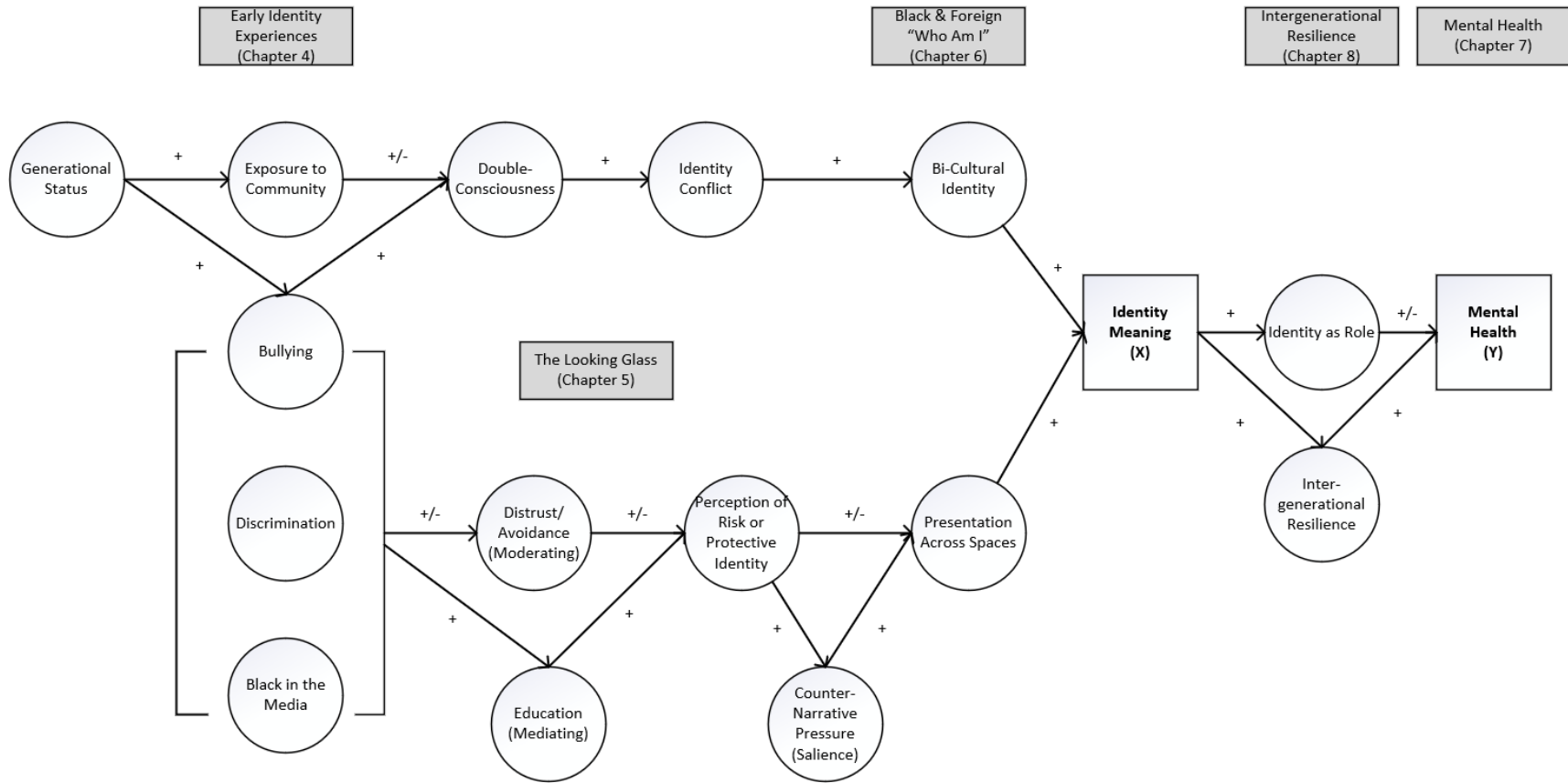


Figure 3.4 Concept Map

4 EARLY IDENTITY INFLUENCES

Both first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants develop a sense of identity through upbringing in their home, interactions within their communities, and often through exposure of different groups of people. This chapter captures the early experiences of Haitian immigrants that trigger an acute awareness of a racial or ethnic identity, a notable memory in which a shift occurs in their understanding of self. While the purpose of this study is not to develop an identity formation model for Haitian Immigrants, there are aspects of their experience that is similar to Dubois' "two-ness" or Cross' "encounter stage" of racial identity development, and more in alignment with Nadal's theory with a strong ethnic identity. Various factors, including the sheltered experiences in childhood, or early experiences in a non-racialized society, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their neighborhoods and communities, and their early interactions with others during childhood. The following sections will allow a deeper understanding of how race and ethnicity are perceived, and ultimately, how they relate to emotional and mental well-being. These experiences include (1) a cultural understanding of race in Haiti (2) first racial awareness (3) childhood and upbringing (4) childhood bullying.

4.1 Understanding Race in Haiti

There were a total of 23 first generation immigrants, thirteen men and ten women. All of these participants were born in Haiti, with the exception of two: Sandy, who was born in the Bahamas and Emmanuel, who was born in Canada. On average, participants came to the United States at the age of 10, with a range from 1 to 27 years of age at the time of migration. Only two participants, Marc and Salva migrated during adulthood. The average age of participants at the time of the interview was 40 years old. Pierre, the earliest migrant came to the United States in 1971, and James, the latest migrated in 2010. These interviews reflect perspectives of migrants

who have experienced life in the United States for as little as 10 years up to almost 50 years. The majority of the participants (73.9%) migrated from Haiti to the Northeast: 8 from Brooklyn, NY, 5 from Boston, MA, 2 from New Jersey, 1 from Connecticut, and 1 from Maryland. The remainder migrated to the South: 3 from Georgia and 3 from Miami, Florida.

In order to assess for any prior notions or understanding of race before migration, participants were asked about their awareness of race in Haiti. For those who could recall their time in Haiti, participants acknowledged diversity in ethnicity, and differences in color in Haiti. However, there was a clear consensus that while differences exist, there are no significant social implications as a result of being a part of a different race, color or ethnicity.

The majority of participants stated that in their Black-majority native home, they never thought about race at all. Marie, who migrated at the age of 15 and spent the majority of her childhood in Haiti stated, "I was born in Haiti, so being Black was not a big deal in Haiti because most of us are Black" (Marie, Age 35). Similarly, Marc provided a contrast of life in Haiti, and the increased awareness of race in the United States, and says:

I was born and raised in Haiti. So, the experiences that a typical African American has, has here, I didn't I didn't feel any sort of way because I was- I never really experienced any... From the two-year-old that moved to Haiti to 19 years old, I came here, I never really felt any different than any human being. "Til this day I don't view- I don't necessarily view race as inferiority or superiority" (Marc, Age 47).

For Marc, the understanding of race was inherently connected to dominance or oppression and was not a salient part of his self-concept. The lack of racial saliency did not make Haitians colorblind to race or skin color as an identifying characteristic. It simply did not impact day-to-day functioning. Jacques, who migrated at 13 elaborates, "For White people it we saw them as nice people who would sometimes come to Haiti. Race was not a thing that you

would wake up, open your eyes and think about every day” (Jacques, Age 48). The differences in skin color did not change the one identity that connected everyone in the country, their Haitian identity. Pierre who migrated at the age of 12, shared “I don’t think there’s such a thing as race in Haiti...Growing up in Haiti, I mean, I went to school with a lot of kids who were ...uh... Mulattoes and also uh Arabs, but they were, we were all Haitians. So there was no...I don’t think I um, I never knew of a race issue growing up” (Pierre, Age 61). Mulatto is a term freely used in Haiti to describe an individual of mixed race, however it does not have the same derogatory connotation that it does in the United States. For the participants who referenced that demographic, they were seen as friends, family and fellow Haitians. Louis, who migrated at the age of 13 shared, “I mean when I went to school early on I had many friends, mulattoes, the Blacks, so on and so forth. So I mean we all got along. So it was... if there were any instances (of race issues) I don’t remember them” (Louis, Age 50).

Haiti’s culture of not emphasizing race permitted even foreigners to experience a seamless integration into Haitian culture despite differences with their skin tone. Emmanuel shared this realization after a conversation with his mother,

And like, they talk about like, how there’s a bunch of North Africans in Haiti that like, live there and go and own the land and stuff like that. I was like ‘Wait, there are White Haitians?’ She was like ‘Absolutely, absolutely there are White Haitians.’ I mean, I haven’t been to Haiti to see them, but like, every now and then, I’ll see a video online of like someone who does not look Haitian speaking like, fluent Kreyòl like better than me. And it’s just like, wow, like, I guess like you can- if you just embrace yourself in the culture you can like, become a part of it” (Emmanuel, Age 22).

Yves paints a picture of how the cultural differences around race in Haiti and America cause him to experience a different America than his White Haitian peers. He shares:

A lot of us who identify as Haitian are White... As a matter of fact, I just went to this little restaurant. And there’s this Haitian guy who owns it... the guy fully identifies as being Haitian... the point I’m making is this: Ok, (if) someone is going

to make a- you know, is going to discriminate. They're going to discriminate when they first see you. Ok. You and I, we cannot escape, OK. But Haitians that's White... They're masked. Ok. They'll get in the circle and hear the conversation that we would never get to hear" (Yves, Age 56).

While Yves stressed that despite the differences in color, there was no evident conflict between the different groups, he did mention certain physical preferences rooted in colorism that he says is present in "all Black cultures." These preferences included light skin and good hair, which he describes as "silliness," and asserted that they never caused him to feel inferior.

Emmanuel, who was born in Canada, shared stories he had learned from his parents. He shared,

I ask them about Haiti all the time and they always tell me how- cause my mom is light skinned and my dad is dark-skinned, but my dad's dad is light skinned and like all his siblings are light skinned and he's the only dark-skinned one. And he talks about the colorism that he experienced as a kid. And then my mom, by proxy, like, talks about how everyone made fun of her when she was light skinned but she recognized that her sisters that were dark skinned got made fun of way more. (Emmanuel, Age 22).

Despite the fact that there was no salient racial identity, Haitians were not colorblind and recognized differences in complexion. Yet despite the presence of colorism, it was not significant enough that it impacted one's trajectory; what mattered was class. Regardless of race, in Haiti, "if you have money, a lot of time you'll be able to get in certain doors regardless of whether you're light or you're dark right, um but in the United States you're Black first. And if you have money, you happen to be charismatic and oh sometimes they'll see past that. But for the most part they don't, to me they don't hesitate to bring you back to where they think you should be. Put you back in your place in other words" (Yvette, Age 42). Salva, who was the eldest of all participants at the time of migration emphasized the socioeconomic delineation, stating,

I wanna say it's more of a Socioeconomic awareness in Haiti. Growing up as a kid- first of all, my parents were very communicative with me. Always talking about differences, and society when it comes to economy, opportunities, etc. So that's my level of awareness in Haiti. You clearly see, growing up, the lines of demarcation in terms of economic wealth, or people who are really struggling" (Salva, Age 48).

He further elaborated that there is a Middle Eastern population who disproportionately controls the economy. When asked if being Black equated to being poor, he replied "I wouldn't say it's that simple... you have a sort of separation of the Black population." He stressed that Black people could be lower class, middle class professionals, or the wealthy; however, it was more likely that the Middle Eastern immigrants to be rich rather than poor.

Due to the dynamics of race and colorism in Haiti, there was no understanding of racism. One participant stated, "In Haiti, it is like you do not even know if you're Black because it's a Black country. But let's be honest- so nobody will tell you "Why are you Black" and they will not treat you (bad) because of your skin color or they would not do anything racism against you because everybody almost everybody is kind of Black there, and then there is I mean you just. You don't really worry about your skin" (James, Age 25). Finally, Audrey explained "I think in Haiti is more focused on Black on Black versus where here. It's more of racism, systematic" (Audrey, Age 36).

Based on the experience of the first generation Haitian immigrants in this study, although they understood the concept of race, it served no function in Haiti, and therefore was not a part of their self-concept or identity. This is in alignment with previous research on Black Immigrants (Stone 1972; Tamari 1991) highlighting the lack of racial centrality in their identity. Therefore, first generation immigrants did not experience a racial awareness until they migrated to the United States, and exposed to a racialized culture. Similarly, second generation immigrants often develop a racial awareness when exposed to the diverse community outside of their home, or a

different community as a result of a move. The next section illustrates the experience of first racial awareness for both first and second generation immigrant participants.

4.2 First Racial Awareness

DuBois describes his first racial awareness occurring during his boyhood at a schoolhouse, as he attempted to give a young girl a gift:

The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, — refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a footrace, or even beat their stringy heads. Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the world I longed for, and all its dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrest from them” (DuBois, 1903).

Although it’s unclear DuBois’ exact age at the time of his awareness, it can be surmised with his description of his encounter that he was a boy, not yet a teen. When asked to recall their very first awareness of their race, their “a-ha” moment that their skin completion had a meaning attached, the women on average identified an awareness or double-consciousness at the age of 14, whereas the men reported an average age of 17. This section will be divided into first and second generation due to the unique experiences of migration, and the circumstances in which they become exposed to a racial identity.

The experience of the first racial awareness for these first-generation participants was organized into two general categories: Mistreatment (such as bullying or discrimination) and Exposure or Observation. Bullying was in reference to a childhood experience in which peers engaged in name-calling, ostracizing behaviors or even physical attacks towards the participants. Discrimination however was in reference to an adult mistreating the participant either during

their childhood or adulthood. Observation is an awareness that occurs organically, through exposure, typically due to a juxtaposition of previous experiences to a predominately White space. The “exposure” category is similar to DuBois’ experience in which he suddenly became aware of his race after observation.

4.2.1 The First Generation

The majority of the first-generation men reported mistreatment as a part of their racial awareness, either in the form of bullying (4) or discrimination (4). In contrast, only one of the 10 women identified bullying as their first memory of racial awareness. The majority of the women reported an experience in which they observed racial differences (6), and the remainder reported discrimination (3). For those who described discrimination, three of the men were called the N-word during their teenage years, one reported being held back a grade when coming to America while White kids were treated differently, and the remaining two described racist interactions during adulthood. Despite experiences of discrimination bringing to light a sense of racial awareness, these participants expressed that these situations did not have much impact on them.

For the twelve men that described their first racial awareness, they were split so that 5 developed an awareness during childhood (12 and younger), 3 during teenage years (aged 13 - 17) and 4 during adulthood (18 and older). For three of the four participants who expressed experiencing a first awareness in adulthood, they all developed recently, within the past four years. For the ten women who described their first racial awareness, five recognized their race during childhood, one during teenage years, and four during adulthood. Men were more likely to experience direct mistreatment from others, whereas women gained awareness through observation.

Pierre, a 61 year old participant described discrimination from both a racial and ethnic standpoint while in Junior High, stating, “I went to a predominantly White school back then in Brooklyn, and some kids were calling us Niggers and stuff like that. Um... It didn’t really affect me that much because I had other kids also call me Frenchie...because we were Haitian, and we barely, I hardly spoke any English so I think I just, it didn’t affect me that much.” Yves recalled being called the N-Word by soccer players from another team in high school attributed his resilience to this situation to his Haitian and New York identity:

You know they call us some names, we call them some names and because uh, I think the reason why I’m saying that is because in New York we are a little more secure. I have to say it like that because stuff like that especially uhm Haitian uhm we, we don’t, we, we don’t let anybody look down at us. And uhm because of that we, we already think that we are equal with anybody but because our parents raise us like that, we grew up in our country like that so it’s it doesn’t impact us the way it would impact some other... I will say it, Blacks.” (Yves, Age 56).

Despite the bullying he experienced, Yves cites an inherent fortitude from both his Haitian and New York identity that allows him to maintain a high level of self-esteem, while also alluding to the idea that Black Americans do not possess this same fortitude.

In elementary school, Yvette recognized the difference between her and her peers through direct experience when a teacher spoke to and treated her poorly compared to her White peers. Louis described his experience of being called the N-Word as a teen as “quite shocking,” however stated that he “just continued on my path and went to work.” For James, who has been in the US exactly 10 years, he described a racist experience four years ago that triggered his racial awareness, stating “I realized that a lot of people do not really uhm do not really appreciate like uhm Black people, or like a different race.” Salva, who came into the US at the age of 27 described his first experience with racial awareness in the US as a racist altercation with a neighbor. While he was aware of his race at a younger age, during his time in Europe, he

described the experience of race as different and less segregated than the United States. Hence why he was especially triggered when confronted with his neighbor about a parking space. He shares:

I had heard rumors that they weren't really uhm I wanna say foreigner friendly <laughs> so I kinda you know, their reaction to it all made me feel like that was the case. You know, very aggressive, uhm you know "get the bleep off my driveway, or I'll call the cops." You know, I felt like it was an exaggerated reaction, you know relative to what was going on. (Salva, Age 48).

There were three women who expressed an awareness of their race through discrimination at the workplace. One participant was oriented to this by her Black peers. She stated, "I went to work with a mindset that I'm going to do a job when I get in the workplace, I didn't go. I'm Audrey, the Black girl. I carry myself as Audrey, the employee, expected to be treated the same as others. So it wasn't until, Hanging around with other co-workers. Hearing them saying, yes, it's because I'm Black or. Yes. That's why they're treating you this way, because you're Black and Haitian and you have an accent" (Audrey, Age 36). Another participant Anya, shared that a parent refused to interact with her due to her skin color. Finally, due to her young age, her race, and gender, Anika describes an experience in which her presence in a space was questioned, and she was presumed to be a secretary despite her position as the manager.

Many first generation women shared stories that illustrated their first racial awareness as being a part of a diverse, or predominately White space. These were not attributed to negative experiences, more so a self-realization as a result of awareness of one's surroundings. One participant describes coming to this realization in elementary school, stating

We had White neighbors, Cuban neighbors, Puerto Rican neighbors. We had a Haitian couple and then there was another Haitian family, a White family. So everybody was, was a different, you know, a race and from someplace different. So I was aware that we were different, but it didn't really stand out. If that makes any sense. I could tell we were different, especially being Haitian and the languages,

but we were still from such a mixed community and we all got along so well.”
(Sandy, Age 47).

Two others, who attended predominately White institutions shared an increased sense of Blackness due to being in the minority. One shared, “On my floor, I was the only Black girl. And college was, I’m going to age myself... I graduated in ’06... so fifteen years ago. (chuckles) So fifteen years ago... And I felt Black. Because I didn’t see like... And I am good in my skin. I don’t need any other Haitians around me to be Haitian... I don’t need that. but to not have not one...” (Marie, Age 35). Widlene shared, “So uhm I would say college, the only -the only time that I saw that uhm that I was Black was people that uh that uh I was hanging out with. You were just automatically drawn into a group of people that were there you know” (Widlene, Age 32). Another participant expressed an awareness of her minority status in a predominately White space, however more emphasis was placed on the language barrier. She stated, “So I had to learn English. So I think, um, just because of the language barrier, it was more than just the color as well. It’s trying to fit in, learn the language. And also the color thing when I went to that school has you kind of like, Oh my goodness, like what you kind of wonder, like, okay, what are people thinking? You know, just insecurities basically.” (Lorna, Age 51).

Isabelle experienced the fourth grade twice, both in Haiti and the US due to the transition to the American education system. She described a first racial awareness when she learned about Black American history. She shared her thoughts about this experience:

We’re learning about MLK for the first time. I was like what is this? I’m different now? Like what? So that was weird. I think that was one of the first things I remember like okay there’s a difference in being Black here and being Black in Haiti. So, What is this dream? What is this speech that everyone has to learn about because it’s such a monumental thing here living in the us being as a Black American? And I thought it was weird because I just though I thought everybody was the same. It was not common to divide people” (Isabelle, Age 28).

When asked about the impact of this racial awareness, she said, “I felt uncomfortable really because I had to kind of identify myself as now Black not just Haitian. You know what I mean? Cause I look Black, so you don’t distinguish me as being Haitian. So, I look like every Black other person that lives in the area” (Isabelle, Age 28). Isabelle’s experience captures the very beginning of her racial identity negotiation, as she started to understand the meaning of being Black in America through Black history, and what it means for her, having Black skin.

As a contrast to Isabelle’s experience, Nadine learned of her Blackness by not being “Black enough” when she moved from Connecticut to a less diverse small town in Georgia. She shared:

I think that is where I realized my Blackness, because in Georgia, uhm when you’re from somewhere else it’s kind of like you’re an export already. And then to put on top of that you’re Haitian, it kind of- you have Black people saying you were different from them because you were different race- but we’re all Black. So that made me like, ok, what’s so different about who I am that makes you Black but not me?... it’s like the Black experience is labelled for you because you’re not from here. Like it’s labelled that you’re not Black enough.” (Nadine, Age 34).

Jean realized in elementary school the contrast with life in Haiti, saying: “over here it’s like people are categories there’s a caste system and stuff like that so yeah. You instantly notice that hey you’re in a box. You know? And you’re put on the shelf here and this person they’re put in that shelf...It made me wanna work harder to prove myself.”

4.2.2 *The Second Generation*

There were a total of 21 second generation immigrants, five men and sixteen women. All of these participants were born in the United States, with at least one parent born in Haiti. The average age of participants at the time of the interview was 28.2 years old. The majority of the participants (80%) migrated from the Northeast: 7 from Brooklyn, NY, 3 from Queens, NY, 1

Boston, MA, 4 from New Jersey, and 1 from Maryland. The remainder were from the South: 2 from Georgia, 1 from Virginia and 1 from Florida.

When asked to recall their very first awareness of their race, their “a-ha” moment that their skin complexion had a meaning or identity attached, the second-generation women on average identified an awareness or double-consciousness at the age of 9.7, whereas the men reported an average age of 6.6, not including the one man who stated he has “always” known. The average age of racial awareness was 8.2 for all 21 second generation participants, a full 7 years on average earlier than the first generation participants. Out of all participants, only two developed a racial awareness during their teenage years, the remainder developed an awareness during childhood, between the 5 and 12 years of age. Ten of the sixteen women described a racial awareness as an observation of others, three were bullied, and two experienced discrimination. Three of the five men identified an observational experience, and the remaining two were bullied.

Many of the women’s stories about racial awareness involved physical differences and hair. Nadia specifically shared,

So, growing up Haitian, I guess as far as the income that my family had at the time, we weren't necessarily always in the latest clothing, or my hair wasn't always... I didn't have, say, a perm like everyone else did, or my mom wanted to do my hair a certain way. So, me being dressed a certain way, things like that, that's when I started noticing, "Oh, okay, she's White, she has longer hair. She doesn't need to do her hair in the morning or doesn't need to wear a scarf." Just different things like that, that's when I started noticing.

The reference to not having a perm is about keeping one’s hair in its natural state and not chemically altered. Oftentimes, due to the tightness of the coils and curls, or styles such as braids, hair appears shorter than straight or straightened hair. Also, styles are often set and wrapped with a scarf or bonnet at bedtime.

This difference in hairstyling became evident to Michelle at the age of 7 during a sleepover at a White friends' home. She saw the other girls playing in each other's hair and realized that she could not participate in the activity, as no one could touch her hair. Marta had a friend in fourth grade who was selective about when she would play with her, who explained that Marta looked different, and pointed out that her hair was different. Annemarie had fantasies of having long flowing hair and would put a pillowcase over her hair while playing pretend as a child. For Nadege, she was often stared at by others because she had locs in her hair. Claudette also experienced a racial awareness at a sleepover at the age of 9, where her friends younger sister approached her and said, "Are you Black?" It was the first time anyone had directly asked her that question. She stated that prior to that, "I guess I never called myself Black. I would always just assume I was either Haitian or African American, but that was the first time someone asked me if I was Black."

Some participants were triggered by a change in their surrounding environment due to the move to Georgia. For Cherie, she moved from a very diverse Brooklyn, New York to a predominately White Marietta, Georgia. She shared:

I was at the time, like about 13 years old when I moved here. And uhm it was the first time that I saw so many White people within my space. Down to school, because the area where I lived in in Brooklyn, but they were different kinds of Black. So- if it was not Black, it was Puerto Rican. So this is the first time I saw White within this space. Uhm, and I didn't have to go out of you know, my location to see. So many White people. So, with that- recognizing that as a Black person, that was my first time seeing it. (Cherie, Age 29)

Cherie was made acutely aware of her minority status when confronted with a white-majority environment. Mendez, who was also from Brooklyn shared a different type of cultural shock that occurred when he moved to Georgia. He shares,

It wasn't like- there weren't jokes about you being Black. It was more so like your ethnic group, your Nationality. But here, taking part of that all Black concept, and

then seeing everyone that was other to me – ‘cause I remember being in school with like one other White person up until I was in like third grade. Uhm this Jewish kid. But other than that, I didn’t feel, I didn’t really see other races until I came to Georgia.

Natalia, from Queens, moved to East Cobb echoed, “that was like the first time I realized like Oh My God, there’s a whole world of White people out here, and I was not exposed to that- I just, I just didn’t know.”

Others learned about their race through exposure and learning about race relations, whether it was the Trayvon Martin case for Chantal at the age of 11 or learning about slavery in class for Arielle in 5th grade. And although he doesn’t remember the details of the conversation, Francois learned about race at the age of 5, when his father taught him about it. He shares:

I remember my dad having a conversation about me being Black, what it means to be a Black boy... I think as with any five-year-old, you're just... You feel like the world is limitless and then I think it, not that it shrinks your world, but it's like, "Wait, so this is not as simple and easy as I thought it was going to be. (Francois, Age 32)

For others, despite already being in a diverse environment, they did not develop a racial awareness until they experienced the bullying by their peers. Nadege at the age of 10, was called a “White girl” because according to her Black peers, she acted “White” and talked “White.” Renee was told by a classmate that she would not play with her because Renee was ugly, which as a minority in her class, Renee attributed to her Blackness. Edwidge, the only Black girl in her class at the age of six, was shunned by her peers when she attempted to join the Girl Scouts. Additionally, three of the five men who shared experiences of bullying were called variations of “booty scratcher” during childhood. Vincent’s most notable experience of racial awareness occurred at church. He shares:

There was one time I had a Caucasian friend, and him and I were very good friends. We were very very good friends as young children. And we went to his

church. I went to his church and they were having some type of festival and something like that. And there was this young Asian boy who was also friends with my friend, and you know he was acting all weird the whole day. And Shawn, his name was Shawn, he finally came up to me and said “He was afraid of you because you are Black. “ And I just I laughed, and I laughed and I laughed and I told my parents and I was laughing. (Vincent, Age 24)

Although second generation immigrants do not share the same international migration experience as first-generation immigrants, there is a parallel experience for participants who migrate from Black-majority communities to predominately White spaces that challenge their self-concept. This is in alignment with both DuBois and Fanon’s belief that exposure to Whites is what leads to feelings of two-ness. It is the exposure to the racialized looking glass for both first and second generation immigrants that triggers a racial awareness.

4.3 Bullying

Although bullying was a part of the first racial awareness for both first- and second-generation immigrants, it is a childhood experience that many participants had. The section below highlights the early exposure to the stigma that comes both from being Black and Haitian. Both first- and second-generation Haitians have to cope with a long history of stereotypes, including poverty, HIV, voodoo, and various others. Additionally, they experience negative reactions due to the color of their skin. Oftentimes this bullying comes from individuals who look like them, effectively causing them to feel ostracized by Black and/or Haitian peers.

4.3.1 First Generation

About half of first-generation participants experienced childhood bullying, but the majority of bullying victims were boys. Bullying was often verbal, however at times escalated to physical altercations. For participants who shared experiences of bullying, it was directly related to either their race or ethnicity.

For Patrick, his childhood bullying was a memorable part of his understanding of race and ethnicity in America. He migrated to the United States at 6 years old during the late 80's. He and his family migrated to the United States during a tumultuous time in Haiti and riots had broken out to protest a corrupt government. This was the first significant migration from Haiti to the U.S. There was a mass exodus of Haitian refugees to the United States, and were called "boat people" who arrived in Florida. While some were intercepted and deported, others were later granted political asylum. He resided near Flatbush, Brooklyn, a place known as the melting pot for Black and Latino Immigrants, especially from the Caribbean. Due to the large population of Haitians in the area, In 2018, Flatbush was officially designated as "Little Haiti," by the city council in Brooklyn (Blkyner 2018). One of the most jarring things about his experience was bullying that came from other Haitian kids. He shared:

Roaming the streets with my older siblings you know, checking things out, all I seen was people who were looking like me: which is Black. Black girls, Black boys, Black men, Black women. So, I would say that when I started attending school, which was PS92 and this was back in '86 and at the time I couldn't understand how it was to be vilified for being Haitian. I was being called names as "Haitian booty scratcher," "Haitian Body Odor", to the point that it was Haitian kids who was calling me that. Mind you it was the same Haitian kids I'm going to their houses... Remember back in the days when we used to have the Haitian parties and they used to dress us up in the suit and the dress with the big barrettes? It was one of these parties, and you're looking at the kid like "you're calling me a Haitian booty scratcher?" I know your mom, your- just because you were born in America you can easily say you're not Haitian (Patrick, Age 39).

Due to the climate at the time, where Haitians were looked down upon, his Haitian peers chose to deny their Haitian identity, and to bully him in an effort to further distance themselves from a stigmatized identity. Another thing that made Pierre a target was his clothes, and his inability to match his peers' name brands that were popular at the time: Polo, Tommy Hilfiger, Nautica, and Guess to name a few. His inability to demonstrate his riches through clothes made him a bigger target. When asked about ways to cope with the bullying and possibly downplay his

identity as the other Haitian American children had, he shared that he had no other choice. His accent did not permit him to assimilate, even if he wanted to.

I was like “good monin teecher, ow ah you doin’ today?” I was that Haitian kid. I already had that identity that I just came off the boat, so off the rip you already knew Patrick is a Haitian cat, straight from Haiti. With all that being said, at one point I was kind of embarrassed. You know in elementary school, but there was a point I was like Yo, why am I embarrassed? I come from the rich history. My ancestors are the greatest of the slaves to come to the Western Hemisphere. So why am I shrinking myself? Why am I shrinking myself from my greatness you know? So I had these thoughts with my older brother. It was tough; there was a time around my junior high years uhm I got kicked out of a lot of schools. I was a *bandi*. (Patrick, Age 39).

Only five years after his migration, at the age of 11, the AIDS virus was attached to the Haitian population. Patrick recalled the media attention when Magic Johnson contracted HIV, and that the rumors were that it was a Haitian woman. He, his siblings, and his mother all participated in the historic protest, walking across the Brooklyn bridge to challenge this false narrative.

Despite being socially shunned as a child, Patrick still identifies as Haitian, so much so, that he would correct the assumption of African American, and he would put “Other” on a form. His childhood experiences galvanized a passion for sharing the Haitian experience and history with others.

The respect is not... there’s no respect. Respect is none to minimal. I- I’ll put it to you like this. Knowing what I know now, and seeing how we’re being vilified in the news. You would think that our country accomplished nothing in life, I mean nothing in their history! In their existence! You would think that we are gutter... deeper than the gutter. They never wanna put in the history books about the Louisiana purchase and how it was us Haitians who put the pressure on what’s his name Monsieur Bonaparte. Napoleon Bonaparte. If you see New Orleans... you go to the French Quarter. You’re in Haiti. *Memn jan Ayisyen ye*, that’s Haiti. That’s Haiti...It gives me a fire in my belly. To try to prove any and everybody wrong about their thoughts and feelings about Haitians. It’s crazy when I tell so many people about the Haitian history, they’re baffled. Just last December, I spoke at Morehouse college. I was a guest speaker. (I had) the opportunity to speak to an African civilization class and I was telling them about the History of Haiti, and how it came from far and wide to gain their independence. And to see these beautiful

Black kids in awe of the history of my ancestors. It was a beautiful feeling man; I'll tell you. I was so proud (Patrick, Age 39).

About 10 years after Patrick's migration, the mid-nineties, was referred to by Marc as the "Wyclef Era." Wyclef Jean was a member of the Fugees, a hip hop group that rose to fame in the mid-nineties. Wyclef was a first generation Haitian who unabashedly claimed his Haitian identity, and incorporated it into his music. His presence in mainstream entertainment was impactful for Haitians, and his name was brought up in three interviews. Yet, despite having this celebrity Haitian icon, bullying did not stop for Haitian immigrants.

Audrey, one of the few women who shared experiences of being bullied, migrated to the United States in 1996 at the age of 12. Unlike many other Haitian immigrants who settled in the Northeast or in Florida, she and her family came to Atlanta, Georgia. She shared a similar experience with Patrick in that it was fellow Haitian peers who were picking on her. They would call her a "just come" for not being able to speak English, and making fun of clothes that she wore. For her, it was the earthquake in Haiti that put Haitians on the map. Her Haitian peers would "claim Bahamians. They will claim Paris. So if the parents ever visited Paris or because they speak French, they use that ability of speaking French or call themselves Canadians." She also shared the identity evolution of those individuals who initially distanced themselves from their Haitian identity:

So at the time, it didn't fragile me to- to feel of shame, of being a Haitian, I actually pity them. Well, I got into a couple of fights, of course, but... I got into it into two fights when I was in middle school it was two Haitians. The first one, it was after the fight, When I got home, I find out that she was Haitian and my mom knew her mother. So at twelve, I remember telling my mom if I knew she was Haitian, I would have beat her harder. <laughs> And till this day, I know that person. (Audrey, Age 36).

The childhood bully turned into a friend, and currently identifies as Haitian. Audrey not only identifies herself as Black Haitian, but also selects "Other" on forms to indicate her ethnic

identity. She describes an all-Black group of friends, who shared predominately Black Immigrant identities, due to shared cultural similarities.

Pedro, who migrated to the United States at the age of 5, described the impact of the shift from the '80's to the '90's on his relationship with his peers and his identity presentation. He resided only a few hours from Patrick, across the bridge in Newark, New Jersey. He experienced the similar target, being an immigrant from Haiti, stating "Having come from Haiti to America, uhm yes. There was major. I grew up in an era where you got picked on. You got beat up and you know. I went through that entire process growing up to where there was a huge difference in uhm you know. As soon as they picked up on it, you know, you became a target." Due to having different hair, speaking with an accent, and not dressing the same way as his peers, he identified those factors as opportunities to get picked on, mostly by African American kids. He further describes a shift from his elementary school years through High School on what it meant to be Haitian and to be bullied:

As a kid, like I said, I grew up in an era where it wasn't popular to be Haitian, so yes, I remember where times where I didn't want to identify or tell people I was Haitian. I came to America again at 5 years old; by the time I was probably 7, six, almost 7, I had already mastered English. So, I even remember other students coming from Haiti and coming to you know transitioning from Haiti, you know, speaking English. And the teacher was asking me to teach them and help them and coach them. So, I mastered English pretty rapidly so what that enabled me to do was to fit in more with the African American uh students. There was no biases, like oh you're just different. The only time they would know I'm different is if they would see me interacting with another Haitian student, speaking the language. And they would be like "Oh I didn't know you speak another lang-" you know, then I'm having to let them know, you know I'm Haitian. Yea you see me hanging out with you, I'm doing all of this, I'm running around and we're playing basketball but you know at the end of the day, I know who I was but during that time I don't think I was just broadcasting Yea I'm Haitian or you know wanted everybody to know. But the shift happened by the time I got to High School to where uhh we became very proud to be Haitian. Uhm you know, there was a lot of you know, fights that had to occur to enable that to happen to make sure that hey, stop picking on Haitians... you're gonna respect us. So I went through that entire—my cousins, you know all of that, we all have stories. But

uhm after that, it became ok, you know I'm carrying the flag on my back. You know, I want everybody to know... it was the unity of the Haitians that kind of unified in my community 'cause I would go to school and uhm there were plenty of Haitians that I didn't even know but uh if one person picked on a Haitian, all of those Haitians came together and you know, and they you know they have you know American, Puerto Rican, Jamaicans, we were pretty much fighting each other. But they would pretty much go to bat for that person. And so, it became, it got to the point where you didn't have to fear- even though, yes, you would probably still get picked on, and probably get beat up. But you knew that you could hold your head up at the end of the day. If it happened one time, it probably wasn't going to happen again. So, it was probably that era, that time that I was like you don't have to be scared, no matter who you are, you know I had family members. If they were to find out that somebody was picking on me, uhm they lived you know, a few towns away- they would come to my rescue. Like you're not messing with (name) or whatever. So it was uh the year would have to be '95-'3, '94, '95 is when that kind of occurred and then it transitioned to the rest of my life where even if I you know, if those friends I don't keep in touch with them now, but that spirit still lives with me, like if I was to see somebody messing with anybody that I know that's Haitian, I'm gonna stop what I'm doing and you're not gonna pick on them because I identify with them you know. Whatever they did or if there's any language barrier, I'm gonna help them. I'm gonna help them explain what they're trying to explain. I brought a helpful spirit for me to you know continue to just uhm kind of broad people's horizons and help them understand more about the Haitian culture. Just because you don't understand it doesn't mean that you have to uh defy it or go up against it. I don't wanna- you know it's ok to be different, you know (Pedro, Age 39).

For Pedro, the shift from the '80's to the '90's was significant for him in that Haitians became more prideful as a community, and recognized their strength in numbers, allowing for kids like Pedro to feel safer and more confident with his Haitian identity. There was a point, he shared that if you were to say that a Haitian kid stinks, it was grounds to fight, whether it was true or not, because nothing bad was permitted to be said about Haitians. Through these experiences, Pedro was able to successfully assimilate with the African American peers while maintaining pride in his ethnic identity.

Yvette migrated to Columbia, Maryland in 1994 at the age of 8. She looked to her older cousin for guidance as she adjusted to a new country. Her cousin had been living in the United States for a few years, and advised her that if anyone where to ask her where she was from, that

she was to lie, and say she was from Jamaica or Trinidad. She didn't realize until later when she witnessed kids from school making fun of Haitian kids that her cousin was attempting to protect her from being a target of bullying. Yvette experienced confusion about her identity, and her relationship to her Black peers. She shared:

I think it's a mixed feeling. When I was younger and even though I was proud to be Haitian, I wanted to fit in... You know I thought um they look like me, they must be my people but because of you know negative experiences that I've had with people that seem to look like me um now I don't look at them the same.... You know the name calling. Oh you- you know you're from Haiti you guys have aids. Haitian booty scratcher or um you know making some kind of like you're a foreigner you're not really like us. We don't understand you know your language. (Yvette, Age 42).

In her experience, her White peers were not able to see beyond her Blackness; it was the African American peers who were able to highlight that "Yeah, you're Black but you're different. You're not like us." So, from her perspective, they were only passing on the racist experiences that they got from White people, and were passing it on to other people who looked just like them.

Bullying seemed to come from all angles for Haitian Immigrants. A few participants in their 40's reference the term "Frenchie" that was used as a slur due to the French accent. For Pierre, who went to a predominately White school in Brooklyn, he shared "some kids were calling us Niggers and stuff like that. Um... It didn't really affect me that much because I had other kids also call me Frenchie." Louis, who migrated to Orange, New Jersey in the 1980's stated, "My experience in school was... you know, when my generation was going to high school we were called "Frenchie Boys" you know, because we were always well-dressed, wearing dress shoes going to school so I guess it wasn't appreciated. We were always called "Frenchie boys" because we were foreign, this and that." In his case, at his predominately Black school, so his bullies were African American. For Jacques, who migrated to Boston and went to

a diverse school, he got bullied by all groups. He shared, “When I went to high school, I attended a school where you had to take an entrance exam to get in. It wasn’t a charter school but there were all kinds of kids that went there. There were the Irish kids, the Italian kids, the Black kids, the people they called Southies and the kids from the North. And when you were there, it wasn’t just the Black kids making fun of you and calling you stinky, or ugly, it was the Irish and Italians who didn’t like Blacks, but they didn’t like you even more because you were foreign Black. So, you were at the bottom of the totem pole then.” (Jacques, Age 48). Isais was able to share his experiences across two different regions in the United States, having moved to Boston from Haiti at the age of 12, and then later moving to Marietta, Georgia. He shared:

I remember like when I first moved to Boston, I went to middle school out there... Sometimes there would be fights. So, I went to my (redacted) middle school down in Dorchester. I mean, back then used to be like, I got I've got into a couple of fights. One time, it was just, I guess, between Ha-. It was that time. It was actually between now, I guess, African Americans and Haitians. I mean, a couple of them I was cool with, but it was the other ones, of course, you know. I guess that was probably one of the first first times. And then when I came to Georgia, it was just like different because when I first came to Georgia, I went to high school in Marietta. And I mean, I would say yea, I'm from Haiti and they're like "Oh in Africa." Like, no dumbass <laughs> ‘Cause they didn't even know like our people. Now, obviously, a lot of people would do. But back then, like when I was- when you say Haiti, a lot of people didn't know here in Georgia, they didn't even know what Haiti was. Like, I guess I remember I had some people in my class who didn't know what Haiti was. And That still the sticks in my head. I mean, I guess I was the difference between being in Boston where a lot of people, you know, either you're Haitian or you know a lot of people from all they were from converging uhm, a lot of Puerto Ricans and Black, I guess from where they were, I guess kind of like divided. And it used to be the Haitians and the Americans. (Isais, Age 33).

Isais shifted from an environment in which the Haitian population in Boston was large enough that it created rivalry between ethnic groups, to an environment in which people had no knowledge of Haiti. Despite the fact that Georgia offered an opportunity to escape the hostility in Boston, it also erased the identity that was so salient to Isais. Overall, the majority of the

participants who reported bullying were bullied for being Haitian primarily, and less commonly for their race.

4.3.2 The Second Generation

Three of the five men and five of sixteen women reported bullying for being Haitian during childhood. The majority of these experiences (with the exception of two) were distinct from the bullying experiences that were described as a part of their first racial awareness. Instances of bullying as a part of racial awareness included being told that you “talk White”, being called ugly, and being shunned by others. As it relates to ethnicity, six of the eight reports of bullying made some reference to being called a “booty-scratcher.” Half of the reports of bullying also made mention practicing voodoo as a stigma against Haitians.

Mendez normalized his childhood bullying experiences and did not attribute the “booty-scratcher” label to being Haitian-specific, but more as being non-African American. All Black immigrants had a similar experience. He explains, “Everyone else who was insert whatever ethnic group, nationality, booty-scratcher at the end, and that was it.” Annemarie shared a similar experience, where her peers did not know where Haiti was located, and assumed it was in Africa. So regardless of where she or her family was from, she got the label “African booty scratcher.”

For Junior, it was very specific to Haitians, as he shared, “ people think we're African booty scratching voodoo conjuring dirty decimate, can't fend for ourselves, always begging ... it's always something.” Nadia was not bullied herself, however witnessed others with dark skin getting called an “African booty scratcher” in elementary school, and since she had dark skin herself, with both Haitian and African heritage, and was impacted by that. Cherie shares her experience with the “booty scratcher” term:

African booty scratcher like that was the main thing that I could- Like I could remember us being in the like... Like I was young, young, and back then, like it wasn't cool. It wasn't like You're Haitian?! Like, it was frowned upon... when I was being called names for being Haitian, it came from the other Black kids whether they were from other parts of the Caribbean like Jamaican or Trinidadian. 'cause nobody was really, really like American Black, like Black American – most of them came from some other part of the Caribbean because we were in Flatbush New York, Flatbush Brooklyn. So, like the Guyanese, like it was just like a whole array of different people. But I can remember my mother would come and she would speak Kreyòl of course because there were a whole bunch of people that could speak Kreyòl over there but then they would speak Kreyòl and everybody would look at me and they would associate me with that and being teased afterwards because of it. Sometimes it would come from other- I remember it was early middle school and some of them that were Haitian, but would claim that they were from somewhere else, so I remember that as well, like I know your parents. Like they go to the same (inaudible) as my parents, like why would you lie? And they were saying that they weren't Haitian, so I guess that was another group of folks... (Cherie, Age 29)

Although second generation immigrants may not have had a distinct accent, there were aspects of their lives that pointed to a different background. The risk of bullying came from all angles, from Native and Foreign Black individuals alike, causing individuals to make attempts to hide their Haitian identity. However, for individuals such as Cherie and Carline, they maintained their ethnic identity despite the risk. For instance, Carline would bring Haitian food to school, and get picked on because it “smelled funny,” and although she didn't have a foreign accent, only a New York one, there were certain words and phrases that she was more accustomed to saying in Kreyòl than English. She was labelled as “different,” and was consequently picked on for those differences.

To put the childhood experience of the second generation into perspective, they are on average 28.19 years of age. Their experience of racial and ethnic awareness developed 20 years ago, in the year 2000. From the reports of the first-generation participants, it had become more socially accepted to be Haitian. When looking at migration patterns of Africans, at the time of the 2000 Census, 56.6% of African-born immigrants had just migrated to the United States

between 1990 and 2000 (Migration Policy 2003). It seems that many of these second-generation Haitians experienced the stigma and backlash from an influx of African immigration as opposed to Haitian-specific stigma.

Naturally, this did not prevent kids for being picked on for being Haitian. Claude, one of the oldest of the second-generation participants, at the age of 33, was the only participant that described getting into physical altercations. He described people throwing rocks through his windows, his family being told to “go back to Haiti,” and being told that Haitians stink and do voodoo. He described getting into “rock fights” often and described it as “Haitian versus American” every day. However, he noted a shift that occurred in middle school, where he did not feel hated for being Haitian. These experiences made it difficult early-on to identify as Haitian. He shared, “at one time I was like I don’t want to be Haitian!” Nadege was significantly older, in high school or college, when her peers told her that Haitians were ugly, or that they ate rats.

Thirty-eight percent of all participants experienced childhood bullying of some sort during childhood, and mostly targeted their Haitian identity. This is less than the 50% of first-generation participants’ experiences of bullying. It’s unclear if this is due to experiencing childhood during different periods of stigma in the U.S., or due to identifying factors, however it is evident that bullying came from all races and ethnic groups. Although both Fanon and DuBois expressed mere exposure to Whites and observation having impact on identity, there was no focus on bullying.

4.4 Parenting & Upbringing

Many participants described growing up in very strict homes. One cultural distinction is the custom of greeting all adults whenever you come into the home and removing your shoes. This special greeting was brought up by four participants. Nadege shared that she was not

allowed to go over anybody's house, sleepovers were never allowed, and people were not allowed to come to her home, which led to a very sheltered upbringing. She shared:

I like to joke that I didn't become American until high school <laughs>. Because uhm I feel... Because I- I- I- didn't grow up with the same- with a lot of commonalities that a lot of Black Americans grew up with. Like the common music, I'm talking television and just I don't know I always felt othered... Like uhm music was a big thing. Like we didn't listen to like blues or jazz or just or just Black artists from a time period. My mom listened to soft rock uhm who was I listening to... I can't remember the band names. But like uhm not a lot of White soft rock artists and the people I went to school with didn't listen to that. So, I couldn't relate to the type of music that they knew growing up, so I wasn't Black. Especially because of the way I spoke. (Nadege, Age 37).

Due to their immigrant status, it seems that Nadege's family embraced what was perceived as "White" culture, causing Nadege to feel alienated from her Black peers. Being Black was understood to be more than skin color, but also choice of music and manner of speaking.

Annemarie shared stories of not being able to go to Six Flags with her friends and having to lie to her parents to be able to spend time with friends. She shares, "how our parents raised us that kind of like drew a wedge" and hindered her ability to develop friendships. Tamara shared that she sometimes wasn't able to go out because her mother had a dream about it. Her limited socialization meant that she didn't know R&B music or quote the movies her kids had seen.

However, Cherie described her upbringing as living under a "militant" dictatorship. She pushed back on her parents causing friction in the relationship in order for her to participate in extracurriculars. When asked to go out with friends, she shared, "I would get a quick reminder—it was a daily reminder almost, to say *"Ou pa—You're not American. Like I was told. Ou Pa American. Se Ayisien ou ye."* Mendez' parents also warned him against assimilating to the Black culture in America. He shared that his entire family would say things like *Sonje se Ayisyen ou ye* due to the representation of Black people in the media.

Arielle's parents advised her against assimilation during her childhood. So, although she was born in the United States, she was always told that she was Haitian. So even though others saw her as Black outside of the home, inside of her home she was always Haitian. She spoke French and Kreyòl more often than she spoke English, something that she assumed all others experienced as well, with her diverse peers. Arielle chose to go to Historically Black College and cites school and fraternities as her biggest cultural adjustment.

There was a completely Black experience, African American, and so you know just little things, being in the caf... Fried chicken Wednesdays? I was like I don't eat fried chicken like this in my house. You know? And they ate a lot of fried fish. And the fried fish was a little closer, but we wouldn't have fried Tilapia and Whiting. I had Red Snapper. <laughs> So with food, I literally had to call my parents like "Can you bring me rice, 'cause they don't eat rice everyday like we do." And there's no plantain! You know, that's one. And Two, I saw Greek life. I'm like WHAT? We don't have delta, AKA in the Caribbean. We don't care about that stuff. Like what is this? It's a legacy? A community? What is it? (Arielle, Age 29).

She also talked about her parents pushing her to focus on school, making her wear a uniform even though she went to public school. The fact that school was free, and there were opportunities to excel, she had to rethink her priorities and not get into the peers making fun of others for not having the newest fashion. She wasn't a part of the "cool" category. Mendez shared a similar experience, stating:

And as you're growing up, I mean, it's like... it's like you leave your house and go to school and clock in to one culture and you clock out at the end of the day when you come back home. I mean, the two don't mix. I mean- I remember vividly when they, my dad told me that a real man wears his pants at his belly button and would send me to school like that looking funny you know what I mean. (Mendez, Age 32).

He talked about never having the experience of having a water gun fight, let alone even making a gesture of a gun with your hands while playing with other kids. As the first-born child, he got the most strict experience, compared to his younger siblings.

Vincent shared the same experience of duality, sharing:

It's like when you walk out your front door, it's like you're walking onto American soil and so you have like uh an aspect of everything you do when you walk outside your door is mostly American 'cause you know unless you're living in a place where there are a lot of Haitians, your friends they do things the American way or their parents do things the American way from all different cultures, and when you walk back into your home, it's like walking into Haiti. Even if it's from the smell of the food you know, communication and so on and so forth. (Vincent, Age 24)

The strictness and restrictions also impacted the relationship with parents during adulthood. Carline expressed that these family dynamics may be considered odd to others but is normal.

I feel like sometimes coming from the Haitian cultures, our parents are a little more funny time, a little more strict, a little more stringent about tradition and the way things they feel should be done and then when you say that, and then also our family dynamics and understanding the idea of family being just so intertwined in everything that you do that boom you turn your head and your family is there- there- there- there- there. And to have people just not understand that closeness because I find that sometimes a lot of them are so distant and their family dynamics were as for the most part, and I'm sure there's other people that- but when I talk to other Haitian people, family is just like in your face, I your business in everything and they're everywhere you go in every part of your life. (Carline, Age 40)

Renée shared that the closeness with family was about nurturing their children, which was a sharp contrast to the tough love of American culture where the child is kicked out of the home at the age of 18. In the Haitian culture, an unwed child can typically remain under their parents' roof until they have found a spouse. Fabienne, on the contrary, spoke about the treatment of parents from the perspective of the child. She shared, "I feel like other races are more inclined to put their parents in like a nursing home as they get older and stuff."

Claudette shared that Haitians "don't play about our kids." Although she did not understand or appreciate her parents' strictness while she was a child, now that she is a mother, she has plans to raise them in a similar way. She speaks about her shock witnessing other parents

being relaxed with their children going out, even during the pandemic, and not offering the protection that comes with being strict.

Yet this wasn't the story for everyone. Francois shared:

I never really felt any shame about my Haitian identity. I always felt proud. When it comes to me sexual orientation, I could say, I've always felt shame. There are times I still feel shame now. Usually that shame is always around the fact that I'm Haitian that I have to deal with Haitian parents when it comes to something like my sexuality." Francois did not speak to his parents for three years, after being kicked out of the home due to his sexual orientation. He describes their understanding of the LGBT community limited, because they could not understand how their son identified as gay but did not wear women's clothes. They asked questions like, "Are you going to change your name from Francois to Francine?" However, when there was an opportunity to celebrate him graduating from college and purchasing his first home, without any apology, these parents were present to celebrate him. His success was a testament to their upbringing. Francois still limits his interactions with his family so that when he goes home, he dutifully greets all of the elders with a kiss on the cheek and disappears, minimizing any opportunity to "embarrass" his parents (Francois, Age 32).

Francois shares that by being put out of his home, he pushed to be a homeowner. He and his family are friendly, but from a distance, and his mother still asks when he is going to bring home a woman. There were also many references made to food, and how Haitians mothers provided home-cooked meals and that eating out was frowned upon.

4.4.1 Education

All first-generation participants were High School graduates, with seven participants having attained advanced (Masters or Doctorate) degrees. The average household income for all first-generation participants was \$125,681 at the time of the interview. As previously mentioned, socioeconomic status is far more salient to Haitians than race. There is a high value placed on education and work. Marc shared his experience in college and initially questioned whether this was a shared value for African Americans.

We went, I went to City College in New York. Or Queens community college
When I first came here. In the beginning of the semester, you would see A lot of

African Americans And Caribbean Americans. And Africans. But at the end of semester. Only the Caribbean American and the Africans survived. The majority of us stayed the course graduated from City College while the Black kids were... Africans, they were Haitians, they were Trinidad and Tobago. They were not, Really... You probably have a couple of Black Americans. So, I do not understand how you get free education. You get all these opportunities and then you Would not take advantage. But You remember ... So. Fast forward to Probably last 10 years. Sometimes you have to Do something that saved my marriage Also... it is that You have to Take yourself out of your experience, In Your Experience and then try to put yourself in their shoes and understand- try to understand the experience. So, by doing that I realized, It's like two three generations ago, There were being really discriminated against here. You know there's like 40 years but not even 40 50 years they couldn't vote could not uh- They weren't accepted. They could not ride the bus. This and that. So, this there was a big- and then the job that was done here to put them down. That, to me was a psychological or a sociological masterpiece. You know what I'm saying, so to me it's going to take them some time. To- that's when I realized it was going to take them some time... (Marc, Age 47)

Although he was originally critical of African Americans, but through a deeper understanding of history and systemic oppression in America, he developed empathy and understanding. He also recognized the influences of his own immediate family. He shared:

My parents were professional so where we were at upbringing which was kind of different than what's being shown on TV. My grandmother is a strong Black woman that did not diverge from their kids being professional. Her kids you know, getting out of whatever life they were in, you know. All my uncles were, were engineers. My grandfather, although I didn't know him, but he was an entrepreneur. (Marc, Age 47)

For Marc, the standard for professionalism was set at an early age. Similarly, both Pedro and James both share that they were encouraged by their parents to pursue medicine. Pedro started college as a pre-med biology major with plans to become an anesthesiologist. However, he later discovered his strengths in math, and ended up changing his major. James says, “Right now I am studying medicine. I’m just studying it because of my parents. I love medicine. I like it. But it was my dream when I was little. But after I finished high school, my only dream was politics.”

Although Widlene had full intentions to become a doctor, her career trajectory shifted after becoming a stay-at-home mom for 8 years. Nonetheless, she still maintained a level of professionalism instilled in her by her parents, something that she attributes to being in her “blood.”

So, you know, you work in an office, and with my mother, how I was raised: you put your suit on and your heels on. You know no matter what, here's no jeans and no flip-flops. Even though it's relax day. You come to work dressed and ready for a board meeting like you're the CEO of the company. And you know, they like that...And they think it's different, “Why you always dress up.” Or “Why do you always have your ...” you know. But that's how I was raised and uh I have to be correct. The other thing is the way I speak. And when I say the way I speak, I mean the properness. If someone comes to speak with someone in the office, you'll say “Please have a seat, let me see if they're available”. But there are things that can be, just surprising to them. The people in the office, they're mostly White. And they're surprised that I have the proper decorum and I have the proper etiquette when it comes to things because that's not my background – my background is not office or things like that. So, I thought- you know growing up you either have to be a doctor or a lawyer or engineer <laughs> so for me it was a doctor route for the longest time. I went to GSU, but I didn't graduate but for the longest time I thought I was going to be a doctor, doctor, doctor. And I got married, and that didn't happen... they think that somehow somehow that part of it is fake. They think I'm putting on airs, and I'm acting bougie, you know. <laughs> So I think to them, they think you know, she's performing. She has to stay in her position, and all that stuff, you know. Uhm, so they don't think it's something that's uh that you're born with or something that you're raised with, something that you were taught to be. So, it's uh you know, and like I said, you don't understand it that it's like in your blood because even though they have dress down day, but for the life of me I can't wear flip-flops in to work. <laughs>.” (Widlene, Age 32)

Widlene reflects the importance of social status in the Haitian culture through her reference of professional dress and the importance of becoming a doctor. The Haitian culture was centered around focusing on education in order to become a successful professional. The focus on education was brought up in multiple interviews. There is a Haitian phrase, “Lekol, Legliz, Lakay,” also known as the “Three L's.” It translates to School, Church, and home. David spoke about how that sheltered approach was different than (African) American culture:

They are just more conservative and American culture you know uh you know they just do what they want to do, and they were just about like, just pout you

where uhm the things that you do, where you go, uhm and the Haitian culture you just more like sheltered because of what your parents wanted you to do... Your parents made all of the decisions for you: where you go, what time you come home, what you should do. And you didn't really have no sense of freedom in a sense where you make your own decision or you know, being able to choose. (David, Age 35).

He shared that this also caused a social imbalance, where other friends were able to explore and experience the world and discover things that they like or dislike.

4.5 Early Identity Analysis

The first generation, having been born into a society in which race does not matter, develop a double consciousness at a later age, on average, compared to second- generation immigrants. This partially supports the second research expectation to find evidence of racial double-consciousness in both generations, with the first generation having this racial exposure post-migration, likely leading to the presence of identity conflict in both generations (RE2). The presentation of any conflict that emerges as a result of this double consciousness is further explored in Chapter 6. Both generations develop their first awareness often due to exposure to a new setting such as starting school or moving to a new neighborhood with different demographics. This supports the identity theory that we develop a sense of self-awareness through the perception of others. The experience of double consciousness was triggered by bullying, discrimination or observation. Boys were more likely to experience bullying whereas girls were more likely to observe racial differences. Although participants experienced racism such as being called the N-word from White children, participants often experienced bullying by people who looked like them, other Haitians or African Americans who criticized them for being too foreign, or not being Black enough. This is similar to Waters' observation of relationships in her 1999 study in which Haitians are rejected from their fellow West Indian peers. Participants often mentioned not having the latest clothes or being able to socialize with their peers due to

strict parenting in which the expectation was that children would focus primarily on their education. These Haitian immigrants' focus on education also reflects the research of other immigrant populations that will permit them to gain financial wealth (Rong & Fitchett 2008). These social limitations paired with bullying likely strengthened the early bi-cultural identity in which participants understood what it meant to be Black, while being fully immersed in a Haitian culture at home. This result partially meets the research expectation of racial double-consciousness in both generations, with the first generation having this racial exposure post-migration (RE2). The second part of this expectation is a resulting identity conflict as a result of two stigmatized identities, which will be further explored in chapter six.

5 THE LOOKING GLASS

As the previous chapter described, many participants did not develop a racial identity until they were exposed to others within a society who reflected this identity back to them. The theory of the “looking glass self” indicates that we depend on our perception of others’ judgment of us, and as a result, we develop a “self-feeling” (Cooley 1968). Through observation, bullying or explicit actions of othering, with the exception of a few first-generation immigrants, this group learned what it meant to be Black and Haitian in early childhood. While these childhood experiences may be perceived as an expected “rite of passage” that many children experience, for Black children, this emergence of a double consciousness is something that gets absorbed into an individual’s permanent identity hierarchy. According to DuBois (1903), this is an irreconcilable two-ness that all Black individuals must cope with for the rest of their lives. This chapter describes the experiences of the looking glass throughout life, through ongoing exposure of discrimination and media portrayals, that lead to an understanding of their identity as a risk or protective factor in a White-majority society. These looking-glass experiences are crucial to understanding the resulting self-feelings that drives participants’ identity negotiations and self-concept and is an important part of the second research expectation (RE2). The acceptance or rejection of the looking glass self, and the stigmas and stereotypes associated with their racial *and* ethnic identities mediate both the identity negotiation and the mental well-being of Haitian immigrants.

As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so, in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it. (Cooley, [1902]1968)

5.1 Representation in the Media

Overwhelmingly, participants felt that the portrayal of Black people was negative in the media, regardless of generation status or gender. Participants were asked two questions about their media exposure. They were told, “Tell me about your experience with how you see Blacks portrayed in the media, and what impact it has on you, if any,” and asked, “How do you view Haitians in the media.” The term “media” was open-ended, to include print, broadcast, and the internet. The two most common forms referenced were the news and social media. These open-ended questions allowed participants the opportunity to share the perception of themselves through the literal lens of the world. Themes that emerged across both genders and generations include stereotyping, propaganda, Eurocentric beauty standards for Black women, the “thug” narrative for Black men, and police brutality. While the majority of participants expressed their disdain for how Black people are portrayed, some participants painted a more mixed experience and described the media image as improving, and becoming more nuanced instead of one-dimensional, likely due to their engagement with social media in which Black individuals have become the narrator. This section presents the experiences of participants from both a Black and Haitian lens and reflects both first- and second- generation perspectives.

5.1.1 *Black in the Media*

The news was considered a frequent offender for the crime of misrepresenting Black people and was the most common source of vexation for both first- and second- generation participants. There were explicit and implicit references to an agenda, in which the news was motivated to maintain and promote the narrative of the Black man as the perpetual criminal. Jean referenced the 6 o’clock news playing the same story that, “It’s just somebody got killed. Somebody got murdered. Somebody got robbed. Somebody did this and it’s all Black faces”

(Jean, Age 34, 1st Gen). It is perceived as if Black people being arrested for murder is “the only thing that happened today” (Marc, Age 47, 1st Gen). In addition to the focus on Black crime, the reporters continuously fail to present any depth to the Black individuals that are represented, and they are reduced to the singular dimension of their crime. In a one-word response, Widlene speaks to her experience of Black people in the media as, “Victims. That’s my keyword, victims. They are being victimized, how are they being portrayed in the media” (Widlene, Age 32, 1st Gen). David elaborates:

I can watch my local news and when there’s a crime that’s done by a White person you cannot see a photo or a snapshot of who they are. You actually have to search for it. But when it’s done by a Black person- you as a matter of fact see the worst picture that they can find. You will know who they are and their family and they they will go ten years and find information about them, but you know when it comes to a White person, it’s more like the storyline kind of favors them—you could be a murderer but it’s like oh this “family man” was killed. (David, Age 35, 1st Gen)

David’s example shows that the media offers more grace and empathy for White criminals, as opposed to Black individuals who are painted as one-dimensional criminals. Margaret also points out the disparity between how the news covers Black people and White people who commit crimes. She describes what seems like an extra effort to report a Black person’s condemning history of failures in contrast to a White history of sympathy and understanding, from the narratives shared, to the photo that is chosen. Not only is this unfair to the individuals who fall victim to the media’s agenda, but this looking glass is one that is widely viewed and consumed by Americans directly impacts Black people across the nation. She shares, “You know everybody watches the news. They know everyone is gonna watch that. And that’s gonna affect the way people think. And its gonna develop all these notions that you know Black people aren’t this, Black people are that. You know all the negative things that they can think of. Nothing is

gonna change” (Margaret, Age 23, 2nd Gen). Sandy similarly talks about the way the news impacts how people see Black people. She shares:

A lot of people believe that most Black people are a certain way, you know, like when they throw the word "thugs" around, um, anytime something, something happens and it's a Black man or boy they're done automatically. And then when they do it, they're patriotic, you know, stuff like that. We see it all the time. And I think a lot of it is sensationalism through media, you know, getting people to watch their shows or get on their websites and stuff like that. I think, I think that a lot of stuff is fueled by, by those who run the media. I don't necessarily think that it's always the life that most of us live. So, there's definitely power... (Sandy, Age 47, 1st Gen).

Participants generally approached the media with skepticism and distrust, feeling as if the odds were not in the favor of the Black individual being portrayed, whether they were the identified perpetrator or a victim of a crime. Yet, despite what Carline refers to as a “propaganda campaign,” she speaks to a need for a counternarrative, and opportunities to stop the cycle of bad news:

I acknowledge the school to jail pipeline. I acknowledge all these different things. But I also acknowledge that life is chess not checkers. Life is not necessarily fair...but in this game you have to be strategic. And yes, there are certain things I acknowledge... you did everything that you thought was right [but] you can still find yourself caught in a situation. But I think that as a family unit, I think one of the first things- just as Black people, whatever, need to concentrate on strengthening the family, because it starts with the head of your house. It starts typically from the head down. And if you can strengthen the family unit, then that trickle down and that spreads (Carline, Age 40, 2nd Gen).

Similarly, Yves referenced a “trap” that forces Black people to play “the same movie,” and expresses fears that what is being seen on television is “not going to change.” He references not allowing the “hood” to define us, and through a focus on education, we can get out of the cycle. He shares, “in America basically, if you have a high school diploma, you’re in poverty. That’s what you’re making. Whatever you’re making is hourly, probably, so you get a college education to at least get out of that” (Yves, Age 56, 1st Gen). Annemarie highlighted the broader

systemic racism at play, thus causing the news to reflect the realities of the Black American struggle. She shares, “African Americans are not in this position because they're lazy, or because they don't want to work, there are institutional factors that are affecting their position in society, and that keep them in that position” (Annemarie, Age 23, 2nd Gen).

The struggle with digesting the news was evident in participants’ responses. There was frustration and blame towards the biased and White-centered nature of the news. However, there were still mixed levels of accountability for Black people as a whole. There is a duality in which participants recognize and understand the systemic racism that continues to oppress Black people, which validates the experiences of those driven to crime, while simultaneously pushing for a change in the narrative and ultimately the looking glass.

I think there is a lot of-- they're portrayed somewhat accurately. But what they don't tell you is that the reason that they're able to portray them accurately in the news or the media, or however you want to say it, is because there's been a concerted effort to make uh- Black people disenfranchised. To disenfranchise them, to red-line them, uhm take over their fathers, take over their mothers, take over their education so-on and so-forth. Uhm, but that's- that doesn't speak for the whole. But there is a large majority of people who are not benefiting their community, and they're destroying themselves. But you know- it needs to be clear that even though they're destroying themselves, it's the people who have the power, uhm, that- that position themselves, or position the Black people-- quote unquote Black people-- to be in those type of positions. (Vincent, Age 24, 2nd Gen).

Vincent’s comment acknowledges both the role that Black people have in hurting their community while also recognizing the systemic oppression that puts Black people in unhealthy positions. In addition to violence and crime, participants were also exposed to the news coverage of the disproportionate number of Black people who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tamara expressed anger, frustration, and uncertainty about the media:

Even from before, with just the Coronavirus and news about that coming out, that has been affecting African American community more and, you know, different people coming out saying, oh, the government is trying to kill- to kill African Americans, you know, by having you wear these masks. So I guess the different-

just different things, like, this theory, after theory, after theory, being thrown out... and like so many, you know, false things are being portrayed in the media. So you just don't know what to believe. And this has been very frustrating and angering. (Tamara, Age 32, 2nd Gen)

In addition to dealing with the stress and uncertainty of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, there was added stress of knowing that the African-American community was at high risk, causing feelings of anger. In an effort to protect themselves from the negative emotions that emerge from the looking glass experience of the media, many participants referenced not watching the news altogether, something that emerges as a protective factor related to their mental health, and further discussed in subsequent chapters. Isais describes his experience of seeing Black people in the media:

Everything from racial profiling. Like, you know, I mean, people always assume if something bad happened, they always assume it's- somebody Black was behind it. I guess. Of course, not always the case. I guess, in the social media or the news... I guess especially local news. I mean, even I mean, a lot of times, I mean... sometimes, it's true. Like, for example. That's why I don't watch the news. You know, when- when I do happen to see something happening, if there is a shooting in whatever: Decatur, Gwinnett... it's always you know, someone is always, you know, some gang related or whatever. I mean, I don't know. I just feel like it's I mean, I'm sure like stuff like that happens with, you know, other races, But I just feel like if it's, you know, I guess when it comes to Black, I guess I feel like they got to, like kind of like focus on it more- show it more (Isais, Age 33, 1st Gen).

Additionally, the news was not criticized for its biased content alone. Black news reporters were described as “watered down to look like their White counterparts” (Anya, Age 34, 1st Gen). In fact, Eurocentric beauty standards were criticized across multiple interviews.

For beauty standards, there are some differing perspectives of media representation, and if it is perceived as progress, or continues to be rooted in anti-Blackness. Hair emerged as a theme for one participant in relationship to his daughter, “Well my daughter yesterday, she has natural hair, but in prep for graduation she felt the need she had to straighten her hair. I’m not going to stop her, but I’m like why do you feel that way? She wants to be beautiful, so I’m like

so when you have that hair you're not beautiful?... That part I don't understand. God gave you- or Uma whatever had the power to give you your hair" (Marc, Age 47, 1st Gen).

On the contrary, Isabelle shares that she is almost overwhelmed by the diverse beauty representatives that are now available in contrast to her childhood.

Cinderella was one of my favorite movies that she did. And comparing that to now, I feel like I have so much representation now. It's like oh my god, almost like- not overwhelming, but I love it. I don't know where to turn, I don't know who to look up to, I don't know like, there's just so much to take in. and I love that, because before I had one person.... Follow in their footsteps, take advice from, follow them on YouTube. Like there's hair care products, and all these different things that they're doing, before I didn't have that. So, it's definitely changed, in such an amazing way. And I cannot wait till when I have kids, to like show them these diverse groups of people. As far as like they can look up to. (Isabelle, Age 28, 1st Gen).

Having come from a Black-majority country, and discovering her Black identity through history lessons of Martin Luther King, Jr., these representatives of beauty from women in film and on YouTube provided her with a positive connection for her Black identity. Especially for the many women in the study who developed an awareness of their race through beauty differences, the representation in the media is an important component of the looking glass. Cherie spoke about the media portraying women in one dimension, as nothing more than sexual objects. She shares:

Like when I see for example, like movies where like I don't know, another way I guess I wanna say like when you call this Blacks being portrayed. So there's this concept that's taking place now, like your I guess the Kardashians and the uhm these new I guess these new overnight social media stars and they perform like this Black – this is what a Bl- like change the body, the filler of the lips, the hair, the darker skin. And they put on this like... I don't know what to call it. And so when I look at it I'm like this is what you think – like this is Black women to you. Like this is what they considered to be Black women is that you know- I just feel like it's more than what's being portrayed, we're more than that. So, even when I think about the roles the Black people are being casted in, it's like damn they can't be much higher than just this? (Cherie, Age 29, 2nd Gen).

Michelle spoke about how the media portrayal of women impacted her mental wellness. Specifically related to social media, Michelle shares that she sees “A lot of naked Black women... I see a lot of like dancing half-naked.” She describes this as overwhelming enough to stay away from social media due to the negative impact it has on her. “It messed up my thinking,” causing her to feel the need to compete with others and feel inadequate. (Michelle, Age 23, 2nd Gen).

Marta shares, “You get to see people like Michelle Obama and Oprah and more like becoming great on their own because they're showing that we're more than just what the media portrays us to be. I just wish that these kids can really just choose a role model who has done more than just shake her booty.” Arielle, on the other hand, was able to recognize this as a part of an agenda to portray Black women in a very specific manner. She shares:

I can see the system coming in and trying to teach us or show us who we are etc. And this is how they want us to be consumed. So I see them try to infiltrate our system. And when I say them, I mean whoever has an agenda. We are sexual, Black women, we are very sexual. And we care more about aesthetics and looks. Our bodies are plastic, but they're really not. Our DNA has always shown us to have bigger hips, bigger bottoms, bigger breasts. So I see them doing that in social media. And in real life I see that everyone's different. (Arielle, Age 29, 2nd Gen)

Arielle pushed back against the idea that women were sexual and materialistic and compared it to her reality of natural beauty. Nadia speaks about beauty standards being “way better than it has been,” and highlighted her experience with ads incorporating Black people, with dark skin, natural hair, and natural bodies.

Even as participants expressed disdain at how Black people are portrayed negatively, there was still criticism about what was defined as Black success. There were themes about how Black people were portrayed in the entertainment industry, and how such portrayals were toxic to the culture. According to Natalia (Age 30, 2nd Gen), the media shows Black people as

successful only if they're "either a rapper, or trapper, a dancer, (or) you do lashes." For her, it's about drama, and feeding off of entertainment, at the expense of the downfall of Black people. Claude (Age 33, 2nd Gen) echoes this sentiment in reference to platforms on social media such as "WorldStar" or "TheShadeRoom" as sources of entertainment despite the oversexualization of women, and glamorizing "baby mamma drama," which makes it harder to move forward and defeat the odds.

There were concerns about exaggerated celebrity presentations of what it means to be rich and famous. Louis (Age 50, 1st Gen), who is mostly tuned in to watching sports, expresses frustration at athletes who make millions of dollars, but end up going bankrupt because they don't know how to manage their money. According to Emmanuel (Age 22, 1st Gen), many celebrities and performers glorify fame and fortune, and people believe these false personas that are portrayed, only to be disappointed when the truth is exposed. Furthermore, Mendez (Age 32, 1st Gen) speaks on the impact of this type of media on his parents, and immigrants in general, causing a separation between them and Black Americans. He shares,

When you look, especially when you don't know any Black Americans, and you come here, or before you even come here and you look on TV and all you see is like chains and rap videos and then uhm you know, yea... so like the toxic parts of the I guess the rap culture and that's with Black people. And you move to like not the best neighborhoods in Miami, and you see a lot of things going on and you want to just disassociate yourself like – "Oh I'm not that. I'm not that" like "We're not that, so don't confuse us," You know... I think that's damaging to the Black identity, especially for Americans. (Mendez, Age 32, 2nd Gen).

Marta also spoke about children needing better role models who are not glamorizing drugs. She shares, "the guys are always rapping about having guns, doing drugs and all this and how it's all cool." She expressed disappointment at not being better for the youth. Participants were not simply digesting the images portrayed in the media, but were also acutely aware of the widespread impact of the media portrayals on other viewers.

There seems to be a mixed perspective about whose responsibility it is to manage this image. Is it the network for encouraging these shows? Is it consuming it through social media? Or is it the rappers and dancers promoting this way of life? Marta expresses that it is the responsibility of the person with a platform who holds the responsibility, especially in Atlanta where there is a drug triangle. She says, “So these kids. Yeah. And it's not only necessarily Black people. Of course, a huge, diverse groups of children that are using and OD’ing on drug. Music makes a huge impact on lives. So why would you continue to praise this debauchery? This Negativity.”

While the majority of participants shared their experiences with the news and social media, TV Shows, and movies were not exempt from criticism. Pedro shared his perspective from the lens of fictional portrayals of Black people, and his experience witnessing a fictional Black family on TV as a child compared to what is available today:

Blacks are definitely not portrayed uh, well. Uhm again, me and my fiancée were actually talking about it the other day. We looked at one show that actually- we were actually just talking about it: The Cosby Show... how it you know, it showed, you know a household where the mom and the dad was there, kids were there, the kids were going to college you know. The- I think Claire Huxtable was a lawyer, Cliff was a doctor. You know that, you know- even though I don’t really remember the effect it had on me but I watched that show and I you now back then I wasn’t proud but when I look at it now I’m like wow, that’s one show that actually you know showcased a the Black culture in a good light. It’s very rare you see shows like that. Now it’s more drama and ghetto-ness and that’s not your average African American household, and it’s definitely not your average Haitian household. I can’t speak for other households but from what I know, uhm it’s not and it’s not fair when the media you know only shows the negative stuff, only shows when a Black person is you know getting arrested and you know a Black woman when she’s having all these kids and a Black woman where the father is missing out the household because it happens again across he board in every – you have one set you know the father’s absent. (Pedro, Age 39, 1st Gen)

Unlike others who painted a picture of progress, Pedro had to refer to the past for a show that represented an “average” American household. From his experience, there has been a

deterioration of the Black family image. Many others referenced the portrayal of being poor and uneducated, a stereotypical negative image whether in fiction or non-fiction as well as images of police brutality. Some provided a more balanced experience, and claimed that it was more nuanced and may be getting better, not just from a racial standpoint but in representing Black LGBT characters in shows. Francois shares:

I think we're getting to a point where our stories are finally being told with a nuance, where there's more dimension to the characters. Most recently I've been watching *Little Fires Everywhere*, and that's a pretty good story where even with (inaudible) telling the story of Black people, Black LGBTQ people during the AIDS Epidemic. There are... I feel people are finally paying attention to the nuances of stories. (Francois, Age 32, 2nd Gen).

Although the majority of participants criticized the media, and even referred to it as something that would not change, some participants, like Francois, spoke of an emerging nuance in the narrative. For instance, Sandy directed her energy to things that reflect positivity. She shared, “I follow a lot of pages that are more on the positive, you know what I mean? You know, Black girl magic, and stuff like that, so that's coming up with my feed. I'm seeing positive stuff, small business women, things by, you know, Black business owner or someone saying the positive stuff. (Sandy, Age 47, 1st Gen)” Pedro spoke of the possibility of a future in which Black people will have the power to write their own narrative.

You can tell your own news. Share your own stuff, watch you know YouTube videos that's actually you know informative that actually you know, tells our side of the story. Hey- we got this person that's going to Yale, and this person that's going to Harvard, you know. Things that we could look up to and be proud of and say oh ok, It's not just them that's making strides. We're making strides as well, you know, uhm so we just have to – it's up to us to change the narrative. Now, it is hard because we don't have the money to buy the conglomerate media companies like you know fox. You can't really compete with them you know but you can do what you can on your own uhm but trying to compete with them, it's hard you know (Pedro, Age 39, 1st Gen).

Although minimal, there are elements of hopefulness and possibilities for the future, with increased autonomy in managing the Black narrative.

As it relates to Black portrayals in the media, the salient racial identity causes participants to see themselves in the images of other Black people, in the sense that “when it comes to things that may happen in current news, I’m like “I’m Black, this could happen to me” (Claude, Age 33, 2nd Gen). Participants seem to be highly sensitive to not only the content of the narrative, but the impact of the looking glass on themselves, on non-Black others and on impressionable Black youth consumers. There is a connection to the larger picture, and the legacy of Black people as a whole. This is a perfect representation of the study in which Bobo et al (2001) state that there is a collective consciousness among Blacks, allowing them to evaluate issues in relation to how they affect the collective interest of all Black citizens. Although I expected to see distancing behavior from Black people (Roediger 1994, 2005) in response to the looking glass, instead Haitian immigrants showed distancing from the looking glass itself, not allowing it to play a significant role in identity negotiation.

While there is acknowledgement of aspects of the news that may be factual, there are many references to the importance of one’s role in that narrative, and what can be done to strengthen oneself and therefore the future. One key takeaway, whether it is in reference to successes or failures, is that Black people cannot be placed into a box. Despite the media agenda in pushing a biased narrative, and presenting a soiled image of Black people, these stories also paint a picture of autonomy. Participants are able to walk away from the news, and turn to more positive platforms such as social media, and create their own narrative. The next section focuses specifically on how Haiti or Haitians are portrayed in the media, and the experience of the looking glass from an ethnic lens.

5.1.2 *Haiti(ans) in the Media*

Many of the images portrayed of Haiti in the media are often related to poverty, as if the only title the country can hold is “the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere.” Carline paints a picture of her experience through the illustration of an advertisement for Haiti as a charity:

We are portrayed as, the example I can give is, uhm, the 70 cents a day kid. We have the fly on our eye with the big bubbled up stomach, we haven't eaten and everybody's slumming it and we're eating dirt because everyone's impoverished. Nobody has meat, nobody has chicken, nobody has this that or the other. They eating dogs and rats and different things like nobody has anything. Everybody is just slummed and uneducated. (Carline, Age 40, 2nd Gen).

In a response to this, Carline describes having added fuel to her fire, and having a “charge on [her] life” to show a different image of Haiti, similar to charge taken on by other participants in response to Blacks in the media. In alignment with this imagery, three participants made specific reference to Trump's 2018 comment about Haiti being a “shithole” country. This one-liner that was uttered almost two years prior to the interview, was significant enough that multiple participants reflected on this as an indication of how the media views Haiti. Jack mentioned a notable counternarrative effort in response to Trump's comment, stating that people all across social media immediately started posting “Look at me, Mr. President. I'm this. I'm that” in an effort to shine a positive light of what it means to be Haitian.

Salva, acknowledges Haiti's shortcomings, and shares that “it's a shame that we put ourselves in that situation... And it's emotional, because what they're saying is right, but they're not seeing the other reasons why as well.” Salva is referring to outside interference and historical factors that have led to Haiti's current state, and the importance in helping people understand the full story. He shares that his conversations with others are driven by the urge to “to try and make them see” (Salva, Age 48, 1st Gen) that the picture of Haiti they are receiving is not the full

picture. Chantal, on the contrary, did not feel motivated to shed light on people's misconceptions:

Haiti is not just the city Haiti is like an actual island. There is like north Haiti that is doing good there's you know south Haiti that's doing good. Everywhere in Haiti, like the country parts are okay, but they just kept focusing on the city. So now everyone thinks, well they already thought you know, but now just seeing the images. And if you you know type Haiti on google, the first thing you're gonna see is the broken palace. Umm gravel everywhere so, it used to anger me but now its just like whatever. If you're gonna stay ignorant and not do your research, I'm not gonna- I can't explain it to you but what you already saw is what you saw so just like okay whatever believe what you want. And then they always keep saying that Haiti is the number one poorest so I mean it is what it is. It upsets me but I know my country so just like you know? (Chantal, Age 20, 2nd Gen).

Chantal's experience of Haiti in the media was not much different than how participants presented their perception of Black people in the media, a portrayal that is biased and incomplete. Salva, Widlene, and Chantal all seem to acknowledge that there are aspects of truth, and that there are difficulties in Haiti, nonetheless the media's bias and motivation to promote the narrative of poverty and devastation is unjust. Widlene expresses frustration that the media continues to highlight the negative, and focus on killings or riots instead of paying attention to "people doing good, or trying to advance us, advance our community" by building hospitals, and creating programs (Widlene, Age 32, 1st Gen). Edwidge shared her experience of exhaustion in having to cope with a negative portrayal from all angles throughout history:

There's always been this negative connotation with negative portrayal of Haitians in the media, especially when you're talking about going down the rabbit hole and talking about, you know, Haitians and HIV. And, you know, that's it's a shithole country. And then I know recently on Netflix there was that show that I don't know the name of the show, but I found on social media, which they are talking about, how Haitians were the reason why HIV spread to the U.S., which is not true? It's been disproven so many times. I mean, there's always, always, always this negative kind of this negative portrayal of Haitians in the media. Not only, you have to- you're dealing with Blackness being portrayed as negative, African Americans being portrayed as negative. And Then you have this other element of being

Haitian. It's like damn, you know, it's really exhausting. (Edwidge, Age 27, 2nd Gen).

Towards the end of the interviews for this study, there was a Netflix series in which one of the episodes claimed that Haiti was the source of HIV/AIDS. Edwidge broached the topic organically, however only a few participants were asked about this during the interview. When asked, in addition to an “eye-roll,” Tamara reported that she responded to it by signing a petition and posting on social media, demanding that the episode be removed. When she had discovered this, she shared, “Of course it's not the first time that I've heard that. And so I've had to correct several people before. So when I saw that that was posted, I was like, Oh, OK. Here we go (Tamara, Age 32, 2nd Gen.)

Jack intentionally doesn't follow the news in Haiti, specifically because of those negative images of poverty, which was a direct contrast to his lived experience. He shares, “I grew up in a middle class, so that wasn't my reality” (Jack, Age 48, 1st Gen). Louis also expressed a contrast between what he sees in the media compared to reality:

I try not to get into you know the- the radio, the news and stuff. I'm more of, if I want to see I'll go see it for myself. But aside from that I think a lot of times the news misrepresents what actually is happening. You know whether it's turmoil and showing that we are a poor country or slums but there are also a lot of beautiful places. It's just that a lot of time the representation is in the bad side. So it's rarely that you something and it's like “Wow” somebody really thought about doing this. Every now and then I see somebody make a commercial or something and it's like oh wow they remembered us, and a lot of the good things to do. But it's not always that way. (Louis, Age 50, 1st Gen)

The benefit of maintaining a bicultural identity is the utilization of ties back to Haiti to verify or disprove the media narrative. Individuals can challenge the negative narratives through their own direct experience. In response to the constant negative portrayals in the news, Nadege intentionally seeks out positive images. She says, “I'll just go on YouTube and look for videos in

Haiti, not just videos of Haiti, but people living in Haiti... I'm on social media. I follow a lot of- I make it a point to follow a lot of platforms to get the exposure" (Nadege, Age 37, 2nd Gen).

Natalia also shares the importance of positive representation for the country. She shares "I think now we definitely have a positive platform since we have a lot of first generations doing some good stuff, that are putting us on the map." Yet Marta seems to want the beauties of Haiti to remain guarded, hidden, and off the map. She shares,

When I went back to Haiti in 2017, I was able to go to my mom's hometown. which is St. Luis du Sud and It's beautiful. It was the most beautiful part of Haiti that I saw my entire 14-days there. And I didn't want to leave! like they don't know this part of Haiti. Carnival, I mean, our Royal Caribbean doesn't come here and they don't come over here with their little sad music and, you know, 75 cents to, you know, Jean-Luis because he needs your help and all these little infomercials. And all that stuff.. This is the part of Haiti that's kept secret. And I hope to God they never find it.

She fears that once exposed, it puts these gems at risk of being robbed of all of the beauty that remains, and will be destroyed by others' attempts to take advantage, something that history has already proven. However, despite her hopes to keep the gems of Haiti hidden, she shares that she always keeps pictures on her phone, and takes every opportunity to show those who are not Haitian, what Haiti looks like.

Similar to the slight shift in narrative for Black people through the use of social media, there has also been a reported shift in Haiti. Isais shares:

I think now they are so, social media, they're showing- because I know people that that's been to Haiti, that's not even Haitian. But uhm, that resort, I went. And then I flew to Haiti- I went to Haiti for one week, I went to the resort. I came back here to the U.S. and I went to DR the next weekend. And when I went down to DR, it was like Decameron that everything was way nicer than in DR. The beach was nicer. The water was definitely cleaner and nicer. Stuff like that, they don't show. Now, I guess now they all showing more because people are like you, like, you know, like I guess people are like, I guess stand up and, you know, trying to show how beautiful Haiti is. But yea, over the years, it wasn't like that. (Isais, Age 33, 1st Gen).

Here again, the flexibility of social media is evident in that the content creator has demonstrated the ability to present an alternative image of Haiti. Yet for Anika, it wasn't enough. Anika shared that there is an increase in Haitian pride, and celebrities are claiming Haiti, which is giving Haiti the opportunity for a better name, however the current issues presented in the media prevent her from being able to connect and visit the island. She states:

Trying to live through the earthquake and trying to live through AIDS, the poverty, we still can't get our act together. You can't even go visit your country. I was dating a guy in Haiti right after I got divorced. And, you know, every time for me to get on a plane and go, I go, can't come. No, can't come. It's like it's sad. You know, again, my kids want to go see a Haiti. They want to now that they're older, they want to go. I can't even fathom what it would be that day that I'd put them all on a plane and go to Port au Prince. I just don't see it (Anika, Age 54, 1st Gen).

Finally, there was also dissatisfaction from a fictional perspective. Three participants brought up the fictional portrayal of Haitians in the blockbuster “Bad Boys II” film that came out in 2003. Jean shares, “That was bad. That was terrible depiction...the part where the guy was with the [dreads] you know whole he's in the Haitian mafia. not every Haitian is in the Haitian mafia like come on. (Jean, Age 34, 1st Gen). Francois was not so frustrated by the portrayal of gangsters, but at the fact that “the accents are off,” and that there wasn't even an attempt to find actual Haitians, who reside where the film takes place, to fill the role. Nadine echoed the same, stating, “The guys don't even speak Kreyòl the right way. So I was like why- to pick two people that cannot even speak the language to play a part. (Nadine, Age 34, 1st Gen).”

The experience of Haiti and Haitians in the media closely mirrors the experience of Black portrayals. Participants maintain a similar level of skepticism and distrust towards what seems to be a concerted effort to paint a picture of poverty. Haitian immigrants were able to easily contrast the images reflected in the media because of their own lived experiences and knowledge

of a “true” Haiti. Still, it is acknowledged that Haiti has its problems, and it is the responsibility of all Haitians to shift the narrative, whether it’s celebrities with a platform, or individuals sharing beautiful photos from their Haitian vacation. Similar to the Black experience, there is expressed hope for a brighter future.

To conclude this section on the looking glass experience with the media, as anticipated, Haitian immigrants experience a biased onslaught of negative portrayals, attacking both their racial and ethnic identities through the lens of a White racial frame. However, participants are not simply passive participants in the looking glass experience. They understand the White racial frame in which their image is being portrayed, and are less inclined to accept it as a valid representation of who they are. They also are acutely aware of the systemic racism that serves as fodder for Black struggles, which in turn feeds the media portrayals. As a result, they practice autonomy in shifting to a positive platform, advocating against the misrepresentation (as in Netflix’s recent episode on HIV), and focusing on a solutions-oriented counternarrative that is rooted in sharing positive stories (and becoming the narrator), obtaining an education, and strengthening the family.

5.2 Discrimination

Participants were asked if they have ever experienced discrimination. This open-ended question permitted participants the opportunity to choose any kind of discrimination throughout their lives, whether from childhood or as an adult, and related to any aspect of their race, ethnic, gender or sexual orientation identity. This question highlights the intimate and often interpersonal experience of the looking glass. Unlike the media, this is not something that people participants choose to view, or have much control with avoidance. Part of what makes the racial identity so salient is its inescapable nature. Therefore those who have the appearance of a Black

person get treated as a Black person, and unfortunately this experience often involves discrimination. Due to their “invisible immigrant” status, these circumstances do not often allow for an opportunity to discriminate due to ethnicity. In an effort to assess the mental health impact of these experiences, participants were asked to share the most memorable or the most impactful experience.

5.2.1 *The First Generation*

Seventy-four percent of first-generation participants reported at least one experience of discrimination through their lives. The majority of participants attributed their experiences of discrimination to their race, despite their first-generation status, and having distinguishing characteristics such as accents, or atypical names. Although the primary cause of discrimination was not gender, women were more likely to bring up their gender in their experiences. In addition, discrimination was more often experienced in the workplace than any other location. All seventeen stories of discrimination took place during adulthood, with the exception of two participants who experienced discrimination during their teenage years.

Marc shared three separate experiences of discrimination. The one that stood out the most was during a social outing in Africa where he overheard a man say in French that Marc was not welcome at the house party his peers had invited him to attend. His host was not aware that Marc spoke and understood French fluently. The friend feigned fatigue, and Marc left with his friends. While this was a memorable moment for him, this situation did not bother Marc. He blamed the incident on the man’s “ignorance” and declared “I refuse to let people define me. To put me down.” He later reflected on an incident during his childhood involving a Taxi:

There was one experience I had in Brooklyn that was when I was about to graduate undergrad and I was close to becoming a professional. But you know to blend been in New York you have to wear sagging pants sometimes you know. Baggy clothes. Uhm, cap and hat and stuff in order to- I thought it was more of a front ‘cause you

were in Brooklyn as they try to test you sometimes. I was waiting for a cab in Brooklyn. And then the cab stopped- It was two of us; my friend was up front. The cab stop and as soon as I stepped up, he sped up... (My friend was) Haitian, but he wasn't dressed like me. So I'm like OK, so to me that's maybe they discriminate against- you know what I'm saying. So that's probably- And after that I was like you know what, I'm Haitian. And at the time like I said, I was almost done so... So I shift my fashion style to become more professional then. (Marc, Age 47)

What Marc took away from this incident was that if he changed his style of dress, he would be able to avoid discrimination. In both instances, he described control either in not allowing racism to impact him or in changing his appearance to avoid discrimination in the future.

When asked about how his gender may play a role in his experiences in the United States, he talked about the negative narrative of the Black male being a gang banger or a rapper, which is not an accurate representation of who he is. He then shared a story about a party he had at his home for his kids which got out of hand due to the number of kids who showed up. The police were called to his predominately White neighborhood to shut down the party, and attempted to “instigate” in an effort to get Marc to react. Marc shared an understanding of the situation by reflecting on the idea that cops have been trained to fear Black men. In this situation, Marc’s objective was to stay alive. While the officer continued to yell at him, he chose to lay down on the floor, because that was the only place he felt safe. He credits this to his maturity, citing that had this occurred 10 years ago, and had his pride gotten the best of him, he may not have survived the situation. In this instance, he had nothing to prove. He shared “I know who I am.” This allows him to tolerate difficult situations without fear, and without having to prove himself in order to stay alive for his children.

Marc further continues to highlight a sense of autonomy and control by highlighting that he is the minority at his job. He felt that if they had their choice, it would be all White people instead of 2 Black people out of 50. Although he considers the possibility of him filling a quota,

he states, “It doesn’t bother me, because, it’s because if I pass that filter, it’s because I am something that I made myself to be.” Regardless of his various experiences throughout life, Marc maintained the perception that he had control over his environment.

Yves, recalled his very first experience of discrimination during his college years, but also alluded to using his intelligence and negotiation skills to advocate for himself and overcome it. He states:

Uh. [pause] Felt discrimination in any way... my first experience of discrimination. In that one I really called it out. It was in college. Basically [pause] you know I was an accounting major you know I got my bachelors in accounting [pause] basically you know I was in a class and it was a math class. And you know it was calculus, and the way the professor graded my paper okay? Now, to give you an example okay, if I did uh $x=2$ ok, and then the answer should’ve been $x=4$ and you know, every answer that I do. Every calculation that I do from getting the first answer $x=2$ is now double ok, but if you look at the way you know the steps that I’m taking, I know the work...At the end, the answer was incorrect. And the professor you know uhm marked me wrong for everything. And then I looked at another of my classmate’s exam and then saw that you know uh they had made something similar on another question... not the same question, on another question. And the professor only took points on one, and gave him the explanation, “I see you understand...” I went in and brought t it up. He tried to argue, I said “No, if you’re looking at this you can’t say I don’t- I do not understand. It’s only double, Obviously I make a miscalculation up here.” The more I say this, I realize that some things happen to you in your life and you remember it, no matter how long or so it was. And then he looked at me, he shook his head and smiled. And he said, “Took you a lot of guts to come in here and make this argument. I respect you. And he changed it and give me the full answer correct. (Yves, Age 56, 1st Gen).

Similar to Yves, Jean had a school-related experience of discrimination when he was dropped to 3rd grade when he came to the United States from 4th grade. However, his father and grandmother challenged the system. In addition to the advocacy from his parents, and his ability to excel in the 3rd grade, the school was able to correct their error by placing him back in the 4th grade.

Pierre recalled a jarring experience in a social setting that almost led to a physical altercation.

One that sticks out the most is ... it happened here actually in Atlanta, when I was in a nightclub, and it was a guy, it was a predominantly White club and there was a Black guy on the dance floor, and he was doing all that breakdancing and all that stuff. People were just looking at him and laughing, you know he was having a good time. But there was a White guy standing right next to me, and he says "What the hell is wrong with this guy." And I'm like who cares or whatever. And he says "Why doesn't he go to a Black club and do that." And I'm like "What?" For a second I took a look at my skin to see if I had changed color. And he was like, you don't see White people going to Black clubs. White people should go to White clubs, and Black people should go to Black clubs... And I said wait, do you have a problem with us being here? If you have a problem, why don't you do something about it then. So now he wants to fight me, and I'm like, let's take it outside then. One of my friends came up afterwards and he noticed I had back-up, so he walked away. (Pierre, Age 61).

In Pierre's experience, the racist comment was not made directly to him, but towards a Black stranger. It is evident that due to his salient racial identity, Pierre received this as a personal insult and reacted accordingly. Pierre could also recall other instances of discrimination, but expressed "you don't know whether it's because you're Black or not." He shared instances that didn't "seem right," and expressed how difficult it is to discern the intent of others, and his reluctance to "call the race card." Yet, with so many experiences, he shares, you have to ask yourself "what could it be?" He shared another instance at a local restaurant in which he was refused seating and told that the restaurant was full, despite evidence of empty seats, after which he spoke to a manager. He also shared an experience at the workplace:

There was an incident this time... Let me see, a telecommunications company, and I was an engineer and I walked into a room that had this heavy expensive equipment that I was working on, and a guy said "Why are you in here? If something goes missing out of here, you're going to be responsible." So I'm like "what?" you know. And I had took that up to personnel, you know to HR. And fortunately, this guy was known to be racist anyway, but unfortunately the lady

was a woman who was in charge of HR who was like “oh, I don’t think so,” so it never went anywhere (Pierre, Age 61).

Again, Pierre’s racial identity plays a role in his looking glass experience with the engineer. By insinuating that Pierre would be a thief, Pierre understood this comment to be due to his race. For Jean, the discrimination experience that sticks out the most was during his time in the military. He worked 5 jobs and worked 12 hour shifts. However when it came time to receive recognition, his White counterpart received a medal. He shared:

It just felt like I got shorted you know. I was just like I don’t understand... I try not to play that card but, it was so obvious. It was obvious. It’s not to the end. It’s not all the way up to the end where he was actually blown away that I got a letter, just like. I try not to but it was so painstakingly obvious that it was... It kind of made you want to give up. A little bit. Like man what’s the point if you’re going to keep doing all of this and then you’re not going to get the respect that you deserve so. Um yeah it made you wanna give up. It made me wanna give up maybe for small. What’s the word? Maybe for like a very short moment, but at that point it made you wanna ah well go its not worth it. Its not worth it if you’re gonna do all this... But I knew that when I got back I had to pick myself up and keep it moving I’m not gonna get hanged up on that (Jean, Aged 34).

Reference to the “race card” was brought up in more than one interview, indicating reluctance to define the experience as racially motivated. This reluctance may also be indicative of an individual’s racial salience, or doubts regarding the cause of mistreatment.

Half of the women who identified experiences of discrimination were in a work environment. It was in these situations that women expressed that their gender was also a significant factor, and that the discrimination faced was not exclusive their race alone. Yvette’s experience contrasted Louis and Yves’ assertion that hard work would be protective from discrimination. She states:

So, growing up you hear, go to school. Get your degree be smart and um you’ll be recognized. You’ll get that position or um you’ll find your rightful place because you’ve done your due diligence right? But I find that oftentimes um even though I had the masters degree at the time or I went out and got you know different

certifications, um I would still be passed up and they were given to somebody who didn't have as many credentials. (Yvette, Age 42).

She elaborates that due to her lack of a Haitian accent, she is confident that being “passed up” for positions is due to her being a Black woman. Anika shared that in her 30 years of working, she had an experience of discrimination at every job. The most recent incident led to a lawsuit which intersected across race, gender, and age. Essentially, it was all of the things that made her different than her colleagues.

So probably anything I've experienced Black first and then in the career world as a teacher, Black and being a woman, but almost always Black as the first thing. Whether it's feeling like, you know, you're overlooked for promotions, for someone who is Caucasian and far less experience in this because of who they know or whatever (Anika, Age 54).

Sandy shared that people tend to automatically assume who a person is because of their race. She talked about how she enjoys rock music, and how surprised her White colleague was as she sang along to Jon Bon Jovi. She felt that the dynamic variability that exists with Black people becomes one dimensional and is limiting.

Two first generation women talked about discrimination when dealing with romantic relationships. For one, her race prevented her from being accepted by White men, whereas the other experienced attacks due to her interracial relationship. Widlene pursued White men not because of their race, but simply for being “cute” and consistently feeling rejected, despite sharing the same social circles or activities. There was an implicit “You're not like us” which made her feel that she had to find her “own” to connect with. In contrast, Isabelle shared that she has gotten flipped off multiple times for being with her husband. At restaurants, they would get stared at, and get unwanted attention.

We got flipped off a few times in Augusta. (chuckles) which is weird- I've never, unless people are driving. This was like in restaurants. I was like what? (laughs) what is this? And so that's one of the main reasons we left Augusta to be honest. Cause I felt uncomfortable. We would go to restaurants and um we would be sitting down. Let's say um we were sitting at a table like that. I would be facing the crowd, but he would be facing me. When I would feel uncomfortable, I would switch seats because he's more of like waving and saying hi to people and saying I see you staring at us. Why are you staring at us? Cause I can't really handle that type of like attention because its unnecessary. Why are we getting extra attention? It's because we're an interracial couple (Isabelle, Age 28, 1st Gen).

In addition to her relationship woes, Isabelle shared a story about discrimination in a store during childhood. She stated, "I'm very careful of different places that I visit. Just because, of course, I know how people see me." She expressed exasperation that she already had a reputation, even though it's not who she is.

However, there were two first-generation participants who could not recall discrimination at all when prompted. Marie could not recall any experiences of discrimination at the time of the interview. She shared that it is something that she cannot see because it's something that she does not care about. She intentionally chooses to protect her space as a mental health therapist, and focus on positivity. She also attributed racism as the problem of the racist, and not her burden to carry. She states, "It's not bringing any value to me. I know what I can bring to the table, and I know what I represent. And that's something for you to work on. Whoever's doing that, that's your problem." Louis could not recall any instances of discrimination either, which he credited to his work ethic. He credits this to his upbringing and holding onto his "old school" principles as the key to allowing him to avoid discrimination. He shared, "I've been working the same job for 25 years. I don't think it's coincidental that you know that I take what I do very seriously and I make sure that the deliverables that I have. I always deliver on time. Uhm and uh you know, college is key. So I always keep educating myself in technology" (Louis, Age 50).

The first generation men seem to indicate some degree of control over the outcome, even when situations were out of their control such as the police coming to Marc's home or the "HR Lady's" inaction in Pierre's example. There seems to be a theme of self-advocacy and a belief that if you speak up, wrongs will be righted. However, there are some evident gender differences in how first-generation Haitian women perceive and experience discrimination. They experience the world through the intersectional lens of a Black woman, which is evident through their professional and romantic experiences. Although there are still some aspects of advocacy, such as Anika's discrimination lawsuit, for women, there seems to be less perception of control when faced with discrimination, such as being rejected or excluded in the workplace.

5.2.2 The Second Generation

Eighty-two percent of second-generation participants reported racially motivated discrimination, whereas a minority referenced ethnic discrimination. The majority of the experiences occurred during adulthood, with the exception of three that were during childhood. (Two of the three childhood experiences were also related to bullying about ethnicity.) Discrimination occurred in various settings including the workplace, school, church, and social settings.

Three women reported specifically being called the N-word as their most significant experience of discrimination. Natalia, who was driving for Lyft picked up a couple on Halloween weekend. The couple was drunk, and the man in the couple was agitated and kept screaming "Where are we going?" which made Natalia feel uncomfortable. For her own safety, she pulled over and asked them to find another ride. This triggered him, and he cursed at her, calling her the N-word. He subsequently came around the car and got into her face, while his girlfriend stood

and watched. This incident stuck with Natalia, and impacted her for a long time. Similarly, Claudette's experience occurred while working in a professional capacity. She shared:

I had a client call me the N-word because her transaction just didn't work out for her. Um, I had already been warned about the area I was getting ready to work in. It was more a rich area in that a lot of these women felt entitled and they would do things like that. But I just never thought it would happen to me. And she accused me of falsely depositing her checks, and she was missing her debit cards. When I finished her transaction, she accused me stealing. The ended up finding the debit card in the car on the side of the door, but I cried so much my manager, let me go home. For me it was one of those moments where you just wanted to hate every Caucasian that you walked upon, but as a Christian, I couldn't do that. (Claudette, Age 28)

Marta's also got called the N-word, at the age of fifteen, while walking home from choir practice with her brother. Unprompted, a complete stranger pulled over and yelled profanity to her and her brother, including the N-Word. This happened shortly after she moved to Georgia, and during a time when she was under the impression that racism no longer existed. For all three women, the utterance of this word caused shock, immediately followed by anger-filled tears.

Marta's shocking adjustment to Georgia was not isolated. The transition to Georgia also emerged as a theme, as two other participants identified the move as a significant moment that led to experiences of discrimination, also during childhood. After moving to Georgia, Arielle attended a bonfire at her predominately White Mormon church. One of the young girls made a comment about Arielle being burned and not having to worry about being close to the bonfire. Later that night, when her sisters arrived, a young boy expressed shock about her inviting more Black people, as if there was an unspoken quota at the event. She also went on to share stereotyping while out on a date, in which a man asserted that all Haitians are into witchcraft, and his mother had advised him to watch out for Haitian women. According to Chantal, she shared, "Everything happens in Georgia." After her move, she shared with her new classmates

that her family was from Haiti, and a student quickly picked on her about doing voodoo and coming off a boat. Even when the same student later came to her home, she even exclaimed, “Wow, this is a big house for a Haitian person.” Nadege had a unique experience as well, as she attributed Atlanta, which is known to be called the “Black Mecca,” as an anti-Black place. She shares:

I never felt like I was hated because I was Black, but maybe assumptions that were made about me like less intelligent or... but it wasn't until I moved here that I felt like my Blackness was a problem... It's very strange though because in Atlanta I don't feel discrimination from White people. I'm not stupid; I know what institutional racism is [laughs] I'm not stupid. I know how its embedded in American society. I know it's there. I know it exists. But as far as face to face, it comes from people who look exactly like me.” She describes colorism from men she dated, and criticism for attempting to purchase a naturally textured weave, and other anti-Black microaggressions that came from other people of color.... I never had that stigma of what it was to be Black. I knew racism existed; I knew there would be hurdles for me to overcome, but I never felt like I was the problem, like my skin, my heritage, my hair was the problem. And I don't get that vibe in Atlanta. I get the idea that, “Yea you're Black BUT you can still be successful. (Nadege, Age 37).

Nadege further elaborated with other examples, including an instance in which Nadege attempted to purchase afro-like hair extensions, and was criticized by a Black colleague for not purchasing Eurocentric straight extensions instead. Nadege made it clear that despite her awareness of a system of racism and White supremacy, her experiences of discrimination were at the hands of people who looked just like her. Similarly, Michelle's Black peers criticized her for sounding like a “White girl” or saying things like “Why do you talk so proper?” She shared:

What I have experienced it's kind of like a little bit of racial profiling. Like if you go to an interview, and then someone expects you to sound a certain type of way, someone expects you to present yourself a certain type of way, I think that's one thing I have experienced. Like I used to work in HR in college, so a lot of people would, like setting up meetings, like meeting with potential employees and them seeing me, and they're like, “Oh...” And you could see, like their face would tell it all. (Michelle, Age 26, 2nd Gen).

Similar to Sandy's experience of being a Jon Bon Jovi fan, her presence and articulation was jarring to both Black and non-Black people who had a fixed understanding of what it means to look, sound, and be Black.

Many other participants reported experiences of discrimination in the form of microaggressions. Margaret referenced people making faces in public spaces, whether at the grocery store or at the park. Tamara shared being judged at restaurants or having an added gratuity to the check. Fabienne was followed around in a beauty supply store. Francois shared a collection of experiences in which he was pulled over by police, had a woman clutch her purse while in an elevator, and receiving mistreatment as a gay man. Junior had others continuously underestimate his abilities and express feelings of shock for his accomplishments throughout life. Margaret was shunned by other students during a class project, where she was the darker-skinned person in the class, and none of the students wanted to work with her.

When I did my um. In English class, we had to work in a group. And mind you I was one of the two Black people. No one of the 3-Black people in there where they were mixed with something. When you looked at them, they were very racially ambiguous. So, I was like the Blackest one in there. And I remember we had to like work in like a group or something like that and I sat there. Everybody formed their groups of 3 and stuff and it was left with me and someone else and it was a girl who happened to be White. And my professor said oh well you can work with her. It's just you two. You guys can work together. She said can I with someone else. That's literally what she said. Can I work with someone else? And it made me feel so bad. And this was in my first year of college at [redacted]. It was my first year and um I remember that day like after I left class, I didn't have to go to my next class cause it was cancelled. Like I was tearing up driving home, because. I was thinking about that... it really hurt thinking about it. It really hurt so. (Margaret, Age 23).

Margaret could not think of any other reason for this treatment besides the color of her skin. She ultimately ended up working on the project alone, but was deeply wounded by the rejection.

Although she did not experience direct discrimination on campus, Annemarie, was exposed to racism on a social media platform during her college years. She shares:

I just remember like racist things happening on campus, like a Black RA died and a Black student died, and at this time there was an app called Yik Yak that was popular, it was like an anonymous app, and people were like, “Oh all the Black kids are dying, clearly God doesn’t want you all here,” things like that. (Annemarie, Age 23)

While social media has been referenced as a tool for positivity and autonomy in presenting one’s own narrative, it also seems to serve as a platform that also exposes it’s users to generalized racism, thus causing hostile and unwelcome environment. Just like Marie and Louis from the first generation, Claude could not immediately identify experiences of discrimination, which he attributes to his confidence in himself. He shares:

I’m gonna be honest. It’s really hard for me to answer this question because I’m so open and accepting and I give a warming love I would like to say Discrimination [long pause] ... I guess for me it’s hard for me to answer because you have to care on a certain level to react to a certain thing.

He elaborated further that he had never experienced being passed up for promotions at work and he has a lot of confidence when it comes to dating. However, this confidence decreases in the presence of police officers. Claude then shared an experience in which he was arrested:

I remember getting stopped with my brother and then- I do this every time someone’s in my car or I know, I say if we get stopped by the cops, keep your hands in plain sight and let me do all of the talking. So if I get stopped by the cop, I put my lights on immediately and the cops come on my brother’s side, the passenger side, and he’s like “Why do you have your hands out there? You’re making me nervous.” I’m like officer, how is his hand out on the dash making you nervous? He’s like, I don’t know, I’m just nervous. And I- it’s just only with cops. It’s only with cops. Even when I got stop and pulled over and arrested for not changing my address from Jersey to Atlanta, I was like OK I’ll change it. And they were like “We are going to have to bring you in.” I’m like... I don’t think that was right – and it was in Alpharetta, an Alpharetta cop harassing me for not changing my license. And I told the truth. I was like “I’ve been here for 6 months” and the thing is that once you move down here you have 30 days or 40 days, and I was like I mean.. and I got treated like trash like if I was a criminal. They treated me as if I shot a cop. When I got in the cell they were pushing me around and they processed me for 8 hours for a change address. I’m like sir, there’s got to be more than this. And they’re like no, it’s just for a changed address. I said... I mean I felt the lowest. I felt like trash. But only amongst police officers.

This experience which evidently impacted Claude's mental well-being at the time, and would likely be considered a salient experience of discrimination, seemed to be absconded in the depths of Claude's memory at the time of the interview. Despite this experience, he expressed feeling protected by his Christian faith, which serves as a deterrent for experiences of discrimination.

To conclude this section on discrimination, it seems that discrimination was predominately fueled by race across both first and second generation; their race was more evident than their ethnicity. Although the majority of discrimination experiences occurred during adulthood, for second-generation immigrants, they seem to occur at an earlier age, from childhood, to college, or at their first job. Mistreatment was primarily based on physically evident aspects ascertained from initial observation, and stereotypes correlated to these assumptions, ranging from microaggressions to more overt and explicit forms of discrimination. Ethnicity-driven mistreatment occurred primarily during childhood. Intersectionality emerged most significantly with first-generation women in the workplace, yet gender did not emerge as a factor for discrimination for second-generation immigrants. Although the second-generation had majority women, I believe the presence of gender as a factor in the first generation and not the second is because the first generation is older on average, likely providing the first-generation women with more experience within the workplace, and therefore have exposure to racial and sexual discrimination. Previous research has shown strong identity salience for gender (Jaret and Reitzes 1999), and race (Steck et al. 2003), both of which seem to be most present in the workplace for first-generation women. Furthermore, there was a strong sense of autonomy for first-generation immigrants, in which participants felt that their self advocacy would have an impact on discrimination. However for second-generation immigrants, discrimination was shared in a more matter-of-fact tone, without much intervention or a search for resolution.

These experiences of the looking glass through the media, and through experiences of discrimination directly speak to the identity negotiation process. We understand that the looking glass is not a passive experience, and as is evident with the experiences of the media, Haitian immigrants may put a lower significance on the media through avoidance and distrust. However, discrimination is unavoidable, and likely strengthens the double-consciousness surrounding the Black identity. This feedback loop is an essential component of Burke's (2009) identity theory. According to Burke, the successful verification of an identity points to a "true self," which is directly correlated to self-esteem. Due to these negative stigmas from both racial and ethnic identities, participants may be motivated to shun or distance themselves from one identity or another. The next section explores the impact of the looking glass self on the perception of their ethnic identity and determine if participants are motivated use one stigmatized (ethnic) identity to mask or suppress the other (racial) as a protective measure for mental well-being (RE3).

5.3 Looking Glass Meanings: Risk or Protective

Participants were asked if they perceived their ethnic identity to serve as a risk or protective factor in their lives as it relates to overall well-being in the United States. This intentionally open-ended question was designed to assess how participants perceived the impact of their identity negotiation and therefore identity presentation across spaces. These perceptions, through the looking glass, directly drive mental wellness. Although the question was asked as a binary, participants generated four responses: protective, neither, mixed, or risk. The neither category indicated that it was neither a protective nor risk factor. The mixed category indicated that it was both a protective and risk factor. Responses were coded based on these four categories.

5.3.1 *The First Generation*

Overall, half of first generation immigrants (50%) viewed their ethnic identity as protective, followed by 14% who found it to be neutral, which combined indicates approximately 64% of participants who perceive their ethnic identity favorably. In addition, 23% of participants viewed their ethnicity as “mixed,” both a risk and a protection, and 14% viewed it solely as a risk. There were noticeable gender differences within the first generation in that, albeit a small percentage, men were the only participants who viewed their identity as a risk. The men’s responses were spread somewhat evenly across all four categories, whereas 80% of women identified a protective factor.

5.3.1.1 *The Protective Factor*

Many first generation participants cited a psychological advantage to their ethnic identity. There was a theme about knowing where they come from, and pulling strength from their ancestors. Marc, who identifies as Haitian, describes the protective aspect of his ethnic identity despite his “combination” response. He says:

I think it's a combination. It protects me because, you truly know we are. Although we don't know we're in Africa we're from. At least we know we're from Haiti. Black Americans here don't have no clue where they are. They don't have any feeling of uh- I don't I think they- Tome I look at it in a way of uhm it's like a kid not having their dad, you understand. It's like although they're normal. But, they still have... I don't know, you're the sociologist, so you've studied psychology. So it affects them in a way. So what I think we are kind of, in a way I have an advantage because although we don't know where we're from in Africa, but we know where we're from in the Caribbean. And we have some type of uh "appartenance"... I don't know how to say that in English. (Marc, Age 47).

The French translation of “appartenance” translates to “membership” and “belonging.” He has a connection to a motherland, which strengthens his confidence in who he is. Multiple times throughout his interview, Marc repeated the phrase, “I know who I am,” which enabled him to navigate multiple experiences of discrimination, negative imagery of Black people in the

media, and political attacks against Haiti with minimal impact to his overall well-being even though he is aware of the risks of being a Black man in America.

For Yves, his Haitian identity does not protect him from racism, and therefore viewed his ethnic identity as “mixed.” He shared that he could not “escape” it, because people chose to discriminate when they see his skin. However, he shares, “What helps me in America is the fact that I know who I am.” He used this phrase multiple times during his interview, and shared that for generations before him, his ancestors were free men. And although he is aware that he will never be on an “equal playing field” as others, he states “it gives me an assurance of who I am. I don’t need somebody to uhm tell me who I am.” Yvette, who viewed her ethnic identity as “protective,” also referenced her ancestors as a source of strength to get through the challenges of life.

I think being Haitian and knowing the history of what we were able to accomplish I think um. I feel I’ll say I feel. I feel like it’s a protective- it’s more of a protecting factor because um you know when things happen to me, I always go back to Africans are strong right. I come from a line of just people who decided against all odds we gone make it and to me that mindset has pushed me through you know freaking linear algebra. (Laughs heartily) It has pushed me through you know writing 18-page papers and you know whenever you just felt like oh my God you just can’t do it anymore. (Yvette, Age 42).

When Yvette reflects on the fact that people have gone through much worse, it offers her a sense of pride, resilience, and courage. Although she has experienced discrimination, and has been passed up for jobs, there is a constant push that failure is not an option. She elaborates, “no matter what’s happening with me I’m not gonna let you know I’m just gonna get up I’m just gonna keep pushing keep pushing keep pushing.”

Nadine also uses the phrase “I know who I am.” In response to the question about her Haitian identity being a risk or protective factor, she shares that before she learned anything else, she had Haitian culture engrained into who she is. Because of how she was raised, she knows

who she is, but also recognizes the risk because of others who do not understand Haitian people in America. So for her, it provided a mix of risk and protection. Audrey echoed Nadine's sentiments about how people lack understanding of Haitian, however she says, "I don't dwell on the negative aspects of things, only because I know who I am and have- I feel like, well I am a great being. So, dealing with racism is just a hurdle for me...I don't let it hold me back." From Audrey's perspective, although she recognized the issue of racism, she viewed her Haitian identity as wholly protective.

Patrick's perspective was that due to his ancestors, that being Haiti could only be viewed as protective, despite the risk of discrimination. It was while Patrick was in prison that he read and learned more about the Haitian culture and history that he had never learned as a child. He talked about the impact of Haiti on America's history. He highlighted how the Haitian revolution caused Napoleon Bonaparte to sell the Louisiana territory to the United States, and how Jean Jacques DuSabe, a Haitian man founded Chicago. He talked about learning in prison that his ancestors came to the United States to aid in the civil war, and how learning these things helped him appreciate being Haitian even more. He shares:

I think it protects more than it doesn't protect. It protects in the fact that it protects me in a sense that my ideologies it protects me with my culture, you know being comfortable in my culture. It protects me. What risks could it give me? The only risk it could really give me is uhm hatred from White people; hatred from people who don't really care for Haitians? That's the only risk. And that to me is not a risk. Because I'm not afraid of no man or woman. (Patrick, Age 39).

He did not understand the inclination for people to judge or belittle Haitians due to their contributions. He confided, "My ancestors are the greatest of the slaves to come to the Western Hemisphere. So why am I shrinking myself? Why am I shrinking myself from my greatness?"

While many talked about ancestors and a connection to the motherland, a few individuals referenced a more intimate influence, which was their Haitian upbringing and appreciation for

Haitian culture. Louis, who previously referred to holding onto “old school” principles as a means to avoid discrimination and to excel at work, also brought up these same principles when asked about the risk or protective nature of a Haitian identity. Aside from Patrick, Louis was the only other first generation man who said it was protective. With these principles in mind, he felt that it prevented him from doing the “bad things” during his teen years, despite being exposed to many things. He has carried these principles throughout his life, and has passed them onto his children, making it clear what is acceptable, and what is not, and understanding that certain paths lead to either success or failure. When asked about dealing with discrimination, he refers to it as a “facts of life,” and something that has to be dealt with regardless. He emphasizes focusing on the things that you can control, leading to a stress-free life.

For Lorna, her protective factor was specifically in being a Haitian woman. Haitian girls are raised differently than the boys. The girls are taught to cook, wash dishes, and learn to manage the home. She says, “As Haitian women, we just take on so much,” because not only is the home maintained but they also happen to be the breadwinners. These are things that are instilled from childhood, and something that you can’t “shake.” While Audrey highlights this as a strength and protective factor, she does acknowledge the added pressure that Haitian women place on themselves.

Many participants highlighted that their Haitian identity served to enhance their social interactions, and sometimes their relationships at work. Half of these individuals, viewed this as purely protective whereas the other half saw it as a mixed experience of potential risk or protection. Widlene, felt that her identity protected her from the stereotype of a Black woman, specifically in a work environment. She shares:

I think for me it serves a little bit as a plus. Because unfortunately there is still a bad stereotype with the Black Americans, right. The angry, attitudinal, certain way

they dress, certain way they talk. I think me identifying as Haitian brings- you don't have to worry, at least to my manager or the ones upper than me, I don't think you have to worry behind that I won't - What is the way Haitians say it "Pa fe'm wont non!" [laughs]. I won't embarrass them because you know, 'she's different'. She wasn't raised here. She didn't pick up the talking or the cursing. I don't do the typical- what they think is the typical Black American attitude. (Widlene, Age 32).

The reference "Pa fe'm wont" translates to "Do not embarrass me," or "Do not bring me shame."

This is a phrase that is routinely uttered from the mouths of parents to their children as a reminder that their behavior, whether in the presence or the absence of their parent was a reflection of their upbringing. While Widlene felt that she was protected, she did feel the pressure of representing her community, unable to "drop a F-bomb and you know, feel good." Sandy couldn't quite put her finger on the shift that occurs when White people discover her Haitian identity, however the perception of her being exotic by others was perceived as a protective factor for her. She says:

Honestly, I feel like it's protective because Americans have a tendency to believe- White Americans, especially have a tendency to believe that there is just something uniquely different in a good way about you being Black from somewhere else than if you're Black from America. So like when I meet, um, I'm trying to find the best way to explain it. It's almost like they have an aha like between, when they first meet me and they know that I'm Black, that's instant, but then when they know that I'm Black and from somewhere else, it's like, Oh, all of a sudden you're interesting and exotic or something, you know, like you're bringing something else to the table, like you're worldly, or there's always some, there's always a shift, even if it's a subtle shift, but there's almost always a shift in how people see you when they, for some reason when they know that you're not completely American, here's just some sort of shift when they know you're from somewhere else (Sandy, Aged 47).

For instance, she shared that she occasionally speaks French with the French teacher at her school, and translated Kreyòl for a Haitian student, and because people are not accustomed to Black people speaking multiple languages, there develops an interest that was not previously there.

5.3.1.2 *The Risk Factor*

Jacques presented a mixed reception of his Haitian identity. He shared, “I was at the bar the other day and I mentioned that I was born in Haiti to the couple that was sitting next to me, and the lady was like ‘Oh, you need to talk to him.’ And I ended up spending two hours talking to this guy!” He elaborated that whenever he introduced himself as a Haitian, more times than not, White people immediately express interest, and like to engage in conversation. He also added that identifying as Haitian has given him an edge on a job interview, causing him to share his identity, even without being prompted. He shared:

I feel like in my industry, in IT, when they see a brown person, they automatically assume they know what they’re talking about. But when they see a Black person, especially when you’re going for these positions like Chief IT Officer, they see it as a satisfying a quota. But when they see someone who is a Black Immigrant, they see that person as having a good work ethic. And I’ve read about this, but I’ve experienced it to. They treat you differently, and it’s like they know that you’re going to work hard to get the job done, and not cause any issues or complain things like that.

In his example, Jacques understands his Black identity to be perceived as positive in the workplace, and synonymous with a good worker; implied is the distinction from Black Americans. Salva focused on his relationships, specifically connecting to other Black people. When he shares his identity with others, it garners interest and curiosity, prompting questions about life in Haiti, and an opportunity to connect with others.

I think that helps me connect, particularly, actually particularly with other Black folks. With other Africans, I’ve made a lot of friends in Europe from Africa, and I usually connect that way you know, with a little piece of their language or their culture, etcetera. But mostly, I think it helps me connect with other Black folks.

However, despite this the connection, he did experience an increased risk under the Trump administration, which triggered him to get his citizenship. He expressed a risk of being targeted or separated from his family without his citizenship. As a result, he saw his identity as

mixed: both protective and risky. For James, who is in the US on a student visa, his lack of citizenship posed only a risk to him from a financial standpoint. He shared that he has to work a limited number of per week, at a low-wage on-campus job while having to pay bills, insurance, and school costs. In addition to the financial struggles, he talks about the impact of how Haiti is viewed in the media. In one instance, a young girl asked him, “Do Haitians have beds to sleep?” because of what she was exposed to in the media. For him, being Haitian only exposed him to a risk of being judged by others.

Besides James, there were only two other individuals who viewed their Haitian identity as a risk. David identified being Haitian as a risk, but only in densely populated cities where Haitians tend to migrate, such as Miami, which is where he originally migrated at the age of eight. He shares that Haitians have not yet gained respect of everyone in Miami, and are “looked down upon.” They are known to be low-wage earners. However in Atlanta, due to the small Haitian population, people don’t immediately recognize him as Haitian, and instead identify him as African because of the way he looks. He elaborates:

They just assume that I’m from somewhere in Africa. Uhm I mean you can- I feel like every- everyone wherever you’re from part of the continent or part of the world where you’re from you have a certain look about you. Just how when you look at Asian or you look at certain people from the Middle-East, there are certain features that you’ll kind of tell that this person looks different. When it’s Haitian, we’ve got like strong cheek bones, like our face structure is very strong. Uhm you know and uhm no matter you know, no matter uh even if even if you’re a foreigner and you’ve been here for so long there’s no- someone's going to detect something from your speech. And uhm you know, they will kind of know that you’re that you’re foreign. But it’s hard for them to kind of pinpoint. In Miami it’s easy to pinpoint it because they’re around a lot of Haitians so it’s not hard to pick it up. In Atlanta, because we have more of a higher population of African than you know when a White person you know assumes that I’m from Africa. (James, Age 25).

In this case, it’s not simply being Haitian that presents a risk to David; it’s being foreign. He further elaborates that due to the way in which Blacks are treated in America, he is likely to get

treated worse due to his immigrant status, similarly to the way Muslims have been treated poorly. This is in contrast to the narratives of other individuals who used their foreignness to intentionally distinguish themselves from African Americans.

Finally, Isais, highlighted police brutality as a reason for being at increased risk. From his perspective, his race, his skin color, have more of an impact on his ethnic identity due to living in a racist country. Yves shared this as well, saying “They don’t care where you’re from” in reference to those seeking to discriminate against his skin. Anika used similar language, saying “before is that people identify you, first instance that you see, I’m a Black woman and I’m an African American woman.” Emmanuel shared the same sentiment, however introduced a different factor:

It doesn’t protect me at all, because I’m still Black...If someone sees me, they’re gonna say African American they’re not gonna say Haitian. It doesn’t protect me at all. Uh yeah- it’s not a shield it’s just a different layer to me you know but it doesn’t protect me (Emmanuel, Age 22).

He then elaborates that it’s not as much of a risk being Haitian as it was “back then,” and that due to his lack of an accent, and sounding American he will get treated accordingly. He mentioned, “I can like code switch at any point and be American...for the most part it’s neutral.” From his perspective, coping with two potentially stigmatizing identifies, in essence, there was no difference.

It is evident that there are multiple factors to consider when understanding first-generation participants’ experiences of their ethnic identity as a protective or a risk factor. These responses reveal a theme of internal and psychological benefits of having a strong culture, history, and recognition of ancestors to navigate through and cope with, or avoid, conflict and discrimination. Furthermore, it shows an acute awareness of race-relations in the United States, and the utilization of an ethnic identity as a protective factor as a way to be “exotic” or place

themselves in a different category to protect them from the stereotypes of Black America. However, for those who identified their ethnic identity as a risk, there is an involuntary nature about their examples, whether it is their citizenship status, or their physical appearance, it is not something that can be strategically used, as needed, or whenever it is beneficial.

Despite the perceived risks or protective factor of their ethnic identity, when asked if their ethnic identity is presented across all spaces, every participant except for one confirmed that they are known as a variation of Haitian (Haitian, Haitian-American, Black Haitian) in all circles. Many participants responded to this with enthusiasm, saying “Absolutely. I rep it till I die, yes” (Isabelle, Age 28). Some had accents, others had license plates, and others referenced other factors that made it clear that they were different, prompting others to inquire about their place of origin. Regardless, the conclusion was an unapologetic ethnic identity that is presented or discovered in all spaces. This is in alignment with my third research expectation (RE3), that the first generation would maintain a salient ethnic identity.

5.3.2 The Second Generation

Similar to the first generation, the majority of the second generation (39%) identified their ethnic identity as protective. Additionally, 22% identified their ethnic identity as “neutral,” neither a protective nor a risk factor, and 11% viewed it as “mixed,” indicating that it is both a risk and protective. However, compared to the first generation, a larger number of participants (28%) perceived their identity to be a risk, compared to the 13% of the first generation. For the second generation, the majority of men viewed their ethnicity as neutral, whereas the majority of women (50%) viewed their ethnicity as protective. Unlike the first generation, these were the only group of women (29%) who indicated a risk factor.

5.3.2.1 *The Protective Factor*

For participants who viewed their Haitian identity as protective, much of it was about finding strength in being different, and having a unique view of the world. There was an ability to distinguish themselves from others, and having different perspectives that their immigrant parents and heritage provided. Michelle described it as having a different “mindset.” She shares:

I don't know. I think it gives you a different drive for any like second generation person. No matter where your families from, it kind of gives you like a higher drive and motivation. I feel like my kids wouldn't really have that because you don't see... You grow up but you don't really see, not pain, but like people who came from nothing. So it's like, when my dad telling me like... like showing me pict... just like really understanding where they came from and how they even got here and actually did better than most African American people, that's what blows my mind. (Margaret, Age 23)

In this case, it wasn't the Haitian-specific identity, but instead being a descendant of immigrants that serves as a protective factor. Resilience is developed by being witness to the sacrifices and struggles of parents who are able to be successful with minimal resources. Marta referenced a resilience inherited by her parents, thus preparing her to face stigma. She shares:

I'm different.... I'm not the stereotypical Black person. Take me serious as I am-- a person just like every other race. I mean, I guess I don't know. Maybe this the way I was raised, but I feel like they gave me My identity, my my heritage gives me protection and I don't know how to describe it (Marta, Age 30)

From Marta's perspective, because her parents survived the 80's and the stigmas of HIV, it was as if they walked through a fire has prepared her to take on the negative expectations of others, and the stereotypes that come with her identity. She shares, “I know what people expect of me... and I'm able to prove them wrong because I'm more than that.” Similarly, Nadia pulls strength from her parents' experience, and being presented with opportunities that her parents may not have had. For her, this meant that “Because I'm Haitian, I feel like I have to succeed.” She shares:

I now have opportunities that my parents did not have, I need to do more. Not necessarily to change the stereotype of somebody who may be looking at Haitians, but because this is personal. I feel like that's where I would say it's protective. Just because it has made me... It's that chance and motivation to do more, to go get more, to have more. (Nadia, Age 28)

The protective factor is described as personal and psychological; it is a drive that is instilled from childhood to succeed and to “do more.”

Carline also shares the protective factor of boldly embracing her ethnic identity. The more she has shared her identity, the more she has reaped the benefits, whether it is through talking about her experiences at her stand-up comedy shows or getting her co-workers to try Haitian food. She shares, “It’s been so exciting to watch this shift of ‘eww, what’s that? Oh my God, you eatin’ a goat?’ to ‘uhh, you goin- did you make that uhm, what’s that rice that you made... Do you think you could bring me some?’” For her, it was an opportunity to share her culture with others. She has found that the more that she has “stood her ground” with her identity, the more comfortable she becomes about it, and the more she loves herself for it, and as a result, the more respect others give her. Carline’s unique approach about being unapologetic for who she is, is almost like taking the looking glass that society is fed about what it means to be Black and Haitian, and flipping it on its head. From what she’s experienced, people see confidence, they see self-love, and they see resilience, and a person who cannot be minimized to a stereotype. She shares, “I’m this Black educated woman, who’s... Haitian ... and don’t try to limit me, don’t try to pocket me, don’t try to stifle me.”

Claudette’s protective factor comes from her sense of community, even in connecting to Haitians at the grocery store when she hears Kreyòl or an accent. Although she acknowledges the risk, especially with a husband who was born in Haiti and people possibly judging him to be “illegal,” she identifies a “self-love” that comes from her identity. She shares, “I know who I am

and I don't have to question that.” Unlike Claudette, Edwidge felt that her identity was protective in the absence of community, only in Georgia where there are not as many Haitians as compared to South Florida or New York. This way, she says “most White people are not very familiar with Haiti or with Haitians, so they don't have as much of a negative perception,” meanwhile they do have negative stereotypes about African Americans. Having a Haitian identity allows her to challenge those negative perceptions, despite her Black skin. Cherie shared, “Yes, I'm Black, but I'm Haitian.” For her, it was an added layer that provided her with a psychological protection, as some first generation participants expressed. She shares that there are general cultural things that Americans experience, that do not bother her, because she is different. She relishes in her Haitian culture as something that is special, and different, protecting her from issues that she describes as an “American thing.” However, according to Vincent, ethnicity didn't make any difference. He states:

The thing is it's probably about the same. For me, I understand that so-called Black people, whether you're Haitian or Brazilian, or you know- Mexican. You know those people who look like us. I would say that we're universally hated, uhm so I don't think it differentiates just because I'm Haitian, you'll hate me less or hate me even more. (Vincent, Age 24).

Francois echoed Vincent's stance. He speaks about his Haitian identity as an undeniable part of who he is, however he warns against any distancing behavior from a Black or African American identity, as it serves to diminish progress related to the Black struggle in the United States.

Holding onto my Haitian identity is more for me thing... I don't need the whole world to necessarily know about my Haitian identity. It's cool, I love it. I still speak Kreyòl I still love Haitian food. It's part of who I am, but not identifying as Black, I've encountered Nigerian friends or Jamaican friends who refuse to identify as Black and African American and I get frustrated with that because that needs to be very in public because at the end of the day, if we're talking about police brutality or any things that we're facing... I just think that Black is Black. It's very clear in this country what it is to be Black. Even if you do not choose to identify as Black,

if you have the phenotype, you are still Black. So I think we just have to be very careful. (Francois, Age 32)

From his perspective, all Black people come from Africa, and to identify as Black serves to unify our people, and strengthen the causes we all fight for. Francois advocates for unity through shared experiences and empathy for one another.

5.3.2.2 *The Risk Factor*

Annemarie paints a picture of an ethnic identity that yields a “mixed” experience of both risk and protective in society. She speaks about the unique anti-Blackness that Haitians experience, and that they are still getting punished for the Haitian revolution. She also referenced not being able to benefit from the exotic and “spicy” perception of other Caribbean islands:

Yeah, I feel like there’s a lot of anti-Blackness, but I feel like Haitians specifically receive a lot of hate, more so than any other, I feel like, Caribbean island. Yeah, and I feel like that has stemmed from the audacity that they had to like fight for their freedom and win. I feel like White people are still salty, to this day. We’re in a very unique position, so I feel like some immigrants may have that protective factor, like you’re Black, but you’re like a different like Black, you’re a spicy Black, but I feel like Haitians, that protective factor’s like, “Oh you’re an immigrant?” But then it’s like, “Oh, you’re Haitian.” (Annemarie, Age 23).

However, despite these perceived risks and stigmas with being Haitian, Annemarie highlights the protective factors inherited from the nation’s history. She shares, “I think that slavery as an institution had a very profound effect on like the way that we’re socialized and just like the way we’ve been able to develop, so I think that’s one protective factor, if your ancestors weren’t slaves.” She refers to the traumas of being slaves has a significant impact on our development as a people, and how, in a way, Haitian descendants are protected from those traumas due to it’s history. Natalia identified her ethnic identity as a “slight risk,” due to the stereotypes and stigmas that emerge, especially in the dating scene. She shares:

I kind of feel like sometimes if you tell people you're Haitian, you kind of get a – you get a label on you that “Oh she...” ugh I don't know sometimes you- I feel that when I tell people I'm Haitian,, they automatically think that I'm poor. They automatically think that... uhh whatever the heck they think about Haitians, whatever stereotypes are out there... (Natalia, Age 30)

Although this causes Natalia to feel “a little bit self-conscious,” when she tells someone she's Haitian, for fear that a date may assume she does voodoo, she still considers it only a slight risk, which does not deter her from expressing herself. Chantal, on the other hand, illustrates the impact of the looking glass on altering her identity presentation in a work setting. She referenced the risk in identifying as Haitian after the president Trump's reference to a “shithole country.”

She shares:

When I do interviews for jobs and things like that, I'm definitely more cautious about when I say I'm Haitian American cause I just, the people that interview me are White Americans. I don't want to necessarily put out there that I am Haitian American cause I don't want that to affect me getting this job. (Chantal, Age 20).

She further elaborates that “I'm not in college for nothing. I'm going to get this job.” Essentially, as it relates to what she defined as “corporate America,” there was little trust putting her fate in the hands of others who may hold racist and/or Xenophobic views, causing her to become more cautious. She does clarify that the main objective is to get the job. However, she says, “in the end if I end up getting the job, if I do get the job and then I say I'm Haitian American and I get fired. Oh well.”

A few participants spoke about their racial identity being dominant, and being the first thing that people see, thus making them vulnerable to judgment, mistreatment, and discrimination. Chantal, in particular, speaks from an intersectional lens and a general risk, looking at her race, gender and ethnicity:

I'm Black obviously you see that its you know like Black but then I just feel like if I go ahead and say I'm also Haitian, I – you automatically think okay you're an immigrant. So I just feel like that adds on to me being a Black woman. Now I'm

also- I'm Haitian American meaning my parents are immigrants and I don't know what your standpoint is on immigrants and that just adds more fuel to the fire. (Chantal, Age 20).

Margret expressed a love for both her racial and ethnic identity. However, unlike other participants, she did not feel that self-love was sufficient to serve as a protective factor due to the risk of being Black. She shares:

I love my identity and stuff you know, but it is a risk. Because I feel like you know there's just so many problems that comes with it. There's always gonna be a problem that comes with it, and that makes it a risk um you know? Being Black it's like you know- as long as you're Black you will always be at risk in general. That's how I see things. Especially with all that is going on with police brutality and stuff like that. Uh yeah, it's. More of a risk. And it's sad to say but it's the truth. Like I'm not gonna lie about and say it's a protective factor because I'm Black. It's a risk. Like I like being Black, but it's a risk you know? (Margaret, Age 23)

For Margaret, the risk of being Black outweighed the psychological benefit of loving herself and her racial identity. Similarly, Fabienne identifies her identity as a risk factor. She shares that regardless if you're African American, Haitian, or Haitian-American, "we all get judged the same way," which is what makes it a risk factor. Yet, Fabienne surrounds herself with a diverse group of friends who are "very culturally aware," allowing her to comfortably express her Haitian identity. However, she still has a certain discomfort with her identity presentation due to the risk of discrimination or judgment. She shares, "I feel like I have to alter how I speak sometimes. Like I feel the prejudice... even with my roommates, like I can't just be like cooking like something, and it's like "Oh, what is that? It's different!" Like, you know, like I don't know... it's different." (Fabienne, Age 21). Additionally, Mendez views himself through the lens and experiences with others as a Black man:

I would say that I'm Black because that's what people see. I mean... That's how people view like that forms a lot of the experiences that you have. So at the end of the day, they're going to see you as Black, before any kind of interaction or things

like that- that's what I am. So no, I don't think it hinders or hurts me. At the end of the day you're just Black (Mendez, Age 32).

When examining the second-generation's perception of their ethnic identity, the perception of their ethnic identity being protective remains dominant. Many participants cited the strength and resilience of their parents as a protective shield of sorts, equipping them with the strength and skills to face and overcome the expected stigmas and stereotypes that Haitians face. However, in contrast with the first-generation, the second-generation expressed more of a risk due to a more salient Black identity. For 28% of them, the risks with being Black overpowered any benefit of being Haitian. This is in alignment with my research expectations (RE2), that the

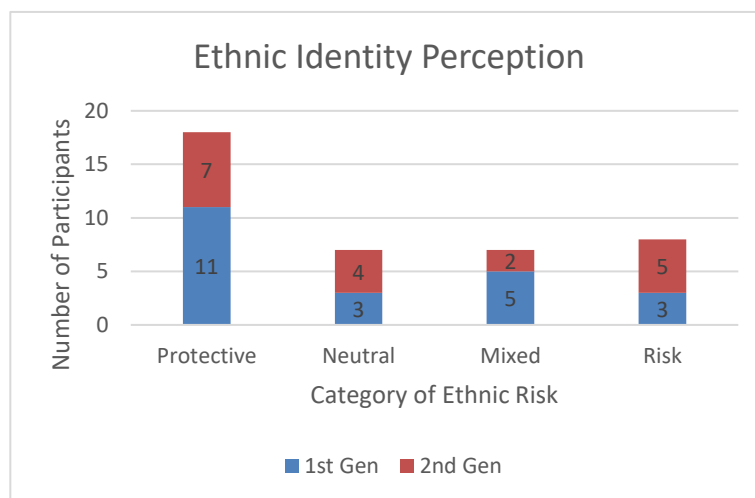


Figure 5.1 Ethnic Identity Perception

double-consciousness that emerges as a result of looking glass experiences will be more evident in the second generation due to their increased exposure, when compared to the first generation.

5.4 The Looking Glass Analysis

Media representation, whether fiction or non-fiction or whether via television or social media, has an impact on the looking glass experience for Haitian immigrants. Media portrayals are observed and interpreted as a reflection of themselves, whether it is a Black individual or Haitian individual being portrayed. However the looking glass has been tainted by the bias White

racial frame, causing participants to approach the media with suspicion and distrust. In response to this looking glass experience, participants often alter their behaviors by avoiding the news altogether, or targeting more positive platforms, leading to hints of optimism for a changed narrative in the future. Here, we see the selectivity of the looking glass at play, where participants devalued the significance of the looking glass experience of the news, because it did not reflect who they were (Reitzes 1980), while still feeling frustration at the poor representation of themselves.

Discrimination, in contrast to the media experience, is often an intimate experience of racially-motivated stereotyping and mistreatment. Seventy-four percent of the first generation reported racial discrimination, compared to eighty-two percent of the second-generation. First-generation men seem to process this as something that can be managed through self-advocacy, and education, in alignment with Awokoya's (20120) finding that education and hard work will circumvent discrimination. However, first-generation women did not experience that same benefit, as they expressed their double-minority experience of being a Black woman. Second-generation immigrants tended to experience discrimination at an earlier age compared to the first-generation, however without the advocacy described the first generation, likely lending them to a more salient racial identity. This salience is evident in the second generation's perception of their ethnic identity as a risk or protective factor. Although across both generations, most participants viewed it as protective, a larger percentage of second-generation participants viewed it as a risk when compared to the first generation. For those who viewed their ethnicity as protective, many cited the strength of their ancestors, their parents as a source of strength, and not allowing the poor portrayals of Black or Haitian people to put a stain on what they know to be great. The words, "I know who I am" made this sentiment clear.

The majority of first- and second- generation participants viewed their ethnic identity as a protective factor. This aligns perfectly with my research expectation that as a result of stigmatized identities understood through looking glass experiences of media and discrimination, participants' identity negotiation distance themselves from Black Americans with a more salient ethnic identity (RE3) However, it seems that this perception of the ethnic identity being protective decreases for the second-generation who feel that their Black identity will put them at risk, regardless of their background. The next section further explores my second research expectation about the presence of identity conflict as a result of this double-consciousness and stigma (RE2).

6 WHO AM I: BLACK & FOREIGN

As we develop a deeper understanding of early identity negotiation, the mechanism of the looking glass, and how it influences the perception of identity, we are better positioned to understand the identity presentation of Haitian immigrants. As individuals who must navigate two stigmatized identities, being Black and Haitian, identity negotiation is crucial to their understanding of themselves, and therefore their mental wellness. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, this study recognizes that it is the meaning that influences behavior, not just the label itself. Participants had varying distinctions and definitions of what it meant to be Black, Haitian, Haitian-American, and African American. Therefore, this chapter breaks down identity definitions, and the multiple ways in which participants present their identity. This includes how they identify themselves, what they put on a census or form with limited selections, and the importance of correcting others when identified as African American. Due to participants' understanding of how others' perceive them, they may be driven to behave in ways to protect their mental wellness and self-feeling by embracing or shunning their own racial/ethnic identities, or by embracing or shunning specific racial or ethnic groups. The goal is to successfully understand the "Who Am I" perspective of Haitian immigrants.

6.1 Identity Definitions

Many participants provided their own perspective of what it means to be Black, African American, Haitian or Haitian-American. Many participants made a clear distinction between Black and African American. Participants were comfortable identifying as Black due to the color of their skin, however African American did not align with their heritage and was specific to American-born Black who had slaves brought to the United States. Another participant made a

clear distinction between the term “African American” and what it means to be Black, due to ancestry.

I know for a lot of people that’s just -it’s just synonymous for like that and before like uh. My friend’s grandma who is African American always like talked about how her birth certificate said negro on there. And like how that being changed from that to African American has like always been a like a jarring kind of shift and how it’s taken generations over time to like see the difference over it. So, I don’t know for me I don’t see it as the same thing as Black but like... I define it specifically as... well I feel like people-Black people who were born here and have ancestry here through slavery can use it. And then like literally people who are from Africa and then who come here and stay here also can use it. Which is why I kind of have an uncomfotability with it cause it’s kind of like there are no other uh... I just feel like literally it could mean one thing but then also like culturally it can be applied to different communities. And like because I don’t have particularly African American experience, I feel like I can’t really identify as much. (Pedro, Age 39)

The majority of participants identified and embraced their identity as Black, because it was a transnational identity that united people from all different backgrounds. Margaret explains that there was no distinguishing her Black identity from her Haitian identity, and that they were one in the same. She shares, “I feel like- it’s like I feel like it’s the same thing. Cause you know they are Black people too and I just think of all Black people as a whole you know? Being Black being Haitian like to me there isn’t really any difference because if I think of myself as being Black and being Haitian it’s gonna be the same thing” (Margaret, Age 23).

However, there was acknowledgement that there was some reluctance to identifying as Black within the Haitian community.

We, you know... and I hear and I know that there’s a lot of Haitians who don’t want to be identified as Black. Especially Black American. So I don’t share those views, however I know that because of the way that we’re raised, we have an identity, you know, we are Haitian. Americans here, you know Black Americans you know also I think a lot of times they’re still trying to find an identity. That’s why they are “African American,” but I don’t need to be called “African American” because I’m Haitian. (Pierre, Age 61)

In addition, there were regional considerations about using the word “Black” as opposed to “African American.” Anika stated, “growing up in New York, I know I was fine saying Blacks that I was, you know, but I think here in the South, I think it's a little bit different. I think "the Blacks" connotation just means things differently down here in the South as it would in New York. (Anika, Age 54). However, for some people, the term African American was specifically about history and heritage, and should only be used to represent one’s ancestry. When asked about his child’s ethnic identity, one participant elaborated on the importance of maintaining an ethnic identity, regardless of place of birth.

Just being born here to me doesn’t automatically equate you to being African American, and I try to explain this to people all the time. You have Irish people and German. And they haven’t been to Germany their entire lives. Their great grandparents probably weren’t even- when they come to St. Patrick’s Day, they identify with their Irish. So, no matter who you are, he’s still going to be Haitian. You know, I make sure I take him to Haiti so they can learn about how where his people came from, where my people came from, his grandparents—so just because he lives here and he wasn’t born in Haiti. I still want him to know that he can identify as a Haitian person, uhm, will I have a problem if he identifies as African American... uhm I can’t make him want to say no, but all I can do is expose him and teach him so that uhm the many generations prior to you did not you know inhabit this land. We inhabited a land you know, in Haiti.” (Pedro, Age 39)

For Pedro, although African-American is often used as a racial identifier, he viewed it as a label that erased his ethnic identity and heritage.

The next section will further elaborate how these different identity definitions impact how participants present themselves. For some, the label is nothing more than a label that is used, and arbitrarily evolves over time. Isabelle elaborates,

For me I love to embrace that I am Haitian, but I feel like being- the idea of how the media and just how times have changed and how now you’re labeled as Black or African American. And seeing the different ways before, the different timeframe. How it went from Blacks, negro, to now being African American. like I don’t like that connotation of what’s putting you in that bubble. Why not just introduce me as just hey I’m (states name) this is (name), she’s my new intern, my new um accountant. (Isabelle, Age 28).

The understanding of these identity labels, and the meanings they have for each individual impacts the way they present their identity in different spaces, and their inclination to make corrections in social settings. The next section is separated by first and second generation participants.

6.2 First Generation Identity Presentation

All participants were asked the question, “What Are You?” to provide an open-ended opportunity for participants to provide a racial and/or ethnic response not limited by rigid categories. Eighty-three percent of first generation participants presented with an ethnic identity. This included variations such as Haitian, Black Haitian and Haitian-American. Nine out of thirteen men indicated an ethnic identity, and two identified as Black. The remainder stated that it depends on the situation, whether they would identify with a city, or with their profession, versus the answer to the question “Where are you from” or “What do you do?” In contrast, all ten of the women responded with an ethnic identity. It is worth noting that of all the participants, only three added the “American” nationality to their ethnic identity, identifying as Haitian-American.

6.2.1 *Correcting “African American”*

Participants were then asked how they would fill out a census, form or survey with the racial/ethnicity selections such as: African American, Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic and Other. This question intentionally omitted the “Black” option to observe how first generation Haitians interact with the presentation of a different ethnic group, which has historically been presented as a racial category. About 75% of participants stated that they would select “African American.” Nine of the ten men (90%) would select this category, whereas only five women (50%) would

select African American. The remainder of participants stated that they would opt for the “Other” category, and then write in their ethnic identity.

Although many participants identified themselves as “Haitian” in response to the “What Are You” question, that racial/ethnic response did not match the African American label on paper. Many participants elaborated that there was no need to distinguish their ethnicity on paper simply because it was understood that African American was a reference to Black individuals living in America.

For some people, their selection was dependent on their mood at the time of completing the form. For Yvette, she stated, “Depends on the day. When I’m in my fighting spirit I put ‘other’... And when I’m just like uh I’m doing some crap right now, I don’t care. I put African American.” (Yvette, Age 42). Another expressed conflict of what to select, stating “Before I used to think like, I don’t relate to this. I’m Haitian. I’m realizing yeah that puts me in the Black category because I am from Haiti. But I do describe myself as Black African American because of course that’s what they see me as. But at the same time, it does not matter at all. Why does that matter?” (Isabelle, Age 28).

One participant felt that despite her different background, the African American label was appropriate due to her experiences. She states, “I usually put uhm African American because I’ve been here. I’ve had the experience, like I’ve grown up here. I just speak Kreyòl, I was born in Haiti, I eat different foods, my culture is different... like, I have and- I feel like actually it’s something to add to the Black culture” (Nadine, Age 34). In contrast, another participant used the reason of cultural distinction to distance herself from the African American label, stating, “It can’t just say Black. I’m not Black. And then when you ask me if I speak any other languages, and then I tell you, but I’m still Black.” (Anya, Age 34).

For another participant, selecting African American was about simplicity, convenience, and had no impact on his identity. “Not complicating things. I know who I am” (Marc, Age 47) Another shared a very similar response, “Call me Black, Black American, that doesn’t take anything away from who I know I am.” (Yves, Age 56) Yet another shared, “I give them what they want. I just say Black. I don’t have time to go to other and actually write Haitian in there.” (Jean, Age 34).

Finally, one participant stated that if she has the option to omit a response, she would, stating “I usually leave it out when I fill it out because I feel like, why do you need to know what I am? You know what I mean? What race I am. Because although they say they don't use it to deny you or anything like that, but there's a reason why you're asking. And I feel like in America, it's not always for a positive purpose that they're asking those questions.” However, if she did fill it out, she would select African American although she did not agree with the choice, stating, “There's usually not a, you know, like say Caribbean section, you know? Um, so normally I feel like if you have to fill it out, there's really not an option for Haitian people except for African Americans, which we're not African American, but I guess you don't really have a choice.” (Lorna, Age 51).

It is worth noting that the 2020 Census has allowed for more flexibility in the racial/ethnic categories. Now, there is a “Black or African American” category designed to include multiple nationalities or ethnic groups including Haitian, Nigerian, Jamaican, etc. (U.S. Census 2020). Due to how this category was labelled, it is likely to increase the Black Immigrants’ selection of “Black or African American” as opposed to “Other.” Nonetheless, it is evident that in this study, participants generally do not feel attached to their census identity, and treat it as a formality.

Participants were asked about a specific scenario in which they were accidentally misidentified as African American in a social setting as a form of introduction, and if they would make the correction. While all participants identified themselves with a variation of racial/ethnic identities, many opted to select African American in writing. This scenario was designed to assess how salient the ethnic identity was in contrast to the African American assumption. Slightly less than half of all participants stated that they would make the correction, with the majority of participants stating that they would not make the correction. This may partly be due to the distinguishable features that does not require a verbal correction, such as an accent, a name, or behaviors that speak for themselves.

For many, it simply wasn't important enough to make the correction, because it had no impact on their presentation. "No I don't correct them. I don't think about it that much... But, if I am in my own element and let's say I get a call from my mom or you know if I'm at the barbershop you know and then I start speaking Kreyòl then they're shocked they're like woah what are you doing. What you saying?" (Jean, Age 34). Another said, "I don't correct unless I see it's necessary.... It's not something that I feel like I need to correct and say I'm not Black-American. It hasn't happened, or maybe it happened and I didn't pay enough attention to it. It's like here I am, and I'm Haitian."

For some, there is an understanding that "African American" is correlated to being "Black" in America, and since they identify as Black racially, there is no need to correct the person. Emmanuel further explains, "Like African American nowadays is used like a synonym for Black so like a lot of times people just say African American when they mean Black. And like I feel that's why a lot of people are uncomfortable with being called that, cause like if you take it in its literal meaning it and it doesn't apply to me in like any context. I'm not really

American and I don't really identify with Africa besides my ancestry, but, um I wouldn't be ...mad" (Emmanuel, Age 22). Another shared a similar sentiment, stating "typically no. There's no need to. I know that if I get pulled over, a cop is not going to see me as a Haitian man. They are going to see a Black man in front of them. So I make sure when I drink I take an Uber; I don't drive" (Jacques, Age 48)

Another individual felt that it was simply a matter of education, and not worth making the correction. "I would not correct them because I don't know, at least in my mind (and I'm going to say something else after this.) In my mind, I think it's an education thing. And I don't know if when a Caucasian person said you're African American, I don't know that they realize what they're saying, whether or not I don't think they're differentiating Black, African American, Haitian, Jamaican, I think they're just seeing it..." (Anika, Age 54).

For those who did choose to make the correction, it was an opportunity for education. One individual shared that this was done, even despite the risk of stigma. "when someone sees me they don't see me as Haitian They see me as a Black Person. So, um. You know, in, I do try to educate them to make them understand. This is why I'm never afraid to tell people that I'm from Haiti. Even though sometimes that tends to have a bad taste, a sting or whatever" (Pierre, Age 61).

Similar to the responses about a census identity, participants did not generally feel the need to correct an individual's assumption about being African American. It is understood that this ethnic label is often placed on individuals with Black skin. Due to this social awareness, a correction is not typically made during an introduction, however it is something that is certain to be presented or exposed through ongoing interactions. Almost all participants ultimately

described that their ethnic identity was well-known across all social circles and spaces, thus making a correction an unnecessary intervention.

6.2.2 Identity Presentation Across Spaces

Participants were asked about their identity presentation across spaces. They were asked if everybody, including work, school, church, and social circles were aware of their ethnic identity. Almost all first generation participants confirmed that their Haitian identity was known across multiple spaces in their lives. For some people, it is inevitable due to their accent or their distinct name, and was not something that could be or preferred to be hidden:

For Marie, her accent is a crucial part of her identity presentation, and something she does not wish to ever go away.

I have an accent. I think it's because I have an accent. None of my siblings have an accent this strong. And I've been here for twenty years without losing it... I want to be as authentic as I can be. And I learned English when I was 15...I still speak Kreyòl. French, I still speak French. And English, I'm like I speak some English, even though I went to school <laughs>. The rest of my life, I will speak English, but those first two things, those are my first loves. They need to be there." She then went on to say that she does not make any effort to hide her accent, particularly on a job interview, because "The idea that I would be passing for something else... I want you to get the Haitian lady." (Marie, Age 35).

While Marie wanted to ensure a distinction from other groups, Isais made it clear that although he had no plans to "get rid of" his accent, it was not intended to be an intentional distinction from others. "I can't hide it likes as soon as I open my mouth. Like, I have an accent anyways. I'll probably never get rid of it, but it depends if I'm hanging out with some friends. Like to me it's not that deep. But I'm not going to be like, "Oh, no. I'm Haitian and I'm not African American." I mean, I'm Black. Either way, we're all Black" (Isais, Age 33).

Other participants identified other distinct attributes that revealed their ethnicity, despite not having an accent. "Just how when you look at Asian or you look at certain people from the

Middle-East, there are certain features that you'll kind of tell that this person looks different. When it's Haitian, we've got like strong cheek bones, like our face structure is very strong. Uhm you know and uhm no matter you know, no matter uh even if even if you're a foreigner and you've been here for so long there's no- someone's going to detect something from your speech. And uhm you know, they will kind of know that you're that you're foreign. But it's hard for them to kind of pinpoint" (David, Age 35).

Sometimes participants shared that the uniqueness of their first or last name sparked questions about their place of origin, whereas others described a more intangible essence. For example, "So they pick up on the accent, sometimes it takes a while. If I'm nervous they'll pick it up. They'll pick up on the way that I dress. The way I carry myself, and my views" (Widlene, Age 32). Lorna, who came to the United States at the age of 5, shared "I wish I grew up in Haiti because there's something about people who grew up in Haiti. I can't put my finger on it, but it's a different, you know what I mean? The way they speak the way they carry themselves." (Lorna, Age 51)

For first generation immigrants, they possess an overwhelmingly ethnic identity, often identifying only as Haitian. When filling out a census-like form, the majority of participants opted for the African American label in lieu of writing in Haitian in the "other" section. This is mostly due to the understanding that the term African American is also synonymous with Black. However, men were more likely to select from the options available, whereas for women, there was a 50/50 chance that they would pick "Other." The majority of participants, if confronted with the African American label in a social setting, would not make a correction. First generation participants had no need to make corrections during introductions; their names and accents were often enough to serve as a Haitian identifier, allowing them to perform their identity across

spaces. There does not seem to be much weight placed on forms, or introductions. Far more important for the majority of participants was their ability and preference to express their ethnic identity across spaces. This behavior is interesting as it relates to understanding distancing behavior; participants mostly selected African-American on the census and did not correct a misidentification indicating that distancing is not as important as anticipated. I anticipated that maintaining an ethnic identity was reflective of distancing from Black Americans in response to the racial stigma (RE3), however the narratives paint a picture of pride as opposed to distancing.

6.3 Second Generation Identity Presentation

Second-generation participants were also asked the question, “What Are You?” to provide an open-ended opportunity for participants to provide a racial and/or ethnic response not limited by rigid categories. Seventy-six percent of second-generation participants presented with an ethnic identity, not much lower than the 86% of ethnic identities in the first generation. This included variations such as Haitian, Black Haitian and Haitian-American. One participant referenced to himself as an Israelite-Haitian. Four out of five men indicated a Haitian ethnic identity variation and twelve out of sixteen women identified with an ethnic identity. It is worth noting that of all the participants who expressed an ethnic identity, only two added the “American” nationality to their ethnic identity, identifying as Haitian-American, despite their second-generation status.

Margaret shared her unique experience having one parent from Haiti, and another from Ghana, and her complicated response to the “What are You” question:

Normally when someone would ask me where I’m from I have to ask are you. Referring to where I was born or where I’m originally from. Um with me I would say Africa. My mother is Haitian, but my dad is from Africa, so I grew up in like two different you know cultural upbringings. Um I would say Africa because that’s where Haitian people originally came from and stuff like that so it’s a lot easier to say. you know Africa because there were times where in school people asked me

like what I am and there were times where I would say African American. There were times where I would say Haitian American there were times where I would say um. I'll say afro Caribbean because people had an issue with the term that I used sometimes. Like for example if I say I'm an African American I had somebody ask me okay so what's the difference between being African American and Haitian American? Why can't you like just say African American because it makes sense instead of just saying Haitian American. Or if I identify with afro Latino, Hispanics will have an issue with it. It's really hard um like it's crazy because when most people think of a Latino person, they think of someone that comes from a Spanish speaking country. And a lot of people are not aware that not all Latin countries are Spanish speaking countries and Haiti just happens to be one of those. And a lot of people don't know that (Margaret, Age 23).

Claude was the only participant who identified as African American. He expressed his preference to use the term African American as opposed to Black. He distinguished the two terms by defining African American as a label that encompasses the potential of being a doctor, lawyer or artist whereas the term "Black" came with criminal stereotypes.

Three of the four participants who identified as Black were women. These participants seemed to have more of a connection to their hometown than to an ethnic identity. When asked "What are You," the initial response was Black. Nadege followed up by stating that she was from the DC Metro Area and that her family was from Haiti. Annemarie shared that she was Black and from Georgia, and would typically answer Haitian if asked about her ethnicity. Chantal's response would vary. She shares, "I don't know if I should say like well I'm from you know Dacula or if I'm from Boston or well I'm Haitian American so. When they ask me where I'm from I'm like okay well where I live? Or my ethnicity? So it kind of just depends on where that conversation goes."

The majority of the Haitian ethnic identities were simply stated as "Haitian" without the "American" identifier. Cherie explains why she chooses to omit the American part. She states:

When they ask me "What are you," I say "Oh I'm Haitian." And they're like "But you were born here" and I understand that and uhm I don't know the whole "Haitian-American" feel, I get it, I was born here, but my, how I identify- I identify,

because both of my parents are Haitian. And there's no question about it. There's nothing American of me except for like I pass for it and you know birth certificate, and of course I can speak the language because I've lived here my whole life but I identify as just Haitian (Cherie, Age 29).

While Cherie distances herself from the American culture, others use the Haitian identity simply because it's their preferred choice. Eight participants identified as Haitian only.

6.3.1 Correcting "African American"

Participants were then asked how they would fill out a census, form or survey with the racial/ethnicity selections such as: African American, Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic and Other. This question intentionally omitted the "Black" option to observe how first generation Haitians interact with the presentation of a different ethnic group, which has historically been presented as a racial category. The majority of participants (57%) identified as African American. Nine out of sixteen women, and three out of five men identified as African American. (This is much lower than the 75% of first generation participants who selected African American.)

For Marta, although she selects African American, she does so reluctantly, stating, "Oh, I hate those 'cause it's like not everybody that's Black is African American. And I feel like that should be only for people who came from Africa. That should be able to distinguish African American (Marta, Age 30)." As a result, she expresses that she often desires to select Black, or write in "Haitian" but instead simply checks the African-American box even though she disagrees with the identifier. Junior also took issue with the limitations of the identities on forms, but unlike Marta, he does opt to select "Other." He shares:

So you always have White, and they put that in the census box as to be superior. Then they have Hispanic, and that's for them. You have Asian, the Asianic continents and countries, Hawaii, things of that nature, the Icelandic, they have that. We just have African American. There's no other split between that. I mean what about us and the West Indies? What about us around the world? What about people who are African? I had a friend, "from where?" "From Nigeria." He'd be like, "I don't select nothing. I'm not African, I'm African in America. I can't select African

American, because that's for Black Americans," So I don't agree with the term, because you can't say American American. What about people who were born here and we're American? What are they, American American? (Junior, Age 29).

For Arielle, she shifted from previously selecting “African American” to “Other.” She explains, “Before I used to put African American ‘cause it’s just easier but if you want to be honest, I was like there is a lot of African American norms and cultures that I just do not attribute to, like I’ve never practiced, and like am ignorant to. (Arielle, Age 29). Tamara, aged 32, shifted in the other direction. When she first moved to Georgia, being in a less diverse space, people viewed her as “just Black.” In an effort to distinguish herself and hold onto her Haitian identity, she selected “Other.” However, she shared that she did research, and started to develop more Black pride. She then started to select “African American” although she makes it clear that it is only “on paper.” Others like Margaret and Cherie put different responses, sometimes depending on the mood. For Margaret although she mostly puts African American, she sometimes selects “Non-Hispanic Latino” which confused her interviewer who had to look up Haiti to see that it was indeed a part of the Latino community. The census identity, similar to the first generation, yields a mixed response that is driven by mood, circumstance, and individual definitions of the terms presented.

Participants were asked about a specific scenario in which they were identified as African American in a social setting as a form of introduction, and if they would make any correction. While 76% of participants identified themselves with a variation an ethnic identities, 57% of all participants opted to select African American in writing. This scenario was designed to assess how salient the ethnic identity was in contrast to the African American assumption. About 61% of all participants stated that they would make the correction, with the remaining minority stating that they would not make the correction. This may partly be due to the distinguishable features

that does not require a verbal correction, such as an accent, a name, or behaviors that speak for themselves.

For Nadege, a woman who identified as Black stated that she would indeed make the correction if someone were to introduce her as African American. She describes her Black identity as “overarching.” She shared that by being called African American, her heritage is being taken away. She clarifies that “We’re no better, we’re no worse, but we’re descendants but we were brought to the Caribbean. And especially being Haitian, you’re taking away my history as the nation of slaves that freed themselves.” While Carline, who identifies as Haitian, did affirm that she would make the correction, it was important for her to point out that she would not do it in a confrontational way. For her it serves as an opportunity to teach them about who she is, and where she comes from. Renee made a face when she was asked the question, and then stated that she would make the correction, but with a smile.

For the individuals who did not feel it was important to make the correction, it was because of their connection to the African American culture. For Annemarie, she acknowledged that her experience was different being raised by immigrants, but did not feel it was essential to make any corrections. For others, it wasn’t viewed as a transgression that warranted a correction. Nadia says, “They are correct. It’s just not specific, so I wouldn’t correct them.”

Michelle described that being called African American doesn’t “affect” her enough to correct another person, however she makes it clear that she does not hide her Haitian identity either. For her, unlike an accent or a distinct name, there are specific situations where individuals get exposed to her culture. For example,

Like when my boyfriend first met my dad, it was different than when I met his parents because he's African American. So I'm like, you have to eat the food even if... Like you have to... Because for Haitian people, they're going to offer you food. That's their way of kindness. You have to eat. So you have to eat even if you're not

hungry, even at least like get a small plate, get something. That level of respect that you have to have for like... My dad I think of like a little different with like regular because it's like he's so important in our household. He's more of like head-of-household than like regular African American families. I feel like you have to have that level of respect with him, and he has to have that with you. That's number one. That's Key.

Interestingly, two of the five individuals who identified as Black or African American stated that they would make a correction. Six of the nine participants who identified solely as Haitian stated that they would make the correction.

6.4 Ethnic Identity Presentation Across Spaces

Participants were asked about their identity presentation across spaces. They were asked if everybody, including work, school, church, and social circles were aware of their ethnic identity. Thirteen of twenty-one participants shared that their ethnic identity was known across all spaces. 100% of men and 69% of women shared that their Haitian identity was known across all spaces, regardless of their initial response to “What are You.” For example, Nadege, Chantal and Claude identified themselves as “Black,” or “African American” yet expressed that they are known as Haitian across multiple spaces.

Nadege, who originally identified a Black racial identity, shared that she has embraced her Haitian identity more throughout the years, “my roots are still in this country. Both of my parents came from this- my entire family is from this country! And I was the first born here. And I’m just like you’re not going to tell me who I am. No, I can’t speak Kreyòl, no I can’t cook, no I’ve never been there but guess what? I’m still Haitian and you can’t take it from me.”

Chantal, who also immediately responded as “Black,” to the “What are you” question, however when asked about expressing her ethnic identity, it depends on the setting. She stated, “If I’m talking to someone else who isn’t just American I guess and you know we’re expressing like our ethnicity then I’ll be like oh well I’m Haitian you know. Um but if it’s just pretty like

generic- well I guess I still say I'm Haitian American. I'm still proud of like being Haitian so I just kind of put it out there, but um I guess more so when I'm talking to someone else who is also a different ethnicity if that makes sense." (Chantal, Age 20)

Claude made it clear that he identifies as African American, but not as lack due to the different connotations with those terms. He also explains that his ethnic identity is evident across spaces due to his name, which sounds friends and triggers curiosity in others about his background. He also shares that he regularly wears a Haitian flag.

For Annemarie and Margaret, they were unique from the others in that they both led with a racial identity, documented African American on a census, and did not present an ethnic identity across all spaces. Annemarie identifies as "Black" and, if asked where she's from, her first response is Georgia. She states, "I think that if someone asks me my ethnicity I would probably say Haitian, but I usually lead with like race." Margaret's father is from Ghana and her mother is from Haiti, and she says "Honestly, um I feel like I don't associate being Haitian with the same way I associate being Black. Like I feel like- it's like I feel like it's the same thing. Cause you know they are Black people too and I just think of all Black people as a whole you know? Being Black being Haitian like to me there isn't really any difference because if I think of myself as being Black and being Haitian it's gonna be the same thing." She further elaborates stating:

My mother is Haitian, but my dad is from Africa, so I grew up in like two different you know cultural upbringings. Um I would say Africa because that's where Haitian people originally came from and stuff like that so it's a lot easier to say. you know Africa because there were times where in school people asked me like what I am and there were times where I would say African American. There were times where I would say Haitian American there were times where I would say um. I'll say afro Caribbean because people had an issue with the term that I used sometimes. Like for example if I say I'm an African American I had somebody ask me okay so what's the difference between being African American and Haitian American? Why can't you like just say African American because it

makes sense instead of just saying Haitian American. Or if I identify with afro Latino, Hispanics will have an issue with it. It's really hard um like it's crazy because when most people think of a Latino person, they think of someone that comes from a Spanish speaking country. And a lot of people are not aware that not all Latin countries are Spanish speaking countries and Haiti just happens to be one of those. And a lot of people don't know that, so I find myself getting into these little arguments with these other Hispanic people and they're like nah cause you don't speak Spanish and stuff like that. They don't speak Spanish there. And I'm just like that doesn't matter. It's not about the language that they speak there. you know it's about where we're geographically located. Haiti is in Latin America. That's just what it is, and you know I know Haitian people would also have an issue with me using that term because I've gotten into it with Haitian people before. And they'll say stuff like you can't identify with afro Latino um because they don't accept us in the afro Latino community and I'm just like I'm not going to deny my identity because I don't feel acceptance. you know? I don't need someone's acceptance to be a certain identity. I don't roll like that so. (Margaret, Age 23).

As a result, she identifies as “Black” to avoid having to explain her identity to others.

The remainder of the participants expressed that their ethnic identity was expressed across all spaces. Renee and Natalia were the only participants, however who identified as Haitian, selected “other” for a census ID, expressed an ethnic identity across spaces *and* corrected others who identified them as African American. Renee identifies as Haitian, and makes it clear that she does not say Haitian-American. She shares, “I don't say Haitian American. If people want to know details, I mean, obviously you should be able to tell that I was born in America, but if it's not obvious, then okay, I'll tell the person I was born here. But actually, I'm Haitian. Like that's my whole reality.”

According to Natalia, “I just don't consider myself Black. So it just sounds so crazy, but I don't consider myself Black, I don't consider myself African American, I consider myself completely just completely different. Uhm, conflict-wise no I never quite felt a conflict about “Am I Black, am I more African-...” No. No, I'm just straight up Haitian. That's how I- that's

just who I am.” Francois shared that people know about his ethnic identity because of his “weird” name, and that it always comes with an explanation.

For second generation identity presentation, despite their second-generation status, the majority of participants identified primarily as Haitian. The “American” identifier was not deemed necessary because it was often understood and did not need to be mentioned. However, compared to the first generation, more second-generation participants expressed a primary racial identity. This primary racial identity was anticipated, and is likely due to early exposure to the looking glass of the media and discrimination. However, this salient ethnic identity for the second-generation is unexpected, as previous research shows distancing from their ethnic identity. Second generation immigrants adopt one of three identities: African American, ethnic American or an immigrant identity (Waters 1999), yet in this sample there is an overwhelmingly strong ethnic identity which seems to be equally salient as their racial identity.

While the majority of participants indicated “African American” on a census-like form, the second-generation was more likely than the first-generation to select “Other.” Similarly, second-generation participants are more inclined to correct an African American introduction and notify others of their Haitian identity. The majority of second generation participants reported an ethnic identity presentation across spaces, only 2% less than the first-generation.

6.5 Identity Conflict

A few participants mentioned being picked on by other Haitian children who were in denial about their ethnic identity, or being advised by family and friends to say that they were from elsewhere in an effort to protect them from bullying, especially at a time where there was a significant stigma against Haitian immigrants. Due to the bullying, experiences of discrimination, or identified protective or risk factors, participants were asked if they have ever

experienced an identity conflict. This was presented in a open ended way, where the participant may have intentionally hidden their ethnic identity, or perhaps even promoted their ethnic identity to approximate or distance themselves respectively from African Americans. The goal was to assess any inner tension or stress related to identity presentation and acculturation stressors. The majority participants stated that they do not have any memory of conflict related to their identity. Some cited pride as the reason. Others referenced a culture at home, being fully immersed with the language, foods, church, and customs that it was inescapable.

6.5.1 *The First Generation*

Of the few individuals who expressed a feeling of conflict, it was due to the stigma during childhood. For Pedro, his rapid ability to learn English and acculturate allowed him to pass for American, so although he did not hide his identity, he wasn't making any effort to "broadcast" it to others. This changed in high school as he became more proud of his identity, and had the support of friends and cousins to support him. Now, he wants "everybody to know." Similarly, Anika masked her Haitian identity with a Caribbean one until she was twenty-four years of age. It was not until she married her Jamaican husband, that she had to correct others' assumption that she shared the same ethnicity as her husband. Her household was predominately Jamaican, with regular trips to Jamaica and the children represented with a Jamaican flag. Her identity evolved even further after she got divorced. She shares, "I'm taking myself back...For the past two years, I have made it my way to definitely integrate them into the Haitian culture and to the point where. Yeah. Now they're putting their both flags up. Now they're putting their Haitian flag up and their Jamaican flag."

Similar to Anika's journey towards her Haitian identity, Jacques described an eagerness to reconnect to his Haitian roots. Jacques was the only participant who's first response to a

question about his identity was to state that he was from Boston. In his story, he returned to Haiti for the first time four years ago since his migration, and although his brother was able to point out things from their childhood, Jacques could not remember. When asked about feeling any conflict in relation to his identity, he shared that this was a new feeling that has only emerged in the past few years. Although he volunteered to participate in the study, he confessed that he called his mom prior to the interview in order to get information about his past in preparation for questions that I may ask. He shared:

I didn't know what you were going to ask, and I wanted to help you. But there is so much that I don't know. And then, as you get older, there is this thing about legacy. Like if they are going to put something on my tombstone, what is it going to say. Like would I have helped little kids in the U.S., or little kids in Haiti. So I think recently I have been asking myself these questions, and there is more that I need to learn.

While Jacques was focused on his personal journey, others identified feeling conflict because of the possibility of not being accepted by other Haitians. Patrick expressed a strong affinity for Black and urban culture. As a result, Haitians would question why he listened to rap music, or embraced American culture. (This was a stark contrast to his childhood where he was picked on by Haitian kids who denied their own Haitianness in an effort to assimilate.) He shares:

I used to tell them that Haitian culture could never leave me. I was born in the land. I grew up neg mon. I grew up on a little farm, you know what I mean. I was one of those little kids with the boutey dlo a sou tet mwen, I was one of those kids. I was in the heart of Haiti. So when people used to tell me that I would be baffled, like I speak better Kreyòl than you. You just realized you was Haitian, and now you want to be Haitian. I used to tell a lot of Haitian kids that. A lot of the Haitian kids who used to make fun of me, I would see on Eastern Parkway shaking their flag. Bamn drapo sa sil vous plais. Ou paka rele tet ou Ayisyen. (Jacques, Age 48).

The term “neg mon” translates literally to “mountain boy” which refers to a person from the countryside. The closest correlation in American culture would be a “hillbilly.” To paint a picture, the phrase “boutey dlo a sou tet mwen” translates literally to “bottle of water on my

head.” This is the image that is often used to demonstrate poverty in third world countries. Patrick’s description here as a retort to his critics was to highlight his authentic experience in Haiti; in other words, they could not challenge his Haitian identity, regardless of his preferences or behaviors. He criticizes those who appear on Easter Parkway, in reference to the Labor Day or West Indian Day parade in Brooklyn. This parade draws individuals from all different countries to come together and celebrate the West Indian food, culture, and music. Oftentimes, individuals come waving the flag of the country that they represent. At the end of the statement, he says “Bann drapo sa sil vou plais. Ou paka rele tet ou Ayisyen.” This translates to “Give me that flag please. You cannot call yourself Haitian.” Patrick also adds to his story that, after being drawn to the streets and spending time in prison, he found himself lost, and distanced from his Haitian identity, and during that time, with reading and reconnecting to his roots, he was able to regain it back.

For David, his feeling of conflict came up when he chose to become an American citizen.

He shares:

I would say when I became a citizen and you know I had to make a choice between denouncing my story and I felt bad about you know doing that, but deep down inside it’s like you know I’m Haitian first. Uhm, so that really bothered me when I really had to say that you know because that’s my country and in my mind I identify first as being Haitian (David, Age 35).

Although the question about citizenship was not asked by the interviewer in an effort to protect any undocumented participants from risk of exposure, a few participants shared their thoughts and feelings about the process. Pierre got his passport to save on traveling costs and inconveniences, he still holds onto his Haitian passport for sentimental reasons. Patrick was at risk of being deported due to his legal issues, so he unceremoniously wed his American girlfriend. Marie shares that although she is a citizen, but it’s “on paper” because she is “as

Haitian as Hattian can get.” Salva makes a similar reference to his citizenship, and calls it a “paper formality.” This was a challenging decision for Salva, however something that he felt needed to be done due to the actions and rhetoric of the Trump administration. He shares, “I felt like it was something I told myself I was never going to do, and holding onto hope of going back to Haiti at some point, but I just had to do it.” For him, it was an emotional decision, letting go of his Haitian citizenship.

For the few individuals who expressed any conflict related to their identity highlighted their connection to their ethnic identity. For Nadine, her experience was about her racial identity. Nadine expressed feeling conflict as result of receiving criticism from Black Americans about how she rears her children. She was criticized and told that she treats her children like a “White girl.” She elaborates:

I like my kids to look a certain way, like clean, like I’m Haitian. It’s part of our culture. Our children always look well groomed, clean, like my mom raised me that way. That’s something that stuck with me, so that meant that I treated my kids like a White person... It made me feel like how much, what’s the measure of Blackness? Like, it didn’t - at the time I didn’t ask myself these questions because I didn’t understand it fully but I you know, as I’ve gotten older and I do now. And I, like, why would that mean that my kids are raised a different way because I want them to look a certain way? (Nadine, Age 34)

It seems that although participants migrated to the United States, any conflict related to identity that emerged were about returning to their roots, and proving that they are Haitian enough.

6.5.2 *The Second Generation*

Due to the bullying, experiences of discrimination, or identified protective or risk factors, participants were asked if they have ever experienced an identity conflict. This was presented in a open ended way, where the participant may have intentionally hidden their ethnic identity, or perhaps even promoted their ethnic identity to approximate or distance themselves respectively from African Americans. The goal was to assess any inner tension or stress related to identity

presentation and acculturation stressors. The majority of the participants (12/21) stated that they do not have any memory of conflict related to their identity.

Some participants were almost defiant about maintaining their Haitian identity despite the bullying. Vincent shared, “I’ve let everybody know that I was Haitian, and if they didn’t like it, they can kick rocks.” And although it may be more complicated to explain where she’s from, Michelle stated that she opts not to identify only as Black “because I’m not.” Natalia also does not consider herself Black, and is “straight up Haitian,” as the core of who she is. Distinguishing from the “Black” identity was not about distancing, and was more about pride and not shunning that part of their identity.

The participants who described feeling an identity conflict attributed it to their youth. Junior spoke about being criticized for speaking English “correctly” and for reading avidly. His Black peers made comments like, “Niggas don’t read” while the Haitians in the community questioned his Haitianness because he had not gone back to visit Haiti since he was a child. Nadege had a similar experience where she was not accepted by Black kids who called her White for hanging out with White people. Despite the fact that she went to a talented and gifted school, she was not associated with being Black because she was bright growing up and answered questions in class. She simultaneously did not feel Haitian enough and felt self-conscious about not speaking Kreyòl fluently.

There is a level of comfort with not having to choose. Marta explains embracing both her Blackness and Haitianness. She shares:

I don't know of it's because the way my parents raised me or just the way I think I was always raised around a lot of Haitians. Uhm, like the congregations I used to go to or be a part of. We were all Haitian.. So I really just immerse myself as much as I can, especially in Georgia. With the Haitian community or was Haitian music and all this other stuff. But I've never had a problem with being choosing between whether I'm Haitian or whether I'm African American. I'm both. That's

something like my nieces, and nephew. They're biracial. Their mom is Italian. And of course, my brother was my brother was born in Haiti. And I told him that you should be proud of both heritage. Because that's what makes. (Marta, Age 30)

Edwidge describes her childhood experiences as being “submerged” in Haitian culture at home and spending a large amount of time at home. She shares, “I know I'm Haitian, of course I'm Black. But I have these elements of African American culture when I'm going to Haiti. People know that I'm Haitian, but they still... but they don't really recognize me as being Haitian because I was born in the US.” So when she goes to Haiti, she is seen as too American to be accepted as Haitian. She describes this as an ongoing conflict that she has to deal with, owing the Haitian identity, but having two cultural experiences within her.

Although there was an expectation for both first and second generation participants to experience more of an identity conflict due to the negotiation of two stigmatized identities (RE2), what emerged was a bi-cultural identity and an acceptance of both a Black and Haitian presentation. Despite previous research showing immigrant parent’s negative stereotypes of Blacks (Waters 1994), the feeling of having to navigate “in-between” worlds (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001), and parent pressure to maintain ethnic roots while peers encourage assimilation (Awokoya 2012), I anticipated more evidence of identity conflict due to assimilation. I further anticipated conflict due to navigating stigma and wanting to hide their ethnic identity (Waters 1999). While there are cultural differences which causes some gaps, participants do not acknowledge this as a trigger for conflict. The majority of conflict that is present is often related to maintaining a connection to the Haitian culture.

6.6 Counternarrative Pressure

After discussing the negative portrayal of Black or African American and Haitian people in the media, and discussing experiences with racism and bullying, participants were asked if

they felt a pressure to present a counternarrative. Essentially they were asked if they felt an obligation to present an ideal representative, whether Black or Haitian, as a result of the media portrayals. Out of twelve first generation men, seven responded in the affirmative, three stated that there was no pressure, and two questioned if “pressure” was the correct description to identify their feelings. Similarly 6 out of 10 women identified pressure, 3 questioned the language, and one said there was no pressure. One of five first generation men and seven of the sixteen women identified a degree of counternarrative pressure.

A few participants expressed the need to present an image as a role-model to younger people. Pierre, aged 61, also feels very strongly about being a role-model, and setting an example for the younger generation as a soccer coach. He references educating others within his family against Black stereotyping, and in social settings when informing people about his ethnic identity. He expresses feeling pressure on “both sides,” feeling terrified when pulled over by the police to make sure that the officer is not scared because he is Black, and also feeling the need to defend Haiti after Trump declared it a “shithole country.” Part of the counternarrative was pressure to then start posting nice pictures of Haiti. He shares, “I’m pissed off that it has to be this way... like, why do we have to do that.” Jack, aged 48, expressed feeling pressure one of the few Black men in his job with the most senior position. He highlights that although he doesn’t have all of the answers, people often come to him for solutions. Similarly, Yves, aged 56, speaks about not thinking of himself, and being cautious to not make mistakes. He shares, “if you mess up in this opportunity you’re messing up opportunities for a lot that’s coming behind.” A few participants clearly recalled the need to present beautiful photos of Haiti, and presenting images of themselves to counter the comment about being a “shithole” country from Haiti.

For others, the pressure came as a response to the negative images in the media. Jean, age 34, he shares that having lived in Vermont where the entire minority population was “2%” so he has grown accustomed to being the “representative” for his race. He shares:

I’m gonna rise above, cause there are good Black men there are good Black fathers there um business men and we can be all of that and more. The only option can’t just be basketball and football. There’s gotta be something else we can be doctors. My brother in law is a doctor. You know my sister in law is a lawyer. Alright? You know I was in the military You know. My wife is in the (federate) You know? We can be those other things it can’t just be 2 options you know. We can do anything and everything. (Jean, Age 34).

A few participants were reluctant to refer to their need to succeed as a pressure. For Louis, it was about his own legacy. He shares:

I don’t know if it’s pressure. Maybe it’s a challenge. The reason why I say that is, you know, with with the question you ask. At times you feel like you’re challenged, and when you’re challenged you want to be at your best, and when you’re at your best you want to succeed at what you’re doing. Uhm. We naturally believe that uhm whether it’s you know... and I said “challenge” you said “pressure” and to me it’s kind of like a combination of both. You know it’s like I’m going to do it because I want to represent well. I don’t want to be the one that somebody goes, “Oh look what Louis did,” and be the uhm uhm benchmark so to speak as to why I should not give someone else a chance. So to me it’s Ok, I’m faced with this challenge. I’m going to do the best that I can, and I’m going to succeed. So in that role I’m always you know, looking for best ways to uh get ahead of the adversity while being challenged. (Louis, Age 50).

Yvette expressed the same personal need to demonstrate success, but for different reasons. As a teenage mother, she felt the constant pressure to prove to her family that she was not a *vagabond*, a term that they often used to refer to Black Americans. It translates closely to the term “thug” which represents a troublemaker or hoodlum.

Salva was one of the few men who expressed that he did not have a pressure to present a counternarrative. Salva, aged 48 did not have an acute racial awareness until three years ago, and started to feel at risk under the Trump administration, so last year he got his citizenship. He spent his childhood in Haiti and his early adulthood in Europe before he migrated to the United States

at the age of 27. He identifies as Haitian which he perceives to be a mixture of risk and protection in American culture. Although he expresses feeling “beyond sad and beyond frustrated” about how Black people are portrayed in the media, and having an incident of discrimination approximately 6 years ago with a neighbor, he does not feel an added pressure to perform. He also expresses some distrust towards the media, that even though “it’s upsetting at times” he expresses that “it’s a shame when some people can’t make the difference between what’s, you know, what’s being presented as truth or not; that’s a shame.” Nonetheless, as it relates to having a counternarrative pressure, he stated, “I would say no because I feel like I try my best anyways and I just have to show what I can do or who I am or what I can do. I wouldn’t say there is any pressure, no... Recently I- in the past 10 years I’ve been in that it doesn’t really matter. You just have to be yourself and other people adapt to to who you are.” Likewise, Marc shared, “I don’t put that pressure on myself. I just carry myself a certain way. And if I if I represent it, I represent it. But I don’t put that burden on me. It’s not something that I like wake up in the morning and say “I have to.”

Overall 58% of participants expressed feeling a counternarrative pressure, 19% expressed a need to present an ideal self however did not identify it as “pressure.” Only 17% viewed it as no pressure at all. Overwhelmingly, there is a strong pull to succeed, and to put one’s “best foot forward,” so to speak. This is perceived as an expectation, and as a way of life, and not necessarily understood as a pressure or burden. This pressure wasw perceived as for both Black and Haitian identities together, so despite the fact that participants maintain an ethnic identity, there is simultaneously a strong Black identity as well. The response to a dual-stigma is a dual identity, attempting to challenge the master narrative with identity presentation and performance.

6.7 Social Circles & Group Identity

Having a group identity is often correlated with better mental well-being. These participants reflected on childhood experiences of bullying, their first racial awareness, ongoing imagery in the media and instances of discrimination. Participants were asked to describe their unique experience of being Black and foreign in America. In essence, what does it mean to be phenotypically similar to the African American group, but having a different cultural background. This section will explore how those cultural differences (or similarities) impact relationships, interactions, and socialization with others. It also sheds some light on their assimilation to the American culture, and whether they choose to distance themselves, or instead feel more connected.

Despite the identified cultural differences, eight of the thirteen first generation men described their friend circle as predominately Black. Half of those majority-Black friend groups were identified as majority Haitian. Seven of the ten first generation women described their friend circle as predominately Black. Two of those groups were identified as mostly Haitian, two as mostly Caribbean, two as Black American and one as a general Black and Immigrant friend group. Out of those predominately Black friend circles, this included a mixture of African Americans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Africans, Nigerians and people from the Caribbean. The remaining participants described a diverse friend group, including Whites, and Mexicans.

Ten of the twenty-one second-generation participants specifically identified friends who are Haitian, five participants identified “Caribbean” friends, and five identified African friends. Most second-generation participants described a diverse group of friends which represented the Black diaspora, African- Americans, Latinos, and others. Only four participants indicated only one ethnicity: Haitian (Fabienne, Nadia, Claudette and Edwidge).

Some participants stressed that their experiences in America were no different when compared to African Americans, despite the cultural differences. For example, Junior's father made him aware of his Blackness, and that regardless of his Haitian identity, he was at risk of being treated poorly by others. Therefore he pushed him to work hard to surpass others, and to not follow the path of his peers. Carline speaks to having the same experience as African Americans despite her Haitian identity:

When I was younger in the 90's and early 2000's moving to south Florida and not only being discriminated against by White people but then being discriminated against by African Americans because they couldn't see me as essentially having some of the same struggles that they had. They couldn't see that you know both of us go for a loan or certain things that realistically a lot of people aren't going to view us any different. The first impression is period point blank Black. They're not going to say well this is an African American. They're not going to say this is Afro-European. They're going to say hey there goes another darkie and I don't like them because they're a darkie. (Carline, Age 41, 2nd Gen)

Cultural differences sometimes influenced relationships with others. Chantal describes her bringing a friend to her home:

You come to a Haitian person's house you say hello to everyone. Okay? You kiss them on the cheek you don't have to, but it's like a mwah hi mwah hi. She kind of just walked right in and my parents are looking at me like ha-ha you know? Uh so that right there, that was like okay you have to go say hi to them and she was like why? She waved and I was like no you don't wave you go say hi. So that was just embarrassing so that was just like one thing. Um the food too, um I remember when I first started school in Georgia, I don't like school food. My mom always packed me a little rice beans and chicken and um just my American friends, they would always look at my food like what is that? But whereas my Haitian friend she knew what it was so I felt comfortable. (Chantal, Age 20, 2nd Gen)

Annemarie related to her African friends because they understood what it was like to grow up with strict parents who spoke with accents and having cultural nuances. Although she also has African American friends who were raised similarly and can also relate, it was the friends with immigrant parents who had more similarities than differences that she grew closer with. She also

referenced an “inherited trauma” that her continental African friends do not have. She shares:

I don't know, I just feel like for one, my African friends who's parents come straight from the continent don't have that inherited trauma of being a descendant of slaves, and I really do think that the trauma that was endured during slavery has a big effect on like our development as people. Not to say that they don't have the effects of like colonialism and imperialism and all those things, but I think that slavery as an institution had a very profound effect on like the way that we're socialized and just like the way we've been able to develop, so I think that's one protective factor, if your ancestors weren't slaves. (Annemarie, Age 23, 2nd Gen)

Cherie talks about shared jokes, and the ability to laugh until tears come out of your eyes, and it's something you understand if you were raised in it, or the ability to share memes. She describes her friends as being born in Brooklyn, with a Haitian family who have an understanding that doesn't require explanations. However she has African American friends who are also like sisters who she goes out and spends time with, however those friends are not as close.

Tamara jokes about her friends threatening to revoke her Black card because she doesn't know the movie references. There is some lingering discomfort when they talk about different cultural references, however they find similarities that they can relate to, like punishments they received from their parents.

Nadege experienced a shift in her friend group as she got older. She stated that they were mostly African American, but as she is getting older, she is finding herself more drawn towards Caribbean people. As a child, she was told she was not Black enough, and as she attempted to connect to her Haitian roots, she would sometimes feel that she was not Haitian enough. She expresses a comfort and being accepted by “island people”. She cites certain things about Black culture that she does not understand and cause her to be “infuriated.” One of those things is She references the use of the N-word, and strongly disagrees with its use. Claude mentioned the same

issues with that word, and stated that he would correct others to use his proper name.

Carline describes her friend group as a “gumbo pot of people,” including Dominica, Puerto Rican, Columbian, Haitian, Jamaican, Trinidadian, Black American and White. She serves as the glue for these friends, so although they are separate, she brings them together. Despite the fact that Margaret had one parent from Ghana and one parent from Haiti, she made this comment:

So, most of my friends are Black. Imma just put it that way. Uh I would say about 50% of them are Caribbean and the other like 50% no I wouldn't say 50% I would say the other like 40%ish percent are like African, but mostly east African. Because I have more east African friends than west African friends because I feel like the east Africans are more welcoming and stuff and the west Africans are like more shady sometimes. So that's why I just, idk it sounds kind of weird but it's true cause even growing up, especially growing up in the Clarkston tucker area you know with a lot of people who are from Tanzania, Burundi, uh Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, places like that. I have a lot of friends from those places. Even though I'm Ghanaian I don't have too many Ghanaian friends.” (Margaret, Age 23, 2nd Gen)

Renee also describes a shift in her friend groups, and describes that as a child it evenly split with Black and White friends, however now it's “fully Black” and a mixture of Haitian, African and African American.

6.8 Identity Presentation Analysis

The main takeaway from this chapter is that both first and second-generation participants primarily identify with a Haitian identity, and that little meaning can be garnered from their written identity on documents such as the census or job applications. Many participants rely on an organic disclosure of their ethnic identity over time, and therefore do not feel the need to correct others when there is an assumption that they are African American, even though they typically do not align with that label. This aligns with Swann's (1992) research showing that individuals are more inclined to seek self-verification from others with whom they have strong

levels of commitment, as opposed to casual relationships.

The negative portrayals of both Haitian and Black people in the media cause frustration, but do not deter participants' presentation of their ethnic identity, regardless of whether it is perceived as a risk or not. However, overall, there is a general need to present a counternarrative representative to others, and to shine a light on the positivity of both the Black and Haitian identity. Finally, across both first and second-generation participants, they do not describe any exclusivity in their social circles nor any animosity towards African Americans who may have picked on them during childhood, however they do describe a preference or a natural gravitation towards foreign first or second-generation Black immigrants. Essentially, participants have surrounded themselves with people whom align with their identity, allowing them to comfortably embrace both their Black and Foreign identity. My research expectation (RE2) to find identity conflict was not supported with this study. While some participants did express some feelings of shame regarding their ethnic identity during childhood, those feelings have since passed, leaving only a few cultural gaps in understanding African-Americans. In addition, the expectation of a strong ethnic identity was supported with this data, with it slightly more prominent in the first-generation, compared to the second. However, I cannot conclude that this is for distancing purposes away from African-Americans due to stigma due to their census behavior and ambivalence about correcting an African-American label.

7 MENTAL WELLNESS

Participants in this study demonstrate a strong bi-cultural identity, allowing them to strongly embrace their Blackness, while maintaining their Haitian identity label. Through the looking glass experiences of bullying, negative media portrayals and first-hand discrimination, Haitian immigrants develop an understanding of how the world views them through media and discrimination. Through these experiences, participants arrive at a salient self-identity, one which is often presented across spaces, regardless of risk perception. Participants maintain an acute awareness of systemic racism, stereotypes, stigma, and risks related to their ethnic and racial identity, yet were able to present with minimal negative emotion expression and sub-clinical symptoms of depression. The previous chapters presented the words and images portrayed in various forms of media, as it relates to the looking glass experience, but did not dive into the mental and emotional impact of those images. This chapter aims to capture the penetrating gaze of the looking glass, and the depth of its impact on Haitian immigrants.

7.1 Self-Feelings & The Looking Glass

In an effort to capture mental and emotional well-being, various sentiments were coded throughout the interview to explore negative emotional expressiveness in response to interview questions. This approach was designed to provide insight to how participants expressed themselves from an emotional standpoint throughout a 50-min interview about identity. Participants were not explicitly asked about their feelings towards the media or discrimination, but instead were asked “How did that impact you?” Interviews were reviewed and coded to capture variations of the following non-clinical and emotion words: Bother, Sad, Mad, Frustrated, Disappointed, Angry, Hopeless, Stressed, Overwhelmed, Fear/Afraid, Pissed, Hurt, Bad, and other general expressions of negative emotions. Based on the word counts, each

interview was tallied, with scores ranging from 0 to 15. The idea is that the more negative expressive participants were, the more likely that their mental health was deeply impacted through their experiences of the looking glass. On average, each participant uttered 5 negative emotion words throughout their interview. The section below serves to illustrate the types of reactions experienced by participants for both Haitian and Black American media portrayals.

7.1.1 *The Media*

The most common emotional reaction was anger and frustration, and was expressed in 50% of the interviews. Jean spoke out passionately in regards to images of police brutality, and the narrative surrounding Black people.

[I feel] a certain **rage** that kind of builds up where you just wanna be outspoken. Sort of just be like no this-this is not the narrative. This is not the image. I'm a person of high character, you know, and me- no, no, no, no. That's not the image that should be portrayed and put out there for people to believe that we are just a group of savages. (Jean, Age 34, 1st Gen)

Cherie was visibly angry during her interview, particularly about how Haitians are portrayed in the media, both non-fiction and fiction. She states:

Half the times when they do cast them in movies they aren't even Haitian! It **angers** me. It angers me- not even more so it **hurts**. Like it hurts me yes, but I'm so past the hurt that it's complete anger. Like we're more than- and I just don't believe that Haiti's poor. I mean that's another topic that will be more than an hour but- I just- it angers me 'cause I just hate it. Now that's one thing that I **hate**. I hate how Haitians are portrayed, either the Manbo or the person has to be doing Voodoo. And it's not saying that something is anything wrong with it you know what I'm sayin? M'apreciye (inaudible) but it's not just Haiti. It's not just Haitians – every Haitian isn't (inaudible). That- that that just boils my... my **ugh**" (Cherie, Age 29, 2nd Gen)

When Pierre was asked about his experience of Black people in the media, he referenced Black people being shown as lower-class and uneducated. He continued to say, "It bothers me. It does bother me when I hear that. And the way it impacts me is that the way I've tried, the way I've

lived my life you know I try to be an example. I try to do things right.” For Pierre, when asked if the media was stressful for him, he responds,

I don't know how much stress it adds (chuckles) to my already high level of stress. For example when I hear about President Trump calling Haiti a shithole country, that definitely **triggered** something in me. So, it does have an effect on me. Do I, does that um, cause me to act differently, or not be able to sleep. I don't lose sleep over that. Am I concerned about it, absolutely. Am I **pissed** off, yes. But it doesn't get to me where it affects my physical health. (Pierre, Age 61, 1st Gen).

Even after describing “a little anxiety” about the political unrest in Haiti and not being able to visit, he shares, “It's really frustrating. It's really, It's sad.” Arielle also expressed frustration and anger by media portrayals of both Black Americans and Haitians. She was upset specifically with housewives, and the willingness of Black women to allow themselves to be portrayed in a scripted, immature, and hostile manner.

Although Widlene tries to protect herself by avoiding “horrific news about something that happened to a Black person,” similar to Pierre, she gets upset about the chronic unrest in Haiti. She shares, “All of those videos of burning, people fighting. And I hate it. I don't like it... It makes me feel like when are we going to get this right? Not again.” (Widlene, Age 32, 1st Gen). She describes it as a combination of frustration and fatigue, however she clarifies, “I'm not hopeless.” In a way, while she censors the American news, she expresses an ability to better tolerate news about Haiti, because it does not affect her life with her children in America.

Yvette, who was also visibly upset during her interview cited Black people's acceptance of what to her was evident propaganda. It infuriated her that Black people would fall victim to what she described as “programming.” She shared:

I want them to overcome the nonsense right to see past what is being put in front of us. You know if it means turning off the freaking tv, if it means not watching you know this um reality tv show like why are you dialed in to the people fighting [...] why are you dialed into these freaking slave movies (Yvette, Age 42, 1st Gen)

For Vincent, despite having developed some numbness around the media portrayals of Black people, he was able to describe an underlying frustration. He states:

It's **upsetting**. It's **frustrating** but you become **numb** to it after a while. Like I remember when uhm Trayvon Martin died, and it was like, it was like a real big thing. I cried and everything, and I'm not that type of person 'cause I didn't know him like that, you know what I'm saying. But just like the way that they were able to kind of push things and portray things in the media and kind of like the back and forth between people, it **affected me** in a certain way. And now that I've gotten older and I'm maturing, I now understand that you know, I need to be able to make a difference. I need to work to make a difference because me being **emotionally hurt** is not going to do anything. (Vincent, Age 24, 2nd Gen)

The second most common response to the media was an expression of sadness, and was reflected in 36% of the interviews. For Claude, his sadness is tied together with a feeling of hopelessness, having to face seemingly unsurmountable odds. He shares:

I think when you think about a large pie with 8 slices. I think we're not even showing, we're just showing a little slither of African American, and we think that's what the whole pie is. It makes me feel **sad** 'cause uhm the statistics, you almost can't beat it like when you look at the divorce rate, daddies not being around or uhm child support is negative with baby mamma drama, it just make sit feel like I'm against the odds, so to work twice as hard or three times as hard trying to get one inch forward (Claude, Age 33, 2nd Gen)

Along the same vein, in regard to being underestimated despite the potential, Marta states "It's really sad to see us being portrayed as less than what we really are. Because there's so many so much talent out there" (Marta, Age 30, 2nd Gen). Salva echoes this sentiment, stating, "I would say I'm beyond sad and beyond frustrated 'cause that's the reality from which we have to go through" (Salva, Age 48, 1st Gen). Anika speaks about the same hurdles, but from the perspective of a mother:

We try to- I try to, you know, as parents as mothers, we try to protect our kids as much as possible. You tell them what to do, what not to do. And, you know, here you are minding your own business and not even looking for trouble with you're or you're murdered. Yeah. It's a **sad**, sad state of affairs. I don't like it. As much as we make, - We take five, 10 steps forward. We're taking 20 back. ... You know, it's just like it's just a constant pulling you down, like you can't walk outside your door.

I mean, even if you stay inside your door, it can happen. So it is a **downer**. (Anika, Age 54, 1st Gen)

Although Natalia expressed a disassociation from the media, especially when witnessing stories of police brutality, where she feels like it's "just another one," when asked to describe the feelings she is attempting to protect herself from, she shares "I mean definitely sadness.

Definitely sadness, anger, like- like why is this happening, you know, so I guess all of the normal spectrum of feelings that anybody would feel: loss, sadness, oh my gosh for the family" (Natalia, Age 30, 2nd Gen). Similarly, Sandy expresses a feeling of being hurt. She states, "It, um, it hurt as a mom. It hurt as a sister. I have brothers who, you know, have been pulled or profiled. It hurts as a teacher because I teach high school kids. And you know, the dynamics of their age group is that hip hop look" (Sandy, Age 47, 1st Gen).

While much of the sadness expressed was in regards to negative media portrayals, and commonly related to matters outside of the locus of control, Tamara's sadness fell on the responsibility of both Native and Haitian Black people. She shares, "I do know that it's always something with the president that our people do not like and want to force out of office. And so, No doubt the looting, the destroying of property is just it's just really sad. It's really, really sad. And then I tend to see that happening with this specifically at Atlanta before this past weekend when they were burning down even Black owned businesses. And I'm like what is going on, there are people who worked hard for it" (Tamara, Age 32, 2nd Gen).

7.1.2 Discrimination

There were not many emotional expressions related to discrimination. Some participants could not recall discrimination, and for a few who did experience it, they expressed not being bothered by it. Isabelle recalled what she described as "the most distinguished experience" of

racism as a high school student, walking into a high-end store with her classmates as the only Black girl. She shares:

I was in high school. And I was trying to find like a job, a part time job to do on the weekends and stuff. So, I was well dressed with like my regular clothes. Slacks, my little Black shirt with my little bookbag. And I remember walking into the store with a few of my friends. We were all from different backgrounds of course, but me being the only Black girl in the group, we were all leaving but then they stopped me to check my bag. And I was like, why am I getting my bag checked and nobody else is? And I thought it was weird because everybody just stood and watched me. But I remember my friend was like why are you checking her bag? We were all in here together why is she being the only one that your stopping? And I remember being embarrassed, and I bawled when I left the store. And I was like why is this happening to just me? Why was I the only one searched in this store? We all were walking around the same area laughing and talking and trying on the same things. Why am I the only one that got stopped? So that was one of the only things that's like this was **hurtful**. (Isabelle, Age 28, 1st Gen)

She further went on to say that she never returned to that store, and has become cautious of where she goes. She described it as “unfair” and “degrading” to be treated in such a way and being “a lot to take in.”

Claudette described her experience of discrimination as a traumatizing event, which requires “a lot” of self-restraint to prevent herself from being angry and wanting to be “reckless” (Claudette, Age 28, 2nd Gen). Although Pierre did not use any “feeling” words, his experience of discrimination, had his friends not been present, would have escalated to a physical altercation. Salva referenced a feeling of “hell rage” that came over him during an altercation with a neighbor over a parking space that was triggered by racism. For Jean, although he didn't want to get “hanged up on” his experience of discrimination at the workplace, and had decided to “move on,” he shared that it did impact him in a way that made him question, “Is it worth it?” He questioned his motivation to push forward when less deserving peers reaped the reward.

Ultimately, both first- and second-generation participants experienced negative emotional reactions to the media, both for Black Americans and Haitians and for fictional and non-fictional

representations. Feeling expressions were predominately anger and sadness. It is these negative emotional reactions to the stigmatized identities in the looking glass that is the core of my first research expectation (RE1), thus causing a decline in mental wellness. However, when looking at both the frequency of negative emotion expression and the PHQ-9, with the assumption that they serve as indicators of emotional and mental well-being, there does not appear to be a trend toward mental or emotional disturbance. Despite the slight increase in scores on average for the second-generation, there appears to be a resilience present, as all participants on average have mild scores.

7.2 Mental Health Assessment

While some participants were rarely expressive, and others were very expressive during the interview, across generation and gender, on average they were very similar in the frequency of their emotional expression. When looking at communication patterns, almost half of the participants (45%) expressed a negative emotion between 0 and 3 times through the duration of the interview. These participants were evenly split, with 10 first-generation and 10 second-generation participants. In contrast, I also explored the most emotionally expressive participants, those who ranged from 8 to 15 emotion words during their interview, which was 9 (20%) of participants. These participants were majority (67%) first generation. Below is a breakdown of gender and generation differences with emotional expression.

First generation men had scores that ranged from 0 to 11, with an average score of 4.9. Therefore, on average first generation men, during a 50-minute average interview, typically expressed a negative emotion word 5 times. The majority of the responses were related to the media and police brutality. First generation women had scores ranging from 0 to 13, with an average score of 5.0. Their negative emotional reactions were also focused on the media, but also

frequently related to work. Second generation men had scores ranging from 1 to 5, with an average of 4.0, and second generation women had scores ranging from 1 to 15, with an average score of 4.63. Men altogether scored an average of 4.67, whereas women altogether scored an average of 4.77.

The PHQ-9 screening tool was used to determine the severity of depressive symptoms, and can be used for a preliminary diagnosis based on criteria in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The nine items measure the frequency of symptom presentation over the course of the previous 2 weeks. This screening tool assesses anhedonia, depressed mood, sleep disturbance, fatigue, appetite changes, feelings of worthlessness, concentration difficulties, psychomotor disturbances, and thoughts of death, which can be used to establish a clinical diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder. Participants are asked how often they have been bothered by these symptoms in the past two weeks, and to indicate (0) Not at all (1) Several days (2) More than half the days (3) Nearly every day. The lowest potential score is zero, and the highest and most severe score is 27. Scores from 0 to 4 indicate minimal or no depression severity, which does not warrant intervention. Scores from 5 to 9 indicated mild severity, and scores from 10 to 14 indicate moderate severity; both of these categories require clinical judgment to ascertain if treatment is necessary. Scores from 15 to 19 indicate moderately severe depression severity, and scores from 20 to 27 indicate severe depression severity; both of these categories warrants active treatment including therapy and possible medications. This screening tool has been translated into multiple languages and is considered to be both reliable and valid across sociodemographic factors including race/ethnicity, sex, and education level. This tool was administered in English for this study.

Across both first and second generation participants, scores remained in the “mild” category, with the first generation average at 5.43, and the second generation only slightly higher at 6.25. Of those with the lowest scores, and considered to have minimal to no symptom severity, 54.5% were first generation, and 45.5% were second generation Haitians. Of those with the highest scores, ranging from moderate to moderate severe, they were evenly split with 50% first generation and 50% second generation. However, there is a gender difference with 80% of the women and only 20% of the men have scores in the highest category.

First generation men had an average score of 4.84, indicating mild symptom severity, which represents 30.4% of first-generation men. The majority of these participants (61.5%) had minimal to no symptom severity. In comparison, the second generation men scored an average of 2.5, indicating minimal to no symptom severity, with 100% of participants falling in that range. First generation women had an average score of 6.2, slightly higher than the first generation men, but still within the mild category. The majority of first generation women (40%) fell into the minimum to none category, followed by (30%) who were considered mild. For second generation women, the average score was highest compared to all other subgroups, at 7.19, yet still within the mild category. The majority of these participants fell into two categories, minimal to none (37.5%) and mild (37.5%). These results support the first research expectation (RE1) in that they show a slight decrease in mental wellness from the first to second- generation, although they are both categorized as “mild.” The gender difference was not anticipated. Previous research on Caribbean immigrants show that men had higher rates of psychiatric disorder than women (Williams 2007).

7.3 Mental Health Analysis

Based on the assessment of these participants, it seems that for both generations, women had slightly higher symptoms than the men. This is likely due to the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender which emerged in the discrimination section of the looking glass chapter. In addition, the second-generation participants, who are predominately women, also had a slightly higher PHQ-9 average than the first generation. This may speak to more of gendered differences than generation status. In alignment with the PHQ-9 scores, women were also slightly more expressive than men throughout their interviews. . Although there were no gender-specific research expectations, there is some conflicting data about mental health for women. According to Williams' (2007) Caribbean sample of Black immigrants, men had higher rates of psychiatric disorders than women. Meanwhile, according to the National Institute of Health, men are more vulnerable to develop mood disorders compared to men (Seney and Sibille 2014). Nonetheless, across generation status and gender, participants on average had mild symptoms of depression. Nonetheless, across generation status and gender, participants on average had mild symptoms of depression. One of the shortcomings with both the PHQ-9 tool and the emotional expressive coding is that they are designed to find risk factors, deficiencies, and illness. It fails to capture protective measures, strength, and resilience. The next chapter explores protective factors that emerged in my analysis, which I believe helps understand their sub-clinical presentation of depressive symptoms.

8 INTERGENERATIONAL RESILIENCE

Through the looking glass experience of the media and discrimination, the negative self-feelings that emerge are evident, and heavily reflect feelings of anger and sadness. Yet despite having these feelings and symptoms, these participants do not reach the levels suggestive of a clinical diagnosis of depression, indicating factors of resilience at play. Although resilience is considered to be a “complex family of concepts,” it is based on the inference and analysis that an individual has developed positive adaptation despite having been faced with threat and adversity (Masten and Obradovic 2006). According to Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) the risk-protective model assumes that protective factors serve as a buffer that reduces the impact of negative experiences or risks. Cardoso and Thompson (2018) cite family strengths, cultural factors such as biculturalism and community supports as factors for resilience. This chapter explores various factors presented throughout interviews that likely promote resilience, including identified coping mechanisms, a connection to ancestors and culture, the “role” of identity, and pride.

8.1 Coping Mechanisms

Many participants displayed an acute awareness of the White racial frame through which the media portrays images of Black people and therefore developed healthy coping mechanisms including avoidance, distrust, being “unbothered,” and numb. Participants often see themselves, or their loved ones in the images of others. These measures serve to protect participants from experiencing feelings of sadness, anger, and hopelessness that is often expressed relating to the fear that this narrative will never change.

8.1.1 *Avoidance & Distrust*

In an effort to minimize the negative emotional reactions to the media, many participants made conscious attempts to avoid exposure. Outside of comments about not watching live

television, this section captures intentional efforts to avoid the media as a protective measure. Twenty-six (59%) of participants expressed avoidance, distrust, or both. Avoidance and distrust are both shown in this section, because although they were not always expressed together during the interviews, they seem to be related to one another.

The most commonly avoided program was the news, however avoidance was not limited to news reports. Widlene shares that she not only takes precautions to avoid the news, but also for negative fictional portrayals of Black people:

I try not to watch. I come to this realization as I got older. I know that I don't want to see things that make me mad or angry. Like uhm if I hear of something, maybe ah the last thing I heard – because my son is 11 and maybe there was a boy that was shot for playing with a play gun, a toy gun. I know I cannot watch this. I cannot watch this. So anytime it would come on, I'm blocking it. I- you are not allowed to play with any toy guns, you can't go outside...Even with like movies. If a movie comes out and it's a story about how this person went through some- you know been in jail for the wrong reason, you know, just somethings horrific. I know this will just mess up my day or just bring up me feeling some kind of way and you know, I can't. So, so yea. I try to ignore it. Or I have to really make that time to be like ok let me just watch this thing and get my mind ready for this, you know prepare myself to watch this. But other than that, I protect myself from any news or horrific news about something that happened to you know, a Black person. (Widlene, Age 32, 1st Gen)

Despite Widlene's Haitian identity, she recognized the realities, whether fiction or not, of her son being at increased risk of being in harm's way as a young Black boy. Similarly, Anya expressed avoidance because she says, "I feel like too much bad, you know, I just feel like I, deal with a lot of people with trauma and I don't really want to sit here and watch the news and identify, you know, more, you know, kind of bring it on to myself" (Anya, Age 34, 1st Gen).

Jean made a decision to no longer watch the 6 o'clock news, because:

"It's painful to watch cause you're like man this person looks like me or looks like a family member of mine. Looked up and it looks like we could be related. you know its painful to watch what I mean?... I mean I don't want to see anybody suffer. Especially somebody that look like you." Jean specifically talked about intentionally being a part of positive things, and not being "pulled in" by the

negativity “because *they* want me to feel bad about my own people and I don’t want that.” (Jean, Age 34, 1st Gen)

Avoidance is also often referred to as a way to avoid a “programming” by an unidentified “they,” as Jean mentioned. Carline shares that “seeing the news in general is a propaganda campaign in regards to Black people in general (Carline, Age 40, 2nd Gen). Marc spoke very passionately about an agenda in the United States to convince Black people that they are inferior. Marc spent all of his childhood and early adulthood in Haiti and did not experience his first real racial awareness until Trump got into office. He shares:

I am as equal as anybody. To me. And I always used to put that even though they're- they're trying to do that right now I refused to let anyone remind... I think right now what's happening is more of a reminder. Because you're too comfortable. Let me remind you that you are inferior and stuff like that.... (Marc, Age 47, 1st Gen)

For him, there was an evident strategy to make Black people feel inferior, so as a result, he said “I don't let that bother me.” He explained that objectively, it was an effort for White people to maintain their grip on their power. He asserted that Black genes were dominant, and that there was White fear of being wiped out or replaced in the future. He also recognized that the Black people in America were descendants of survivors, and that there is an attempt to make Black Americans forget their strength.

To me the strongest survived that trip because it was a brutal trip. It was Not A cruise line. So a lot a lot of Blacks died. So, Leaving only the strong survivors. Meaning you are a descendent of someone that survived that trip. Ok. Someone that worked In the field. In this... Sometimes in the summer. I'm outside here, I'm like what the heck it's hot! How they do this? You know what I'm sayin'... so Someone that survived something like that... I don't I don't see anything negative for me to look at or for me to feel that I am inferior. (Marc, Age 47, 1st Gen)

Avoidance is not simply a protective factor for oneself, but also an act of rebellion, in a sense, not feeding the troll which is the media. There is an underlying understanding that the Black community should know better than to feed or digest the media. This was a point of

frustration for Marc, as he stated, “the sad part is we are helping their agenda because they're not there themselves. They're not the face of what's happening. They use us to destroy ourselves.

That to me bothers me” (Marc, Age 47). Yvette speaks passionately about not only avoiding the “programming” herself, but also questioning others who don’t do the same. She shares:

I want them to overcome the nonsense right to see past what is being put in front of us. You know if it means turning off the freaking tv, if it means not watching you know this um reality tv show like why are you dialed in to the people fighting (...) why are you dialed into these freaking slave movies why are you dialed in... We-they-you can control that, like why do you not see that? (Yvette, Age 42, 1st Gen)

An example of this was brought up in Patrick’s interview in which he criticized Gayle King for questioning Lisa Leslie about Kobe Bryant’s rape case after he had passed away. The network had published a clip of the interview, focusing on that question, causing it to go viral, resulting in a strong backlash against Gayle. She then gave a public apology, stating that the clip did not provide the full context of the interview. Patrick insisted that she should have known better:

That question shouldn’t have been asked at all. Because that situation was already case closed. If that wasn’t the case, why didn’t you ask Kobe that his last game as a player? Why you didn’t ask him that when he retired? Why you waited to ask somebody else? About a sensitive topic. Let alone you have to think about his wife. I thought that was insensitive. She has to realize, she works for a corporation. That corporation is not going to show us in the best light. Since when has that corporation showed us in the best light. She knew better. She knew better because you’re a veteran journalist. Over 30+ years in the business... When it’s a Black person portraying that negativity, how are we going to change that if she’s doing that and she’s a part of the media.”

Audrey described Black people being “okay” with the negative narrative of Black people in the media as a criminal act. She stresses that the media in America goes beyond borders and impacts the culture worldwide. And when Black people believe it due to a lack of understanding, she states “That is a crime.”

For Jean, he doesn't watch the 6pm news to protect his own emotional well-being. However, he also chose not to watch because "they want me to feel bad about my own people and I don't want that... The viewership. The ratings. I'm not gonna do that I'm not gonna cosign on that. I don't cosign to that." Jean is well aware that the media relies on participation from viewers to keep the system going.

For Salva, whenever he is watching the news, he reminds himself of the "image war" which makes him cautious and critical of what he is watching.

That image war that you know, certain facets of society: government, western governments have tried to put on Black folks that's unfair and it's not factual. So I try to make the difference between what's true, and what's not true. Uhm, you know that's how I try to see things. Because we have to be aware of history, right? Think about it—what's been portrayed based on history, on religion. So there's a lot to say there. (Salva, Age 48, 1st Gen)

Sandy also expresses distrust with media biases, saying,

I do feel like a lot of people believe that most Black people are a certain way, you know, like when they throw the word "thugs" around, um, anytime something, something happens and it's a Black man or boy they're done automatically. And then when they do it, they're patriotic, you know, stuff like that. We see it all the time. And I think a lot of it is sensationalism through media, you know, getting people to watch their shows or get on their websites and stuff like that. I think, I think that a lot of stuff is fueled by, by those who run the media. I don't necessarily think that it's always the life that most of us live. So there's definitely power. (Sandy, Age 47, 1st Gen).

Marie directly correlates her avoidance of the news to her emotional well-being. She says, "So there's a censorship I do, because I am in my core a happy person. And I do have a Black husband, and a Black boy that I'm raising." Arielle is acutely aware of the direct correlation of news exposure to her emotional well-being. She states, "I'm seeing more. I'm reacting more. So for instance, I try not to watch the news because they shed so much light on the issues that it just brings me down." Emmanuel echoes the need for emotional protection by keeping his exposure to a minimum, stating,

Like if I watch too much sad news it'll like mess up my vibe for sure. And like my parents they can just sit there and watch it all day, but like I just can't. I have to get up and leave at a certain point cause it's just like, it's too much. You know? I just feel like it's overwhelming and I hate feeling like I can't do nothing about it...It triggers a lot of helplessness. So, I try to intake news, so I'm informed but not to where I like am just overloaded with emotion" (Emmanuel, Age 22, 1st Gen).

8.1.2 *Unbothered & Numb*

The sentiment of being unbothered, unaffected, or numb emerged during multiple interviews. Phrases like "I don't care," "Whatever," or "It doesn't bother me," and others were coded into the unbothered and numb category. Eleven participants expressed this sentiment as it relates to media, bullying, discrimination, or other social interactions. Being unbothered was not always related to avoidance or distrust.

For Pierre, as he described one set of kids calling him the N-word during childhood, she stated "it didn't really affect me," because another group of kids was calling him "Frenchie." For Marie, when asked about exposure to discrimination, she said "I don't care" because racism was not her problem, and not something that she would pay attention to. When Marc shared a story about discrimination while working abroad in France, his response was "whatever man," because he referred to it as ignorance. And, when later asked about the possibility of filling a quota by being the minority at work, he said, "It doesn't bother me...because if I pass that filter, it's because I am something that I made myself to be." When Jack was talked down to by a person at work who was a known racist, he shared, "It didn't really bother me. I just told myself I had to find out how to just deal with it, or navigate around it." Louis described an incident during his teenage years where other teens yelled the N-word at him while walking, and although it was shocking, he shared, "I just continued on my path and went to work." He then described other "knock-knack" instances where he was called a Frenchie Boy because of the way he was dressed, and interpreted it as simply cultural differences since he was in a majority Black school.

In response to seeing police brutality in the news, Yves shares, “it’s unfortunate but I’m a little bit... what’s the word? Uhm immune to it.”

As it relates to the media, a few participants expressed how it no longer had an impact on them.

Honestly, lately, I don't know like- I mean, over the years, I've- like certain stuff, like when you're used to it, you just can't get mad about it- you know, like you just- I became numb to stuff play like that over the years like, OK, it is what it is then, OK. Cause what can I do about it? So I think over the years, I mean, I think, I guess maybe before that I mean, I guess when I was young, I probably used to care more or, you know, feel some type of way, so bad or sad about it. I mean, now I'm just gonna (inaudible) move on. (Isais Age 33, 1st Gen)

Both Natalia and Yves describe being initially alarmed when seeing shootings, but now it’s become “Oh, another one” and being jaded by the media. Chantal described Black people being seen as poor and uneducated in the media. However, she states that her emotional reaction to these portrayals have evolved over time, and no longer affects her as it once used to, now that she knows “How America works.” She then later expressed that introducing her Haitian identity would add to the risk of racial discrimination, and introduce “fuel to the fire” depending on people’s stance on immigration. Yet, this did not deter her from presenting her Haitian identity. She shares:

So like we kind of have this wall put up you know? We know the certain outcomes of situations um but if I keep thinking about that its gonna eventually give me anxiety and I’m gonna lose my mind. Haitians don’t really let things affect themselves like that...So like we kind of have this wall put up you know? We know the certain outcomes of situations um but if I keep thinking about that its gonna eventually give me anxiety and I’m gonna lose my mind...So I just kind of just block it out. Like I know there’s a chance of it happening but I kind of just turn the other cheek I guess if that makes sense? I don’t know what stops me from not getting anxiety about it. Um I don’t know I cant really explain it...Yeah like it doesn’t bother me. Like I know it’s there. I know people will think a certain way if I say this that I’m Haitian. You know I know that I need to like... you know I need to be aware of when I’m going to say that I’m Haitian and things like that, but for some reason it doesn’t really impact me. I don’t feel anxiety I don’t feel stress. (Chantal, Age 20. 2nd Gen)

Finally, Renee speaks about having multiple racist interactions at work, yet coming to terms with the idea that people don't know how to interact with people of different races, and does not allow it to bother her. She also states that when she sees negative images on the media, she intentionally tries not to react because "I'm too damn stressed," and that she makes an effort to rise above it.

Through a distrust of the media, coupled with an understanding of a White supremacy agenda, the avoidance of the media is a protective measure. These participants are able to keep the negative mental and emotional responses from affecting their well-being by intentionally trying to become emotionally callous to the media's influence.

8.2 Ancestors and Connecting to the Culture

The Haitian Revolution was a significant factor in the participants' identity. Fourteen participants spontaneously made reference to Haitian independence during the course of the interview, nine first generation and five from the second generation. Ancestors were often presented as a representative of who participants are, and what it means to be Haitian.

For Louis, the Haitian independence is central to what defines him today. He says, "First Black country in the world, You know it's- it's- it says it all. It says a lot about roots from where I came from. Uhm, we are a very strong people uhm strong minded you know a lot. Uhm and uh you know very pride, proud of you know what we've accomplished and to me knowing that that's where I came from truly helps me you know with my trajectory in life." Salva's perspective was similar, when asked about what truly defines his Haitian identity. He responds, "Well I think pride first, being that first Black independent nation, uhm, pride that you can definitely build a nation. And then after that is cultural as well, what we've done throughout history in terms of our art. My mother's an artist so I'm kind of sensitive to that. We built the

language, you know the Kreyòl language, it's an official language now. We have a lot of cultural heritage too, you know. So, mostly that."

For Patrick, the Haitian independence didn't belong exclusively to Haitians. It was an event that should be celebrated by all Black people, because "your ancestors were rooting for them too" in reference to W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass praising Haiti in their documents. He shares, "I'm big on telling people about what my ancestors did to get independence, how they gathered together, how they put their minds together. They joined in one under spirituality, you know what I mean, how they summoned the ancestors to be given the strength and the courage to defeat the oppressors." Pedro clearly stated, "Before I'm Haitian I am Black;" however, he expresses taking every opportunity to speak about the Haitian independence because many people are unaware of the history. For Jean, it was a source of pride and uniqueness, in that "We are the first Black republic. There is no other." Yves confesses that although he empathizes with the struggle of the Black American, he does not fully understand it. He recognizes that "I guess I'm a little bit too hard on them... basically I fought for my independence and they didn't... and I think that has a lot to do with it. In the way that my mind view is... so I guess I'm a little bit too much of a hardcore."

Yvette goes into detail about the Haitian connection to Africa as a result of the independence, and the severed connection for Black Americans due to slavery.

Because of the revolution in 1804 um I think uh Haitians have been able to keep a lot of their traditional ways because of the fact that we fought against that oppressional and that um that approach of trying to erase our connection to Africa so to me we, during that time we still had a lot of- of rich remembrance of what it was like in Africa or the language um that we, you know that connected us. And I think because African Americans, they you know they were still being brainwashed and you know still being programmed decades after we decided you know we are no longer slaves. they lost a lot of their connection so to me just our connection to Africa makes us a but different right? We don't have to dig too deep to realize okay that our people do look like (inaudible) you can see that or

the um the voodoo religion you can see that connection to Benin that connection to Nigeria it's like that. there's a strong a connection you can look back and see okay this is maybe where I do come from vs um African Americans who you know are celebrating um fourth of July. That's not something that you can connect to Africa or um there's some of the other things they do where it's just like um where did you get that from? That's not someone that you know that's connected to Africa. (Yvette, Age 42, 1st Gen.)

Marc had a similar narrative about the connection to Africa. This was his response to

“What do you think has had the most significant impact in establishing that confidence in the identity as you are now?”:

I will go back to my African roots where the unfortunate ones that were taken from Africa to be brought here I was part of the strongest that survived. I don't know what percentage. That was 40%. Those were the strongest ones who came, they worked. In the field and during all these humiliation, all these well all that psychological, sociological engineering, warfare against them. They survived it. And to be part of the Haitian culture where we rose and fought. And we got our independence more into 200, 200 years ago that we're still paying for to this day. And come here is also trying to identify or try to understand what African Americans went through here. And. Even when they were born to stuff they- They never really gave up 'cause some of them were escaping, from the South went to the North. You know. A. Bunch of revolu- Although I don't think we have any revolutionaries right now. But we have we have had some great names. When you go down to the Martin Luther King. Center. Down there you just see that makes you proud. And my wife was very big on making our kids and myself understand the Black people that were uhm - The strong people that were you know- and us Haitians we've helped here a lot. It was a Haitian that founded Chicago. We helped and- We went to Savannah for the kids- a competition. You know, we've helped there as well. You know, the New Orleans story and there's plenty plenty of other stories that are, that are being hidden that we don't know about. To find out that Black Wall Street, They came and destroyed it. I mean we are capable of doing some things right. So although they hiding to me I think I liberated myself and I opened myself up in a way where. None of these narratives will.- I don't believe them. I know who I am; I know what we're capable of. As a people and I wish everybody. would wake up and see the light. So we can get away from these imaginary shackles and become a great people. But it's not gonna be easy, man <laughs>. 'cause you know, they have a machine- they have a machine. Trying to keep you down. It's crazy. <laughs> (Marc, Age 47, 1st Gen)

Pedro also reflected on ancestry, however from a perspective that minimizes the importance of nationality, and unites all Black people through the same African connection:

When they were getting us from Africa you know we were all one people back then. So even though now, even though I would say the media makes us separate each other. In reality we're not. Those same people in Louisiana, if we were to trace their lineage, you would find that their lineage ties back to somebody that actually lives in Haiti. Alabama, South Carolina, all of those. Because their job was to break up the family. So I might have a great- great- great- uncle in Alabama, one in Louisiana. You know. And one of my ancestors landed in Haiti and started his you know- so we're thinking that's where it started. That's not where it started. If you know, we start way back there, way back there in Africa we were you know one. So. The cultural differences where we live in Jamaica, you live in Haiti, you live in Grenada. You live in all of these different uh countries. Uh for the most part we were all on one ship. (Pedro, Age 39, 1st Gen).

Similarly, Isabelle relates the Haitian history to her Black pride as a whole. When describing what it meant to be Black, she shared, "I describe it as overcome powerful... just godly beings honestly. I just feel so proud to be Black that I come from such a line of people who have done so much already in our culture. And of course, being from Haiti as far as the first revolutionary of slaves, it's like nothing compares to that honestly" (Isabelle, Age 28, 1st Gen).

The Haitian Revolution is a significant and salient part of the Haitian identity. For example, Naomi Osaka, a first Haitian and Japanese tennis player who was born in Japan was tweeted after winning her third Grand Slam title in the US Open: "I would like to thank my ancestors because every time I remember their blood runs through my veins I am reminded that I cannot lose" (Osaka 2020).

8.2.1 Cultural Roots

Despite not being born on the island. Chantal shares the need to learn and understand Haitian history to pass it on to her kids. She says "Haitians have been through. Since the beginning of time. 1804 to now, the earthquake, just everything. I just feel like it's so important for me to just pass on that history to my kids. Cause my parents didn't necessarily even tell me about the history. I took my butt to the library. I read books on it, I googled it to understand who I am." Marta shares her upbringing with gender norms, and finding her way back to them:

You know, my mom raised me to be the perfect wife, the perfect mother. I was cooking at 9 years old while my brothers were playing basketball, playing video games with my dad. I learned how to hand sew. I learned how to crochet, you know, the works, everything. And I rebelled against it all because Americans don't live like this. Granted, there's some parts, you know, some people that they still have that, you know, old school mentality. But they also allowed their girls to live and I'm like, I want that freedom. So I still rebelled against it, to this day. And I was dating this Haitian guy. And he got me back to my roots a little bit like my my sister was like, you're cooking? You made legume? You made some bouillon? (Marta, Age 30, 2nd Gen)

The connection to the culture was also a connection to the family. Carline discussed how speaking Kreyòl was important so that she can hold conversations with her parents. Now that they're older, they have a preference to speak in Kreyòl, and although she may have to insert a few English words, there is a connection to parents.

Many of the women spoke about gender norms, and the expectations of a Haitian woman.

While there is some resentment about the way in which they were raised to be the perfect wife from childhood. Arielle outlines the standards below:

I'm a guest in your house, you treat me like a king. Like if the royal family came to dinner. You have to impress me, so I would never allow anybody- so for me, when I have Black people or anybody come to my house, I serve them. They're not going in my cupboards to pick up a plate and to feed themselves. I serve you, you see what I'm saying. So when you're done leave your plates b/c it's my job to clean up. And I serve drinks. And it will be on nice plates. And as a woman I have to be submissive and subservient to my man. But not to the point you know I don't allow it to mentally defeat me. But there is I guess it's kind of like charming, like I know, you know he holds the door for me, he's treating me like his princess and at home I am very much happy to give him a massage, you know this is when Haitian women and women in general are held to a standard like you should know how to cook. So I learned how to cook, I learned how to OK. Like if my dude is coming home, like as a woman we have to work as a team. So I believe in working as a team. So I'm going to make sure that you know, food is ready because you probably were out all day so you're hungry and let me make sure I have something ready. In Haitian culture if the food doesn't taste right or isn't cooked correctly, you're a disgrace. You're an abomination. In Haitian culture if your man is sitting and eating at the table you should sit there and be with him to keep him company. (Arielle, Age 29, 2nd Gen)

Cherie was forced to cook to learn how to be a good wife. This steered her away from the kitchen for years, leaving her not wanting to cook and clean, because if all of that was for her husband, she didn't want one. She knew that if she were a boy, her experience being raised in a Haitian family would be completely different. She would be able to come and go as she pleased, and be able to stay on campus in college without being told she was getting pregnant.

Nonetheless, Cherie expresses wanting a Haitian husband and wanting to raise her child in a Haitian home. She shares:

I'm not saying that I'm going to raise my child exactly how my parents did for me, but a lot of the messages, a lot of the teachings, a lot of the principles that they instilled in me, I will instill into that child. In terms of, you're going to speak Kreyòl. That's definite and there's no question. You're going to Haiti where you're going to have to learn, you're going to have to see where you came from. Like the same things that my parents did for me is the same thing that I'm going to do." (Cherie, Age 29, 2nd Gen)

Margaret shared that she learned how to cook at 11 years old in order to get married.

However Margaret shared, "I don't really care too much because you know I grew up here and I feel like okay. If my husband would want to cook for me then that's fine it is what it is."

Claudette, on the other hand intentionally sought out ways to be a "good" wife to her husband. She elaborates:

I took time to look into it. It's not like I, I don't, I didn't, I didn't come out of my, out of my parents' house into marriage, knowing how to do anything. I YouTubed. I had women elders in my churches. I looked up to. My best friend's mom was like my mom, teaching me how to cook. My sister in law... She's my everything. She's the one who helped me with after I had my kid, she gives me my *beng*. She's the one who helped me learn how to cook. I took on the initiative to learn these things. So now today, if I can whip up any Haitian dishes, it's not because, Oh, I learned it from growing up. No, I took the initiative to learn how to do it and find out where the different farmer's markets are to buy these things, to know how to do anything, to treat my husband with the dishes that he culturally-- is his culture. He loves it.(Claudette, Age 28, 2nd Gen)

Despite Francois' experience being shunned by his family for being gay, he continues to search for a place of belonging. Even within the gay community, Francois cites "femmephobia" where his masculinity is scrutinized on the dating scene. Francois shares that he has intentionally sought out acceptance within the intersection being Haitian and gay. He shares, "There's probably a lot more gay men in Haiti but they can hide, because my thing is not wearing a dress or I don't identify as a woman I can hide." He has been able to connect with another Haitian male who is out as gay through YouTube and is able to share in the unique experiences and barriers that come with his sexual orientation and his culture and upbringing.

The Haitian Revolution was a significant factor in participants' identity. Seven of the thirteen men made reference to the independence during the course of the interview as a direct response to cultural differences between Haitians and African Americans. The 1804 revolution was brought up as a reason to wave the Haitian flag, as an ode to resilience, and strength.

I don't want to curse, but like, why would I be embarrassed about being Haitian? Like we did something that no one else was able to do, like ever. Well, I'm not going to say ever, but you know what I mean, like we were able to fight against world superpowers and win, like first of all, I don't even want to get started on the tangent of like how is it possible that when we're teaching children about slavery, right? The fact that a island of slaves fought against the French, and won their independence, how is that not taught? You would think that's something that you know, might want to get mentioned. I literally never heard about the Haitian revolution in like a education ... like in a classroom, until my senior year of college....(Annemarie, Age 23, 2nd Gen)

8.2.2 Cultural Strengths & Perspectives

Participants acknowledge how the difference between Haitian history and African American history impacts their perspectives and experiences. Jacques shared that he has less "radical" political views when it comes to race relations. For him, this is influenced by his heritage. He shares:

Like the Kaepernick situation. On one end, I feel like he should respect the flag, but on the other end, I know what he's protesting and that he is using his platform to deliver his message. But my friend wants me to be a lot more radical with my views. And I think it's because he has family members like his grandma who went through things like segregation and discrimination. They have a different burden, and Haitians don't have the same history. Just the other day I saw something about reparations, and I don't think it is going to change anything, but if it will, then get it and move on with it, move forward. (Jack, Age 48, 1st Gen)

Lorna expressed an appreciation for being Black in America and being Haitian, because he gets to see different views. Due to her exposure, she identified a greater ability to connect with others in an open-minded way and relate, whether it's a person with a background from Italy or Germany, and exchanging cultural experiences and learning from one another. She shares that a colleague of hers had asked her what her perspective is on African Americans. Her response is that Haitians were brought up to be confident, and did not have centuries of slavery or segregation. She states, it wasn't that long ago that MLK was shot and that schools were segregated. While she does not judge young Black kids for "walking around with (their) pants hanging down," and understands that the history, she has very strict guidelines for her own children. She states:

I can tell like if a child, the way he comes out or he carries himself, he's going to be judged totally different than the kid who's coming out, dressed, you know, the way you look, your appearances, like is what people think of you. Whereas like there's two ways to look at it: So I will tell my kids, like not to do this. I'm not gonna tolerate it. If they know not to do that, I'm like, I'm going to call the police, myself if you start walking around like that. But they had me to tell them, whereas like the other parent who may be less educated, "you know what, that's cool. That's how it looks tough." You know? And I'm not saying that's what they think. I don't know how they got there. So my background and their background is totally different. (Lorna, Age 51, 1st Gen)

Related to ancestry, Yvette also cited perceived differences with child rearing and family dynamics. Participants were not asked about their marital status, however according to the Pew Research Center (2013), nearly half of adult Black immigrants are married, compared to 28% of

African American adults. Yvette relates this difference as related to the lack of connection to Africa, and the family and community customs that were lost.

I think that also the language um of course makes us different. Um I think for the most part I see Hattians having a more sense of family and togetherness and I mean as I was it seems sometimes were always at war with each other but at the. End of the day when you know your mom, your daughter has a baby and the mom is just crazy trying to you know make sure the baby is okay like literally taking care of her daughter like she's a baby herself. You don't see that stuff in African Americans you see more of your on your own. I got my other issues. I ain't tell you to go have that damn baby. They just don't have that sense of family and taking care of each other. It's like every person for themselves. (Yvette, Age 42, 1st Gen)

Salva also referenced child rearing by referencing how Haitians tend to shelter their children. He shares, "I think we tend to- the big difference I've seen is that we tend to care about things we say in front of our kids, things they watch on TV, things they hear on radio. For better or for worse, we tend to think that things are going to impact them in a bad way. We tend to shield them" (Salva, Age 48).

Participants also expressed an ability to understand things through a broader lens. Margaret described a different "mindset" by being more open to learning about others. Chantal described African Americans as being "one-sided" but that is simply due to having only the American experience as opposed to a more worldly approach at understanding things. When describing her parents, Annemarie shared:

I think that for a long time they did kind of lack that awareness of the societal and like institutional racism that specifically targets African Americans generationally, that they ... I'm not going to say that they don't experience that same type of racism, but I don't think that they have that like inherited trauma in the same way. (Chantal, Age 20, 2nd Gen)

8.2.3 *Descendants of Immigrants*

Through the process of coding, a second-generation voice emerged. Although these participants maintain a Black and Haitian identity, there was a level of responsibility that became evident as a result of witnessing the strength and resilience of their parents. Many participants had referenced this as their Haitian identity protective factor in the previous chapter. However, it seems that this role is built upon the responsibility to achieve a higher education, to obtain a successful job, and to surpass their parents, in honor of their parents' sacrifice when coming to America. Michelle describes what it means to be a second-generation immigrant for her:

For any like second generation person. No matter where your families from, it kind of gives you like a higher drive and motivation. I feel like my kids wouldn't really have that because you don't see... You grow up but you don't really see, not pain, but like people who came from nothing. So it's like, when my dad telling me like... like showing me pict... just like really understanding where they came from and how they even got here and actually did better than most African American people, that's what blows my mind. Like my dad came here with nothing, he really just like represents hard work, him and my mother. So it's like seeing them push so hard, and they have... Growing up, like when you would go over to your friend's house and you see their living situation is like way worse than yours, and you're like... I'm like, "Are you from somewhere? Did your parents..." I'm thinking maybe their... But it's like, no. Their parents were born here. Their grandparents were born here. So it just makes you really humble and like even though he came here with nothing, he has more than most people. So it's like he used that to his advantage. It gave him an advantage because of his drive and his motivation. (Michelle, Age 23)

Michelle describes a pressure to outperform her parents, and do better for the next generation. Claude similarly spoke about his parents' high school education, and seeing their ability to get a house, a business, always have food on the table, and provide for him through his childhood. He shares, "If they can do it with what little they have, I can do it with the much they have given me." He talks about the differences in Haiti versus the U.S. and how there are many more opportunities in America that are not always taken advantage of. He states:

If they grew up here and they see things like free school and free lunch... like free lunch What? You don't get that in Haiti or in a different foreign country. But it's

almost like no child left behind like, no if you don't have the money and the funds in a different country you're not going to school. You don't have to work on a farm and things like that. If you do get paid it's like there's labor laws....Like they didn't have to go through what my parents had to." (Claude, Age 33).

So the sheltered upbringing, and the assimilation of the parents impacts the identity development of the child. Carline speaks to the pressure of being a second-generation immigrant, and how she relates to other immigrant children of all races and ethnicities whenever doing her stand-up comedy. She shares,

I'm going to say because coming and being, whether it be first generation or second generation and coming from another country and getting here, I will say that even when I was younger, as annoying as it was and I'm not saying that African Americans don't harp on education. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that there was such a push for us to go to college. There was, and whenever I speak to other Haitian families versus speaking to some of my African American friends, the push for college was different. Like the push for you to get a doctorate, the push, and I address that when I'm on stage too. The push to go be a nurse, or the push to go be you know, it's like such a it's such a different push. It's such a different, and I find that more- when I speak in different settings, more foreign, no matter what country identify more with what I'm speaking as far as that education push than Americans. Like, they laugh at it but when I really talk about the stories involving that education push, I get a lot of Indians who are like omg you're talking about my mom. When I talk to Asian people they're like oh my god, my parents were like that. (Carline, Age 40).

As a result of this pushing, for Carline "failure is not an option." And, it is very clear that being successful was the fruit of their labor. Nadia acknowledged that she now has opportunities that her parents did not have, and she has a "motivation to do more, to get more, to have more."

However, this sheltered approach caused confusion for Chantal as she watched the case of Trayvon Martin's murder. As an 11 year old child, she didn't understand why it happened, and she didn't understand the anger. Not being able to find the answers online, she felt "blown off" by her parents and left to figure out the racial dynamics on her own. Similarly, Marta's

parents had told her that racism didn't exist. So when she was called the N-world by a man driving by on the road, she was "devastated" and "hurt."

Being second-generation for Cherie meant having conversations with her parents, and educating *them* about the African American struggles. Cherie had to explain that while her parents chose to migrate to the United States, African Americans did not, and that Jim Crow and civil rights was not that long ago, and that some of these same policies impacted generations of people and still hold systems in place now. Natalia also shared that she had no excuse to "remain regular as hell," due to the sacrifices of her parents as immigrants. Vincent makes reference to "ancestral debt" stating. He states that after God, comes parents.

I do believe that it's important to- we have something in my circle that's called ancestral debt, uhm which is uhm, portray who your parents taught you to be. So if you're taught to raise before a man with gray hair or older people, and to salute them and make sure they you know when guests come over, you serve them well and so on and so forth or whatever the case is. I do that out of respect for my parents. Because that's how they taught me, and that's how I was raised. But I'm not trying to portra- 'cause I know who Black people are and what they went through you know, and don't understand then they're just not there. (Vincent, Age 24)

These second-generation identities seem tied to early upbringing, and being raised in a bi-cultural environment with strict parenting. There is a significant value placed in what Vincent described as paying the "ancestral debt."

8.3 Pride

Although it could be inferred through stories of ancestors, and reminiscing about upbringing, the majority of participants specifically expressed a feeling of pride, often spontaneously through the course of their interview. Twenty-eight participants (63%) explicitly used the word "pride" or "proud" as it relates to their identity. Many participants who expressed

pride, as something that develops when armed with the knowledge of history and referenced it as a protective factor, serving as a barrier to stereotypes or stigma. Annemarie shares:

I think that taking a lot of time to like really know myself and get comfortable in who I am, and like honor all aspects of myself, just allows me to like move through spaces more comfortable and just being me... I think it was the education and like the knowledge and you're just like, why the ... I don't want to curse, but like, why would I be embarrassed about being Haitian? Like we did something that no one else was able to do, like ever. I feel like I said it a million times during this interview, but honestly just the knowledge factor, and it doesn't even have to be like formal education like I did with like African American studies, but I think that just knowing the truth about who you are, alleviates all of that like programming of like embarrassment and shame, like when you learn the truth about what it means to be Black, or Haitian- That gives you pride in like who you are. (Annemarie, Age 23, 2nd Gen)

Nadia also shares her love for the Haitian culture has been an intentional process, by following Haitian influencers on social media. She shares:

I would say now it doesn't affect me. The negative stereotypes, or what I see doesn't affect me, because I do know that... First of all, I've grown to love being Haitian, a lot of times when I was younger I had my doubts about it or certain negative connotations with it. But I will say that I've grown to love my culture, and I've also followed many Haitian influencers, just being proud of who we are as a people has helped me be able to face... When I do see certain negative comments or certain negative media about us or Black people in general, I'd say now it doesn't affect me, because I'm proud. (Nadia, Age 28, 2nd Gen)

Pride also seems to be built upon the trials of the Haitian people, and the expression of pride is also wrapped in acknowledgement of economic, political, and historical struggles, and success despite the odds. James shares, “despite everything that we are ashamed of, we are a great nation. And we can do a lot of good things. I am proud of my nation, and my dream is winning the lottery... to go back to where it can be a wealthy country.”

Yvette shared a pride inherited from her father, a man who “always spoke well of Haiti, even when things weren’t the best and he was recognizing the stuff was messed up but there was

never any doubt of the love that he had for Haiti.” When asked what it means to be Black and foreign, Yves shares:

It means... It means a lot. I mean because for me I find myself as Haitian uhm more secure in my skin. Uhm because I find that I am able to have ah more you know I mean having my heritage and my background, having the proudness, you know the pride of Haitian. I mean I tell people all the time, my country may be poor but we don't have a poverty mentality and uh you give us an opportunity and we'll make big with it and so having an inferior mentality it prevents you from excelling. (Yves, Age 56, 1st Gen)

Natalia also inherited her pride from her father. She shares, “My dad. My dad would- I mean... So, he would always talk about how cool Haiti is, how number one they are... So he would always throw in a history lesson on Haiti. He's very- he's a very proud Haitian, so I think that's what has always made me feel like really happy and proud to be Haitian. It's through my dad.” Salva also speaks about his parents and describes his father as a “very proud Haitian,” and his mother as an artist, which allows him to appreciate the “cultural heritage” that Haiti has to offer. His parents, paired with history, and “how people respect it and are proud of it... That contributes to a sense of pride. How people are really- they're proud of what we've done.”

Others described pride as a core part of what it means to be Haitian. Due to the success of bearing the title of the first Black republic, Jean describes Haitians as a “prideful people.” Louis echoed this by stating, “we are a very strong people, uhm strong minded you know, a lot. And you know very pride- proud of you know, what we've accomplished. And to me knowing that that's where I came from truly helps me you know, with my trajectory in life.” Rene offered her definition of what it meant to be Haitian. She defined it as “choosing to love yourself for who you are. You know, your parents tell you you're Haitian, your parents tell you about the history. So being proud of who you are. Being proud of where you come from.” For Carline, the act of self-love was almost an act of defiance. She shares,

No matter what you do, you can't stomp us out. It's just something about being Black that has such a pride in it. 'cause like I love my kinky hair, I love the ability to have different hair if I feel like it... So, for me, I associate Blackness with pride... It's kind of like that scene where Jennifer Hudson is screaming 'And you, and you, and you, and you gonna love me.' Like, I am going to tell you that this is what Haiti looks like. This is what Haiti looks like. (Carline, Age 40, 2nd Gen)

With all of the pride expressed through these interviews, whether it was developed through self-initiated learning or inherited from parents, participants expressed the need to hold onto and show their Haitian identities as a way to honor its history. This is not designed to distance themselves from African Americans, but to share with others that they are not only Black, but also represent a rich history. When asked what it means to be Black with foreign roots, Tamara responds:

For me, honestly, is a sense of it's a sense of pride for me. I didn't always feel that way. But really moving down to Georgia is what got me still like really proud of the fact that I'm not just Black, I'm Haitian. And my ancestors, you know, were the first Black- like we were the first ones to like really become a Black Nation. I mean, country, I mean, I'm sorry. So for me, it's a sense of pride, just knowing that that's in my blood, knowing that that's where my family comes from, knowing that I'm different, that I speak a different language, you know? Yes, It's just a sense of pride... it wasn't until I moved down to Georgia that I was like, wait, so everybody just thinks I'm just regular Black. And I'm like, no, I'm different. I speak this language. I eat this food. I cook this food, I dance this music. I go to this church and I do all these different things. So I started researching Haiti more and that's where my sense of pride started coming out more. (Tamara, Age 32, 2nd Gen)

Vincent also acknowledges the “pride and respect” he has at being Haitian, and understand that the music he listens to, the food he eats, and the way he thinks and acts adds a complexity which is “outside of when you say Black or whatever else.” Pedro shares that his Blackness “is always going to be first,” however it is important that he shares his heritage with others, to let them understand the sacrifices of the Haitian independence. Nadege explains, “

Like when I'm correcting them because when you call me African American, you're taking away my history. And uhm I'm like, no. African Americans were the descendants of slaves that were brought to the United States. And we're no better, we're no worse, but we're descendants but we were brought to the Caribbean. And

especially being Haitian, you're taking away my history as the nation of slaves that freed themselves. <laughs> And so I can a) see how somebody says it's not a big deal and b) feel like it's being ... I don't know is separatist even a word?... That's important and I have the right to have pride in that. So when you call me African American you're erasing that. Or I will sometimes if I have that energy when like you know how White people will just like refer to just Black people as African American just blanketed. I'm like you don't actually know their origin so you can't really just say that. But ohm my god I remember when uhm I remember recently Ms. South Africa won something. Ms. Somebody and somebody called her African American... and I'm like, no, her origin is in her title <laughs> (Nadege, Age 37, 2nd Gen)

Marta further explains her pride and shares, "it's not because I'm ashamed of my American heritage Um. But because I'm proud of my Haitian one. So I definitely do put that out there... It's not even about pride. I just I just love my well it's not even my country. But I love my culture. I think it's important for people to know that I'm I'm different."

Cherie speaks about how it feels to be Black. She states, "I absolutely love it. Uhm. My identity, my skin, the culture, the language, the togetherness. Uhm the community. The diversity within itself. Like that Black person doesn't look like this Black person. And we don't sound like that Black person but we're connected to skin. I can say "us" being Black as culture. Uhm. It means everything to me. It's pride, it's respect, it's strength. It's history. It's story. It's just- I love it. Just proud."

When we listen to the stories of these first and second generation Haitian immigrants, they are an extension of Haiti's history of resilience. Despite a history of troubles, and present-day unrest, Haiti is viewed as something to be honored and respected. Similarly, despite having faced adversity in their lives with discrimination and poor representation in the media, individuals also demonstrate a resilience in themselves due to their ancestry.

8.4 Resilience Analysis

Despite the primarily sad and angry responses to media portrayals of Black and Haitian people, both first and second-generation participants overall show sub-clinical scores on the PHQ-9, which focuses on both emotional and physiological symptoms of depression. One significant factor is the distrust of the media, and the consensus across generations about an agenda to oppress Black people. However, what clinical behavioral health providers may see as paranoia, it is actually something that has been proven time and time again in Haitian history. After what some may consider to be the most successful slave revolt in history, Thomas Jefferson and other slave-owning world leaders refused to acknowledge the new nation, for fear that it would inspire rebellion on their own land. France only acknowledged the country if Haiti agreed to “repay” France for its lost investment. In essence, Haiti had to pay billions of dollars for successfully beating the French, and for fighting for their own freedom, causing Haiti to go into severe debt. This rocky start was followed by countless instances of political unrest, manipulated elections, and an assassinated president, and ultimately a US invasion and occupation in 1915 under the direction of President Woodrow Wilson. This history naturally positions Haitians with a mindset that warrants a healthy hesitation to accept narratives as they are presented. While they view themselves in the images being portrayed, they understand that there is a larger picture and that it is not a true reflection of who they are. Furthermore, experiences of discrimination, although emotionally impactful, are understood as hurdles that are to be expected as a result of history of being disenfranchised.

The strong connection to ancestors, and the commitment to honoring their parents’ sacrifices also proves to contribute to psychological resilience, serving as a barrier to some of the adversities faced by these individuals. For these participants, due to the strong salience of their

Haitian identity, it presents more similarly to a role identity, which may be one of the most significant protective factors that contributes to intergenerational resilience. According to Thoits (2013:376):

Role enactment provides personal gratification and social rewards (generating happiness and satisfaction), enables the development or exercise of skills and abilities (enhancing self-esteem and a sense of mastery or control), contributes to a sense of purpose and meaning in life (lessening anxiety and depression), provides normative behavioral guidance (promoting positive health behaviors), and offers opportunities for physical activity (maintaining or improving health), among other benefits.

As individuals discuss ancestors, this does not only refer to those who came before them, but also indicates the need to continue a legacy for those who will come after them. This is particularly evident in the second-generation as they pay their respects to their parents who were able to thrive with limited resources and through sacrifice. There is a strong sense of purpose, which serves to protect them against what Thoits (2012) refers to as “existential despair.” For these participants, they seem to be able to find comfort in a deep resilience, based on a history of a nation that was birthed through struggle.

Due to the higher than average earning of this sample, some may argue that this sample’s higher income likely what accounts for the better mental wellness. To address this, I further examined this sample by identifying the highest and lowest earners, and exploring how identity, connection to ancestry, and coping skills impacted their mental wellness. There were a total of 14 participants (the bottom 32%) who earned between \$15,000 to \$55,000. These low earners were mostly women (64%) and majority second-generation (64%) participants. On average, this group of participants had an average PHQ-9 score of 6.9, indicating that on average, they reported mild symptom severity. In regards to identity, three identified as Black or African-American, three identified as Black-Haitian and the remaining eight identified as Haitian

or Haitian-American. Those who identified as Black had a PHQ-9 score of 9.67, those who identified as Black Haitian had a score of 4.0, and those who identified as Haitian had a score of 7.0. As it relates to their relationship to their ancestry, many participants referred to their parents and upbringing, however only three (21.4%) individuals made reference to the Haitian revolution during their interview. Additionally, when analyzing each interview for coping skills such as being unbothered, being untrusting, and being avoidant, there were only ten instances in which this was mentioned across eight (57.1%) interviews. Most participants (64.3%) expressed pride related to their identity. In this sample, those with an ethnic identity had a lower symptom severity score, compared to those who had a race-only identity. In addition, connection to Haiti's history, specifically the revolution, was not strong, nor was there evidence of strong coping skills to promote resilience.

When analyzing the highest earners, who self-reported a gross income of \$100,000 - \$300,00, there were a total of 15 individuals (the top 34%). These participants were predominately women (60%) and were majority (73%) first-generation immigrants. The higher earners as a whole, had an average PHQ-9 score of 4.8. In regards to identity, four participants identified as Black, two identified with a racial/ethnic combination of "Black Haitian", and the remaining nine participants identified as Haitian or Haitian-American. Those who identified as Black only had a PHQ-9 score of 4.75, those who identified as Black Haitian had a score of 5.8, and those who identified with a Haitian-only identity had a score of 3.6. Eight participants (53%) specifically referred to the Haitian revolution in addition to a connection to family, roots and upbringing. In addition, there were 22 references to coping skills including being unbothered, untrusting, and avoidant behaviors across 13 (86.6%) participants. These participants also

conveyed a strong sense of pride, with eighty percent expressing pride related to their identity during their interview.

When we compare these two groups and examine the factor of income on their mental wellness, there are other trends that emerge. The sample of low-earners was predominately second-generation women. Women experience the intersection of gender with their experience of the looking glass, and the realities of the glass ceiling, and therefore may be more impacted. In addition, second-generation immigrants are on average younger than the first generation, which may also play a role in their identity negotiation. While there does seem to be a relationship between identity label and mental wellness, this research illustrates that it isn't the label alone, but the meaning behind it, as participants have shown variability in how they identify in contrast to how they present themselves across spaces. It's evident that the key differences between these groups is the identity-driven resilience due to ancestral connection, coping mechanism and pride.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Contributions

This dissertation sought to explore the identities of Haitian Immigrants as they assimilate to the United States and understand the impact of their racial and ethnic identity negotiation on their mental well-being. Research shows that Black immigrants arrive to the United States with superior mental health compared to Native Black Americans, yet as they spend more time in the United States, and as the second and third generation assimilate further into the American culture, there is a deterioration in mental well-being (Williams 2007). This trajectory is different from the children of White immigrants, indicating that their racial minority status presents decreased opportunities for mental wellness than their immigrant counterparts. The objective of this study was to understand how first and second-generation Haitian immigrants navigate and cope with two stigmatized identities, Black and Haitian, and the impact it has on mental wellness.

Haitian immigrants in this sample, both first and second generation, demonstrated a resilience that did not follow the expectation of poorer mental wellness over successive generations. Although this supports my primary research expectations (RE1), and the second generation showed slightly higher rates of psychological distress compared to the first generation, both first and second generations had symptoms categorized as “mild” on the PHQ-9, indicating that clinical judgement should be used to determine the necessity of treatment, as it is not required. Despite childhood bullying, constant exposure to disparaging images of Black people (both American and Haitian) in the media, and discrimination, participants’ reactions remained sub-clinical, with very mild symptoms severity for depression. The source of resilience when faced with adversity is rooted in a bicultural identity with core values that have been

cemented from childhood, strength from ancestors that came before them, paired with a healthy distrust of the media and understanding of a White racial frame. Furthermore, the second generation in particular placed great emphasis on success as a part of their identity due to the sacrifices and/or successes of their parents.

In an effort to protect themselves, and to their mental wellness, it was anticipated that this population would employ various theoretical techniques in which individuals manage and cope with their stigmatized identity, such as absconding their stigmatized identity, passing, (Goffman 1963) or distancing themselves from others (Snow and Anderson 1987). My third research expectation (RE3) was to see a more salient identity, and distancing from African-Americans. The majority of participants report that they present their ethnic identity across all spaces, indicating strong salience (Stryker 1994). In addition to being prideful about being Haitian, it is often described as a key part of who they are and cannot be hidden away; it is not a matter of choice. However, holding onto this ethnic identity is not synonymous with distancing themselves from Native Black Americans. While the majority of participants do not identify as African American, with the exception of one, all embraced their Black (racial) identity.

Theorists have also identified “low status strategies” (Hughes 1998) that may cause Haitian immigrants to lean towards an in-group or out-group identity. These strategies include individual mobility, social competition, and social creativity. Although mobility, which is escaping or disaffiliating with a group was anticipated, either with the ethnic identity or with the racial identity, it was not evident. Some participants, especially first generation, expressed an original feeling of judgment or criticism towards Black Americans, for not seizing the opportunities of education, or for not presenting a better image, however through further exposure and education, there was a development of empathy towards the Black American

population and an understanding of American history and systemic racism. Furthermore, despite the fact that bullying was often at the hands of Black Americans, when assessing social circles, most participants reported a Black-majority friend circle. The bi-cultural identity, which allows participants to embrace both their racial and ethnic identity, is also reflected in their social circles, which primarily consists of Black and often inclusive of Black Immigrants. Only 26% of participants described a Haitian-majority friend circle. One significant factor may be the demographics of Atlanta, and regular exposure to Black-Americans. This supports previous studies showing that, a salient group identity results in higher self-esteem and less depression (Hughes et al. 2015).

While Haitian immigrants expressed frustration at the biased nature of the media, the emphasis was not so much on disavowing the negative but disavowing the skewed image that was presented. Second generation immigrants tended to put slightly more responsibility on Blacks/African Americans for self-created content such as reality television or social media, and disavowed the idea that success is limited to being a rapper or dancer. Almost half of the participants stated that they did feel a pressure to present a counternarrative to what is being presented in the media. In other words, they felt responsible for presenting a positive image on behalf of their race and ethnicity. Although those with counternarrative pressure had mild symptom severity, their scores were much higher than participants who said “No” or described it as “not pressure.” It may be inferred that the perception of additional pressure due to their identity, may be a potential risk factor for mental wellness.

The second research expectation was that there would be identity conflict, particularly in the second generation, as a result of double-consciousness (RE2). When asked about any conflict that may be present within their identity, the majority of participants said there was none.

Participants demonstrate a bi-culturalism in which they hold onto their cultural roots, and express empathy and understand the experience of African Americans while residing in America. It was expected that as a result of facing two stigmatized identities, there would be a degree of identity conflict, in which participants may push away from one identity or the other. Although there is some degree of two-ness, as a result of being sheltered as a child, having cultural differences, and not having enough exposure to the African American culture, participants denied an experience of an identity crisis. Some participants did express, regretfully, that there were earlier periods in their life when they hid their Haitian identity. However, after learning more about Haiti, the shame turned to pride. As it relates to labels, the Black identity is more readily embraced than the African American identity, due to its erasure of the Haitian heritage. For those that did experience an identity conflict of any kind, it was related to them not feeling sufficiently connected, or a fear of losing their Haitian culture, especially as it relates to passing that down to the next generation.

In summary, the broad research expectation to find higher levels of psychological distress with second generation immigrants, compared to the first generation was not supported with this sample. The first generation averaged a PHQ-9 score of 5.43 (SD 5.10), and the second generation scored on average 6.25 (SD 4.32). This research expectation was based on the concept of downward mobility due to a minority racial identity, however participants maintained a bi-cultural identity which seems to have served as a protective factor for their mental wellness. The second expectation was that participants would experience a racial double-consciousness, causing an identity conflict, most acutely felt in the second generation. As anticipated, the first generation did not experience this double-consciousness until they migrated to the United States, and the double-consciousness was experienced at a much earlier age for second-generation

immigrants. However, this did not yield identity conflict. Participants alluded to identity conflict with peers or family members who chose to abscond their ethnic identity, and some (first generation immigrants) expressed a degree of disdain towards Black Americans, however there was no evidence of current identity conflict beyond minor gaps in culture. The final research expectation involving distancing from Black Americans by maintaining an ethnic identity was only partially supported by the data. Participants reported maintaining an ethnic identity due to their strong sense of pride, and a connection to their culture and ancestors. While they maintain an ethnic identity in both first and second generations, they are not driven to correct a person who would identify them as African American, and only half are driven to select “other” on the census, which doesn’t indicate strong distancing behavior. It seems that the strong ethnic identity and connection to cultural roots served as a protective factor that caused selectivity with the looking glass, and in turn an intergenerational resilience for mental wellness.

9.2 Limitations

The participants of this study were all high school graduates, who had attained some level of higher education. On average, the gross household income was \$98,232. According to the United States Census, from 2014 to 2018 the median household income was \$55,279 in Atlanta and \$55,679 in the state of Georgia. The Pew Research Center shows that based on data in 2013, Black immigrants overall earn lower household incomes than the median U.S. household, and lower than the median household income for all U.S. immigrants, they earn almost \$10,000 more than Native Blacks. Although the income for participants ranged from \$15,000 to \$300,000 the average household income is significantly higher when compared to Atlanta and is much higher than the Pew Research Center’s average. This may account for the ability for participants to correlate success to identity and ancestry. There were fourteen participants (32%) who fell at or

below \$55,000 household income. The average PHQ-9 score for these participants was 6.93, indicating mild depression severity.

In addition, the primary method of recruitment was social media. There were various Haitian-affiliated platforms who were willing to share the flyer with their followers. Therefore, it can be surmised that these participants were already connected to an online community and are more likely to express a strong and prideful Haitian identity. Only 16% of participants identified as Black or African American. Unfortunately, due to COVID, there were limitations with in-person recruiting, however in an effort to get a more diverse population, a future study should identify participants in the community who may not be connected with a Haitian group. This could be accomplished through targeting Black-specific groups.

Furthermore, many participants expressed that if there ever was any identity conflict, it is something that they had overcome through education and learning. Future studies focused on the identity development and stigma management may seek to identify participants who have been in United States for a shorter period of time. The average time in the United States for first generation participants is 30 years. Although previous research shows that immigrants deteriorate as they spend more time in the US, it is possible that identity conflict may emerge much earlier than this sample group.

9.3 Implications

This study extends social psychological theory by utilizing the symbolic interactionist approach to examine how social interactions contribute to the development of the racial and ethnic self-concept. The looking glass experience tells us how others perceive us, however we have the ability to be selective in utilizing the looking glass based on the significance of the source (Reitzes and Burke 1980). This study introduces the concept of intergenerational

resilience which is driven by the narratives of victories and struggles of the ancestors, a concept that seems to both undermine the validity of the looking glass self through the white racial frame but also present a counternarrative that elicits strong feelings of pride. Equipped with the knowledge of Haitian history and heritage, which reflects both oppression and overcoming adversity, immigrants have emotional reactions to the negative images in the media, without internalization. History informs them that obstacles can be overcome through elevation in social status, and that (White) narratives are not to be trusted, as they are motivated to maintain their positions of power. This healthy distrust and avoidance of the media serves as a protective factor for participants' mental well-being, and allows them to place greater meaning on their individual accomplishments, and the accomplishments of those who came before them. In fact, many participants expressed frustration towards their Black American peers for not recognizing or falling prey to the false narrative of the media, and not having sufficient distrust. This contribution is significant in that this connection to history and ancestry creates a set of foundational meanings through which the American looking glass is then understood and determined to be (in)significant.

The connection to history and ancestry is not only a reflection of what occurred in the past, but an indication of a legacy that is to be fulfilled. In essence, both first- and second-generation participants viewed their ethnic identity in terms of a role identity, with a clear purpose to achieve success through socioeconomic status and education, thus bringing honor to the legacy of their parents and grandparents. The need to honor parents was more present for second-generation participants, as they reflected on sacrifices and hardships that their parents endured as first-generation migrants, and being driven to do more with the opportunities that their parents afforded them. This reorientation to a role-like identity allows participants to find a sense of

purpose which in turn improves their mental wellbeing (Thoits 2013). Research has shown that salient identities, both racial (Demo & Hughes 1990; Porter & Washington 1979) and ethnic, (Mossakowski 2003) have been correlated with a positive well-being, however this has been understood as an in-group identity, but not explicitly as a role. Mead (1964) defined the “role identity” as a socially recognized, and action-driven identity that connects the self to society; this includes roles such as occupation, family role-identity, and religious affiliation. While exploring the narratives presented by first- and second- generation immigrants, in addition to paying the “ancestral debt” as described by one of the participants, and serving to continue a legacy, they also overwhelmingly feel the need to present a counteranarrative in society. Whether defined as “pressure” or viewed as “not pressure,” seventy-seven percent of participants responded in the affirmative when asked about being viewed as a “representative” of Black people and Haitian people in their presentation. I believe this to be more than managing a stigmatized identity, and instead presents more as a role which is driven by purpose and action.

In addition, this study extends sociology of race and ethnicity theory by highlighting the diversity related to the Black immigrant experience. Although the experience of double-consciousness is felt by all participants, for first-generation immigrants, it occurs post migration to the United States. While DuBois became acutely aware of a “veil” as a Black man, these participants maintain a bi-cultural identity in which they both appreciate and understand what it means to be Black in America, while also holding onto the culture and values of being Haitian. The embrace being both Black and Foreign, with Black being defined by their skin, not necessarily a shared (American) history. Similar to Patterson’s (1972) work, these participants did not experience despair related to their racial identity. However, despite the highly salient ethnic identity presented in this study, many participants referenced a degree of identity conflict

that was present either in their own lives or expressed by their peers other Haitian immigrants. Participants made references to others hiding their Haitian identity and passing for Black during childhood, while also making references to being “too harsh” on Black Americans prior to learning about and empathizing with the Black American struggle.

Furthermore, this study illustrates the nuances in label meaning as it relates to racial and ethnic identities. For instance, race scholars should understand that a participant who selects “African-American” may or may not identify nor have the same cultural understandings or experiences as a Black American. We see in this study, a mixed reaction in which some individuals select it because of limited significance (or value) of the document, whereas others will mark “other.” This selection may be influenced by something as minor as an individual’s mood on the day of filling out the form. Therefore, depending on the type of study, race scholars should pay close attention to country of origin questions, and special attention to the term “Black” which indicates race as opposed to “African-American,” which is a reference to ethnicity. While open-ended questions may be “messy” for quantitative data, it offers better inclusivity and accuracy in capturing the full Black diaspora. Finally, In this study, women had higher symptom severity when compared to men and were also more likely to report discrimination in the workplace and being undermined or overlooked due to their race and gender. It further contributes to the intersectional approach in understanding discrimination by taking into consideration both generational status and gender.

In addition, this study also serves to capture the experiences and perspectives of Haitian immigrants residing in Atlanta and expands the literature that has primarily focused on the large Haitian communities in the Northeast and Florida. The majority of participants, having migrated from another state have to adjust to a smaller and less centralized Haitian community in Atlanta.

Due to Atlanta's informal title of being the "Black Mecca," the stories from these participants may provide a more acute perspective of what it means to be Black in America. In addition, much of the research available on Black Immigrants groups individuals from different countries which may include immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean or Latin America. Therefore, the nuances that exist due to country of origin and preconceived notions of race, and different experiences and cultural practices are lost due to this grouping. This research offers specific insight to the Haitian experience, which carries a unique history.

As it relates to the mental health field, this study contributes to increased cultural sensitivity, awareness, and competence. Providers often use structured forms to determine the race and ethnicity of the client, which as this data proves, would yield predominately an African American response, without the opportunity to state "Other." Black therapists are not immune to deficiencies with cultural awareness as it relates to this population due to the shared skin complexion. Inadequate assessment of ethnicity and cultural background may cause limitations in understanding of these clients who have a unique background and history. Participants in this study showed a mild symptom severity for depression across both the first and second generation. Therefore, as opposed to focusing on the mental and emotional issues, this data shows opportunities for behavioral health providers and community members to support Haitian immigrants, by focusing on factors for resilience. These factors are directly related to history and being the descendant of immigrants. While family therapists use the genogram to inform them of a client's history and develop a deeper understanding about relationships, and family patterns, inherited ailments, and meanings, a therapist would also benefit from a culturally competent approach in understanding the meaning of ancestors for this population. This is the ideal setting in which a practitioner may explore the client's story, and the meaning that emerges as a

descendant of immigrants, ultimately driving interventions that include connecting clients to their heritage, and further developing a strong sense of purpose.

Narrative therapy, in particular, is a newer form of therapy, developed in the 1980's by social worker Michael White. It is based on the premise that "we make sense of our lives through stories" (Brown and Augusta-Scott, 2006:ix). Similar to the theory of the looking glass, the stories that we tell about ourselves do not only illustrate events, but offer meaning through social interactions. This narrative approach is designed to capture cultural and historical context, which may be missed through other clinical approaches in which the practitioner presents as the authority. It puts the therapist in the role of the coauthor, to support the development of less oppressive stories (Brown and Augusta-Scott, 2006). This therapeutic approach centers experience, self and identity, and as a result has the ability to disrupt dominant discourses. Narrative work has been proven to be effective as a component of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, an intervention for children who have experienced trauma, has been shown to reduce anxiety, and abuse-specific-emotional distress (Deblinger et. al. 2011). Due to the unique identity negotiation experience of Haitian immigrants (and other Black immigrants), being confronted with double-consciousness and stigma related to the identity, narrative therapy allows for the unpacking of stories and their meanings. It allows the practitioner to co-author and building connection and pride by utilizing history and heritage as a source of strength. For third and fourth generation immigrants who may be likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress than their parents, this culturally competent approach may help to improve their mental well-being.

However, due to the sub-clinical symptoms, and the overall distrust, there is a likelihood that many of these participants would not seek professional intervention for mental health

symptoms. Therefore, opportunities to cultivate resilience for both Haitian immigrants and other racial and ethnic minorities who are at high risk for negative media portrayals and discrimination must come in the form of early intervention. These interventions should include (1) recognizing the diversity within the Black diaspora and other races (2) building trust with balanced narratives (3) increasing education opportunities for a story of origin and (4) establishing a sense of purpose through meaning and role-oriented identity development. Similar to initiatives to present safe spaces for the LGBT community by changing language, and by displaying pronouns, community-serving organizations may do the same by allowing opportunities for individuals to express their ethnic identity. Eliciting this information requires a two-part approach: cultural humility and inquisitive probing. Cultural humility puts providers and community members in a position in which they do not assume one's racial or ethnic identity due to phenotype and providing opportunities for individuals to identify themselves. This means modeling the newest Census when collecting demographic information and presenting a write-in option so that individuals can indicate "Haitian," or "Nigerian" in addition to "Black." Inquisitive probing is an essential component to eliciting this information, simply because this population has demonstrated varying levels of importance when it comes to filling out forms asking for racial/ethnic data. While the genogram serves as a great tool in a mental health setting, other approaches may include initiating conversation about cultural customs, foods, and languages spoken. Many participants expressed and maintained their identity through these cultural components, causing them to feel connected to their country of origin, regardless of what they chose to document on a census. The goal is not simply to obtain an identity label, but to establish an identity connection through ancestry.

Since trust may prohibit expression of culture, or ethnic identity, building trust serves as a foundation for fostering resilience in minority communities. Building trust within the community would involve efforts to highlight positive images in the media, and even better, to provide community members with the opportunity to narrate their own stories. Adequate and balanced representation instills a sense of trust and encourages engagement of minority communities. This has been evident with the utilization of social media platforms to facilitate such narration. These balanced representations may also decrease the perception of having a counternarrative pressure, which based on this sample, also correlates to a higher PHQ-9 score. Furthermore, in addition to increasing trust, efforts to enhance education related to the empowering history of racial and ethnic minorities provide opportunities for a sense of connection and purpose. Unfortunately, in this sample, many of the participants described learning about Haiti during their adulthood, whether in jail, social media, or in an Africana studies class. Minority communities and schools can easily incorporate cultural festivals, honor heritage months, and review curriculums to reflect the history of the student demographic. These recommendations are applicable for all minority groups, who may struggle with similar issues. A key component to providing an empowering history is to offer resilience through a meaningful story of origin. This story of origin is narrated by the people, not by the oppressor. A story of origin is one that does ignore the impact of slavery, colonization and oppression, but instead uses that as an attestation to perseverance and resilience of the people. For example, when looking at Jewish history, if only presented through the lens of Egyptians, they would only know themselves as slaves and not through the lens of purpose as “chosen people.” Similarly, Black American children should not only know themselves through the lens of being descendants of slaves, but as the most resilient survivors from Senegal, Gambia, Congo, Angola and other African nations. The common reference to

Africa as one entity alone, serves as a means to erase the richness in its history and uniqueness of the different regions that may serve to build a strong identity rooted in pride. This provides a sense of “I know who I am,” a phrase that was expressed multiple times throughout the interviews in this study.

Finally, through a trusting environment in which ethnicity and ancestral history may be explored and performed, individuals across vulnerable minority groups are presented with an opportunity for a cultural sense of belonging and pride. The confidence that comes from this identity serves as a protective barrier against the negative impacts of biased media portrayals and discrimination in racialized society. Ultimately, once an individual establishes a strong connection to their ancestry, they find motivation and purpose towards establishing a legacy, which in turn strengthens their mental and emotional well-being.

10 CONCLUSION

For first- and second- generation Haitian immigrants who must negotiate two stigmatized and minority identities, coping skills such as distrust, avoidance, and a strong connection to ancestry serve as moderators for depression symptom severity. This research highlights the importance of recognizing the heterogeneous Black population and their unique experiences and history that informs the way in which they experience the looking glass. These participants paint a picture of resilience after having faced bullying, discrimination, and negative images in the media. On average, participants reported mild symptom severity for depression, however women had slightly higher severity when compared to men across both generations, which points to the impact of the looking glass as an intersectional experience for race, ethnicity and gender.

Future research should continue the analysis of Black immigrants to contribute to diversity and better understanding the Black experience. Much of the recent growth in the Black Immigrant population has been from Africa, with an increase from 24% to now 39% of the total Black Immigrant population, however approximately 50% of Black Immigrants are from the Caribbean (Pew Center, 2018). The top four birthplaces for Black Immigrants in the United States are: Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria and Ethiopia (Pew Center, 2018), and should be areas of focus. All of these countries are majority-Black countries, and therefore are likely to experience more of an adjustment to the minority Black status in the racialized culture of the United States compared to other Black Immigrants. For example, Ethiopia, the fourth largest Black Immigrant group (Pew Center, 2018), may be mistaken for Latino or Indian (Habecker 2011), and within their culture use a wide range of colors to refer to one another, causing a slightly different experience of identity negotiation. In a study looking at the mental health of Black Caribbean people, there seems to be evidence of resilience as well. Haitian men had lower odds for mood

disorders when compared to English-speaking Caribbean men, and had a lower rate of any disorder (looking at a 12-month rate) (Williams et. al 2007).

In addition, a small study done in Jamaica with young adults who engaged in skin-bleaching did not present with lower self-esteem when compared to the non-bleaching control group, which questions if there is a presence of anti-Blackness in their colorism, or if this activity is distinct from their racial identity, which in the Black-majority Jamaica is not salient (Charles 2003). Ultimately, research on the mental wellness of these populations is minimal, and future exploration will undoubtedly lead to a deeper understanding in racial identity negotiation from the Black immigrant lens.

In addition, there should be further exploration around an “ancestral narrative,” defined by Hein and Moore (2009) as a combination of family folklore, and tales of legends and fables that narrate the foundation of a culture. This study shows that the ancestral narrative directly mediates the experience of the looking glass, and therefore mental wellness for the Haitian immigrant population. Snow and Anderson have captured the “identity work” of homeless individuals and ways in which they speak of themselves to maintain a positive identity, however this narrative is limited to the individual. The genogram tool has been a tool used primarily by family therapists to understand family relationships and patterns, (McGoldrick and Gerson 1985) and albeit useful in capturing the second-generation identity does not tap into the protective “ancestral narrative” that highlights the role-aspect of identity and an individual’s connection to their role in the future. These narratives are crucial for the intergenerational resilience seen in this sample, and with further research may be used to apply to various racial and ethnic groups to serve as a buffer for the societal ills of racism and discrimination, and thus protecting their mental wellness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A.1

Pre-Phone Screening Questions

1. Do you have at least one parent who was born outside of the United States?
2. Are you or is one of your parents from Haiti?
3. Have you lived in the United States for more than 10 years?
4. Are you over the age of 18?
5. Have you ever been identified as a Black person in America?

Appendix A.2

Interview Questions

Initial Open-Ended Questions

1. Tell me about your very first experience of race in the United States, and how it impacted you. How was this different from your (parent's) country of origin?
2. What does it mean to you to be both Black and with Foreign roots in the United States?
3. Tell me about a time that you've felt discrimination in any way (or tell me about discrimination that has been experienced by your family and friends.)
4. Tell me about a time when you felt conflict related to your racial/ethnic identity.

Intermediate Questions

1. Describe your experience with viewing Black people in the media. How does that impact your mood or stress levels if at all?
2. Tell me about a time when you were mistaken for a Black-American and your thoughts, feelings, and actions after that encounter.
3. In what ways, if at all, did you find your actions/behaviors change due to your affiliation with (or experience with) Black Americans?
4. How have your views on race changed since you have moved to the United States?
5. How do you describe the person you are now (from a racial/ethnic perspective)? And what do you think contributed most to this change (or continuity)?
6. How do you anticipate that your identity will change the longer you stay in the US?
7. Do you find that you are having any issues with sleeping, eating, physical aches or discomforts in the past year?
8. In what ways has your identity caused or alleviated stress, anxiety, or depression?
9. Has there been any change in use of drugs or alcohol in the past year?
10. How do you feel your gender plays a role in your experience in the United States, if at all?

Ending Questions

1. Do you have anything you would like to ask me?

After reflecting on your experiences in the US, do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix B

INTERVIEW NUMBER	PSEUDONYM	GEN.	AGE	COUNTY OF RESID.	GENDE R	GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME	HIGHES LEVEL OF ED	PHQ-9
001	PIERRE	1st	61	Cobb	M	\$75,000.00	Bachelors	8
002	MARIE	1st	35	Clayton	F	\$70,000.00	Masters	0
003	MARC	1st	47	Cherokee	M	\$180,000.00	Masters	1
004	JACQUES	1st	48	Cobb	M	\$300,000.00	Masters	4
005	YVES	1st	56	Douglass	M	\$245,000.00	Masters	1
006	JEAN	1st	34	Clayton	M	\$70,000.00	Some College	17
007	MICHELLE	2nd	23	Clayton	F	\$60,000.00	Bachelors	4
008	LOUIS	1st	50	Gwinnett	M	\$230,000.00	Bachelors	1
009	CLAUDE	2nd	33	Gwinnett	M	\$60,000.00	Bachelors	N/A
010	NADEGE	2nd	37	DeKalb	F	\$35,000.00	Some College	7
011	WIDELENE	1ST	32	Gwinnett	F	\$45,000.00	Associates	5
012	YVETTE	1ST	42	Douglass	F	\$250,000.00	Masters	9
013	CHANTAL	2nd	20	Gwinnett	F	\$30,000.00	Associates	13
014	ANNEMARIE	2nd	23	Cobb	F	\$100,000.00	Bachelors	13
015	EMMANUEL	1st	22	Gwinnett	M	\$55,000.00	Some College	12
016	SALVA	1st	48	Cobb	M	\$120,000.00	N/A	1
017	MARTA	2ND	30	Clayton	F	\$30,000.00	Associates	11

018	CARLINE	2nd	40	DeKalb	F	\$125,000.00	Associates	4
019	PATRICK	1ST	39	Fulton	M	\$75,000.00	Bachelors	2
020	ISABELLE	1ST	28	Gwinnett	F	N/A	Bachelors	17
021	ARIELLE	2nd	29	Henry	F	\$215,000.00	Masters	6
023	CHERIE	2nd	29	Cobb	F	\$90,000.00	Bachelors	9
024	MARGARET	2nd	23	DeKalb	F	\$15,000.00	Some College	9
025	RENEE	2nd	22	Fulton	F	\$75,000.00	Some College	1
026	FRANCOIS	2nd	32	Fulton	M	\$50,000.00	Masters	3
027	PEDRO	1ST	39	Fulton	M	\$200,000.00	Bachelors	1
028	JAMES	1st	25	Hall	M	\$35,000.00	High School	6
029	JUNIOR	2nd	29	Fulton	M	\$32,000.00	Masters	2
030	FABIENNE	2nd	21	Cobb	F	\$37,000.00	Some College	3
031	NADIA	2ND	28	Cobb	F	\$85,000.00	Bachelors	2
033	MENDEZ	2nd	32	Cobb	M	\$90,000.00	Bachelors	2
043	VINCENT	2nd	24	Cobb	M	\$60,000.00	Associates	3
032	AUDREY	1st	36	Fulton	F	\$65,000.00	Associates	11
034	ANIKA	1st	54	Cobb	F	\$175,000.00	Bachelors	9
035	NADINE	1st	34	Douglass	F	\$50,000.00	Some College	1
036	SANDY	1st	47	Henry	F	\$150,000.00	Doctorate Education	9
037	NATALIA	2nd	30	Cobb	F	\$50,000.00	Some College	13

038	ANYA	1st	34	Clayton	F	\$115,000.00	Masters	0
039	LORNA	1st	51	Cobb	F	\$115,000.00	Bachelors	1
040	CLAUDETTE	2nd	28	Henry	F	\$90,000.00	Associates	0
041	DAVID	1st	35	Fulton	M	\$90,000.00	Bachelors	5
042	ISAIS	1st	33	Cobb	M	\$55,000.00	Bachelors	4
044	TAMARA	2nd	32	DeKalb	F	\$100,000.00	Associates	12
045	EDWIDGE	2ND	27	DeKalb	F	\$30,000.00	Masters	8