

BLACK SPACE IN A WHITE ZONE:
AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF BLACK EXPERIENCES
WITHIN PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract
of
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Predominately white universities located in hegemonic areas, i.e. Inter-Mountain West region, invest an inadequate amount of resources in support of diversity or multicultural recognition. Notably, there are cultural resources specifically meant for people of color that bolsters their psychological well-being as well as their individualized academic and career success. Some of these resources include, but are not limited to students, faculty, and staff of color, cultural centers, and race-based organizations and events. This study investigates the ability of Black members at a predominately white institution (PWI) to develop a positive racial identity and increase their group cohesion. An Intersectional analysis brings out the heterogeneous divisions between Black people on campus, and highlights the psychological and social conflicts of, and effects on, people of color in at a PWI surrounded by a hegemonic off campus environment.

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Chapter I

“To succeed in higher education working class people must learn to adopt and represent middle class culture as their own. This culture does not grant dual citizenship. You must ‘leave behind’ your ‘low class’ ways, your ‘bad’ English, your values of humility and inclusion, and much more—not least people you love! In early adulthood there are developmental tasks of differentiation at play that I suspect help fuel the leap the young crossover student is trying to make. But it is a cruel and unsuspected consequence to have that process set up a chasm that may never be bridged again” – Barbara Jensen (2013: 421).

The quoted term ‘class’ can be exchanged with any *social status* from race to gender.

Max Weber (1957) based *social status* on individuals’ common mode of living and defined code of behavior. Social status has “positive or negative privilege with respect to social prestige,” thus status is a stratified cultural construct determined by a particular society (Weber 1957:428). As people within the same economic class share cultural characteristic and affinities, contextually speaking, race and gender parallel class in being a social status that too privileges individuals into hierarchical positions. These divergent stratified social status groups all share their own sub-cultures within the larger dominant culture.

While considering social status and its role in society, it is crucial to understand what culture means, how it develops, and who affects and is affected by it. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* defines culture as “more or less systematically related set of construction that people share as members of an enduring, communicatively interacting social group” (1995:161). *A Glossary of Cultural Theory* adds that a culture’s “social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored” (2002:60). As culture is structured by its members, it too has a “symbolic element of social life” that signifies the values and norms of a particular group within a defined setting (Turner 2006:111). Thus with paradox form, culture is fluid and too structured by all the individuals and institutions within a social environment.

Feagin and Feagin (2003) recognize the power struggle between divergent social status groups to determine norms and values that define cultural standards within a particular society. Dominant culture is “the understandings and symbols created and controlled by a powerful group” (2003:11). In contrast, oppositional culture is formed by minorities, less powerful social status groups, resisting dominant culture (2003:36). Some where in the middle, as an idealistic compromise of multiculturalism, stands cultural pluralism which allows each group to have “the democratic right to retain its own heritage” (2003:29). With these over-lapping, vague levels, there is inevitable and inherit cultural conflict as individuals’ battle for prestige and control between and within social status groups.

A society’ institutions are the battlegrounds for cultural control. Within an institution, the dominant status group has the greatest influence over its culture. Given the historical centrality of racism in the United States, whites remain the dominant group within many, if not most, influential institutions from political arenas to higher education. Pierre Bourdieu coined the term *habitus* to describe the reproduction of culture, and explained as “a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrat[es] past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” (1977:83). McDonald and Wingfield narrow in on organizational habitus in which “embedded norms and values of an organization can structure interpersonal interactions and social contacts” (2009:31). They go on to emphasize that “organizational habitus can affect not only what types of issues are addressed within an institution, but how those issues are raised, and the available avenues for pursuing them” (2009:31). The reproduction of white habitus protects their hegemony in predominantly white institutions (PWI).

Within predominantly white colleges, culture is constructed and maintained by the dominant population via *white habitus* (Bonilla-Silva 2003:104); however, sub-cultures or

different cultures altogether simultaneously exist. Nonetheless, whether they are mutually respected or conflicting is determined by the individual members of each culture.

Notwithstanding, power differentials influences clearly advantage the dominant group over minority cultures with regards to access to the college and its fundamental resources. More precisely, white administrators, staff, and faculty directly chose and influence the number of Black staff, students, and faculty on campus at any given time through admissions and employment committees and personnel issues. Consequently, while Black people create and mold their own culture on campus, it is inevitability economically, politically, and socially managed by the dominant population.

As culture comes from social groups, Black individuals form a racialized collective on campus (Turner 2006:175). These individuals make up the first and primary cultural resource within PWIs as students, staff, and faculty members of the Black community. They alone have the ability to create Black culture, but again, the dominant population heavily influences their numbers and capability of creating any other forms of cultural resources on campus. Regardless of their self-identification, individual Black members of PWIs are institutionally and socially categorized into a racialized social group which consequently has negative implications but could too have positive attributes.

As a minority status group on campus, the survival of the Blacks culture is contingent upon resources availability. Mary J. Fisher research highlighted that, in the racially *hostile* environments of predominantly white colleges, “minority groups had a significantly higher average use of enrichment activities than Whites had” (2007:138). The added support of activities is simply one measure and indication for the necessity of resources for Black campus membership. Moore and Toliver’s study “confirmed the need for long term, multi-contact interventions to

create a supportive college environment for Black student retention and success” (2010:935).

Their concept of multi-contact interventions can only be viably supported by the combined efforts of Black faculty, staff, and students. Moore and Toliver surmise that students “fare better in academic environments that have sizable numbers of Black faculty” and it takes the organization of Black students to get more Black faculty hired (2010:934). Furthermore, it is the Black faculty, staff, and students responsibility to maintain *institutional memory* to prevent lost knowledge of critical minority-oriented resources on campus (Turner et. 2011). In needing support of their racialized status, Black faculty, staff, and students can collectively create and maintain their own culture and cultural resources to successfully exist within predominantly white colleges.

To form this primary collective, there first must be a need and place for Black faculty, staff, and students in higher education. Arguably, there are well qualified Black individuals who are eligible to work and study within predominantly white colleges/ universities. “Only 15.9% of Black students in 2000 were enrolled in historically Black colleges and universities,” suggest that most Black students attend predominantly white institutions (as cited in Fischer 2007:125). This ever increasing population of Black students on predominantly white campuses highlights the necessity to support more minorities in higher education. However, it is questionable whether or not these institutions have the resources and/ or commitment to meet the needs of students of color within predominantly white colleges.

While the number of possible Black faculty and staff has increased, they are not proportionately represented in positions on campuses. “In fall 2009, some 7 percent of college and university faculty were Black... [while] about 79 percent of all faculty were White” (NCES.ed.gov). Equally problematic, “Staff who were Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native made up about 19 percent of executive, administrative, and

managerial staff in 2009 and about 33 percent of nonprofessional staff' (NCES.ed.gov). As the combined national total of ethnic minorities only equals 19 and 33 percent respectively, the reader can only imagine the actual number of Black faculty and staff per campus.

Given the significance of education in our technological information-based society, it is imperative to have a holistic understanding of college life, including race based statistics and qualitative data, and all of the campus characteristics that affect students, faculty, and staff performance and success among all racial ethnic groups. Because of the high stakes of education for historically underrepresented minorities, it is important to research the experiences of Black members in predominately white universities and colleges. Literature identifies that there are culturally relevant resources for Black people to use to develop a positive sense of self and strong social network on campus to increase their educational and career success (Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley 2008; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Rodgers and Summers 2008; Smith and Moore 2000; Jones and Williams 2006).

It has been established that certain cultural resources on campus for Blacks positively address institutional race and ethnicity based inequities and hardships. Research reveals particular cultural resources on campuses bolster people of color's psychological well-being which in turn increase their academic and employment success (Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley 2008; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Rodgers and Summers 2008; Smith and Moore 2000; Jones and Williams 2006). Along the same line, this research hypothesizes that limited cultural resources weaken the abilities of Black campus members to maintain a positive image of their racial self and community and to form substantial networks of support with fellow Black students, faculty, and staff.

On predominately white campuses, Blacks are keenly aware of their physical racial attributes which heightens their identification as minorities or the ‘other’ in comparison to the dominant norm of whiteness. Structured power inequalities between groups produce oppositional interest and images of each other, because their identities or concepts of self are related to each other in an inequitable manner (Glenn 2002). Furthermore, Glenn declares “oppositional categories require suppressing variability within each category and exaggerating the differences between categories” (2002:13). This exaggeration of racial identity isolates Black members of PWIs segregating them into ‘others’ due to their notable physical and adopted cultural differences.

As defined others, racialized minorities are subject to enormous micro-aggressions that can be devastating to their individual and group social psychological sense of self; however, a positive racial collective consciousness can combat and uplift their racialized existence. Current literature identifies cultural resources that build up positive social identities and networks. As stated previously, the first foundational cultural resources are the people: students, faculty, and staff of color. These individuals can create and fill up cultural centers, and race-based organizations, and ethnically-oriented events (Anglin and Wade 2007; Moore and Toliver 2010; Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley 2008; Jones and Williams 2006; Rodgers and Summers 2008; Smith and Moore 2000; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000). Having numerous Black students, faculty, and staffs provides peer alliances and mentors for individuals who relate to their race based struggles and support their social needs on campus (Anglin and Wade 2007, Jones and Williams 2006, Moore and Toliver 2010).

Specific (in)formal cultural spaces on campus give Black people a place to consciously meet to embrace their own racial values and norms without repercussions from the dominant group (Grier-Reed, Madyun, and Buckley 2008; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Rodgers and

Summers 2008; Smith and Moore 2000; Jones and Williams 2006). James Blackwell's (1985) research describes how Black people developed culturally distinct but parallel institutions, i.e. counter-spaces, to make up for the inequitable access to resources and counter their invalidation by the dominant culture. Counter-spaces are physical places that are a safe space for minorities who are surrounded by dominant ideologies, policies, and the massive physical presence of whites in the area. Counter-spaces help Black people develop their sense of identity and communal bonds within ecological boundaries as well as their socio-psychological shared values (Blackwell 1985:15).

Counter-spaces also offer minorities a way of responding to marginalization by coping, forming resilience, and using resistance mechanisms to handle the adverse effects of oppressive institutional settings (Case and Hunter 2012:257-259). Specifically, marginalized individuals create personal affirming narratives, engage in acts of resistance, and build supportive networks. These strategies fight off oppressive stereotypes while uplifting a healthier view of self and build a positive sense of community (Collins 1986).

As counter-spaces are built and maintained by intra-group members, these same people can too create racially oriented organizations to purposefully united Black individuals. These spaces allow them to challenge micro-aggressions in a positive, nurturing way that validates their beliefs and collective knowledge (Rodgers and Summers 2008; Smith and Moore 2000; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000). For example, "The Black table" and "Black Student Organizations" are two counter-spaces on campus that unify Black people (Smith and Moore 2000:18). Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso listed even more counter-spaces: Black student organizations, office services for African Americans, Black fraternities and sororities, and Black

study halls (2000:70). Seemingly, Black organizations and counter-spaces go hand in hand to support their community.

These cultural resources unite and support individuals' suffering under similar circumstances come together to have positive experiences in support of their racialized reality. However, it has not been as clearly determined how limited resource availability influences Blacks' collective consciousness and cultural identities within predominantly white universities. Specifically narrowing on how Black individuals' manage their pluralistic existence gauges their level of acculturation into dominant culture in comparison to their utilization of counter-spaces on campus. Based on previous literature, it is presumed that limited cultural resources are deleterious to Blacks' sense of self and social capital; thus, this research explores how, why, and the range of the impact of cultural resources on Black cultural identity and group cohesion.

Statement of the Problem

Current literature describes the experiences of Black members in predominately white institutions of higher education who have access to the necessary resources to increase their individualized success. This research further explores the multi-faceted cultural identities of Black members of PWIs and their intra and inter-race relations when the Black oriented resources, i.e. counter-spaces, are not available or severely limited. Presently most literature focuses on specific outcomes pertaining to just Black faculty, staff, or students as independent entities. This research addresses the scholarly void that disregards how limited cultural resource affects Black individuals' collective consciousness and intra-group cohesion within predominantly white colleges. Furthermore, this study focuses on the cultural impact and experiences of Blacks at predominantly white colleges surrounded by hegemonic white environments. It is the combination of being independent, under-represented racial minorities with limited resources in

such a hegemonic white space that makes this research significantly different and necessary in our current era of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Gallagher 2013).

Social Significance

Current literature locates Black people in residence of urban areas that contains diverse resources simply due to the sheer number of people. Alternatively, there is little information about Black individuals, their communities, and their culture in environments that have relatively small Black populations. It is presented, or assumed, as if no Black people live outside urban metropolitan areas or even in certain states all together. To fill this dearth, this research focuses on colleges located in states that have less than five percent of Black people in the total population.

Specifically, it is oriented toward the Inter-mountain West region of the United States which includes Wyoming [1.7%], Idaho [0.8%], North and South Dakota [1.8 & 1.9%], Utah[1.3%], and Montana [0.6%] (from here on referred to as Winsdum) (US Census 2012).

The Inter-mountain West is a hegemonic white environment based on the actual number of whites within the population and their power to dictate culture via the political and economic mechanism within the states' boundaries. The combined population of (non-Hispanic) whites in these states totals 84 percent indicating that all and any other ethnicities combined only make up 16 percent of the people in the area (US Census 2012). By far, the Inter-mountain West is the largest physically connected land mass that has homogenous racial population in our county.

Wyoming, Idaho, North & South Dakota, Utah, & Montana makes up an interconnected land mass of 552,263.48 square miles (that is more than California & Texas combined [417,010]). In this area, there are 7 people per square mile while the national average is 87 per square mile which means 2 percent of the US population control 16 percent of national land. Within the Intermountain West, there are 6,360,191 white people and only 95,676 Black individuals. These

numbers of actual individuals highlights the political power of the majority, as Black individuals or even the combined efforts of all the ethnic minorities could never out vote whites on any issue. Furthermore, nearly all of the historical to contemporary politicians in these states identify as white which too indicates the lack of political and social representation for racial ethnic minorities (US Census 2012).

As whites' political power dominates the cultural norms, economic factors also contribute to their hegemony. Out of 712,184 firms (private companies), only 5 percent are controlled by racial ethnic minorities and 25 percent are managed by women. These numbers show that whites run 95 percent of the private companies, and an estimated 70 percent are ran by specifically white men. With whites holding 83 percent of voting power, over an estimated 90 percent of political representation, and 95 percent of private business, it can be said that the Inter-mountain West is hegemonic white space. Thus specifically for colleges in this surrounding area, racial ethnic minorities must always exist and negotiate their reality of being different from the norm on and off campus (US Census 2012).

Although this research focuses on colleges surrounded by homogeneous hegemonic environments, some of the theories and concepts are applicable to predominantly white universities in multi-cultural areas. Places like California and New York are diverse, but still have PWIs within their states due to historical and political racial development of the United States. While minority students can more readily escape racialized hostile environments of predominantly white colleges located in diverse metropolitan areas, they should be ideally encouraged to stay on campus and feel safe in any academic surrounding. Studies show students who are actively engaged on campus, via organization and activities, are more academically successful and more likely to graduate (Astin 1993). To keep minorities on campus, they must

have a reason to stay, have a safe place they consider home, and have like-minded individuals to build community within the academic environment.

While colleges in homogeneous environments are the topic at hand, contemporary race relations and the resulting cultural identities are at the heart of this research. In examining cultural symbols, specifically language and identity of Black members of PWIs of higher education, this research extends our knowledge and familiarity of intra- and inter-racial dynamics based on Black people's perceptions and experiences. Learning more about under-represented groups- specifically Blacks- increases people's awareness of power-oriented conflicts and strengthen their ability to promote diversity in a constructive way. It is never simple to comprehend the complexity of race relations or culturally based identities; however, when people are conscientious of their socially constructed reality, they are better equipped to isolate, negotiate, and manage conflicts between divergent status groups and/ or individuals.

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines Black experiences and communities in predominantly white institutions of higher education, and employs sociological concepts and theories, specifically within a social psychological framework. Explicitly, Symbolic Interactionism helps analyze the meaning and significance of particular symbols and interactions between individuals and groups. This theory allows for in-depth micro-level understanding of Black individuals' cultural identities, experiences, and group cohesion within PWIs. Standpoint Theory grounds this research by continuously referencing the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts surrounding the individual and collective voices. In narrowing in on intra and inter-group dynamics, Intersectionality Theory captures overlapping and interrelated systems of oppression and their impacts of Black identities and experiences. Lastly, Social Capital Theory highlights the intra-group networks and deprivation within the Black community on campus. These perspectives and theories combine to create a comprehensive understanding of racial identities and group cohesion of Black people on college campuses in a hegemonic white environment.

Symbolic Interactionism

As this sociological social psychological research uses the Symbolic Interactionist (SI) perspective, it is important to clearly establish and define how SI guides this research. As mentioned above, SI highlights the symbolic meanings within any particular group and/ or experience. The social constructionist aspect of symbols highlights its fluidity due to the complexity of the changing environmental context and different individuals' agency and reality. For instance, as this research discusses racial identity, historical and social events alter the meaning and significance of racial symbols especially depending on the individuals' perspective. For example, there are some SI racially oriented studies that draw out identity based connections

within ethnic groups. For instance, Blumer (1958) found that “race prejudice as a collective phenomenon [is] rooted in the way groups see themselves in relation to other groups” (as cited Hollander and Howard 2000:344). In other words, Black people may only perceive themselves as different once they contrast themselves to another group such as whites who are the dominant populous. In using SI, the concept of race is a symbol of difference which holds divergent meaning based upon its context- such as interactions with the dominant group, with the Black community, and other. The individual constructs a sense of self in a web of relations that might devalue and marginalize or affirm and empower. What it means to be Black reflects the outcomes of these interactions.

As a social construction, race has many symbolic representations. For instance, as a racially conscious researcher, bell hooks often examines her own connections with Black culture. She reflects “I am in language” and continuously references that “Language is also a place of struggle” (hooks 2004:154). In analyzing her text with SI, one can gauge the significance of hooks’ emphasis on language and how dialect symbolizes her place within Black culture. To fully comprehend what her language is indicating and its connection to race, one must understand the context that surrounds its origins and existence. Thus SI as a perspective is enhanced by Standpoint theory as it grounds symbols and interpretations in a context of power inequalities and gives voice to the margins (bell hooks 2004).

Standpoint Theory

Standpoint Theory socially situates knowledge by recognizing and building upon the foundational conflicts on systematic problems (Davis 2008; Harding 2004; Wylie 2004). In debunking the prevalence of objectivity, standpoint theorists draw out the significance of firsthand accounts to further our understanding of scientific knowledge. Going along with value-

neutrality of objectivity suggests that inequalities do not exist, that we have no agency, or hold any influence over our current knowledge or societal norms and values. More poignantly, traditional social science cannot be neutral or objective, because their views/interpretations are shaped by their social location in the social hierarchy. Becoming reflexive of this reality can help them identify the gaps in what they see and understand about the world, and how the world is viewed from other people. Once we accept that society is a social construction, we can begin to analyze the intersectional existences of individuals from their own unique social locations as reflected in their narratives and traditions.

With an epistemic advantage, we can identify and trace the origins of a problem and highlight the intersectional context to address the inequities of power associated within and between any groups or institutions. This process oriented model of Standpoint Theory begins with its primary premise that knowledge is a produced social construct with a unique history; therefore, we must consider which individuals and groups have been systematically included as well as the ones that have been left in the margins (Harding 2004; hooks 2004). For instance, Harding proclaims “Female feminists are made, not born” (Harding 2004:135). Harding’s illustration points out that individual identities and social statuses are socially constructed. In following this example, gender and politics intersect to form a dual reality for individuals whom inherently must balance their social identity within and between two groups. Standpoint Theory allows us to contextualize identity by bringing out the voices of individuals who exist between groups and are marginalized by dominant society.

More specific to racial identity, Standpoint Theory and Symbolic Interactionism converge to illuminate the social interactions and symbols that are significant to Black members of PWIs. In considering cultural symbols, it is imperative to know how they define Black or

Blackness as it relates to their existence on campus. Figuring out how individuals self-identify with Black culture on campus isolates particular symbols that are relevant to all of them as a group. Similarly to hooks' cultural language, Blacks on campus could be unconscious or consciously connected through the cultural recognition of symbols and their meanings. Besides, they are certainly categorically related. As Blumer noted, they are aware of each others racial existence and membership in such a homogeneous environment.

As “people behave in concert within a group with which they identify” (Stets and Burke 2000:226), they also can identify with more than one group and thus must balance their identities. As they navigate diverging realities, they may choose a primary identity status; meaning that, they have greater salience with one group identity over all others (Stets and Burke 2000). For example, a female Black athlete can chose to mainly associate with athletes regardless of race or gender. An intersectional framework can help one understand such a reality. Moreover, the “consequence of vacating such a role [(i.e. denying their gender and racial orientation)] is a loss of a social network that is psychologically important” (as cited in Hogg, Terry, White 1995:258). The managing of multiple identities and privileging one over another reflects society's hierarchical placement of identity statuses.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a critical perspective for understanding intra and inter-group relations as well as cultural identity. Intersectionality involves the compounding and interrelating, arguably oppressive, effects of having multiple identities, societal status, or group affiliations (see Collins 2003; Crenshaw 1991; Daivs 2008). Colorfully put, Ivy Ken said the “combination of race, class, and gender *intermingle* like flavors in our mouths” (2008:164). As with any theory, intersectional categorization involves inequitable hierarchies that uplift and suppress individuals and groups

based upon fluid governing society values and norms. These divergent categories of identification are shaped by oppressive systems that hinder individuals' ability to point out any particular form of victimization or place blame on any insidious individuals or groups. As Collins explains "Oppression is full of contradictions" as there are "few pure victims or oppressors" (2003:591). It is this social construction of "interlocking structures of oppression" that gives power to the conceptual nature of intersectionality (Collins 2003:592). These implicit and normalized intersectional inequities are the heart of this research. The task of the analysis is to identify micro-level aggressions and interactions that marginalize individuals' full humanity in PWIs.

As categories have symbolic social meanings that hold individual and structural implications. These socially positioned classifications carry intrinsic value on an inequitable hierarchal scale (Crenshaw 1991; Glenn 1998). To decipher the symbolic meaning and value within and between categories, Leslie McCall (2005) spells out some conceptual and ideological differences of categorization based on an intersectional approach. McCall identifies three types of intersectional categorizations: intracategorical is the reconstruction of terms, anticategorical deconstructs language and meaning, and intercategory analyzes relations between groups (2005). Symbolic Interactionism specifically highlights these terminological differences that have significant ideological implication. For the purposes of this research, intracategorical analysis is not used to alter any definitions; however, anticategorical and intercategory approaches help isolate, define, and analyze the symbolic meanings and relationships within and between groups.

McCall's intersectional perspective analyzes categories, and furthers the methodological precision of Social Identity Theory's emphasis on socially constructed categories versus self-identified labels and/or groups. Social psychology is known for placing the individual in a social context; however, intersectionality provides insight into power inequalities that shape interactions

along racial, gender, and class hierarchies. For predetermined grouping, Winker and Degele point out that categories are “symbolic representation[s] [that] support, in their roles as ideologies and norms of justification, structural power relations and are-at the same time- generated with them” (2011:54). As social structures categorize individuals, people simultaneously influence the meanings of symbols and therefore the power relations of and for any given group.

This research seeks to negotiate a relative balance between agency and structure. From a social psychological perspective, individuals are attributed inordinate amount of agency in self-identifying with any social label or category. At the same time, there are power structures that impose their own categorization on individuals regardless of how they self-identify, relate to in-group members, and the culture within their systematic group. An Intersectional analysis of Black groups on campus highlights the diverse identities of their membership in relation to their intra-group associations as well as inter-group connections. This dual recognition of agency and structure brings out the prevalence of non-traditional and traditional categories that influences Black individuals and their overall racial group on predominantly white campuses.

Social Capital

Lastly, as an Intersectional analysis explores overlapping and conflicting identities of individuals within the Black community, this sociological research emphasizes their group cohesion by specifically looking at their social capital, meaning their social relations, intra and inter-group networks, and conversely their community deprivation. Bourdieu, the defined *social capital* as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (1986:248). Since Bourdieu, the concept of social capital has been discussed and refined in many ways based around its construction of relationship structure and content (see Bartkus and Davis

2009). For this research Bourdieu's classic definition will suffice; however, certain aspects and features of social capital are highlighted to pronounce their particular relevance within this theoretical framework.

While there are conceptualizations differences in Social Capital theories, there are commonalities within the known theoretical frameworks. A Marxian analysis asserts that capital is a process, not simply just a commodity (Tucker 1978; Lin 2001). Elinor Ostrom points out that capital guarantees no future benefits, has positive and negative effects, and is situational (2009:23-4). Also, social capital involves a dynamic balance between structures- i.e. their social network- and relational dimension from individuals' hierarchy status to social norms (Fishman 2000; Lewicki and Brinsfield 2000; Lin 2001). Found somewhere within the inter-connected structures are people who hold influential egocentric networks. In isolating the intersections of Black people's identities and affiliations, this research identifies the *linchpins* that harbor social capital from particular people and positions to cultural affinities (Baker 2000:83).

In short, Social Capital has a few critical components within this research paradigm. The general concept of social capital is fluid and multi-dimensional since capital is dependent on the ever-changing relational influence of individuals and social ties being linchpins to significant resources. Furthermore, dense ties of social networks increase group cohesion. However, social capital is not simply a positive concept; it is fundamentally based on personal and institutional inequality. Social capital's ability to empower minorities makes it even more imperative to isolate the significant institutional agents, cultural linchpins, and social networks within the Black community of a PWI.

Overall, the theoretical perspectives provided forms a framework for how this study examines Black people's cultural identity and group cohesion within predominantly white

colleges. Furthermore, the theoretical concepts are used throughout the analysis to contextualize and analyze the data in this research. More precisely, this study uses Symbolic Interactionism, Standpoint, Intersectionality, and Social Capital theories to critically analyze and understand Black students, faculty, and staffs' experiences, cultural identities, and group cohesion in one particular predominately white college within the Inter-mountain West of the United States.

Chapter III: METHODS

This qualitative research investigates the cultural experiences, perspectives, and communal reality of Black members of predominantly white institutions that are surrounded by a white hegemonic environment in the United State. This methodological section is organized into three main points: thematic coding, the collection process, and the validity of the data. First, this study focuses on the participants' use of language to understand identity and group cohesion of Black members at one particular college in the Inter-mountain West. As Intersectionality is a theory, it too is a methodology. Intersectionality is a particular coding process that highlights the inter-connected themes of identity within a certain group. Second, the collection process is explained by detailing where the data is from and how it was obtained. Third, there is discussion of how the principal investigator's personal background influences this research and the overall validity of the data. All the mentioned components equally contributed to the critical methodology used to analyze the experiences and social networks of Black members of PWIs.

Thematic Coding

Intersectionality Theory is used to highlight the diverse identities of Black individuals within a predominantly white college. Two main categories of analysis are identity and group cohesion. These inter-related and over-arching categories are broken down into thematic sections that were directly or subconsciously identified by the participants. This methodology allows individuals to exercise agency through self-identification, and too permits the recognition of diverse traditional and non-traditional societal categories.

Specific quotes were chosen to emphasize the participants' perspective and position. Their specific use of language indicated the significance of certain terminology, relations, and experiences. The selected quotes are written out verbatim to highlight each participants type of

speech and emphasis of significance terms that they purposefully or unintentionally used throughout the interview. Therefore, there is slang terminology and possible grammatical errors within the quotations. Via the quotes, themes reveal how the individuals are connected and disconnect to other Black people on campus. Furthermore, group cohesion is measured by their density of the social networks and use of social capital. Overall the exemplary quotes illustrate the relevance of cultural identity and the diverse networks used by Black people within predominantly white colleges.

Collection Process

With such a small population of Black people associated with Winsdum, who physically stand out simply due to their complexion, the data collection process was designed and systematically handled to increase confidentiality while gaining as much information as possible from the heterogeneous Black community on campus. In accordance with California State University, Sacramento's Institutional Review Board's requirements, human subject approval was gained by principle investigator's home institution as well as secondary approval from Winsdum's Institutional Review Board. With official approval in November of 2012 by both Boards, the principle investigator worked with an institutional agent within Winsdum to identify and contact possible participants. This agent was the only individual outside of the principle investigator who is aware of the identity of the participants within the study.

Sample

It is important to point out that not all the respondents identify themselves as 'Black.' There is a lot of historical, political, and cultural relevance concerning race and ethnic identity within the United States. People born of African descent located in the United States have been identified and/or self-identify with many different terms, such as, Negro, Colored, African American, Afro-

American, Person of Color, or Black (Ravage 1997). This research uses the term ‘Black’ due to its current epoch use and all-encompassing feature that includes all people of African descent regardless of their national origins. Furthermore, African American is not an appropriate term for this research because the participants may or may not identify as American.

The term Black is capitalized since it is synonymous with African American on federally oriented documents and culturally referenced as a distinct pan-ethnic group (Census 2012; DuBois [1899]1962). Conversely, white is not capitalized due to its ambiguous nature as it is not clear who is technically included in its categorization as it varies depending on ever changing perspective and situation. This research follows the commonly held opinion that white pertains to the dominant collective of people who choose to self-identity or can be physically seen categorically as white regardless of national origins, ethnic alliances, or cultural difference. Deciding not to adhere to the principle of equality consciously disrupts the superficial claim of a colorblind society, e.g. equality of opportunity. Moreover, this approach minimizes whites’ racial privilege as more culturally relevant and historically significant than all people of color. Overall, this research focuses on the significance of Black identity from an emic perspective in our contemporary era of conflicting race relations.

Black people are identified as “a clearly bounded group by contrast to other groups” (Ritzer 2007:922). This research does not question the ontology of Blackness (Gordan 2000); moreover, it focuses on “blackness [as] the primary racial marker; it has categorical implications” (Gordan 2000:161). Skin color puts them in their own category marking distinct cultural characteristics and communal relations. Their culture is dependent on how in-group members contextualize the meanings and significance of their actions (see Becker & McCall, 1990). Black people in this study vary by social class, age, and a multitude of other identity statuses on campus.

Within the sample, their main connection and defining characteristic, other than their skin tone which is clearly identifiable as Black, is their membership within a college surrounded by hegemonic white space.

A purposeful criterion-based sampling method was created to obtain a diverse sample of participants who self-identified and can be visually considered Black (Creswell 2009). First and foremost, participants had to identify with some sort of Black ancestry, regardless of their national affiliation. Secondly, each participant must have spent one year in within the Inter-mountain West region. Third, each participant must be a legal adult over the age 18. Lastly, each participant had to be affiliated with Winsdum as a student, staff, administrator, or faculty member for at least one year. Also, due to the low numbers of Black people connected to the University, there is an increased the risk of disclosing the subjects' identities, so the participation criterion included previous employees and students to decrease potential harm or any claimed liability placed on current employees and students. In the end, the purposeful criteria ensured that the sample was a diverse demographic mixture of gender, nationality, sexuality, age, and university affiliation.

One PWI: WINSDUM

The sample of Black members of a predominantly white institution comes from one university/college within the Inter-mountain West. WINSDUM is a pseudonym as well as an acronym that stand as a representation of a predominantly white college that can be found in Wyoming, Idaho, North and South Dakota, Utah and Montana. Winsdum is an open admission, four year degree granting public institution that annually serves 10 to 15 thousand students. There are at least 15 faculty members for every one student, which includes less than 5 Black faculty

members, less than 20 staff (including administrators), and less than 200 Black students.¹ At Winsdum, like most campuses in the named states, all the Black members of the institution make up less than one percent of the total university population. (NCES.ed.gov).

Documentation

Once individuals were identified as potential candidates, they were contacted and informed of the research scope. The principle investigator clarified to each candidate of their role by oral explanation and written documentation via a consent form before formal interviews began. Each candidate confirmed that he or she met the initial criteria and agreed to be a participant by way of their signature.

Each interview included three formal instruments: the consent form (appendix A) a demographic questionnaire (appendix B) and an interview guide (appendix C). Each participant filled out their personal demographic information relating to Winsdum. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a formal interview guide that was supplemented with on the spot questions that arose within a conversational format. The interviews ranged from half an hour to an hour and a half; the actual interview time was dependent on each participant. In total, there were thirteen interviews conducted, analyzed, and transcribed by the principle investigator.

Validity of the Data: An Insider Perspective

As this research is guided by the Standpoint paradigm, it is contextually necessary to discuss the principle investigator (PI) who is the sole author of this research. The interviews were conducted and analyzed by the same person, who holds an *insider perspective* as a fellow member the Black community within PWIs. As an insider, the PI is aware of and has the ability to recognize cultural symbols and complexities shared by the interviewees and community members. Due to the nature

¹ Due to the federal and institutional definitions, the term Black is inclusive of individuals who have origins outside of the US thus there numeric counts do not reflect accurate cultural statutes (see IPED's glossary).

of participatory observation, the PI was able to engage in a dialog format throughout the interview process. As the PI could relate and equitably converse on each topic, the participants within this study were able to divulge relatively intimate detailed information about the knowingly uncomfortable conations and relations of race, racism, and their racial community (see Bourdieu and Passeron 1990 ch2). The PI's insider position allowed for more attainable information, and it granted greater insight into the interpretation of the data and its context (Hawkins 2010). The PI's cognizance of the internal diversity and community consciousness decreases the likelihood of reporting stereotypes and inaccurate information in comparison to a non-member, an outside researcher (Barajas and Ramirez 2007).

Conversely, as an insider, there are possible hindrances within the research process and design. There can be an implicit intent and/or ideal purpose to subjectively advocate for the research participants due to an inherently bias as a member of the community. Along this line of thought, any research runs the risk of being subjective and inherently biased by researchers' perspective and ideological affiliations. As Standpoint Theory clarifies, it is better to recognize the significance of perspective and situate the research in the appropriate context. Furthermore, the PI never speaks as we or use our, nor is a personal narrative included, within the discourse to capture the participants' cohesive experiences along with their individual voices of differing identities within the Black community.

A concerning complication lies with the interview participants ability to speak openly about potentially negative and harmful realities for Black members of PWIs. As qualitative studies often involve face to face contact, issues of confidentiality and security are concerning notions to both the participant and the principle investigator. These issues can even be considered deleterious for minority members of a PWI, since they can be easily perceived as providing

information that undermines the values and norms of their host institution (Stanton Salazar 2011). These potential risks were minimized by ensuring the participants with details about strict confidentiality. Knowing that their personal information, transcriptions, or audio recordings would not be shared with anyone inside or outside their community and institution allowed them greater freedom to speak candidly.

Validity checks through triangulation of methodology decreased bias, contamination, and misrepresentation. The PI conducted formal interviews but also confirmed consistencies through unobstructed and participatory observations and informal interviews. Also, verbal discussions and written feedback from academic insiders and outsiders concerning the literature, methodology, and analysis provided for a more holistic and critical understanding of the data and its context. These comprehensive validity checks minimized potential bias and increased the reliability of the results.

The methods provided in this section collectively create a systematic approach to scientifically study, analysis, and understand the cultural identities and group cohesion of Black members within hegemonic white institutions. This qualitative research uses data from one particular college to exemplify Black people's racial realities and conflicts within a predominantly white environment. While the sample is not representative, a great deal of information is gained about the heterogeneous make-up Black community since the participants were purposefully chosen in recognition of their communal diversity. Semi-structured interviews created a guided dialog that enabled the participants to feel comfortable in divulging sensitive information about race relations within their host environment.

Great measures were taken to ensure the validity of the data and the overall collection process. The principle investigators' insider perspective adds to the in-depth understanding of the

research and minimizes stereotypical and mis-representative assumptions. Triangulation of methods with interviews, observations, and continuous feedback increased the reliability of the data, its analysis, and conclusion. All of these methods combine to systematically and critically comprehend minorities' perceptions of and experiences with contemporary race relations within a hegemonic white environment.

Chapter IV: DATA

This research investigates what happens to Black people's racial identity and sense of community when there are limited cultural resources available on predominantly white campuses within hegemonic environments. Previous literature has noted certain cultural resources, such as diversity centers, cultural organizations, and mentorship, help Black individuals develop a sense of belonging on campus to retain their presence and success as students and employees of predominantly white colleges. This research goes further to highlight how Black members' racial experiences affect their sense of self and ability to connect with other Black people within the university.

This chapter provides the qualitative results from data collected via in-depth interviews with thirteen Black members of Winsdum, one predominantly white college within the Inter-mountain West. The results are divided into four sections: the institution, the inter-racial influences and interactions, intra-racial dynamics, and community relations. Each section has salient themes that are illustrated by quotes, and then further explained to contextualize their relevance in that particular situation.

It is important to understand why the results are presented and categorized into the four inter-related sections. The organization of the results is to purposefully lay out how macro-level institutional characteristics and perceptions influence each of the following levels. The inter-racial interactions are considered the meso-level, an interactive-between stratum, that influences the individuals who are categorized as Black on campus. The micro-level and point of interest is the Black members intra-racial dynamics, perceptions, and self-identified experiences with other Black members of a specific predominantly white institution.

The Institution

The institution, Winsdum, has four prevalent and reoccurring themes: Being the Other, Religion, Economics, Recommendations to attend. These themes came from the description of Black individuals' campus experiences and perceptions of their environment.

Before considering just Winsdum as an isolated institution, it is imperative to comprehend how the surrounding hegemonic regional environment influences Black members existence in the area. When asked her perception of the culture and local interactions April said,

I just stay in my own world. Actually once, I freaked out, when I was at, um Coldstone, cause I walked in, I am not even kidding everyone turned and starred at me. And I was just like "Oh my God take a picture, it last longer." And my roommate was just dragging me by my hoody like out the door. Other than that usually I don't pay attention to it, cause they are going to think that certain way like it doesn't matter what you say. It is not going to change.

In the campus' surrounding area, April felt like she was so different that she noticeably stood out. In an uncomfortable state, she perceivably over-reacted for being "starred at." This feeling of unescapable difference was a trend for all the participants. For instance, when describing the campus, Professor Zachary Brooks said "if I want to do certain things I have to be willing to travel. And from this community it means 2 and ½ hours south, or 3 and ½ hours west if I want to be in a community with more access to things that I enjoy from culturally, to musically to, you know, um seeing more people of color." At another point during the interview he stated as a matter of fact,

People who are not of color on this campus and this community have a choice, to engage or not engage. And they exercise that choice, whether it's consciously or unconsciously every day. They could actually, they're in a position here in this community and that includes the university, so they can choose to not be around people of color. People of color don't have that same choice here in this community. You can't interact in this community without every day, with multiple interactions per day, people who identify as being white or Caucasian.

These narratives suggest that Winsdum's homogenous surrounding region impacts Black people's daily perception of self and racialized experience in the area.

Being the Other

For Black people in a hegemonic area, their appearance affects their experience on campus. Dr. Brooks noted "that I'm different. That I'm easily seen. I can't hide. I can't just walk into a room and sit in the back quietly. I stand out. Um whether I walk into a room where there are two other Blacks or whether there, cause there aren't that many." As one of the few Black professors, when he speaks of other Black people they are commonly students and at times staff, but rarely one of his peers of color. Harmony, an undergraduate, felt "that I'm like more recognizable. Like you know like cause there aren't that many of us. It was like, ya that Black girl who was on the track team. (lol) its just me." From a low level of isolation to a more apparently aggressive form of difference, Nickolas believed that people thought "um, you're not from around here." Then he went on to add, "I mean you can't walk around so many um people of a majority, you know the religious influence coupled with Caucasian, and not think that there are people looking at you thinking that you're a threat you know male or female." Nickolas knew he stood out because of the color of his skin, but also recognized what that meant from a cultural stand point.

Religion

On top of being racially noticeably different, there are religious factors that too segregate Black people and stigmatize them as different at Winsdum. Phason, a well-known staff member, characterized the campus as being "overwhelmingly white and overwhelmingly LDS in this area that people don't have the kind of capabilities of even recognizing when things they do are potentially offensive because it doesn't offend the majority of the population." With any religion or any status group, people hold particular values and beliefs that may hinder their knowledge of

and/ or contact with members of a different group. April, an undergraduate student, too noticed that “it’s predominately conservative and LDS, so it’s hard to talk to people because they are so narrow minded.” However, it is important to note that as it is a publically state funded university, Winsdum does not directly identify itself to being affiliated with any particular religion.

Economic

One would ask why a minority choose a predominantly white school in a hegemonic environment instead of a more diverse college and area. One answer is the Economic factors that influenced why Black people chose to attend Winsdum. Gaby, a graduate student said, “I got accepted. And it was free. That played a big factor.” Similarly, Victor, an undergraduate who later transitioned into one their graduated programs, said “Student athletic scholarship or I don’t think I’ve ended up here.” Furthermore, an international undergraduate student, Larry noted that “its cheap education.” ... “It was cheaper than um almost all the other schools that I had looked at. It was the cheapest.” Regardless of their title or relation to Winsdum, all of the students pointed out how economic factors influenced their decision to attend the university.

While all the previous students spoke of their personal experience, Dr. Cathleen Johnson, a professor, figured that “most of the quote unquote scholarships that Black students receive are from their athlete abilities and the um the scholarships for students from other Black nations are because of their, um, academic abilities.” Interestingly, a professor not only noticed that economic status influenced students experience, she too pointed out how it broke down for different types of Black students on campus. This economic trend sheds some light to why Black people attend Winsdum which in turn let us know money and/ or financial aid is an influential part of their experience on campus.

Recommendations to Attend

During the interview process, participants were directly asked whether they would recommend Black people to attend and/or work at Winsdum. Out of thirteen people, six males said that they would recommend Winsdum and only one man would not recommend Black people attend or work in the area. However, with an even split, three females recommended Winsdum and three females did not recommend Black to attend or work at Winsdum or any other school in the area. With a higher ration of Black men endorsing their college, it could be argued that men, in comparison to Black woman, seem to be more satisfied with their experience at Winsdum.

Inter-racial influences and interactions

At Winsdum, Inter-racial influences and interactions were categorized into eight main themes: First encounters, The Black Friend, The N-word, Cultural Recognition, Non-Intellectual Stereotype, Tokenism, Physical Body, Colorblind. Again, the organization of this data helps conceptualize how the Black community is influenced and perceived on campus. The first three themes are considered from less to more overt forms of racism or race-based interactions. The latter are more covert forms that reflect different levels of micro-aggressions. Also, Cultural Recognition and Non-Intellectual Stereotype operate on a symbolic level of norms and perceptions, while Tokenism and Physical Body are more aggressive forms of marginalization and oppression.

First encounters

A couple of the interview participants discussed some of the interactions when they happened to be the first Black a white person had ever met. Simply describing it as culture shock does not capture the magnitude of how conflicting these interactions can be for Black people. Erika, an undergraduate student, had a roommate that had never seen a Black person before moving in with

her. With shame but lack of surprise, she sadly and softly said, “She always seen them on tv but not in person.” Erika gave off a vibe that this alienating experience was not the only occurrence, but it was too challenging to discuss other occasions. Instead of sadness, Larry vigorously explained,

With white males there is always this friction, cause they’re always ready to fight and we’re always ready to fight. And another thing, just respect which they don’t have. When you meet someone for the first time, like, I will greet you with your name or whatever with my friends. But a white guy will be like ‘hey asshole,’ for the first greeting, you know. Like I don’t really know you that much to, cause they are, I think that’s how they grew up, how their culture is. Ours is not like that way. That’s like a bad thing to take. Like sometimes I’ll reply but then it’s like it’s going to be hard to make friends with this guy. Cause he is reckless with his words. Cause in my culture you know when to be reckless with your words and when not to.

These first contacts are emotional encounters for both sides. Certainly, any first experience, whether positive or negative, can be exciting considering that white individuals daily contact is normally with people of their mutual race. This places a significant amount of responsibility on the individual who is perceived as different which makes the Black person in the situation more than just another person. They become a stereotypical representation of how the dominant populous views Black culture and people as a group.

The Black Friend

After meeting a few Black people, whites in the area may develop relationship with their Black counter-parts which could potentially lead to friendship. This more continuous interaction too places psychological burdens on Black people. Larry, an international student, recalled, “someone will tell you, oh you’re my first black friend. Like are you kidding me.” When inquiring how often this occurs, he said, “like a lot, like almost ten times, like I mean from ten different people.” Furthermore, Victor, a student-athlete, illustrated how the responsibility unfolds on a day to day basis. For instance, he explained how he provides cross-cultural interpretation,

Black people have more of slang, so that's happened a lot. They're like "he said this so i don't know what it meant." All he said was, and they're like "oh, oh ok, right, I get it," that's happen. I don't know, I think like: "It's cracking over here so you might as well role through." He was like "oh, I really don't know what he said," and I was like basically he said "it's cool here so come by like come over."

This seemingly simply interaction occurs so often that Victor has been socialized to embrace his role as a cultural interpreter. He noted this skill to be a beneficial tool in his daily reality and even for employment purposes. He is proud to say he can navigate both worlds, but looks down on people who cannot so easily culturally adjust or fit into any racialized situation.

The N-word

The use of N-word, from nigga to nigger, was mentioned by participants as normal occurrence or habit at Windsum. However, only one person fully explained a situation when the word was used, how it was used, and what happen before and after it was said by a peer on campus. Erika, an undergraduate student, began by noting that "when I first got here I got here I was getting a lot of stares;" then she went on say,

I got called nigger [or] nigga. Well it was plural because I was with another friend and she was Black too. We were just walking and this girl just um uh wanted to talk to one of us, but we were talking, and then so another white girl was like "you can't talk to niggas that way" I flipped. I flipped. Like auh.

The follow up question was: What did you do? Erika preceded by intensely saying,

I punched her in the stomach and slammed her against the wall. Punched her and said don't you ever call me that. I hate that word. I hate that word cause you know growing up I was called that growing up. I hate that word.

After explaining what happened, Erika made sure to mention how she felt while it was occurring and how she decided to handle the overall situation. Erika was shocked and hurt that her peer used a derogatory term to reference them; but more importantly, she wanted the girl to understand why she reacted with so much anger. Later that day, Erica found the girl and calmly talk to her

about the situation, apologized for hitting her, but made sure to point out that it is never ok to say that word and why she was deeply offended.

Cultural Recognition

Winsdum as an institution and its predominantly white populous minimally recognized Black culture. Participants noted only two forms of Black cultural celebrations: Martin Luther King Jr Day and an annual African Night. The lack of cultural recognition for their ethnic heritage on campus negatively impacted individuals' sense of self and community connection on campus. For example, Erika recalled how:

They don't even celebrate Black History Month. I mean like they have the Martin Luther King March and everything; but other than that, it's not even celebrate it. And to be honest, being in this city, I forgot about Black History Month and that's so sad. That's so sad. So, but huh, in class we don't even have a Black History Month or Black history fact or something or we don't a theme or the month or whatever. It's around campus it's not promoted it's not, you know, so I think that's really sad.

This lack of cultural recognition denigrated Erika's sense of self as a Black person to the point that it limited her cultural consciousness. Similarly, Ricky, a graduate student, felt a loss and culturally devalued when he attempted to be involved in celebrations of his culture. In talking to representative of Winsdum's cultural center, he realized that "what I got from them was that we have plenty of diversity events here on campus. And um, the one from your culture, you missed yours. So I didn't go back to them again. The Center more caters to, it seems like, the foreign exchange students. That type of culture, so I've not gone back." As Ricky's culture was marginalized by the institution, he further segregated from the one physical place on campus with the sole mission to directly recognize diverse cultures.

Non-Intellectual Stereotype

While the Black members of Winsdum are on campus for academic purposes, they do not feel as if they are perceived by the dominant population as scholarly students or professionals. Most participants spoke of how their academic status was marginalized by people consistently assuming that they were ‘dumb jocks,’ on some form of financial aid, or simply not scholar. Frustratingly, Erica quoted a few of her experiences,

They just bluntly say like if when they bluntly say “what country are you from,” they say “do you run track,” “did you get a scholarship for volleyball or something,” or like (lol) “basketball,” “you on the basketball team?” No. “So did you get a scholarship for anything?” No. (lol). “Minority scholarship?” I got that I got asked that a couple times. “Did you get a minority scholarship?” ... (lol) Cause um here you know they just to bring diversity here they have to you know they have to you know bribe African Americans either by sports or by scholarships.

Erica’s narrative shows how the dominant populous perceives Black members of the campus as all athletes and/ or on some form of financial. This type of racist institutional norm allows people to be so comfortable with their assumptions as to verbalize faulty stereotypes that minimizes Black peoples’ scholarly identity. Furthermore, it places the responsibility on the Black people to explain themselves in defense of their personal and cultural identity. In turn, this burden socializes Black individuals to expect to answer stereotypical questions related to their racial categorization. Ricky provides an example of this acceptance in explaining,

When you know they ask me why I’m here. “Oh, I’m in a PhD program.” Cause usually I just say I’m a student, cause we are all students when I say something keep it real general. And then they go “what’s your major,” and I say oh counseling and then their like “counseling oh talking,” and I’m like “ya.” “So you getting a masters,” and “no PhD,” and they’re like “Oh, oh, oh, alright.” It’s almost like they don’t expect that answer. Um, and then the only other negative thing is that expect me to play sports and I don’t. So but the positive things are, once they hear I’m in a PhD program they go like “man that’s awesome” like um “that’s really good that you’re here.” We don’t- and then they tell me “Cause we don’t really see to many people of color getting a PhD, in general, like you know across the board.” I’m like “hey, I’m here.”

Throughout Ricky's narratives he recalls negative and positive scenarios and all the while jokingly accepts people's questions and assumptions about his status on campus. Like the other participants, Ricky and Erica have grown accustomed to stereotypical racial assumptions.

Tokenism

Black people racially stand out in most situations on a predominantly white campus. With such low numbers, they tend to be one of the only Black people in any give scenario. As one of the only people of their race, they often become a token- the sole representation of their culture and often expected to be an expert in Black knowledge. For instance, Iesha described her common experience, "I mean it's kinda hard. Obviously I've had classes where I'm one of the only Black people. So if we are talking about slavery or something that has to do with a Black person, they be like 'oh so Iesha what do think about it?' So I'm kinda like um... I think it happens often. I don't think I've ever had another Black person in one of my classes." Like Iesha, Ricky is the only Black person in his graduate cohort. He said, "it's a lil different when you're the only Black guy or minority in your classes. I mean you're the spokesmen of everything. I mean as far as diversity, you know. 'What do you think Ricky?' I don't know. I don't have an opinion. But it's almost forced cause they need to know something other than white opinion. I guess." In the situation, not only are they isolated as the only person who looks like them, they too feel pressured to defend themselves and their culture.

Students are far from the only ones experiencing this sense of isolation. While there are few Black faculty and staff, they are still some who serve in a variety of capacities and positions on campus. With less than five Black faculty associated with Winsdum at any given time, these few individuals are consistently reminded how alone they are on campus. Dr. Cathleen Johnson illustrated a common occurrence, "I was sitting on a faculty committee, and this individual said

‘you know I didn’t even realize they had any Black faculty on campus,’ so it’s like you are perceived as not being there.” Ironically, they are noticed due to their racial difference, but not seen as professional or at least not capable of holding a professional position. Dr. Brooks reflected:

More times than not it’s assumed that I’m a graduate student just passing through. Cause I don’t look that old, I look too old to be a undergraduate. So there’s still some who don’t understand that I, not only am a faculty member, I’ve taught here for over eight years, I’m in my ninth. And, so there’s a pretty significant impact. That’s it...That used to happen more early on, like I would say the first four years. I would get you know, “are you the grad, the grad student rep?” are you the, this or the, that. I get that less from faculty now because I’ve served on university committees. Um but I think I still get that from students. And then, so I don’t know. I’ve got last week in the elevator, or in an elevator, “who are you, a student up there?” Oh well, “you can call me that sure.” I get it. I get the “are you a student there” I would say at least three or four times a semester.

Both professors were questioned and arguably belittled by their white counterparts and students. Furthermore, Dr. Brooks was considered a student so much by students that rather than explain himself and his position he simply allowed them to assume whatever they liked to believe about his role on campus. From faculty to students, Black members of Winsdum are stereotyped into particular statues even though they hold variety of positions on campus.

Physical Body

As a racial minority, the Black body stands out in high contrast with the rest of the population on campus. The participants were not only aware of their physical differences, they too realized how their racial features were perceived by the dominant group. Nickolas, a staff member, said “I think people are afraid of me, like they look at me, and they think something different than I am because I am Black. Uh, some people say you’re a big Black man so you’re intimidating. And so, or I look mean.” Just as Nickolas cannot control his physical appearance, Larry, a Nigerian, cannot completely alter his accent. Larry explained “when I took my speech class the professor

always mark me down cause he said I had an accent which I think is not my problem you know. And um, there is this professor that was so hard to talk to but when my other friend, like my other white friends, go talk to him like with the same problem he's opens up more to them than me." While Nickolas and Larry cannot control their racially ascribed characteristics, they still must negotiate a reality where their appearance significantly influences their experience on a predominantly white campus.

Hair, as trivial as it may seem to outsiders, is a significant racial characteristic for Black members of Winsdum. No matter the style, Black individuals notice how they are perceived and treated due to their hair on a daily basis. Gaby mentioned,

The only thing that stands out to me is that I have natural hair, but now it's actually straight cause it's just easier. I feel like when my hair is straighter I get tons and tons more compliments cause it seems like to me that's a reinforcement of um conforming. I'm getting compliments 'your hair looks so nice,' but to me that's almost an- insult.

This recognition of hair being a racial attribute is not just a female conundrum. Trevor, a student-athlete, too deals with people commenting and moreover touching his hair. Trevor said,

I always get questions about my hair. They always ask about dreads like "hey, how'd you do that." That's the main question I get on campus. The main thing, they'll come to me asking me about my hair. "How u do it?" "It's so cool. I wish I could do my hair like that." It's the main thing I get on campus. Every day, I at least get a question or somebody coming to touch my hair. People usually ask first.

While hair may start off as, or may seem like, a 'normal' physical trait, the dominant population daily questioning and touching increases the psychological significance of their racial existence. Continuous recognition of their racial features, whether their hair is good or bad, serves as another reminder that Black people are noticeably different on campus.

Lastly, a person's overall corporal space is a significance part of individuals' sense of self which makes physical contact an influential component of Black people's experiences while on campus. Phason explained,

You know I was sitting in a meeting a couple of days go and you know this dude came in and uh, he sent me an email later apologizing, but he came in and uh for whatever reason uh he decided that uh he need to just rub my head. He just rub my head then he said, cause I was like "man, don't rub my head," he was like "well I need luck." And I was like you know look, I told him I said "I'ma tell you why that's problematic" you know cause you try to be cool right cause you know you can't just bug out so I was trying to be cool. So I was like "man, I'll tell you why later why that's problematic for you to come rubbing on my head like that." You know uh cause I always raised that you know white folk would rub your head and he said for luck. You know, which is really racist. And uh you know, uh my uncle told me about when he was young him and a white man would go finish and would want to rub your head for luck so that they would catch fish. Uh, you know, so he started touching me so I was like I can't just I can't just swell up, you know. I'm not in that position no more. And so it's those kind of things right that drive you crazy. He what I'm saying cause it's like, I don't know I don't know if he like he knew why that would be offensive but that's the kind of stuff that you're like I'm I gona trip. And that was only two weeks ago but then he sent me the email.

Phason's narrative details how his peer intruded into his personal space by touching him.

Furthermore, Phason articulated how he personally viewed the interaction as stereotypical behavior with historical significance that demeans Black peoples' humanity while advancing white supremacy. What seemed playful to his co-worker was in actuality culturally offensive.

While he acknowledges that the intruder may not have realize his behavior was considerably negative, Phason is still left with the burden of responsibility for maintaining a higher level of professionalism while enduring culturally insensitive gestures, attitudes, and behaviors.

Intra-racial Dynamics

At Winsdum, Intra-racial dynamics were categorized into five main themes: Colorblind Ideology, Athlete, African, and Others; Gender; Black Enough; University Status. These intersectional identities divide the Black "community" into groups with conflicting values, perceptions, and

experiences. The themes are incredibly intertwined trends that appear between and within themes to show the connections and conflicts within the community's intra-racial social networks, institutional agents, and social capital.

Colorblind Ideology

Colorblind Ideology is the first theme because Black people's mentality within the hegemonic environment effects how they view themselves and their position on campus and how they perceive, feel about, and interact with their fellow Black members of the university. The individuals who make up this heterogeneous group have divergent background statuses; meaning, they vary in class status, place of origin, gender, and campus affiliation. However, they still share the common reality of being racially socialized to exist in a white hegemonic area with minimal possible interactions with people of color. Their physical isolation of not seeing (people of) color impacted their psychological status to the point that they subscribe to a colorblind life style. Interestingly, even though they made direct colorblind statements, they too later contradicted these surface colorblind notions when reflecting on their experiences and ergs for more Black people on campus, to form a greater sense of cultural consciousness, and be a part of a Black community.

Many of the participants used colorblind statements to explain how race does not affect their daily reality or cultural perspective. Ricky, a graduate student, said "I used to be caught on color, like I used to be oh she's Black, white, she's mixed, she's this, she's that. Maybe now I'm at a place now that hey man we all bleed, we all bleed red... for me it's not so much the color, it's more or less about the person." In a similar form, Erika felt that for her "social groups or anything, it's not me being Black, it's not it's not, it doesn't hinder me in any way." Thus, for

Erika, she did not immediately notice how race impacted her social reality; just as, Ricky no longer considered race such a significant factor in his daily reality or life perspective.

While these Black individuals may have made colorblind claims, they just as quickly pointed out how race affects them in a social situation. For instance, Gaby said “I haven’t had a negative experience so far, except for the fact that I feel by myself or well that I don’t see people that look like me.” As she directly chose to not acknowledge any negative racial components of her life, she too mentioned how a lonely part of her reality stems from being Black in a hegemonic white space.

Like Gaby, Victor did not want to make his life or perspective about race. While he liked being around Black people, he did not want to purposefully initiate an interaction with them as he felt like it should happen “naturally.” He said “I feel like if it was an organized meeting I feel like it should be completely, I want to say like it should be completely, diverse. Like let everybody, like them kinda be drawn to one another and so like have if they’re like all races, like they’re going to be naturally drawn to each other.” In his statement, racial segregation is “natural.” For him, groups or meetings should not be designed to racially separate from one another, but it would be ok, and almost inevitable, for individuals to choose how they align themselves by race. This form of colorblind ideology misinterprets race as a natural phenomenon that cannot and should not be controlled by anyone (Bonilla-Silva 2003). This puts Black individuals in a questionable form of repression and subscription to an internally racist paradigm.

Black enough

For Black members of Winsdum, they knew non-Black people considered them Black; but within their own community, they questioned people’s ‘Blackness’ and felt at odds about how that influenced their experiences on campus. For instance, April, who has an African mom and white

dad, identifies as American said “I can’t pick and choose side, none of the people that are white that I am friends with are saying that you are not black enough verses oh they were never like that it was always the black girls.” April knows she has Black heritage and is visibly Black. However, she does not feel connected to other Black people on campus, especially females, because they directly question her racial identity. Now, she chooses to be with her white counter-parts and rarely affiliates with the Black community. Another undergraduate female, Harmony, too struggles with what it means to be Black. She said,

Freshmen year, I meet this one guy and um and I was like that’s cool and whatever. He really seemed like um all about Black people. And I never really been that way. Like, I don’t, I don’t like not acknowledge that I’m Black or anything like that. But that was just like what he was about. And he wanted to make this connection cause I was this Black girl and there was no one else. And um, one day he said to me, we were just walking, he said “oh, yeah I remember when you came, I was all excited cause I was like oh hey a Black person or like a black girl or whatever and then but then you started talking and then I was like oh wait she’s not Black.” So like the way I speak is not the like Black enough. And like really offended me; because I don’t know, he was he was just so blunt about it. Oh yeah, you did this so yeah she’s not Black.

Harmony narrative shows that regardless of gender, unlike April, she did not feel Black enough. She could not connect with Black people because she lacked the cultural capital, i.e. language, to be identified as a ‘real’ member of the Black community on campus.

Language seemed to be a significant source of conflict within the Black community.

Nickolas, a non-US staff, remembered African Americans telling him “you don’t talk Black;” and felt, “like for me that was like a huge point of not being accepted. Yeah and I was like from that point I was like that wasn’t a relationship worth pursuing for me. You know uh Black women and me, not that I pursue white women more because of that but whenever I see a Black woman I immediately revert back to those earlier experiences that I had when I first got here.” For Nickolas, again, there was a gender conflict; however, for another staff member, Phason, class

and race in higher education determined how he chose to speak and his use of language on campus. Phason explained,

You're not going to be very successful in academia if you sound too Black. It's just not going to happen, right. Even if you go to an all-Black college, or you're a professor in an all-Black institution, as soon as you write and you try to write in all Ebonics you're not going to get published. And if you get, if there is a Ebonics journal out there that journals going to be looked at kind of suspect.

Phason chose to speak in a way that uplifts his inter-racial relations over his cultural standing in the Black community. Code-switched, changing his language based on who he was with in any given particular situation, granted him positional respect within any racialized setting (Blom & Gumperz 1972).

Africans, Athletes, and others

The theme of Africans, Athletes, and Others breaks down into three intertwined sub-categories. It has its main section that shows how all three interact but goes further to highlight two other sub-division: Africans vs African Americans and the Athletic Bubble. It is important to remember that this section focus on how Black individuals view, speak of, and interact with other Black members of Winsdum.

All the participants noted the divisions between and the perceptions of different types of Black people at Winsdum. Trevor said "I know the African Americans that are here are either from Africa or athletes." Furthermore, April adds that "the Africans don't interact with like the African Americans and the Athletes only hang out with each other." While Trevor and April speak as students and note what they perceived to occur, Phason contributed his knowledge as a 20 year member of Winsdum's campus community. He said,

I think we can look and say that's a question of internationalization of universities. Cause I think people look and say look at all the Black people in school but "how many of them are African." Well at least people look and say "well we got a lot of Black going to school," but that makes it somehow it can

lead to the perception that we don't need to recruit as many African Americans cause we're doing good for African Americans right cause we have all these Black folk. But we're not bringing African Americans in, see what I'm saying. So we, and the ones that we bring in are athletes and their experience is different. Right, because they don't have the kind of cultural support staff that all these other groups have right. But we look and say look at all these Black folks. They must be doing ok.

Phason's statement details the conflict of how people notice that Black people are on campus but fail to recognize the heterogeneous types of people who are socially and institutionally categorized as Black.

Overall, their statements highlight how the Black community is heterogeneous and are more than simply a bunch of Black people who subscribe to the same ethnic culture. At Winsdum, there are Black athletes, people who may or may not identify as American, and Black individuals who do not identify with sports or personally proclaim any particular nationality. Some of these Black individuals may not relate to any other categorical status and may resent a stereotypical categorization holding back their autonomy and/or sense of cultural consciousness.

Africans vs African Americans

Africans and African Americans are divided on campus regardless of their institutional categorization that lumps them together. Larry, a Nigerian national, said "I don't think it's a united community, so I don't know how to define if I belong to it or it's not a united Black community. It's like it's separated Black American, and African Americans, oh, Black Americans and Africans. Plus in the African, with Africans there is still division cause um the East Africans the West Africans like it's so hard to get everyone together." Then, an US national, Ricky said,

Like there's African like African clubs on campus but I don't feel a connection to that cause I'm not African. Um and I haven't seen and maybe it's just me cause I don't leave very much this building. But um I don't I don't see many Black clubs. I don't even know they exist. I mean I'm sure they do. But I haven't seen

anything like I haven't I mean when they have a cultural things go on it's usually African-Africans. Its Africans, not Black people cause for me that's a distinction. They see us different and I see them different.

Larry and Ricky's statements describe how both group equally segregate Black people into distinct cultural entities. However, Winsdum as an institution enumerates them into one all-encompassing group regardless of their personal affiliations and/or cultural associations.

Athletic Bubble

At Winsdum, Black athletes are encapsulated in their own 'bubble.' Their experience on campus is unique to them and while they may or may not realize it, non-athletes notice the segregated differences. Phason, a long time staff member, captured the essence of the situation,

We need to attract African American students, Black students who are not just athletes and not primarily athletes cause that's the problem I think, that most of the folks are Black students are here are athletes and because they're athletes, they are busy and that means they aren't particularly connected with the rest of the institution with the things that they're doing on a social basis.

While Phason recognized how the student population was skewed towards Black athletes, the athletes see everything as 'normal' within their comfortable Black community.

Consider how Trevor, a basketball player, and Victor, a football player, describe their college experience and Black community. Trevor said that "I feel like since I'm an athlete my support comes from my teammates. A lot of my teammates who are African American, we have more African Americans than white so... I thought it was supposed to be something more recognized but that's basically it, my team." Victor said he hangs out with "the normal student population, a lot of athletes, more or so athletes, we are always around each other." While telling about Black people he knows on campus, he said:

Well, um a lot of people like in, my coaching staff, I have a good relationship with my coaching staff. And three of the four was it four of eight coaching member of the staff were Black. The whole defensive staff were Black. And I had a good relationship with all of them, especially my position coach. My

athletic administrator, my mentor, my advisor- he's Black. Um some body that works in administration.

In his description of Black people on campus nearly all of them were somehow associated with sports and/or the athletic department. Their whole world is formed around athletics and for them that just coincidentally happens to be most of the Black community.

Outside of the athletic bubble, one of the only Black professors, Dr. Books noted that:

In those situation where I've walked into a room and there are a great deal of Blacks cause that's a situation where they've been student athletes and they're amazed another Black man is here. Cause they see so few, they see their coaches, they see their direct of academics, they see one other person who works with athletes so they see in their sort of bubble five on a campus with over 13,000. And wow, look there's number six. So, um, I think that also get a a sort of double take. And then when they find out what I do, I think that raises an eyebrow.

Dr. Brooks narrative aligns well with the student-athletes' descriptions. There are very few Black people at Winsdum and seemingly most of them are associated with the athletics department, so much so that Black people are surprised when individuals are not athletes.

Gender

The gender dynamics within the Black community breaks down into two main themes: counting them out and female isolation. The first details how the participants actually enumerated the Black females on campus. The latter describes how the women were disconnected from the Black community.

While gender was not formally included of the survey tool, it came up in all the interviews as a significant attribute within the Black community at Winsdum. Out of all the African American and African females on campus, Harmony supposed "I'd say 20 which is probably way off but I'd say that's how it feels." This meant she figured there were only "20" females out of "300" Black people on campus. Nickolas, a staff member, said, "Um the African,

the African women um I think its gotta be in the teens and um Black African American women I can think of three.” Trevor recalled the few Black women he knew in a more qualitative fashion by saying,

Black females on campus, there’s not a lot on campus. All my first year, the one that used to twist my hair, she left and went back home. She from African, so she went back to Africa after she graduated. Um, it’s a mixed athlete of the basketball team. Um, there’s actually one Black athlete on the track team and she Black. She reminds me of my younger sister but I don’t talk to her like that so. There’s not a lot of black females here. You see way more Black males here. If I was to throw out a number, I have no idea. There has to be 10, just to say 10.

While recollection was primarily dependent on whom he could think of, Larry, a Nigerian, broke it down by national affiliation and include men in his ratios:

I would think that’s its 3-1 for Black Americans being 3 and Africans being 1. Cause the ones in school now there in the few, there are fewer now then the Black Americans are the many. Oh, there are very very few Black American women that I know of. I know of 4 or 3 and only 2 of them I talk to and the others I don’t. I’ll say the African women are more than the African American women. That I know so I’ll say like 3-1 same thing cause there are more African males to African females. There are more African female than Black American females.

As the participants counted Black females, most of them stated an extremely low number.

However, Larry estimated a roughly close ratio with 3 males to every 1 female student on campus.

Female Isolation

With a low number and percentage of Black females on campus, they end up isolated and feel less connected to the Black community. For instance, Dr. Cathleen Johnson, a non-tenured professor, said “I can remember several times one or the other telling me ‘well g-wiz, we you know just going to have to invite you to some of our group meetings sometimes.’ I was like well I didn’t even realize y’all even got together; but I you know later I realized, yes they did and yes I was isolated.” While she felt left out of the group, it unclear how often the males attempted to

include her. To gain some male perspective, Ricky, a graduate student told of his relationship with the only Black female in their program. He said “our connection is school. We don’t really hang out outside of school. Her choice, cause she does her thing. She’s having a tough time adjusting, a real real tough time adjusting. I say hey come over for dinner. We’re here for you; but, she isolates herself. So I can’t help her if she doesn’t want to help herself.” In both narratives, the men noticed that they should be inclusive and yet the females are still left feeling isolated. An undergraduate, Harmony felt just as awkward and males had nothing to do with it:

Personally, I don’t really feel like the most welcomed into that whole like Blacks here... I personally think that it’s Black girls. Like they think and this is um I mean, um I feel like they think that I think that I’m too good or that I’m better than everyone else. And that’s, and at the same time they at like they are too good like won’t even, I don’t know, I feel like they stare and that they don’t say hi... I did [say hi] at the beginning. As a freshman, I’d smile and be all like hi. Then you just, I don’t know, I’d just stopped.

In the end, Harmony felt so unwelcome that she stopped attempting to include herself. Harmony’s narrative showed how isolation changed her social psychological status to the point that she suppressed her behavior to mimic what she perceived as the appropriate form of interaction with other Black people.

Institutional Status

While the students mainly articulate a status divide between athletes, Africans, and African American, Winsdum employees noted conflict due to their differing positions and responsibilities on campus. First, Dr. Johnson notice the purely low number of their collective by recalling, “1-2-3-4 uh 5 Blacks that are employed on campus right now,” adding that “I was the only Black female that was employed on campus at that time.” Then a staff member, Nickolas struggles to connect due to power dynamics:

I didn’t just go talk to her because I was a like I don’t want that student to feel like I’m picking up on her or something. But that’s how I am with females. I

wanted to find out where she was from. You know uh I had only seen her alone every time I had seen her. And I had only seen her alone, never with somebody else. So I wanted to ask her you know like how are things going here for you. You know just to reach out to her because she seems like a loner to be on campus.

Again, in his statement, a female was isolated; and as staff, he was unsure of how to connect with her. This conflict is not just about gender, because there was also a power conflict due to his employment status on campus. Dr. Brooks said

There's such a difference between what we do professionally between professional staff and faculty and the times we have to do it. You know, I, it's hard to match schedules, also there's time, then when you have a cause or a thing you really want you have to make time you have some place to do that. My office can't hold all of us, well it probably could if we probably tried.

Dr. Brooks' narrative detailed the difficulty of coordinating all the employees together even with the low number that Dr. Johnson counted out.

Community Relations

The core of this research is to understand the communal relations between the Black individuals at predominantly white institutions. All of *the instructional* characteristics, the *inter-racial influences and interactions*, and the Intra-racial dynamics impact the ability of the Black individuals to build a community and develop a positive sense of cultural consciousness on campus. The participants made remarks about how they currently relate to and interact with other Black individuals and groups. They also mentioned what helps them connect to the University's Black community and specific ways of how they develop a greater sense of Black culture on campus. The theme of 'Community Relations' is divided into two parts: Symbolism and Advocacy.

Symbolism highlights important values and norms that Black individuals hold as a significant part of their cultural experience on campus. It breaks down into two sub-sections of

‘Connections’ and ‘Affirmation.’ Connections details how individuals connect, want to connect, or feel disconnected to Black people on campus. Affirmation highlights how Black people want or believe that Black individuals automatically should or do acknowledge their presents in any given situation.

Advocacy involves a mixture of what the participants currently like and what they would prefer to have on campus. This theme highlights quotes that describe the importance of Black individuals taking a more active role in providing services to the community. It shows how individuals build meaningful associations with fellow Black people and feel connected to the community through mentorship, leadership, and friendships.

Symbolism

Connections

Paradoxically, the participants felt automatically connected via race which is why they needed each other but simultaneously some individuals felt disenfranchised and not directly embraced enough by the perceived community. This section shows three components of how they feel connected, their sense of need for each other, and how they are simultaneously disconnected.

The participants described feeling an “automatic” connection to Black people on campus. Victor said “I feel like, just people, like Black people are automatically more comfortable when they see another black person. Like he’s Black, I’m automatically connected to him.” Victor’s sentiments were echoed by Trevor, as he explained, “if I’m around you know African Americans than I’m more comfortable in just talking freely. Where I find myself sometimes in the office or something and gotta make sure I sound more proper, you know what I mean.” These students felt more “comfortable” with Black people on campus in comparison to other racial groups.

As the participants felt connected to Black people on campus, they described why they need other Black people on campus. Phason said that “not a day goes by when I don’t think about my ethnicity,” and proclaimed, “I’m particular concerned with what it means to be African American. I think about it all the time. I never forget that I’m African American.” While recognizing his cultural consciousness, he added that “we don’t have luxury, I think, in this community at this school to not acknowledge each other, to not interact with each other.” This message of dependency was passed onto Nickolas by a fellow Black staff member. Nick recalled a female staff member telling him “‘we gotta make sure we look out for each other,’ meaning Black person to Black person. Cause some of these folks, from her words, ‘you can’t trust them you know.’” These three different staff members recognized a need for Black people as a matter of survival at a PWI.

However, not all the Black members of Winsdum felt this immediate connection but seemed to want to belong to the community that they were not intimately a part of on campus. Dr. Johnson said “I really didn’t feel like I was a part of the Black community on campus.” She believed this to be because there were “groups of Blacks that is on campus have formed their little own family per-say.” Erika felt this same challenge to join the ‘group,’ she nervously explained that “sometimes um well if you see if you see ok, if you see a group of Black people together sometimes it can be a little intimidating if you don’t see the person the one individual who you know more than anyone else and stuff, sometimes it can be a little intimidating, but you just get past that and you just go and say hello and everything.” With this group-identity conflict, Harmony suggested that “all I can think of is more Black people. There need to be more of them who aren’t athletes. More non-athletes so it becomes more normal to just be a, just to be able to come to school here and be Black and to go to school here.” These three females felt

disconnected from the community because they could not identify with the largest Black subgroup, the athletes, on campus.

Affirmation

A sense of acknowledgement from Black individuals is the foundation for developing a cultural consciousness to build up the symbolic capital within the community. Professor Brooks said,

I'll stop and I'll introduce myself and I'll ask them about themselves because I think that's nice. When I see students, especially when it's somebody I haven't seen before. And a part of it is because I believe you have to have a connection to this place some sort of connection to to to weather it. And sometimes someone saying hello and acknowledging your presence and really and honestly just asking you about you cause their interested in you for no other reason is is a really it can have a nice impact. So um when I ask a student "what do you do here" and they tell me they're sport, I say "no, I wasn't asking you about that." For some people that's shocking or it's a surprise cause they don't get that often... Most times, it's, I initiate that interaction.

While Dr. Brooks was open to initiating random conversation, Phason has begun feeling a little differently,

It really bothers me when I see students, young Black, especially Black men... [who] don't talk to folks, pass you like a freight train passing a dog. Drives me crazy. Right, it just drives me crazy. Not even a head nod. I've seen I say you know and I'll say hi and they'll say hi, you know. But I've seen where you know it's only us and they'll look at you and they'll look right through you. Now I recognize this is some of this stems from the fact that they come from bigger places and they don't speak to everybody right. When I go to the city I don't speak to everybody, right. But, you know, there's a certain, you can, you can acknowledge somebody even by just looking at you without nodding your head or anything, right. These cats, these cats don't see you. You know and that drives me crazy.

Just like the employees, the students too felt the need for recognition. Trevor said "when I see other Black people on campus it's like 'who is this,' kinda like that. Even if you know their name or don't know their name, you always nod or you see them or feel some kind of connection. I always speak when I see Black people." These narratives show that acknowledgement of their

racial identity was a significant part of the social and cultural capital of Black members of Winsdum.

Advocacy

Being an active individual on campus is crucial to their development of Black cultural consciousness and building up the Black community at predominantly white universities. Having social capital and a strong network takes consistent support from individuals with diverse backgrounds and differing statuses on campus. Dr. Johnson, the only Black female professor, said “you definitely need more faculty, and faculty who are willing to uh function as mentors.” She felt this way because she was fortunate to have Black mentorship. She explained “He was a very strong support person uh and role model on campus.” In the end, she added “I um mentored uh many Black students on campus.” A fellow professor, Dr. Brooks noted that “I have one young man who I mentor, um another young woman, graduate students in this department in this program... At times I think I feel an extra purpose sense of purpose in helping them have a good experience.” On top of individual mentorship, he advised a student club that no longer exists. He mentioned that “I don’t know what they are doing these days. Those students that I’ve advise in that group graduated and nobody else came up. I don’t know if there are any other.” These professors were active on campus because they recognized the need and appreciated the connection within the Black community.

Just as the professors felt a need for connections, students too appreciated their activism.

Iesha said,

I use to have I guess a professor, mentor, kind of advisor- and he’s gone. He really pushed me. He always sat me down and was like if I didn’t get a 100 on an assignment or something, he’ll be like “oh you know you’re better than this.” And “you know you have to work harder, especially because you know you are one of the many underrepresented Blacks at this college,” so he’ll be like “you

need to push forward.” He always still checks up on me, so I think he kinda a person who drives me and pushes me to do better and be better.

Iesha connection with her active professor’s motivated her to do better academically, but that is not all the mentors do for fellow members of the Black community. Ricky noticed “I met a lot of African American people [because] Dr. Brooks would introduce me to people. He would say ‘hey this is dududuh that used to go here,’ so uh, that were Black.” These introductions to fellow members of the community are a significant part of their social network and capital. Larry explained how “it would be easier for me to approach a Black man than a white man. I’m not saying I won’t, but then the readiness of me approaching a Black man is higher. That’s what I think.” All in all, the students and equally the employees of Winsdum appreciate activism and continuous engagement in the Black community.

Summary

This research set out to investigate what happens to Black individuals’ cultural identity and sense of community when there are limited cultural resources available on predominantly white campuses with hegemonic environments. The data collected in 13 in-depth interviews produced robust results about four key aspects of their experiences as a Black member of a predominantly white institution in a hegemonic white area. The ‘Institution’ as a whole had certain characteristics that influence Black individuals’ experience on campus via economic factors, being otherized, and religious backgrounds. The ‘Inter-racial influences and interactions’ impact how Black individuals’ viewed and conducted themselves via the first encounters, as the Black friend, with the N-word, cultural recognition, non-academic considerations, tokenism, their physical body, and colorblind notions. The ‘Intra-racial dynamics’ divided the community based on social identities such as being Athlete, African, and others, gender, Black enough stereotypes,

and University statuses. Lastly, their 'Communal relations' were the core components of this research. Symbolism via their connection to and acknowledgement of each other and Activism were the main ways the Black community built up their social capital and were able to feel a greater sense of cultural consciousness on campus.

Chapter V: RESULTS

This research investigates the multi-faceted cultural identities of Black members of PWIs of higher education and their intra and inter-race relations when the Black oriented resources are not available or severely limited. It is the combination of being independent, under-represented racial minorities with limited resources in such a hegemonic white off-campus environment that makes this research significantly different and necessary in our current era of color-blind racism. The previous chapter identified varying themes of Black students, faculty, and staffs' experiences on camps; now, this chapter elaborates the sociological significance and social implications of the qualitative results.

This chapter discusses two outcomes based on the data: 1) the conflicting experiences within the Black community on campus and 2) the challenges and values of being accountable and responsible for minorities' existence within PWI in hegemonic off-campus environments. Intersectional theory brings attention to the power conflict between agency vs structure and attributes the burden of responsibility to the institution, which should be accountable for, obligated to, or accept ownership of valuing, managing, and considering race relations and minorities' experiences/ wellbeing on campus. The chapter ends by discussing the research limitations and possibilities for future studies.

Socialization of a Colorblind Era

Socialization is the processes in which people are taught and adapt to what is considered normal by the dominant population, and learned who they are, i.e. the I, me, and Generalized Other (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). As people accept, moreover embrace, what is perceived as normal,

the norm becomes a part of their identity, a core part of their beliefs and values, and essential to their life perspective. Temporal space, meaning time and environment, is an influential component of the socialization.

In our contemporary era, overt racism has been challenged as a norm and its expression has shifted to covert institutional and cultural forms of racism. Many people narrowly confine racism to blatant individual actions that are momentous in nature that constitute micro-forms of discrimination, and mistakenly reduce the institution and group level problem to the individual level (Merton 1949; Blumer 1969). Conversely, modern Critical Race Theorists like Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso research the pervasiveness of institutional racism that “affects the structures, processes, and discourses of the collegiate environment” (2000:63). From everyday individual interactions to institutional racism, colorblind racism is systematically normalized in society (see Bonilla-Silva 2003; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin 2007; Taylor and Clark 2012; DeCuir and Dixson 2004). Socialization teaches our generation that race should not be directly pointed out or accounted for in anyway or for any reason (e.g. Bakke vs Regents of the University of California).

Within predominantly white colleges, racism occurs as micro-aggressions that are verbal and non-verbal behaviors. The dominant group continuously engage in negative interactions creating a tense racial climate inside and outside of the classroom (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Grier-Reed 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin 2007). This micro-level racism is enacted in three forms at Winsdum.

The first type, micro-invalidations minimize the worth of the Blacks' sense of self (Grier-Reed 2010:182, Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin 2007:274). Winsdum's campus offers minimal, if any, recognition of Black culture. In any given calendar or school year, there were only two possible Black culturally-oriented events, one hosted by the University on Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) day and the other coordinated by the African Student Association. Furthermore, the institution's cultural intentions are questionable as MLK day celebrations are promoted as 'Human Rights Day.' It is not as an official recognition of African American contributions, nor is it a day of awareness about their cultural preferences, values, or concerns. Outside of these two events, Black culture is not celebrated or acknowledged in any way by the institution or individuals on campus. There is no ethnic studies department, African American/ Black history class, Black cultural lectures or activities of any kind on campus. At the most, a couple of the participants who were connected directly with the athletics department mentioned visiting speakers of Black decent who lectured on a variety of non-ethnically related topics. Black people's sense of self is seemingly devalued on campus when only 2 of 365 days promote a positive acknowledgement of their culture, heritage, and contributions.

The second type, micro-insults are culturally normalized racist behaviors (Grier-Reed 2010:182, Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin 2007:274). Erica's narrative of when she was referenced as the n-word by her white courter-part shows how micro-insults can build up into a larger problem. Erica, like other participants, had been verbally insulted on multiple occasions to the point that led her to physically attacking a white student. Granted physical violence should never be the answer; however, who is responsible for teaching Erica and equally the white student the appropriate form of inter-racial conduct? Furthermore, how

equipped is the institution to manage cultural conflict if they already fail at substantially recognizing other minority cultures. Remember, in the greater area that surrounds Winsdum, whites make up over 80 percent of the population and Blacks are less than five percent. With such a skewed ratio, it is not uncommon for Black people to be considered the first or one of their few Black friends, and even the first Black person who whites in the area had ever met before coming to campus. These alienating racial experiences insult Black people's humanity and devalue their personal sense of self on campus.

The third type, micro-assaults constitute more conscious and manifested forms of racist behaviors (Grier-Reed 2010:182, Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin 2007:274). As a seemingly more overt form of racism, micro-assaults can still fly under the radar of directly suppressive behavior. Consider Phason's stereotypical interaction when a fellow staff member rubbed his head; not only did this man assault his corporal space, he disrespected his cultural bounds in two ways in the same instance. First, his white privilege allowed him to lack cultural awareness to the point of sheer arrogance; when secondly, he enacted historically offensive behavior in a professional setting. His actions represented racist behavior, dehumanizing and disrespecting a Black co-worker, something he would not have done to a white one. This unequal and abusive behavior highlights white campus members' sense of superiority as they relate and treat the "other" as less human. Yet, through it all, Phason was the one left with the responsibility of managing his sense of self and suppressing his behavior after being racially assaulted. The skewed ratio of hegemony increases white privilege to the point that they act with less constraint in applying racial stereotypes. The comfort of privilege allows for micro-invalidations, insults, and assaults that Black people endure on a daily basis. These over-lapping micro-aggressions cumulate over time to damage the sense of self of all PWI members of color.

These micro-forms of contemporary racism impacts Blacks' daily experiences on campus from feeling alone in class to being the tokenized 'other' who is expected to represent and speak for all Blacks on campus (Jones and Williams 2006:26, also see DeCuir and Dixson 2004). As the participants spoke of the many occasions of being the only Black person in their class and while on campus overall, their use of language showed how socialization led to their acceptance and normalized existence as the 'other' within the campus' hegemonic environment. They mentioned how after a while they did not even notice or think about their isolation; yet conversely, knew it was their 'assigned' responsibility to speak when Black culture was the topic at hand or when people indirectly needed resolutions stemming from their racial divide.

This inescapable racial symbolism takes an exhaustive toll on Black individuals' psychological wellbeing, social capabilities, and academic/ employment career, because colorblind racism presents a conflicting reality for their socialized behavior. As they see all whiteness as the institutionalized norm, they normalize the values and behaviors of their peers and authorities (Freire 1970). However, their ironic socialization to act as one of the dominant group becomes challenged when the hegemonic populous' otherizes them to speak for or be representative of the racial group who are denied existence in the first place.

Due to the racial climate, Black members of PWIs must figure out how to negotiate their dualistic existence on campus. Being a student is a challenge in its own right; yet, being a Black student further complicates his or her experiences as they too must deal with external forces outside of their control. Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) found that Black students feel invisible and drained, often doubting themselves; note that they are under constant scrutiny; and emphasize their low numerical status denigrates their academic performance and causes them to

change classes, majors, and even leave the university. In accordance with Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso's findings, this study found Black students, faculty, and staff felt like they had to work harder to prove their academic rigor, isolation pushed them towards further segregation off campus or assimilation into white groups, and all the participants knew of Black peers who were pressured to drop out. Their racialized reality dictated their limited academic options in that they either tolerated the emotional, psychological, and possible physical stress on campus or accept the failure of dropping out. More to the point, their academic capabilities are hindered by predominantly white campuses' hostile racial environment. The qualitative evidence presented this study gives possible explanation to how and why institutional racist expectations and treatments take a toll on Black members of PWIs, as shown in quantitative evidence of unusually higher dropout rates of student and lower retention of faculty and staff.

Unlike the finite reality of students, Black staff and faculty must strategically navigate their racialized existence to maintain their continuous employment. As Black faculty average less than ten percent of faculty in universities across the nation, they carry a heavy workload as they are expected to fill significant roles as mentors, role models, support nontraditional scholarship, speak for minorities within universities' governance, and contribute to overall campus diversity (Jones and Williams 2006:26). Faculty and staff participants in this study all mentioned their continuous roles as mentors and support systems for Black peers and students which was in addition to their normal expectations, responsibilities, and workload on campus.

While many could argue that Black faculty and staff can choose to avoid or minimize their diversity-oriented service work, they cannot escape their racialized presence inside the classroom and within shared governance. Black faculty [and staff] must continuously engage in

emotional work and labor to balance their professional demands and their personal feelings, moods, and biases (Harlow 2003:349). For example, they deal with white students' challenging their teaching abilities and subject knowledge (Harlow 2003; Moore and Toliver 2010; Tuitt 2012). All the participants of this study shared to how they directly handled these challenges or what could be deemed as racial micro-aggressions. Recall one faculty member allowed students to regard him as just another student; and equally challenged, a staff member altered his communication in attempt to command enough respect as to avoid students questioning his subject knowledge. This constant pressure to minimize racial aggressions adds emotional stress and detracts from their primary educational focus. More poignantly, devaluation of their intellect and skills impairs their psychological health and diminishes their energy to contribute to other campus responsibilities. With so few Black faculty and staff who are simultaneously balancing their multiple professional roles and their personal identities, it is difficult for them to holistically contribute to the social network of support in Black community within PWI.

As Black students, faculty, and staff exist together within PWIs, they all bring their own personalities, ideas, and experiences to campuses that understandably vary due to their unique class, nationality, and socialization which have shaped their values and beliefs as individuals. Research shows the salience of their personal racial identity effects their connection to Black culture and people (Anglin and Wade 2007; Lott 2008; Moore and Toliver 2010; Smith and Moore 2000; Tuitt 2012). Results indicate that negative perceptions of their own racial group decreased their racial salience and in turn negatively affect their group cohesion in an area with limited cultural resources.

Black socialization before and while on campus influences how they self-identify and relate to other Black members in the PWI. Blacks are not a homogenous pan-ethnic group on

campus (Smith and Moore 2000). An intersectional analysis of Black members of PWI highlights how individuals are simultaneously racially categorized together but also segregated by social divisions along nationality, class, and gender lines among others. Two of these group diversions were revealed by the participants' self-identification preferences via their use of certain terms and reference to cultural symbols.

First and foremost, all the participants spoke of the national divide between those born and not born in the US. As they considered themselves to be some version of Black, they enacted their agency in choosing how they self-defined ethnically within the racial category (Waters 1999). Some made sure to use the term African American, while others spoke of particular sports in reference to a certain group, i.e. Africans played soccer while African Americans, football and basketball. Additionally, they all knew of both Black-oriented events on campus but defined the racial divide by attendance as Africans supported African night and Americans participated in MLK day.

Second, the participants paid special attention to the non-traditional categorization of being an athlete. The athletic participants actually defined their primary status as athlete and only made mention of their racial heritage when it was absolutely necessary. In uplifting their self-identification as athletes they simultaneously attempted to minimize their Black identity. Athletes distancing themselves from their racial categorization did not change others perception of them as Black athletes; however, it isolated the non-athletes from the community since they could not personally relate to the same intersectional experience of being Black athletes who are the majority percentage of their racial community.

Lastly, gender was not a proclaimed self-identifier but was a significant symbol in the Black community at Winsdum. Most of the participants assumed that the interview pertained to

just Black men because they happen to be the largest portion of Black people on the campus. Both male and female participants marginalized Black women through their continuous failure to recognize Black women's existence and experience on campus. Furthermore, men could not comprehend Black women intersectional experience, as they personally admitted to knowing very few details about Black females on campus. Along same line, females did not readily identify with the dominant narrative of Black male athletes on campus.

The diverse social identities within the Black community impact each of the individuals who are also members of different groups. As the individuals exercise agency by self-identifying with particular symbols, they are still constricted to adhering to the norms, values, and expectation of the structural categories, in this instance national identity, athletics, and gender. These conflictive relations affect individual Blacks' feelings of closeness and distance to the Black community on and off campus (Smith and Moore 2000:3; also see Tuitt 2012).

The more individuals identify with Black culture the more they will connect with the Black community. Along the same lines, mis-education and negative Black sense of self, resulting from negative stereotypes, decreases group cohesion as well as the individual ability of Black students to "feel competent and confident" on a predominately white campus (Anglin and Wade 2007:213). The participants were consistently confronted with a stereotype of not being intellectual as if they had nothing scholarly to contribute due their racial categorization. This pervasive negative stereotyping in association with their racial identity diminished the positive information they received about their culture. Their access to and comprehension of Black-centered information and culture, often via their parents and pre-adult experiences, affects how they personally relate to other Blacks and group association on campus (Smith and Moore 2000:24-26, Hughes 2003:16). This socialization of negative stereotypes about Black individuals

and their culture is deleterious to their internalized sense of Blackness-their cultural consciousness- and their interactions with other Black members of campus.

Cultural identity is not a dichotomous decision of being or belonging to one culture or the other; within our multi-cultural society, there is an intersecting and overlapping range of identities. Furthermore, there are different levels of agency an individual can exercise within a multi-cultural society from minority assimilation to a pluralistic co-existence (Glazer 1983:110). A dualistic perspective recognizes divergent orientations of cultural identities that simultaneously attempts to balance minority preference with the dominant groups' values and norms. WEB Du Bois described Negro's double consciousness to detail Negro's ability to see themselves as well as their status in the eyes of the dominant society (as cited in Preves and Mortimer 2011:294). Since then similar concepts have been coined and debated from in-between transitional experiences to constant hybridity (Barajas 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

This "intermediate outcome" leads African American students to become "bi-cultural," so that students develop a sense of belonging to the dominant culture while holding onto their African American heritage (Rodgers and Summers 2008:182). While "promoting multiculturalism among Black students" may seem inclusive, it also places the burden on Blacks to adjust because it emphasizes that they are the ones with a problem with the dominant ideology and environment (Anglin and Wade 2007:214). Thus, those at the margins of white supremacist society learn the views/ ways of those with power, but the inverse is not true. Therefore, Black people's survival experience requires knowing how to navigate through two unequal worlds by developing a keen sense of double consciousness. This ability is only possible for racialized minorities who remain connected to their ethnic communities, because the unequal structural and power inequalities suppresses the minority group (Barajas 2009: 221-222)

For example, a systemic denigration of Black culture can produce internalized racism or self-hatred as a result of assimilating the racial-cultural hierarchical values (hegemony) of the dominant society. Black members of PWI exhibited this internalized racism by subscribing to a colorblind paradigm while questioning whether individuals within their community were Black enough. In their narrow definition of Blackness via symbols like language, they dismissed negative associations of Black culture but equally missed out on the positive connections. Assimilation to the dominant paradigm limits Black people's sense of self, racial awareness, and ability to protect themselves in a hostile environment; and without an affirming community that values diversity and Black culture, the internalized racism as evidenced in color-blind rhetoric becomes a more probable condition for Black individuals.

Black students, faculty, and staff must have some form of coping mechanism and behavior modification to survive structural racism and micro-aggressions on campus. Limited cultural resources eliminate the availability of counter-spaces that allows for a culture of resistance on campus. Furthermore, the socialization of Black members of PWIs in hegemonic areas is more likely to lead toward acceptance of a colorblind perspective which creates a culture of acquiescence rather than resistance. Thus to survive, Black individuals make societal accommodations that allows them to exist in a hostile environments and to endure of hegemonic norms, values, and expectations. Black members in PWI accommodate to the white hegemonic spaces that contribute to their higher attrition rates and persistent sense of not belonging, particularly among those who are not able to join supportive organizations/groups.

PWIs place the burden of responsibility of adapting to the university on the minority members, who behave in accordance with hegemony space called the "university" -which lacks a universe knowledge and competencies (Barajas 2011). While a few of the participants' narrative

highlighted acts of resistance, in the end the individuals acquiesced to better maintain their psychological state. For instance, after April went off in Coldstone and Erika punched the woman who called her the N-word, they both re-considered their actions, or at least their mental state, and considered them “crazy” which caused them to re-evaluate their conduct. They later spoke of their maturity and responsibility to conduct themselves as educated young ladies. In time they learned, or were socialized, to behave in a manner deemed appropriate to normal costumes of the university. Their socialization to make societal accommodations helps explain the calm reaction of long time staff member who had his white colleague rubbed his head, the ease in which the professor allowed students to regard him as a student, or the pleasure of the student who provided inter-racial translation. Instead of consistently fighting, they are pressured to acquiesce to the normalized institutional abuses that secure the university’s hegemonic hierarchy along lines of race, gender, class, and other unmark/ non-traditional categories.

Building Community when Race isn’t Enough

An intersectional analysis highlights the common and diverse narratives within the Black community on predominantly white campuses. While researching these intersections, Social Capital Theory highlights how resources are utilized and under-utilized within the varied networks of Black people in hegemonic white spaces. The combination of Intersectionality and Social Capital Theory helps draw out how their limited cultural resources can be utilized to improve individuals’ positive racialized sense of self and increase group cohesion within the Black community of PWIs.

Intersectionality provides a theoretical model to that comprehensively analyzes empirical data and provides a theoretical model to that comprehensively analyzes empirical data. Choo and Ferree’s research offers “a dynamic, process-oriented, non-hegemonic intersectional”

methodology and perspective for analyzing inequality (2010:147). Their suggestions bypass the average inclusion model of diversity to evaluate the exclusion practices that condone inequality. This research uses the practical application of their conceptualization of intersectional components to further scientific knowledge concerning overlapping inequalities by actually applying their theoretical approach to analyze the real experiences of Blacks within PWIs.

As Intersectionality isolates unique identity within multiple systems, there are a few significant components within its application to individuals' lives as well as on a systematic basis. Choo and Ferree emphasize "three defining aspects of Intersectionality: inclusion, analytical interaction, and institutional primacy" (2010:131). In recognizing under-represented individuals, this research highlights the perspective and experiences of diverse people who straddle boundaries and exists within many groups.

Choo and Ferree's concept of inclusion is meant to give a voice to marginalized individuals and not just the normative categories of race, class, and gender (2010:133). This too lines up with Standpoint Theory's qualitative emphasis on situated knowledge and consideration of individuals' narratives encompassed by their social location. Specially, the participants of study all wanted acknowledgement, and ideally affirmation, from their fellow members of their community and certainly from their inter-racial counter-parts. Some expressed their frustration about the minimal recognition they received while other seemingly accepted their isolation by not even attempting to seek out affirmation within the Black community on campus. At minimum, the results of this study reveal that marginalized individuals expect recognition, want their voice heard, and need affirmation within and outside of their racial community.

Furthermore, accepting people's intersectional identities means expanding our understanding of human experiences and the sociological capabilities of analysis to include

“unmarked categories” which welcomes differing subset and unacknowledged perspectives (Choo and Ferree 2010:133). This point of diverse inclusion is re-enforces Standpoint Theory emphasis on the political context surrounding any particular category. Through self-identification, the participants proclaimed the athletic identity as a prominent narrative in their community. (Un)marked categories all carry actual as well as symbolic meanings from stereotypes to group associations. The pronounced athletic identity indicates that some Black people have alliances within and reliance on the University’s athletic department. Their connection to Athletics privileges them to benefits outside the direct reach of Black people who are not directly affiliated with that campus department. This athletic identity is not simply a symbolic narrative and personal preference; it is an unmarked category- an uncaptured quantitative subset- that divides this already small Black population on campus. Moreover, this finding reveals an economic and academic disparity within the Black community of PWIs. These social categories impact group cohesion and individualized success via inequitable resource accessibility in a racially hostile environment.

Institutional support via people and programs can combat intersectional inequality. *Institutional agents* and their support is a significant component of social capital within an educational environment. Stanton-Salazar coined the term institutional agents to recognize individuals within organization “who occupy one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high status... [that] possesses a high degree of human, cultural, and social capital” (2011:1075). These institutional agents should not be confused or considered aligned with traditional ‘gatekeepers’ who preserve privilege and dispense resources in accordance with the dominant cultural values and norms of the institution. Conversely, institutional agents empower minorities through a transformative process of personal and social engagement that includes increasing access to

diverse intangible and material resources from social networks to economic assets (Salazar 2011). Black athletes and the Black staff within these athletic departments have the ability to act as institutional agents due to their relative privilege status on campus.

These Black athletic institutional agents can use their access to diverse resources to increase intra-racial non-athletes' individual success and enhance their group cohesion. These agents could provide support to divergent minorities within their community through personal and positional resources (Lin 2001). The participants spoke of a number of particular supportive cultural resources for athletes and could too help non-athletes. They mentioned Black guest lectures, Black counselors, and Black mentors on and off campus. These agents could use their influence to invite non-athletes to lectures that are hosted by Black speakers to further all of their cultural awareness. The Black athletic counselors could extend their positional services to personally support non-athletic Black students. Granted this puts the burden of responsibility on Black individuals to increase their work load and support individuals outside of their directed duties. Furthermore, the institution should ideally diversify their staff in the University' advising department and all other departments to support the needs of students of color. However, considering the current inequitable status of the Black community, it is more likely that they will have to depend on themselves due to the unlikelihood of the university acknowledging the cultural deprivation and provide ample support for students, faculty, and staff of color. The participants' feelings of increased comfort when speaking with a fellow Black person about their personal issues and academic concerns makes academic advising services and professional mentorship even more particularly significant culturally relevant resources for their success on campus. Institutional agents' can use their access to resources to build up intra-group networks and support the individualized success of their community members.

While institutional agents can decrease inequality, they are still structurally limited by the institution's policies, procedures, and overall values. The field of social psychology explores the dialectical relations between individuals and structural forces. On one hand, individuals have their own personal agency and personality that comes from within them. On the other hand, there are societal structures and institutions that influence and affect individuals' level of autonomy. Choo and Ferree's paid particular attention to the effects of multi-level interactions and context that captures the level of agency and its existence within the constraining forces of social structures (2010:134). Accordingly, this research recognizes individuals' choice of identity with any social category in relation to the possibilities and limitations superseding their agency by the structure and the people instituting its norms and values. Allowing the participants to self-identify brought out the diversity of a racial group that the University categorizes too simply as Black/ African American.

The results showed voluntary segregation between US and non-US Black members of Winsdum. Some of the Black students exercised their autonomy by promoting their international affiliations via the African Student Association (ASA). Like with any club on campus, they had to have some sort of staffing support, which for them, came from a high-level administrator in the International Affairs department who is visually identifiable as Black but not US born. Thus, there is enough of a Black international student populous to galvanize a social network that receives official support by the University. However, the same cannot be said for the American Black students who do not have any group representation. Ironically, there could have a Black Student Association that could equitably support US and International students; but for now, their Black community is divided by separate group affiliations based on their ethnic self-identification.

A valuable part of social capital is the networks formed by individuals and organizations within an institution. Wayne Baker believes networks to be a normal part of life, thus states, “We can’t avoid managing relationships; our only choice is how we manage them” (2000:2). An intersectional analysis of the Black community at Winsdum revealed how each of the participants intimately knew of the diverse networks within their association and how they chose to manage what little resources they have available to them. In considering “social capital depends on who you know- the size, the quality, and the diversity of your personal and business networks-” (Baker 2000:2), Black members of PWIs could attempt to capitalize on their intimate connections with each other to build up the qualitative nature of their small diverse population.

In conceptualizing the value of social networks, the diversity of affiliations is essential to increasing network size and structure (Baker 2000; Burt 1992). Furthermore, the patterns and composition of social networks are formed by the force of constraints, opportunities, and individual choices (Baker 2000:64). In knowing the racial constraints inherent in the structural racism of PWIs, Black individuals have to take advantage of the few opportunities afford to them within their community. The patterns of their networks reveal that the two strongest Black group associations are the athletes and the African Student Association; however, there are Black members who do not identify with either. Currently, the three distinct networks disrupt the quality of the structural composition of their community. Their personal preferences via their self-identification minimize their individual access to divergent resources in their community. Indicating that, the lack of cross networking between the three groups decreases the cohesion within the Black community within PWIs.

In relation to the concept of structural constraint, Choo and Ferree’s last point of intersectional interest focuses in on the historically embedded inequality within institutions.

Inequality is a complex hierarchical system that involves more than just manifested outcomes; it is the processes and methods by which inequalities are systematic and maintained through institutions culture and practices in various university units (Choo and Ferree's 2010:136). Winsdum's racially ignorant and intolerant populous mirrors the white patriarchal hegemony of their surrounding area. The participants in this study highlighted particular demographics of the surrounding area's population who perpetuate the values, norms, and out-right practices that ostracize people based on their racial appearance and cultural preferences. The deconstruction of hegemonic norms allows individuals to contest institutional privileges that fail to consider the intersections of inequality. Breaking down norms too grants people the opportunity to recognize the often unheard narratives of the marginalized.

The history of these predominantly white institutions socializes each of its members to what is normal and expected and conversely what is different, intolerable, and problematic. The results of this research revealed how the Black membership of PWIs perceived their everyday reality and the overall population on campus. Their racial appearance socially marked them an 'other,' and not the 'norm,' the preferred population who continue their hegemony through self-selection of themselves as students, faculty, and staff. The participants also noticed the Church of the Latter Day Saints (LDS) religious norms and cultural preferences. While LDS removed overt structural discrimination back in the 1970s, people still carry the left-over covert values and norms of their (earlier) generation who allowed direct racism. Lastly, Black people are aware of the economic factors that initiate their membership of Winsdum. As most of the Black population contributes to the financial surplus of the institution, they consciously carry extra burdens of contractual responsibilities that result in privileges for the rest of the population. These structural

intersectional inequalities compound on to Black individuals' ability to exercise their agency and uplift their communal existence.

Influential people and their social networks are the fluid part of social capital that creates intersectional inequalities and inherent resource deprivation. This fluid nature of social capital gives way to institutional inequality via structural holes, "missing relationships that inhibit information flow" (Burt 2000). In navigate these holes, Ronald S. Burt (2000) coined the terms brokerage and closures as dualistic mechanisms of social capital. Brokerages links people across groups while closures fortify intra-group relations (Burt 2000:39). These concepts are applicable in understanding the relations between and within both the dominant group as well as Black groups within PWIs.

Winsdum's norms and practices show how their institution primarily, if not solely, values the economic contributions of its Black population. A qualitative intersectional examination of the Black population on campus showed that most individuals were either athletes or international students both of which provide economic capital to the institution. The institution allowed an inter-racial structural hole for Black members' entrance when it benefited their interest. However, the dominant group too places up closures that span across holes to protect their values and practices (2000:46). Their closure resulted in limited resources for Black individuals who do not provide them economic privileges. To combat this inequality, Black members must broker relations within their community to overcome the dominant groups' closures (2000:42). It is the positioned institutional agents, athletics and ASA members of Winsdum, that have the brokerage ability to use social capital to help fellow Black members better navigate theses structural holes to increase their group cohesion within PWIs.

Concluding Thoughts

This research focused on the communal relations and realities of Black students, staff, and faculty of predominately white colleges surrounded by hegemonic off campus environments. It specifically analyzed what happens to Black individuals' cultural consciousness and intra-group cohesion when there are limited Black culturally-oriented resources available on predominantly white campuses.

Data from thirteen diverse interviews generated four significant themes that each had numerous sub-topics. First, 'Institution characteristics' had economic factors, being otherized, and religious backgrounds. Second, 'Inter-racial influences and interactions' dealt with first encounters, being the Black friend, the N-word, cultural recognition, non-academic considerations, tokenism, their physical body, and colorblind notions. Third, 'Intra-racial dynamics' broke down the relations between Athletes, Africans, and others, gender biases, Black enough stereotypes, and University statuses. Fourth and lastly were the Communal relations.

The data analyzed with Intersectionality Theory and Social Capital Theory provided two main findings: 'Socialization of a Colorblind Era' and 'Building Community when Race isn't Enough.' The first discussed how the institutional structure impacted minorities and their community and the latter highlighted points of agency in community building and limitations. Combining the findings provides insight into the experiences, struggles, and strengths of Black students, faculty, staff, and their racial group on predominately white campuses.

The scope of this research narrowed in on the communal relations and personal experiences of Black members of PWIs. Furthermore, many of the concepts, theories, and findings may be applicable in considering the experiences of diverse minorities, moreover people of color, on predominately white campuses. The narratives belong solely to the participants of

this study and it cannot be assumed that their experiences represent the reality of all Black people on predominately white campuses. Nevertheless, this qualitative data grants scholars and their prospective institutions the opportunity to learn and benefit from the personal narratives of Black students, faculty, and staff from a predominantly white university in the hegemonic environment of the Inter-mountain West.

The challenge of the holistic scope of this research was combining the literature that segregates the experiences faculty, staff, and students based on their professional university status. The scarcity of available information concerning the communal aspect of minorities on predominantly white campuses limits the research analysis and literature comparison. Despite this gap in the literature, the information provided in this study reviewed the professional experiences of one of the populations at a time then attempted to weave the boundaries of faculty, students, and staff together into a theoretical community.

The principle researcher being able to self-identity with or be considered a part of the same community as the participants and research topic may result in different perspective, analysis, data, and findings in comparison to someone who does not or could not be personally identified as part of participants' community. Furthermore, this research analyzed the data with Standpoint Theory which takes political and social contextual information into account in comparison to positivistic perspective which proclaims a purely objective stance. These divergent points of perspective can lead to different results than presented in this study.

To remedy the limitation of this study, future research should be designed, conducted, and analyze the concerns of the Black community on predominately white campuses. More research should explore PWIs in higher education with hegemonic surroundings and in diverse areas. Future studies should investigate more about the communal aspects of campus life and

experiences of minority students, faculty, and staff. More research concerning the conflicts and strengths between and within subgroups on campus provides a greater breath of literature to establish a better common knowledge about diverse college communities.

Research can too be conducted about minority communities from the dominant perspective. Knowing the dominant group's experiences and concerns with minorities and their communities can further our knowledge of race relations in our contemporary epoch. Gaining their insight may help break down stereotypes and mis-leading information that prevents inter-racial comradery. Furthermore, a mixed study that includes the narrative of multiple racial/ ethnic backgrounds equally enhances current scholarly knowledge.

Along with a call for more research, there should be an increase of institutional policies and programs developed to support minority subgroups on campus. To develop these policies and programs, college committees, staff, and faculty can use scholarly research such as this thesis as evidence for necessity of building communities within universities. It should be the charge of the institution to challenge discrimination, to increase community development, and secure the mental and physical safety of all its members.

Appendix A: **Informed Consent Form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Christina Cannon [the principal investigator (PI)], a graduate student in the Sociology Department at Sacramento State University. A goal of the study is to identify how the university can create a greater sense of belonging and success for historically underrepresented students. Specifically, this research will advance our empirical knowledge and enhance our cultural understanding of Black people and their organizations at predominately white institutions. You have been asked to participate in this research because of your current (or previous) affiliation with Idaho State University (ISU), self-identification as Black, and current (or previous) residence in Idaho. Your participation in this research project is voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not you will participate. The purpose of this study is to investigate Blacks' experiences within predominately white institutions (PWI), with both Black and white employees and students, and the overall campus climate. Specifically, I research their status at Winsdum, their social and physical space on campus, their relationships with other Blacks and the dominant population, and their connections to the greater community off-campus, specifically the Black Community.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked questions about the following topics: demographic background, campus affiliations, and personal experiences and preferences in relation to being Black at Winsdum. The interview will take place at any time and location decided on between you and me. The interview(s) will take about an hour. Also, the interview session will be recorded to accurately capture all your statements.

Personal questions I will ask during the interview may lead to some minimal discomfort. However, please know that you may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your participation at any time. Also, please be aware that there will not be monetary or any other compensation provided for you to participate in this research. Nor will there be any financial obligations or burdens placed on the informants. You have the right to refuse participation in this research study at any time.

To ensure confidentiality to the participants, in any presentations, publications, or thesis, I will only refer to the location as the Inter-Mountain West region to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents and their affiliated institution. The university's name will not be

used, and a pseudonym will serve in its place. Your name will not be including on any data, and pseudonyms will be in place for your identity as well as campus affiliations i.e. athletic teams or club names. Upon request, you will have the right to review any personal information you have given. Written notes and recordings of your responses to the open-ended and demographic questionnaires will be kept until data analyses are completed. There will be limited access to these documents and will only be used for scientific purposes. Personal information, research data, and related records will be stored in a secured location.

Your participation in this research is VOLUNTARY. Even if you choose not to participate, that will not affect your relationship with Winsdum, or your right to receive services at Idaho State University to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice or penalty to your future at Winsdum. Also, the investigator may withdraw you from participating in the research if circumstances arise which warrants doing so. If you must drop out, your information will not be given out or publicized for any reason.

You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Sacramento State University Human Subjects Committee office

Winsdum Human Subjects Committee office

The Principal Investigator: Christina Cannon

The Investigator's Advisor: Manuel Barajas

I have read (or someone has read to me) the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of the informed consent form.

By signing this form, I willingly agree to participate in this research.

Print Name

_____ Date _____

Signature

_____ Date _____

I authorize the recorded interview session: _____

Time, date, and location: _____

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Alias:

Email:

Phone:

Occupation:

Years w/n that Occupation:

Previous Occupation:

Annual Family Income:

Years lived in Current State:

Hometown:

Primary reason for being in Current State:

Degrees held:

Titles held:

Parents' highest degree:

Affiliation with University:

Years with the University:

Self-identification (and life-partner's identification)

Gender:

Racial:

National:

Ethnic/ cultural:

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Environmental factors:

Would you recommend this university to other Black people? Why?

How would you describe the racial climate and physical make-up of the University?

What was it like adjusting to the campus environment?

Were there any social and/ or cultural obstacles or challenges?

Were there any social and/ or cultural positive influences or support systems?

What factors contributed to you working for or attending this University?

Did you consider any other universities, perhaps a historically Black colleges & universities (HBCU)?

Racial Identity:

What does it mean to be perceived as Black?

What impact does your race have on your overall academic (or employment) experience?

What impact does your race have on your overall social experience on campus?

Please describe any other Black members on campus and your relations with them.

Do you have any Black professors, peers, co-workers, advisors, mentors, counselors, coaches, or teammates?

How do you relate to and interact with other racial/ ethnic groups on campus?

Please describe a negative and a positive experience you have had with any other racial/ ethnic groups on campus.

Campus community:

To what extent do you feel part of the black community on campus?

From 1 being not at all to 5 extremely connected, how do you score your sense of belonging to campus? Why?

What resources are necessary to build a black community?

(i.e. Faculty of color, physical space, cultural programs)

Specifically, what are the key components that would develop greater social ties between blacks?

What would increase black individuals' collective consciousness to form a stronger sense of belonging to and within the Black community on campus?

Home community

How would you describe your hometown? (size, rural v. urban, racial composition)

When you go back home, do you feel a sense of connection with family, friends, others in the community?

From 1 to 5, how do you score your sense of belonging? Why?

Why do you feel connected or disconnected?

Space

Are there any black groups and/ or organizations on campus?

Do you support, belong to, connect with, and/ or meet with them?

Please describe any of your peers and group affiliations.

Please name any formal or informal cultural events that have occurred on campus?

Did you and/ or your friends attend and/ or participate?

What types of events and meeting do you normally attend?

Are there any black formal places or informal spaces on campus?

Where do you normally hang out and with whom?

What do you know about the Diversity center? Are you connected to it?

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