

1.5 Generation Black Jamaican Immigrant Journey of Self-Discovery and Ethnic Identity  
Development

Winston Benjamin

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Reading Committee:  
Geneva Gay, Chair  
Anne Beitlers  
Charles Hirschman

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**Abstract**

Winston Benjamin

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Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
Professor Geneva Gay  
College of Education

This qualitative study was designed to understand how 1.5-generation Jamaican Black immigrants develop their ethnic identity in the United States. As the Jamaican American population continues to increase, it is important to understand how educational research masks the needs of this community immigrant community. Portraiture is the methodology used in this study to collect, analyze, and interpret data from narrative interviews of six participants. This methodology's analysis and interpretation procedure includes pre-analysis; sketching themes; constructing codes; testing codes for accuracy; and identification of common themes and ideas from these codes.

The findings of this study focused on how the participants navigated multiple cultural and linguistic norms related to race and ethnicity in the United States; the impact of schooling on, and the resources and strategies utilized, to develop their Black Jamaican American Identity. The analysis of the data revealed several themes that were organized in response to each research question. These themes are; (1) Culture shock and othering as catalysts for identity formation,

Learning to use the “right language”; (2) Schooling devalue Jamaican and immigrant identity, Lack of curriculum representation impact on identity, Impact of non-curricular on identity, Race trumps national and ethnic identity in U.S., Identity formation: Moratorium of African American and Foreclosure of Jamaican identity; (3) Resist hiding their Jamaican identity, Codeswitching between identity boundaries, Ethnic Identity Achievement by Reimagining schemas. These 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants also developed a deep understating of linguistic and cultural boundaries to develop their personal ethnic and racial identities.

This research is potentially valuable for education because it recognizes the pluralistic frameworks that individuals use to navigate the U.S. identity matrix as well as the educational system. This has the potential for positive outcomes for students by developing culturally responsive pedagogy and school environments that are frameworks to assist marginalized Black immigrant population succeed in the mainstream educational system. Furthermore, the results of such research could expand the discourse related to race, power and identity.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my foundation. Winston, Leonie, Neil, Charlton, and Alecia Benjamin. The many people who are in Jamaica supporting my every move.

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During the last five years there have been many moments of frustration and self-doubt, where I felt that I made the wrong choices and was not worthy of receiving this degree.

Completing my dissertation would not have been possible if it was not for the support of my family, the scores of friends, mentors, advisor, and colleagues.

I would like to thank my parents, Leonie and Winston Benjamin, for uprooting our family and immigrating to the Bronx NY to give their children a chance at a better life. My brother Neil, you have no idea how you inspire me to be a better man. I remember your choice to get a job to keep our family going during those hard first years in the United States. Charlton, you have always giving me an image of a strong educated Black man to imitate. You let me know how to take advantages of the opportunities in the U.S. Alecia, thank you for being my sister; I know I test your willingness to claim me as your own. Thank you for always being there in my times of need.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Immigration continues to change the United States demographic, cultural, and racial makeup. The fastest growing segments of the Black population in the U.S. are Caribbean and African immigrants and their children. Rapid growth in the black immigrant population is expected to continue. According to Anderson, (2015, p. 5) “by 2060, Black immigrants are expected to make up 16.5% of total Black U.S population. Black immigrants are from many parts of the world, but half are from the Caribbean alone.” However, this percentage can be misleading because the “Caribbean” represents a political and geographic category that includes several countries and territories, for example, Jamaica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana, and Dominica. Therefore, it is important to disaggregate the population numbers to truly represent the cultural, linguistic, historical, and demographic diversity of the Caribbean immigrant community. To break this trend of grouping diverse sets of immigrants into one category, this study only focuses on Black Jamaica immigrants in the United States.

As of 2015, Jamaica is the largest source country for foreign born Blacks followed by Haiti and Nigeria. About 682,000 immigrants were born in Jamaica- accounting for 18% of the national total, (Anderson, 2015). Many of these immigrants live in large urban metropolitan areas like New York City, Boston and Miami. An important question that comes from having such a large population of Jamaican immigrants is how do they influence and are influenced by these communities? For example, how has the Jamaican population in New York impacted the political, social, economic, racial and cultural landscape of that city? Conversely, how has a city like New York impacted the community’s self-perception, cultural identity and expression?

Increasing discourse about gender, social class, sexual orientation, immigration and language use challenges and reshapes accepted cultural norms as U.S. demographics change. For example,

individuals use tangible and intangible community artifacts, which define social and cultural norms that govern daily interactions (Bourdieu, 1977; Gross, 2011). The way individuals use these artifacts can alter the conceptions of the social norm associated with the relic. Tangible artifacts such as clothing and hairstyles, and intangibles like beliefs, values and language combine to represent meaning in a culture. Artifacts are simultaneously shaped by social group members. To put it another way, individuals may influence other group members to develop new social norms, which expand behavioral parameters. Expanding the parameters allows members to construct new synergistic identities using multiple criteria. As a result, cultures and identities are constantly changing as has been true since time immemorial.

Jamaican immigrants and their children are constantly acquiring new social artifacts (language, dress, and social rules) from multiple and often overlapping communities. Each of these communities has criteria that define members and non-members. The three major social groups that influence Jamaican Black identity formation are mainstream White Americans, African Americans and other Jamaican immigrants (Ferguson et al, 2012; Ferguson, 2014). These criteria include ways of communication, beliefs, customs, traditions, and activities that convey the values of a community. From these overlapping practices, Jamaican immigrants sometimes receive multiple and often conflicting messages regarding their membership status in U.S. society (Vickerman, 1999; Model, 2008, Daniels & Warmington, 2007). Consequently, many Jamaican immigrants internalize and critique these messages to potentially create new hybrid meanings and identities.

Anzaldúa (2012) created a conceptualization of the immigrant hybrid meaning making process. She described the epistemological positions that individuals develop when crossing two or more cultural barriers as *Mestiza knowledge*, which means mixed or blended knowledge. This

knowledge results from reconciling conflicting ideologies found in overlapping communities of practices, which break down the subject-object duality, and suggest that social dichotomies can be transcended to reinterpret the philosophies that stratify society (Anzaldúa, 2012; Engstrom, 2001; Bourdieu, 1977). In short, Jamaican Black immigrants navigate numerous social, political, and cultural practices and expectations in their host country to develop new schemas to understand the world.

The longer Jamaican immigrants live in the U.S. the more they become aware of more social practices and their social position (Waters, 1999, 2001). Two major factors contribute to the marginalization of both recent immigrants and naturalized Jamaicans. The first factor is the de-contextualization of Jamaican immigration to the United State. Jamaican immigration to the U.S. began in the mid-1830s, peaked in the 1960s and continued at a slower rate throughout the 2000s. However, discussion of Jamaican immigration commonly focuses on the 1960s wave (Hahamovitch, 2011; Hirschman, 2001, 2004, 2012; Vikerman, 1999; 2001; Waters, 1999, 2001). The Jamaican migration history is divided into four waves; 1) 1800-1900, 2) 1900-1965, 3) 1965-1990, 4) 1990-present. During both World Wars, the United States again recruited Jamaican men for service on various American bases in the region. The largest wave of Jamaicans came in the third wave. This group of immigrants was traditionally from the Jamaican upper and middle class. Wave four immigrants are from the lower class who utilize family unification (Jones, 2008).

This long history of immigration Jamaican and U.S. cultural understanding passed back and forth between the two countries, which has led to the developed multiple perspectives, including some recurring stereotypes. For instance, Jamaican culture has become synonymous with marijuana smoking in the U.S. context. Additionally, because of Jamaican immigrants'

willingness to work multiple jobs they were also positively labeled as hardworking. Many Jamaican immigrants stereotypically view the U.S. as the land of unlimited economic opportunities.

The second reason why Jamaicans in the U.S. have been marginalized is due to the country's racial constructs. It can be argued that "Black immigrants operate as Blacks and immigrants in the United States under more levels of cross-pressures, multiple affiliations and inequalities than either native Blacks or European immigrants" (Vickerman, 1999, p. 4). Black Jamaican immigrants face a different level of discrimination due to intersecting oppressed identities compared to their African American and White European immigrant counterparts. Consequently, because of their intersecting Black and immigrant identities, Jamaican immigrants and their children negotiate sometimes conflicting political, social, and ethnic ideologies that often create different perspectives on race (Vickerman, 1999). Immigrants are often required to reconceptualize and develop their local and global identities by continuously merging multiple U.S. and Jamaican social norms and cultural frames of references. Understanding the ways that Jamaican immigrants combine numerous social norms to construct and represent their identities can provide insights into how members of this community potentially invent, perform, and refashion their ethnic identity over time.

### **Rationale**

Much of the scholarship on immigrant students focuses on the struggles of the socialization process they encounter in schools (Olsen, 1997; Saenz & Morales, 2005). For example, Olsen (1997) argues that the role of U.S. schools is to "Americanize" immigrant students. This process includes separating immigrant students academically; becoming English-speakers and dropping native language; and establishing an individual's location within the U.S. racial structure but

often immigrants are synonymous with English Language Learners (Suarez-Orozco et al, 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Vickerman, 1999; Model, 2008; Waters, 1999). Because Jamaican immigrants speak multiple levels of English (formal and informal). Specifically, the informal dialect of English known as Patois. Even though Jamaican immigrants have ranges of English grammatical knowledge, they are not considered English Language Learners (ELL) (Adams, 1991; Kasinitz et al., 2008). Even though they are not ELL students, these immigrants are cultural learners being socialized into U.S. society. Despite speaking English, Jamaican immigrant youth are learning a new form of English with structural and grammatical rule differences (Adams, 1991; Waters, 1999; Siegel, 2006). Consequently, by focusing on second language learners, researchers can marginalize Jamaican immigrant students who are cultural English learners.

Admittedly many immigrant students struggle academically, but Jamaican immigrants' academic experiences differ slightly. For example, Jamaican immigrants have high rates of academic success. When compared to their first generation counterparts from non-native English speaking countries Jamaican immigrants have more positive educational outcomes (Model, 2008; Jones, 2008; Waters, 1999; Clayton & Zusho, 2015). Furthermore, education is highly valued by Jamaicans because it is considered the single most important route out of poverty for people of poor backgrounds. According to Jones (2008) approximately 70.8 percent of Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. complete high school.

Another component that contributes to the marginalization of Jamaican immigrant is the U.S. racial structure. Olsen (1997) explained the racializing aspects of the socialization process for immigrant students. Through these processes, immigrants become cognizant of their perceived race and the messages (positive and negative) that are associated with this

categorization. In the past, racial discourse in the United States has juxtaposed Blacks and Whites as dialectical opposites, and excluded other racial and ethnic groups. This binary limited understanding the multiple ways that people of color experience, respond to, and resist racism and other forms of oppression (Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999; Lee, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

Discourse using U.S. racial categories offers limited formal and informal opportunities to examine other intersecting variables that influence Black Jamaican American ethnic and racial identity development. For example, many Jamaican immigrants are phenotypically Black so they have a symbolic connection with the African American community but, there are ethnic, political, and social differences between these groups as well. Therefore, more comprehensive analytical tools are needed to highlight the intra-ethnic diversity of the Black or African ancestry population in the U.S. (Vickerman, 1999; Model, 2008; Hernandez, & Murray-Johnson, 2015).

### **Context of Study**

Prior research has addressed the issues of immigrant incorporation into new societies and cultures from multiple perspectives. There are inconsistencies in the use of key terms and concepts, and how findings are analyzed and interpreted. This has led to inaccurate and misleading conclusions by scholars who have studied Black Jamaican immigrant identity development. Additionally, this misconception also mask the educational experiences of past and current 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants.

In general, immigration scholarship focuses on issues of generational transition, specifically how new immigrants are different from the children and the grandchildren of earlier immigrants (Olsen, 1997; Saenz & Morales, 2005; Gordon, 1988). According to Kasinitz et al, (2008) a first-generation immigrant (i.e. 1.0) is defined as one who immigrated after the age of twelve. The 1.5-generation are those who immigrate before the age of twelve. The second-

generation (2.0) is made up of native born individuals born to at least one immigrant parent. Because 1.5-generation immigrants spend most of their life in the U.S. their immigration experience has many elements of both 1.0 and 2.0 generations. If acculturation is a first-generation experience and assimilation is one of the second, where do 1.5 immigrant children fit into these incorporation theories?

There is an extensive and credible line of inquiry investigating first generation immigrants, which has led to commonly accepted ideas about this population (Harklau et al., 1999; Remennick, 2003; Abrego, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2012). However, a limited amount of scholarship exists about 1.5 Jamaican immigrants. For instance, Kasnitz et al. (2008) studied 3,415 immigrants of 1.5 and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation children in New York City. Their work focused on many of the immigrant groups in the city, included Dominicans, West Indians, Colombians, Ecuadoran, Peruvian, Chinese, and Russian Jews, Puerto Rican, Native Black, and Native Whites. Many of Rogers (2001) findings are valuable in understanding the experience of Black Caribbean immigrants. His findings suggested that scholarship on identity and race should exercise caution in making “generalizations about the future of Black politics in the country” (p. 188) because West Indian immigrants do not necessarily conceive of their racial identity or its political entailments in the same manner as their native-born counterparts. Their overriding assumptions and findings regarding 1.5 West Indians immigrants are questionable since they were extrapolated from experiences of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation individuals. This study ameliorates this problem by focusing only on 1.5-generation immigrants of one specific country (Jamaica) within the West Indies.

Scholarship that focuses on West Indian immigrants in the United States tends not to disaggregate the population by specific nation of origin. For example, Waters (1999, 2001),

Model (2008), Vicerkman (1999, 2001), Kasinitz (1992, 2001), and Kent (2007) do not separate the Jamaican American experience from the Trinidadian or Barbadian. By extension this academic convention marginalizes, and runs the risk of erasing the experience of individuals from other countries. To avoid this trend of imposed amalgamation, this study will focus explicitly on 1.5 Black Jamaican immigrants. The results have the potential to illuminate some intra-group variability among the composite African ancestry peoples with in the U.S. Even with a small sample size, this study can be effective in highlighting some aspects of the Jamaican American community because it specifically investigates Jamaican immigrants.

Even though Waters' (2001) seminal work on Black immigrants shed light onto the many academic and social aspects of the Black immigrant experience, she combined many groups experiences to tell a single narrative. By focusing only on Jamaican Black immigrants, I will be able to express the feelings of some members of this specific group and disrupt the conflated narrative of Black Caribbean immigrants. Recognizing and disaggregating the single story is a beneficial step in understanding the unique experiences of the numerous Black immigrant groups. This study creates a line of theoretical foundation in education which examines Black Jamaican immigrant identity development and allows for future exploration of this community.

As 1.5-generation immigrants age (chronologically and residence in the country), many lose visible immigrant markers, such as language, but retain their legal documented or undocumented immigrant status. As they are socialized and racialized through schooling, coupled with losing distinctive features of their Jamaican culture. Black Jamaican immigrants may begin to resemble their second-generation and African American counterparts (Gibson, 1998). Much of the current scholarship regarding the racialization and socialization process of Black immigrants focuses on three common ways that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation individuals are

incorporated into U.S. society (Waters, 1999, 2001; Model, 2008, Vickerman, 1999). These membership pathways are influenced by individuals' (social and economic) capital as well as knowledge of their ethnic enclaves and African American social norms. Despite the overwhelming number of Jamaicans who are of African heritage, research should acknowledge the ethnic and cultural diversity among them and other groups with African ancestry.

Although many Jamaicans are of African ancestry Jamaica is a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society. Approximately 90.9%-92.1% of the 2.6 million people who live in Jamaica are Black, the remaining are descendants of East Indian, Chinese, White, Mulatto, and Indigenous peoples (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2009; CIA Factbook, 2017). To prevent the misrepresentation of diversity among Jamaican people, I use the term 1.5 Black Jamaican immigrants in this study. The lack of cohesion has created a gap in what is known about how Black Jamaicans who immigrated as children develop their ethnic identity. Therefore, it makes sense to investigate how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants interact with and relate to U.S. social norms about race, culture, and class as they age, attend schools, and construct their ethnic identities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts that is used to explain and investigate a social phenomenon. Maxwell (2005) suggested that frameworks serve several functions in research. First, they help justify why the research questions or problems are important to an academic domain and to society. Second, the frameworks are used to make intangible distinctions and organize ideas, which help contextualize and place boundaries around the topic of interest. Third, theoretical frameworks also assist the researcher in selecting a methodology, and determining what meets and does not meet the requirements of inclusion as

data. Ideas from the works of Ferguson et al.'s (2012, 2014) three-dimensional (3D) acculturation theory, Engestrom's (2001) third generation Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), and Phinney's (2004) model of ethnic identity development constitute the theoretical framework for studying the ethnic identity formation of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants.

**Three-dimensional (3D) Acculturation.** Acculturation has been defined as the changes in behaviors, customs, and beliefs that follow initial contact between immigrants and their host country's social norms (Ferguson et al, 2012; 2014). Traditionally psychological studies examined immigrant acculturation into U.S. society from a two-dimensional (2D) model. This framework is based on the degree of participation in immigrants' own ethnic cultures and in the culture of the new country (Ferguson, Iturbide & Gordon, 2014; Ferguson et al, 2012; Berry, 1997). The 2D model of assimilation assumes immigrants are adapting to a mono-cultural society; however, U.S. historical and contemporary society is multi-cultural. Therefore, newly arrived immigrants of color should develop an understanding of, and acculturate into, multiple cultural and ethnic norms embedded in U.S. social interaction. For example, newly arrived Jamaican immigrants must learn about and interact with mainstream White as well as African American cultures. Consequently, a different assimilation typology is required to more adequately explain the complexities of the multidimensional processes of immigrants entering U.S. society.

Ferguson and his colleagues (2012, 2014) developed a 3D acculturation model to more accurately represent the processes of immigrants of color. This typology is used to describe the integration of Black immigrants into the multicultural, multiethnic landscape of the United States. These researchers specifically examined the acculturation process of 473 dyads of Black

Jamaican immigrant mother and children. According to Ferguson, Iturbide & Gordon (2014) “3D acculturation is relevant for Jamaican immigrants in the United States because the African American minority culture is also a salient dimension in their acculturation process based on segmented assimilation” (p. 239). Therefore, this model provides a theoretical framework to investigate the conceptualization of Black Jamaican immigrants’ identity development as they interact with the majority White and minority Black cultures. Ferguson et al. (2012) contend that Black Jamaican immigrants are predisposed to a form of cultural integration that is dependent on the social, political, economic, and racial conditions of the United States. In other words, these immigrants integrate into a preexisting racial system based on phenotypes. This means they are incorporated into the African American classification regardless of ethnic heritage.

Ferguson et al., (2012a, 2012b, 2014) provided empirical evidence to validate their premises. In a 2012 study Ferguson and colleagues investigated the assimilation experience of Black Jamaican mothers and their children in the United States. Forty percent of the participants exhibited a tri-cultural awareness with a high orientation toward Jamaican, mainstream European American, and African American cultures (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012). In a latter study Ferguson, Iturbide, and Gordon (2014) investigated the ethnic identity and psychological function of long-term Black Jamaican immigrant adults in the United States. They found that tri-culturalism was even more prominent than in the earlier study. Tri-culturalism may allow immigrants to maintain a sense of uniqueness based on their ethnic identity and feelings of belonging based on out-group and in-group indicators. Ferguson et al., (2014, p. 241) argued that tri-cultural immigrants who internalize three cultural orientations may reap even more benefits than bi-cultural individuals. These advantages range from having a broader social network, a wider behavioral repertoire, and more frameworks for code-switching. Thus, multiple cultural

identifications markers may help immigrants adapt to an assortment of cultural expectations and construct optimal identities. The 3D acculturation model provides a distinctive approach to understanding how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants are valuing and incorporating overlapping social norms.

**Ethnic Identity Development Model.** The second theory that contributed to framing this study was Phinney's (1989, 2004) four-stage progression of ethnic identity development. These stages move progressively from unexamined ethnic identity to ethnic identity search and then to ethnic identity achievement. She examined how immigrants adapt to new social contexts in their host countries, and identified two major factors in the formation of ethnic identities. These factors are exploration and commitment. Exploration deals with willingness to engage with individuals' ethnic community and cultural practices. Commitment is the inclination to claim membership within an ethnic group. These factors are based on positive and negative interactions with members and non-members of an ethnic group.

This model focuses on changes in identity that begin during adolescence and end during adulthood. Her work also examines the significant developments in socio-emotional aspects of personal ethnic identity during a lifetime. The specific developmental stages of Phinney's (1989, 2004) conceptualization are:

- Diffused: Little or no exploration of one's ethnicity and no clear understanding of related issues.
- Foreclosed: Little or no deliberate exploration of ethnicity. Feelings about one's ethnicity may be positive or negative, depending on one's socialization experiences.

- Moratorium: Evidence of exploration accompanied by some confusion about the meaning of one's own ethnicity.
- Achieved: Evidence of exploration accompanied by a clear, secured understanding and acceptance of one's own ethnicity.

Phinney (1989, 2004) called the first stage unexamined or diffused ethnic identity because individuals accept cultural customs and norms unquestionably. She argued that young children are socialized into cultural practices without reflecting on their social meanings. They participate in cultural practices with little active decision-making, and largely emulate behaviors exhibited by their parents and other adults. The physical and social changes that occur during adolescence cause ethnic youth to start questioning their place in the society. As teenagers, they become more cognizant of their social and ethnic identities as they get increasingly exposed to and interact with different individuals, communities, and experiences. Another important factor during this stage of development is based on how others respond to individuals' membership in specific social and ethnic groups. For example, teenage Muslim-Americans may not deliberately explore all aspects of their ethnicity, but the prevailing social and political climate can affect their sense of identity.

As individuals age and enter adulthood they begin to crystalize personal representations of their ethnic and social identities. During this moratorium or search phase, young adults explore and engage with activities and aspects of their identity that they find stimulating. They become more aware of positive and negative social perceptions of their identity and develop ways to respond. The final stage in this framework is ethnic identity achievement, which is characterized by feelings of security, confidence, and clarity about one's ethnic identity. Individuals internalize their ethnicity and cultivate realistic assessments of their membership in

larger social contexts (Phinney, 2004; Pennycook, 2010; Kamwangamalu, 2010). Ethnic identity affiliation is solidified when individuals commit to the goals, beliefs, and standards of a specific ethnic group. This process is not linear, meaning a person can return to previous stages based on personal experiences.

Ethnic identity can change over time for many reasons. Changes in commitment involve complex understandings of histories, cultures, and memberships on one's social status (Phinney, 2004; Pennycook, 2010; Kamwangamalu, 2010). For example, if individuals have negative experiences their personification of ethnic norms will be lower than those who have positive reinforcement of ethnic identity. This study focuses on the latter stages of the process, meaning how the identities become crystalized and/or what has prevented these identities from becoming crystalized. I have chosen to use participants' reflections on their lives because it has the potential to uncover the reasons for specific identity choices made during the adolescence stage of life. Some have said that hindsight is 20/20, meaning that when looking back at a situation people are able to analyze more aspects of a situation because they might have more time to reflect on the benefits and drawback to their choices (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

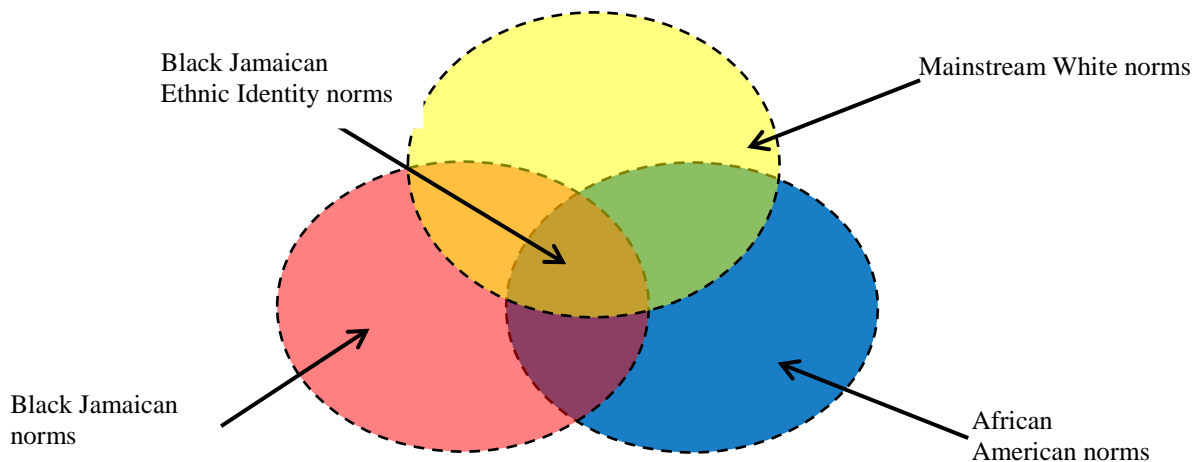
**Cultural Historical Activity Theory (C.H.A.T.).** The last source of literature for the theoretical framework of this study is the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (C.H.A.T.). This theory was developed from Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory on learning. Sociocultural theory argues that parents, relatives, peers, history, and society are important influences on how individuals learn. Mediated artifacts are used to help pass knowledge from one generation to another. These artifacts are based on the history, politics, economics, and language of a community. Based on Vygotsky ideas, Leont'ev (1977) and Luria (1979) developed C.H.A.T. to explain how social rules develop within a society.

Daniels and Warmington (2007) and Emgestrom (2001) claim that there are three iterations of C.H.A.T. The first is based on the works of Leont'ev and Luria, which does not consider individual action in creating social rules. The second version is grounded in the work of Scribner (1985) and Cole (2005) that recognized broader social aspects of activity systems by including community rules and social divisions. In the third version of C.H.A.T. (Emgestrom, 2001; Daniels & Warmington, 2007) dialogues among social groups are examined to determine how new rules and knowledge frameworks are created. Efforts are also made to explain how individuals cause change within an activity system or community.

The third version of C.H.A.T. is especially useful in investigating 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant ethnic identity development because it deals with negotiations individuals make when engaging with multiple group norms. It examines a minimum of two activity systems and contextualizes how people explain the contradictions between those social norms. It is possible to adapt this theory to make sense of interactions between more than two social systems, such as the three of interest in this study. These social systems are Black Jamaican immigrants, dominant Whites in the U.S., and African Americans.

Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the relationship of the theoretical ideas used to create the framework for this study. It shows the overlapping social norms that may be used by 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants to construct their ethnic identity. Some contributing factors are discrete by locations (such as Black Jamaican norms) while others result from intersecting location (such as overlaps among mainstream White U.S. norms, African American norms, and Black Jamaican norms).

**Figure 1: Overlapping Factors Influencing 1.5-generation Black Jamaican Immigrants' Ethnic Identity Development.**



The intersecting point of the three circles may be where the new Black Jamaican American identity is formed. The dotted line signifies that the locational or contextual influences on the identity development of Black Jamaican immigrants are fluid and continually evolving. This theoretical framework will guide the gathering and interpretation of the interrelatedness of the data collected.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the rationale, context, and theoretical framework of the study were presented. Chapter II includes a selected review of research and scholarship relevant to this study. These include African American Identity Development; Schooling, Immigration, and Race; Identity Development models; and Narrative Analysis. The methodology used and the positionality and subsequent influence of the researcher is explored and described in Chapter III. Additionally, the research questions focusing on 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant ethnic and racial identity development were discussed. The findings of the study are reported in Chapter IV. Chapter V includes a summary and discussion of the findings from the study, limitations of those findings, and the recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter II: Review of Related Research and Scholarship**

The purpose of this review is to summarize a selection of the scholarly work pertinent to this study of the ethnic identity development of Black 1.5-generation Jamaican immigrants; to establish the relationship among different academic claims and concepts; and to situate the research questions and methodology within a body of previous research. Scholarship on assimilation and acculturation, identity development, and cultural diversity within education (or multicultural education) are also included in this review.

### **African American Identity Development**

Several models of identity development among African Americans are cited frequently in scholarship. These include Cross (1971, 1995) Nigrescence model, Helms' (1984) People of Color model, and Jackson's (1975, 2012) Black Identity Development model. They have received both accolade and criticisms. One question is whether these models accommodate contemporary globalism and immigration. For example, the investigation by Fries-Britt et al. (2014) conducted a 5 year study with 15 foreign-born students of color enrolled in U.S. colleges; that focused on how they make meaning of racialization in the United States found that no one model of racial identity development fully captured the nuances of these students' experiences. They concluded that future research should consider "other aspects of foreign born [individuals] racial-ethnic identity that traditional models created to examine identities of U.S. born people of color do not address" (Fries-Britt et al., 2014, p.11). Hence, ongoing modifications of theoretical models of Black identity development is necessary.

Research regarding cultural practices and meanings can be conceptualized and misinterpreted depending on a scholars' personal and academic worldviews. Tilman (2002)

pointed out that without appropriate knowledge of cultural and historical contexts studies of African Americans can produce inaccurate portrayals and generalizations. Homogenizing portrayals of the Black Americans cannot capture the true diversity of the community “due to a shared phenotype, and [because of] constraints of limited terminology available to represent the multinational and multi-ethnic demographics within this racial category” (Tilman, 2002, p. 4). Researchers should develop methodological approaches to overcome these limitations that incorporate a culturally sensitive framework to properly conceptualize and interpret the multiple cultures that makeup the Black American population.

Some scholars have suggested that the growing presence of Black immigrants in the U.S. demand for more analyses of the complex nuances of Black racial identity. Hernandez and Murray-Johnson (2015) employed autoethnographic methods in their study, where they argued that the “Black Experience” for foreign-born Blacks is made up of multiple elements such as ethnicity, nationality, and skin color. Yet, they are often subsumed within the larger category of American Blacks because models of Blackness developed within the context of the racialized U.S. provide limited lenses through which Black immigrants’ racial and ethnic identity experiences may be effectively examined.

If the gap between cultural realities and limited scholarly analyses are not closed there will continue to be misunderstandings about how Black Americans experience the world. According to Hernandez and Murray-Johnson (2015) few studies exist “on the issue of process, and by extension models, that might frame or undergird the Black immigrant racial/ethnic identity experience” (p. 54). Thus, there is a need for new frameworks to examine how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants develop their racial identity, and more inclusive approaches to characterizing Black identity, in different social, political, and cultural contexts.

## **Schooling, Immigration, and Race**

Scholars often do not disaggregate Jamaican immigrants from the larger West Indian immigrant community. Notable portrayals of West Indians, and specifically Black Jamaican immigrants have been created by researchers such as Waters (1999), Vickerman (1999), Model (2008), Bashi-Bobb and Clarke (2001), Saenz and Morales (2005), Rong and Brown (2001, 2002), Kasinitz (1992), and Kasinitz et al. (2008). These scholars documented racial and social tensions within the West Indian immigrant communities from 1965 to the present. They also examined the educational attainment of West Indian Black students compared to their African American counterparts in New York City and racial integration into U.S. society in relations to African and European Americans. For example, Kasinitz (1992) examined racial solidarity and ethnic distinctiveness among West Indian immigrants and African Americans.

Kasinitz (1992) conducted a community study of West Indian immigrants in New York, which examined their ethnic group identity, immigrant group identity, and as a growing politically organized entity in New York City social structure. He examines the experiences of these immigrants within the context of their racial and ethnic statuses. Kasinitz (1992) concluded that their racial similarities to African Americans and their cultural and social differences (such as language and citizenship status) place West Indians in a unique position on the U.S. racial spectrum. Although, this is a significant scholarly work on the community, he does not distinguish between the specific experiences of the nations that make up the West Indies.

Black immigrants from the West Indies and Africa tend to settle in ethnic enclaves in large U.S. cities such as New York, Boston, and Miami. Case in point, foreign-born Blacks make up a quarter of the Black population in these three cities (Kent, 2007; Howard, 2010; Anderson, 2015). There are many West Indian ethnic enclaves that are thriving economically, politically,

and socially in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens (Jones, 2008; Model, 2008). Yet, many West Indian parents are concerned about disjuncture between their own goals and values and those of their children and social environments. Specifically, they are apprehensive about the negative influences (such as gang violence, trafficking of humans and drugs, and gun violence) prominent in these urban environments on their children. Parents hope they can guide their children through a process of “accommodation without assimilation” (Gibson, 1988; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Waters, 1999). They want their children to learn enough about U.S. norms to ensure their success, but not at the expense of becoming disconnected from and/or losing their cultural heritages.

Second and later generations of Black West Indian immigrants’ assimilation may pursue three main directions based on the ability to leverage social capital. They may remain marked as immigrants by distancing themselves from the African American community by developing a hybrid identity of Jamaican and U.S. components or fully accepting membership into the African American community. In either of these scenarios Black Jamaican immigrants cannot separate themselves from race or location. Even those immigrants of color who settle in suburbia and are middle and upper class professionals are still racialized as minorities by many white Americans (Howard, 2010; Anyon, 2014). Participation in a specific immigration path has profound effects on the educational attainment and social status of West Indian immigrants (Waters, 1999; Vikerman, 1999, 2001; Katainz, 1992, 2001; Model, 2008; Kent, 2007; Jones, 2008).

**Entrenched in immigrant enclaves.** In the first pathway of segmented assimilation West Indian immigrants and their children remain connected primarily to their immigrant roots by operating largely in their ethnic enclaves. These enclaves insulate children from “dissonant acculturation” that involves abandoning ancestral languages and cultures (Gorden, 1964; Portes

& Rumbaut, 2006; Park, 2011); scholars also claim that strong family and community ties can shield ethnic and racial group members from the U.S. racial hierarchical structure in other multiple ways. For example, West Indian immigrants' communities can be places of refuge where native languages are spoken without fear of retribution or judgment, respect or status are attained and recognized, and jobs and other financial assets are available.

West Indian immigrant parents and communities pass on their beliefs in the U.S. as a source of valued opportunities to their children. This optimism is another buffer against the harmful effects of discrimination on the psychological wellbeing of immigrants of color (Hirschman, 2001; Bashi Bobb & Clarke, 2001). West Indian children are sometimes labeled as "foreign" when they stay closely connected to their ethnic enclaves. Both Model, (2008) and Vickerman, (1999) concluded that because of this foreigner label Black immigrant children could sometimes avoid being associated to stereotypes related to African Americans. For example, Black immigrants are sometimes considered to be more hardworking than their African Americans counterparts by White Americans (Model, 2008; Waters, 1999). This perception gives West Indians social capital, which they can use to diffuse or counter negate stereotypes related to their race. These positive social stereotypes, community support, and optimism provide Black West Indian immigrants with greater chances for educational and economic success when their immigrant social identity is valued over their racial identity (Jones, 2008).

**Hybrid identity: Immigrant and Black.** This segmented assimilation framework argues that Black immigrants can also develop a mixed identity as they cultivate understanding of race, ethnicity, and nationality. The longer immigrants remain in the U.S. they may become more cognizant of the fact that blackness can be used to limit their educational and economic opportunities, as well as minimize the effects of their parents' optimism (Vikerman, 1999, 2001;

Model, 2008; Waters, 1999, 2001). To counter racial and economic discrimination in the United States, these individuals might develop a racial solidarity with African Americans but also understand their ethnic distinctiveness.

The longer Black West Indian immigrants live in U.S. they simultaneously become more cognizant of racial stereotypes and able to access multiple frames of references to respond effectively to these stereotypes. Henke (2001) suggested that West Indian immigrant youth often develop political views that elude their parents. Immigrants are sometimes worried about causing too much disturbance to the U.S. social structure, and often are unaware of the legal protections against discrimination. Their children are more attuned to U.S. culture and ways of responding to discrimination. For instance, as West Indian immigrants age they develop awareness of multiple communities, which allows them to “code switch,” or alter patterns of interactions to match social situations and take advantage of opportunities (Model, 2008; Vickerman, 1999). This ability to cross cultural boundaries allows West Indian immigrant youth to blend cultural elements from their native heritage and the U.S.

Although racial discrimination and economic exclusion persist to varying degrees within all generations of West Indians immigrants, the experience of immigrating provides counter-narrative of success that shape their response and resistance to discrimination. Henke, (2001) and Thomas et al., (2009) contend that by incorporating knowledge and other cultural elements from both their immigrant experiences and native-born peers, West Indian immigrants have access to alternative meanings of the idea of “Black American” to use when constructing their ethnic identity. Vickerman, (1999) Model, (2008), and Kasinitz et al., (2008) argues that this ability to choose elements from both immigrant and native-born cultures produces a social advantage that is a catalyst for developing a hybrid identity.

**Fully Accept Membership in African American Community.** The third path for Black West Indian immigrant assimilation is to become racially and socially African American. By doing so, individuals lose connection with their native cultural and immigrant identity. This is equivalent to ethnic Whites' "straight-line" assimilation into the U.S. social structure (Gordon, 1964; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, 2014). West Indians structurally assimilate through intermarriage and developing a common national identity based on social realities. West Indians who live in African American communities and have very limited interactions with the ethnic enclaves develop what could be called Afro-conformity (Waters, 1999, 2001). Second and later generations develop a political and social voice and common experiences with the African American community.

The cost of assimilation is lost knowledge of one's ancestry. For instance, for White ethnic immigrants, such as the Irish, to become fully integrated members of the U.S. mainstream society they had to lose markers of their foreign identity and conform to Anglo centric norms (Gordon, 1964). Similarly, some third- and fourth-generation West Indians lose their ethnic markers through social adaptation to U.S. society and intermarriages (Henke, 2001; Gordon, 1964). Therefore, Afro-conformity requires Black West Indian immigrants to forgo their ethnic markers as they become ethnically African American. The results could be considered West Indian straight-line assimilation into the U.S. racial and social systems.

Compared to the other two pathways, this one has a negative effect on educational, economic, and social outcomes (Rong & Brown, 2001, 2002). Segmented assimilation theory argues that the longer a West Indian immigrant is in the U.S., the lower their connection to their ethnic enclaves (Model, 2008; Waters, 1999). Some scholars argue that this identity pathway is not possible for many 1.5-generation Black immigrants. They contend that there will always be

markers that will be used to distinguish between Black immigrants and native African Americans (Ferguson, et al, 2012, 2014; Berry, 1997). For example, the immigrant's documentation status (undocumented or permanent resident) is difficult to change. It takes money (to pay for naturalization fees and immigration lawyers), time, and a test of knowledge that determines an immigrant's understanding of U.S. history and laws to change one's documentation status. Moreover, it is less likely to change the undocumented status since there are laws preventing the conversion of this immigrant status.

### **Identity Development**

The meaning of identity and its development have been a topic of discussion for many years. Currently scholars across several disciplines use different conceptualization of identity that are sometimes contradictory (Jacobson-Widding, 1983; Phinney, 1990; Erikson, 1987). Nevertheless, anthropologists, linguists, psychologists, sociologists and educators, writers, artists, and musicians continue to explore how personal, social, cultural, ethnic, and racial identity is constructed. Even with all these explanations and models of identity development there is still a limited understanding of the multidimensional process of Black Jamaican 1.5-generation immigrant ethnic identity development.

One of the problems with trying to explore how identity is constructed is its complex and contextual nature. Jacobson-Widding (1983) argued that identity "has two basically different meanings. One is sameness, the other is distinctiveness" (p. 13). Sameness refers to the group's collective values and norms, while distinctiveness is connected to representation of the self in relations to others (Erikson, 1987; Phinney, 1990; Jacobson-Widding, 1983). In the case of the people of the African diaspora, skin color (which is a visual symbol of kinship) can signify a collective sameness. According to Ferguson & Bornstein (2012) a salient factor in

distinctiveness is environmental location. For example, the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa have different social behaviors and understanding of Blackness due to economic, political, environmental, and geographic variations. Different representations of Blackness in rural and urban U.S. cities illustrate regional distinctiveness within a country (Howard, 2010).

**Personal Identity Development Model.** One of the most widely used conceptualizations of the personal identity development process was created by Erikson (1987). His theory considers the impact of external factors, such as parents, peers, and society, on how individuals conceptualize their personal identity. He described eight interrelated identity development stages that stretch across a lifetime. The stages are divided into general age ranges that are consecutive. They are *hope* (infant); *will* (toddler); *purpose* (3-5 years old); *competence* (6-12 years old); *fidelity* (12-18 years); *love* (18-35); *care* (35-65 years); and *wisdom* (65-death). During these stages affirming or disaffirming experiences can lead to the conformation or elimination of specific personality traits.

In the *hope* stage children learn the concepts of trust and mistrust. Positive and negative interactions with caregivers can foster attitudes of optimism, insecurity, or the mistrust of others. During the *will* stage individuals learn autonomy as well as shame. At the culmination of this developmental phase a person learns culturally appropriate behavior and either develops a high or low self-esteem. In the *purpose* stage children tend to imitate adults around them, and develop ideas of their future selves. Throughout the *competence* stage children learn the rules of engagement within a community by observing adults and their own experiences. Parents move from being complete authority to being less significant in the decision-making processes of youth, and peer gain more prominence. The *fidelity* phase of Erikson's model is a state of identity crisis. Young people are learning how to answer questions of who am I, and what do I

believe? In this stage, the direction of one's identity depends on what a person does and how others respond in kind. Some adolescents struggle to negotiate social interactions and social group membership. Individuals cultivate loyalty to ideals, causes, and friends, as well as experience confusions leading to rebellion against conformity and authority. Moreover, membership in specific social groups is somewhat fluid as individuals attempt to join identity groups that are most suitable to their newly developed ideals (Erikson, 1987).

*Love, care, and wisdom* occur during adulthood when people form deeper and more persistent relationships with friends and partners. For example, in the *care* stage an individual's career and family symbolize salient personality traits and life experiences. Major changes occur in these phases of life, which can have long range effects. For instance, children leave the household and careers change, which cause some to struggle with finding a new purpose and/or group memberships. The last stage of an individual's life leads to moments of reflection. Some people are content with the direction of their lives and others are not; some even wonder what was the point of their lives (Erikson, 1987). For this research project *fidelity* stage provided a good theoretical framework for understanding how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants develop their racial identity. During this time, these youths are developing a sense of the complexity of their social world while creating an external representation of their internal selves, and understanding how others perceive and comprehend these representations.

**Social Identity.** A person's social identity is an important factor in determining group membership and styles of engagement during interpersonal interactions. Interactions with perceived group members and non-members are different due to the insider knowledge, which provides information needed to interpret exchanges and respond appropriately and develop self-esteem (Becker, 1963; Billet, 2006). Tajfel (1974) and Turner (1986) explained that the actions

of individuals are influenced by perceived differences in a group, legitimacy and status within a group, and the ability to change groups. A major assumption of their theories was that individuals are driven to achieve positive standing within their social group. For example, when an individual's in-group status is high they gain more knowledge and understanding of the group norms, which in turn creates stronger commitment to that social group. If the in-group status is low then individuals change membership to improve perceived personal value (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1986).

According to some scholars' social identity is based on the intersection of political and economic resources allotted to certain groups based on overall standing within the larger society. Meaning and individuals social identities are constructed in relation to others, and there is a dialectical relationship between the individual and the group. Hall (1992, 1996) suggested identity is a process that involves diverse and ever-changing social experiences. Thus, individuals go through multiple social identities during their lifetime. For example, newly arrived immigrants have a different relationship with U.S. society compared to those who are long-term established residents. Due to different realities related to time-period, population size, and political experience divergent representations are created.

Jacobson-Widding (1983), Waters (1999, 2001), and Olsen (1997) point out that conflicts in social identity occur in 1.5 and 2.0 generation immigrant children because of a dual socialization process. These children undergo a primary socialization in which parents transfer behavior and value norms from their country of origin, and a secondary socialization into the rules of engagement of their host countries through schools, media, and peers. This dual socialization process causes "dissonant acculturation" where young immigrants try to balance their native culture and host nations culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, 2014). As a result, an

identity crisis can manifest in attempt to navigate interpersonal exchanges using two, sometimes conflicting, frames of reference. To reconcile these conflicts, immigrants develop a social identity that provides them with a set of norms that fit their contexts (Jacobson-Widding, 1983).

**Cultural Influences on Identity.** Culture includes commonly held values, beliefs, customs, and traditions. There are two major components that help understand this aspect of identity. The first dimension of cultural identity is *explicit social norms*, which are transferred from one generation to the other. The second is *implicit social preferences* which are intrinsic to a social structure. These preferences are the unspoken rules of social behavior that are accepted within a social group (Jacobson-Widding, 1983). Therefore, culture is the convergence of these implicit and explicit expressions of specific norms. Wolf (1984) explained that “cultures are not integral wholes carried by social isolates. We must distinguish between reality culture and ideology making, and recognize that the creation or dismantling of cultures always goes on” (p. 393). To put it succinctly, there is no singular way to represent a culture. Topographical and meteorological differences in a country lead to difference expressions of culture. For example, individuals who live in mountainous areas have different cultural variations compared to those who live near a beach. Therefore, acknowledging the complex way individuals dismantle and recreate cultural meaning can be vital in recognizing distinctive representations of ethnic groups and individuals over time and location.

Culture is intertwined with social identity and norms, and evolves from and shapes social beliefs, ideologies, and knowledge from generation to generation (Moll, 2014). For example, a style of dress can be a marker of a time (a social identity) but if this style transcends a specific point in time it can also be a cultural style. A case in point is the Dreadlock hairstyle. This hairstyle in the 1960s of Jamaica Rastafarians was perceived as a symbol of unconventional

social group membership. Despite this controversial past, currently it has become an integral cultural artifact of some Jamaicans (Shellock & Bennett, 1998).

Moll (2014) advised educational researchers to be cautious about paradigms that view culture as a “well-defined entity” with traits and values that are shared by all members of a group. Due to the wide range of experiences, locations, political and social realities all traits are not shared equally among all members of a cultural group. Instead, it is better to “think about culture as dynamic and changing, never fixed or static, and full of agency and versatility” (Moll, 2014, p. 120). However, researchers who do not heed the warning run the risk of misunderstanding the diversity that exists within groups.

**Ethnic Identity.** Positive ethnic identity is linked with other positive outcomes such as improved coping skills, self-esteem, academic adaptation, and social adjustment (Gonzalez, Eades & Supple, 2014 p. 102). Most studies of ethnic identity have been conducted with second-generation participants; as a result, there is a gap in the research scholarship regarding 1.5-generation immigrants (Gonzalez, Eades & Supple, 2014; Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014; Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012). The gap is also indicative of the numerous ways that academic domains define identity and whose identities are studied.

Gonzalez, Eades and Supple (2014) observed that the definition of ethnic identity varies widely among academic domains. Sociologists define ethnic identity as an individual’s commitment to values, behaviors, traditions, and cultural knowledge that can change over time. Psychologists view ethnic identity as a developmental process that varies during different phases of life. It is based on an individual exploring cultural activities to construct a personal self-definition. Ethnic identity also focuses on the conscious reactions, attitudes, and feelings

individuals have regarding their group membership, and it has implications for social harmony or conflict (Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014).

This aspect of identity also has private regard, and public meaning and manifestation of consensus (or centrality) and divergence. Ethnic centrality reflects how important ethnic group membership is to one's sense of identity. Private meaning relates to how positively individuals view attributes of their own group, while public regard is perceptions of how others view one's ethnic group. Public regard does not distinguish between negative or positive biases and attributes (Sellers et. al, 1998; Gonzalez, Eades & Supple, 2014). These aspects of ethnic identity allow a person to choose to claim group membership or not, and symbolize *agency*. When immigrants become conscious of, and competent with, social norms they can code-switch to present themselves as insider or outsider of a social group. This means they have the ability to modify some aspects of identity based on situational factors such as safety and opportunity (Malcolm & Mendoza 2014).

Chandra (2006) provided another valuable perspective on ethnic identity. She considered ethnic identity as a subset of categories of eligibility for group membership. One is determined by descent-based attributes and the other is connected to "choice". To illustrate, individuals of African descent share phenotypical traits but this does not mean that all individuals of African descent have the same ethnic identity. These shared attributes are considered *normal ethnic identity* categories, meaning that people who have them are eligible for membership in that group. By contrast the attributes that include the specific performance of religion, food, dress, beliefs, and ways of communicating to express membership within a group are considered *activated ethnic identity*. Thus, individuals have a repertoire of cultural artifacts that can be activated to signify their ethnic identities and affiliations (Chandra, 2006).

Activated ethnic identity was a valuable construct for use in this research on the ethnic identity development of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. These immigrants may have repertoires of identity that are comprised of elements from their Jamaicanness, Blackness, and U.S. versions of Americanness (influenced by both African Americans and Whites). Although they are not White they are exposed to the same political, economic and social system as Whites in the United States. Therefore, considering ethnic identity as a process of activating specific normal ethnic identity categories was a useful framework for investigating how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants create and represent their ethnic identity.

Another component of Chandra's (2006) work that was useful in this research is that her conceptualization provided a way to disaggregate ethnic groups that share common descent-based traits such as skin color. In other words, the use of activated and normal ethnic identity allow researchers categories to distinguish between individuals who share phenotypical traits. Chandra believes recognizing differences within race and ethnicity groups is valuable because it rejects some aspects of marginalization. She explained that ethnic identity categories are constrained by descent-based attributes. But the property of constrained change requires us to accept one important assumption --that the disaggregation of 'basic' attributes into their component parts requires institutional change while their aggregation into larger categories does not (p.6). Researchers who investigate ethnic identity should be cognizant of the constraints of traditional conceptualizations of intra-racial and ethnic diversity. This understanding requires changes in methodologies and frameworks to validate research about cultural, ethnic, and racial phenomena.

**Reflective Narrative Identity Analysis.** The empirical scholarship on reflective identity examined turning points in adulthood to understand how identity is developed (McAdams &

McLean, 2013; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Burner, 1994). The goal of those studies was to determine how people make meaning out of the transitions in their lives. They focused on transitions around stages of identity struggles (such as adolescent), and transitions from school to work. These studies provide support for examining life narratives of adults as they look back on the turning points in their lives. Data from these analyses can be used to understand how immigrating to the U.S., attending school, and adolescent identity struggles influence how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants develop their ethnic identity through individual efforts and interactions with social and cultural worlds.

Autobiographies or life narratives offer insight into a person's internalized and evolving identity, and explain how they integrate and reconstruct the past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose (McAdams & McLean, 2013; Chase, 2003; Bruner, 2001, 1994; McAdams & Bowman, 2001). Self-narratives express how people see themselves, and reveal their points of views, personal agency, and exploration. Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) suggested that reflective life stories convey insights about the narrators, and are opportunities for them to revise and reconstruct their personal identities.

The evaluation structure used in narrative research involves placing events in sequential order to make meaningful connection. Situation or life events cannot be evaluated without connecting present events to past experiences. According to Burner (1994) narratives do not solve problems; they simply locate them in such a way as to make them comprehensible. He considers using turning points in narrative analysis to distinguish "what is ordinary and expectable from that which is idiosyncratic and quintessentially agentive" (Burner, 1994, p. 32).

Turning points prompt changes in beliefs, convictions, thoughts, and identities. Chase (1995) points out that narratives are a "complex social process, a form of social action that

embodies the relation between the narrator and culture” (p. 274). McLean & Pratt (2006) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the identity development of emerging adults centered around turning points in participants lives. There were 896 participants (544 female) the ages of 17-23 from 16 high schools in Ontario, Canada. The students were asked to explain their identity status across several periods of their lives, including adolescence and early adulthood. Through these self-reported narratives, they extrapolated how these young people made meaning of their identity in relations to important events in their lives. Objective Measures of Ego Identity Status (OM-EIS) were developed by Adams, Shea, and Fitch in 1979 to measure where a person was on the identity development scale. This scale ranged from achieved, moratorium, foreclosed, and diffused. McLean & Pratt (2006) found that “those low in identity exploration tended to show less narrative meaning in their personal turning point” stories (p. 721). In other words, this study suggests that a lack of personal exploration in identity development is connected to life experiences that lacking in cultural or emotional meaning.

### **Summary**

The research and scholarship reviewed in this chapter included a wide range of works that examined race, identity development, immigrant integration. The arguments of several different scholars were used to demonstrate the complexities of interpersonal communication relationships and the sociocultural factors on identity were evident. Finally, narrative analysis in research and its value was discussed. This paradigms take into consideration the lived experiences of the participants and how to appropriately represent the transition in their lives.

### **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant ethnic identity development. This chapter begins with discussing the research methods and rationale used. Next, the procedures for participant selection, data collection and data analysis are described.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

Tilman (2002) proposed some research methodologies that expand conceptual orientations and procedures to more fully capture the multi-dimensions of ethnicities and cultures that make up the Black American population. One approach is to investigate the intra-ethnic diversity of the Black community using culturally sensitive research methodologies. These methods are used to make decisions about what data to collect, analyze, and report. To qualify as culturally sensitive research, methodologies must acknowledge and value the beliefs and behaviors of diverse ethnic and cultural individuals and communities.

Portraiture is a form of qualitative research that aligns well with culturally sensitive inquiry techniques (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). It attempts to accurately capture the experiences of ethnically and culturally diverse people in their own voices and contexts. Culturally congruent practices can be useful in analyzing the everyday experiences of the Black immigrant participants in this study. Narrative methods assist in the design of culturally responsive research by seeking to generate person-centered data to aid in understanding the motivations, behaviors, and social contexts of the participants. This approach is used to develop questions to illicit descriptive responses. These questions allow the participants to tell their stories and explain how the stories influence how they relate to and understand the world. Narrative research and portraiture methods are techniques for engaging creatively and

holistically with research data. Using this approach to interviewing reminds the researcher that each participant is a unique individual who interacts with the research tasks differently and her, his, or their reactions must be respected.

There are two benefits to using a culturally sensitive methodological approaches in investigating Black American people and experiences. First, they generate legitimate interpretation and identification of varied aspects of Black culture, history, and contemporary experiences in the U.S. Second, these techniques can facilitate a deeper understanding and knowledge of intra-ethnic diversity in this group. Culturally sensitive approaches can uncover the multiple realities and experiences of Blacks in the U.S. These academic lenses allow for co-constructing (between research and participants) knowledge, which leads to more accurate interpretation of the data to produce transformative knowledge and better theories about race, culture and ethnicity (Tilman, 2002).

The qualitative methods used in this study include a combination of aspects of narrative inquiry and portraiture. They were multidimensional and validated the merits of diverse epistemologies, instead of the idea that knowledge can only be produced in academic circles (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Saavedra & Perez, 2012; Chavez, 2012). These methods also allow data to be collected in their cultural contexts. Employing aspects of these qualitative methods facilitated exploring how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate overlapping cultural ideologies in constructing and performing their ethnic identity. Narrative inquiry helped frame the data collection while portraiture provided the blueprint for analysis and reporting. Narrative inquiry provided an effective way to access necessary information to capture the most accurate portraits. Portraiture assisted in telling the stories of the participants

individually and collectively. Gathering the best information was vital in creating these characterizations.

Interviews were another essential feature of the research design they have multiple purposes and forms. Researchers interested in specific actions or events use topical interviews. Cultural interviews are topical, and are used to obtain details about how individuals learn from and pass information across generations (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Brenner, 2006). Narrative-focused interviews are distinct from semi-structured interviewing strategies. According to Golsteijn and Wright (2013, p. 307) “even ‘open-ended questions’ can act to suppress – and even eradicate – the impulse and opportunity for storytelling”. Therefore, researchers must design interview questions that lead to reflectively and descriptively storied responses. This interview technique is categorized as conversational interviewing, which uses cultural probes to investigate the experiences and meaning-making processes of diverse individuals or groups (Tilman, 2002; Golsteijn & Wright, 2013). For example, a conversational interview question could have been, can you explain how you got your family nickname? Such a question requires more than a one or two sentence response.

In portraiture and narrative inquiry, the researcher’s goal is to identify authentic data that capture the richness, complexity, and multiple dimensions of the human experience. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) portraiture research seeks to resist reductionism and abstraction of the human experience, and it challenges “the tyranny of the academy” (p. 7). This methodology focuses on depicting “real” experiences of research participants in ways that capture the intricacies of their social realities and create “life drawings”. This methodology also creates vivid descriptions of settings and contexts to capture and convey, as closely as possible, the essence of the characters, histories, and stories of the participants in the study (Connelly,

2006; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Chase, 2003; Bruner, 2001, 1994; McAdams & Bowman, 2001). Furthermore, skillfully constructing a portrait of the context and setting simultaneously meets the requirements of academic research and the need to humanize the lived experiences of the participants.

Creating portraiture requires an in-depth examination of phenomena within real-life contexts and reports these experiences in storied form (Yin, 2006). For example, investigating how foreign born Black Jamaican residents develop their cultural identities involves understanding complex negotiations of multiple messages from their home culture and adopted U.S. culture. These descriptions use “ethnographic vignettes or ‘short pen pictures’ of people in a setting, which highlight the individual’s experience, histories, and social setting” (Golsteijn & Wright, 2013, p. 305). A central aspect of the vignettes in this study was to create a holistic account of the participants to ensure that attention focused on the diversity of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants.

When documenting human experiences, it is crucial to provide enough context for accurate interpretation. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) “human experience has meaning in a social, cultural, and historical context – where relationships are real, where the actors are familiar with the setting, where activity has purpose, where nothing is contrived” (p. 43). In other words, context becomes the reference point, road map, and the clues for interpreting the experiences of the actors in the setting. Contexts can be physical, geographic, historical, cultural, and personal. These settings can be organized into three mandatory levels for constructing an effective portrait. The contexts must address physical locations, the person’s historical background (e.g. individual’s immigration journey, culture, and ideology), and the

researcher's positionality (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Saavedra & Perez, 2012; Chavez, 2012).

One context that is essential to creating a quality narrative portraiture is setting or physical location of the participants and the researcher. Understanding human history and behavior requires researchers to situate the action within its natural setting or physical location. Detailed description of settings place the research participants in their natural settings, which is necessary to more effectively interpret the findings of the study. The portrait is more comprehensive when it is apparent how the participants' experiences are affected by their various surroundings (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Another context that must be accounted for in a quality portrait is "framing" the participants or detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants. These descriptions must include historical backgrounds, personal life journeys, cultures, and ideologies, conveyed in part through symbols and metaphors used to represent identity. Personal context also includes the choices researchers make. For example, being explicit about how researcher's personal history, culture, and ideologies influence the selection of data. This gives the reader insight into the thinking processes and potentially deepens their understanding of the information being presented.

Portraiture methodology also includes guidelines for dealing with the length of a study. It requires a short data collection timeframe, normally limited to four interviews and field observations per participant (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The short time period has the potential of reducing the risk of researcher and participant bias. Research bias can occur when participants try to align their answers to what they believe the researcher wants. In a short study timeframe participants have less time to anticipate questions or

provide prejudiced answers. To prevent this occurrence portraiture scholars recommend conducting at most four interviews that are forty-five minutes to an hour each. Bias also can occur when researchers narrow the focus of study to the presumed outcomes, and reject information that does not validate their hypotheses and assumptions (Chavez, 2012; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Saavedra & Perez, 2012; Brenner, 2006). Having a short observation period forces the researcher to record more detailed information and remain open to multiple outcome possibilities.

### **Research Questions**

The major purpose of this study was to examine the ethnic identity development processes that 1.5-generation Jamaican Black immigrants go through in the United States and the contributions education might make to the construction of their racial and ethnic identity. The primary questions explored in this study were:

- How do 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate multiple cultural norms and social meanings?
- How do these racialization experiences affect their ethnic identity development as Black Jamaican Americans?
- What resources and strategies do Black Jamaican immigrants use to engage with U.S. ethnic and racial dynamics?

### **Methodological Procedures**

This study included six (3 woman and 3 men) 1.5-generation Jamaican immigrants between 30- 42 years-old, who immigrated to the U.S. between the ages of 7 and 12. The participants' age allowed them to reflect on turning points in their lives and assess the impacts of these events on their ethnic identity development. All the participants received pre-collegiate

education through the U.S. K-12 system. A snowball sampling strategy, commonly referred to as "word of mouth", was used to identify potential participants (Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2003). This sampling approach used referrals to make connections with potential participants within the population of interest. I publicized the study on Facebook and Instagram, distributed recruitment flyers in locations with large Jamaican immigrants, including Hollywood Barbershop (Brooklyn, NY) and the Caribbean American Center of New York (Brooklyn, NY). Since 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants can be misidentified as African American or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Jamaican Americans, it was necessary to use a contact method that differentiate this group of individuals. This word of mouth approach was appropriate for acquiring participants, because it offered the researcher access to populations who were not easily identifiable due to small numbers, privacy, and social marginalization.

There also was an opt-in process for participating in this study. Those who qualified and were interested contacted the researcher and the screening process began. Screening ensured that individuals met all the requirements of the study and created an equal distribution of gender. Some examples of the screening questions were: Did you immigrate between the ages of seven and twelve?; Are you Black Jamaican; and, what is your gender? The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality of the data was ensured by me transcribing all field notes and interviews personally, and pseudonyms assigned to each participant, teachers, family members, and other easily recognizable individuals. Finally, all documents were kept in a locked file on a password-protected laptop, and the original digital recordings of interviews will be destroyed after the required institutional timeframe for data storage.

## Participants

Identifying participants (specifically males) was difficult. The Jamaican immigrant community is insular and skeptical of outsiders. Since I was recruiting from Seattle, I was not able to engage with members of the community directly. After months of no response from flyers posted in locations in the Bronx and Brooklyn, I travelled to New York to recruit participants. Table 1 provides a summary demographic profile of the participants in this study. It includes age, gender, age and year of arrival in the U.S., and citizenship status. A more descriptive profile of each participant follows the table.

**Table 1: List of Interview Participants**

Name	Age	Gender	Age/ Year of Arrival to the U.S.	Immigration status	# of interviews
Alice	40	Female	9 years old/ 1982	Naturalized Citizen	2
Ivy	30	Female	11 years old/ 1998	Naturalized Citizen	2
O'Neil	41	Male	11 years old/ 1988	Naturalized Citizen	2
Denny	34	Male	7 years old/ 1985	Naturalized Citizen	2
Patricia	39	Female	10 years old/ 1989	Naturalized Citizen	2
Clive	37	Male	8 years old/ 1989	Permanent Resident	2

### Alice

Alice is a 40-year-old female. She immigrated with her family to the Bronx N.Y. in 1982 at the age of nine. She migrated with her mother, father, and half-sister. Alice also has a younger brother who was born in the United States. She has lived in two neighborhoods in the Bronx. At first she lived in the Grand Concourse neighborhood, which she described as a diverse community made up of Whites, Puerto Ricans, Dominican Republicans, and African Americans.

As a teenager, her family moved to the White Planes Road area of the Bronx. This is one of the two larger Jamaican/Caribbean ethnic enclaves in New York City.

Alice went to Public School (P.S.) 85 and Middle School (M.S.) 118 for elementary and junior high school. She attended Grace Dodge Vocational High school. Her high school was across from the Bronx Zoo, the Bronx Botanical Garden, and Fordham University. The school was in an Italian American, African American, and Latino American mixed community. It provided vocational training in nursing, accounting, paralegal studies, and many others. Alice studied in the nursing assistant program and continued her nursing studies at State University of New York (SUNY) Utica College. Utica is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) of higher education in Upstate NY. For the past ten years she has worked in a Bronx hospital. She described herself as a nurse and happy. Being a nurse was something she wanted to do since she was a child. All her education was directed to becoming a member of the healthcare profession. She also considers herself as family-oriented.

### **Ivy**

Ivy is a 30-year-old female who described herself as a family-oriented person who loves to serve others; is caring, determined, and hardworking; and a God-fearing woman who is just trying to find her purpose in life. She immigrated to the Bronx with her younger brother and mother to reunite with her grandmother.

Ivy grew up in the Kingsbridge area of the Bronx. She said that it was a mostly Latino and Caribbean community. For elementary school, she attended P.S. 246 for one year. She then went to M.S. 143 for seventh and eighth grade. For high school, she attended John F. Kennedy. Which Ivy described as “my zoned school,” meaning this was the assigned school for students in a specific geographic area. Kennedy was demographically diverse a result of this policy.

Ivy pointed out that her high school had some Albanians, “it had a little bit more diversity but it was predominantly Black and Hispanic cultures and races”. She attended the SUNY Buffalo State for college. Currently, she is a lawyer for a branch of the federal government. Ivy is married and currently lives in the suburbs of D.C.

### **O’Neil**

O’Neil is a 41-year old-male. He immigrated to the United States in 1983 at the age of 7 with his mother as a result of being selected in the Visa Lottery (also known as diversity based immigration). This system gives a specific number of visas to a country every year. Immigrants who are on the visa waiting list are selected until the yearly quota is met. O’Neil is as introspective, analytical, and critical thinker. Throughout our conversations, he discussed his Afrocentric philosophical viewpoints.

O’Neil lived in Prospect Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn N.Y., which he called a predominantly Caribbean neighborhood. He said, “We had everything Caribbean: Trinidadian, Guyanese, and Jamaican.” Because of its history of immigration Prospect Heights is adjacent to Jewish and Eastern European ethnic enclaves. Even with these different enclaves the area of Brooklyn is predominantly African American.

O’Neil attended P.S. 221 and M.S. 394, and attended Paul Robeson High School for Business and Technology. After graduation he went to New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Business. He is currently a self-employed freelance financial advisor.

### **Denny**

Denny is a 39-year-old male who immigrated to the U.S. with his father, mother and his younger sister in 1989. He considers himself a rational individual “because I can see both sides

of a situation.” His family moved to the Crown Heights neighborhood in Brooklyn. Crown and Prospect Heights neighborhoods make up the largest Caribbean enclave in New York City (Henke, 2001). This area of Brooklyn host the West Indian Labor Day Celebration, which is a cultural celebration of people from the multiple Caribbean Islands who live in New York City.

Denny attended P.S. 250, Intermediate School (I.S.) 318, and Westinghouse Career and Technical Education High School. Students at Westinghouse were predominantly African Americans, Latinos and Caribbean from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It is a vocational training school that focuses on technical and mechanical trades. He credits his high school for providing him the skills for and love of being an electrician.

Denny did not attend college. Instead he said “I went to work right out of high school”. He currently is an electrician for Con-Edison. He is married with two children and still lives in Crown Heights. Denny feels that he and other older residents of the neighborhood are being pushed out because of gentrification.

### **Patricia**

Patricia is a 39-year-old female who arrived in New York City in 1989 at the age of 10. She grew up in the South Bronx with her parents and three brothers. They migrated under the Family Reunification policy and joined their paternal grandmother in the United States. Patricia considers herself a representative of the divine community since she was baptized in the Pentecostal church in her early teens. According to her the “neighborhood she grew up in was integrated with Spanish speaking people from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and a mix of people from the islands such Jamaica, Antigua and Black Americans.” Patricia currently lives in Co-op City, which includes around 50,000 people in the North East section of the Bronx. The residential area also includes some African immigrants and Russians and Jewish Americans.

All of Patricia's schools were close to her childhood home. Her elementary, middle, and high schools were within 10 blocks of her apartment building. She attended Community Elementary School (C.E.S.) 70, middle school Diana Sands 147, and Taft High School. Patricia attended the SUNY University of Binghamton. She describes her college community as composed largely of "probably middle class to upper middle class, Jewish, White people". Patricia has a Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Business Administration. She currently works as an administrator for a New York City law enforcement agency.

### **Clive**

Clive is 37-year-old male who lived in Bushwick Brooklyn which at the time of his migration was a middle income African American community. He was an only child. When he was eight years old he and his mother immigrated to the United States. His father arrived a year prior to prepare for their arrival. Clive considers himself a joyful person, always trying to "find the bright side in things."

During the time when Clive's father was in the U.S. he was able to identify what area of the city had the best schools, and consequently, his parents sent him to Queens for a better education. He attended P.S. 26, Ryan Junior High, and Bayside High School. As he put it, "I went to schools with Whites and Asians." Clive attended City University of New York (CUNY) Hunter College where he majored in U.S. History. He currently is a tenth grade Humanities teacher in a Charter School in the Bronx.

### **Data Collection**

Culturally sensitive, conversational interview techniques are used to collect authentic and appropriate data. These techniques allow deviations from the norms of standardized interviewing. Conversational interviewing procedures allow interviewers to ask participants if

they do not understand a question and provide unscripted feedback to clarify the meaning of questions as necessary (Chavez, 2012; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Saavedra & Perez, 2012). Portraiture and narrative methodologies provided guidelines that had to be followed to collect an appropriate amount of data. Therefore, two 45-minute narrative interviews with each of the six participants (See Appendix C for a sample interview protocol) were conducted over a two-week period. The interview protocol was developed by selecting a list of 15 topics that were clustered into areas of interest, such as race and national origin. This list became the interview prompts to obtain an in-depth description of each 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant participants' identity development process.

Participants preferred phone conversations instead of other modes of communication such as face-to-face video conferencing. Since participants might not have felt comfortable sharing personal information about their identity, portions of the first interview focused on building rapport. During the interviews, field notes were taken to better document the context. After each initial interview, follow-up protocols were tailored to further clarify and expand ideas and themes from the participants' original responses. The second interviews were two weeks after the first. Each interview was recorded with the "Call Recorder" app on iPhone and then each interview was transcribed.

A two-phased review process was used to identify which parts of the interview best helped construct the portraits of ethnic identity development among 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. Using quotation also provided interesting insights while retaining and communicating a coherent picture of the interviewees. In the first phase, the audio recordings, field notes, and photos were reviewed, and notes were made on thought-provoking comments and observations. In the second phase the notes were then used to write a rich description,

supported by lengthy quotes from the interview to construct the portrait. A rich description combines first and second order narrative to construct the “life drawing.” Golsteijn and Wright, (2013, p.312) claim that “first order narratives (those of the participant), and second order narratives (the stories the researcher is conveying) including interesting observations, and interpretations” are used to create the accurate and holistic portrait of each participant experience. Narrative research and portraiture have great potential for providing more contextualization of interview findings, and the ‘full picture’ about an interviewee, because they combine participant and researcher narratives. This case study provided insights about the positive and negative effects of socialization and acculturation on the development of Black Jamaican immigrants’ ethnic and racial identities.

### **Data Analysis**

Portraiture’s data analysis includes five major phases. These are pre-analysis; sketching themes; constructing codes; testing codes for accuracy; and theorizing and reporting findings. The pre-analysis was done simultaneously with the interviews. After each interview, the recordings were listened to and reviewed field notes to make initial assessments. I used information from this initial evaluation to design the next semi-structured interviews as well as to identify preliminary codes. Even though, the theoretical framework guided the interpretation of the data this early review process aided in identifying potential common themes and ideas. Also, this analysis provided a form of validation because the interviews and notes could be reviewed multiple times to make sure the interpretations and conceptual framework aligned with the intended research design. This initial and continual review of data for accuracy aligned with culturally sensitive research practices.

After this pre-analysis and completion of all interviews, they were transcribed. The transcriptions were reviewed systematically to identify recurring units of information or codes (Matheson, 2005; Merriam, 2009). A rough sketch of major themes, ideas, or concepts were developed. These themes were frames of reference that connected the participants' experiences to theories explaining identity development and cultural adaptation phenomena. These primary ideas helped to isolate significant units of information from the transcripts. This step in the analysis process involved drawing logical distinctions between relevant and irrelevant information to the issues under study. The data identified were independent thoughts, meaning they were understandable even when taken away from the context of the interviews and field notes. In other words, the codes were large ideas that were of value to the specific study.

Once the data were reviewed and themes were identified, the next step was to sample or code the data. Merriam, (2009) defined codes as statements, words, or pieces of information that can be considered a potential answer or part of an answer to the research questions. After going through most of the data, there were numerous open codes, which were words, phrases, and sentences that capture the essence of embedded concepts or themes. Through the process of inductive and deductive reasoning the open codes were sorted, combined, re-categorized, and then sub-categorized. This led to the construction of axial or analytical codes (Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Axial or analytical codes identify specific dimensions of the phenomenon being studied. These codes helped me focus on major or central themes. They were triangulated by reviewing each interview and noting recurring concepts.

The evaluating stage of data analysis focused on determining the accuracy of the codes by narrowing down and defining major themes. This step moved the analysis beyond categorizing data to making inferences from the texts, interpreting and reflecting on the

relationship among the ideas in the theoretical framework, and drawing conclusions based on those themes. Therefore, inductive inferences connected descriptive accounts of texts to the meanings they evoked, which were verified by the text itself and larger social and academic contexts (Holsi, 1969; Matheson, 2005; Ferree, 2002; Krippendorff, 2013; Merriam, 2009). In other words, inductive reasoning involved generalizing based upon observed behavior in specific circumstances.

For example, Lee (2005) exemplified inductive inferencing in empirical research by examining the influences of schools on Asian youth's understanding of their race, ethnic identity, and immigration status. Lee (2005) explored the experiences of 1.5 and second-generation Hmong American students in University Heights High School (UHS) in the state of Wisconsin, as they developed resistance to racism encountered in school. She made connections between the personal experiences of each participant to larger social issues of immigration and race through interviews and observations. In this inductive reasoning example, the participants' thoughts were strong evidence that supported the researcher's conclusions. This form of logical analysis presumes, to some degree, that a researcher's conclusions are based on the preponderance of evidence according to theories and personal narratives.

The final stage of the data analysis process was discussing and reporting responses to the research questions. The findings are important because they helped the research community and society understand why the research investigation is significant (Hosti, 1969; Matheson, 2005; Glesne, 2011). They were arranged in a logical sequence without bias or interpretation. Reporting the findings is intended to only confirm or reject assumptions underpinning a study. In reporting results portraiture narratives use language that engages individuals beyond the halls of academia (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Using a writing style that was reader friendly,

welcoming, and informative to both academics and non-academics could break down hegemonic barriers that dehumanize some members of society (Saavedra & Perez, 2012; Chavez, 2012).

### **Researcher Context**

In portraiture the social, educational, political, and cultural position (i.e. positionality) of the researcher is made visible to decrease the risk of bias. By being explicit about personal history, culture, and ideologies that influenced the selection of codes, location, participants, and data gives insight into the researchers thought processes, which deepen the meaning of the presentations. By disclosing their positions in the narrative process researchers provide the audience with the opportunity to make their own interpretations of the story presented.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explained the value of transparency and the voice of the researcher. In doing so, they defined voice as “the research instrument, echoing the self (or the soul) ... of the portraitist—her eyes, her insights, her style, her aesthetic. Voice is omnipresent and seems to confirm [the] claim that portraits reflect more about the artist than about the subject” (p. 85). To fully respect the participants, the “artists” (researchers) need to explain their thinking processes and illuminate what they chose to add or leave out of the portrait.

Milner (2007) also recognized the need for researchers to be explicit about their positionality as they conduct educational research. The premise of his argument is seen and unseen dangers emerge when researchers do not pay careful attention to their own racial, social, economic, and cultural systems of knowing and experiencing the world. These dangers include misinterpretation and misrepresentation of participants’ stories by omitting vital contextual information based on the researcher’s implicit biases (Milner, 2007). Villenas (1996) reinforced the importance of researchers being self-conscious and self-regulating in describing their roles as "privileged" ethnographers.

The benefits of researchers' self-consciousness and self-declaration include revealing the thinking process behind the production of the research and breaking down a power structures embedded in academic research. When researchers acknowledge their personal, social, political, racial, and educational identities they admit the limits of their interpretations. This also potentially undermines "the notion of objectivity, because from particular locations all understanding becomes subjectively based and forged through interactions within fields of power relations" (Merriam et al., 2010 p. 416). In this sense, exposing the researcher's positionality does not privilege one voice or narrative over another. Instead, by being transparent with the interactions a more authentic portrait can be constructed about how different people understand, interpret, live, and function in society.

I am a Jamaican male who immigrated to the Bronx, New York in 1989 with my parents and siblings. I was educated in the New York City public school systems and then attended a small, predominately White liberal arts college in Massachusetts. My positionality influenced data collection and interpretation in multiple ways. First, having contextual cultural knowledge of the Jamaican immigrant experiences enabled me to develop culturally sensitive interview protocols and narratives. Second, I was aware of linguistic and cultural word choices. Because of my cultural knowledge, I was able to interpret linguistic choices that had the potential to deepen the analyses. For example, during one of the interviews, a participant used the word "twang." I understood she was not implying the US southern accent but referring to an unnatural English accent. Third, my positionality afforded access to these participants. The type of responses might have been different if I was an outsider to the community.

## **Summary**

The research methodology for this study was designed to isolate issues of identity and highlight the process 1.5-generation Jamaican Black immigrant go through when developing their ethnic identity in the United States. This was done by using interview and observation procedures that capture the essence of the participants' life experiences. The short data collection period had the potential to limit the bias associated with research, but there are some inherent limitations as well. My positionality provided some benefits and limitations to the methodologies used in the study. These strengths and challenges of my positionality will be explained in the discussion chapter.

## **Chapter IV Findings**

This study was undertaken to understand how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate multiple cultural norms and social meanings, and strategies used to construct their racial and ethnic identities. Data related to each research question are presented sequentially. Specific examples of themes identified during the analysis process are provided. Some participants are featured more prominently than others because their responses to the research questions varied in density and comprehensiveness.

### **Exploring Identity**

An important aspect of identity development is exploration. People explore ways of presenting and expressing themselves, such as through choices of clothing, music, hairstyle, and community membership. This probing of interests and affiliations is considered the initial stage in many identity development models. As the participants in this study acquired different social positions in the United States they became more cognizant of positive and negative perceptions of their identities and developed ways to respond to them. These reactions led to questions and explorations of their membership in the Jamaican immigrant, African American, and mainstream U.S. communities. The cultural shock of immigration initiated this early stage of “moratorium” according to Phinney’s (1989, 2004) model. During this phase of the ethnic identity development process the 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant participants in this study had to cultivate an understanding of multiple cultural norms to express their ethnic identity.

The first question explored in this study focused on how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate multiple cultural norms and social meaning. The first research question examined how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate and make sense of the

multiple cultural norms and social meanings that is used to construct a person's racial and ethnic identities. Several themes emerged from the data.

### **Culture shock and othering catalyze identity formation.**

Experiencing culture shock was a major catalyst for the development of ethnic and racial identity. As children Patricia, O'Neil, Alice, Denny, Clive and Ivy were thrust into a world that they and their parents were ill prepared to navigate. They had to learn two dialects of English, (Jamaican Patois and African American Vernacular), as well as the mainstream U.S. English Vernacular, and academic English, which includes formal schooling. They also had to internalize social cues and norms related to their race and immigration status. Even though the participants had different life experiences, there are some commonalities that wove through their individual identity development processes. One location where these youth interacted with multiple communities was the U.S. school system. Since their parents, older siblings, classmates, and teachers were not going through the same acculturation journey they could not receive advice from them on how to navigate their cultural identity development processes.

In addition to having to reconcile and navigate different English language usage, classroom and school norms, these individuals had to negotiate public and workplace interactions related to race. Since they had some education in the Jamaican school system they had an understanding of expected student behavior. However, O'Neil, Ivy, and Clive recalled having to construct new schemas for understanding their current role as Black American school age youth. O'Neil stated that he had to develop new ways of decoding U.S. social meaning. He pointed out that it takes "a whole new paradigm. You have to learn how to live and work within that paradigm, and it takes time to get acclimated to it." Others agreed about having to develop new cognitive frameworks to understand the racialized language, and the economic structures in

the U.S. and where they belong within that system. Also, that the development of these new schemas takes time.

Ivy also discussed developing new ways of interpreting and responding to the cultural, racial, and economic systems in the U.S. She described the need to construct new schemata as follows:

migrating here [U.S.] at 11 years old, it was definitely a culture shock because when I was growing up in Jamaica, ...when you wore uniforms, kids were kids. There was no cursing. Race wasn't something that was in our face. The n-word wasn't something we used. Profanity wasn't something we used in school. It was definitely a lot different than what I was used to.

As a child Ivy recognized the differences between language and cultural norms in U.S. and Jamaican schools. The first cultural difference was in student dress code or lack thereof. Another was the explicit discussion of race, which was new to her. For instance, the use of racialized words and profanity was foreign to her, which challenged her perception of race and what being in school meant.

Similarly, Clive spoke about his difficulties adjusting to the cultural differences between U.S. and Jamaican schools. He thought that U.S. school structures reinforced rigid social and economic hierarchies. This was something new he had to consider when going to school. Clive believed the biggest challenge for him was

adapting towards the culture. Adapting to the way kids spoke to teachers. Adapting to wearing whatever you want to school. You realize you're no longer equal because they're wearing the latest sneakers, the latest 'gear'. You're more focused, at least for me, on what are you going to wear to school today. You have something else to focus on apart

from school, whereas in Jamaica everyone wore the same thing. Your hair had to be a certain way. You had one uniform.

For Clive the lack of a dress code in U.S. schools highlighted economic disparity among students. In his opinion uniforms might have alleviated some of the social pressures associated with socioeconomic status. Clive, Ivy, and O’Neil also believed that adapting to U.S. school culture required them to focus on things outside of the classroom. They worried about how their clothing choices would mark them as social, cultural and economic outsiders.

These 1.5 Jamaican Black immigrants learned that they have to understand rules of social settings, as well as the cultural, economic and racial hierarchy of U.S. schools and society. Within the school system they learned “their place” within the U.S. economic, racial and ethnic structures. In many instances they had to adapt to a culture that seemed to be the opposite of what they experienced in Jamaica. As students they had to learn how to respond to teachers and classmates, and how their race and immigration status impacted their social and ethnic identity matrices.

Another catalyst for these 1.5 Black Jamaican immigrants’ identity development was fear and othering. Clive and Ivy hinted at the fear of othering when they discussed not “wearing the right gear” or fitting in, which forced them to develop new paradigms of understanding. The school culture seemed to rejected the ideologies, cultures, perspectives, and experiences that these immigrants brought to the United States. As a result of this mismatch they had to adapt and master the cultural attitudes and behaviors required in different social situations. During their initial stage of identity development, these participants were driven by fear of being considered outsiders. This anxiety of othering was a facilitator for learning how to effectively navigate multiple social norms.

Consequences of being deemed outsiders ranged from ridicule, being stigmatized, and even isolated because of, and often by, the multiple social communities they belong to. All but one participant attended schools with primarily Black population. This fear of being “othered” was a major motivating factor in these immigrants use of language cues as forms of identity. Patricia and Ivy explained how they learned that shifting between languages effectively was essential to being recognized as an insider of a community. Patricia stated,

maybe you do figure it out as you're being adapted to it...as a child, you're just trying to survive. You're just trying to not stick out.... For me anyway. Maybe somebody else had a different experience, but for me I remember trying not to be like an outlier. The quicker I learned the culture and get into it, the less I'll stand out and be an object for ridicule. In a sense, you kind of have this duality occurring where you're one thing at home, but when you go out and you meet your friends, you're something different.

The fear of being an outlier motivated her acculturation process. The faster she and the other participants learned the U.S. culture the less likely they would be the “object of ridicule.”

Reminders of being an outsider sometimes took the form of jokes and microaggressions related to their Jamaican identity. Ivy explained that her drive to adapt to U.S. cultural and linguistic expressions was to limit the teasing she faced as a newcomer. She said

wanting to change was more so I could fit in faster, because you just don't want to get teased because kids can be brutal. You just don't want to get teased for your accent and stuff like that. When you're submerged in a culture and they're speaking their tongue, they're speaking English, you start picking up certain things. It sounds funny at first because you can tell that you're trying to like change a little bit. It's like okay. You pick it up because you are constantly around it.

As children newcomers these immigrants felt that learning and becoming part of the U.S. cultural landscape was the easiest way to escape the brutal teasing from peers. Ivy felt that she had no choice but to “change a little bit.” She highlighted the cognitive choices that she made when adapting. Ivy recognized that she sounded funny, and made corrections to minimize this as she became more fluent in the cultural norms. As a result of being immersed in the school and cultural systems you start to “pick it up.” This idiom means that she was learning through trial and error. Ivy was not given instructions on how to deal with being submerged in U.S. culture. She had to learn the rules of engagement as she interacted more with U.S. citizens.

As young children these immigrants felt that they had to learn “on the fly” in order to make sense of the rules of engagement outside of their home or face restrictive consequences (being teased). As Patricia said, you “figure it out as you're being adapted.” This demonstrates that this cultural adaptation process was based on trial and error. Furthermore, these immigrants did not have any models for navigating the multiple social and cultural norms. Ivy, Alice, and Denny described the difficulty of understanding and navigating multiple social norms. As a child Alice felt like she was ineffective at traversing ethnic landscapes because she did not have support in balancing the demands of these different communities. She said,

I often felt like I was a guinea pig because I didn't have a model of how to grow up in America. I could not ask my parents how to handle situations in making friends, behave in schools, or applying for college. I felt like I was going through a trial and error period when I first moved to the States.

As these 1.5 Black Jamaican immigrants grew up they did not have blueprints for navigating and reconciling the multiple cultural norms and meanings that determine their membership in social

groups. They are told by insiders from both the Jamaican immigrant enclave and U.S. society at large that they were not members of either group.

As newcomers they had to balance their parents' and U.S. cultural expectations without much guidance and assistance from either community. The only guidance Denny got from his parents when he arrived in the U.S. was to get educated. Part of this absence was because his parents did not understand the U.S. social and cultural rules. He explained that,

The only expectation my mom and dad had of me to being here was just to go to school and get good grades. That's it. Go to school. Graduate and go to college. They did not know how to apply to college, I was just expected to go to college. That's literally the only expectation my mom had. If she had something else, she didn't tell me....Go to school, come home, clean up your space; that's about it. Go to school, come home and clean. I couldn't really even do after-school activities. I couldn't do much. Just her Jamaican sensibility about how I should be raised. Going out and hanging out, that was foreign to her. Even school dances, my mom just didn't trust people; just scared something will happen while I'm out.

Denny parents' only expectations for his transition into U.S. culture was to focus on his academics. He could not remember talks about other relevant issues in his life, such as how to balance out the different cultural expectations he encountered inside and outside of school. Being successful in school is not simply a matter of academics- socioemotional, family structure, and cultural knowledge impact success. His mother's Jamaican sensibility might have kept him from fully participating in and learning about the U.S. social culture. This resulted in Denny having difficulties traversing these multiple cultural and social norms of racial and ethnic identity, and knowing when to use various ones.

### **Learning to use the “right language”.**

Feelings of disequilibrium were significant experiences in the initial identity development journey of these 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. They all described frequently misreading social cues which led to being identified as outsiders. This mismatch occurred in simple interactions such as in telephone conversations. O’Neil and Ivy described experiences of being marked as non-American Black when their friends called their homes. Ivy explained the slight ridicule she received for incorrectly using cultural communication features. She said,

“my friends tease me. Are you saying bye? No I’m saying good night. I need to answer the phone, ‘good morning’. You answer the phone, ‘good afternoon’. You answer the phone, ‘good night’. I lost a lot of those things. It’s so funny. Texting, I’ll do it, but when you answer the phone, you don’t say ‘hello’, ‘good morning’ anymore. ‘Hello, good night’. Our mannerisms are definitely different. You can tell when I first got here, she’s definitely not from here. She’s from another country, just because of my mannerisms were so different.

Her use of Jamaican cultural greetings created some cultural dissonance between her friends and herself.

O’Neil also commented on this idea of othering. He pointed out that inaccurately using a single word could indicate a cultural distinction while simultaneously enforcing ethnic and national boundaries. He noted that,

people pick up certain words that we say, and especially because you growing up with a very rigorous concept of the time of the day where it’s good morning, good afternoon, good evening, good night. So whenever I say ‘good evening’ to someone, they’re like where are you from?

These examples show how the participants were perceived as outsiders when they used Jamaican social communication norms in the U.S. context. O'Neil and Ivy described cross-cultural learning processes that were full of missteps and othering. These immigrants learned that a change in the tone of a word and the combination of words signified a cultural difference. A major part of identity development is based on membership within a community. It is determined by how other members respond to the use of markers of belonging. If an individual inaccurately uses these signals they are relegated to the margins of, or excluded from, a social group. Moreover, they are reminded that they are not effectively balancing their multiple "worlds" which has emotional, psychological, and physical consequences.

In addition to learning U.S. mainstream communication they also had to internalize African American and Jamaican norms for interaction. As they start to take on attributes of membership in one group their membership in others was sometimes questioned. Many of the participants recounted times of being told that they were outsiders of the Jamaican community for using U.S. social norms. Ivy stated that,

When I'm with my family... my accent goes in and out and at that point it's the American accent, speaking in the schools in and out. They'll [her family] just laugh at me and say, 'Just go ahead and speak because you sound funny'.

These participants were also considered outsiders when they misappropriated U.S. communication codes in Jamaican cultural interactions. Ivy indicated that she was using a U.S. "accent." This idea of accents suggest different versions of the English language that the participants used when interacting with people.

Patricia experienced similar questions of her Jamaican authenticity by her family because of vernacular miscues. Being considered as an outsider extended beyond the use of language to include clothing and food choices. She points out,

I'm gonna only talk about my parents and my brothers, right ... we know we're Jamaican, so the question of whether or not you're Jamaican enough does not come up in conversation unless it's a joke... Like, "You're not Jamaican because you don't do this, or you don't eat that, or you don't wear this, or you don't listen, or you don't have the right accent, or you don't pronounce Patois words correctly."

Joking and various forms of social ostracizing sent a clear message to these immigrants, a clear message that they did not fully belong to either group. However, there was still a desire to acclimate to the U.S. culture.

They learned to become savvy in recognizing what social cues were being used and how to respond to them. Clive described how he chose which language version to use in specific circumstances. For example, the language required at home was different from that used outside of the home. He stated,

I was different when I was home. I was inside my own culture and therefore I could express myself this way. When I left home I was inside [the U.S.] culture and therefore I had to use the rules within that culture. People not gonna understand me if I just talk Patois. So when I'm communicating, I want people to understand me, so what do I do? This is why you had to adapt. I still practice and can speak Patois in my home or around my Jamaican friends. But when I get around my white friends or my black friends, I don't speak that way cause they ain't gonna understand me.

Without this cultural knowledge Clive faced emotional, economic, social and cultural disadvantages. He considered the ability to effectively communicate in the U.S. mainstream cultural and language codes as essential to success.

Ineffective communication also can lead to questioning a person's intellectual ability. Ivy described how her mother used "proper" English when she first immigrated to the U.S. because people questioned her intellect if she spoke in her Jamaican accent;

If she [her mother] was at my school and she was trying to communicate with my teacher or any kind of official she would. She would try her best to say the words so Americans will say they can understand, but her accent was so strong because, again, my mom is much older coming here. At 11 years old it's easier for me to adapt, like for her she's grown. It's a little bit harder. Yeah, she would twang. That is actually a very appropriate word to use. She did try to twang. I haven't used that word in forever. Oh, wow. She did. She did. She did try to twang, when she spoke to officials or someone that's not Jamaican that didn't understand her dialect.

Twang is a slang term used to refer to Jamaicans who grew up speaking heavy patois trying to speak in an American or British accent, which produces an unnatural sounding dialect of English. "Unnatural" in this context means that members in both the Jamaican and American communities recognize the tonal inconsistencies in pronunciation. Ivy's mother twanging was done to demonstrate her intellect when interacting with school officials. As a child Ivy realized that she needed to learn how to speak a type of English that represented her intellectual ability.

Twanging also has a racial component. For Jamaican immigrants proper American English, in their minds, is spoken by White Americans. O'Neil explained the connection between race and language when he said,

when you came to America, you wanted to speak the crisp, gentle American accent. Not like a Brooklyn accent, like yo, what's good? 'You wanted to be articulate, you wanted to be able to pronounce your r's, and your s's, and ask, instead of ax.' Right? They say most Black people don't pronounce their s's in that word. It's like no, no, no, it's not ax, it's ask. And I'm like 'yeah, whatever'. Right?

These comments highlight how language is used to distinguish membership in U.S. racial groups, indicate intellect, and imply a colonial conceptualization of language. The 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants in this study had to learn how to accurately use different versions of English vernaculars to establish membership in numerous communities. During this early stage of acculturation into U.S. society they were marginal members in these communities. Their membership remained in question due, in part, to inconsistencies in their language usage, but that also was context dependent.

### **Influences on ethnic identity development as Black Jamaican Americans.**

The second research question focused on how socializing experiences affected the ethnic identity development of Black Jamaican American immigrants. The participants in this study were socialized into accepting conceptions of race and ethnicity through interactions with schools, classmates, teachers, administrators, family, community members and media. School practices and curriculum also had a major impact on these immigrants' development of a positive or negative Jamaican identity. As youth, some of the participants faced academic discrimination, which reinforced the idea that being Jamaican was undervalued and should be removed from their identity makeup.

### **Schooling devalues Jamaican and immigrant identity.**

For some, schools provided positive environments to display their personal identity, but for most, school was not a safe space for their own and their parents' Jamaican-ness to be expressed. For example, Patricia stated that her mother's accent restricted her interactions with teachers. She recalled,

my mom didn't have much interaction with my teachers. It was a lot harder for my mom, because my [her] accent. As far as my mom's interaction with my teacher, my mom didn't come to school very often. I don't even remember my mom coming to my school in the sixth grade unless like dropping me off in the morning. After a few times of dropping me off I started to walk myself to school. I lived literally right down the block from my school.

This indicated that her mother did not feel that comfortable in the school building. This reluctance enter the school building diverges from the literature (Vickerman, 1999).

Both, Ivy and O'Neil felt that U.S. schools were a negative environment and unwelcoming for their Jamaican identity. Ivy explained "when I first started school here in the sixth grade, I didn't feel welcomed. I was treated different because I had an accent. I spoke different so [I was] teased by kids and stuff like that...". Ivy's classmates highlighted her otherness and bullied her, which created a negative environment. The intimidating environment made Ivy feel unwelcomed and unsafe. O'Neil also felt unaccepted at school and unable to be Jamaican without ridicule from his classmates and teachers. He said,

... well they're [Teachers] not making fun of you, [but] you're weird to them, because you're speaking with an accent. When I came here, well see, I came here right at the cusp of everything, at the precipice of change. I came here when they were still calling kids from the islands, every island, that we came on the banana boat. You know, and that we

were wearing all these colorful clothes and stuff. So it was weird; like they didn't have any respect for our culture....

These comments highlight the ways that teachers and classmates negatively impacted O'Neil's and Ivy's comfort level and perception of their Jamaican identity. Teachers considered them "weird" and forced them to "fix" their accents. These experiences taught Patricia, O'Neil, and Ivy that others undervalued their Jamaican culture which led to negative associations with their identities.

Although traumatic experiences were often associated with their schooling experience, there also were times when school valued their identity. For example, Clive remembered a teacher who was supportive of his abilities, which gave him an opportunity to positively view himself. He described this teacher as follows:

It was a Jewish lady. Her name was Ms. Herman. She was my fifth grade teacher, and she loved me to death. She thought I could take over the world if I wanted to. She just had a liking to me, or whatever, because she valued my intelligence. She valued the fact that I went above and beyond the requirements in academia. She made me run for student government, and everything. And she was just endlessly supportive.

This support helped Clive feel like he was part of the school culture and community. Positive relationships with teachers and classmates creates bonds that fosters success and belonging (Howard, 2010).

**Lack of curriculum representation impact on identity.** Another aspect of school life that made the participants feel like outsiders was the curriculum and lack of other conversations about Jamaicans who played a role in U.S. history. Culturally non-responsive curricula can have negative effects on their racial, cultural and ethnic identities of minority students (Harding, 1991;

Howard, 2010). Conversely, culturally responsive curricula value, recognize, and discuss the knowledge and beliefs of diverse groups, communities, and heritages in different academic arenas (Gay, 1992; Delpit, 2006).

Denny, Alice, O’Neil, and Ivy reported that there was no inclusion of Jamaican or Jamaican American history, culture, and beliefs in their early years in U.S. schools. Cultural celebrations is one way for schools can engage with students’ cultural communities. However, this did not happen for these participants. Denny recalled, “we didn't have cultural events that talked about Jamaicans when I was in school.” Alice did not expect to have discussion about her Jamaican heritage since the schools did not have conversations about other racial and ethnic minority groups. She stated, “I don't think I really recognized I was lacking because there was no significant discussion around Jamaicans but even at that time, there wasn't significant discussion about Black people either.” O’Neil also commented on the lack of Jamaican cultural knowledge in his school curricula. He had to seek knowledge about his community outside the confines of the school building. O’Neil recalled, “you didn't really learn about [Jamaicans], like Garvey. I learned outside of school. Bob Marley you learn outside. There's really nothing but a Eurocentric education that you're going to receive.” Ivy was the only participant who indicated that her Jamaican heritage was a part of the school curriculum. However, this experience was not as a newcomer but as a college student. She stated that “Marcus Garvey is the only one that stood out as being distinctly Jamaican against this backdrop of civil rights leaders. I wrote a historical analysis paper in college on Marcus Garvey”. This is a positive example of Jamaicans in the curricula. Multicultural education scholars have highlighted the correlation between curriculum representation and increase in minority students self-esteem (Howard, 2010; Steele, 2010; Nasir, 2011).

**Impact of non-curricular on identity.** Many participants indicated that some other school practices had a negative effect on their ethnic identity development. These included re-education practices imposed upon them as newcomers, one manifestation was having to repeat an academic school year. However, Alice, Clive, and Ivy found ways to circumvent this practice. Participants believed that this re-education practice was based on the U.S. society belief that they are superior to their country of origin. These experiences led some to question their intellectual ability, and make negative associations with their Jamaican ethnicity.

The participants recounted emotional, identity, and academic struggles created by this re-education program. Even though O'Neil and Patricia reported being affected by this practice, Denny summarized the experience best. He described this re-education practice as traumatic and creating anxiety. According to Denny,

I was going to private school when I was in Jamaica, when I was a kid. And when I came here, I was educationally more advantaged than American students, when I came to school. And I was put back a grade. It was traumatic. I mean as a little kid, I probably couldn't articulate it. But as an adult, looking back now I can put some sort of word on emotions that were going through, right? It was traumatic. It's very stressful; it makes you anxious. It's like what's going on here.

The early socialization processes such as that experienced by Denny were catalyst for long term identity crises for him and these other 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. The strong negative emotional impact of cultural isolation and low academic expectation caused doubts about the value of their Jamaican identity.

Some participants were able to find ways around this re-education practice, after initially being victims. Clive with the support of a savvy educator avoided this experience. He recalled

... if it wasn't for another Jamaican lady ... a counselor at the school who took interest in me, I would have been put back a grade. She fought for me, and I got skipped a grade, so I was ahead of my grade in elementary school.

Alice also remembered that the school she attended wanted to put her and her brother back a grade:

They put my younger brother back. They wanted to put me back also. I wouldn't let them put me a grade back. I refused. I was like, 'I'm not going a grade back'. So I took the test, I was a pretty smart kid so I didn't have a problem. I took the test and they let me go to my right grade. But they put him back a grade.

Although Alice was able to avoid the effect of this practice by taking a test her brother was not as fortunate.

Ivy attributed the "re-education" process to negative assumptions about her intelligence by teachers and classmates because she spoke with an accent. She said,

... my teachers ... didn't really do anything because it's not like they didn't understand me and it's not that I didn't understand them. It's just that I had broken English. I know they wanted to put me back because when you migrate here they try to put you a grade back, especially when you are younger because they feel like you're not up to par. That was like I am not going back. I'm not going back to the fifth grade. I just completed the fifth grade in Jamaica... I think it's because I came from a Caribbean country so they automatically assume [you] may not be up to par, up to standards. She may not understand English. We speak English. It's our broken English. We understand English. It's not like it's a foreign language to us.

This re-education practice caused trauma and identity crises for the participants in this study. It perpetuated assumptions that caused them to question themselves and wonder if they were the problem because of low expectations based on stereotypes (Howard, 2010; Steele, 2010; Nasir, 2011).

**Race trumps national and ethnic identity in U.S.** As these Jamaican newcomers began school, they located themselves onto the U.S. racial map. This required understanding particular cultural meanings of race and ethnicity in the United States. Participants in this study learned how their racial and ethnic group membership was perceived and prioritized by various interactions in school. This prioritizing was based on a limited U.S. racial structure defined by a set of skin color demarcations, behaviors, languages, and alliances. Denny, Patricia, Ivy, O'Neil and Alice described how these categories constrained expressions of their Jamaican and immigrant identities. They also made intentional choices when thinking about engaging with their multiple communities.

The participants of the study were not comfortable with fitting themselves into established racial categories commonly used in the U.S., such as Black and White. This disconnection was because these categories did not accommodate the complexity of their national and ethnic background. For example, Denny explained that, “when you fill out the census, there's no Black other, or Black Jamaican, or black [etc]... It's just Black African descent. I only can fill one bubble”. This is an example of the challenge faced by these 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants in claiming membership in the U.S. Black population. As Denny stated, there was no option for his specific identity as a Black Jamaican. Therefore, these limited options for declaring ethnic identity restricted the ability of these newcomers to express their national and ethnic backgrounds when locating themselves in the U.S. racial structures.

As other participants in this study had more social interactions in and outside of school, they were taught that their race superseded other aspects of their identities. Based on multiple interactions, O'Neil emphatically stated, "it's always race first." Patricia, Alice, and Ivy echoed this feeling that race was prioritized over national and ethnic identities. As Patricia explained:

I wasn't like running somebody down to get it right that I'm a Jamaican. I'm a Black person. All Black people, migrate, was brought over as slaves from Africa. At the end of the day, we all share a common past, common history, but it doesn't matter whether I identify myself as an American Black or a Jamaican Black, it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, people see our race, not your nationality first.

Patricia's comments are not an anti-African American perspective. Rather, she was highlighting the fact that the U.S. preoccupation with race overshadows the national and ethnic origins of Black immigrants.

The idea of racial dominance also was repeated by Alice. She pointed out that people treat her as an African American even if she claims membership in the Jamaican community. According to Alice, she feels "Jamaican". But is "treated more like I'm Black American". Furthermore, her reaction suggests that group membership is determined in part by how others respond to an individual's self-identity claims. Even though these immigrants felt connected to their Jamaican roots, they were still treated as Black Americans.

As these immigrants moved from newcomers to longer-term residents, they also began to prioritize their African American identity membership over their Jamaican ethnic identity. Ivy's comments illustrate this evolving process: "I did consider being Black before I considered being Jamaican. I'm a Black woman. I'm a Jamaican Black but you don't see Jamaica when you see me. You see a Black woman."

The limitations of the U.S. racial structure constrained these 1.5 generation Black Jamaican immigrants expression of their ethnic identity. The codification of race in legal documents reinforced social discourse that skin color and English proficiency created a fictive kinship between the participants and the African American community. This kinship model places a hierarchy on the experience of slavery as the single story of Black identities in the United States.

**Identity formation: Moratorium of African American and Foreclosure of Jamaican identity.** Feelings of fear and othering led to multiple phases of identity exploration for these participants. As young children, they were taught to try to disguise their language and membership in the Jamaican immigrant community when interacting with non-members. Some developed negative feelings about their ethnic identity from observing their parents' interactions with U.S. authorities and other citizens, and their limited understanding of issues related to their race in U.S. context.

Sometimes managing different expectations of race and culture in a stratified society may cause individuals to diminish the expression of one culture in order to accept another. As a child, Patricia explained how she navigated the demands of her dual identities and cultures. She said,

Well because at home, we practice, or we did, Jamaican things. We ate Jamaican food. My parents talked Patois. Then when you went to school, you had a different culture. I guess like any other teenager whatever, what you practice at home is not necessarily what you practice outside, or what you're exposed to outside. I wasn't exposed to Jamaican ... I had Jamaican friends, but it wasn't a huge population when I came to this country. Where I live, or the school I went to, there were Jamaican kids, but we weren't coming together

or congregating exclusively by ourselves. We were integrating inside the school, into American culture, because we're not in Jamaica, so we weren't exposed, or learned from. Since Patricia had limited exposure to Jamaican cultural artifacts and the narrow framework of race, she did not “expose” the outside world to her Jamaican culture.

During the transition from newcomers to long-term residences of the U.S. these 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants made identity choices about being in the U.S. racial context that sometimes resulted in suppressing and distancing themselves from their national heritage. O’Neil explained how he made the determination to accept a U.S. racial identity framework. He said,

when I was younger, I listened to rap music more, I listened to rock and roll. I became more embracement of the culture. Like when I first came, I'd hardly listen to any Jamaican music, I hated it. In actuality, I didn't really like it [Jamaican music] that much. Not to say that I hated it, I didn't like it that much, right? Because I wanted to fit in with the Americans. But then as I started to embrace the value of what the violence, it all was back down to the violence. I'm going to tell you that. Right? As I started to embrace the fear, and the bravado, and the respect, that I started to embrace the music. The mannerisms, everything, more.

O’Neil explained the choice to fit into the U.S. racial framework required embracing the “bravado” and music of African American and mainstream American cultures. This choice necessitated him to stop listening to Jamaican music and incorporate rap and rock-n-roll into his repertoire. By doing this O’Neil hoped to be accepted by others as African American or even an mainstream White Americans.

As these immigrants continued to take steps towards accepting their racial categorization they publicly distanced themselves from their Jamaican identity by joining organizations that expressed membership in the African American community. Furthermore, inclusion in these racialized organizations provide insight into other cultural artifacts that solidify membership in the African American Black identity. This exploration of and public presentation of the African American identity extended beyond the K-12 experience. For example, Ivy joined the African American Student Organization at Buffalo State (NY) to decrease the confusion related to her personal understanding of African American Blackness. According to Ivy,

once I went to college, I joined the African American Student Organization. I didn't join the Caribbean organization so people always question that, like why did you join the African American Student Organization and not the Caribbean Student Organization? Because that's where you have clearly, all the folks in the Caribbean and then you have all Black Americans, or Africans or whatever. I mean people who knew I was Jamaican. I didn't hide my culture. In my room I had a flag. In my room I had a map of Jamaica. People didn't really have to ask me whether or not I was Jamaican... I just felt that the stuff that we talked about like the people, I was more attracted to the people. The stuff that we talked about it was more so like where I wanted to be. The discussions were about Blacks in America, social injustice, and dating in college. Just different things.

During this stage of identity development these participants were exploring what it means to be Black Jamaican Americans who are perceived to be African Americans. They were seeking membership in groups such as the African American Student Organization in order to get guidance on how to behave in the world as this newly accepted racialized identity.

Simultaneously, these immigrants were suppressing public explorations and expressions of their

Jamaican ethnic identity. Consequently, these 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants had not yet fully achieved a positive ethnic identity because they do not deliberately explore all other aspects of their identity.

**Resources and strategies used to develop ethnic and racial identity.**

The last question of this study focused on what resources and strategies the 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrant participants used to engage with U.S. cultural dynamics and construct their ethnic and racial identities. Commitment to their multiple communities may fluctuate because of positive or negative interactions and understanding of overlapping aspects of these communities. As the participants aged they recognized a need to reconcile their duality as insiders and outsiders to the U.S. and Jamaican cultural communities. Consequently they cultivated multiple strategies of identity development that allowed them to push back against classifications typically used in the U.S. identity hierarchy, and to code shift across different identity borders.

**Resist hiding their Jamaican identity.** Throughout their lives in the United States, the participants were taught to prioritize their racial identity over national and ethnic origins. These experiences led them to develop strategies to remedy identity dilemmas. Over time they went from accepting to challenging the need to hide their ethnic identity and constructed a conceptualization of identity that recognized their racial and ethnicity identity. Patricia described how she struggled to acknowledge her multiple identities as follows:

. . . as a child when you first come to this country and you kind of give up what you knew and what was familiar. You didn't want to . . . I don't want to say give up because you never really give it up. You cannot be fully integrated in a Jamaican society if you're living in the United States. You have to give up that aspect of culture and you have to be

integrated into the new culture. This is not my phrase, but instead of it being a melting pot, it's not really a melting pot, it's now a salad bowl. People want to keep their distinctions.

This conceptualization of the U.S. cultural integration as a salad bowl allowed her to keep cultural distinctions while still taking on some of the characteristics of the other cultures.

Reconceptualizing their identity matrices required the participants to acknowledge their past and question the need to suppress their Jamaican heritage. Denny said, “you need to remember stuff. Remember you were born there [Jamaica], but you spent some of your childhood there. You won't forget that no matter how much you try.” This is an example of the beginning of a process of cultural and ethnic reconciliation.

Clive and Alice resisted the need to give up their Jamaican-ness by refusing or delaying the naturalization process to become a U.S. citizen. Clive rejected naturalization and remained a documented permanent resident. He believed that “you can't change your nationality, I was born in Jamaica.. And [the nationalization process] cost too much. Why would I pay money to stay here?” For Clive the social value of citizenship also did not outweigh its economic cost. Alice delayed becoming a U.S. citizen because she,

. . . didn't want to get my [U.S.] citizenship. I didn't want to give up my Jamaican citizenship. I didn't want to become an American because of the discrimination in the U.S. towards Jamaicans. I wanted to make sure I was different, I wanted to keep all parts of me.

However, Alice eventually did become a naturalized citizen. The discrimination she and Clive faced as a children caused them to resist becoming a legal member of the United States. Their Jamaican citizenship was tangible evidence of their difference from other Americans.

**Codeswitching between identity boundaries.** Gaining a deeper understanding of the multiple dimensions of group membership allowed the participants to seamlessly maneuver between cultural boundaries. This codeswitching was used to elevate specific identities in response to social interactions within the United States. Codeswitching is alternating between two or more languages and cultures or varieties of them (Anzaldúa, 2012). It allowed the participants to establish membership in multiple communities without being challenged by other group members. O’Neil referred to shifting between language boundaries as “channel switching” in advising Jamaican immigrants to, “learn to speak without the accent, learn to speak with the accent. Embrace your culture for what it is, because it's empowering, and I mean as far as cultural wise, that's it. Channel switching is important.” As O’Neil pointed out codeswitching requires a clear understanding of the relationships between cultural and linguistic cues related to class, ethnicity, race and other social positions, and appropriate responses to them.

Codeswitching can be a conscious or unconscious action. The conscious manipulation of the language and culture cues requires the individuals to quickly assess the surroundings and determine what interaction style is suitable. For example, Patricia described how she consciously evaluates social situations to determine which “code” to use. She said,

I just actively remembered that not everyone is going to understand Patois because again this was a time before it was popular to be Jamaican. But being Jamaican and having that ability to speak Patois was like someone speaking Spanish. Not many people would understand what you were saying so you kind of had this secret language even among your peers who were your cohort, your Jamaican cohort or whatever. That's where I remembering practicing, cause I knew when I got home it was just okay to talk this way.

When I was at school it wasn't okay to talk this way. It was a distinction in the type of language I used.

Patricia determined what language to use based on whether others would understand her. Maintaining the skill to speak Patois [a Jamaican dialect of English] gave her a "secret language" that elevated its value to her Jamaican identity. Furthermore, the cognitive decision about which codes to use in specific situations involved a thorough understanding of U.S. social, cultural, and linguistic expectations.

Through practicing codeswitching became internalized and subconscious. As Alice explained,

it's like somebody [who is] bilingual? Do they think about whether they are speaking Spanish or English? No, they just talk the language that they know is appropriate for now. It's not like, 'Oh, wait, let me switch gears'. You just automatically speak the language that you need to speak.

Ivy also described how she maneuvered through different language boundaries. She stated,

if people start talking to me in regular English then I would speak in regular English. But when my mother starts talking Patois, then it would just automatically flow. . . . Just depends on what she's saying to me and who is talking to me.

After many years of code-switching Ivy, Alice, Patricia, and O'Neil learned to effortlessly shift between cultural frameworks. This ability allowed these participants to reconceptualize the saliency of identity boundaries. However, their responses were still bound by conventional constructions of identity boundaries.

**Ethnic Identity Achievement by Reimagining schemas.** Throughout their lives in the U.S. participants in this study learned how others expected them to behave in specific cultural

situations and they constructed frameworks that acknowledged multiple aspects of their identities. In discussing the need to accept himself O'Neil explained that, "it took me a long time to become comfortable in my skin. I didn't want to be anyone else. I wanted to find out what it means to be me. Just me". Wanting and needing to find ways to be comfortable in their "own skin" were echoed by other participants as well. Denny and Alice discussed manipulating group norms to construct their personal identities. Denny described how the process worked for him as follows:

let's use food as an example to explain how I feel. I mean, today I might want some Greek. I might want some teriyaki sauce and go get some Greek food and some hot sauce. That's the uniqueness; you can integrate all these other foods into your world, into your culture. You can develop or create something new. You can have fusions. The lines are not distinct. It's not black and white.

This analogy is an example of how these immigrants effectively deconstructed the conventional U.S. race and identity schema. The ingredients refer to the many linguistic and cultural aspects that contribute to personal identity. Having knowledge of these "ingredients" allows him to fuse them into a new, unique identity.

Alice also developed her identity by mixing and matching parts of other identities. She points out that,

if I had to say where I would place myself based on who I interact with, I'm a Black person, right. Depending on the group, I may talk Patois or I may talk just strictly American with an accent. It's like, you can go between the lines really because you're not defining yourself as, 'I'm strictly this, or I'm strictly that'.

Patricia described a similar process of self- definition and acceptance. She stated,

Well it's easy because I came here as 10 years old, so I didn't have identity formation. I knew I was Jamaican, I was born in Jamaica, but I can't learn a culture if I'm not immersed in it. I immersed in American culture. What's always in the back of my mind is, I am born in Jamaica, but culturally I could say I identify as an America. But I can't fully be an American if I wasn't born here. I'm a naturalized American, but culturally I identify as a Black Jamaican American female.

Ivy also emphasized the value of choice in constructing her personal identity. She reconciled her identity in the places where cultural communities overlap because, most of the people I'm around when I go to Jamaica are family, so no one has ever [said], I'm not Jamaican because again, here I try to keep my culture. I try to keep certain traditions so I still cook traditional food. You're more American now than you are Jamaican. They don't have a problem with it, you know what I'm saying? I don't have a problem with them saying that because I'm just like I was born in Jamaica. I was raised until I was 11, but honestly, I am more American than I am a Jamaican. You want to put it that way because I've lived here for 20 something years, more than half my life. This is home, you know what I'm saying? Jamaica, yeah that's my roots but America is home. It's all I've known, for real, most of my life.

Having spent over half of her life in the U.S. gives Ivy claims to her American identity. She takes pride in maintaining her Jamaican cultural while accepting the U.S. culture.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I presented themes that emerged from analyzed interview data . These themes focused on how the participants navigated multiple cultural norms related to race and ethnicity in the United States, the impact of school on identity. The resources and strategies

utilized to develop positive self-identity and their Black Jamaican American ethnic identity. The statements made by the participants seems to suggest that positive and negative experiences as students, such as culture shock, isolation and ridicule, were catalysts for developing codeswitching strategies for social interactions. These 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants also developed a deep understating of linguistic and cultural boundaries to develop their personal ethnic and racial identities. In the next chapter, I interpret and discuss the findings of the study, suggested contributions of the study to the field, and the implications of the findings on research and practice.

## **Chapter V: Summary, Discussion and Recommendations**

This chapter will explain and describe the significance of the findings considering prior research that investigated immigrant race and ethnicity identity development and to explain any new understanding or insights. It is organized into sections beginning with a summary of this study, followed by a discussion of the findings. These are followed by limitations and then the significance of the study. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research on foreign born 1.5 generation Black Jamaican ethnic and racial identity development.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the ethnic and racial identity development process of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants in the United States. I was interested in examining how these immigrants' life histories and experiences in schools influence their knowledge and awareness of race, ethnic and cultural norms, and national origin. Additionally, I was concerned with the effects of this knowledge on the participants' personal ethnic and racial identity development.

Ferguson et al.'s (2012, 2014) three-dimensional (3D) acculturation theory, Engstrom's (2001) third generation Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), and Phinney's (2004) model of ethnic identity development provided the theoretical framework for this study, and the methodological procedure included elements of Portraiture and narrative inquiry. These qualitative research methods of inquiry blends art and science to capture the complexity and dynamics of the human experience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The data used were collected from a series of narrative-focused interviews, comprised of initial one-on-one and follow-up conversations with six 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. In these interviews, participants discussed their thoughts, feelings, and experiences

in U.S. schools; the concepts of race, ethnicity, nationality; and how their life histories influenced their personal identities. Portraiture data analysis included five major phases. These are pre-analysis; sketching themes; constructing codes; testing codes for accuracy; theorize and reporting findings.

Data analysis revealed several themes that were organized in response to each research question. These themes were; (1) Culture shock and othering as catalysts for identity formation, (2) Learning to use the “right language”; (3) Schooling devalues Jamaican and immigrant identity; (4) Lack of curriculum representation impact on identity; (5) Impact of non-curricular on identity; (6) Race trumps national and ethnic identity in the U.S.; (7) Identity formation: (8) Moratorium of African American and Foreclosure of Jamaican identity; (9) Resisting hiding their Jamaican identity; (10) Codeswitching between identity boundaries; and (11) Ethnic Identity Achievement by Reimaging schemas.

### **Discussion**

Although the educational and immigration experience occurred 20 to 36 years ago, the memories for the majority of the participants were as if they occurred recently. Their experiences indicate that their personal racial and ethnic identity development were impacted by their interpersonal communications and relationships with teachers, peers, administrators, school practices, parents and family, other members of the Jamaican immigrant enclaves, and U.S. citizens. These interactions inside and outside of school helped the participants identify, categorize, and acculturate into the cultural and social norms in the United States. In general, the findings suggest that the development of codeswitching techniques and a deep understanding of U.S. cultural, ethnic, and racial discourses allowed the participants to manipulate and reshape these frameworks to construct their personal, ethnic, racial, and cultural identities.

The results of this study are consistent with the premises outlined in the theoretical framework and prior research. The findings align with three-dimensional (3D) acculturation theory developed by Ferguson et al.'s (2012a, 2012b, 2014), which argues that Black Jamaican immigrants are integrated into Jamaican, mainstream European American, and African American cultures. Additionally, Engestrom's (2001) third generation Cultural Historical Activity Theory (C.H.A.T.) contends that when people have membership in two or more cultures they develop a hybridized conceptualization using aspects of each of the cultures. This theory was supported by the findings of this study. The results were also consistent with Phinney's (1989, 2004) model of ethnic identity development which proposed that people have different levels of examination and public display of their ethnic identity. Furthermore, commitment to a specific identity groups depends on positive or negative interpersonal feedback from other members of these groups.

### **Ethnic and Racial Socialization**

The data seemed to indicate that as newcomers these immigrants were socialized into Jamaican culture at home and the U.S. culture in educational settings. Schools in part integrate immigrant children into U.S. society by reproducing social, economic, and racial hierarchies (Olsen, 1997). During this early integration period, the participants felt like they were guinea pigs. In other words, they felt that they were given the U.S. and Jamaican rules of cultural engagement without a blueprint of how and when to use the correct cultural norms in interpersonal communications. Because of this trial period they were sometimes ridiculed by members of each cultural groups for incorrectly using cultural and linguistic norms (Daniels & Warmington, 2007).

The participants also suggested that if they did not develop an understanding of U.S. cultures quickly, they encountered psychological dissonance as they considered the impact of

this new physical location on identity. Living in the U.S. prevented these immigrants from fully claiming membership in the Jamaican society. Conversely, they were not given unequivocal access to full membership in the U.S. because of their immigrant status and skin color. This duality of location and membership created the need to develop strategies and identity spaces that attempted to fully recognize all of the aspects of their ethnic and racial identities. Positive and negative interactions with members and non-members of an ethnic group created circumstances that necessitated the development of an ethnic identity that offered these 1.5 Black Jamaican immigrants the ability to effectively traverse ethnic borders.

Gaining membership in cultural groups required learning linguistic frameworks that marked them as insiders in the Jamaican, African American, and mainstream American identity groups. For example, using Patois when interacting with U.S. citizens led to misunderstanding, moments of isolation, and othering by both African Americans and European Americans. This othering and marginalization also happened if U.S. interacting norms were used with other Jamaicans. Furthermore, this language management process provides contextual validation that these foreign born Black Jamaicans went through a three-dimensional acculturation process into U.S. society (Ferguson et al., 2012a, 2012b, 2014). Part of the identity development process dealt with the internalization of at least three cultural communities' linguistic frameworks. This tri-culturalism was based on the individuals' perception of out-group and in-group membership indicators (Ferguson et al., 2012a, 2012b). Furthermore, the participants all described actively making mental choices about which linguistic framework to use when interacting with other members of their multiple communities. This also illustrates the cognitive decisions they made when constructing their ethnic identities, which requires reconciling inconsistencies between the overlapping identities demands or challenges (Ferguson et al., 2014).

Similar to Olsen's (1997) results, these immigrants are inculcated into the U.S. society through the school system. As they became more "Americanized" these foreign born Jamaicans learned their placement within the U.S. racial and social structure. Interpersonal interactions inside and outside of school informed the belief the U.S. conceptualization of their racial characteristic is the first, sometimes the only, identity marker others acknowledged or welcomed, or even demeaned. For example, these immigrants were ridiculed, treated as being "weird," and their intelligence questioned by classmates and teachers because they spoke with a Jamaican accent. Because of school practices, teachers' and students' perceptions of their intellect, and their parents interactions, or lack thereof, with schools, these immigrants also learned that their Jamaican-ness should be hidden or removed.

Participants in this study felt that they received subliminal messages during school that devalued their Jamaican identity. For example, the re-education practice of placing many of them into a lower grade was traumatic and reinforced the belief that U.S. education was superior to what they received in Jamaica. The lack of representation of Jamaicans in the curriculum negatively affected the value placed on their national and ethnic identity that led to the foreclosure of overtly expressing their Jamaican identity in public spaces. For example, these participants consciously decided not to speak with a Jamaican accent, but to sound like their classmates as a way to remove the cultural roadblock to their incorporation into U.S. society. This finding aligns with multicultural education researchers who have shown a relationship between the lack of cultural representation in curricula and negative self-esteem of students of color and other marginalized groups (Howard, 2010; Anyon, 2014; Nasir, 2011).

Phinney's (1989, 2004) ethnic identity conceptualization facilitated categorizing the participants' ethnic identity as they simultaneously develop an understanding of their social

position in the U.S. racial discourse. Negative or positive socializing experiences influenced how committed a person was to identity attributes that placed them into one of the stages in Phinney's model. These immigrants seemed to be in two identity stages simultaneously. The culture shock of immigration initiated the moratorium stage of their Black American identity construction, while the negative experiences inside and outside of school activated the foreclosure stage of their Jamaican identity. Some statements made by the participants indicated that they were in the moratorium stage of their Black American identity development, meaning they had moments of exploration accompanied by some confusion about what it meant to be Black in the United States. One example of this exploration was when Ivy joined the African American student organization. She joined as a way to express her membership in the Black American community, and she was able to find guidance regarding rules of engagement as a perceived member of the Black American community.

However, the participants also were in the foreclosure stage of their Jamaican ethnic identity development because they had little or no deliberate public exploration and expression of their Jamaican ethnicity (Phinney, 1989, 2004). For example, many may have had a Jamaican flag in their college dorm room or homes, but did not express their Jamaican identity in public spaces unless they were with other Jamaicans. Some participants also suggested that Patois was their secret language that should not be spoken in public. Due to the negative treatment by teachers and classmates, lack of representation in curriculum, and discrimination faced inside and outside of schools, these immigrants developed a negative association with their Jamaican ethnicity. As a result, they were dissuaded from incorporating elements of their own ethnic cultural practices, personal experiences, family traditions, and language into academic learning situations.

These Black Jamaican immigrants also struggled with the status quo identity framework that prioritized race over other aspects of Black Jamaican immigrant identity. They felt that this framework required them to accept the U.S. conceptualization of race and become African American, or reject that framework and maintain a Jamaican identity. This finding is consistent with the work of Portes and Rumbaut, (2006, 2014) and Vikerman, (1999, 2001). The participants in the study expressed discomfort about making themselves “fit” into these established norms because they felt the racial discourse did not fully acknowledge the complexity of their national identities and ethnic backgrounds.

### **Reimagined Identity**

According to segmented assimilation theory, as Black immigrants are socialized into the U.S social structure they develop a mixed identity as they cultivate understanding of race, ethnicity, and nationality (Waters, 1999, 2001; Vikerman, 1999, 2001). The findings of this study suggest that the participants developed a hybrid identity that combined U.S. and Jamaican conceptualization of race, ethnicity, and nationality. This hybridized conceptualization took many years to cultivate and involved the manipulation of identity boundaries and artifacts. This achievement required the acceptance of one’s self and lived experiences. These individuals progressed through three levels of response to the constraints of the U.S. racial and ethnic identity dynamics to develop a hybridized self. This is seen in when Ivy and Patricia discussed combining different aspects of the multiple cultures they belong to in order to construct a personal identity schema. They started by resisting the conventional of U.S. race by rejecting membership in the Black American community. Then they developed approaches to shift between identity borders. Lastly, they constructed a personal identity framework that

acknowledges and reconciles the complexity of their group memberships. The last phase of ethnic identity development is what Phinney (1989, 2004) called the achievement stage.

These 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants developed a deep understanding of multiple social groups identity markers. They learned how to manipulate the markers to gain acceptance as members of the groups, and simultaneously engaged with the U.S. racial and ethnic identity structure, as they resisted prioritizing their American identity over their Jamaican identity. For example, Patricia was able to “go between the lines” so that she was not “strictly this, or strictly that”. In this level of ethnic identity development, these Black Jamaican immigrants cultivated an approach to identity formation that recognized the cultures, histories, and languages that make up their personal identity without prioritizing any one.

During their lives these immigrants faced discrimination and marginalization from the communities in which they were partial members. In order to reach this third level of ethnic identity development the participants had to reconcile negative and positive experiences on their journey of self-discovery. Acknowledging that their identities existed in the borderlands or the periphery of multiple cultural communities was the catalyst for the development of this hybridized personal identity (Anzaldúa, 2012). Not being a full member of any group allowed them to construct their identity the way they wanted. Knowing that others did not see them as full members in the Jamaican or the U.S. community provided a freedom of choice. This choice involved acknowledging and balancing membership within these overlapping social groups. They also learned to manipulate these norms to develop identity schemas complex enough to accommodate their individual personal identities. This finding is consistent with Engstrom’s (2001) C.H.A.T. theory, which deals with the negotiations individuals make when engaging with multiple group norms and contradictions.

The strategy of codeswitching provided these 1.5 generation Black Jamaican immigrants with a way to respond to the identity limitation and discrimination within the U.S. and Jamaican immigrant racial and ethnic identity frameworks. As newly arrived immigrants the participants faced social isolation, ridicule, and psychological discomfort because they incorrectly used identity markers during interpersonal communication. In response to these experiences the immigrants used their understanding of the social codes as a way to relieve their social dissonance. Codeswitching emphasizes these immigrants autonomy over their identity presentation.

As these 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants matured they developed a deep understanding of multiple cultural norms. A central aspect of identity development is understanding that social artifacts, such as skin color, have shared meanings, which are used to communicate among members of a social group. Therefore, by skillfully using overlapping artifacts these immigrants influenced how others responded to their identity. By controlling what they presented, they were able to shift between cultural boundaries without being ostracized as outsiders. This process of manipulation liberated these individuals from the limited U.S. race and ethnic identity matrix.

### **Limitations**

Despite efforts to conduct a carefully designed research investigation, this study had several notable limitations. They related to the length of the study, the researcher positionality as an insider, the small sample size, and the identity model used in the theoretical framework.

The first limitation was the time period of the study as it related to the data collection. Conducting research about events that occurred 20-36 years ago can be challenging based on the availability of participants, their selective memories, and acquiring relevant historical content.

Memory can be distorted by age and limited recall abilities. As a result, some of the interview data could have been skewed. However, this was somewhat mitigated by cross-referencing the interviews that increased the accuracy to the memories.

There are many advantages to having a member of a community conduct research on that community. However, insider researcher may take some cultural features of their communities for granted. In other words, assumptions can be made that the meaning and significance of particular phenomena are shared by all members of the group. At times my status may have limited participant responses. For example, some participants may not have provide detailed information about some experiences, because they assumed I had prior knowledge as signaled by phrases such as “ you know what I mean”. Because of this, it can be challenging to take a position of neutrality and look at our own culture dispassionately. This cultural intimacy can sometimes limit the kinds of observations and understandings made from the data. Undoubtedly, my positionality impacted the data obtained, but exactly what these influences were was impossible to determine with certainty because they were not deliberately explored with the participants. Despite these possibilities, the results of the study are insightful and worthy of serious consideration by multicultural scholars.

This research was a case study of only six 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants focused on depth of analysis rather than breadth. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all Jamaican immigrants across the United States. Also, because of its qualitative nature it would be difficult to replicate the study. Another set of participants might respond to questions differently: duplicating the findings is virtually impossible. However, common themes could be uncovered with a second attempt at this study and further validate the findings. Also, culturally responsive research practices may validate the findings. These include peer reviews (invite

colleagues to examine the process of the study and the findings to ensure accuracy); and member checks in which participants review early findings to corroborate the plausibility of the results or offer alternative explanations. These strategies can ensure the reliability and accuracy of the findings.

Another major limitation of this study was time. For example, the dissertation timeline imposes a limitation on the amount of data that could be collected, analyzed and interpreted. In other words the time frame limited the scope of the study. I also had difficulty recruiting participants for the study, which also limited the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Additionally, the sample size could have impacted the type of responses and perspectives to the research questions and immigration and schooling experiences. Once my degree is completed, I can then dedicate my life to understanding the intricacy of the identity development of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants.

A study can also be limited by the availability of research and the theories used to frame the phenomena. For example, Phinney's (1989, 2004) theory does not account for socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, and skin color when examining ethnic identity development. As a result this study was constrained by the theory used to understand how other aspects of social world influenced the identity construction of the participants. To compensate for this limitation, I plan on using an identity developmental model that considers gender, skin color, sexuality and socioeconomic status. These theories include Atkinson's, Morten's, and Sue's (1993) minority identity development model, Branch's (1997) African American identity model, and Sellers' et al, (1998) multidimensional model of racial identity development.

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in understanding the ethnic and racial identity development of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants, and its contribution to scholarship on the impact of immigration, race, and schooling on Black students. Research indicates that attitudes, expectations, and perceptions influence classroom climates, what is taught and how it is taught, and students performance and self-conceptions. Efforts to understand differences in academic environments for students from diverse backgrounds who are phenotypically members of the African American community but are cultural and linguistic different, should be considered when analyzing the experiences of Black students in contemporary educational institutions (Nasir, 2012). This study also may have value for contemporary educators relative to current and future possibilities for Black Jamaican students. Given the realities of schools in which students are primarily of color, and most teachers are White, the quality of education available continues to be problematic (Howard, 2010). Teachers in these situations could learn from the stories of immigrants in this study about some instructional attitudes and behaviors to avoid and cultivate in fostering positive identity development.

Academic research on communities of color often is conducted by outsiders. These individuals insert themselves into communities for the duration of their study and then leave. This highlights the possibility of exploitation of these communities because the research results are not accessible to minoritized people. Since this study of a marginalized group was conducted by a member of that group, it may not perpetuate these tendencies, and may add to the emerging body of knowledge about conducting culturally responsive research with and within marginalized and minoritized communities. Furthermore, having a Jamaican immigrant interpret the data collected optimized the ability to produce thicker and more authentic descriptions of the

embedded social and cultural constructs than may have been more difficult for a researcher who was not similarly invested in the culture of the participants and the issues studied.

The study also provided strong support for teaching and learning through a cultural lens. There is compelling research that students and teachers bring their personal and cultural attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions with them into the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Lee, 2005; Keiser, 2005). This study reaffirmed the need for teachers to better understand the behaviors and perceptions of their students from cultural perspectives, and to recognize that cultural compatibility (or the lack thereof), the nature of classroom settings, and classroom climates have major consequences on immigrant students' ethnic, social, cultural, and academic development (Banks, 1992; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 1992). Even though these immigrants were able to prevail in adverse school and classroom conditions, their painful memories of ineffective teacher-student relationships and classroom environments last a lifetime. Therefore, educators should create better learning environments for Black Jamaican immigrants and other students of various ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds.

### **Recommendations**

More investigations of Black Jamaican identity development should address some of the limitations of this study. One recommendation is to increase the amount and the diversity of the data collected. This can be done by identifying and interviewing a larger group of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants, and including younger immigrants who have spent less time in the United States. These participants would broaden the knowledge on ethnic and racial identity development.

Conducting interviews with immigrants who are currently in school may provide different information about the temporal impact of interpersonal interactions and curricula on

Black Jamaican immigrant ethnic identity development. Younger participants may reveal changes that have occurred in this immigrant community as the cultures in Jamaica and the United States have evolved over time. Such interventions could contribute significantly to increasing what is understood about diverse Black identities and schooling experiences—specifically how immigrants, who are phenotypically members of the African American community, conceptualize racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, and how they actually behave toward those differences when interacting with other members of the U.S. society.

A third recommendation is to repeat this study over a longer period of time. Tracking the same individuals over time and assessing their social, emotional, and personal identity development outcomes after valuable insights into their developing lives. Following the changes in participants identity can isolate specific school experiences that influence the racial and ethnic development of 1.5-generation Black immigrant. Understanding how newcomers respond to the social and cultural integration processes as they transition into U.S. society by way of schooling would locate opportunities and recommendations for improving these transition experiences.

The results of this study support the understanding that teachers have the ability to influence, positively or negatively, and consciously or unconsciously, the academic and life experiences of immigrant students. Therefore, observation of actual classroom interactions and curriculum choice related to experiences of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants would be a worthy research endeavor. The participants in this study discussed negative interpersonal interactions with teachers and classmates because of their perceived otherness. One way to substantiate and counteract these experiences would be identifying ways that culturally responsive education practices can change the school and classroom environment for immigrant

students. The results could improve the engagement, performance, and ethnic and racial identity development of marginalized Jamaican immigrant (and others) students.

### **Final Statement**

This study is deeply tied to my own journey as a scholar and practitioner. The questions that guided this study are grounded in my lifelong struggle to make sense of my own racial and ethnic identities. For this study, my initial questions of concern were how 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants navigate multiple cultural norms and social meanings, and these experiences affect their ethnic identity development as Black Jamaican Americans. The results suggested that public perceptions of ethnicity and race affect the negative or positive beliefs of one's personal ethnic and racial identity. Both challenges and invitations are associated with these perceptions and reactions that should be considered in formal and informal socialization and education of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse students.

I designed this study to understand the race, culture, and, ethnic identity of a select group differently by investigating how schools impact the development of 1.5-generation foreign born Black Jamaicans. There has been other research that examined how Black immigrants adapt to U.S. society through the school system. Few have isolated specific groups within the larger Black Caribbean immigrant population. This study offers a different view of the acculturation and identity development process of Caribbean immigrants by disaggregating the population. It is my hope that the study will contribute to ultimately improving Black Jamaican immigrant students' schooling and life experiences.

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT/INVITATION MATERIALS

#### A-1 (Email) Invitation to potential participant

Winston Benjamin  
University of Washington  
College of Education  
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear [Individual name],

I am writing to ask you to take part in a research study. I would like to conduct a qualitative research, about people's attitudes, concerns, and behavior. The goal of this research is to study how 1.5-generation Jamaican immigrant youth ethnic identity. A 1.5-generation immigrant is defined as a person who immigrated between the age of 7 and 13.

I am undertaking this study as part of doctoral studies at the University of Washington. I will use the information from this study to inform my doctoral dissertation. This will be a qualitative research study aimed at understanding the effect of schooling on the socialization process and ethnic identity development of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. With your permission, I hope to use my notes from our meetings and your experiences growing up in a Jamaican family while going to school in the United States. Collecting this information would not take much of your time. There would be a maximum of four interviews for one hour each at a time and place that is convenient for you.

If you agree to participate, all of your information will remain strictly confidential, and you can stop at any time. The study is not in any way evaluative of your work as a student, and it will hopefully inform how schools engage with Black Jamaican immigrant students. If the results of the study are published or presented, I will not use the names of people, names of schools, or any other information that would identify participants. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant now or during the study, you can contact Dr. Geneva Gay at the University of Washington College of Education 206-221-3456.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I will be contacting you shortly in person to discuss this with you further. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone 857-417-9638 or via email at winben@uw.edu

Yours sincerely,

Winston Benjamin

Doctoral Candidate Multicultural Education

| UW Secondary Teacher Education Program | Curriculum and Instruction



## Are you a 28-39-year-old Jamaican Immigrant?



Did you come to the U.S. between 7-10 years of age?

Actively seeking interested participants for a research study about the experience of Jamaican immigrants growing up in the U.S.

- The purpose of the study is to understand how growing up in New York City influences Jamaican immigrants ethnic identity.
- Your participation will require 2 or 4 hours of interviews.
- You will be compensated for your time.

Winston Benjamin  
University of  
Washington College of  
Education  
Multicultural  
Education

Contacts  
Email: [winben@uw.edu](mailto:winben@uw.edu)  
Phone (857) 417-9638

**APPENDIX B**  
**Consent Forms:**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:**

Investigator: Winston Benjamin  
College of Education  
Curriculum and Instruction  
winben@uw.edu  
Phone: 847-417-9638  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Geneva Gay  
ggay@uw.edu (206-221-3456)

**Investigator's Statement**

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you all the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to understand the effects of the socialization process on the ethnic identity development of 1.5-generation Black Jamaican immigrants. By investigating your life story, I am interested in understanding your reflections on certain critical educational issues and how that influences your identity, if at all. I hope to use what I learn to inform how we conduct educational experience for Black Jamaican immigrants in the future.

**PROCEDURES**

If you choose to be in this study, I would like to interview you (a maximum of four times) about your experiences in school. This interview will last no more than one hour. For example, I will ask you, if "your teachers and administrators recognize that you are Jamaican" and, "do you feel more American or Jamaican when you hang out with your friends?" With your permission, I would like also to audio tape your interview so that I can have an accurate record of our conversation. During the interviews, I will create a written transcript of the conversation that will identify you by a pseudonym only, and then I will destroy the original recording, leaving only the coded transcript of the interview. Only I will have access to the recording, which will be kept in a secure location. If you would like a copy of the interview transcript, I will gladly provide you with one.

**RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT**

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section above and in “other information,” below. Some people feel self-conscious when notes are taken or interviews are recorded.

### **BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this research study. One benefit of this study is the possibility of developing new insights about racial and ethnic identity development of Jamaican American youth. Another benefit may be bettering the experience for future Black Jamaican immigrant students based on your contributions and opinions. I will use information from this study for my doctoral dissertation and as a foundation for future research.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. Information about you is confidential. I will assign you a pseudonym and code the study information. I will keep the link between your name and the pseudonym code in a separate, secured location until June 12, 2019. Then I will destroy the information linking your information to the pseudonym. If the results of this study are published or presented, I will not use your name, or any other identifying information.

Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm. Identity development during adolescents can be a sensitive topic. I do not anticipate any participant disclosing suicidal intentions, however if any participant does disclose suicidal intentions, then I will need to provide information about counseling options. Since participants are 18 years old I cannot mandate any action but I can offer access to social networks that could assist the participant. Participants will be informed that I am a mandatory reporter of child and elderly abuse and would only break confidentiality if someone (participant or family member) is at risk for abuse (financial, physical, sexual, or other types of abuse), and neglect.

I may want to re-contact you for future related studies. Please indicate below whether you give me permission to re-contact you. Giving me permission to re-contact you does not obligate you in any way.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact Winston Benjamin at the telephone number or email listed at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Dr. Geneva Gay at the University of Washington College of Education 206-221-3456.

---

Signature of investigator

Printed Name

Date

## Participant's Consent Statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research, I can ask the investigator listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call Dr. Geneva Gay at the University of Washington College of Education 206-221-3456. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for this researcher to audiotape my interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT give my permission for the researcher to audiotape my interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for the researcher to re-contact me to clarify information.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT give permission for the researcher to re-contact me to clarify information.

---

Signature of participant

Printed Name

Date

Copies to: Investigators' file  
Participant

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **Interview Protocol**

#### **Personal**

1. If you had to write a biography, how would you describe yourself?
2. Have you ever been asked what nationality you are? (Follow up if just yes.) What do you say?
3. Do you feel like you are more Jamaican or American?

#### **Relationship with family**

1. When you are with your family, how do they describe your nationality?
2. Has your family ever questioned how Jamaican you were?
3. Do you feel more Jamaican or American when around your family?

#### **Relationship in your community**

1. Is there a Jamaican representation in your neighborhood?
2. Do you feel like you are more Jamaican or American when you are in your neighborhood?

#### **Relationship in school**

1. When you think about your school experience, can you remember a time when Jamaicans were talked about in your classes?
2. Did your teachers and administrators recognize that you are Jamaican?
3. Did you ever feel like you had to represent the Jamaican community when in school?

#### **Relationship with friends**

1. How would your friends describe you and your nationality?
2. Do you feel more American or Jamaican when you hang out with your friends?

**APPENDIX D:**  
Pre-Screening survey

1. Are you 18 years old or older? No (Stop, do not continue) Yes (If yes, continue to next question).

2. Are you a Black Jamaican? No (Stop, do not continue) Yes (If yes, continue to next question).

3. Did you immigrate to the United States between the age of 7 and 10? No (Stop, do not continue) Yes (If yes, continue to next question).

4. Once you immigrated, did you do all of your years in school in the U.S.? No (Stop, do not continue) Yes (If yes, stop).

Once all questions are answered:

Thank you for your time, unfortunately you do not meet the criteria to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time, fortunately you meet the criteria for participation in this study. I will mail you a copy of the consent forms and also set up our first in-person meeting.