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Reflected Appraisals And Racial And Sexual Identity Development In The Lives Of Black Lesbian And Bisexual Women

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REFLECTED APPRAISALS AND RACIAL AND SEXUAL IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIVES OF BLACK LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN

By

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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May
2012

This dissertation, submitted by Konjit V. Page in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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April 16, 2012

PERMISSION

Title   Reflected Appraisals and Racial and Sexual Identity Development in the
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Degree   Doctor of Philosophy

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Konjit V. Page
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am because we are
– African Proverb

The culmination of this project marks the end of a journey that would not have been possible without the support, wisdom and care provided to me from family, friends, mentors and colleagues. I am truly a reflection of their spirit. This journey has been several years in the making and has spanned several states and programs that have fostered my personal and professional development. I am grateful for all of the individuals and experiences that I have encountered along this path.

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Finally, but definitely not last, I thank the women that participated in this study. I am honored that you allowed me into your lives and am amazed by your commitment to ensuring that the voices of Black LGB women remain at the table. Thank you.

There is a saying, "A thousand mile journey begins with just one step" (Unknown). While there is a larger journey that will continue – thank you all for making *this* leap with me.

To my parents, Almaz and George Page, for always letting me know that I belong.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of reflected appraisals in the lives of Black lesbian and bisexual women. Black lesbian and bisexual women were specifically selected in this study due to the unique and multiple issues Black lesbian and bisexual women face as members of multiple marginalized and oppressed groups.

Participants in this study included 13 self-identified Black lesbian and bisexual women. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. In accordance with grounded theory approaches, follow-up interviews were conducted and enabled participants to provide feedback on the preliminary results of the study. Participants also completed a measure of racial identity, the Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms 1990, 2003). Racial identity profiles were developed from participants responses on the BRIAS. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed following a social constructivist grounded theory methodology.

Based on the results of the data analysis, a substantive grounded theory of a Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women emerged. This study defined a Sense of Belonging as one's experiences of identifying with a social identity group, feeling that one has a place within the group(s), and feeling that one or more of one's social identities are supported by the group. Sense of Belonging is comprised of the following features: membership, locality, and acceptance. Membership is the identification of an individual

to, or with, a social identity group. Locality is how an individual perceives a place and/or space for her racial and/or sexual identity within a social identity group. Finally, acceptance is an individual's sense of receiving validation for her racial and/or sexual identity within a social identity group. Each feature encompasses self and reflected appraisals. Further, each feature is influenced by internal and external contextual factors that dynamically interact with each other. The grounded theory of this study provides clinical utility for mental health professionals to explore multiple dimensions of social group identity across the construct of a sense of belonging for this population.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of psychology, clinicians and researchers have become
increasingly aware of the role race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, and sexual identity
in the personality development and functioning of an individual (Atkinson, Morten, &
Sue, 1998). This general awareness creates a growing responsibility for psychologists to
address the culture and context in which individuals operate (Fuertes, Bartolomeo, &
Nichols, 2001). While the field of psychology has begun to pay more attention to the
growing diversity of individuals, little has been accomplished in the area of
understanding the "diversity within the diversity" of these groups, specifically how we
understand the complexities of individuals who carry multiple and often competing
identities.

Literature on multiple minority identity emphasizes the importance of
understanding the ways in which individuals possessing more than one marginalized
identity make meaning of their experiences (Constantine, 2002). When research in this
area has taken into account the significance of racial and ethnic identities, in addition to
other social identities that an individual may hold, the literature has focused on the effects
of possessing multiple, and sometimes conflicting, identities that are often marginalized
in society. Issues such as the experience of multiple oppression and multiple minority
stressors have been examined to understand the roles that they may play upon

individuals' psychological well-being. Harper, Jernewall and Zea (2004) noted that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people of Color may experience multiple layers of oppression due to negative societal reactions to their sexual orientation, racial prejudice, limited economic resources, and limited acceptance of their sexual orientation within their own cultural community. Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black, and Burkholder 's (2003) study examining the concept of "triple jeopardy" (i.e., persons possessing at least three marginalized social identities; Greene, 1994) amongst a group of Black women explored these women's experiences of multiple minority stress. In addition to providing empirical support for the "triple jeopardy" experience of Black lesbians, participants in the study discussed racism as a significant stressor in their lives, and contextualized their experiences of sexism and heterosexism through the prism of racism. Over the past few years, researchers have attempted to go beyond providing qualitative descriptions of the complexities involved in possessing multiple minority statuses; however, models attempting to conceptualize the processes by which individuals make meaning of their experiences of multiple minority identities have been limited in breadth and scope (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

A potential area of inquiry that could inform the literature on multiple minority development is the construct of reflected appraisals. A core construct in symbolic interaction theory, reflected appraisals are individuals' perceptions of how others view them (Cooley, 1902). Research in the area of reflected appraisals have included studies investigating issues such as discrimination, small group processes, self-esteem, father involvement, delinquency, and women's perceptions of their bodies (Eccleston & Major,

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2006; Ichiyama, 1993; Jaret, Reitzes, & Shapkina, 2005; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Matsueda, 1992; Quinlivan & Leary, 2005). Current research in the area of reflected appraisals has also included the influence and role that this construct may have in racial identity development (Alvarez & Helms, 2001; Khanna, 2004). Only a couple of studies could be found that referenced reflected appraisals and LGB populations (Savin-Williams, 1989; Sanitioso, 1999).

Black lesbian and bisexual women are a unique population within the study of multiple minority identity due to the distinctive and multiple issues that Black lesbian and bisexual women face. According to Greene (2000a), "African American lesbians provide an example of women who face the challenge of integrating more than one salient identity in an environment that devalues them on all levels" (p. 246). Studies that have addressed the issue of racial identity in Black lesbian and bisexual women have tended to rely upon interview and/or survey questions that have attempted to address issues of race, but have faced the problem of inadequately capturing racial identity (Bowleg, Craig, & Burkholder, 2004). Furthermore, due to the lack of literature on Black lesbians and bisexual women in the LGB literature and the relative lack of exploration of sexual identity in Black psychology, issues around sexual identity for Black women continue to be an underexplored territory. Examining Black lesbian and bisexual women's experiences may provide a more in-depth snapshot of how individuals from multiple minority statuses understand their identities within themselves and in relationship to others. Additionally, the construct of reflected appraisals may provide a unique

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perspective from which the dualities of their experiences in Black and LGB communities, as both insiders and outsiders, can be understood.

Purpose of Current Study

This study aims to expand the current literature on the issues related to individuals possessing multiple minority identities, by focusing on a subset of this population, Black lesbian and bisexual women. The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of reflected appraisals in Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities. In order to address this issue, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Black lesbian and bisexual women make meaning of their racial, gender and sexual identities?

2. How do Black lesbian and bisexual women experience race- and sexual identity-related appraisals made of them by members of their racial and sexual communities?

3. How do Black lesbian and bisexual women make meaning of their experiences of race- and sexual identity-related reflected appraisals in their understandings of their racial and sexual identities?

4. What is the relationship between racial identity statuses and the way Black lesbian and bisexual women experience reflected appraisals in their understandings of their racial and sexual identities?

Profiles of participant's racial identity statuses, as measured by the Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003), were used to examine how

Black lesbian and bisexual women from different racial identity statuses may experience reflected appraisals in their conceptualizations of their racial and sexual identities. Qualitative data obtained from participants were used to give voice to these individuals' actual experiences and, in so doing, provide a richer context from which a particular experience of Black lesbian and bisexual women lives can be understood.

Grounded Theory and the Literature Review

The flexible nature of qualitative inquiry influences how qualitative researchers choose to present their findings. Specifically, as this study utilized grounded theory, it is relevant to provide a brief explanation regarding the literature review process in the context of grounded theory. An overview of grounded theory and its application in this study will be provided in Chapter 3.

Although classic grounded theory approaches have advocated against the utilization of exhaustive literature reviews, some authors have asserted that this has been a misconception of early grounded theory literature (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Haverkamp and Young (2007) suggested that it is impractical to approach research without pre-existing beliefs and preconceptions. They advocated that researchers attempt to approach qualitative research from a broad position without strong conceptions, but recognize that a researcher's study topic will be influenced by their own experiences, general knowledge, popular media and general discourse on the topic area.

For this study, the literature review served two purposes. First, it provided clarity about the concepts relevant to the lives of Black lesbian and bisexual women and highlighted the relative invisibility of this group in the literature and provided a focus of

where inquiry could begin. Secondly, the literature was used as a tool to inform my analytic process as the emerging theory of this study began to take shape. Such literature will be integrated in the presentation of results of this study in Chapter 4. This is consistent with qualitative researchers who emphasize that a review of the literature should be integrated within qualitative manuscripts (Meloy, 2002; Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007; Wolcott, 2002). Further, it is in line with the presentation of grounded theory approaches that often includes related literature in the discussion section as a way to relate the study findings to a broader context (Havercamp & Young, 2007). The role of the literature, as applied to the process of analysis in this study, will be addressed again in Chapter 3.

Statement on Terminology

Terminology for racial and ethnic minority groups and LGB persons can vary based on one's culture, historical context, or geographical location. In consideration of this, definitions of terms regarding identities and social group memberships will be noted throughout this manuscript. In this section, some of the key terms used throughout this study are defined.

Although the term "Black" could denote any person of African origin or based on physical features, throughout this study, the term "Black" will be used to describe the sociopolitical and sociocultural experience of people of African descent who were born and raised in the United States. This study will also adopt the following definition of sexual identity as provided by Bowleg, Craig, and Burkholder (2004):

We use the term sexual identity rather than sexual orientation to reflect the socially constructed nature of sexuality. The term sexual orientation connotes that one's sexuality is essential and stable rather than influenced by sociohistorical context and language. (p. 230)

The terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer are used throughout this study. As related to describing participants of this study, the terms reflect the multiple identifications that participants made in their identifications as women who were romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women. Throughout this document the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) refer to women who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women. Additionally, unless otherwise indicated, the term "LGB community" refers to predominantly White LGB communities. Similarly, unless noted otherwise, the "Black community" refers to predominantly heterosexual Black communities.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The current chapter, Chapter 1, provided a background of the study, purpose of the study and research questions that guided the study. Chapter 2 will introduce the reader to the initial literature review that informed the study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in this study. The results of the study, including the development of the emerging theory of the study will be presented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the grounded theory of the current study and situates the theory within extant literature. In addition, the strengths and limitations of the study will be discussed, as well as implications of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The initial literature reviewed during the inception of this study is presented in this chapter. As mentioned in Chapter 1, and consistent with grounded theory approaches, the literature presented here assisted me in developing a purpose and need for the current study. I reviewed the literature throughout the research process, as guided by the data and analytic directions that emerged from interviews with participants in this study. A discussion on how existing literature was utilized throughout the study will be presented in the next chapter. Additionally, I discuss the scholarly and empirical literature that informed the development of the emerging theory for this study in Chapter 4. Finally, I integrate the literature within the context of the grounded theory of this study in Chapter 5.

The current chapter will begin with a general overview of the extant literature on lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) persons and people of Color within LGB communities. An overview of racial and sexual identity development is also provided for the reader, followed by a discussion on literature involving Black lesbian and bisexual women. Finally, the concept of reflected appraisals is provided and situated within the literature.

LGB Literature

Research on lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) persons and communities within the field of psychology underwent a major shift in the 1970's, moving from a pathological to

non-pathological emphasis on homosexuality. This shift has been attributed to the removal of the diagnostic category of homosexuality from the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–III; American Psychiatric Association, 1980) and subsequent increased advocacy around the de-stigmatization of homosexuality from the American Psychological Association (Conger, 1975; Rothblum, 1994). While scholarly and empirical literature on LGB populations has increased over the past forty years, much of this literature been relegated to LGB-specific journals. Leading psychology journals have yet to fully adopt LGB research within their journals, often publishing such research as "special issues." The following section provides an overview of the study of LGB sexual identity in the field, literature on LGB people of Color.

Black Lesbian and Bisexual Women

If lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) and racial and ethnic minority research comprise a small amount of the psychological literature and research on LGB people of Color represent an even smaller portion, literature on Black lesbian and bisexual women is indeed, as Greene (2000b) pointed out, "less than a footnote to the footnote [of Black women in American psychology]" (p. 82). Literature focused on this population has included investigation of issues such as relationships, coming out, adolescent identity development, gender, social class, depression and stress and coping (Bates, 2004; Cochran & Mays, 1994; Follins, 2003; Greene & Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Halberstam, 1997; Hall & Greene, 2002; Hughes, Matthews, Razzano, & Aranda, 2003).

Literature on psychological distress and coping for Black lesbian and bisexual women indicate that this population may be at a higher risk for psychological distress than heterosexual or White populations. Hughes, Matthews, Razzano, and Aranda's (2003) examination of psychological distress, risk factors for distress, and methods of coping reported by Black lesbian and heterosexual women found that, overall, lesbian women in the sample reported more psychological distress than heterosexual women. The study also found that Black lesbians were more likely to utilize mental health services than Black heterosexual women, although this was still a lower rate of utilization compared to lesbians of other racial groups.

In addition to focusing on the mental health aspects of Black lesbian and bisexual women's health, researchers have also focused on other health-related areas of concern for this population. Arend's (2003) study of HIV positive women of Color who identified as having sex with other women indicated the need for health care providers to become aware of the complexities faced by HIV positive women who may experience homophobia and racism in seeking support and treatment. The study examined participants' psychological and emotional needs and their methods of coping with HIV. Of interest are the factors that influenced participants' coping, which included disclosure, reduction of risk factors, support network utilization, and interaction with the HIV and lesbian communities. Issues of disclosure were present across all of these factors, with disclosure being impacted by participants' fear of homophobia and racism by individuals and groups.

Bowleg, Craig, and Burkholder's (2004) examination of their theoretical model of active coping (responding to stress in a way that promotes positive results) among Black lesbians indicated that internal (self-esteem, race and lesbian identification) and external (social support, perceived availability of LGBT resources) factors were predictive of active coping. Of interest is that they found that internal factors were more predictive of active coping than external factors. They did not find that their race identification variable correlated with any of the other variables in the model and believed that this may have occurred because their questions relating to race were tied in with sexual identification questions. The researchers recommended that a measure focused on racial identity may be more beneficial.

Although the field of counseling psychology emphasizes diversity, increased inclusion of research focusing on LGB populations and/or issues remains to be seen. Phillips, Ingram, Smith, and Mindes' (2003) content and methodological analysis of LGB-related articles published in counseling journals revealed several issues pertinent to the representation, or lack thereof, of LGB research within the field. One hundred and nineteen LGB-related articles published in eight major counseling journals over the course of a nine year period (1990-1999) were analyzed. Some of the findings included a consistently low percentage of LGB publications in leading journals, a preponderance of articles focusing on gay men (mostly White), and a lack of representation of LGB people of Color and LGB persons with disabilities.

Research in the general psychological literature that includes racial and ethnic minorities is diminutive in comparison to research that includes White samples.

Research on LGB people of Color is even less represented. Many of the studies

conducted on the LGB populations have either predominantly utilized gay, White male

samples or have failed to describe the racial, ethnic or cultural demographics of

participants, leading the reader to assume that participants were White (DeBlaere,

Brewster, Sarkees, & Moradi, 2010; Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004). Additionally,

similar to Phillips, Ingram, Smith, and Mindes' (2003) findings, much of the research

published on LGB people of Color has tended to focus on theory versus empirical data

(D'Augelli, 1994). In a study conducted by Harper, Jernewall, and Zea (2004), empirical

literature on LGB people of color during a ten year period (1992-2002) was examined.

Of the 14,482 empirical research articles published in journals of the American

Psychological Association (APA) during this 10 year period, the researchers found that

less than 1% of these articles included LGB samples and only .04% of these articles

centered on people of Color.

<div align="center">**Sexual Identity**</div>

Probably one of the most referenced models of lesbian and gay identity

development is that of Cass (1979) who presented a stage-wise model of integrating

lesbian and gay identity into one's self-concept. The six stages that Cass proposed

included: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity

Acceptance, Identity Pride and Identity Synthesis. The Identity Confusion stage can be

characterized as a period during which an individual may begin questioning whether he

or she is lesbian or gay. In the Identity Comparison stage, the individual may experience

feelings of isolation and alienation both self and from others. Individuals in this stage

may begin accepting that they may be gay or lesbian and begin identifying heterosexual privilege and the loss of it. The Identity Tolerance stage is characterized by the individual beginning to seek out other gay and lesbian persons and beginning to tolerate his or her sexual identity. Identity Acceptance is described as the stage during which the individual may begin to disclose his or her sexual identity to others. The need for increased community contact is experienced during this stage. In the Identity Pride stage, individuals are described as immersing into lesbian and gay culture and rejecting heterosexual values. The individual may begin to experience an "us versus them" attitude towards heterosexuals and experience anger and frustration towards homophobic and heterosexist attitudes. Finally, the Identity Synthesis stage is characterized by the individual's lesbian or gay identity becoming a part of themselves instead of an independent identity.

Critiques of Cass' (1979) model include the assumption that sexual identity has a clearly defined beginning and ending and that validation of the model was conducted with Australian samples (Diamond, Omoto, & Kurtzman, 2006; McCarn & Fassinger , 1996). Researchers have noted that while the ultimate goal of Cass' (1979) model is Identity Synthesis, this is predicated upon communication of one's sexual identity to others (Eliason, 1996). This does not account for individuals who identify with multiple social group identities who may experience conflicts between these identities (Phillips & Stewart, 2008). Nor does the model account for the potential influences that an additional social group identity may have upon sexual identity development (Eliason, 1996). Additionally, the model assumes linearity in development (Follins, 2011). Cass'

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(1979) model has also been critiqued for failing to acknowledge the experience of bisexual women and men (Rust, 2003).

Racial Identity

Racial identity may be defined as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3). Racial identity theories have been developed for a number of racial groups in the United States and internationally; however, initial models of racial identity development grew out of researchers' desire to understand the experience of Blacks in the United States (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Amongst these theories, Cross' (1971) theory of nigrescence has often been cited within the literature to provide a framework for understanding Black racial identity. He describes nigrescence as a "re-socializing experience" through which Blacks move from a non-Afrocentric to an Afrocentric identity. Cross' (1991, 1995) revised model describes five stages of Black identity development through which an individual moves from an unawareness of their race and the role it plays in his or her daily experiences to an internalization of and commitment to Black culture: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization and Internalization-Commitment. Parham (1989) expanded Cross' (1971) model by proposing that racial identity development was a life-long process and that individuals cycle though stages. That is, individuals can move back and forth from stages as they encounter varying experiences with Blacks as well as Whites (Parham, 1989, p. 195).

Helms' (1990, 2003) Theory of Black Racial Identity Development

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According to Helms' (1990) theory of Black racial identity development, racial identity development "occurs by means of a maturation process in which the person learns to substitute internal definitions and standards of racial-group identity for external or societally imposed definitions" (Helms & Piper, 1994, p. 126). The theory further maintains that this maturation process is comprised of progressively refined variations of the ego or "ego statuses" (Helms & Piper, 1994). Helms' (1990) model proposes that Black racial identity development involves the following statuses through which one may move from a self-denigrating view of oneself as a racial being to a solid and healthy sense of oneself as a racial being: Pre-Encounter, Post-Encounter, Emersion/Immersion, and Internalization. Helms' (2003) revised theory of racial identity delineates racial identity statuses from racial identity schemas. Racial identity statuses can be understood as hypothetical constructs, while schemas are the observable expressions of a status. Additionally, schemas represent the strategies that any individual may use for interpreting and responding to an understanding of one's race. The revised theory also separated Emersion and Immersion into two discrete statuses.

During the Pre-Encounter status, individuals may adopt a worldview imbedded in White culture. Individuals in this status may highly identify with White culture and reject, deny or devalue membership in Black culture. The Post-Encounter status is characterized by individuals actively rejecting previous identifications with White culture and seeking identification with Black culture. The individual may experience ambivalence and confusion regarding his/her racial group, which might have surfaced via experiencing a shocking personal or social event related to race/racism. The Immersion

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status of racial identity development is characterized as a time during which the individual completely identifies with and idealizes Black culture and, at the same time, withdraws from White culture as a means of establishing his/her Black identity. Individuals operating within this status may begin to use his/her own external racial group standards to self-define his/her self. The Emersion status reflects an individuals' commitment to Black culture and communities. Group commitment and loyalty is highly valued by individuals in this status. The final status of racial identity development, Internalization, is defined as the individual's acceptance of his/her Blackness, abandonment of internalized racism and development of a positive commitment to the Black community. During this status, individuals are also described to have begun to internally define racial attributes and have developed the capacity to assess and respond objectively to members of the dominant societal group.

Reflected Appraisals, the Self, and Identity

Research in the area of reflected appraisal has often examined the role of this construct in relation to self-esteem (Eccleston & Major, 2006). In addition, this area has also examined issues such as discrimination, small group processes, self-esteem, father involvement, delinquency, and women's perceptions of their bodies (Eccleston & Major, 2006; Ichiyama, 1993; Jaret, 2005; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Matsueda, 1992; Quinlivan & Leary, 2005). The concept of reflected appraisals is most often associated in the literature with symbolic interaction theory and can be best understood as an individuals' perception of how others view them (Cooley, 1902). In describing the basic premise of symbolic interaction theory, Kinch (1963) stated, "The individual's conception of himself

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emerges from social interaction and, in turn, guides or influences the behavior of that individual" (p. 481). Additionally, Kinch provided three postulates of self-concept:

1. The individual's self-concept is based on his perception of the way others are responding to him.

2. The individual's self-concept functions to direct his behavior.

3. The individual's perception of the responses of others toward him reflects the actual responses of others toward him. (p.482)

Kinch (1963) asserted that individuals' perceptions of others (reflected appraisals) would influence his or her behavior (postulates 1 and 2) and theorized that if an individual's perceptions can determine his or her self-concept and the individual's self-concept directs behavior, then individuals' perceptions of others will predict his or her actual behaviors (postulate 3).

As captured by Kinch's (1963) description of symbolic interaction theory presented above, central to this theory was the principle that individuals' self-concept is derived from how significant others view them (Cook & Douglas, 1998). Key to this is Cooley's (1902) theory of the "looking glass self," which referred to individuals beliefs about how he or she is being perceived by others. Cook and Douglas (1998) described three key elements involved in the process of individuals' development of self. These included the other individuals' actual view or evaluation of the individual (actual appraisals), individuals' perceptions of how others view them (reflected appraisals), and individuals' view of themselves (self-appraisals). An example of how these concepts might work can be seen in cases of individuals with body image disturbances. An

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individual may have received negative messages about his or her body from others (actual appraisals) and, in turn, highly internalized these messages and developed a negative self-image about his or her body. Likewise, an individual may perceive messages from others that he or she is physically unattractive and, despite actual appraisals that might be contradictory, still internalize these messages and have them influence his or her level of self-image about his or her body.

Researchers have attempted to go beyond providing theoretical assumptions of reflected appraisals and have tried to explain the process by which it may work. Felson (1985) examined the impact of reflected appraisals of peers on self-appraisals of physical attractiveness in children and suggested that the process of reflected appraisals may operate differently across varied settings. Questionnaires were administered to fourth through eighth grade children (N=561). Self-appraisals of the children were measured by asking, "How good looking do you think you are? Less good looking than most in the class; average looking; better than most in the class?" Reflected appraisals were measured by having the children nominate three "best looking" boys and girls, nominate the three most well-liked boys and girls by the class, and indicate whether they thought that they were a member of either group. Two additional appraisals were measured in this study, actual appraisals of peers, identified as the number of times a child was nominated by classmates, and stranger appraisals, which was obtained by having the pictures of respondents rated on physical attractiveness by children from another school. Findings of the study suggested that perceived peer appraisals were significant on

children's self-appraisals, however the influence of actual peer appraisals and stranger peer appraisals on self-appraisals were minimal.

Felson (1985) suggested several factors that may interfere or promote the process of reflected appraisals. Of interest is his suggestion that reflected appraisals should have a greater influence on individuals' self-appraisals for characteristics that elicit the reactions of others, such as physical attractiveness in his study, versus objective characteristics. Although Felson's study did not address issues of social group identification factors, such as race or sexual identity, this particular suggestion could be extended to include characteristics such as race and gender which, similar to those of physical attractiveness, elicits responses from others. Sexual identity too could be considered as a similar characteristic given literature on perceptions of LGB persons based on physical appearance (Krakauer & Rose, 2002; Laner & Laner, 1980).

Few studies have examined the construct of reflected appraisals in the role of racial or sexual identity development. Kaufman and Johnson's (2004) study of gays and lesbians and identity development found that reflected appraisals played a major role in participant's initial experiences of stigma and in their development of a stigmatized identity. Further, the researchers found that positive reflected appraisals were necessary in the maintenance of stigmatized identities. Alvarez and Helms (2001) examined the influence of racial identity schemas and reflected appraisals on the racial identity adjustment, identified as collective self-esteem and awareness of racism, of Asian Americans. Asian American university students (n=188) were administered a measure of racial identity, the People of Color Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (PRIAS; Helms,

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1995); the Perceptions of Asian Americans Scale (PAAS; Alvarez, 1996), which includes

two subscales that assess individuals' reflected appraisals; two subscales from the

Cultural Mistrust Inventory (CMI; Terrell & Terrell, 1981) designed to measure

participants awareness of racism; and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE; Luhtanen

& Crocker, 1992) which assesses individuals' evaluations of themselves as members of

social groups. The study found that racial identity statuses and reflected racial appraisals

were associated with participants' self-esteem. The researchers also found that

Immersion-Emersion and Integrative Awareness statuses were associated with higher

levels of racial self-esteem, while the Conformity and Dissonance statuses were

associated with lower levels of racial self-esteem. As the authors suggested, these

particular findings point to the importance of racial identity theory in understanding how

members of racial minority groups evaluate themselves based on their race and the

meaning and importance this may have on their racial identity. An additional finding of

the study was that participants' reflected racial appraisals were significantly related to

their collective self-esteem. The finding suggested that participants who believed that

their racial identity was well thought of by their own racial group tended to have a higher

regard for their own identities as Asian American. Interestingly, reflected appraisals of

Whites were not related to participants' racial adjustment, indicating that, for Asian

Americans, reflected racial appraisals of their own racial group may be more influential

in healthy racial adjustment than those perceived by Whites.

In examining Alvarez and Helms' (2001) study in the context of the present

investigation, several points are worthy of further examination: Could individuals'

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different reflected appraisals interact with each other? Specifically, could reflected racial appraisals interact with reflected sexual identity appraisals, such that healthy racial adjustment in Black lesbian and bisexual women could be compromised by the possessions of another identity (i.e., sexual identity) that may not be valued in the Black community? Likewise, could these women's reflected sexual identities be compromised by their racial identity, which may not be valued in predominantly White LGB communities?

Summary

This chapter presented the literature reviewed during the initial stages of this study. A brief overview of the literature on LGB populations and Black lesbian and bisexual populations was provided. Literature on racial and sexual identity development was also presented. Lastly a discussion on the literature on reflected appraisals was provided. The following chapter presents the methodology of the current study.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology of the study. The chapter includes a rationale for the method selected, a description of the grounded theory approach that was utilized, information about the participants, and a description of data collection and data analysis for the study. In addition, a discussion about trustworthiness and researcher reflexivity, including the personal context and experiences that I brought to this study are provided in this chapter. Interview questions and supplemental materials are provided in the Appendices.

Method Rationale

Qualitative inquiries enable us to understand lived experiences through sociocultural and sociohistorical frameworks (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Haverkamp & Young, 2007). It can be characterized as non-linear, specific to context, discovery-oriented and providing an in-depth exploration of phenomena (Morrow, 2007). Qualitative approaches to research have been recommended in the literature as being suitable for examining topics and populations where little is known, providing voice and empowerment for participants, and situating the study of behavior within a social context (Morrow, 2003; Opie, 1992). It has also been recommended for counseling psychology research as qualitative methods and paradigmatic underpinnings are closely aligned with the training and practice of counseling psychology (Morrow, 2007).

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Further, approaches to qualitative research can give voice to individuals and groups that are typically marginalized in society (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Given that Black lesbian and bisexual women are an under-researched and marginalized population, qualitative inquiry was the most suitable approach for this study as it offered a means to generate rich, illustrative and socially contextualized data.

Qualitative research literature stresses that research should begin with the selection of a paradigmatic foundation and that paradigms should be made explicit throughout the qualitative study (Creswell, 2007; Haverkamp & Young, 2007). A social constructivist paradigm was implemented throughout this study as it provided the best context through which the multiple aspects of Black lesbian and bisexual women's lives could be understood. A social constructivist paradigm emphasizes the importance of the subjective meanings of experiences. What is known and understood is constructed from multiple understandings versus a singular deduction of a phenomena or event. The construction of reality is viewed as non-linear and influenced by social forces, the context in which it exists, and by time (Turnbull, 2002). Another feature of social constructivism is the significance placed on the context of power in the research process. The context of power is of importance in the study of Black lesbian and bisexual women as the history of racism, sexism and homophobia, inherent in the history of Blacks, LGB persons and women are essential issues to be considered in any study of this population. According to Ponterotto (2005), another distinctive feature of this paradigm is the "centrality of the interaction between the investigator and the object of investigation" (p. 129). Through this interaction, the researcher and the participants can engage in co-constructing

meaning and theory. Research is not viewed as "value-free" as in some paradigms, but the researcher's values are assumed to influence the research process (Havercamp & Young, 2007). As such, the influence of the researcher's values, personal beliefs and characteristics on meaning construction will be discussed later in this chapter.

Grounded Theory

A grounded theory method was utilized in this study. Grounded theory is a research method in which theory emerges from, and is grounded in, the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Instead of traditional research approaches that begin at a place of inquiry and hypotheses, followed by the process of substantiating these hypotheses, grounded theory places the experience of the subject or phenomena at the center and allows "the data to emerge" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The process of the constant comparative method of analysis is used in the interplay between data collection, analysis, and theory building that occurs in a grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method can be best understood as a recursive process in which data analyses are consistently revisited, re-informed by new data and compared to extant literature in the process of developing an emerging theory (Parry, 1998).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Charmaz (2006) are two grounded theory approaches often noted in grounded theory literature. Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach can be viewed as a systematic approach to grounded theory in which the goal is to develop a formal theory that provides an explanation of the process, actions, and interactions of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007). Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach has been criticized within the literature for deviating from the

historical underpinnings of grounded theory, which emphasized the nature of emergence in data analysis procedures (Eaves, 2001; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). This emphasis on emergence is best captured in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) seminal work, "Discovery of Grounded Theory." In light of these criticisms, use of Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach is often encouraged for researchers beginning grounded theory research as the systematic nature of the approach can foster learning and application of grounded theory (Creswell, 2007).

Charmaz' (2006) social constructivist approach to grounded theory argues that flexibility in data analysis procedures is necessary in order to allow for theory emergence. This approach challenges the method of Corbin and Strauss (2008), cautioning that systematic approaches may lead to "forcing" data into concepts and categories that deviate from the grounded experiences of the participants in a study. Charmaz' (2006) approach clearly reflects a social constructivist paradigm and places great emphasis on the influence, personal context, and subjectivity of the researcher.

Given the nature of this study, which examined the lived experiences of a triply marginalized and oppressed group of individuals, a social constructivist grounded theory approach was the most appropriate method to use for the purposes of this study. This approach mitigates shortcomings in alternative designs that may neglect to provide a contextual understanding of complex processes involved in the relationship between racial and sexual identity development. As this study employed a quantitative measure, the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms 1990, 2003), the following section provides a rationale for the use of this measure within this study.

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Rationale for Using a Quantitative Measure

Initial utilization of the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003), as a measurement of racial identity, in this study was in accordance with the purpose of this study which was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experiences of reflected appraisals in the experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women. The use of a quantitative measure within a social constructivist grounded theory study, beyond empirical verification of a theory, may appear to present a conflict between issues of objectivity versus subjectivity, or quantitative versus qualitative methodology. My decision to use the BRIAS was influenced by Helms' (2009) newly developed procedure for determining individual-level reliability coefficients, referred to as an "iota." Racial identity profiles that were later developed could then allow for an examination of individual-level responses that did not require group-level comparisons in order to establish reliability. A discussion of this procedure, as well as the development of this procedure is described further in in this chapter in the presentation of the BRIAS as a data source for this study.

In summary, a social constructivist paradigm was selected as the guiding framework for this study. This paradigm was deemed appropriate to the study as it set out to understand the experiences and meanings that Black lesbian and bisexual women made around issues of race and sexual identity, as the experiences of this population has been invisible within the literature. Qualitative research was selected as a methodology of choice as it provided an opportunity to generate data that was socially contextualized and accurately reflected by its participants. A constructivist grounded theory approach

was utilized to provide an in-depth understanding of the multifarious processes involved in the relationship between racial and sexual identity development. Racial identity profiles developed from participants responses on the BRIAS were constructed to provide an examination of how participants with a particular racial identity status may respond differently to interview questions.

The following sections describe the sampling strategies employed in this study. In addition, the recruitment process for participants is presented in the next section.

<div align="center">**Sampling and Recruitment**</div>

Sampling Strategies

The population for this study included adult Black lesbian and bisexual women. Previous researchers have noted several challenges to participant recruitment and sampling amongst LGB populations and even further difficulties in recruiting and sampling LGB people of Color who may not be adequately represented in LGB communities, organizations and venues (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees, & Moradi, 2010; Meyer & Wilson, 2009).

Purposeful sampling methods were used to recruit participants. According to Miles and Huberman (1984), purposeful sampling methods are common for qualitative studies as the scope of such studies tend to be limited to people and settings. Snowball sampling has been described as the process of identifying key informants or events, whereby individuals can inform the researcher of other potential informants and can inform other potential informants about the researcher and/or the researcher's study (Patton, 2002). This approach has been noted as being particularly useful when studying

sensitive topics or when if there are difficulties in accessing the target population (Boeije, 2010). DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees and Moradi (2010) encouraged the use of multiple recruitment methods, including "proactive snowballing" whereby researchers encourage participants and potential participants to share study advertisements with others in an attempt to have potential participants "vouch" for the study (p. 342).

Participant Recruitment

Participants for this study were initially recruited from the Northeast region of the United States where, at the time of data collection, there was a growing presence of social groups for lesbian and bisexual women. In addition, a number of organized social and networking groups for lesbian and bisexual women of Color were developing. These groups provided a venue in which women were able to meet other women who shared interests such as social justice organizing, dating, and other hobbies. DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees and Moradi (2010) suggested that researchers recognize cultural variability in sexual orientation identification and terminology by engaging in efforts such as providing multiple terms for self-identification when obtaining demographic information and by soliciting feedback about study advertisements from LGB people of Color. In developing recruitment materials, I reached out to a few LGB women of Color who were community leaders and members. These women provided feedback and assisted in developing graphics for recruitment materials. During the recruitment process, participants were asked to participate based on their identification as queer, lesbian, bisexual or as a woman romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women. These terms were initially provided in an effort to recognize that the terms "lesbian" and "bisexual" alone may not

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be salient labels for women of Color (Abes & Jones, 2004). The term "queer" was specifically utilized as it was most often reflected in community materials and postings within the Northeastern community. I developed recruitment materials that provided interested individuals with contact information should they wish to participate (Appendix A). Additionally, recruitment materials included a link to a website I developed which provided additional information about the study could be viewed (Appendix B). Participants responded to flier postings at LGB community establishments, listserv announcements, community postings and through word of mouth.

Through connecting with LGB community organizers within local communities and through email correspondence, I was able to attend to issues of mistrust in LGB and racial and ethnic minority communities that have experienced a history of exploitation and misrepresentation in psychological research. One of these efforts included offering my knowledge in mental health and LGB issues in the planning of an inaugural event for LGBT women of Color in a local community and developing and facilitating a panel discussion for the community on mental health issues faced by LGB women of Color. Through this involvement alone, several individuals either approached me at these events when they were made aware of my study or indicated to me during initial contact that they recognized me from one of the events or received a forward of my email call for participants from someone that had attended an event.

Participants

Participants were 13 individuals who identified as lesbian (N=7), bisexual (N=3), queer (N=2), and gay (N=1). All participants identified their biological sex as female.

Participants ranged in age from 23-48 years of age (M=36.69) and resided in the Northeastern, Southern, and Midwestern parts of the United States. Participants varied in their gender identification. Eleven of the participants identified their gender as "female." One participant identified her gender as "gender fluid," while another identified her gender as "gender non-conforming."

While all participants identified as being of African descent, 11 participants identified as Black and/or African American, one identified as Biracial/Black and another as African and Black. All participants identified as being born and/or primarily raised in the US, with one participant identifying as being born outside of the US, but indicating that she was primarily raised in the US. Six of the participants reported that they earned $50,000 or more per year, with only one participant not reporting her average income. Almost all of the participants had at least a college degree (N=12), with seven of these participants reporting that they had an advanced degree (masters or PhD).

Data Sources

The corpus of data used in this study included a demographic questionnaire, transcribed interviews, memos made by the researcher and racial identity measures completed by the participants.

Demographic Form

A demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) was developed to obtain basic demographic information from participants regarding their age, biological sex, gender, racial and ethnic identity, religious preference, education level, income level, parental status, if the participant was born or primarily raised in the US, and participants' current

relationship status. Participants were also asked how they self-identified in terms of their sexual orientation and how others would identify their orientation. This was an error found in the demographic questionnaire, as it should have inquired about participants' sexual identity versus orientation (see terminology discussion in Chapter 1). This issue was addressed during the interviews when I inquired about the participant's responses to the demographic questionnaire for clarification and asked participants to answer the question as it related to their sexual identity.

Interviews

In-depth interviewing is often an integral component of qualitative research, enabling a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena in question and opening the door for the process of co-construction to occur between researcher and participant (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Qualitative studies typically employ an interview guide approach whereby the researcher identifies broad topics and questions while retaining flexibility in additional topics and directions that participants generate and go to. Use of the guided interview can assist the researcher in focusing on the topics under investigation while enabling a degree of flexibility in the interview process.

Participants engaged in two interviews with this researcher. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. I developed an interview guide that was utilized during interviews (Appendix D). Since the purpose of the interview was to elicit participants' narratives around this topic, the interview was mainly guided by the nature of the participants' responses, with the interview guide providing a general structure. Interview questions were centered on four topic areas aimed at

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addressing participants' experience of reflected appraisals and how they made meanings

around their racial and sexual identities. In order to elicit information on how the

participants described their various identities, questions such as "How do you identify

yourself to others in terms of your gender, race and sexual identity?" were posed.

Questions relating to participants' experiences of racial identity and sexual identity within

Black and LGB communities were also asked of participants. In order to elicit

information regarding participants' varied race- and sexual identity-related appraisals,

question such as, "How do you think members of the Black community perceive LGB

persons?" and, "How do you think others perceive you within the Black/LGB

community?" were asked. Finally, participants were also asked questions regarding their

experiences of validation of and conflict between their racial and sexual identities

including questions such as, "What are your experiences in gaining validation/acceptance

for your sexual identity within the Black/LGB community?" and, "Have there been times

when you have experienced conflicts between your race and sexual identity?"

I conducted follow-up interviews with participants. The purpose of these

interviews was to allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback on results from

preliminary data analysis. This process is consistent with grounded theory approaches

and enables the researcher to attempt to present data that is the most reflective of the

participants' experience. Upon the completion of some initial analysis of the participants'

first interviews, I began to notice some patterns in codes and began developing tentative

analytic categories, defined by Charmaz (2006) as, "ideas that best fit and interpret the

data" (p. 3). A discussion on preliminary analysis results are presented in the next

chapter. From this initial phase of data analysis, I developed a visual representation of the analysis and sent this document to participants prior to our next interview. The preliminary analysis document was developed with consultation from this researcher's advisor and is presented in Appendix E. Within this document, I requested that participants think about the following in preparation for our next interview:

1. As you look at these themes and their related constructs, was there anything that did not seem to resonate with your beliefs and/or experiences? If so, could you tell me which ones and briefly why they did not resonate with you?

2. Please briefly share any additional thoughts that you have about the themes presented, including any that particularly stuck out for you and/or themes or experiences that you think are missing.

In addition, I developed a protocol sheet for use during follow-up interviews to assist in documenting participants responses (Appendix F).

Memos

According to Charmaz (2006), "Memo-writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process" (p. 72). Memos provide a written record of the evolution of the theory development and coding processes (Creswell, 2007). They map out the progression of a study, including decision-making and analysis procedures, and serve as an audit trail for the researcher (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Charmaz (2006) noted that memo writing engages the researcher in the thoughtful and reflective processes required of grounded theory studies. Additionally, memos can capture the researcher's perspectives

and thoughts during the study, as well as provide a communication vehicle for others involved in or supervising the study. During data collection, I took several notes and recorded my thoughts and key issues that the participants generated during each interview. After each interview, I constructed a memo on my thoughts, reactions, reflections and observations made during the interview in a written memo or audio memo that was later transcribed. The audio memos were particularly useful for when conducting in person interviews in the field as they enabled me to quickly record my thoughts and observations. These memos were incorporated with memos generated during data analysis and will be discussed further in the data analysis section presented in this chapter.

Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS)

The Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003) was designed to measure individuals' attitudes that correspond to the four racial identity statuses identified in Helms' (1990) theory of racial identity: Pre-Encounter, Post-Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Internalization. This study utilized the revised BRIAS, which separated the Emersion and Immersion scales and reflected Helms' (2003) revised theory of Black identity (Bazelais, 2011). Helms' (2003) revised theory of racial identity delineates racial identity statuses from racial identity schemas. Racial identity statuses can be understood as hypothetical constructs, while schemas are the observable expressions of a status. Additionally, schemas represent the strategies that any individual may use for interpreting and responding to an understanding of one's race.

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The BRIAS is a 60-item self-report measure that is comprised of five scales to assess the five racial identity schemas of Helms' (2003) theory of Black identity: Pre-Encounter (17 items), Post-Encounter (8 items), Immersion (14 items), Emersion (8 items), and Internalization (13 items). Responses are indicated on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranges from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) and indicates the degree to which the item reflects respondents' attitudes. Items include, "I believe that White people look and express themselves better than Blacks," and "The most important thing about me is that I'm Black."

Warren's (2004) study administered the revised BRIAS to a community sample of Black women and reported the following internal consistency (alpha) coefficients: Pre-Encounter (.70), Post-Encounter (.64), Immersion (.69), Emersion (.62), and Internalization (.56). In her study on coping strategies and race-related stress amongst a sample of elderly Black women, Bazelais (2011) reported the following Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients: Pre-Encounter (.78), Post-Encounter (.71), Immersion (.77), Emersion (.66), and Internalization (.59). A number of studies have provided reliability estimates for the four-subscale versions of the BRIAS. Helms and Parham (1996) have reported the following internal consistency (alpha) coefficients: Pre-Encounter (.69), Post-Encounter (.50), Immersion-Emersion (.67), and Internalization (.79). Reliability estimates for the RIAS-B have varied. Additionally, Lemon and Waehler (1996) reported the following coefficients: Pre-Encounter (.70), Post-Encounter (.33), Immersion-Emersion (.75), and Internalization (.48). The researchers suggested that the lower alphas

may have resulted due to the small number of items in scale or because items in that scale might measure more than one dimension.

In the current study, Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were not used to assess the internal consistency of the subscales of the BRIAS. Helms (1996, 2007; Helms, Henze, Sass, & Mifsud, 2006) has addressed a number of methodological concerns in the measurement of racial identity and argued that traditional racial identity measurement approaches that focused on treating scales as independent of each other in describing racial identity failed to address the multidimensionality and non-linearity of racial identity measures. As such, she advocated for the use of evaluating responses through patterns or profile analysis. She further asserted that Cronbach's alpha (CA) as an estimate of reliability was inappropriate in the assessment of multidimensional measures as CA does not account for individual-level responses to subscales. Racial identity measures, such as the BRIAS, which measure racial identity constructs, can be described as ipsative. This term is more commonly used in psychometric theory and refers to "measures that yield scale scores that are interdependent at the level of the individual" (Trimble, Helms, & Root, 2008; p 157). Helms (2009) developed a procedure for determining individual-level reliability coefficients that she referred to as "iota." Iota is defined as "the proportion of an individual's raw score that is attributable to the sum of the absolute deviations from the person's mean score (i.e., within person error variance) subtracted from 1.00" (Jernigan, 2009). Iota varies from 0 to 1, with higher coefficients representing higher levels of item interrelatedness. Thus, iotas enabled me to examine the extent to which a participant's responses, based on her

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individual perception versus as compared to a group (as in traditional measurement approaches), on a specific schema were inter-related.

The use of iotas in developing racial identity profiles for participants of this study was selected as it provided an alternative approach for examining individual-level responses. Additionally, it was particularly suited for this study as, though this was a qualitative study within a constructivist framework that, traditionally, may not adopt a quantitative measure; this measurement approach stayed the closest to the participants' responses without comparing their responses to each other or another group in order to establish reliability.

The utilization of this measurement approach to a racial identity measure supported my usage of a quantitative measure within a predominantly qualitative, social constructivist study as it represented the non-linear construction of a reality, here racial identity schemas, a common feature of social constructivist paradigms (Turnbull, 2002). Additionally, insofar as I can find, there have been no studies that have previously employed the BRIAS with Black lesbian and bisexual populations.

Procedure

Individuals that were interested in the study were directed in recruitment materials to contact me via email for more information. I responded to individuals with a standard email response (Appendix G), which provided more information about the study, what participation in the study would look like and requesting that the individual email me if she was still interested in participating. Through email and phone correspondence a preferred date, time and location (if in person) was established.

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During the recruitment phase of this study, queries regarding my own racial and sexual identity arose during initial contact with individuals who inquired about participation in the study. Some of these initial inquires came from individuals that became participants in this study. Individuals inquired both about my racial background, as well as if I identified as a member of the LGB community. Some individuals noted that my name led them to assume that I might be a racial or ethnic minority. However, my affiliation with a predominantly White academic institution made them question whether or not I might be a White researcher. Issues regarding researcher/participant race has encouraged researcher self-disclosure of social group identity membership when interviewing people of Color (Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Parker, 2003; Ochieng, 2010). At the outset of this study I recognized the significance of researcher race and sexual identity in research, given the history of research on marginalized groups. I believed that it was important for me to inform participants of my racial and sexual identity. Additionally, I believed that in asking these women to share intimate aspects of their lives with me, I had a responsibility to be honest about my own background if asked. Almost all of the individuals that asked about my background indicated some form of relief and/or satisfaction that I was "a member of the community," with many describing how they had previously participated in studies with White or heterosexual researchers and were concerned with how their experiences would be interpreted.

Interviews

Initial interviews.

Initial interviews were either conducted in-person (N=6) or over the phone (N=7)

and lasted an average of 54 minutes. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Location of in-person interviews were jointly decided upon between myself and the participant. This negotiation provided participants with the opportunity to designate their ideal and most comfortable location for the interview. Of the six participants interviewed in person, one participant was interviewed at a coffee shop, while the other five participants requested to be interviewed in their homes.

At the start of each in-person interview, informed consent was reviewed and obtained from participants and they were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix H; Appendix C) prior to the start of the interview. For participants that were interviewed over the phone, an informed consent form and the demographic questionnaire was either mailed or emailed to participants and returned to me via mail prior to our scheduled interviews. Participants were encouraged to contact me prior to our interview if they had any questions about the consent form. Issues regarding consent and confidentiality were reviewed prior to the start of our phone interviews. At the end of each initial interview, I thanked participants for their time and informed them that I would be in contact to schedule our follow-up interview at a later date.

Follow-up interviews.

Participants were scheduled for follow-up phone interviews. Follow-up interviews lasted an average of 9 minutes. Prior to each follow-up interview, participants were emailed a document that provided a visual representation of the tentative analytic categories and related codes generated from initial data analysis (Appendix E). Participants were asked to think about a couple of questions and their reactions to these

categories prior to the follow-up interview. At the end of each interview, participants were informed that they would receive a survey about attitudes about race (BRIAS) to complete via mail with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return to me. Of the 13 participants, two did not return the BRIAS survey after approximately 5-6 attempts to contact these participants had been made. All participants were again thanked for their time and participation at the end of the follow-up interview and asked to provide any additional thoughts they had about their experience.

Data Analysis

The corpus of data used in this study included a demographic questionnaire, transcribed interviews, self-reflective and analytic memos I made throughout data collection and analysis, and BRIAS surveys completed by the participants. This section discusses the analytical tools and steps taken during the analysis of data.

Analysis Software

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software was utilized for the analysis of data. The software program Atlas.ti 6.27 was specifically selected for use as it enabled me to organize the data generated from interviews and memos. Such software has been suggested to aid in systematic and well-documented procedures, enhance researcher productivity, and assist in increasing transparency issues that have been previously critiqued in grounded theory studies (Blank, 2004; Bringer, Johnson, & Brackenridge, 2004; Smith & Hesse-Biber, 1996).

After each interview was transcribed, accuracy of transcription was checked by listening to each interview and comparing it to the transcript. Adjustments were made as

necessary. All transcribed interviews were saved as Rich Text Files (RTF) and uploaded into Atlas.ti as Primary Documents (PDs). Once each document was loaded into Atlas.ti, the program automatically assigned line numbers. Each document was printed to in order to keep a "clean" copy of the numbered PD for future reference.

Coding and Initial Phase Analysis

Saldana (2009) described codes in qualitative studies as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute" (p. 3). Data analysis of interviews involved going through each transcript, reviewing line, sentence, and paragraph segments of the transcribed interviews, and providing codes for each unit of analysis. The process began with open coding, wherein the large amount of textual data was broken down into manageable data units to which I then applied codes, or concepts, to represent these data units (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Three types of open codes were used during this process within Atlas.ti, including open codes (new code developed), in-vivo codes (using the actual words of the participant), and pre-existing codes (developed from either the in-vivo or open codes). In line with grounded theory, a constant comparative method was utilized in analyzing the data. Constant comparison methods involve comparing the similarities and differences of each incident in the data with other incidences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Comparisons occur across all levels of analysis and this process is significant to the analysis as "it allows the researcher to differentiate one category/theme from another and to identify properties and dimensions specific to that category/theme" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During this initial stage of analysis, I began to link concepts that were occurring across the data, elaborating

and reflecting upon what I was noticing in the data in memos and creating tentative analytic categories. As I progressed, codes were merged and/or reassigned as I compared data units against each other within single interviews and across participants in an effort to reduce redundancy.

As initial codes were developed, I utilized the "code family" function in Atlas.ti to develop tentative analytic categories. As coding progressed, the use of code families in developing categories complicated the ease of sorting through codes. This problem has been noted by Friese (2009) who advised against the use of code families for grouping codes. The use of code families for filtering and grouping codes to facilitate queries about the data was recommended instead. This initial process of relating and assigning initial codes into categories that best captured the essence of the concept being discussed essentially began what many grounded theory studies view as the axial coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Open and axial coding occurred concurrently as analysis progressed, reflecting Corbin and Strauss' (2008) updated perspective on open and axial coding, initially viewed as separate and distinct processes. Similarly, Charmaz (2006) indicated that axial coding is not essential in the analysis process, specifically when the researcher can be flexible in the analysis process. As such, while I recognized the axial coding process, as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008), I viewed it as being subsumed during initial phase analysis.

Tentative analytic categories were developed upon analyzing approximately half of the initial interviews (N=7). I utilized these categories, as well as sample codes from each category, to develop a preliminary analysis document that was sent to participants

prior to our follow-up interview (Appendix E). These follow-up interviews facilitated

member checking, generally described as a process of sharing research findings with

participants to ensure that the interpretations of their interviews reflected their

experience. Additionally, this process enabled participants to reflect not only on how

they situated their own experiences within the preliminary analysis, but how they related,

or not, to other areas not previously addressed by them during their initial interviews.

Participant data from the follow-up interviews informed my continued initial coding of

the remaining initial interviews (N=6).

Coding and Second Phase Analysis

Data obtained from follow-up interviews were compared to previous data and

assisted in the refinement of categories during focused coding. Focused coding, defined

by Charmaz (2006) as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift

through large amounts of data" (p. 57) was utilized during this phase of analysis. I

engaged in the process of examining recurring concepts, exploring and refining

categories and subcategories through re-examining initial phase coding and memos.

Each code and category that was developed was annotated within Atlas.ti to provide a

description of what each appeared to capture. Additionally, data obtained from follow-up

interviews were incorporated into this phase of analysis. Feedback obtained by

participants assisted in the analytic processes by enabling me to examine tentative

categories and concepts that seemed to resonate, or not, with participants. Further, after

receiving feedback from the second interview, I was able to return to previous interviews

to examine potential categories and concepts that participants felt were missing from my

initial analysis and categories and concepts that were unclear to participants, warranting further explication, removal or may have reflected another category or concept. As patterns emerged in the data, they were further explored through memo writing.

In addition to memos that were written throughout this study, several specific analytic tools were utilized during the latter stages of data analysis. The co-occurrence explorer in Atlas.ti provides an output of codes that overlap or are in close proximity to another code (Friese, 2011). While this function does not provide an interpretation of the co-occurrence, it was useful as it enabled me to examine codes that may be redundant or may reflect concepts that were closely related. Once the co-occurring codes were identified, related quotations were retrieved and further analyzed through asking the following questions recommended by Contreras (2011):

- What is this co-occurrence telling us about our research problem?
- How do these concepts relate to each other in the context of the study?
- How is this particular concept helping us understand this other particular concept?

Scott's (2004, 2008) conditional relationship guide was designed as a tool that could be utilized by grounded theory researchers. The purpose of the guide is to understand relationships amongst categories in a grounded theory study. A conditional relationship guide is created by answering each of the following questions posed by Scott (2004, p. 116):

- What is [the category]? (Using the informant's words helps avoid bias.)
- When does [the category] occur? (Using "during …" helps form the answer.)

- Where does [the category] occur? (Using "in …" helps form the answer.)

- Why does [the category] occur? (Using "because …" helps form the answer.)

- How does [the category] occur? (Using "by …" helps form the answer.)

- With what consequence does [the category] occur? (Using "by…" helps form the answer)

Use of the co-occurrence explorer and conditional relationship guide is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Memos

The rationale for use of memos in this study has been previously mentioned. This section focuses on the providing a description of the different types of memos I utilized during data analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2008) diverged from their previous break down of memos into code, theoretical and operational notes towards a perspective of acknowledging the multiple uses and fluidity of memo writing and use within grounded theory studies. Atlas.ti enables the researcher to develop several different types of memos, which can be named and applied to the data in multiple ways. For the purposes of this study, I utilized four different types of memos within Atlas.ti. *Commentary* memos served as a notation of emerging thoughts on the data and process and areas that I wanted to follow-up on within the data and/or within the literature. *Memo* titled memos reflected my musings and observation about what I was seeing in the data. These were later utilized during focused coding and in the development of categories and the emerging theory. *Methodological* memos captured the issues relating to the research

process, including documenting decisions and analytic directions. *Theory* memos served to document my thoughts on the emerging theory and on literature related to the theory.

In addition to the memos described above that were made and applied to the data during the analysis, I also transcribed the memos that I audio taped after each interview and imported these documents into Atlas.ti as a *Field* Memo. During data analysis, I often went back to these memos in order to be reminded of additional contexts, personal thoughts and other musing that I experienced during the interview that may or may not relate to what was emerging in the data.

Data Coding and Analysis Documentation

Although Atlas.ti was useful in maintaining documentation of my coding and analysis procedures, my own learning curve for understanding the software and desire to increase the transparency of my work led me to develop rigorous means of documentation of the coding and analysis processes. Atlas.ti is capable of generating numerous types of output. With each round, or iteration, of coding, I kept track of changes not only within the Atlas.ti software program, but in hardcopy and other electronic formats. Recognizing that coding is a time intensive process, I attempted to capture each coding session through maintaining a detailed documentation system. In addition to serving the purpose of enhancing the trustworthiness of this study, this system enabled me to keep track of "snapshots" of the coding process.

Each coding session was identified as a coding iteration. Upon the conclusion of a coding session, I reviewed a documentation checklist that I created (Appendix I). Once an iteration was completed, I exported the code list, code family list, and code frequency

data of that iteration into separate Word documents and an Excel workbook file. Both

enabled me to keep track of coding changes (including deletions, renaming, merges) that

occurred throughout the history of the study. In addition, I also exported the code list

with comments included, list of memos, and list of memos with quotations as Word files.

During later stages of data analysis, these records, in addition to those stored within

Atlas.ti, were particularly useful in revisiting previous coding and analysis decisions.

Racial Identity and Profile Analysis

Participant's responses on the Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS;

Helms 1990, 2003) were scored and analyzed utilizing Helms' (2009) procedure for

calculating iotas, an individual-level reliability coefficient that allowed me to look at the

interrelatedness of items, as perceived by participants, for each racial identity schema

measured by the BRIAS. After the calculation of iotas for each participant that completed

the BRIAS (N=11), a profile was generated for each participant.

<div align="center">Development of Emerging Theory</div>

As this chapter has discussed, traditional grounded theory approaches result in a

theory that illustrates a basic social process, in which a "core category" or "central

phenomenon" is identified and through which all other categories can be subsumed

(Strauss & Corbin, 2008). In the development of the emergent theory for this study, I

adhered to Charmaz' (2006) assertion that constructivist approaches should not merely be

reduced to a singular phenomenon through which the corpus of all data can be

understood. Therefore, I understand the emerging theory of this study as one account, or

interpretive lens, through which participants' experiences in this study could be

understood. This section discusses the process through which the development of the emergent theory occurred.

As previously discussed, initial data analysis procedures resulted in the development of six tentative analytic categories. These categories were then provided to participants for their feedback and additional thoughts about the study during a follow-up interview. Follow-up interview data were incorporated into the second phase of analysis, alongside memos I constructed throughout data collection and analysis. Through an iterative process of refining codes, categories and subcategories; reviewing initial analysis and memos; and reviewing supporting literature, four major conceptual categories were identified. It was at this juncture that I encountered several difficulties in theory generation. An initial difficulty was in articulating the relationships amongst the major conceptual categories and moving from a descriptive account of the data to a substantive theory. Indeed, a challenge that arose was making the "analytic leap" described by Charmaz (2006). In addition, I struggled with the data that seemed to reflect an account of participants' experiences, upon which the emergent theory has developed, versus searching for a structured account of the data that "fit" the initial guiding questions. While the BRIAS, specifically the profile analysis, was well-suited for examining response patterns and relating this back to participant narratives, it did not provide the best means for answering the initial purpose of this study, which was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities (the reader is directed to a discussion of this specific issue in Chapter 5). Lastly, I encountered

difficulties in how to present the emergent nature of the theory in an account that best reflected grounded theory methodology versus traditional structures of doctoral dissertations write-ups.

Through writing up my findings and interpretations, further analytic and process memoing, and consultation with colleagues, I reached a major turning point. It was here that I returned to my initial purpose for utilizing a grounded theory approach in this study, which was to provide voice to a marginalized population, Black lesbian and bisexual women. To present an aspect of their racial and sexual identities that was grounded in *their* experiences. This realization required a shift in my thinking of structure for the purposes of *explaining* to writing a narrative account, or story, of one interpretive understanding of how racial identity statuses and reflected appraisals can be understood. Utilizing additional analytic tools, such as the conditional relationship guide (Scott, 2004, 2008), I further explored patterns and relationships amongst the major conceptual categories. This process lead to a theoretical model, grounded in participants experiences, which may be used to understand the relationship between reflected appraisals and racial identity statuses. This theory is presented in detail in Chapter 5. Implications of the theory as related to our understanding of the relationship between racial identity statuses and reflected appraisals are also provided in Chapter 5.

Trustworthiness

The concept of "trustworthiness" within qualitative studies is often used when examining the quality of data, instead of the terms reliability and validity, and have been described in the literature as a standard of credibility derived from the process of

qualitative research (Anastas, 2004; Morrow, 2005). Morrow (2005) noted that standards of trustworthiness in qualitative inquiries often rely upon the paradigmatic foundation of a study; however, she identified four criteria for trustworthiness that transcend one's research paradigm: social validity, subjectivity and reflexivity, adequacy of data and adequacy of interpretation. These criteria were later revised by Williams and Morrow (2009) who identified three major categories of trustworthiness that should be included in all qualitative inquiries: integrity of data, balancing reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings.

Integrity or adequacy of data encompasses not only the researcher's clarification of the procedures and analytical strategies employed in the study, but evidence that an adequate amount and quality of data has been collected as well (Williams & Morrow, 2009). According to Williams and Morrow (2009), triangulation of data is one approach that can increase data quality. Triangulation of data can be understood as the utilization of multiple methods of data in an effort to understand the phenomenon under investigation (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). Approaches in triangulation may consist of multiple methods, multiple data sources or multiple data collection methods (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003; Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). Multiple data sources were utilized in this study. These sources included interviews and the initial use of the BRIAS.

The second criterion of trustworthiness identified by Williams and Morrow (2009) involves the balance participant narratives and researcher interpretations of participant narratives. Consideration of researcher reflexivity and subjectivity and member checking were suggested as two ways in which this balance could be addressed.

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Reflexivity on the part of the researcher involves awareness of biases and assumption that the researcher may bring into the research process. In the next section of this study, I provide a discussion on the issue of reflexivity, as applied to this study, and provide the reader with the personal contexts in which I entered into this study and the biases and assumptions that I held that might have influenced the research process. Additionally, member-checking occurred during the early stages of analysis. Member checking is one approach in attempting to bridge the gap between researcher interpretations and participants' meanings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Midway through the initial phase of analysis, I presented each participant with a visual representation of the tentative analytic categories (Appendix E) and requested that they provide their feedback during a follow-up interview. In addition to member-checking, this study utilized continuous memo writing. Fassinger (2005) described memo writing in grounded theory approaches as illustrating the emerging analytic directions that the researcher engages in. Memos were written during data collection and throughout the analysis process. Additionally, they were integrated throughout data interpretation.

The third and final criterion for trustworthiness, as identified by Williams and Morrow (2009), involves the communication and application of the results of a study. The researcher is encouraged to provide support for interpretations provided in the form of illustrative quotes from participants. Situating the results of a study within existing literature is one approach suggested in meeting these criteria. In this study, the emerging theory is situated within the extant literature. Additionally, participant quotes have been

provided in Chapter 4 to support category development and the emerging theory of this study.

Researcher Reflexivity

In line with most qualitative studies, grounded theory assumes a relativist perspective in which multiple views of a reality are acknowledged and equally considered and valued (Barbour & Bird, 2001; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Within these realities lie those of the researcher in qualitative studies. Researchers engaged in qualitative inquiry attempt to acknowledge their biases through engagement in reflexivity, which can be understood as a researcher's self-reflective stance that makes explicit one's past experiences, life history, knowledge base and other factors that may influence the researcher's development and interpretation of data (Charmaz, 2006). According to Williams and Morrow (2009) the balance between the voices of the participants and the interpretations of these voices on the part of the researcher is dependent upon both subjectivity, the acknowledgement that research is subjective, and reflexivity. Given the emphasis on participant voices in grounded theory methods, importance is placed upon the researcher making explicit her biases and assumptions (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). In this section, I attempt to make my potential biases and assumptions explicit through providing my background as a context for my undertaking and conduction of the current study.

The impetus for my desire to engage in this study is informed by my educational, professional and personal experiences. As a as queer, Black woman, understanding my multiple backgrounds has been a kaleidoscope of varying experiences, each uniquely

shaped by internal and external reflections of myself, made by myself and by others. I grew up in a bicultural family, through which I came to understand my racial and cultural backgrounds within my family context. However, it was through my experiences with others I came to learn that how I identified and defined myself was not necessarily how the world would chose to identify and define me.

Throughout my development, my understanding of my racial identity often shifted. Frequently these shifts were related to experiences of being both an "insider" and an "outsider" in racial and ethnic minority communities based upon alienation for acting "too White." Concurrently, I was increasingly aware of being "too Black" in majority White communities. Soon the issue of gender became an area of saliency for me, though I recognized quickly how it was inextricably linked with my race. I was not just someone who was Black and a woman. I was a Black woman. This identity came with the assumptions and stereotypes associated with Black women that I have experienced more frequently as I have progressed through my higher education. For example, if I am quiet, I'm may be ignored or thought of as being "angry." If I am assertive, I'm may be perceived as "uppity" or angry. Increased awareness about who I was and how the world saw and interacted with me personally led to more aggravation than enlightenment.

My queer identity reflected similar experiences in my youth of not fitting in. Coming out, I was propelled into a predominantly White LGB community that did not readily accept me as "family." My race and gender expression, femme, seemed to be difficult for members of both heterosexual and LGB communities to contend with.

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Exclusion, racism, and oppression were concepts that I had experienced based upon my race and gender. In coming out, I was required to integrate an additional layer of marginalization.

Given my experiences, it was not surprising that I was drawn to the field of psychology, specifically in the area of race and culture. I wanted to know why people behaved the way they did, how to facilitate growth in others and how people came to understand and interact with issues of race, gender, and later, sexual identity. Others "like me" did not seem to exist in the world I came out in. Rare was it that I would see another woman of Color in the LGB community, even rarer to see another Black woman. I was not even aware of the literature on LGB people of Color until I progressed further in my studies.

My educational, professional and personal experiences set the context in which I entered into this study. Some of the potential biases that I had included perceived similarities between myself and participant experiences. Additionally, I had to be aware that terminologies and concepts discussed by participants may not have the same meanings I would have attributed, based on my experiences.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview and rationale for conducting a qualitative research study using social constructivist grounded theory. Sampling strategies and recruitment were discussed and a description of the participants in this study was provided. The data sources and procedures of this study, including data analysis procedures were detailed in this chapter. A discussion on the development of the

emerging theory was provided as well as a discussion on trustworthiness and researcher

reflexivity. The next chapter will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of reflected appraisals in Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities. Initial coding and analysis of the first seven interviews resulted in the development of six tentative analytic categories, which were provided to participants for their feedback and additional thoughts about the study. This feedback was then incorporated into the second phase of analysis, alongside memos I constructed throughout initial and continued data collection and analysis, including data collection and analysis of the remaining five interviews. Through an iterative process of refining codes, categories and subcategories; reviewing initial analysis and memos; and reviewing related literature, four major conceptual categories were identified. These categories were further explored for their relatedness and informed the development of the emerging theory for this study. Participant responses on the Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003) were scored and racial identity profiles were created for each participant that completed the BRIAS (N=11).

This chapter presents the results from this study. The chapter begins with results from the initial data analysis, followed by participants' responses to these results during the second interview. The next section of the chapter focuses on the findings from second phase data analysis, including the resulting major conceptual categories.

Following this, participants' racial identity profiles will be presented. Finally, a conceptual model of the relationship between racial identity and reflected appraisals on Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities will be presented.

Initial Analysis Results

Preliminary Results

Initial coding of the first seven interviews resulted in 238 codes from which six tentative analytic categories emerged from the data: Sexual Identity and Whiteness; Not Looking the Part; Partial Acceptance; Sense of Belonging; Rainbow is Not Enuf; and Gender Expression. This section discusses each of these tentative analytic categories, including a description of the category and corresponding concepts. Each category also includes relevant quotes to illustrate the category or concept discussed. Following each quote is a reference indicating the participant (P#) and initial (1) or follow-up interview (2) and transcript line number.

Sexual Identity and Whiteness.

Sexual Identity and Whiteness referred to one's sexual identity being related to some aspect of whiteness, either self-identified or imposed on by others. Participants described "whiteness" in the context of behaviors associated with White Americans and representing White American culture. Table 1 presents this tentative analytic category, its related concepts, and some sample codes that were included within this category during initial analysis.

Table 1

Tentative Analytic Category 1 (Sexual Identity and Whiteness), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Acting White	Acting White
LGB Community Predominantly White	LGB community normed on White culture
	LGB communities dominated by Whites
LGB is a "White Thing"	"lesbian," just sounds really White
	Being gay is in the White community not Black community
LGB Community Not Diverse	LGB community does not encompass different races and/or ethnicities

Participants discussed the concept of *Acting White* in reference to being told by

others that they acted or possessed characteristics that were stereotypically associated

with White Americans (e.g., speaking "proper English"):

> And growing up, not speaking whatever I was supposed to, and getting teased about it or having people point it out when they visited my family, "Why does she talk like that?" So I think language, in that sense, that I don't speak whatever "Black English" is. I think language plays a role in that. But I don't think it's a huge part of what it is. I think it's also my growing up in mostly White neighborhoods, I think probably that's the biggest part of it. (P7.1, 157:157)

> I can tell that when I'm talking to people sometimes that they kinda look at you like they're saying, "Oh, wow." They didn't know that you could even talk proper English, or if you're educated, that same thing too. It's like a double sword among the Blacks. It can be a lot of jealousy if you further your education. Like you think you're better than everybody else. And we get the thing that, "Oh, you're talking White," or "Why are you talking like that? Why are you trying to sound White?" I get that or have gotten that in the past because I can speak proper English. (P11.1, 161:161)

Acting White was often described by participants in relation to sexual identity.

Participants discussed a general sense that common LGB terminology often reflected

whiteness or triggered associations with White populations. Participants also discussed

stereotypes held by family members and members of the Black communities that located

LGB identities and issues within predominantly White populations:

> "Lesbian" just sounds really White to me. (P1.1, 185:185)

> It's really viewed as the "White man's disease." Like if you engage in that
> activity something's wrong with you. You're not right or you've been hanging
> around White people too much. That's the kind of stuff that we hear. (P11.1,
> 145:145)

> It seems like my mom is under the impression that there's like no way that I can
> be gay and be African. Right now she's set in that this is just a selfish act and it's
> not a biological act, because this is very American…and White American. It's a
> very White American thing to do. To be selfish and just think of yourself, and not
> think about reproducing. And this, to her, is very White American culture. (P5.1,
> 199:199)

> Participants discussed the dominance of White populations within LGB

communities and LGB identified spaces. LGB communities were described as lacking

racial and ethnic diversity and not inclusive of diverse experiences. Further, spaces for

LGB persons were described as being targeted for Whites:

> I think a lot of times when you're looking at the GLBT community it doesn't
> really encompass a lot of Black experiences or Hispanic experiences. It's kind of
> normed on a White culture. (P1.1, 213:221)

> There are definitely more establishments for Whites, particularly White men,
> when it comes to gay-friendly restaurants, gay-owned restaurants or clubs.
> (P11.1, 57:58)

Not Looking the Part.

Not Looking the Part refers to participants' individual characteristics being related

to stereotypes of sexual identities either self-identified by participants or imposed on by

others. Table 2 presents this tentative analytic category, its related concepts, and some

sample codes that were included within this category during initial analysis.

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Table 2

Tentative Analytic Category 2 (Not Looking the Part), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Don't Look Like an LGB Person	I don't look like the stereotype
	Looking like an LGB person
Looks Straight	People think I'm straight

Participant 13 provided some insight on what it meant to "look like" someone

who was LGB:

> I know people who, I don't know if I look any particular way [laughs], but I know
> women, lesbians, who are more male-identified and you can really look at them
> and tell a sexual identity.   They receive a lot more harassment and looks and
> stares and stuff like that. (P13.1, 61:61)

Self and reflected appraisals were provided by participants on how their physical

appearance, behaviors and/or mannerisms did not match theirs or others stereotypes of

what an LGB person looks like. Self-appraisals about not appearing as though one was

an LGB person were described by participants in terms of how their physical appearance,

behaviors or mannerisms were not representative of stereotypical representations of LGB

women:

> I don't look like the stereotype. (P1.1, 265:265)

> I would say, though, when I am about, you know, out and about that they don't
> know 'cause I don't have that "gay look," you know. I don't dress like a guy, you
> know. I look like any other Black feminine woman. So, you know, they would
> even really know unless they, you know, knew me, you know, personally, you
> know, my life, so, yeah. (P11.1, 173:173)

Most of the participants that discussed not looking like stereotypes of LGB

women also noted that they were feminine in their physical appearance and mannerisms.

I termed this concept as *Looks Straight*, which was exhibited through self and reflected

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appraisals held by participants. For a participant that *Looks Straight*, others may not

readily identify them as an LGB person without additional context or information

indicative of an LGB sexual identity:

> I think if I'm not out to someone, they're going to assume that I'm just straight. (P5.1, 19:19)

> It would be hard for someone to know that I was gay unless I told them in advance and that was how they found out. It doesn't happen that often that I'm in those spaces. (P13.1, 65:65)

Partial Acceptance.

Partial Acceptance refers to participants' experiences that reflected a sense of not

being fully accepted by families and friends, and in communities (including Black, LGB

and spiritual Communities). This category was predominantly discussed within the

context of participants' sexual identities. Table 3 presents this tentative analytic

category, its related concepts, and some sample codes that were included within this

category during initial analysis.

Table 3

Tentative Analytic Category 3 (Partial Acceptance), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Accept Person but not "Lifestyle,"	Not completely accepted by Black community
	Covert acceptance of sexual orientation
Don't Ask, Don't Tell	Black tolerance until close to home
LGB Family Secrets	LGB family secrets
	Sexual orientation not discussed in family

Participants described several experiences of others' silent acknowledgement or

awareness of an individual's sexual identity. Two participants discussed such

experiences as a covert type of acceptance:

In the neighborhood I live in, there's myself and two other couples living here. Amongst all of us, we're all queer. A lot of my neighbors know, some of them don't. Most of us, we don't even have a conversation about it. I remember this gay guy was living there once and some of the people were referring to him as a "homo-thug." I don't know, it's like an acceptance with a snicker sometimes because there is that level of ignorance. (P4.1, 41:41)

It's kind of more covert and oftentimes feels like the person is an ally, but almost ashamed to be an ally. Or the person themselves is queer, or some alternate identification, but ashamed to be recognized overtly as a member of that population. That's just my experience, but it feels like it's a covert acknowledgement and a very vocal validation…In the Black community at large, it feels like it's more of a covert acceptance with the people who are accepting it than an overt one. (P12.1, 97:97)

Partial Acceptance of LGB identities within predominantly Black communities was discussed by several participants. Their descriptions reflected a tension between public and private forms of acceptance and limitations on what can be said or expressed about LGB persons and issues. Participant 13 provided an example of this tension in her beliefs on how Black community members' attitudes on LGB issues can change when someone close to them identifies as an LGB person:

I think, in general, there's a sort of live and let live philosophy until it comes a little bit closer to home. So, if you ask a Black person that's straight whether people should have rights or something like that, they'd go "Yeah," or be against discrimination, for example. But then, there's overwhelming statistics on people who kick their children out of the house because they're gay. A lot of the homeless youth are African American. But there's something about when it's close to home or family, a lot of people have told me about family members not talking to them or not coming to commitment ceremonies and things like that. (P13.1, 53:53)

Participants discussed sexual identity-related reflected appraisals held by family members that led to participants experiencing a sense of Partial Acceptance. These reflected appraisals were discussed within the context of experiences of silence around sexual identity within the family. Additionally, participants discussed these appraisals in

the context of a pattern of non-acknowledgment of an LGB family members' sexual

identity:

> My parents like to not talk about the fact that I'm gay, except I'm just like, "I'm gonna live my life." My cousins, who are younger, they're like, "Have whatever, but that's just her doing whatever she wants to do." But my aunts and uncles, they don't talk about it. (P1.1, 477:477)

> I think my mom, because we never talk about it at home… In her mind has some illusion of me, or delusion of me being like they say "straight." Not talking about it, or just kind of putting it under the rug, and that's allowed because my father doesn't know. It's not like they can talk about it at home. (P5.1, 63:63)

While participants discussed their experiences of Partial Acceptance from others

as being related to a silent, or covert, acknowledgement of sexual identity (whether theirs

or others), other participants also discussed a potential consequence of receiving Partial

Acceptance within predominantly Black communities – a general sense of not feeling

connected to the Black community:

> It's just that I grew up a different way than a lot of Black folks grew up and so I think, sometimes it's made me feel like an 'other' because I feel like I'm not completely accepted and there's nothing I can do about it. (P12.1, 81:81)

Sense of Belonging.

Sense of Belonging refers to aspects of belonging or not belonging to groups or

communities. Participants discussed this in relation to belonging to Black communities,

predominantly White LGB communities, religious communities, and in their families.

Table 4 presents this tentative analytic category, its related concepts, and some sample

codes that were included within this category during initial analysis.

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Table 4

Tentative Analytic Category 4 (Sense of Belonging), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Alienation (Black Community)	Black community not accepting of LGB persons
	Being partially connected to the Black community
	Should be able to let guard down around other Blacks
	Coming out and alienation from the Black community
	Invisible in Black community
	Being an outsider in the Black community
	Being gay in the Black community is difficult
Alienation (Family)	Coming out and alienation from family
	Sexual identity not accepted by family
Religious/Spiritual Conflicts	Black Church
	Resolving conflict between religion and sexual orientation
Lack of (Blacks/Diversity in LGB Community)	Lack of Black LGB
	LGB community does not encompass different races and/or ethnicities

Participants discussed their experiences and fears around alienation within and

from predominantly Black communities. In addition to speaking about these experiences

and fears from their own perspectives, participants also described their general beliefs

about the lack of acceptance of LGB persons within the Black community:

> You know, it was all that I really had. I didn't want to be alienated. I didn't want
> to be ostracized. And so, I just didn't say anything, and I just kept that [sexual
> identity] to myself. (P1.1, 409:409)

> There's no way, supposedly, that anyone of African descent could be gay or
> lesbian. So it's shunned upon, very often among Blacks, be it their families, their
> workplace, their community surroundings, such as church. So, therefore, a lot of
> them remain in the closet because of the fear of being shunned. (P11.1, 53:53)

As illustrated in the examples above, several participants described the fear of

alienation and how it may impact the disclosure of an LGB identity within the Black

community, whether their own or others. Participants also discussed experiencing alienation within their families. P11 describes her concerns about coming out to her family members:

> I had to make that decision to come out to my family, which was very difficult, very difficult, because I knew my parents were going to have a fit. I knew they were not going to be happy, as well as my daughter. And I knew that just knowing them over the years and comments they've made about gay and lesbian people, negative comments that I would hear, and that type of thing. So, I knew that it would not be accepted. (P11.1, 101:101)

Participants identified several religious and spiritual conflicts related to their Sense of Belonging to religious communities. While some of these conflicts were personal or internal struggles with religion and spirituality, other conflicts that were identified were related to religious institutions. Participants discussed their experiences with the Black Church and of beliefs that they felt the Black Church held about LGB persons. Additionally, some participants described inconsistencies and double standards that they felt existed between the Black Church and its views on LGB people and issues:

> "You know you're a sinner and you're going to go to hell," but these are people who were doing God knows what [chuckles] and definitely weren't talking about God, but then all of a sudden it gets really religious and, yeah, being with Black folk can be difficult some times. (P1.1, 269:269)

> But then I find that even within those communities that a lot of those folks, even if they're very religious, they know, I think at their heart level, they know that we're just like everybody else because I think a lot of the Black churches and the Black choirs have a reasonable percentage of gay folks in the choirs, especially gay males and some gay or bi females that everybody knows but nobody talks about it overtly. (P12.1, 53:53)

Participants described a process of contending with an LGB identity and messages that they received from their religious communities. In addition to describing this process as one that participants dealt with on an individual level, they noted an

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awareness of similar struggles faced by other Black LGB people. When conflicts

between one's sexual identity and religion arose, individuals were challenged to question

what it meant to have an LGB identity and a religious identity:

> I know a lot of my friends are, are struggling with their sexuality and their background, being raised in a Black family and in the Black church and all that kind of stuff. They really struggle with that and having come to terms with being gay and loving God at the same time, is it possible? (P11.1, 237:237)

> It was difficult in that I had to really be careful about who I disclose that information to because I was still struggling with, "What does that mean to me spiritually?" (P2.1, 113:117)

> I was just kind of not wanting to be challenged or have to explain Christianity and how I can find those two things to be consistent with each other. Like, I can be gay and Christian at the same time. (P13.1, 45:45)

> Participants described a lack of other Black LGB people within larger,

predominantly White, LGB communities. P1 describes her "search" for this diversity

when she attends LGB functions:

> I always look to see if there are other Black people there. And that's one of the things that I always look for, I look to see are there Hispanic people there? I looked to see, are there some Asian people here? I'd take an Asian person. Like, that'd do it for me too! [laughter] You don't have to be Black, just be a minority! [laughs]. I'd take it! (P1.1, 641:645)

> These experiences are similar to participants' experiences of LGB communities,

in general, not being racially or ethnically diverse, as discussed in the tentative analytic

category, Sexual Identity and Whiteness. However, I included these experiences here as

participants' descriptions were discussed in the context of their race being represented

within LGB communities and how that might relate to feeling as though they belonged to

the community or not.

Rainbow is Not Enuf.

Rainbow is Not Enuf refers to the LGBT pride symbol of the rainbow flag as related to misrepresentations and/or contradictions of the diversity and within group differences in predominantly White LGB communities. Additionally, the term is a reference to Shange's (1975, 1997) seminal play about the experiences of women of Color. Table 5 presents this tentative analytic category, its related concepts, and some sample codes that were included within this category during initial analysis.

Table 5

Tentative Analytic Category 5(Rainbow is Not Enuf), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Shared LGB Identity (Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate)	Getting a pass
Shared LGB Identity (Assumed Understanding of Race)	Shared LGB identity does not mean we are all the same
	Being oppressed does not make you sensitive to other oppressions
	White LGB think making inappropriate comments is okay
Race Becomes Invisible	Race not thought of in LGB communities
	Invisible in LGB community
Racism in the LGB Community	Racism and discrimination in the LGB community
	Experiences of race negative

Several participants described experiences of assumptions and behaviors that they felt White LGB persons engaged in with people of Color. These behaviors were described as an assumed affinity that White LGB persons may perceive between sexual identity and race, with this affinity based on the experience of oppression and marginalization experienced based on an LGB identity and one's race. P3 discussed how

such an assumed affinity might enable some White LGB persons to make inappropriate

comments:

> I think when I'm in environments that, let's say a gay bar or a party, I think maybe I can come off as interesting to talk to, but really, I know for myself, if a gay guy prances over to me and says something politically inappropriate, it's not going to fly for me. And I may not necessarily check him on that, maybe in a humorous way, but that stuff is important to me because I think that… I don't know, I think that bad politics is just bad politics no matter who's saying it. So, things that gay people might say that are offensive racially don't get a pass from me. (P12.1, 77:77)

Participant 12 also highlighted this affinity, or *Shared Identity,* as related to White

LGB persons' understandings, or lack thereof, about race:

> Sometimes they bring the very same basket of 'isms' that their families might have but then they just happen to be queer so gay rights is a big thing for them but not necessarily rights for people of Color or able to identify oppression if it doesn't strike their particular perspective on queer oppression, maybe they can kind of identify, yeah, maybe that's kind of similar but I don't find that across the board, definitely not 100% that folks realize that their perspective or other people's perspective of oppression or experience of that, it doesn't always follow because I think oftentimes, not oftentimes but a majority of the time maybe that people who are not people of Color don't always, are not always sensitive to the other types of oppression that are occurring to brothers and sisters of Color. (P12.1, 41:41)

Participants provided some thoughts about why issues of race may not get

addressed within predominantly White LGB communities. They described issues around

race either not being thought of within LGB communities or race becoming invisible

within LGB communities:

> I guess I feel, I never really thought about it or been made to feel like I need to think about it because there's just sort of an aura that floats over the LGBT community that people like to think that they are already there. That their racial politics within those communities and those organizations are already evolved. (P12.1, 105:105)

It's just not even in their radar. So they don't think, in terms of race, just like a lesbian discussion group I went to where I asked the facilitator, at one point we were talking about race and ended up switching to her bisexual identity, in the group I said, "But wait, we were talking about race. Why are we avoiding that?" And this woman said, "Because every time I talk about it, I end up saying something wrong, so I don't want to talk about it." And I think that's the general attitude, "We're not going to talk about it. It doesn't exist. We're really liberal and how could we know where you live or anything about the Black community?" (P4.1, 69:69)

Participants acknowledged racism within LGB communities and attempts towards challenging it:

Um, but there's still, um, some who still have that, I think, that, that twinge of racism, still, you know, within them just for having, you know, how they were brought up, whatever or what they were taught, you know. (P11.1, 161:161)

I felt more contention, battling, trying to carve a space within different spaces. Trying to explain to White lesbians why we might need a Black-only space [laughs], stuff like that. Trying to challenge racism within the LGBT community. (P13.1, 109:109)

Gender Expression.

Gender Expression refers to the ways in which gender is outwardly manifested. Table 6 presents this tentative analytic category, its related concepts, and some sample codes that were included within this category during initial analysis.

Table 6

Tentative Analytic Category 6 (Gender Expression), Related Concepts and Sample Codes

Related Concepts	Sample Codes
Dating Preferences	Gendered dating preference
Femme/Butch Roles (Dating)	Butch/Femme relationships
Femme/Butch Roles (Black LGB)	Roles
Gender Fluidity	Gender expression
	Gender fluidity

Participants discussed several concepts related to Gender Expression including dating preferences towards women with varying degrees of femininity and masculinity that they or others they knew had:

> I found myself attracted to both feminine and more stud-like women, but my preference is a stud woman because I like being the girly-girl in my relationship [laughs]. (P11.1, 137:138)

Participants 11 and 13 highlighted the concept of 'Femme/Butch Roles (In Black LGB Community)' experienced by several participants as being within the Black LGB community and experienced differently within White LGB communities:

> Our community here is very polarized. The people are very feminine or very masculine and I'm kind of in the middle, just me. (P13.1, 69:69)

> But in the White community, I've noticed that it's not so much as a role play going on as this role play thing going on with women. Women loving women is not so much about if you're a femme or butch or whatever. It's just women period, without all the stereotypes or labels being placed upon them. (P11.1, 61:61)

In addition to discussing the different ways in which participants expressed their gender, participants also described identifying as gender fluid or androgynous:

> And so I currently and most accurately identify as gender-fluid. But mostly I would say maybe 80% of the time I'm probably identifying as female and there's about 20% of the time that I identify otherwise. (P12.1, 9:13)

> It's not exactly androgyny. You can tell I'm female, but I'm not trying in any direction, if that makes any sense. (P13.1, 69:69)

Summary of Preliminary Results.

Preliminary findings of initial coding resulted in six tentative analytic categories. Sexual Identity and Whiteness and Not Looking the Part were most often discussed in relationship to participants' sexual identity-related self- and reflected-appraisals.

Participants discussed experiences of LGB identities and issues often associated with White populations. Additionally, participants described either identifying or being identified as not "looking like" an LGB person if the participant's physical appearance, mannerisms and behaviors were feminine, as opposed to stereotypic association of masculinity with LGB women. The categories Sexual Identity and Whiteness and Not Looking the Part involved one's sexual identity being defined or identified in comparison to stereotypes about LGB people. The tentative analytic category Partial Acceptance was discussed by participants in the context of not feeling full acceptance specifically of their sexual identity in families and communities. Participants experienced a Sense of Belonging in relation to fears and experiences of alienation from family and the Black community based on their sexual identity. Sense of Belonging was also discussed in relation to religious and spiritual conflicts some participants experienced, with some of these conflicts including with the Black Church. Lack of diversity, awareness of race-related issues and racism within predominantly White LGB communities defined the Rainbow is Not Enuf category. Additionally, this category reflected participants' descriptions of White LGB persons assuming an affinity with people of Color through the belief that one form of oppression (e.g., homophobia) was closely related to another form of oppression (e.g., racism). Lastly, the tentative analytic category Gender Expression captured participants' gendered dating preferences, their experiences of gender roles (e.g., femme and butch) in Black and predominantly White LGB communities and the different ways that participants expressed their gender.

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, these preliminary findings were used to create the Preliminary Analysis document (Appendix E) sent to participants prior to our second interview. The next section of this chapter presents participants' responses to these results.

Participant Responses to Preliminary Results

Follow-up interviews with participants lasted an average of 8 minutes and 52 seconds, with the longest interview lasting 18 minutes and 32 seconds. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for frequency of endorsement of tentative analytic categories and explanations on lack of endorsement of tentative analytic categories illustrated in the Preliminary Theme document (Appendix E). Participants indicated which tentative analytic categories and codes they believed were the most salient to their experiences, those which were not, and category or code labels that were unclear. Participants also provided feedback on topics that they believed were missing and/or expected to see amongst the preliminary findings.

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, participants were asked to comment on anything that did not seem to resonate with their own beliefs and/or experiences. The amount and length of participants' responses ranged from a focus on which categories and/or concepts did or did not resonate for them to discussing these categories and concepts in more depth. Three of the participants began the interview by sharing with me that they felt all of the categories and codes seemed to resonate for them:

> Ah, let's see. With the overall themes, I think that everything kind of resonated for me. Everything. Because I think at one point or another I've experienced something in that spectrum. (P1.2, 13:17)

Participant 9 was the only participant to initially express overall disagreement with most of the tentative analytic categories and concepts. She believed that differences in generations could account for her perspective:

> It's very interesting because I think part of it is age, generational history stuff that in the year 2010 as somebody that's been active in gay identity work for more than 25 years. Excuse me… That my community, my people, we've grown and we've seen the successes in the younger generation. And so I realize intellectually that there is still a gap, that there are still people who are very much in the place that we were twenty-five years ago. As much growth as we've experienced as individuals that other individuals given their geographic experience, reality or whatever, that it's still different. (P9.2, 13:13)

Of the six tentative analytic categories, Sense of Belonging, and its corresponding concepts were endorsed by the most participants. Participants discussed how their Sense of Belonging was influenced by experiences of conflict around their sexual identities within predominantly heterosexual Black communities:

> I definitely feel like when you're dealing with the overall Black community that there is definitely a struggle with just being openly gay. You get the, "You're too pretty to be that," or "That happened when you were out in college. That's what happens when we send our girls to college," kind of thing. (P1.2, 39:41)

> I can be around a lot of straight Black people whatever, but sort of this unwritten rule that I don't talk about who I'm dating or I don't feel comfortable talking about who I'm dating. (P10.2, 78:84)

> And then the Sense of Belonging. That one kind of jumped at me because as my neighbors are becoming more aware you know of my sexual identity and they're becoming more aware because, most of them know my ex-husband. And he's not here and now they see me with women. And there's been a chill amongst some of them. (P4.2, 69:85)

Participants also discussed issues relating to experiences of alienation, due to their sexual identity, within their families:

> I think in light of a current family situation, there's a tender situation with family alienation. I have a brother who has been hospitalized. You know I didn't hear

from [pauses]. It seems I tend to get information through the family through someone else. And my brother has kids and it sort of brought up the kind of alienation I have with my family and how there's so many different sections of the family life that I'm not included in. Family members that I'm not in relationship with because of my alienation, because of my sexual orientation, they don't want to expose me to their children. Yea, it's a tender issue. That one really stuck out. How I'm still alienated from members of my family. My immediate family. So that was a big one. (P6.2, 40:52)

Conflicts around religion and spirituality resonated for several participants, in particular the Black Church, with the Black Church often being described as an extension of the Black community:

I think that 'Lack of Diversity in LGB' and 'Religion/Spiritual Conflicts', those always inhibit me because of how I experience the Black community and I feel like it's a barrier. We talked about this last time, the biggest barrier for me is religion and I have not been able to reconcile that. I have been able to reconcile that in myself, but I don't feel like the Black religious community has been able to reconcile itself enough to accept people like me. (P6.2, 40:52)

Even if participants could not resonate with the category or codes reflecting Sense of Belonging, they were able to identify it as a larger issue within communities or as an experience that they are aware others have had:

Everything else makes sense about the 'Alienation (Family)'. I can relate, not on a personal level, but my friend, about the 'Religion/Spiritual Conflicts'. I know people who struggle with that, I don't personally, but I know quite a few people that do. The 'Lack of (Blacks/Diversity in LGB Community)', I can relate to as well. Everything else I can relate to or the people that I know have experienced it. (P11.2, 49:49)

Five of the participants initially discussed the tentative category of Partial Acceptance as one that resonated for them. P1 related the overall category to her experiences with her family, while P10 related the overall category to her affiliation with religious communities:

I think that that's kind of life with my family. And 'partial' might be being really

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generous. I think we've grown into that. And even with my coworkers, the whole 'dark side' thing. We can kind of be humorous about it, and I hope that at some point by knowing me that's an educational experience for them. But you know they only accept but so much of who you are. (P1.2, 35:37)

In terms of being part of a faith community, the same thing. A lot of the churches where I've been a member have sort of this, "Yes you're welcome here, and you're a part of this larger, Black faith community," and at the same time there are a lot of instances where I would hear homophobic sermons. It always led me know that part of me wasn't really accepted there. (P10.2, 60:76)

For P13, she noted that, while she could not resonate with this category

personally, she was able to acknowledge the experience for others:

Let's see, Partial Acceptance. I don't really have too many… personally, I don't have experience with the Partial Acceptance, those themes. But having been part of a community of Black lesbians I know that that's certainly the case. (P13.2, 21:25)

The concept of 'Accept Person but not Lifestyle' resonated for P4:

On the Partial Acceptance, I think that the first two, 'Accept Person but not Lifestyle'… I have a couple of friends who have said, "Hate the sin, not the sinner," and directed it at me. (P4.2, 61:65)

The concept of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' was discussed by P4 and P10 in relation

to others knowing about their current same-sex dating statuses:

And then, 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'… There's a similar group of people who essentially don't want me to talk about it, and don't want me to be open if I'm dating someone. They'd prefer not to see them around me. (P4.2, 61:65)

Well I have felt partially accepted. Generally, I'm not, in my family… I know my family cares about me but I also know that they don't, when I've been a partner with somebody, they don't necessarily ask about the person or ask about how things are going with us. Or when there's been a breakup, they haven't necessarily shown concern. So it's being partially accepted that way. (P10.2, 60:76)

P10 further discussed not having her relationship status acknowledged by others:

I can think of times when I have been partner with somebody and they say that

their family knew who I was. That I was that person's partner, but when they were around other people, like their friends or other family members, they would introduce me as my partner's friend. And it's like, "You know we're not friends." So again indicating, sort of behind closed doors, "Oh that's so-and-so's partner." Whatever. They all knew who I was, but then referred to me as different. (P10.2, 60:76)

Participants had the greatest variability in their responses to the tentative analytic category, Rainbow is Not Enuf, meaning some endorsed, some disagreed and some were unclear about the category and inclusive codes. Participants were unclear about the concept of a 'Shared LGB Identity' as related to 'Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate' and 'Assumed Understanding of Race':

> I was bit confused about the theme Rainbow is Not Enuf. Especially these first two. I wasn't quite sure if that really applied to me. (P2.2, 13:13)

> I would ask under the Rainbow is Not Enuf theme… It says, 'Shared LGB Identity (Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate)'. What does that mean? (P3.2, 25:25)

> So for 'Shared LGB Identity', I'm not sure what, I'm not quite sure I'm understanding what you mean by that. Either being under for 'Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate' or 'Assuming Understanding of Race'. (P7.2, 73:73)

Even though some participants were unclear about this category and concepts, clarification assisted them in their understanding. Clarification was provided based on the description of each code created during analysis and provided as a description of that concept. For example, as reflected in the example above, P7 was not clear about the concepts 'Shared LGB Identity (Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate)' or 'Shared LGB Identity (Assumed Understanding of Race).' I attempted to clarify these concepts in the following dialogue, as I also recognized an error in one of the concept labels:

> Me: The 'Shared LGB Identity (Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate)' refers to sharing this sense of, "We're gay together," and 'Getting a Pass,' "Since we're

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both gay it's okay, since we're kind of in the same family, that I can say inappropriate things or jokes about other aspects of your identity because I'm 'down'." And then as it relates to Assuming, and it should read 'Assumed Understanding of Race', it's the sense of, "Since I'm LGB, because I'm gay, I understand the plight of being Latina or Black."

Participant 7: Oh my gosh yes, okay.

Me: But I might rephrase that… It sounds like that really hits you.

Participant 7: Yea, I resonate with that. 'Assumed Understanding of Race' makes more sense to me than 'Assuming Understanding of Race'.

Additionally, participants who did not need clarifications either endorsed the category and/or concepts or did not feel that they resonated with them:

Got it, yea. No, I mean would say I definitely have experienced, I don't know if it's like hard-core racism in the LGB community but definitely this sense that there is not this understanding just because the other folks have an oppressed identity, LGBT that they can then understand issues of race. I guess that would be one that I could associate with. (P3.2, 29:29)

I do feel like sometimes there is a 'Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate,' like I definitely see that. But the rest of it I didn't identify with. (P5.2, 9:33)

While the concept of 'Race Becomes Invisible' either was not endorsed or not brought up by most participants as something they resonated with, a few indicated that this concept did resonate with them, including P4:

I think race becomes invisible not in a good way, not in we all, "Kum-bah-yah." And frankly I don't buy, when somebody says to me, "I don't even think about people in terms of race." Well, I'm Black. And I want to be thought of in that way. There is a richness behind that. And if you aren't thinking about it, then you come out of your mouth and say stupid shit. (P4.2, 97:129)

Participants 1, 8 and 11 indicated that the tentative analytic category of Not Looking the Part and its related concepts 'Don't Look Like an LGB Person,' 'Looks Straight,' and 'Doesn't Act Like an LGB Person' particularly interesting and resonating

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for them:

> I get it all the time, "Oh, you don't look like you're gay," or "You don't act like you're gay." That kind of thing. In fact my coworker has deemed it, "What did they do to you that made you flip over to the dark side?" [I asked participant to clarify who "they" are] "They," are the gays. (P1.2, 23:25)

> I think that there are times where I may think that someone is attractive or cute or whatever, but they're looking at me sideways because they're wondering why I'm there. So, yea, I think that is something that happens a lot, especially in terms of straight harassment. I think particularly with men, I am always, always, always read as straight. One hundred percent of the time. Whereas with women it can be a little variable. (P8.2, 17:33)

> That's happened to me before. People have said that I don't look like I'm gay, "You don't look like you're gay." I've heard that before. (P11.2, 29:29)

The tentative analytic category, Gender Expression, refers to the ways in which

gender is outwardly manifested. Three of the participants initially shared that the

category as a whole did not resonate for them (P1, 3 and 10):

> Okay well, the theme on Gender Expression. And I guess I didn't, not that it wouldn't necessarily resonate with me, it's just that it's something that I haven't dealt with as much as maybe other folks. And that's why it hasn't been as significant. (P3.2, 13:17)

> And then also the Gender Expression piece, especially when it talks about the 'Butch and Femme' scenario. I really don't think that really applies to me. (P2.2, 17:17)

> In contrast, the category "stood out" for two participants, P5 and P13:

> Yea. I guess the one that stuck out the most would be Gender Expression. (P5.2, 41:45)

> Of the four concepts, example codes, encompassing the tentative category of

Gender Expression, several participants discussed the concepts of 'Femme/Butch Roles

(In Black LGB Community)' and 'Femme/Butch Roles (Dating)' as experiences they

resonated with:

Because I feel in the LGB, in the LGBT, or LGB of Color community, I feel like it's really prevalent. There really is a lot of butch-femme and it's more extreme than you see it in the, I guess non-color community, the White community. (P5.2, 41:45)

Right now I'm part of a Black gay community where the butch-femme thing is a little more strict than what I'm used to, or that I agree with. So, for my personal life trying to connect with people, trying to date and things, I'm finding that being somebody who doesn't necessarily identify as butch or femme, it's becoming difficult because the world seems so binary and divided. I guess that's why that one is sticking out for me. (P13.2, 33:45)

Even for participants that indicated that these concepts did not resonate with their own experiences, they acknowledged awareness of these experiences within Black LGB communities:

And the next one was Gender Expression. That didn't necessarily, I am aware that people do the butch-femme stuff but that hasn't really been a part of my, it hasn't been a big part of my experience, in the Black community. (P10.2, 54:54)

I'll start with the Gender Expression categories. So in terms of ones that I don't have… one of them is 'Butch-Femme Roles (Dating)' and 'Butch-Femme Roles (in Black LGB Communities)'. Because I'm more queer identified and, for me, that means I'm attracted to folks who may identify as gender-queer, trans, in addition to my attraction for cis gender women, or bio-women or however you want to call it. So for me, I identify as femme, but I don't have direct experience in dating butch women, if that makes sense. (P8.2, 5:9)

As previously discussed, initial document errors included the term "orientation," instead of "identity," however this was clarified with participants. Further discussion on this issue is presented in the following chapter. A few participants initially resonated with the tentative analytic category of Sexual Identity and Whiteness and indicated as such by naming the category when I inquired about categories that particularly resonated for them:

I think that probably Sexual Orientation and Whiteness. (P2.2, 19:21)

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The first one, the Sexual Orientation and Whiteness. (P4.2, 25:45)

My favorite ones that I thought were totally interesting was the concept of whiteness. (P7.2, 17:17)

On the other hand, this category did not resonate for a couple of participants,

including P13:

I don't feel like I connect Sexual Orientation and Whiteness. (P13.2, 13:17)

Participants 2 and 4 elaborated further on the concept of 'Acting White' as it

related to how they were identified by others:

You know being so identified as 'Acting White' or being associated with characteristics that seemed to be more conducive to someone who is White, when I am being confronted by a group of Blacks. Although, I'm noticing as I get older it's changed and because of the dynamic, people become more educated. Or I gravitated towards people who are more educated. (P2.2, 19:21)

I've often been, at least in my childhood and maybe early adulthood, accused of 'Acting White.' So just that whole historical thing, I certainly felt it. (P4.2, 25:45)

Participant 9 discussed how she did not relate her sexual orientation to whiteness

or 'Acting White:'

In terms of Sexual Orientation and Whiteness, you have 'Acting White'… I've never gotten that. I've gotten 'Acting White' as a result of being Black and speaking a certain way, but never in regards to my sexual orientation. I got it because of the neighborhoods I grew up in and the schools I went to, and who my friends were at home versus who my friends were at school, versus as I became an adult… and what my community looked like., (P9.2, 33:37)

In relation to 'LGB Community Predominantly White', Participant 4 discussed

how she saw the LGB community as being "geared" towards White individuals:

And then ah, the second one, about the 'LGB Community Predominantly White', I think that the White LGB community is more visible. And I think that you know I think that the reason why that is, is because things are geared towards the LGB

community, it's geared to them first. And so you know I think that's how they become more visible. (P4.2, 25:45)

The concept 'LGB is a White Thing' was discussed by both Participants 4 and 11 as an experience that one related to on a personal level and as another did not relate to, but acknowledged existed:

> And then 'LGB is a White Thing.' I think that the White community, the LGB White community, thinks that it's a White Thing because they think it's their thing. And so the community is not diverse in terms of, certainly, their coming together. And, I think in one of those little notes, that I wrote about 'LGB is a White Thing,' it's a sense of ownership. I participated in a lesbian focused group in town. And it's as if there's an assumption that they own the space. (P4.2, 25:45)

> Yea the thing about under Sexual Orientation and Whiteness. 'LGB is a White Thing.' I mean, I don't perceive it that way, but I know some people in the community do, especially in the Black community. Those that don't agree with this, "lifestyle." You know, they'll say, "You're just 'Acting White'," or, "It's a White thing." Obviously that's not the case. It's just something that I don't believe. I know it's not because I'm not White. (P11.2, 45:45)

Two participants also discussed differing opinions on the degree to which the concept 'LGB Community Not Diverse' resonated with them:

> And then in terms of diversity, I think that there is certainly, the communities are very separate and when they come together I think oftentimes it's because a White woman is interested in a Black woman. (P4.2, 25:45)

> 'LGB Community Not Diverse,' didn't stick out too much for me. (P7.2, 37:37)

These endorsements were particularly illuminating in focused coding of the data during the second phase analysis, as both the concepts of what it means to look or act like an LGB person were further explored from the participants' self-appraisals and appraisals of their sexual identity by others.

In addition to responding to preliminary findings, participants provided feedback

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on categories and concepts that they either thought were missing or those that they expected to see in the preliminary theme document. Four of the participants reported that they could not think of areas that were missing and indicated that the preliminary analysis either captured their experiences or those of others:

> No, I think that the themes that have been put in front of me have captured at least my experience pretty well. So I couldn't think of anything else. (P2.2, 33:33)

> No... Other than the ones in my head and I think they're all here. (P5.2, 53:57)

> No, I can't see anything missing. I think everything that you asked me in the past, and these themes that you've developed in talking with the different people, have all been true, if not personally then definitely people that I know. I don't think anything is missing. (P11.2, 69:69)

> I can't think of anything else. Yeah, it looks pretty comprehensive. (P13.2, 39:39)

Participant 1 provided some comments, however, indicating that the preliminary analysis reflected her personal experiences:

> Everything that I think that I've seen in my own experience is here. (P1.2, 49:49)

Participant 6 discussed marriage as a category that she felt might have been missing from the preliminary analysis. Participant 6 discussed feeling a difference in her relationship with her partner since becoming legally married:

> There is such a difference between how we feel about each other now that we're married. I can't really explain it. It's almost like the first day that we got married I felt so invested, I was really just concerned about my partner and I looked at her in a different way. I felt very protective of us, in our life and who we are. (P6.2, 59:79)

Participant 6 also had questions about the importance of same-sex marriage and how LGB individuals negotiate the use of language in legalized marriage:

I do believe that it's important for gay people to get married and start to define what does that really mean because we haven't really had a public ceremony, because we're still struggling with the word for us. What does it really mean for two women, I mean how do we, at the Justice of the Peace they asked us how we would like to be recognized and we chose "partners in life," because "spouses," didn't work for us. So that this language stuff, which doesn't fit, would be able to articulate what it is for us to be in a life partnership together. I would like to see more people get married and we talk about, and give us a conversation, "Well what does that mean for LGBQ people?" We're really struggling with it. So it really feels like we've usurped the heterosexual ideas and connotations and we're still floundering to find out what it really means for us. (P6.2, 59:79)

In addition to marriage, specific issues within relationships in general were noted as topic areas missing from the preliminary analysis. Participant 9 noted several areas related to healthy relationship functioning that she does not believe are talked about openly. These areas included discussions around non-monogamy in committed long-term relationships and sexual diversity within relationships:

I go back to a Pat Califia quote from a gazillion years ago where she said, "You no more want to fuck the same person day after day than you want to eat spaghetti every day of your life." So, how would you have a healthy diet? How do you have a healthy relationship that allows you diversity within that relationship? I'm in a 15-year relationship. I'm trying to figure out how to negotiate opening our relationship, or re-opening our relationship. (P9.2, 83:91)

Participant 7 discussed wanting to see more issues relating to dating and bisexuality in the preliminary analysis. She described her experience as a bisexual woman and navigating developing an understanding of the line between friendships with others and knowing whether or not she or the other person had an attraction for each other:

I would like to see if, I don't even know where this would fit, but there's that line between friendship and being close friends with someone and then having feelings for them and how that ties into social role type things. I feel like if you're just one, like you are just homosexual or if you are heterosexual, things are simpler. When you're friends with someone, and they know what your sexual

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orientation is, then they can either think you might like them, if they are same-sex friends or not. If you're bisexual you have no friends that are like, "I'm sure that this person isn't sexually attracted to me." I feel like it's more apparent when you are bi. But I have no way of really knowing. It's not like I was lesbian before or straight before. (P7.2, 89:119)

Participants 3 and 9 discussed issues relating to social class. For Participant 3, she described how further exploration of this area could be interesting as related to families and how class could be an indicator of openness to diversity:

> I guess when I think of identities I kind of always want to include class as well. And I don't know if it can make a difference in family reactions… I guess more education, more income usually correlates to more open mindedness, or more ability to see differences as okay. I don't know that it's necessarily the type of thing that comes up. But it would be an interesting piece of it, this issue of class. (P3.2, 41:45)

Participant 9 indicated that the preliminary analysis document seemed to neglect a broad representation of social class:

> So when I look at this I see a very class-based, and fairly middle class, fairly well-educated perspective. I haven't seen notes. I don't know who you've interviewed. I don't know if it's more diverse than that. But the pallor that this graph present shows me, says to me… It's fine, and please know that I'm not beating you up, but it seems to me a very class-specific, education-specific perspective. (P9.2, 135:139)

Participant 8 indicated that social class and socioeconomic status as related to how or if an individual chose to be out in the workplace would be an area the she would have liked to see explored in the preliminary analysis:

> I think the only thing that comes to mind is how free someone feels to be out in different environments may have to do with their economic status or class background. If you're working in academia, you may be better off. Obviously no place is one hundred percent, but you may be better off than if you were working retail someplace. In terms of the amount of, I guess, maybe your expendability in your job? You might be discriminated against in a salaried positioning, will cost them a lot more time and money to find another person, or maybe you have more resources to be able to access to information to be able to challenge or sue

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someone if you're being discriminated against, or harassed based on your sexual orientation, or who you choose to bring to company parties and all that stuff. Or if you are working in a minimum wage job they think they'll find another person. (P8.2, 41:53)

Participant 4 indicated wanting the preliminary analysis to address whether or not other participants had engaged in discourse that challenged both predominantly Black heterosexual communities and predominantly White LGB communities:

If they have challenged their old community about sexuality and homosexuality. But I think, more importantly, have they challenged White LGB community about their racism? And their sense of entitlement and that they own the community... I would say that it's a question of whether or not people are challenged, challenged the racism and what's come of that. (P4.2, 133:137)

Participants 7 and 9 raised the issue of the preliminary analysis not capturing the complexities and nuances of gender expression and that the terminology used, including "butch/femme," may be limiting:

As far as my experience is the gender expression, feminine gender expression, doesn't really mean much to me. It would be nice to have something that wasn't so dichotomous, but I can understand that might be the experience of a lot of other people. (P7.2, 89:119)

I try to shift the conversation from butch-femme to top-bottom. Who is getting done, how and under what circumstances, that's my conversation. I won't wear lipstick if you don't want me to... But for me it's a different thing than the butch-femme thing. (P9.2, 95:107)

Additional topic areas that participants briefly indicated were missing or that they expected to see in the preliminary analysis document included having young and adult children (P1 and P9); women's health issues including hormone deficiencies, hysterectomies and menopause (P9); aging (P9); spiritual conflicts (P1); women's involvement in the legal system, including, "Having your sexuality defined by the

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criminal justice system," (P9); and expanding definitions and addressing in-group differences amongst people of Color as a whole (P12).

Summary of Participant Responses to Preliminary Results.

During follow-up interviews, several participants indicated that they felt all of the tentative analytic codes and example codes resonated with their experiences. Sense of Belonging and its related codes were endorsed the most by participants, and the category reflected experiences that participants had or that they were aware of in general. Partial Acceptance was the second most frequently endorsed category by participants, with participants indicating that they had either experienced the category and/or its related concepts or they could relate the category to the experiences of others. Participant responses were the most variable in terms of endorsement and clarity of the category and/or related concepts for the category Rainbow is Not Enuf. Upon clarification of the concepts with participants, some participants were able endorse this category. Not Looking the Part was discussed by several participants as being particularly interesting, especially in terms of how their sexual identity is perceived and responded to by others. A few of the participants did not feel that Gender Expression reflected their experiences as a whole, while other participants reported that this category and its related concepts reflected their experiences and/or experiences that they were aware others had. While a couple of participants did not feel that Sexual Identity and Whiteness reflected their experiences, several indicated that the category at least resonated with them or that the category was of interest to them.

When asked to provide feedback on categories and concepts that they either thought were missing or those that they expected to see in the preliminary theme document provided to them, four of the participants indicated that they believed that the categories provided captured their experiences or those of others. Of the participants that indicated areas that they felt were missing, one or two areas were suggested including issues such as SES, marriage, children, and relationships/dating.

Participant feedback on preliminary results enabled me to check the degree to which my interpretations of the data reflected participants' experiences. Responses obtained led to revisiting previous codes in order to integrate participant feedback. Additionally, it guided my continued initial coding of the remaining six interviews, and subsequent focused coding. The next section presents the results from the second phase of data analysis.

Second Phase Analysis Results

Initial coding of the first seven interviews resulted in 238 codes and led to the development of six tentative analytic categories. Member checking, in the form of follow-up interviews with participants, further guided the analytic process as I re-examined previous codes, continued initial coding on the remaining six interviews and engaged in focused coding of interview data. The code list in Atlas was re-organized with each category indicated in capitalization and separated for ease of sorting by delineation with a color. Through open and focused coding during the initial and second phases of analysis, four major conceptual categories emerged. Of these categories, three were initially identified during preliminary analysis and endorsed by participants as being

reflective of their experiences, either in whole or in part. Relationships between

categories were examined through relational matrices and the co-occurrence tool in

Atlas.ti to explore the relational dynamics of the categories.

The four major conceptual categories are Sense of Belonging, Partial Acceptance,

Looking the Part, and Resistance. I named each category based upon relatedness to

concepts, codes they encompassed and on feedback received from participants during

follow-up interviews. A brief description of each category is presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Major Conceptual Categories and Definitions

Category Name	Description
Sense of Belonging	An individual's feeling of acceptance, being a part of, and/or being authentically known by a group or community.
Partial Acceptance	An individual's sense of not feeling full acceptance from others for one or more of one's identities.
Looking the Part	Identification of an individual's race, gender or sexual identity by physical traits, appearance, mannerisms, and/or style of dress associated with stereotypical representations of Blacks, women, and LGB persons.
Resistance	Strategies employed by participants in challenging racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes.

The four major conceptual categories provided the building blocks for the

emerging theory. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, in accordance with grounded

theory methods, extant literature was incorporated as the emerging theory began to take

shape. As such, I will begin to integrate the literature that informed the emerging theory

of this study in my continued discussion of the results of this study. The following

sections will explore each of the four major conceptual categories, as illustrated through participant responses, and the related literature that informed the emerging theory of this study.

Major Conceptual Categories

Sense of Belonging.

When I think about my experience of race and LGB communities, I'd say where there are communities of Color that has actually tended to be a pretty affirming place. Yeah, it's just been good to be around some other people in the community who share this identity, this shared understanding of what it means to be lesbian or gay or bisexual, and a person of Color at the same time. (P10.1, 45:45)

The conceptual category Sense of Belonging was identified during preliminary analysis as a tentative analytic category. During follow-up interviews, participants resonated with this category the most and it was discussed across all interviews. Sense of Belonging refers to a feeling of acceptance, being a part of, and/or being authentically known by a group or community. Participants described experiences of belongingness occurring in communities (including religious communities, Black communities, Black LGB communities, communities of Color, and LGB communities) and in relationships (family and romantic relationships). When Sense of Belonging was experienced, the result for participants included increased confidence, experiences of being validated, and increased feelings of comfort within communities.

One's Sense of Belonging was fostered through being understood and believing that communities held positive perceptions about the participant (reflected appraisal). Participants discussed the notion of being able to be "comfortable," being themselves within communities, reflecting the importance of authenticity in one's Sense of

Belonging. When participants experienced discomfort in being themselves within

communities, this led to not feeling authentically known or able to be themselves. Some

participants related this to unmet expectations of community acceptance that they held.

For example, some participants felt that they should be able to "fit in," with Black

communities or communities of Color:

> When you're around Black people you feel like you should be able to let your
> guard down. But it's not that way. (P1.1, 253:257)

> I was talking about this with another friend who is also ah, in an interracial of
> Color relationship and just feeling it's almost like a form of violence that we can't
> actually be as affectionate as we would like to…and remembering not to carry
> that over into our home space, because when we're home we should be able to be
> with each other however we want to be. And it shouldn't just be during Pride
> where we can, obviously, be gay together. (P8.1, 467:471)

> Sense of Belonging could also be fostered through "feeling known" by

communities. The process of "feeling known" was described as one that can take time,

but can result in positive interactions and the potential to alter a community's previously

held negative perception:

> Then again, to be honest with you, it takes time. Because we don't all expose
> who we are right away. (P2.1, 333:333)

> I was in this role in my office where most of the people there, in terms of the
> faculty and staff, were predominantly White gay and lesbian folks and I think
> there's a little bit of the exotic or the different. So, they were kind of hesitant
> first, before they got to know me. After they did, they were a little more relaxed,
> but it definitely took them by surprised that somebody that had that position was a
> person of Color. I assume that they didn't think I could relate to what they were
> going through as gay people. (P13.1, 73:73)

> Receiving acceptance for their sexual identity from their families also fostered

participants' Sense of Belonging. Having a strong understanding of oneself enabled

participants to better understand themselves within communities, which sometimes had

the added benefit of assisting in managing conflicts that they experienced in regards to

their racial and sexual identities. Related to understanding oneself were descriptions of

confidence and assertiveness within communities. In many ways this highlighted the

sense that when participants felt good about themselves, it facilitated their relational

connections with others:

> People are gonna make up their minds, one way the other. You can't control that. But I definitely think that the more confident, the more grounded you are in who you are, the positivity that you project, people are either going to be responsive to that and want to gravitate towards that and accept you or not. (P2.1, 145:149)

> And because I'm assertive, and because I'm confident, and because I'm willing and interested in hearing what other people have to say and I don't expect them on either side, being Black or the majority GLBT, I don't expect them to accept it all in a day. I'm willing to work with people. I think because of that and that confidence that I have and that acceptance that I have, that, for other people, it just makes it easier for them to deal with it. (P1.1, 762:766)

In addition to occurring in communities and with others, Sense of Belonging was

also experienced during one's coming out processes. Specifically, participants described

not being able to attain a Sense of Belonging and experiencing alienation when coming

out in communities and in their families. The experience of alienation of sexual identity

was based on actual experiences of alienation or the belief that they would be alienated.

Some participants shared their experiences of being alienated from friends and family

when they came out. Participants also described their beliefs that they would be alienated

from their families if they came out. This belief was rooted in expressed homophobia

within their families and/or witnessing the alienation of another family member that had

come out:

> When my mom found out that I had friends that were gay and lesbian and bisexual, she thought I was going to go to hell. She was like, "You're going to go

to hell because you know these people." Yea, just knowing them. Not being part of the group, just knowing these people would like damn me to hell forever. So ridiculous. Before this whole thing, back when I was in junior high, elementary school, and back when my mom would talk a lot more about these types of issues, which was kind of weird. It obviously was a bad thing, but it was something perverse, and really disgusting and just kind of so sad and gross, but probably not super gross, but just kind of, so you don't befriend these people. (P7.1, 81:85)

Similarly, participants described this same fear of being alienated if they came out in Black communities, discussing issues of homophobia within Black communities:

I think when I was younger and I was really struggling, because all I knew was the Black community. It was all that I really had. So, I didn't want to be alienated. I didn't want to be ostracized. And so, I just didn't say anything and I just kept that to myself. (P1.1, 405:409)

You know there's no way, supposedly, that anyone of African descent could be gay or lesbian. So it's shunned upon, very often among Blacks, be it their families, their workplace, their community surroundings such as church. So, therefore, a lot of them remain in the closet because of the fear of being shunned. (P11.1, 53:53)

The main barrier to experiencing a Sense of Belonging was participants not feeling that they were a part of the Black or LGB community. Not feeling a part of these communities made some participants feel that they were outsiders and others that they were disconnected from these communities. Within Black communities, participants discussed not feeling a part of the community in the context of alienation and homophobia. Visibility of other, out Black lesbian, bisexual or queer women, including role models, within Black communities and the larger media were discussed as being related to not experiencing a Sense of Belonging in Black communities:

And in that same way, in the Black community, I didn't want to ruffle too many feathers. Because, you know how we talk, and I didn't want something to get back to my parents or I just wasn't equipped for that then. (P1.1, 706:714)

Sheryl Swoopes came out, that's great, but I think a lot of people are like, "Really?" You know like, "WNBA? What is that?" I think when, myself, when people are able to see more of us out and functioning and being a part of the community… I think that, as a community, when we start to see somebody come out from the NBA, or football, while they're playing, not ten years after they leave and they'll be remembered… If Michael Jackson'd come out, that would have been great. (P4.1, 149:149)

Participants also discussed their experiencing of not feeling a part of the LGB community. For some participants, this was related to not having their bisexual identity accepted by lesbian-identified communities. Participants shared experiences of having their bisexuality questioned by lesbian-identified women and of myths associated with bisexuality within these populations:

I feel like bisexuals are on the fringe. Because you have same-sex and you have opposite-sex and then you have people who do both. And I felt like bisexual females aren't accepted in the lesbian community because it's like you guys aren't really, you guys just are pretending or confused. It's not a recognition that you're actually what you are. So that's a little weird. Because you feel like you're a little bit on the outside. (P7.1, 53:53)

Participants discussed issues related to race as the main reason for not feeling a part of LGB communities. A lack of diversity within LGB communities was noted by participants. LGB communities were described as being predominantly White, with the community being "normed on White culture," (P1.1, 213:221), and being dominated by gay males. If diversity was present, participants described feeling that LGB communities were often socially segregated by race. For example, nightclubs were reported to be either mostly geared towards White women or nightclubs or other venues that promoted Black or women of Color events:

That's not where I spend the majority of my time just because I think there's a, you come together in the whole, "We're all gay umbrella," but then at the same

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time, there's a lot of times where either it's just really a male-centered group. Or either it's really kind of more geared towards White people. (P1.1, 205:205)

There are definitely more establishments for Whites, particularly White men, when it comes to the restaurants, gay-friendly restaurants, gay-owned restaurants or clubs. (P11.1, 57:58)

Some participants described this segregation highlighted in online

dating/personals:

And so when I started dating, I remember having a hard time. Well, not a hard time I was open to other cultures, other racial groups and dating, but to be honest I really was trying to seek someone who was more like me. Because I think you instantly sort of have some similarities and sameness. And I wasn't finding that. I would say for every, let's say ten people, no, I would say for every five people I would date, probably one would be someone that was Black American. So that was a struggle. (P2.1, 497:497)

And so I looked at the men seeking men, and women seeking, well I looked at all of them. But then especially in the men seeking men and women seeking women, I noticed that there were quite a lot of people who stated their race and usually they were White and they would also be looking for a White partner. They would specifically say, "I want a White person, blah, blah, blah." And I thought that was kind of interesting. And so I asked a friend of mine, who had identified as a lesbian for a long time, I said, "It really seems strange that people in the gay-lesbian community who are essentially minorities in this culture would be so focused on the issue of race and not be willing or interested in dating outside of their race." And she and her girlfriend said, "Oh you'd be really surprised how racist the gay and lesbian community is." (P3.1, 53:65)

Participants noted that issues of race were often ignored within the LGB

community due to a lack of awareness around race-related issues leading to an overall

lack of discourse and/or ability of the LGB community to engage in race-related

discourse. Some participants expressed disbelief that race was even thought of by White

LGB persons:

I think, one, they don't think about us. I think, quite honestly, White people don't think about people of Color. They don't have to. Their world is such that they're not challenged to consider other people. Period. (P9.1, 91:91)

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Participants described individuals within the LGB community as not being comfortable or having fears about talking about race-related issues. White privilege was described as a factor in the race-related issues being ignored in LGB communities:

> I definitely have experiences where folks were uncomfortable if I discussed race or brought it up or there have been a lot of situations where I've been the only person of Color or whatever handful of people of Color in a bigger group of White LGB folks. (P3.1, 189:193)

> I felt like the lesbian communities I was interfacing with, letting people in and be friends with and stuff like that, were, it's just when it came down to any kind of real racial analysis, analysis of racial privilege. For them as White women, it was really frustrating. And so it was really frustrating. So I was just, I never really felt completely, I had relationships with individuals in that community, but I never actually considered myself up there being a part of the "lesbian community." Though I, like I said, I was in relationships with people who were. (P8.1, 81:85)

Some participants contrasted the lack of attention to race-related issues within the LGB community to their experiences of engagement on issues of social justice/activism with White LGB persons, specifically those who identified as liberal and/or progressive in their politics. Participants identified that while they were able to join with White LGB "allies" around issues of social justice and activism, race-related issues or issues around privilege were infrequently addressed:

> With the LGBT White, there's this idea that we're allies because of our sexuality, right? And, but if that's, if you're still gonna pull White privilege on me, then we're not allies. We're not at all. We just happen to love the same sex. (P4.1, 105:105)

Participant experiences of not feeling connected to LGB communities based on the lack of diversity in the community, the norming of LGB community on White culture,

and the reticence of the LGB community to address race-related issues reflected a sense of exclusion for Black LGB persons:

> So when I'm there, I think we all gather under the premise of being gay, but because it just, it doesn't feel like it was set up to have Black people as a part. (P1.1, 633:633)

Sense of Belonging and Related Literature.

The concept of Sense of Belonging, as understood from participant narratives in this study, was closely related to the concept of "sense of community" in existing literature. McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined a sense of community as consisting of four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Membership represented the feeling of belonging to a group marked by boundaries that delineates in and out group status. Influence was described as a feeling that one matters, or feels that she/he makes a difference to a group and that this sentiment is reciprocated by the group. Integration and fulfillment of needs referred to the individual receiving reinforcement, or a benefit, from being a member of the group and guided by shared values of the group. Lastly, Shared Emotional Connection was described as a belief in a shared history and future, marked by events experienced or that one could identify with, that bonded the group. Together, these four elements were reflected in a concise definition of sense of community:

> Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that
>
> members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members'
>
> needs will be met through their commitment to be together. (p. 9)

McMillan's (1996) revision of the sense of community theory extended the initial

principles of the theory and renamed and repositioned the four elements initially

described in theory, redefining sense of community as:

> A spirit of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can
>
> be trusted, an awareness that trade, and mutual benefit come from being together,
>
> and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as art. (p. 315)
>
> Of particular interest to the current study is McMillan's (1996)

reconceptualization of the element of membership, referred to in this version as "spirit,"

which now emphasized the importance of a setting, or environment, in which individuals

can express all aspects of their authentic self and in which individuals can see themselves

reflected through the perspective and reactions of others (p. 315-316). Participant

responses in the current study indicated that Sense of Belonging was promoted through

participants' beliefs that communities held positive perceptions about the participant

(reflected appraisal) and through "feeling known" by communities. Both the McMillan

and Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996) sense of community theories were re-examined

as the grounded theory for this study emerged and we will revisit these theories in our

discussion of literature related to the grounded theory of this study presented in Chapter

5.

Alienation from others, both actual and perceived, based on one's sexual identity

was identified in participants' narratives within the context of how a participant

experienced her Sense of Belonging. The fear of alienation from family, friends, peers,

faith communities, and Black communities has been documented within existing

literature on Black LGB populations (Bridges, Selvidge & Matthews, 2003; Greene & Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Mays, Cochran & Rhue, 1993; Phillips & Stewart, 2008). Further, actual experiences of alienation or rejection from others have been described in the literature as a consequence of Black LGBs identification of an LGB identity (Jackson & Brown, 1996; Sears, 1989). Participants described fears of alienation from Black communities in relation to homophobia within Black communities. Experienced and perceived homophobia within Black communities have been highlighted in several studies focused on the experiences of Black LGB persons (Loiacano, 1989 ; Icard, 1985; Mays, Cochran & Rhue, 1993). As in this study, the attribution of LGB identities to whiteness by Black communities has been described within a number of empirical and scholarly works (Greene, 2000; Icard, 1986; Lewis, 2003; Moradi, et al., 2010; Pachankis & Goldfried, 2004). General perceptions of increased homophobia within predominantly Black communities have been explored in the literature and related to Black communities resistance to assimilation into a dominant, oppressive majority; internalized racism; and community resistance to further social marginalization (Greene, 2000; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Pachankis & Goldfried, 2004). Further, the significance of the Black family and the Black church has been discussed as important factors in understanding homophobia in Black communities (Greene, 2000; Icard, 1985; Miller, 2007).

Partial Acceptance.

I know my family cares about me but I also know that when I've been a partner with somebody they don't necessarily ask about the person or ask about how things are going with us, or when there's been a breakup…They haven't necessarily shown concern. (P10.2, 60:76)

The conceptual category Partial Acceptance was identified during preliminary analysis as a tentative analytic category. During follow-up interviews, participants either endorsed this category or endorsed components of the category the most frequently, next to Sense of Belonging. Partial Acceptance refers to a sense of not feeling full acceptance from others for one or more of one's identities. Specifically, participants discussed partial acceptance occurring in relation to their sexual identities. Participants described experiences of partial acceptance occurring in communities (Black communities, LGB communities and religious communities) and in relationships (family and friends).

Partial Acceptance was discussed by participants as an individual experience and as a phenomenon located within communities. Relating to their individual experiences, Partial Acceptance for one's sexual identity was most discussed in the context of family relationships and norms. Some participants shared that LGB issues and identity were not discussed within their family during their development. Even when it was "known" that a family member was LGB, it was still not discussed or acknowledged within the family:

> You know, I don't think I've ever heard the word "lesbian" from my grandparents or great uncles or aunts. Ever. I would hear the word "gay" every once in a while to describe like, more like a behavior is funny, and, you know, that that means gay? (P8.1, 181:181)

> And my aunt, I didn't know about her until I was a teenager. I had heard my dad said to my mom that she was. It was a family secret. To this day they don't talk about it. She's dead now and they still don't talk about it. (P1.1, 465:473)

Some participants described maintaining positive family relationships, but not discussing anything relating to their sexual identity with family members. This includes participants in relationships where their partner is not acknowledged by their family:

> And having some family members be fine and non-judgmental and accepting. And having other family members being a little more, kind of opposed in a

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sense… I guess particularly my mom has probably been the most opposed and just sometimes verbally I get, "I don't agree with this. I don't like it. I don't think it's right." And sometimes how she basically ignores this part of my life and my partner or she doesn't really, I guess, totally acknowledge my relationship with my girlfriend and, although she has been to visit us a couple of times and stays here and will interact and speak to her, but it's just never the full acknowledgement and acceptance of our relationship. It's just not there. (P3.1, 109:113)

Partial Acceptance as a phenomenon in communities was frequently described by participants as Partial Acceptance for one's sexual identity within Black communities and within the Black Church. The notion of "covert" acceptance was often described as occurring in both of these communities, referring to an community members' awareness that an individual may be LGB, but similar to families, was not acknowledged or discussed. Dissimilar to experiencing Partial Acceptance for sexual identity in families was the notion that Partial Acceptance had boundaries in Black communities and the Black Church. Participants described a sense of tolerance for one's sexual identity until attention was drawn to it that may require the community to respond. For example, a member of the congregation of a Black Church might be "known," to be LGB, but may be treated differently if she came out:

And I think that, at the same time, I think there's this kind of, it's also important to recognize the connection with the Black community and family, and so there's an unspoken thing where you might know somebody is gay or lesbian, but you don't really talk about it and so it doesn't, while it's not as openly accepted, it's also, it doesn't seem to be quite as vilified. (P3.1, 109:109)

In addition to raising the awareness of one's sexual identity through coming out, participants also described Black communities as not being concerned about a person's sexual identity as long as it did not raise attention to others:

Black people don't really care what you're doing. If it's not overtly obvious, like making out with your girlfriend or boyfriend or whatever. Everybody knows the sissy in the church. Everybody knows the bulldagger from blah, blah, blah. Everybody is fine with that, "They've always been nice people. They come and help shovel my walkway." All of that's fine. I think when it becomes obvious and political, when people feel blowback…and I think that's when the religious stuff kicks in. (P9.1, 71:71)

Consequences of Partial Acceptance for sexual identity within communities and in relationships included fears of community alienation and a reluctance to be out in communities. It also led to some participants experiencing discomfort in having to keep aspects of their lives hidden or "living two lives" (P11.1, 125:125).

Partial Acceptance and Related Literature.

Partial Acceptance was described in terms of an absence or lack of acceptance of one's sexual identity. According to Bridges, Selvidge and Matthews (2003), Black families may deny their awareness of a family members' sexual identity or hide it. Greene and Boyd-Franklin (1996) suggested that the cultural norms of extended families, those not biologically related, within African American families and of close friendships between Black women may contribute to Black families denial of lesbianism or bisexuality. Participants in this study described experiences of LGB issues and family members not being discussed or acknowledged within the family, which reflects experiences found in the literature.

Consistent with existing literature were participants' experiences of covert or silent acceptance of LGB identities in the Black community and Black church. Scholars have suggested that Black communities may be aware of and tolerate LGB identities insofar as attention is not drawn to it or it is not openly discussed (Cole & Guy-Sheftall,

2003; Greene, 2007; Patton & Simmons, 2008; Savin-Williams, 1998). Mays, Cochran and Rhue (1993) study on the effects of the perception of racial and sexual identity discrimination on Black lesbians' intimate relationships suggested that even when they perceived a Black community as homophobic, they continued to seek and desire participation within the community. Additional literature further suggested that concealment of one's sexual identity may be an accepted consequence for Black lesbian and bisexual women who have a greater need for acceptance from Black communities (Greene & Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Mays, Cochran & Rhue, 1993).

Looking the Part.

> I think that I definitely don't fit what a lot of people consider to be a typical lesbian stereotype that they have in their head and it's often surprising when they find out that I am. (P2.1; 377:377)

The conceptual category Looking the Part refers to identification of an individual's race, gender or sexual identity by physical traits, appearance, mannerisms, and/or style of dress associated with stereotypical representations of Blacks, women, and LGB persons. The concept illustrates a process of in and out group identification made by the participant and made of the participant by others. This process was initially identified during preliminary analysis in relation to sexual identity only and identified as the tentative analytic category, Not Looking the Part. During follow-up interviews participants resonated with this category, as applied to sexual identity, across all interviews. During second phase analysis, the additional dimensions of race and gender emerged and were further explored. Participants described this conceptual category occurring in interactions with other individuals and communities, in their race and sexual

identity-related self-appraisals, and in their race and sexual identity-related reflected

appraisals from of others and communities.

In their interactions with other individuals and communities, participants

discussed experiences of others identifying their race as being Black. Some participants

discussed a general awareness that being Black may be the first thing assumed about

them due their physical traits:

> Wow. My experience of race in the LGBTQ [laughs] community. It's been
> interesting. I think, to be honest with you, it's been pretty easy to be sort of
> identified from people outside looking at me because I look like I'm Black. So, I
> think that it's usually taken at face value that I represent someone from the Black
> American group. (P2.1, 2:5)

In addition to participants being able to identify others' awareness of their race,

some participants discussed their own awareness of not fitting into stereotypes of Blacks

that they and others may hold:

> I think that my biggest obstacle with that is I think people expect things of Black
> people and sometimes I can't, I don't fit those molds. I don't know all my hip-
> hop or I don't know… I'm not into a lot of the stereotypical things. (P5.1,
> 183:183)

Some participants described the conceptual category of Looking the Part

occurring when others expressed difficulty identifying the racial background of the

participant. This difficulty was discussed within the context of the participant not fitting

into a stereotypical representation of what others believed Blacks should look like,

including skin tone and perceived attractiveness:

> It's really, quite honestly, it's painful but, to be blunt, it comes from people who
> think that because they find me attractive I could not just be an American-born,
> Black woman. I would have to be from someplace else. Someplace slightly, in
> their mind, more exotic or that would make more sense for me to be an attractive
> person for them. (P8.1, 419:419)

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Participants also believed that not fitting into others' representations of Black

people led to being perceived as someone who was safer and less hostile:

> I think that, one because of my complexion, because of the way I speak, there's
> always got to be this other, you can't just be Black, you can't be just gay. Or,
> they will feel more comfortable with me because they think I'm less hostile or
> they think I'm what, "I'm easier on your eyes?" (P4.1, 133:133)

In addition to discussing Looking the Part in relation to race, participants

predominantly discussed this conceptual category in relation to sexual identity and the

relationship between gender, gender expression and race on how participants either

looked or did not Look the Part of an LGB person. Participants discussed how gender

expression could communicate one's sexual identity to others:

> It just seems like maybe there's a lot of mis-education or stereotyping that
> happens within heterosexual communities around what a lesbian or queer person,
> a queer woman would look like. (P8.1, 117:117)

When participants' sexual identities were not immediately identified by others,

participants described being "flashed on," or "getting read," by others, indicating that

others were identifying characteristics of the participant that suggested some difference

of the participant in relation to others:

> I think there is definitely something and I think maybe people perceive something
> different about me and sometimes you get these looks from Black females that are
> like, there's something a little bit different and I never know if they're flashing on
> my orientation, and that tends to be my assumption right there, or if they're
> flashing on the way that I speak and maybe perceive that it's something different.
> Although there's lots of heterosexual women that speak the same way that I do,
> but I'm never certain what they're flashing on. I do think I get some flashes on
> things and I never know which part of my personhood they're flashing on. I
> guess I kinda tend to defer and think that it's the queer part, the part they're
> picking up on, kinda giving me the sideways look because of that. It could be that
> it's not, but I think that's the most visible or the most recognizable part, not that I
> look 100% textbook queer person all the time, but I think maybe they perceive

that there's something about me that is not as mainstream as I perceive some of them to be. (P12.1, 61:61)

Participants described the concepts and constructions of femme and butch as gender identities and expressions of gender. While not all participants agreed or identified with traditional butch/femme dichotomies, regardless of identifying as femme or butch, participants were able to provide some descriptions of what these concepts and constructions meant to them. Femme presentations were primarily discussed as being related to gender stereotypical female roles and feminine characteristics. Alternatively, butch presentations were primarily discussed as being related to gender stereotypical male roles and masculine characteristics:

> So, I love a perfectly arched eyebrow and that's something that I associate with girly-girls. Women who are more butch will sometimes or won't get their eyebrows done. (P10.1, 97:97)
>
> I think butch women are women who wear men's clothing daily. They may even wear men's boxers, instead of panties or they wear ties, or some of them don't like their breasts to be displayed in any way that shows off their curves. (P10.1, 121:121)
>
> Girly-girl… Talking about clothes and fashion and really caring about all that nonsense. (P7.1, 73:73)
>
> So what makes me femme-y in practice? I wear makeup. I shop exclusively in the women's sections of stores I go to. And I wear clothes that are, I was going to say that I wear clothes that are fitted, but that doesn't necessarily mean anything. Yea I don't know. I can't give you a great definition. Maybe it's more than that. That's how people perceive me. Because I wear makeup and I wear heels and I wear jewelry and big earrings and stuff like that. (P8.1, 121:129)

Some participants described how they defined femme and butch gender expressions and identities in the context of disagreeing with identities imposed upon them

by others. For example, being identified as a butch lesbian when the participant did

believe she possessed characteristics that she attributed to being or looking butch:

> Part of what I also hear is people's descriptions about when they use the word 'butch' to describe me. Again, I think it goes back to that whole thing about being assertive. That part isn't humorous, because I am assertive. But the other part, I'm just like, "Really?" I'm pretty sensitive and mushy. A lot of butch women, I don't get the sentimental, mushy when I think about who they are. While I don't necessarily do things to showcase my breasts, I'm not trying to hide them either. And that's something that when I think about well, the butch women that I know, they don't want any attention drawn to the fact that they have breasts. One of my butch friends, her girlfriend calls her "daddy." No, I don't want to be called "daddy," just call me by my name, I'm fine with that [laughs]. So that's why I think that it's funny to hear somebody refer to me as "butch." I just think it's not a word that I would ever identify for myself. (P10.1, 121:121)

Looking like an LGB person was often associated with gender atypicality,

endorsing lesbian stereotypes of women who possessed and/or expressed masculine

traits. Several participants identified as exhibiting predominantly feminine traits, often

resulting in being identified by others as heterosexual:

> I would say, when I am about, that they don't know 'cause I don't have that "gay look." I don't dress like a guy. I look like any other Black, feminine woman. So, they wouldn't even really know unless they knew me personally, my life. (P11.1, 173:173)

> I don't think anyone looks at me and thinks that I'm gay. Not unless I'm with someone or doing something that would give them that impression. But people don't assume it. (P5.1, 51:51)

For participants that were identified as heterosexual based on their feminine

appearance, they described others responses to discovering their sexual identities as

queer, bisexual, gay or lesbian with shock, disbelief, and even insult:

> I think that I definitely don't fit what a lot of people consider to be like a typical lesbian stereotype that they have in their head and it's often surprising when they find out that I am. (P2.1, 377:377)

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As a Black lesbian, I think they see me as, um, [sighs] as…Well, the thing that I get a lot of the time is a lot of people don't believe that I am a lesbian. (P2.1, 357:361)

I have had people be shocked and, it sounds almost silly to say, but act hurt. Like my being queer is a personal affront to them. (P8.1, 141:141)

In addition to exhibiting feminine characteristics, being a feminine Black woman was described as an additional factor in the likelihood of others identifying the participant as an LGB person:

They don't have a clue! Until somebody gets, a man particularly, gets flirtatious and asks, "Got any kids?" They don't have a clue. Although some people, the dreads now, it's kind of a lesbian, Black lesbian thing, going natural. There are assumptions made about me. I think the question is raised because of the way I wear my hair, the way I wear my clothes. (P6.1, 108:108)

Participants that were not easily classified by other as LGB or heterosexual based on stereotypical gender presentations of LGB persons described this discrepancy causing confusion for others:

Everybody is very feminine or masculine and I'm kind of in the middle. And so I think that the not fitting in makes people a little uncomfortable, a least at first. I think it's more comfortable to know where somebody stands and then you can figure out how to treat them. It makes them uncomfortable that I'm kind of not in one of the clubs or the other club. (P13.1, 77:77)

Participants described additional characteristics that they believed caused others confusion about their sexual identities including age, weight, attractiveness and hair style:

I think the question is raised because of my hair and because I'm not totally thin. Although I wear makeup and I'm attractive. So, people will say, "Oh, she's attractive." And I think the whammy comes, when people who don't have a clue, they say, "Oh, you're gay! Oh, then it makes sense that you're forty-eight, no kids and not married." [Laughs] Then they get it. (P6.1, 112:112)

Being able to pass as heterosexual may enable one more flexibility and choice of being out to others. Participants who exhibited femme presentations and were often

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assumed as straight discussed how they were or were not open about their sexual

identities. Additionally, some of these participants were able to include how this was

different from how they experienced their racial identities:

> I think probably a lot of time being around family or being, well I do some stuff in the community, some social justice work in the community, and in that context, I'm not open with my sexual orientation. But issues of race can be openly expressed and talked about and I come from that place like, "Okay, I'm a Black person and here's where I'm coming from with my experience." (P3.1, 203:205)

> I do know that when I lived in another state I don't think I was perceived as being particularly interesting just because I didn't really go walking around and saying "I'm a bisexual." I remember times when I was in college and I was like, "You know what? I'm bisexual, but do I really have to identify myself by who I want to have sex with or find attractive?" But if someone asked me, "Hey are you bisexual?" It was, "Yea. I am bisexual." But it's hard to know… I guess I haven't really felt my bisexual identity as much as my Black identity. (P7.1, 109:109)

Participants described some of the benefits and consequences of Looking the Part

as related to sexual identity. Looking the Part of an LGB person enabled participants to

identify and be identified by another LGB person or community for the purposes of

community connection and dating:

> I think it's easier to be certain when people wear their sexuality out there. (P2.1, 419:421)

> For example, if you're at a meeting with LBGTQ people and let's say someone dresses in a way that is sort of stereotypically associated with a certain identity then people know, "Okay, this person definitely is down," you know, in the life. (P2.1, 425:425)

> I don't think I present any kind of way. It's also hard for gay people to know that I'm gay [laughs]. (P13.1, 69:69)

For participants that described themselves as gender-fluid or androgynous,

difficulties in being identified by others as LGB may render them invisible:

But me in the world, I don't really register with people. So, I think that the idea that I might be gay really doesn't, people don't really think of me any kind of way like that. Just kind of invisible. (P13.1, 61:61)

Participants that exhibited feminine characteristics and were identified as straight discussed difficulties in identifying other feminine women who may or may not be LGB:

But when someone is sitting there wearing a dress or whatever represents what a traditional feminine look is, I think sometimes there's that sort of hesitation. Like, "Hmmm are they?" [Laughs] Or definitely maybe they're interested but, "Are they really?" (P2.1, 429:433)

Another consequence that participants described was having their sexual identities questioned by the LGB community because the participant "looks straight":

If I'm in a group of other LGBTQ people, I think, a lot of times, many of them will already assume that I'm in the life or I'm supportive of people in the life. But if they have to look at me and think if, "Okay, if she's in the life what part of the life does she represent? How does she label herself?" I think a lot of people would probably, and I know this for a fact, some people would probably question whether or not I'm a true lesbian. Question, maybe saying, "You know what? She's probably more on the bi side." (P2.1, 409:413)

I think the biggest thing is, I'm really femme. So people will question, "You may be bi. You may be something else." I think those have been my biggest struggles. (P5.1, 179:179)

Looking the Part and Related Literature.

Looking the Part was discussed by participants in terms of how they were identified into social identity groups (self and others) based on their physical traits, appearance, mannerism and/or style of dress associated with stereotypical representations of Blacks, women and LGB persons. Participants provided experiences of others identifying the participants' race based on physical characteristics. Additionally, some participants discussed their awareness of not fitting into racial stereotypes of Black persons. Previous research has supported societal assumptions that one's race can be

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determined based on physical characteristics, such as facial features, skin tone, and hair texture (Freeman, Penner, Saperstein, Scheutz, & Ambady, 2011; Hill, Bruce & Akamatsu, 1995; MacLin & Malpass, 2001). Additional studies have provided support for the influence of stereotypes on racial categorization (Zarate & Smith, 1990).

Participants' experiences of not fitting into racial categorizations based on appearance are reflected in literature on racial ambiguity. Literature on the experiences of biracial women suggests that the influence of physical attributes on racial categorization obfuscates biracial women's self-identification of her race, as well as how she is identified racially by others (Gillem, 2000; Khanna, 2010; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004). In addition to racial ambiguity based on appearance, research has also indicated that Black women, in particular, may be less identified in general categorizations of Blacks and women, with Blacks being associated with men and being a woman being associated with being White (Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Sesko and Biernat's (2010) examined how this phenomena, termed the "non-protypicality hypothesis," may contribute to Black women's' invisibility. The researchers found that White participants were less likely to recognize Black women from other groups and had difficulty distinguishing Black women from each other. Additionally, the researchers found that comments made by Black women were less likely to be properly credited in comparison to Black men, and White men and women.

Participants' experiences of "getting read," or displaying subtle cues that might trigger others' identification of a participant as an LGB person, have been discussed

within the literature. Implicit cues associated with heterosexuality and homosexuality may be founded upon historical stereotypes. Rieger, Linsenmeier, Gygax, Garcia, and Bailey (2010) examined the accuracy of "gaydar," the purported ability to distinguish sexual identity from implicit cues, in two related studies. The first study involved raters judgments on a target's sexual orientation based upon pictures, video, and audio media. Their research suggested that sex-atypical behaviors may function as a signal of sexual orientation. While the study noted inclusion of African American participants as raters and targets, this population was included with those who also identified as Asian, Native American, or 'other.' The issue of cross cultural or racial differences in accuracy of sexual orientation identification was not assessed in either study, though recommended for future research.

Participants' experiences of being identified as an LGB person within the contexts of gender, gender expression and race are supported within scholarly and empirical works on the influences and relationships of these factors with sexual identity (Kite & Deaux, 1987; Rieger, Linsenmeier, Gygax, Garcia & Bailey, 2010). Research suggesting that sexual identity stereotypes are influenced by gender stereotypes indicates that these stereotypes reflect the assumption that lesbians and gay men are similar to opposite-sex heterosexuals (Bailey, Hills & Linsenmeier, 1997; Kite & Deaux, 1987). Greene (2000) further noted that sexuality and sexual orientation are often associated with gender roles and that the construction of gender roles may vary across cultures.

Resistance.

I'm not willing to just be your stereotype. So, if you want to see me as the Black lesbian then know that I'm going to challenge you on your perceptions of that. (P9.1, 129:129)

The conceptual category Resistance was identified throughout participants' narratives. Resistance refers to strategies employed by participants in challenging racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes. It was described by participants as an internal and external process experienced by participants within themselves and occurring in communities (including religious communities, Black communities and LGB communities), in relationships (family and friends), and within society at large. Resistance strategies included challenging stereotypes through discourse that was educational and confrontational. Stereotypes were also challenged through refusing to participate and engage in oppressive environments and refusing to internalize negative stereotypes. Lastly, participants discussed gender expression and gender roles as additional challenges to stereotypes.

Resistance in the form of challenging discourses involved engaging others in conversations that challenged stereotypes of race, sexual identity and gender. Resistance was described as occurring in multiple contexts including when coming out or discussing LGB-related issues with family and friends. Participants also engaged in Resistance in the company of liberal or social justice oriented White LGB communities, where Whites had difficulties in discussing issues relating to race. Participant 4 shared an experience of attending a book reading where the topic of Black and White race-relations was quickly changed to a discussion about international issues:

"Why is it that when we get in a room and we talk about race, the first thing that left-wing, social progressives talk about is Central America and South America?

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And not matter how, you have Black people sitting in this room talking about Black and White issues and you keep talking about Central America?" And then one woman said, and even this was in a patronizing way, "I really appreciate what you just said. It's so true and I think it's just my discomfort because of my…" And I'm just like, "Oh, my God!" But I said to them, "Look, when Black people and Latinos are together, in my experience, when we talk about you all, they are not charmed by the fact that you came to their country, in college." (P4.1, 133:133)

Participants identified approaches that they took to engage others in discussions that were intended to increase awareness of racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes in an effort to educate others around these issues and create awareness around language:

You know, I'm like, "Well, what, what would make you ask that question?" Ask the question about, "What does my husband do?" Or my fiancé, or whatever they said that eluded to the fact it would be male. Because I'm very keen on trying to get them to listen to those kinds of self-imposed sort of ideals that they present in their language. (P2, 381:381)

Participants noted that engaging in conversations that confronted these issues was a way to change these stereotypes. Additionally, these types of conversations were described as moving experiences for some participants:

We're socialized to have certain beliefs about, um, certain subgroups of people. And it's only when we have direct experiences with people that challenge that, then we can move on and say, "Hey, that's not the experience." (P2.1, 229:233)

Oh it was phenomenal [having her experience heard by a White person]. It, it makes us want to go out and have more of those conversations. (P6.1, 173:179)

While some participants noted the educational components of engaging in challenging discourses, others discussed actively confronting acts of racism, homophobia and/or gender stereotypes. This included challenging LGB stereotypes, specifically around bisexuality, within LGB communities:

I think bi is kind of a weird thing to be because when you're a bi female, in my personal experience, the lesbian females think, "Well you just don't know what

you are, and you just kind of, you don't have a real identity. You're just kind of confused or whatever." And I'm like, "Nah, I don't think I'm confused. I just like 'em both." (P7.1, 49:49)

This also included participants speaking on these issues when they occurred and participants carrying a consciousness of these issues that surfaced in different environments where they felt these discussions needed to occur:

> I was meeting this person for the first time and we did not get off on the right foot. The woman, the first thing she said to me at the time was, there was something going on in the news and Black clergy were going against some LGBT issue and she said, "Oh, the Black church is so homophobic and Black people hate gays," and I said, "Whoa, backup. Wait. Are you crazy?" [laughs] I said, "Well, there are tons of clergy who are really positive, who are also fighting, they're just not getting the media attention. And if you listen to Black radio, the arguments are pretty 50/50 or 60/40. It's not that they are more homophobic than a White community." (P 9.1, 83:83)

Participants discussed acts of racism, homophobia and sexism in various environments and described taking a stance against these acts through their refusal to engage in those environments. Resistant was a way in which participants could protect their identities when under attack from others' or societal stereotypes. This included participants not wanting to compromise or hide their identities:

> I don't want to be your only one. I don't want to be exoticized. I don't want to be thought of as a safe lesbian or the one that, even though I get upset, they know that I still like White people. I find that really tedious and boring and there's no vodka involved in that [laughs]. It's like, either pay me, fuck me, or get out of my way, but that's just not what I'm interested in. If you're going to pay me to play that role in your life, we can negotiate those terms. (P9.1, 157:157)

Some participants discussed their desire to not compromise aspects of their identity as being influenced by witnessing others' coming out processes:

> My aunt is gay and she lived her whole life in the closet, with the exception of when she was totally away from her family, totally away from everybody she knew. And even when she was significantly older, like in her seventies, and at the

close of her life-She was still, her whole life was whittled down to a box and she's just like, "I want to show you my gay box," and I'm just like. I won't let my life be that. I won't let other people make me hide who I am. I won't let you do that to me. (P1.2, 453:457)

Participants discussed actively refusing to internalize negative stereotypes others attributed to their identities. These stereotypes arose from family members, friends, religious communities and society at large. For some participants, this internal resistance was a part of their authentic selves:

So, how I negotiate that? I guess… I don't know, maybe in some ways it's still a work in progress even for me. I'm not sure, I feel like if it happened again it would give me some pause for thought again and I would have to say, "This is who I am," and stop apologizing for it because if it's authentically who I am, and that's my Holy Grail right there, so if it's authentically who I am, who is anyone to question that? So, once I get passed the indignation of anyone questioning that, what's beyond that is just who I am. Take it or leave it. (P12.1, 109:109)

The ability to not take on others' negative perceptions or stereotypes was described as a difficult experience for some participants:

I work really, really hard not to take on what other people think of me. I think it's really easy to do that and I think that's where a lot of us end up depressed and over-eating and over-drinking and what have you, and out the night clubs, because we're not living to other people's standards or are in conflict with that or we want to live up to them, or insecure… And all of those things are true about me. (P9, 137:137)

Participants discussed challenging gender stereotypes and norms through their gender expression and atypical gender roles. Some participants discussed not wanting to be defined by others based on traditional stereotypes ascribed to men and women. For these participants, they described a desire to behave in ways that may challenge gender norms, but that were in accordance to how they understood themselves and/or self-identified:

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But then I'll put on a shirt and tie, like a man shirt and tie, and I think, for some people, I think that's confusing. Again, because I'm not really fitting nicely and neatly into a box, I'm, "Hey, I'm a woman, too!" I just look differently than what everybody tells me I should look like. And I have short hair, so again, sort of transgressing the norms in that way too, that what's considered feminine, in a lot of instances is long hair. I don't have long hair, and very rarely get manicures or whatever, but one day, you know, if I decide to put on a dress, I'm going to put on a dress, polish my toes. And the next day, if I feel like having on a baseball hat and a polo shirt and some tennis shoes I'm going to do that too. (P10.1, 97:97)

In addition to gender expression serving as a form of resistance to gender stereotypes, the association between gender expression and sexual identity was also discussed. Participants described how deviations from traditional gender roles and expressions were often associated with sexual identity. Some participants noted this as especially true within Black communities:

And I think that is about gender presentation that I think people get that confused sometimes with sexual identity. And I think that kind of idea is more rampant in communities of Color, specifically Black communities than it is in White communities. This idea that you're breaking the rules, that you're doing something you're not supposed to do. (P10.1, 53:53)

As well as being discussed as occurring in communities and during processes such as coming out, Resistance was also described as occurring when participants did not feel respected. The importance of respect was highlighted by participants, asserting that validation or acceptance from another could not be received without it:

Respect is just the basics. (P1.1, 577:577)

Some participants believed that they were respected in Black communities based on their acts of commitment to the community or through their covert acknowledgement of their sexual identity based on gender expression. Receiving respect from others

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enabled participants to feel as though they were able to be viewed as individuals and/or a part of a community:

> I have very few straight Black people in my social life and in my intimate space. And so, it's about work, it's about issues, it's about whatever health issues… So whatever the education campaign is that I'm working on or political stuff that I might be engaged with or a kid dies in the street and I want to be involved, public awareness campaign. And my lesbianism is really just not an issue. I think what people respect about me is my willingness to do stuff and my ability to get it done. (P9.1, 117:117)

> I do tend to go to male barbershops to get my hair buzzed and you know there will be guys in the corner I hear, "Oh man, that girl's probably a dyke right there," or whatever and you know little things like that. But by in large, I feel like Black men in particular, they see me and they know I'm an Amazon. I feel like they give me my props and they give me respect if anything, I feel like you know cause physically I'm pretty strong in appearance and I'm tall, I just feel like they maybe just kinda give me the same head nods they give the guy that walked in before me so I feel like there is a respect and they can probably figure out where I'm coming from so I don't get messed with a lot. (P12.1, 49:49)

While the concept of Resistance was discussed as being related to strategies employed, participants also discussed self-appraisals and reflected appraisals relating to the participant possessing confidence and assertiveness:

> You know, and, but then again. I'm not the kind of person that you can just really come up to me and say something crazy to either. (P1.1, 517:521)

Some participants attributed their present life stages and past experiences as contributing factors to their positive self-image. Additionally, participants who came out to significant persons in their lives described caring less about stereotypes or negative perceptions from others:

> After that [coming out to parents], I didn't care who knew after that other relatives, aunts, cousins, whatever, it didn't matter, 'cause, you know, they don't pay my rent [laughs]. And they're secondary in my life, so it didn't really matter about anyone else. (P11.1, 125:125)

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Consequences of Resistance were experienced as positive and negative for others and for participants. Participants described strategies of Resistance, such as engaging in challenging discourses, resulting in making others feel uncomfortable as expressed by behaviors such as changing topics:

> But even when she [Black community group member] talks about race- the first time I was there and she was there, she brought it up and that's where it went from race to bisexuality. I mean, we were both like, "What the hell? What happened?" (P4.1, 97:97)

Resistance also led to some participants experiences of being alienated from others:

> One time somebody in the group said, "Why is everything about race?" And I said, "Because everything's about race." Because it is. That's what it is. And so the woman I'm seeing, she asked me if people in the group, if any other woman had tried to date me and I said, "No! They barely talk to me." (P4.1 89:89)

Participants also expressed some ambivalence around Resistance relating to challenging family members. This included a desire to engage family members around LGB related issues while having concerns about the responses that family members may provide:

> I have members of my family who are very supportive, very present and they live in conservative red states and I have talked to them when votes have come up that would affect LGBT people. I've talked to them about the importance of supporting what I think is the right position… I actually don't know how they voted. So, and maybe that's a choice I make. I catch them before the vote but I don't necessarily want to know how they voted because, one, people lie. Two, if they voted in a way I didn't like, what am I going to do with that information? (P9.1, 71:71)

Participants described positive aspects of challenging stereotypes including the ability to debunk others' beliefs and developing increased compassion and awareness about privilege through challenging discourses:

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Some of the really great things about being Black are because of other people's negative perceptions and being able to shatter them. And because of all the pressure you have to you know live under and succeed in and try hard, because you have to try hard. (P7.1, 205:205)

And I think what was unique about it was this was the one time where different, the discourse, not just about Black identity but how White privilege, White privilege in dialogue with Black identity and the pain around White people when they start identifying their privilege. It gave me a lot of compassion because I hadn't thought about it. And I see that there is pain on both sides. It really is kind of a struggle. (P6.1, 171:171)

Resistance and related literature.

The concept of resistance in the lives of Black women has been discussed within scholarly and empirical literature across the fields of psychology, sociology, and feminist theory (Fine & Carney, 2001; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Jordan, 2011; Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Tolman & Brown, 2001). It has been defined in terms of actions taken on by individuals or groups that could be conducted overtly or covertly (Jordan, 2011; Langhout, 2005). Further, it has been discussed within the context of challenging institutionalized and structured oppression, and as an important aspect of individual identity, and as a mechanism for coping (Ashforth & Mael, 1998; Collins, 1998; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Langhout, 2005).

In this study, Resistance was identified as a major conceptual category during second phase analyses and understood through the participants' narratives as strategies that they employed in challenging racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes. Shorter-Gooden's (2004) study of stress management of racism and sexism in Black women found that Black women utilized multiple coping strategies. One findings of interest was that the participants possessed an internal resource of "valuing oneself," described as a

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positive set of self-image, sense of worth, respect for oneself, and a continual pursuit of personal development. The researcher found that these women worked at not internalizing negative stereotypes of Black women as represented in society at large. This specific finding related to findings in the current study. The participants of the current study described having positive self-images of themselves and how this characteristic enabled them to not internalize negative stereotypes made of them and those in the larger society about Black lesbian and bisexual women. This value of holding a positive self-image is most notably discussed within the works of Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 1998). In explaining the significance of Black women creating self-definition and self-value, Collins (1986) argued "defining and valuing one's consciousness of one's own self-defined standpoint in the face of images that foster a self-definition as the objectified "other" is an important way of resisting the dehumanization essential to systems of domination" (p. S18).

Participants in this study identified the consequences of Resistance strategies including not having their voices heard and experiencing alienation from others. Audre Lorde (1984), noted Black lesbian scholar and poet, described the importance and potential consequences of giving voice to injustice:

> I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect. (p.40)

Participants in this study discussed addressing issues regarding their sexual identity within their families, including when challenging homophobic beliefs held by family members. While some participants had directly challenged family members on

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these issues, others described a pattern of speaking about these issues with family members that they felt would be accepting as well as a pattern of ambivalence about how much or how far they could go in these conversations. Collins (1998) noted that the family system may be an important location for discourse on gender and race within the US that can challenge oppressive hierarchies.

Confronting stereotypes about bisexuality within LGB communities was discussed by some of the participants of this study. These experiences are similar to those noted in research examining attitudes about bisexuality (Fox, 1996; Rust, 1993, 2000). Mohr and Rochlen's (1999) study of attitudes about bisexuals found three main attitude domains regarding bisexuality: attitudes regarding moral tolerance for bisexuality, attitudes regarding the legitimacy of bisexuality as a sexual orientation, and attitudes regarding bisexuals' reliability as romantic partners, friends, and community members. The results of their study highlighted distrust that heterosexual and LGB communities may hold about bisexuals. In addition, the study found that lesbians held higher negative attitudes towards bisexuals than heterosexual men and women, and gay males.

Participants in the current study discussed the use of gender expression to challenge gender norms and heteronormativity. Patton and Simons' (2008) study of Black lesbians at a historically black college found a similar trend and suggested that expressions of atypical gender expressions for women as a signifier of sexual identity may be attributed to a generational attitude trend of younger Black lesbians that reflected a belief that heteronormative society just needs to "deal with" LGB identities. An

additional finding of Patton and Simons' (2008) study was that some women in their

study adopted an "I don't care attitude" (p.210) in response to others' biases or

stereotypes about their sexual identity. This finding is similar to responses from

participants in the current study who described a pattern of "not taking any mess" when

confronted with racism, homophobia and/or sexism.

Summary of Major Conceptual Categories and Relationships.

This section will provide a brief summary of the major conceptual categories and

describe the main relationships identified between the categories through the exploration

of co-occurring codes and the conditional relationship guide. As previously discussed in

Chapter 3, the co-occurrence explorer in Atlas.ti was utilized in examining the

relationships between the major conceptual categories. Upon identifying the codes from

each of the major conceptual categories that co-occurred, I examined the interview

transcripts at the points of these co-occurrences in order to derive the potential meaning

of the relationship. These relationships were further explored through the construction of

a conditional relationship guide (Table 8).

Table 8.

Conditional Relationship Guide

Category	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?	Consequences
Sense of Belonging	Feeling of acceptance	Coming Out	Communities (religious, Black, Black LGB, of Color, LGB)	Desire to connect	Being understood	Alienation
	Being a part of	Sexual identity not accepted		Expectations (fit in, let guard down, be authentic)	Positive reflected-appraisals	Increased confidence
	Being Known	Identification with	Relationships (family, romantic relationships)		Comfort being self	Experiences of validation
				Lack of LGB community diversity	Acknowledgement	Feeling comfortable
					Seeing representation	Increased understanding of self

Table 8. Cont.

Category	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?	Consequences
						Ability manage conflicts
						Changing negative perceptions
Partial Acceptance	Lack of full acceptance for sexual identity	Others don't want to know your sexual identity Covert acceptance Conditional acceptance of an identity Coming Out	Communities (Black, LGB, religious) Relationships (family, friends)	Lack of acceptance of one identity Cannot be all aspects of self with others (sexual id) Lack of LGB community diversity Being an outsider	Not discussing sexual identity Not acknowledging identity	Alienation fears and experiences Reluctance to come out Hiding aspects of life (double life) Sexual identity not accepted
Looking the Part	Identification of race, gender or sexual identity	Incongruences with stereotypes of race, gender and/or sexual identity Categorization of identity Difficulty in categorization discernment	Interactions with other individuals and communities	Atypical gender presentation Media representations of LGB people and community Identified as "different" Racial and/or gender ambiguity	Self-appraisals of racial, gender and sexual identity Perception of others' beliefs (reflected-appraisals) of racial, gender and sexual identity	Being Out: Decisions Decisions around being "out" Group exclusion Group inclusion
Resistance	Strategies to challenge racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes	Coming out Racist, sexist and/or homophobic acts Do not feel respected	Self Communities (Black, LGB, religious) Relationships (family, friends) Society at large	Not wanting to be defined by others Lack of diversity in LGB community Protection	Challenging discourses around race, gender and/or sexual identity Atypical gender expression, challenging gender stereotypes/norms Defending self-identifications Refusal of engaging in negative environments/people	Changing negative perceptions Increased confidence Others feel uncomfortable

Four major conceptual categories emerged from second phase data analysis

procedures. Sense of Belonging and Partial Acceptance were initially identified in

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preliminary analysis and were the most and second most (respectively) categories endorsed by participants during follow-up interviews. Sense of Belonging referred to participant experiences of felt acceptance, being a part of, and/or being known. It was discussed in relation to racial and sexual identity and as occurring in communities and relationships with others. In contrast, Partial Acceptance was described as being related to an absence or lack of acceptance for sexual identity. Similar to Sense of Belonging, Partial Acceptance also occurred in communities and in relationships with others. Several codes related to Partial Acceptance co-occurred with Sense of Belonging codes. Upon examining the co-occurring codes and utilizing the conditional relationship guide, a pattern of Partial Acceptance as a potential consequence to Sense of Belonging emerged. For example, experiencing partial belonging to the LGB community (related to Partial Acceptance) was discussed in association with a lack of diversity in LGB communities (related to a factor of why Sense of Belonging occurs). In addition, both Sense of Belonging and Partial Acceptance resulted in the consequence of participants experiencing and/or fearing alienation from communities and others, including family and friends. As Partial Acceptance was predominantly discussed in relation to sexual identity, it can be understood as a consequence of Sense of Belonging around one's sexual identity.

Similar to Sense of Belonging and Partial Acceptance, part of the conceptual category Looking the Part was initially identified during preliminary analysis as the tentative analytic category, "Not Looking the Part." While this initial category was predominantly related to sexual identity, further exploration and member-checking

resulted in the additional related dimensions of race and gender. Looking the Part refers to identification of an individual's race, gender or sexual identity by physical traits, appearance, mannerisms, and/or style of dress associated with stereotypical representations of Blacks, women, and LGB persons. Codes relating to this category co-occurred the most frequently with codes related to the final conceptual category, Resistance. Resistance refers to strategies employed by participants in challenging racism, homophobia and gender stereotypes. Co-occurring with Looking the Part and Resistance codes were those relating to gender expression, with Resistance being discussed as a consequence of Looking the Part. For example, experiences of atypical gender presentation and expressions (related to Looking the Part codes) were discussed in association with challenging gender stereotypes through gender non-conformity (related to Resistance codes). Resistance strategies to challenge gender stereotypes could be understood as a consequence of Looking the Part, specifically in relation to gender expression.

This section summarized the relationships between the four major conceptual categories: Sense of Belonging, Partial Acceptance, Looking the Part, and Resistance. Through an iterative process of examining the co-occurrence of codes, developing a conditional relationship guide, returning to previous literature and interview data, these relationships set the stage for the emerging theory of the study, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

As I progressed through the analysis of this study and continued to work through the concepts and relationships of the conceptual categories, I began to notice that my

analytic direction was drifting from the initial purpose of the current study. Through a journey of methodological ambiguity, reflection, and growing knowledge about constructivist grounded theory, I believed that the analysis was leading to an experience that was firmly grounded in the narratives of the participants. My adherence to the grounded theory method led to issues and experiences that were of importance to the participants, resulting in the grounded theory for this study. In Chapter 5 I will discuss this journey and the implication that it had upon my original decision to utilize the Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003) as a measure of racial identity status in the current study. The following section presents the results of the profile analysis of participants' responses on the BRIAS. These results and how the BRIAS was understood and utilized within this study will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Racial Identity

Profile Analysis

The Black Racial Identity and Attitudes Scale (BRIAS; Helms, 1990, 2003) was used to generate individual racial identity profiles. BRIAS measures were completed by eleven out of the 13 participants. I made five attempts to obtain completed BRIAS surveys from the remaining participants. As such, the total sample referred to in BRIAS discussions represents the eleven participants that completed the survey and is not representative of total participant sample for this study (N=13). The mean score and standard deviations for each racial identity schema were as follows: Pre-Encounter (M=32.64, SD=7.58); Post-Encounter (M=15.18, SD=2.66); Immersion (M=34.73,

SD=6.77); Emersion (M=30, SD=5.02); and Internalization (M=54.18, SD=7.33). The mean scores, standard deviations and ranges of scores for each racial identity schemas across participants are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations and Range of Scores for Racial Identity Schemas on the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale for Total Sample (N=11)

Racial Identity Schema	Mean	SD	Range
Pre-Encounter	32.64	7.58	22-48
Post-Encounter	15.18	2.66	11-19
Immersion	34.73	6.77	23-44
Emersion	30	5.02	23-36
Internalization	54.18	7.33	34-63

Iotas were calculated for each schema for each participant that completed the measure (N=11). The range of reliability of responses for each of the BRIAS scales across participants (N=11) were: Pre-Encounter.36 to .79; Post-Encounter.35 to .86; Immersion .43 to .84; Emersion .67 to .97; and Internalization .50 to .97. The means, standard deviations, and obtained ranges of iota coefficients are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of Racial Identity Schema Iotas and Raw Scores

	Pre-Encounter		Post-Encounter		Immersion		Emersion		Internalization	
	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score
P1	0.48	33	0.67	12	0.84	31	0.97	31	0.88	52
P3	0.57	35	0.73	11	0.65	34	0.94	34	0.9	58
P4	0.77	22	0.86	14	0.67	39	0.91	35	0.88	52
P5	0.63	35	0.63	16	0.67	24	0.9	29	0.89	56
P6	0.69	48	0.74	19	0.51	35	0.78	23	0.5	34

Table 10. Cont.

	Pre-Encounter		Post-Encounter		Immersion		Emersion		Internalization	
	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score	Iota	Raw Score
P7	0.44	27	0.46	13	0.43	23	0.72	25	0.88	57
P8	0.51	39	0.53	19	0.46	35	0.61	23	0.8	55
P10	0.79	28	0.71	14	0.67	39	0.85	33	0.87	55
P11	0.36	28	0.4	15	0.59	44	0.89	36	0.97	63
P12	0.67	39	0.82	17	0.63	35	0.77	26	0.81	57
P13	0.68	25	0.35	17	0.47	43	0.8	35	0.74	57

Racial identity schemas refer to the strategies for interpreting and responding to a participant's understanding of her race (Helms, 1996). As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the BRIAS measures five racial identity schemas, which are the expressions of the five statuses in Helms' (2003) Black racial identity theory: Pre-Encounter, Post-Encounter, Immersion, Emersion, and Internalization. Profiles were developed for all participants that completed the BRIAS (N=11). The mean score of each participant across subscales is illustrated in Figure 1.
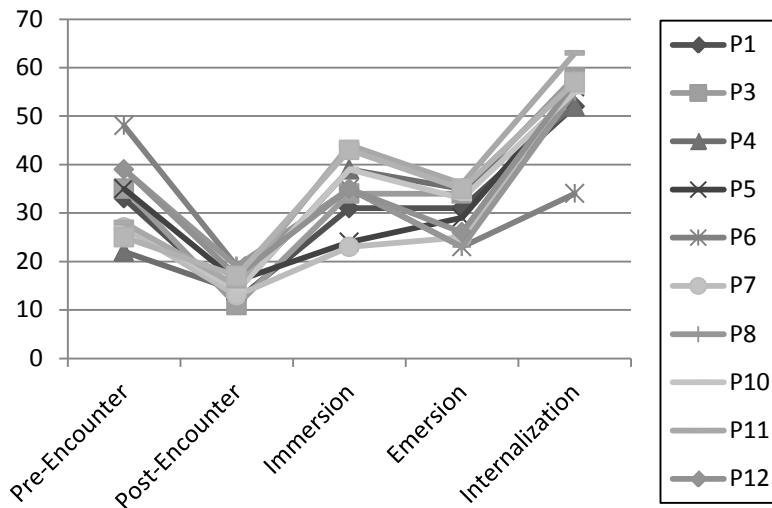

Figure 1. Racial identity profiles across participants. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 1: Pre-Enc = 33; Post-Enc = 12; Imm = 31; Emer = 31; and Intern = 52. Participant 3: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 11; Imm = 34; Emer = 34; and

Intern = 58. Participant 4: Pre-Enc = 22; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 35; and Intern = 52. Participant 5: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 16; Imm = 24; Emer = 29; and Intern = 56. Participant 6: Pre-Enc = 48; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 34. Participant 7: Pre-Enc = 27; Post-Enc = 13; Imm = 23; Emer = 25; and Intern = 57. Participant 8: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 55. Participant 10: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 33; and Intern = 55. Participant 11: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 15; Imm = 44; Emer = 36; and Intern = 63. Participant 12: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 35; Emer = 26; and Intern = 57. Participant 13: Pre-Enc = 25; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 43; Emer = 35; and Intern = 57.

Graphing all participants' racial identity schemas as measured by the BRIAS, as well as graphs generated that compared individual scores with the mean of the total sample (see Figures A2 through A23) served two purposes in my initial understanding of the utilization of the BRIAS. First, while I recognized that participants varied along a number of dimensions, comparison graphs were a way to see how much any one participant differed from others on a particular racial identity schema. Individual iotas could also be looked at to examine the consistency or interrelatedness of the participant's responses on each scale. This then allowed me to go back to the data and examine that individual's narrative to see how her responses related to her BRIAS. However, as I have discussed earlier in this manuscript and later in Chapter 5, the emerging theory, grounded in participants' narratives, and my adherence to the grounded theory methodology lead to a new understanding of how the BRIAS did not fit with the participants' narratives.

The second initial purpose for generating graphs as a means to examine racial identity profiles was that it enabled me to see the pattern of strategies a participant utilized for interpreting and responding her race (Helms, 1996). Relating these strategies back to the participant's interview, and again back to the major conceptual categories,

reflects the use of the BRIAS within the constant comparative approach to data analysis utilized in this study.

Emerging Theory

The goal of a constructivist grounded theory inquiry is the construction of a theory that is rooted in the narratives of participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Constructivist grounded theories can be distinguished from other grounded theories in that theories generated from a constructivist grounded inquiry typically result in a substantive versus formal theory (Charmaz, 2006). Substantive theories offer context-specific interpretations; that is, the theory supplies an explanation of a specific phenomenon within a specific situation (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lempert, 2007). In contrast, formal theories serve to provide a broad explanation for phenomena across various contexts (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lempert, 2007). Formal theories can be inclusive of several substantive theories. Glaser (2007) asserted that a formal theory could be understood as the "general implications" of the central phenomenon of a grounded theory study, wherein these implications can be generalized (p. 99). Substantive theories can be raised to formal theories through empirically verifying the theory utilizing quantitative data collection and analyses that result in generalizability (Creswell, 2007; Lempert, 2007). The emerging theory of this study is substantive as the analysis and interpretation of the data collected provides an explanation of a specific phenomenon within a specific population, Black lesbian and bisexual women.

Sense of Belonging was a dominant concept occurring throughout initial and second phase analysis. It co-occurred and related to most initial codes, tentative analytic categories, and focused codes. Additionally, each of the other three major conceptual categories, Partial Acceptance, Looking the Part and Gender Expression were related to Sense of Belonging. Given this, Sense of Belonging was identified as the central theme of the study upon which the emergent theory centers on. As discussed in Chapter 3, I define the central theme of the study as one account, or interpretive lens, through which participants' experiences in this study can be understood. Findings from participants' racial identity profile analyses further informed my interpretations and the emerging theory. The theoretical model that emerged from this study represents an account of participants' experiences that can be used to understand the relationship between reflected appraisals and racial identity statuses. This theory and its application are presented in detail in Chapter 5.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings from data collected from Black lesbian and bisexual women. Data included initial and follow-up interview data and participant responses on the BRIAS. The reader was guided through the findings as they occurred during data analysis procedures discussed in Chapter 3. Major conceptual categories were identified, out of which a central theme, Sense of Belonging, emerged as the foundation of the emerging theory of this study. In the next chapter, I present the emerging theory and supporting literature. Additionally, a visual and narrative

illustration of the model will be provided. The chapter will also discuss the strengths,

limitations and implications of this study for theory, research, practice, and training.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study at its outset was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of reflected appraisals in Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities. The study was initially guided by the following questions: (a) how do Black lesbian and bisexual women make meaning of their racial, gender and sexual identities; (b) how do Black lesbian and bisexual women experience race- and sexual identity-related appraisals made of them by members of their racial and sexual communities; (c) how do Black lesbian and bisexual women make meaning of their experiences of race- and sexual identity-related reflected appraisals in their understandings of their racial and sexual identities; and (d) what is the relationship between racial identity statuses and the way Black lesbian and bisexual women experience reflected appraisals in their understandings of their racial and sexual identities? The intended outcome was to develop a theory, grounded in the experience of participants, about racial identity statuses and reflected appraisals. This study was influenced by my interest in multiple minority identity development, specifically related to Black lesbian and bisexual women. My desire to understand the experiences of these women led to the selection of a social constructivist grounded theory method, as I wanted to conduct a study committed to raising the voices and actual experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women. During my initial review of the literature, I was drawn to

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the construct of reflected appraisals as a potential perspective from which the racial and sexual identities of Black lesbian and bisexual women could be understood.   However, in adhering to a constructivist grounded theory method, what emerged from participant narratives and this methodological process was a data-grounded theory about an experience, Sense of Belonging, salient for participants about their racial and sexual identities. This divergence from the initial study purpose is further addressed in the limitation sections of this chapter.

This chapter begins with a discussion about the use of the BRIAS in this study. Following this, a formal description of the grounded theory that emerged from this study is presented. I developed a visual representation of the theory that is used to further enhance our understanding of the theory. Next, I explain the theory through the use of a narrative illustration of the theory applied to the experiences of one participant from this current study. After establishing our understanding of the grounded theory through description and illustration (visual and narrative), the theory is situated within existing literature. Finally, I discuss the strengths and limitations of this study and conclude the chapter with a discussion on the implications of this study for theory, research, practice, and training.

Racial Identity Statuses and the Emerging Theory

Interview data from participants in this study did not lead to an understanding of the relationship between racial identity statuses, as measured by the BRIAS, and reflected appraisals. Adherence to the grounded theory method led to issues and experiences that were of importance to the participants, resulting in the grounded theory for this study. The BRIAS was administered to participants at the conclusion of the second interview in

an effort to mitigate the potential priming of racial identity issues. This lead to a parallel process of engaging in the second phase of analysis while generating and interpreting the profile analyses of participants that completed the BRIAS (N=11). What resulted then was an emerging theory based on the qualitative data and my efforts to "fit" the racial identity profiles with this theory. While the intended utilization of the BRIAS was to inform the process of how Black lesbian and bisexual women from different racial identity statuses may experience reflected appraisals in their conceptualizations of their racial and sexual identities, an unintended consequence of the parallel process that occurred was that the profiles did not add meaning to the emerging theory. Participants' experiences of racial and sexual identity-related appraisals are embedded in the grounded theory of this study. That said, there was something to be learned from participant responses to the BRIAS when taking into account the emerging theory of this study. A discussion on how the BRIAS might be understood within the context of the emerging theory of this study is provided in the discussion on implications of this study presented at the end of this chapter. The following section presents the grounded theory that emerged from this study.

Grounded Theory of Black Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Sense of Belonging

The theory that emerged from the experiences of participants in this study centered on participants' Sense of Belonging as related to their racial and sexual identities. This theme occurred in initial and secondary analysis, across participant interviews, and is related to other focused codes and conceptual categories. Sense of Belonging is defined by this study as participants' experiences of identifying with a

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social identity group, feeling that one has a place within the group(s), and feeling that one or more of one's social identities are supported by the group. Sense of Belonging can be delineated by the following features: membership, locality, and acceptance. Membership is the identification of a participant to, or with, a social identity group. Locality is how a participant perceives a place and/or space for her racial and/or sexual identity within a social identity group. Lastly, acceptance is a participant's sense of receiving validation for her racial and/or sexual identity within a social identity group. Each feature involves self and reflected appraisals. Additionally, each feature is also influenced by internal and external contextual factors that are in a dynamic interaction with each other.

Membership

Membership involves identification to social groups and is a part of how we understand ourselves to belong to, or be a part of, a social identity group. This identification is made by the individual and by others and can be based on factors such as history, personal experiences, physical and behavioral attributes associated with a particular social group, as well as stereotypes held about different groups. Social group identification as made by the individual and by others may or may not be consistent. An individual's awareness of how she is being identified by others can be perceived (reflected appraisal) or informed by direct experiences. Incongruences between individual characteristics, such as physical attributes and behaviors, and those typically ascribed to different social identity groups, including stereotypes, may lead to discrepancies between group membership identification made by the individual and made about the individual by others.

Locality

Locality refers to situating oneself within a place and having a sense of a space for oneself. Having a place and space can be understood in terms of physical locations or *sense* of location. It can be discernible or inferred by the presence, or lack thereof, of markers that reflect and/or support one or more of an individual's social group identities. Further, an individual may hold a perception of whether or not there is a place or space for one or more of her social group identities. Places and spaces that include and are supporting of one's racial and sexual identities may be sought out or formed. When one experiences exclusion, alienation or a lack of visibility of a social group identity, she may choose to create a place or space in which that identity can thrive or make choices about identity emphasis or disclosure (e.g., disclosure of sexual identity).

Acceptance

Acceptance refers to a feeling of support and/or validation for one or more social group identities. It can be experienced by the individual through interactions with others, including communities and society at large. Additionally, acceptance can be based upon an individual's positive or negative race and sexual identity-related reflected appraisals. Acceptance is felt through experiences of behaviors that may be overtly or covertly provided by others. Acceptance can also be experienced by an individual in full or partiality. In the case of partial acceptance, the individual may experience ambivalent or context-dependent acceptance of her racial and/or sexual identity (e.g., it may be known that she is lesbian in her church, but there is pressure to not talk about her sexual identity).

The grounded theory of Sense of Belonging encompasses dimensions of an experience that occur across and in multiple contexts. In addition, this is a dynamic model in which numerous interactions between dimensions of this experience and between these dimensions and multiple contexts can occur to varying degrees and at varying points in time. Given this, the model can best be depicted through a modified transactional ecological framework. Initially popularized from the works of Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1994), ecological models generally address individual development with an emphasis on a complex system of relationships influenced by a number of contextual levels, or ecological layers, in an individual's environment (Berk, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's model identifies four levels of contextual influence, often depicted as nested layers or concentric circles: (a) the microsystem of the interpersonal relationships with one's immediate environment, including family, school, and work; (b) the mesosystem of processes and relationships between two or more microsystems, such as school and work; (c) the exosystem of processes and relationships between two or more environments that do not involve the individual, but impacts the individual indirectly; and (d) the macrosystem, encompassing the culture characteristics of the micro-, meso-, and exosysytems, including societal beliefs and values. According to Cicchetti & Aber (1998), researchers may utilize all or some of the ecological layers, depending on the focus of their research inquiry when describing or illustrating a theoretical or conceptual model. Transactional ecological models broaden the scope of contextual influences commonly described in ecological models by including the individual as an additional system, or ecological layer and emphasizing the interactions,

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or transactions occurring between and across these levels of influence (Cicchetti & Rizley, 1981; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998). Neville and Mobley's (2001) ecological model of the multicultural counseling process was also of interest for this study. In addition to placing emphasis on the individual as an additional system, the influence of sociocultural issues and the identification of social structures throughout the model, as opposed to being relegated to the most distal contextual layer, were included.

A grounded theoretical model illustrating Sense of Belonging is presented in Figure 24 below.
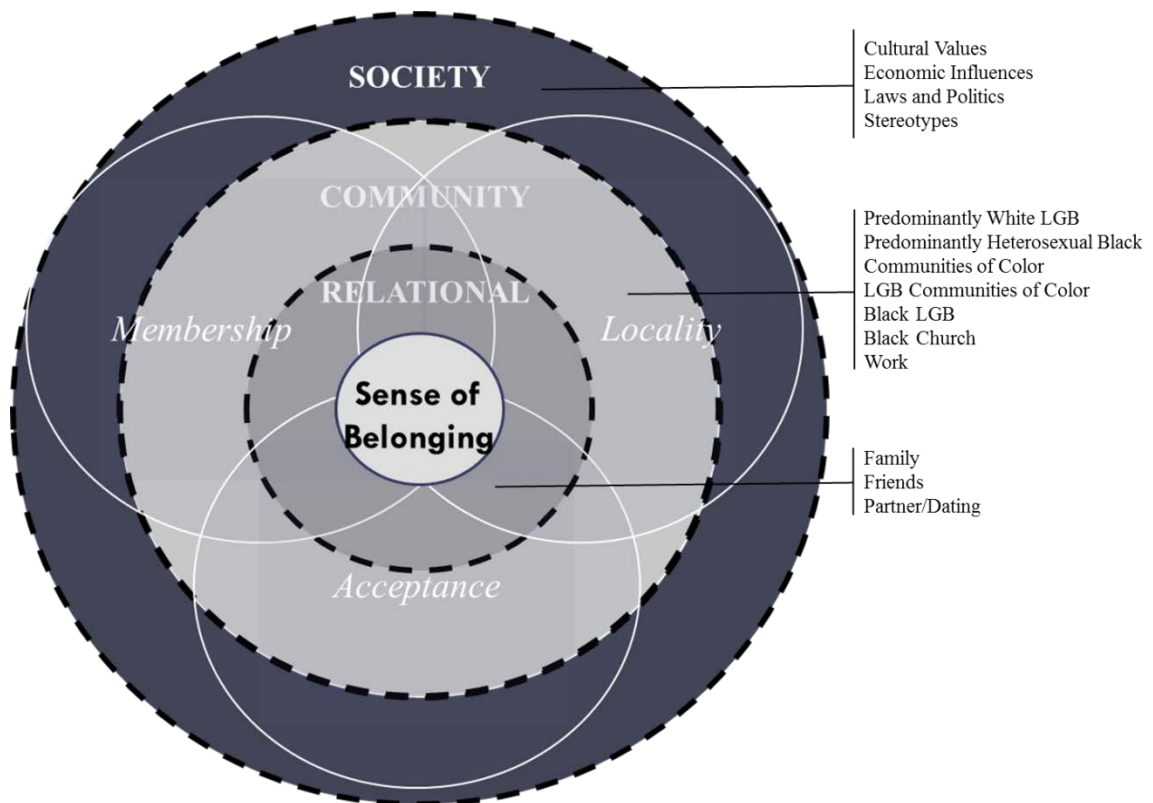
Figure 24. Grounded Theory of Sense of Belonging for Black Lesbian and Bisexual Women

Three layers representing a set of contextual influences are shown in the model. The inner layer, Relational, represents the influence of family, friends, and partners or

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dating mates in the individual's life. The next layer, Community, represents the influence of the following communities as identified by participants of this study: predominantly White LGB communities, predominantly heterosexual Black communities, predominantly heterosexual communities of Color, LGB communities of Color, Black LGB communities, Black Church and workplace. The outer layer, Society, represents the influences of dominant-majority societal stereotypes about race, sexual identity and gender; cultural values of various social identity groups; laws and politics relating to social identity groups; and economic influences. Dashed borders are used for each layer to reflect the permeability of layer of influence, highlighting the impact that each contextual layer can have upon each other at any given time. In this model these influences are in constant interaction with each other at any given time in the experience of the individual. Lastly, a set of three overlapping circles, representing the dimensions of Sense of Belonging, are superimposed onto the contextual layers to reflect how each dimension of Sense of Belonging is influenced by varying contextual influences. Additionally, these overlapping circles represent a relationship between each dimension without imposing a dependency or hierarchy.

The grounded theory of Sense of Belonging as depicted in Figure 24 represents a dynamic interaction between the delineating characteristics, or dimensions, of Sense of Belonging and three contextual levels through which each dimension can be experienced by Black lesbian and bisexual women. For example, Black lesbian and bisexual women in this study often underwent complex means through which their membership to a social identity group was determined by others. Multiple identity characteristics including race,

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gender, and sexual identity often intertwined with each other to inform, or misinform, social identity group membership identification. Atypical gender presentation for some women may serve as a way in which they could be identified by others as lesbian or bisexual, based on stereotypical representations of what a lesbian "looks like." Identification by this means could be positive, if such identification is desired, or negative. At this same time, how a woman may self-identify as a member of a social identity group, particularly in the case of sexual identity, may be influenced by whether or not she perceives a sense of place within the social identity group in question. Lack of presence of other Black women or women of Color within identified LGB communities may further impact her identification. Once in such spaces, experiences of acceptance (received or not), may not only influence her experience of locality, but how she further identifies herself, or not, within that community.

Narrative Illustration of a Sense of Belonging

The following is a narrative illustration of the grounded theory of Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women. The experience of a participant, Melanie, was selected to illustrate how the theory could be further understood. Her name and other identifying characteristics have been changed. The following narrative discusses Melanie's experience of each dimension of Sense of Belonging as occurring in each contextual layer. While the presentation of the theory in this format highlights examples of each dimension of the theory, it is important to emphasize that interconnections of each dimension and contextual influences are also occurring, even if not explicitly noted for the purposes of this illustration.

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Melanie was a 32 year-old Black female, originally from the South. She identified as a Black, bisexual female and had been in a same-sex committed relationship for approximately two years at the time of our interview. Melanie had moved to the Midwest a few years prior to pursue her doctoral education and was a full-time graduate student. Melanie racially identified as Black, which she described was consistent with how others generally identified her race. Similarly, she identified her gender as female, which was also consistent with others identifications of her gender. Though raised in the Black Church, Melanie attended a progressive, liberal Christian church that was predominantly White. In addition to being active in this religious community, Melanie considered herself a member of academic communities, which she described as predominantly White, well-educated and progressive.

While Melanie's self-identifications of her race and gender (self-appraisals) were generally consistent with those made across Relational, Community, and Society contexts (reflected and actual appraisals), her sexual identity was not. Melanie self-identified as bisexual. Others within Community and Society contexts generally assumed that she was "straight." Melanie believed that predominantly heterosexual Black communities generally perceived her as a heterosexual Black female and that she had not experienced being "called out" on her sexual identity due to her gender expression, feminine, and due to not meeting stereotypic representations of what a lesbian might "look like". When those in the Black community were made aware of her sexual identity, they often responded in surprise or disbelief, again due to an assumption that she was heterosexual. Amongst those in her Relational and Community contexts that knew her sexual identity,

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including friends and other LGB persons, she was generally identified as a lesbian instead of as a bisexual woman. This included her LGB friends considering her a lesbian, and not bisexual, as she was in a same-sex relationship:

> I think that the LGBT community probably perceives me as one of their own in that sense even though I kind of self-identify as bisexual, that's kind of negated by the fact that I'm, you know, like that's symbolic but structurally I'm in this lesbian relationship. (P3.1, 157:157)

While Melanie's experience around the dimension of Membership cuts across each layer of the model, her experiences also reflect the interaction between the layers. For example, Melanie described an experience of her sexual identity not being identified within predominantly heterosexual Black communities due to her physical appearance. Stereotypes about sexual identity within the larger culture are reflected in how Black communities may assume that she is heterosexual. Likewise, stereotypes regarding bisexuality within LGB communities can influence how those within Melanie's Relational and Community contexts may impose their own definitions on what bisexuality means. In this case, Melanie's self-identification as a bisexual woman was discounted, or nulled, as her same-sex relationship was equated with a lesbian identity.

The dimension of Locality can be observed in Melanie's description of her initial foray into same-sex dating. When Melanie began to date women, she utilized dating personal advertisements seeking dating and relationships with others that can be found in local newspapers or online sites and made some discoveries that were surprising to her. In going through dating personal ads, she found that most of the women seeking other women explicitly stated that they were White and seeking other White women. She also found that the LGB community seemed segregated. After speaking with other LGB

persons about racism and segregation in LGB communities, she described her shock

around this occurrence:

> And so I asked a friend of mine who had identified as a lesbian for a long time, I
> said, "It really seems strange that people in the gay-lesbian community, who are
> essentially minorities in this culture, would be so focused on the issue of race and
> not be willing or interested in dating outside of their race." And she and her
> girlfriend said, "Oh you'd be really surprised how racist the gay and lesbian
> community is." (P3.1, 61:65)

Similar to the dimension of Membership, our model allows us to see the

interactions between the contextual influences of the dimension of Locality. Here we see

influences in Society relating to racism interacting with Community contexts (community

segregation, and possibly partner preference) and both with the Relational context of

dating.

Examining the dimension of Acceptance further provides us with an opportunity

to understand Melanie's experiences in more depth. Additionally, we begin to see the

interrelatedness of each dimension. While Melanie could describe her perceptions and

experiences of predominantly heterosexual Black communities' identification of her

sexual identity, in general, she had difficulty identifying her experiences of *being*

bisexual in Black communities.

> I don't know that I've had experiences of my sexual identity in those broader
> Black communities. I guess the feeling that I have about what it means to be gay
> or lesbian in the Black community is just a little more abstract than my concrete
> experiences. (P3.1, 101:105)

Melanie perceived predominantly heterosexual Black communities as

conservative, heterosexist and homophobic. Melanie noted the influence of the Black

Church in Black communities and a general sense of covert acceptance of LGB peoples'

sexual identities, where one's sexual identity may be known within the community, but is not discussed.

This experience was similar to her experience of her sexual identity within her family where she received both positive and negative responses to her sexual identity. Melanie described an overall acceptance of herself from immediate family members, but her sexual identity was not known by extended family members. Within her immediate family, Melanie described feeling loved and a general acceptance as a member of the family; however, her sexual identity was not accepted. While she was able to maintain positive family relationships, her relationship with her partner was not acknowledged by family members. It was when Melanie moved away from her family, that she was able to increase her experiences of "being out" with regards to her sexual identity.

Melanie's discussion about the influence of the Black Church in Black Communities begins to weave in not only Society and Community interactions, but interactions within the contextual layer of Community (e.g., Black Church and predominantly heterosexual Black communities). Additionally, as we come to understand her experiences of Acceptance within her family, we can make connections between these experiences and her increased identification of her sexual identity (Membership) as she moved away from her family and began to seek LGB communities (Locality).

At this point the reader has been provided with a description of the grounded theory of this study. A visual and narrative illustration was provided in order to facilitate further understanding of the grounded theory. The next section of this chapter presents

the literature related to the grounded theory of a Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women.

Grounded Theory and Related Literature

In keeping with grounded theory methods, a brief literature review, undertaken prior to the start of the study, was provided in Chapter 2 to orient the reader to the study. As indicated in Chapter 3, the initial literature review informed my work, alongside literature reviewed during data analysis and theory development. In Chapter 4, the reader was provided with the literature related to the four major conceptual categories, grounded in study participants' experiences, which laid the foundation of the emerging theory. In this section, we return to the literature as it relates to the grounded theory of Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women.

The general concept of belonging has been situated within the psychological literature as a basic need and fundamental motivation for humans (Maslow, 1954; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Literature in the area of belonging points to a number of theoretical and empirical endeavors to define the concept and have included elements such as affect, psychological factors and physical factors (Anant, 1966; Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992; Kestenberg & Kestenberg, 1988). Researchers and theorists have emphasized one's interactions with the social environment, or system, as a key component of belonging (Anant, 1966, 1967). Belonging has also been discussed as a temporally bound feeling, a result of an accumulation of experiences (de Certeau, 1984). Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, and Collier's (1992) definition of belonging included an emphasis on an

individual's experience of congruence, or fit, with the system based on collective or complimentary characteristics. Baumeister and Leary's (1995) review of the empirical literature on the concept of belonging as a human need found support for the concept of belonging as a fundamental emotion in humans. The authors expanded the concept by positing that belonging was comprised of an individuals' desire for recurrent relational encounters with others and individuals' need to perceive that a relationship is stable, caring, and that the relationship will be ongoing.

The general concept of belonging as related to the lives of Black lesbian and bisexual women has been located in both the empirical and scholarly literature. The current grounded theory defines Sense of Belonging as experiences of identifying with a social identity group, feeling that one has a place within the group(s), and feeling that one or more of one's social identities are supported by the group. I have found no other study that provides a theory of Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women. Though no theory of a sense of belonging exists, the experience of a sense of belonging and the consequence of not having this experience is represented in the literature on the lives of Black lesbian and bisexual women described below. Further, empirical and scholarly literature centered on Black lesbian and bisexual women has addressed issues of group membership, concepts related to locality, and issues relating to acceptance in the areas of lived experiences, identity development and mental health of Black lesbian and bisexual women (Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black & Burkholder, 2003; Greene, 1997; Mays, Cochran & Roeder, 2003; Szymanski & Meyer, 2008).

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The dimension of Membership in this grounded theory was defined by participants' experiences of self-identification to a social identity group and their experiences and perceptions of being identified by others as a member of a social identity group. In this study, self and other identification of racial group membership was more consistent than self and other identification of sexual identity for the Black lesbian and bisexual women that participated in this study. This inconsistency was most often discussed by participants as related to looking or not looking "like a lesbian." According to Hutson (2010), similar to society at large, norms around appearance exist within LGB communities and can provide the function of identifying both in and out group membership. Literature on the notion of individuals' performativity through appearance and behaviors of social identities highlight the experiences of appearance as related to group membership identification (Bell, 1999; Butler, 1999). For Black lesbian and bisexual women, LGB identities may not be stereotypically associated with Black women, particularly for women who exhibit predominantly feminine characteristics. Participants in this study who described themselves as being feminine in appearance shared experiences of others assuming they were straight within predominantly Black heterosexual communities and in predominantly White LGB communities. Patton and Simons (2008) reported a similar finding in their study of Black lesbians at a historically Black college stating that, "because they presented themselves in a feminine manner, their lesbian identity was often ignored or unacknowledged," (p. 207). According to Bridges, Selvidge and Matthews (2003), a history of non-traditional gender roles for Black women within Black communities expands the gender roles that Black women may

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assume and be associated with. While traditional stereotypes of LGB identities for women may be associated with masculine appearance and behaviors, similarities of such behaviors as associated with Black women may lead to incorrect LGB group membership identification by others.

The inconsistency of sexual identity group membership identification made by the participants and by others may also reflect a racialization of lesbianism, how it is defined and what it looks like. The concept of racialization has been described as a process in which physical and cultural differences are attributed to individuals, groups, and communities (Barot & Bird, 2001). Several participants in this study described an association between LGB identities being related to Whiteness or the White persons.

Nabors, Hall, Miville, Nettles, Pauling, and Ragsdale's (2001) commentary on the experiences of LGBT psychologists of Color with multiple identities and oppressions described psychologists' experiences of having their sexual identities equated with wanting to "act White," or to acculturate to the White majority, and being viewed as denigrating their racial or ethnic heritage.

The dimension of Locality was defined in this grounded theory as situating oneself within a place and having a sense of a space for oneself within groups, environments and communities. Participants' experiences in this study indicated that Black lesbian and bisexual women may not be represented within predominantly White LGB communities or predominantly heterosexual Black communities. Further, they may not see accurate, or any, portrayals of other Black lesbian and bisexual women in their immediate environments or in the general populace. Literature suggests that the lack of

Black lesbian and bisexual women's presence in LGB identified spaces may be attributed to a history of Black LGB women's efforts to avoid racist environments, negative perceptions associated with Black butches, or the invisibility of Black femmes who may be denied access to LGB spaces as they may be assumed to be heterosexual (Halberstam, 2007). Kestenberg and Kestenberg's (1988) study on child survivors of the Holocaust defined belonging within the context of object relations, noting that belonging "manifests itself in terms of familiar space and objects to whom the space belongs" (p. 536). Their definition of belonging included a relationship to an individual's environment and a temporal location to which an individual could relate to as well.

The dimension of Acceptance was defined in this grounded theory as a feeling of support and/or validation for one or more social group identities. Empirical and scholarly literature on the general concept of belonging has emphasized the significance of an individual's perception of being valued or accepted by a social system (Anant, 1966; Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). According to Follins (2011), a general theme within the study of Black lesbian identity development is the need for validation from Black communities, predominantly White community, and lesbian communities.

Strengths of the Study

The primary strength of this study lies in its contribution to the field in that this is the only study, to my knowledge, that has developed a theory of Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women, thus filling a gap in the literature on Black lesbian and bisexual women. Another strength of this study was the level of engagement from

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LGB communities of Color and the participants of this study. I received an overwhelmingly positive response from leaders of various LGB communities of Color via my active engagement with communities while living in Massachusetts and from other leaders across the US who learned about the study via word of mouth. A common thread amongst these initial responses was a desire for increased attention around issues for Black lesbian and bisexual women. Participants in this study reflected similar sentiments. All participants initially enrolled in this study participated in both interviews for this study. At the close of our first and second interviews, several participants informed me that they had never spoken about some of the issues raised in our discussion. Most asked me if a book would result from this, encouraged me to write one, and discussed the importance of sharing their stories with others. This level of engagement also deepened my own commitment to representing, and honoring, the experiences of the women in this study to the best of my ability.

The methodology selected for this study proved to be appropriate for generating a substantive theory that remained as close to the narratives of participant experiences as possible. In utilizing a constructivist grounded theory methodology, my initial interpretations were checked through follow-up interviews with participants. Feedback on tentative analytic categories and their related concepts led me to re-examine previous memos and coding decisions. Additionally, participant feedback made me aware of concepts that warranted further examination, clarity, or may have been reflected another concept or category that I had not captured. Further, it provided me with a guide in looking at what categories and themes appeared to emerge from the perspective of the

participants, which ones seemed more salient than others, and additional areas for investigation as provided by participants. Use of a constructivist grounded theory approach as detailed in this study may also serve as a guide for future researchers in the field.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations that relate to this study, including the generalizability of the study and methodological issues that arose during the study. This study resulted in a substantive theory which supplies an explanation of a specific phenomenon within a specific situation, limiting the generalizability of this study across different settings and/or contexts (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lempert, 2007). Additionally, this study utilized purposeful sampling methods and, as such, may not have been inclusive of a diverse sample. For example, participants in this study tended to have a high level of education and income, with almost half of the participants (N=6) reporting that they earned over $50,000 a year and almost all participants (N=12) reporting that they had at least a college degree.

Although I utilized measures such as member checking in an effort to adhere to trustworthiness criteria, thus attempting to align my interpretations with the experiences of participants, researcher subjectivity should be taken into consideration as a limitation of this study. The interpretive lens, through which concepts in this study were developed, even though checked for accuracy with participants, may be different from those that might be developed by another researcher replicating this study. Additionally, contextual factors that may be specific to this study, including factors related shared experiences

and/or backgrounds between myself and the participants, should be taken into account.

My identification as a queer woman of Color could have played a role in participant

responses. For example, participants may have provided socially desirable responses

based on perceived similarities. While literature has encouraged researcher self-

disclosure of social group identity membership such as race when interviewing people of

Color, similar limitations of "insider-insider" statuses between researcher and

participants have also been identified (Dunbar, Rodriguez & Parker, 2003; Ochieng,

2010). Interaction of history and treatment may also be an important issue to consider in

the replication of this study. Data collection for this study occurred from July 2009

through May 2010, with almost half of the initial interviews with participants conducted

in-person in Massachusetts (N=6), a state in which the first same-sex marriage legislation

in the US was introduced, and passed, in May of 2004 (Schecter, Tracy, Page & Luong,

2008). Had this study occurred at a different point in time, responses from participants

may have reflected discourse and level of awareness of LGB identity and issues of that

time period.

As discussed previously in this chapter, interview data from participants in this

study did not match the initial purpose of the study; an understanding of the relationship

between racial identity statuses, as measured by the BRIAS, and reflected appraisals.

Issues of divergence between the initial purpose of a study and the results of a study have

been noted as potential consequences of qualitative studies. Although this divergence

was encountered in this study, alignment with grounded theory methodology led to issues

and experiences that were of importance to the participants, culminating in the grounded theory for this study.

Literature on the problems encountered by novice researchers who engage in grounded theory inquiries highlight the conflict between knowledge about the exact way to develop a grounded theory (Glaser, 2009). In this study, I encountered such a tension during my initial analysis of the data and moving from a descriptive account of the data to a substantive theory. The concept and process of emergence and "rendering through writing," as attributed to Charmaz' approach to grounded theory, was aligned with the social constructivist paradigm with which I entered into this study. However, Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach to grounded theory initially helped provide structure to my analytic process (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Conformity to Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach led to an additional tension between fitting the data to conform to the approach and the emerging theory of the study. What became useful was a shift in my understanding of Corbin and Strauss' (2008) approach as a set of analytic tools from which I could draw and, ultimately, return to the ontological and epistemological roots of social constructivist grounded theory. This permitted me to retain a relativistic view of reality, in which multiple realities exist, and an emphasis on researcher subjectivity in the research process (Creswell, 2007; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Ultimately, the flexibility of Charmaz' (2006) approach proved to be best suited for the data provided by participants in this study.

Implications for Theory, Research, Practice, and Training

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The grounded theory of a Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women fills a gap in the literature as such a theory does not exist in the literature on Black lesbian and bisexual women. The results of this study hold several implications for future directions in theory development, research design and methodology, clinical applications and training.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the goal of a constructivist grounded theory is to construct a theory closely aligned with participant experiences, most often resulting in a substantive theory (Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). The substantive theory generated by the current study has the potential to facilitate the development of a formal theory. Future studies could raise this substantive theory to a formal theory through empirical verification by utilizing quantitative data collection and analyses that result in generalizable findings (Creswell, 2007; Lempert, 2007). Additionally, while the general concept of belonging exists within the scholarly and empirical literature on Black lesbian and bisexual women, similar to the general literature on belonging within psychology, it suffers from a disparity between the relative importance of the concept, as indicated by the presence of the concept within the literature on Black lesbian and bisexual women, and the lack of a clearly articulated, and accepted, operational definition of the concept. Future directions in theory development would benefit from related theories, such as McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community theory.

The current study has implications for future directions in research design and additional research directions. The process of conducting a constructivist grounded theory study described by this study addresses some of the critiques related to this

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approach and issues of transparency. A major critique of grounded theory studies in general lies in the degree of researcher subjectivity and lack of clarity around analytic decisions made by the researcher and the process by which "emergence" occurred within the study (Eaves, 2001; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). In this study, I attempted to maintain transparency through detailing this processes throughout this manuscript. Coding and analysis documentation processes used in this study were described as a roadmap for future grounded theory researchers. Future research may benefit from the design and process described in this study in the development and construction on constructivist grounded theory.

While the use of the BRIAS within this study turned out to have less utility than initially intended, future research examining the current grounded theory with the BRIAS may provide a richer understanding of the role racial identity may play in understanding how Black lesbian and bisexual women make meaning of their experiences and social group identities. The grounded theory of Sense of Belonging promotes the investigation of multiple dimensions of a sense of belonging across multiple layers of contextual influences. It also highlights where an individual may be positively and negatively regarded at same time. Literature suggesting that individuals that utilize more sophisticated racial identity statuses (e.g., Internalization) may have an increased capacity for meaning-making is an area for future research (Abes and Jones, 2004).

In response to being asked what results they expected to see reflected in the preliminary analysis and areas that they felt were missing from the preliminary analysis, additional areas for future consideration were identified by participants during follow-up

interviews. While some of this information was helpful during the second phase of analysis in this study, several participant responses went beyond the scope of the grounded theory for this study. However, these areas could be explored in future studies to build other substantive theories that could contribute to a formal theory for Black lesbian and bisexual women. These areas included having young and adult children, women's health issues, aging, and involvement in the legal system.

The grounded theory of Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women can be utilized within clinical practice when working with this population. The theory encourages the clinician to explore multiple contexts of belonging with clients. This may prove to be a useful tool in exploring identity saliency and assisting the client in identifying/exploring areas of identity conflict. It also encourages the clinician to refrain from assumptions relating to clients' racial identity statuses and their strategies for making meaning of their sexual identities.

The grounded theory of a Sense of Belonging has multiple training implications. The theory is consistent with the social justice and multicultural counseling theories and orientations within the field of counseling psychology. As the clients and populations that the field will serve becomes increasingly diverse, current training models that take a population-specific approach to multicultural counseling (e.g., counseling African Americans, counseling LGBT populations) fail to take into account the nuances of intersections of identity and multiple group identities that individuals hold. Training approaches could utilize the grounded theory of Sense of Belonging to teach trainees the art of navigating clients' multiple marginalized identities. The model provides a way in

which contextual factors and various contexts of an individual should be considered. Another recommendation for training is the encouragement of interdisciplinary training, particularly for grounded theory. In conducting this study, I found that relegating my scope of the literature to the field of psychology, was limiting. Nursing, sociology, social work, and business are a few areas in which grounded theory is continuing to proliferate.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory about the relationship between racial identity statuses and the experience of reflected appraisals in Black lesbian and bisexual women's racial and sexual identities. This study utilized a social constructivist grounded theory methodology and resulted in a substantive grounded theory, Sense of Belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women. This theory contributes to the literature as it is the only theory on the concept of a sense of belonging for Black lesbian and bisexual women. The theory provides a means through which the lives of these women can be further contextualized across several domains and it provides a clinical utility for mental health professionals to explore multiple dimensions of social group identity across the construct of belonging for this population. Further, the study serves to contribute not only to literature, but to populations of lesbian, gay and bisexual Black women as well. The experience of the women who participated in this study contributes to raising the voices and experiences of other Black lesbian and bisexual women. It is the hope of this study that these women's narratives give rise to future research and to the contribution of other Black lesbian and bisexual women.

APPENDICIES

Queer Women of Color

Contribute YOUR voices
to the understanding and
needs of OUR community.

Graduate student conducting a study examining the experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women, seeking adult Black women (18+) who identify as queer, lesbian, bisexual or as women romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women to participate.

Your participation would include a 60 to 90 minute interview on your experiences of your racial and sexual identities within both LGBT and Black communities, a follow-up interview and the completion of a survey.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact queerwomenofcolorstudy@gmail.com or call (617) 245-0833 to schedule an interview time. Additionally, please visit http://sites.google.com/site/queerwomenofcolorstudygroup for further information.

Be HEARD.

Queer Women of Color Study. For more information please visit: http://sites.google.com/site/queerwomenofcolorstudygroup or email queerwomenofcolorstudy@gmail.com

Appendix B
Screen Shot of Website for Participant Recruitment

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Appendix C
Demographic Questionnaire

How old are you? _____

What is your biological sex? _____

What is your gender? _____

How do you identify racially? Ethnically? _____

Were you born in the United States? _____
      If not, do you consider yourself as being raised primarily in the
      US? _____

What is your sexual orientation? _____

If others would provide a different label for your sexual orientation, what would it
be?_____

Do you have a religious preference? If so, how do you identify? _____

What is your yearly income level (est)?   _____ $10,000-20,000
                                         _____ $20,001-30,000
                                         _____ $30,001-40,000
                                         _____ $40,001-50,000
                                         _____ $50,001-60,000
                                         _____ $60,001+

What is the highest level of education you've completed?

        _____ Primary school (specify K-9th grade)
        _____ Some high school (specify grade)
        _____ High school diploma/GED
        _____ Some college
        _____ College degree and/or certificate program
        _____ Advanced degree (Masters, PhD)

Do you have any children? _____ yes _____ no

Are you currently in a committed relationship? _____
If so, please describe what type of relationship (e.g., same-sex, opposite-sex, polyamorous, etc.) and length in this relationship.

_____

Appendix D
Interview Guide

Note: The following potential questions serve as an example and template for interviews. Questions are aimed to address specific content areas relevant to the study, but may be altered based upon participants' responses.

Questions relating to aspects of participants' identities:
- How do you identify yourself to others in terms of your _____? (race)

  (gender)
  (sexual identity)
- Is this different from how you self-identify as _____ (self-identification; e.g., queer versus lesbian)?

Questions relating to experiences of racial identity and sexual identity in Black and LGB communities:
- What are your experiences of race within the LGB community?
- What are your experiences of sexual identity within the Black community?

Questions relating to experiences of race- and sexual orientation-related reflected appraisals:
- How do you think members of the Black community perceive LGB persons?
- How do you think members of the LGB community perceive Black (heterosexual and LGB) persons?
- How do you think others perceive you: Within the Black community?
  Within the LGB community?
- How do you think you are perceived by other Black LGB persons?
- Have the perceptions above played a role in how you think about your race and/or sexual identity?

Questions relating to experiences of validation and conflict of racial identity and sexual identity:
- What are your experiences in gaining validation/acceptance for your sexual identity within the Black community?
- What are your experiences in gaining validation/acceptance for your racial identity within the LGB community?
- Have there been times when you have experienced conflicts between your race and sexual identity? How have you managed these conflicts?

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Thinking over some of the things that we discussed, is there anything else that you believe would be important for me to know in order to get a better grasp of this experience? Do you have any questions or suggestions that you could provide for future interviews?

Appendix E
Preliminary Analysis Document Sent to Participants

Preliminary Themes

Below are some themes that have emerged from the data thus far. In addition to the themes, you will see some of the experiences that have been shared that relate and/or make up these themes.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. As you look at these themes and their related constructs, was there anything that **did not** seem to resonate with your beliefs and/or experiences? If so, could you tell me which ones and briefly why they did not resonate with you?
2. Please briefly share any additional thoughts that you have about the themes presented, including any that particularly stuck out for you and/or themes or experiences that you think are missing.

Sexual Orientation and Whiteness	Not Looking the Part	Partial Acceptance	Sense of Belonging	Rainbow is Not Enough	Gender Expression
Acting White	Don't Look Like LGB person	Accept Person But Not "Lifestyle"	Alienation (Black Community)	Shared LGB Identity (Getting a Pass to be Inappropriate)	Dating Preferences
LGB Community Predominantly White	Looks Straight	Don't Ask, Don't Tell	Alienation (Family)	Shared LGB Identity (Assumed Understanding Race)	Femme/Butch Roles (Dating)
LGB is a "White thing"	Doesn't Act like an LGB person	LGB Family Secrets	Religion/Spiritual Conflicts	Race Becomes Invisible	Femme/Butch Roles (In Black LGB Community)
LGB Community Not Diverse			Lack of (Blacks/Diversity in LGB Community)	Racism in the LGB Community	Gender Fluidity

Participant:_____
Date:_____
Start Time:_____
End Time:_____

<u>Second Interview Protocol</u>

Welcome and thank them. Remind them that confidentiality of their data remains.

Ask for permission to record.

Start recording.

SCRIPT

Thank you again for continuing your participation with this study. As I mentioned in my previous email, our conversation this evening will be brief. I hope you were able to access the theme document that I emailed you. What I would like for us to do tonight is to take a look at it and I have a couple of questions I'd like to ask regarding your response to these themes.

1. As you look at these themes and their related constructs, was there anything that **<u>did not</u>** seem to resonate with your beliefs and/or experiences? If so, could you tell me which ones and briefly why they did not resonate with you?
2. In looking at the themes, in general, are there any that really stuck out for you?
3. Any themes that you believe are missing?

<u>Closing</u>
Thank you again for your participation. I am going to turn the recorder off now.

WRAP UP
- Thank them again for their participation.
- Inquire if they would be interested in receiving a summary of study once it has been made ready for publication.
  - o Interested? Yes _____ No _____

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Any additional comments made:

OBSERVATIONS

Appendix G
Initial Email Response to Potential Participants

Thank you for your interest!

My name is Konjit Page and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychology at the University of North Dakota. For my dissertation, I am conducting a study to understand how Black lesbian and bisexual women experience their racial and sexual identities in both their racial and ethnic communities and in lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities. This study, "Reflected Appraisals and Racial and Sexual Identity in the Lives of Black Lesbian and Bisexual Women," has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Dakota (IRB-2000905-355).

For your review, I have included the Informed Consent Form, which includes specific information regarding your participation in this study. This is a PDF file, so please let me know if you have any difficulties in opening this. I can also be available via telephone to answer any specific questions that you might have. I can be reached at (617) 245-0833. Though I am in the Boston area and could do interviews in this area, I can also conduct interviews via phone depending on your location and preference.

Thank you again for your interest! I hope that this continues to be of interest to you and that we can connect to schedule an interview time.

Bests,

Konjit Page

Konjit V. Page, MS
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
University of North Dakota
Email: queerwomenofstudy@gmail.com
VM: (617) 245-0833

Appendix H
Consent to Participate in Study

INFORMED CONSENT

REFLECTED APPRAISALS AND RACIAL AND SEXUAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN
THE LIVES OF BLACK LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN

KONJIT V. PAGE, MS
konjit.page@nodak.und.edu
Department of Counseling Psychology
University of North Dakota

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH
A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her informed consent to such
participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the
research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research
projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your
decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY
You are being invited to participate in a research study about the racial and sexual identity
experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women. The primary goal of this study is to understand
how Black lesbian and bisexual women experience their racial and sexual identities in both their
racial and ethnic communities and in lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities. As little
research exists on this topic, this study will use a grounded theory approach where the collection
and analysis of data will be grounded in interviews with various participants.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE
Approximately 12-16 people will take part in this study. Participants will include individuals
from across the United States with interviews conducted both in-person and over the phone.

LENGTH OF STUDY
Your participation in this study will involve two interviews that may be conducted in-person or
over the phone. The location and dates of the interviews will be based upon your preference and
in collaboration with the researcher. The first interview may last 60 to 90 minutes. The second
interview will last approximately 35 to 45 minutes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STUDY
During the first interview, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic form. The interview
will then begin and last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Issues regarding your racial and sexual

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identity will be discussed. If you become uncomfortable at any point during this or subsequent interviews, you are encouraged to let the researcher know if you would prefer not to answer a question. Additionally, you are free to discontinue your participation in the interview at any point in time. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher will speak with you about scheduling for the second interview.

The purpose of the second interview is to present you with a brief summary of themes from our initial interview and to ask you to provide feedback and/or clarification on your responses. The purpose in doing this is to best represent your experiences and voice. In addition, you will also be asked some follow-up questions based upon your initial interview and you may be asked some questions that have been generated based on results of previous interviews. The interview should last approximately 25 to 30 minutes. At the end of this interview, you will be provided with a survey that examines attitudes about one's individual Black racial identity. If you do not wish to answer a question on the survey, please feel free to skip it. Additionally, you are encouraged to discontinue the survey at any point you feel uncomfortable. This survey should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. Your study record may be reviewed by Government agencies, and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board. Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding your data with a unique code. Identifiable data will be stored on a password-protected computer only accessed by the researcher or locked in a filing cabinet in the Department of Counseling at the University of North Dakota accessible by the researcher, her dissertation Chair, or an Institutional Review Board auditor. All materials will be destroyed via shredding and file deletion three years after the completion of the study.

If a report or article about this study is written, the study results will be described in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified. To protect your anonymity as much as possible, a number of precautions will be made to protect your identity in all published reports or papers resulting from this study. For example, none of the participants in this study will be identified by her real name (a pseudonym will be created). In addition, rather than using participants' names on materials collected, each participant will be assigned a code number. Finally, all names of towns, friends or family, places of business, university or college membership, etc., will be coded or otherwise masked.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without consequences of any kind. If you do decide to discontinue your participation, please contact the researcher to inform her of your withdrawal. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current of future relations with the University of North Dakota. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING
You will receive a summary of the research findings at the conclusion of this study. You may or may not benefit personally from this study through the experience of being able to contribute to

the body of knowledge about Black lesbian and bisexual women. However, it is hoped that results of this study could benefit the larger community of LGB people of Color, specifically Black lesbian and bisexual women by providing clinicians in the helping professions further information about how to provide culturally-competent services to a community that is under-served and to which little in this area is known. Findings from this study may add to the literature on the experiences of Black lesbian and bisexual women and on the relationship between multiple minority identity management and stress for LGB people of Color.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Potential risks of this study are minimal, but can include the discomfort of discussing issues related to your sexual identity and race. If you chose to participate in this study, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue your participation at any time. You are also welcome to ask any questions at any time during the interviews. In addition, if a question is posed that you would rather not answer, for whatever reason, you have no obligation to answer.

COSTS OF STUDY

There are not costs for your participation in this study.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for your participation in this study.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR STUDY

The University of North Dakota and the researcher are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

The researcher conducting this study is Konjit V. Page. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Ms. Page at (617) 245-0833during the day and after hours or via email at konjit.page@nodak.und.edu. Ms. Page's faculty advisor is Dr. E. Janie Pinterits, and she can be reached at (701) 777-6234 or email: janie.pinterits@gmail.com.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279. Please call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone else.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participants Name: _____

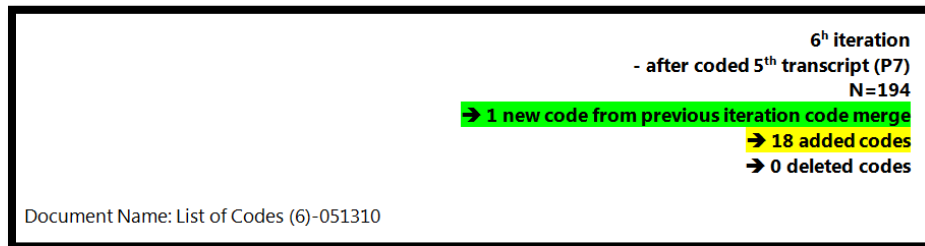_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix I
Coding and Analysis Documentation Checklist

✓ **Export, Save and Print – CODE LIST**
1. Go to CODES/CODE MANAGER/OUTPUT/CODE LIST
2. Send Output to Editor
   a) Copy and paste into a new word document
   b) Save file as "List of Codes (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/List of Codes
   c) Add following headers to Word document (based on comparison of previous iteration and what did this iteration)

<div style="border:2px solid black; padding:10px; max-width:600px;">
<p align="right">6^h iteration
- after coded 5th transcript (P7)
N=194
➔ 1 new code from previous iteration code merge
➔ 18 added codes
➔ 0 deleted codes</p>
<p align="left">Document Name: List of Codes (6)-051310</p>
</div>

3. Copy and paste into "Coding Manual Excel File" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual
   a) Copy into "Code Tracking" Worksheet. Title with # of this iteration.
      i. Using "Code Tracking Guide," make appropriate highlights and spacing to be able to see differences between current and previous iteration.
         (1) Use this to fill in header for "List of Codes" Word document (see above).

✓ **Export, Save and Print – CODE FAMILY**
1. Go to CODES/CODE MANAGER/EDIT FAMILIES/OPEN FAMILY MANAGER/FAMILIES/OUTPUT ALL FAMILIES
2. Send Output to Editor
   a) Copy and paste into a new word document
   b) Save file as "Code Families (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/Code Families
   c) Add following headers to Word document (based on comparison of previous iteration and what did this iteration)

3. Copy and paste into "Coding Manual Excel File" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual
    a) Copy into "Code Families" Worksheet. Title with # of this iteration.
        i. Using "Code Tracking Guide", make appropriate highlights and spacing to be able to see differences between current and previous iteration.
            (1) Use this to fill in header for "Code Families" Word document (see above).

✓ **Export and Save ONLY – CODE FREQUENCIES**
1. Go to CODES/CODE MANAGER/OUTPUT/ CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE/QUOTATION COUNT (EXCEL)
2. Send Output to Editor
    a) Save file as RTF "Frequency of Codes by PD (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/Freq of Codes by PD
3. Open file this file and excel file, "Frequency of Codes by PD-All" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/Freq of Codes by PD
    a) Copy from "CODES" and the Primary Document number down, paste into Excel file [Paste Special - Fixed Width - General]
    b) Save.

✓ **Export and Save ONLY – CODES WITH COMMENTS**
1. Go to CODES/CODE MANAGER/OUTPUT/CODES WITH COMMENTS
2. Send Output to Editor
    a) Copy and paste into a new word document
    b) Save file as "Codes with Comments (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/Codes with Comments
        i. Add following headers to Word document

✓ **Export, Save and Print – MEMO LIST**

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1. Go to MEMOS/MEMO MANAGER/OUTPUT/MEMO LIST
2. Send Output to Editor
   a) Copy and paste into a new word document
   b) Save file as "List of Memos (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/List of Memos

✓ **Export, Save and Print – <u>MEMO LIST WITH COMMENTS</u>**
1. Go to MEMOS/MEMO MANAGER/OUTPUT/MEMO LIST
2. Send Output to Editor
   a) When asked, "Include quotations?" – select "yes"
   b) Copy and paste into a new word document
   c) Save file as "List of Memos with Comments (iteration #)-DATE" in Dissertation/Data Collection/Data Analysis/Coding Manual/List of Memos w Com
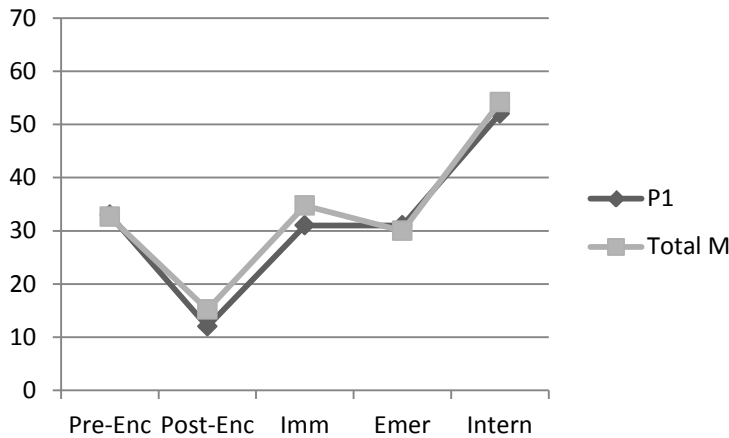
Figure 2. Racial identity profile for Participant 1 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 1: Pre-Enc = 33; Post-Enc = 12; Imm = 31; Emer = 31; and Intern = 52. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.
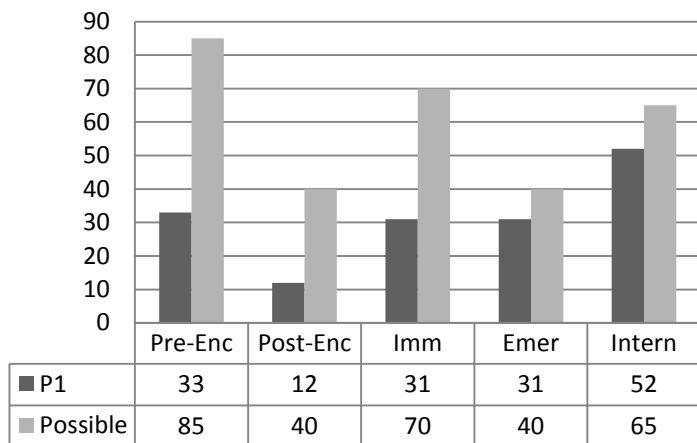

	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
P1	33	12	31	31	52
Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 3. Racial identity profile for Participant 1 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 1: Pre-Enc = 33; Post-Enc = 12; Imm = 31; Emer = 31; and Intern = 52. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.
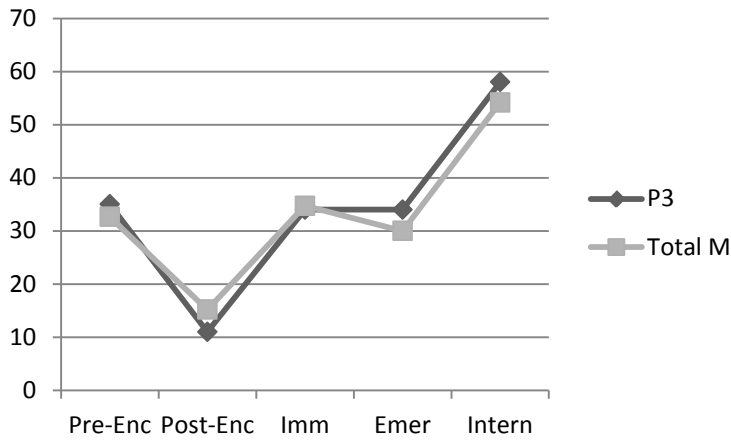
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Figure 4. Racial identity profile for Participant 3 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 3: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 11; Imm = 34; Emer = 34; and Intern = 58. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.
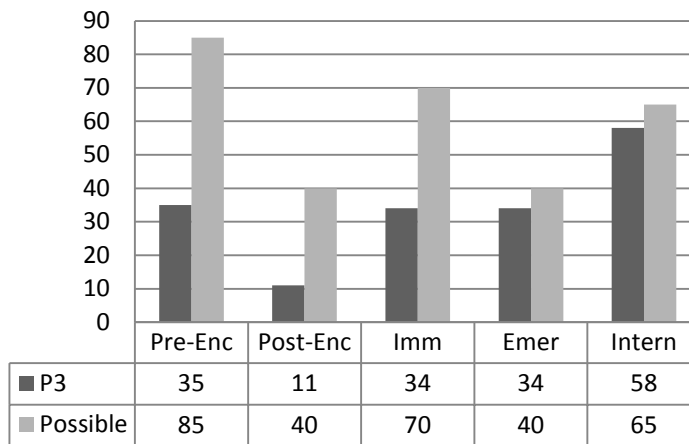

	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
P3	35	11	34	34	58
Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 5. Racial identity profile for Participant 3 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 3: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 11; Imm = 34; Emer = 34; and Intern = 58. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.
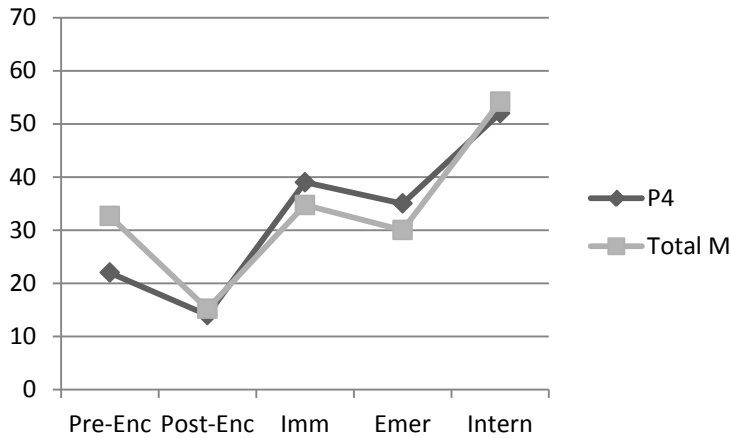
Figure 6. Racial identity profile for Participant 4 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 4: Pre-Enc = 22; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 35; and Intern = 52. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

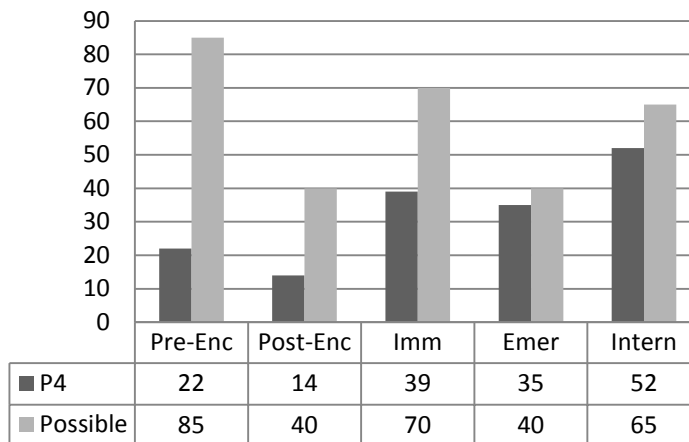|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P4	22	14	39	35	52
■ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 7. Racial identity profile for Participant 4 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 4: Pre-Enc = 22; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 35; and Intern = 52. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.
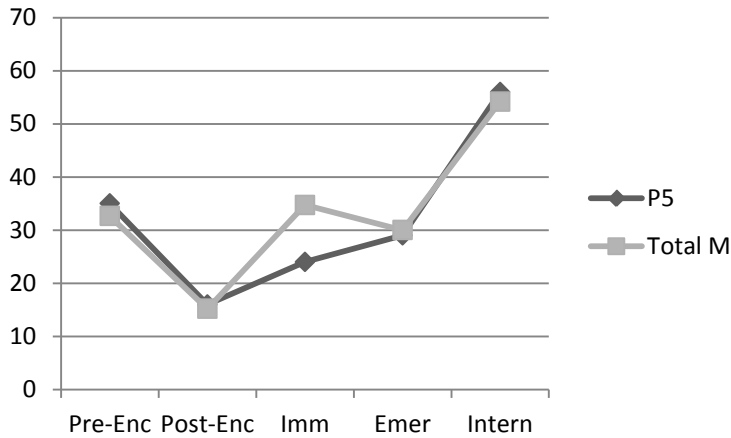
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Figure 8. Racial identity profile for Participant 5 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 5: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 16; Imm = 24; Emer = 29; and Intern = 56. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P5	35	16	24	29	56
■ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 9. Racial identity profile for Participant 5 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 5: Pre-Enc = 35; Post-Enc = 16; Imm = 24; Emer = 29; and Intern = 56. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.

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Figure 10. Racial identity profile for Participant 6 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 6: Pre-Enc = 48; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 34. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

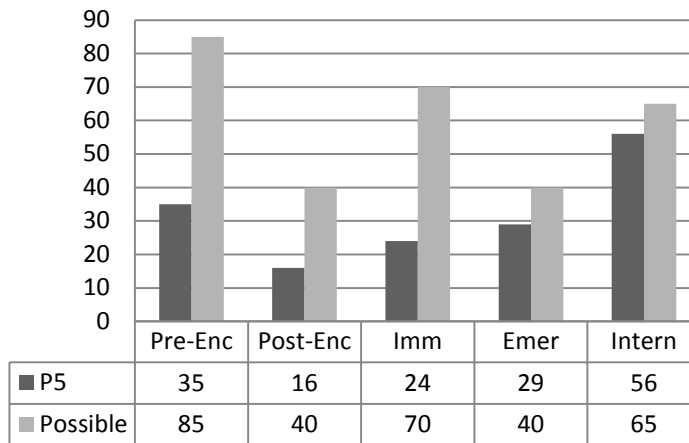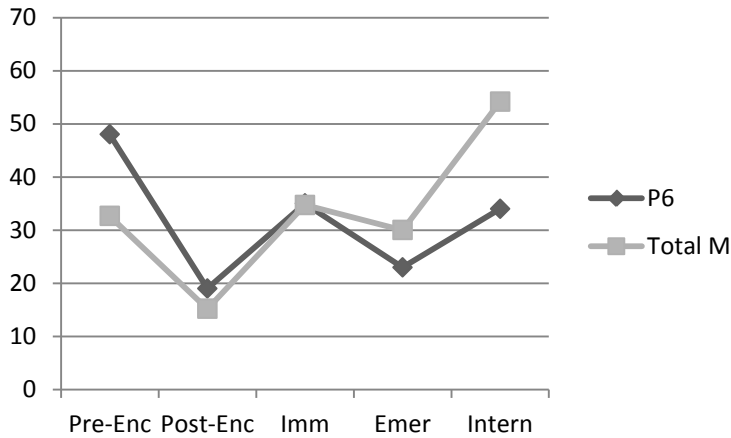|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
P6	48	19	35	23	34
Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 11. Racial identity profile for Participant 6 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 6: Pre-Enc = 48; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 34. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.

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Figure 12. Racial identity profile for Participant 7 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization.
Participant 7: Pre-Enc = 27; Post-Enc = 13; Imm = 23; Emer = 25; and Intern = 57. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

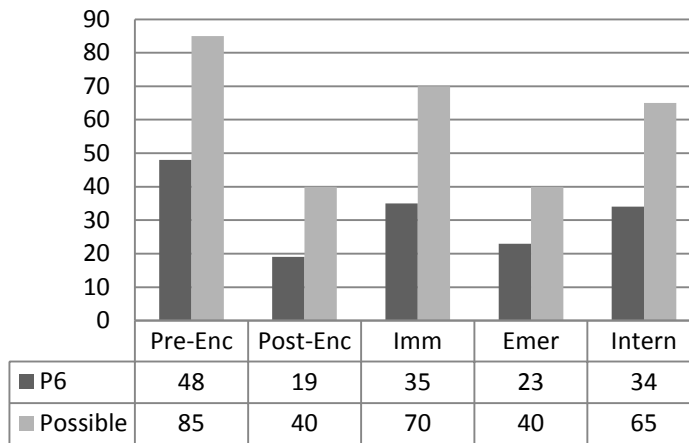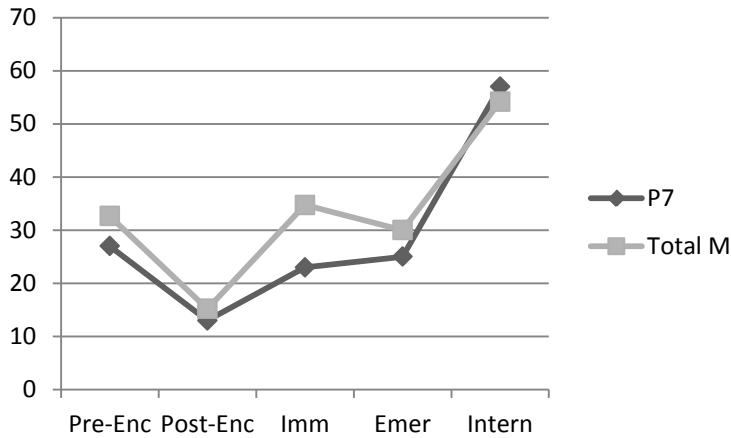|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P7	27	13	23	25	57
■ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 13. Racial identity profile for Participant 7 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization.
Participant 7: Pre-Enc = 27; Post-Enc = 13; Imm = 23; Emer = 25; and Intern = 57. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.

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Figure 14. Racial identity profile for Participant 8 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 8: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 55. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

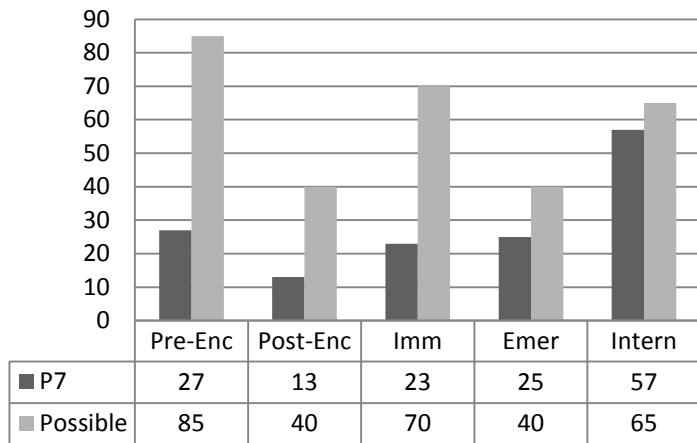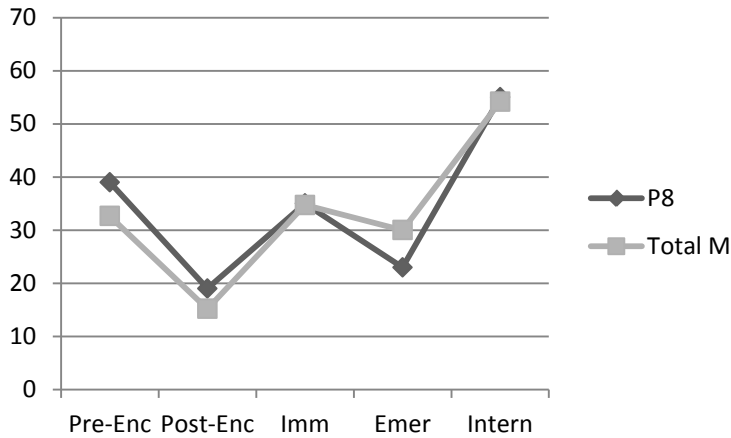|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P8	39	19	35	23	55
▨ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 15. Racial identity profile for Participant 8 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 8: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 19; Imm = 35; Emer = 23; and Intern = 55. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.

Figure 16. Racial identity profile for Participant 10 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 10: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 33; and Intern = 55. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.
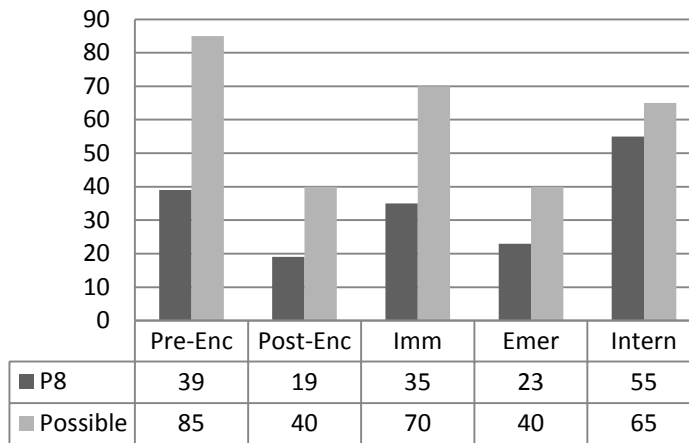

	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P10	28	14	39	33	55
▪ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 17. Racial identity profile for Participant 10 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 10: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 14; Imm = 39; Emer = 33; and Intern = 55. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.
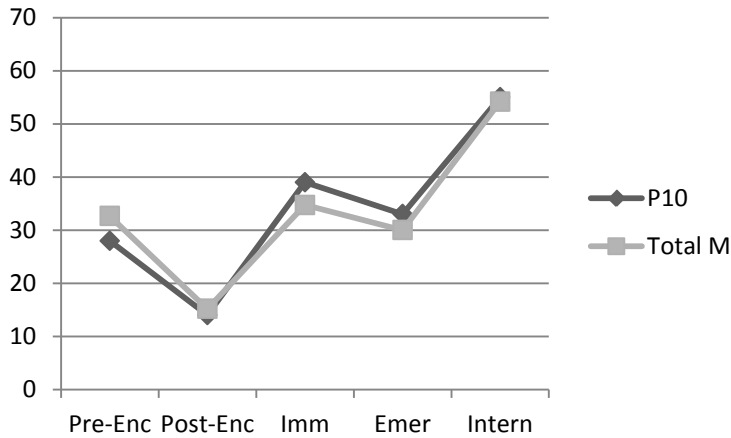
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Figure 18. Racial identity profile for Participant 11 and total mean score
of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-
Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization.
Participant 11: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 15; Imm = 44; Emer = 36; and
Intern = 63. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm
= 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

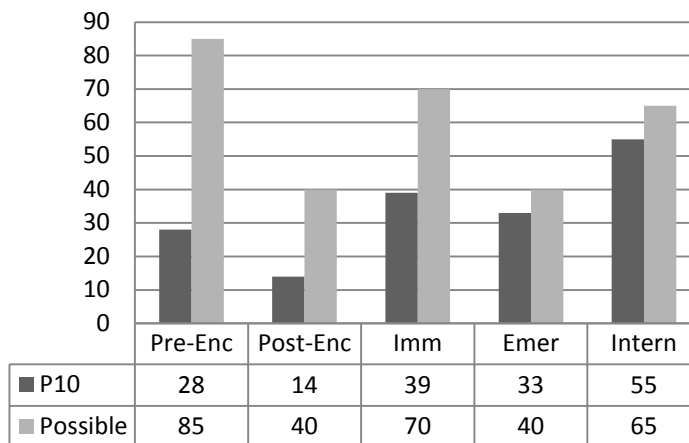|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P11	28	15	44	36	63
■ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 19. Racial identity profile for Participant 11 and total schema
score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter,
Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern =
Internalization. Participant 11: Pre-Enc = 28; Post-Enc = 15; Imm = 44;
Emer = 36; and Intern = 63. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40;
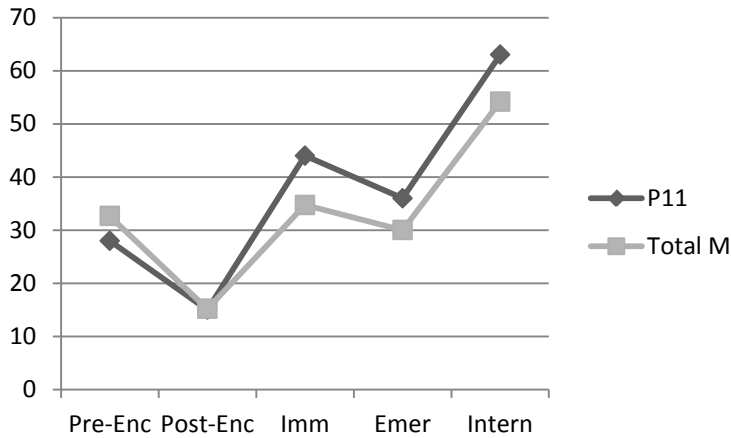Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.

Figure 20. Racial identity profile for Participant 12 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 12: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 35; Emer = 26; and Intern = 57. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

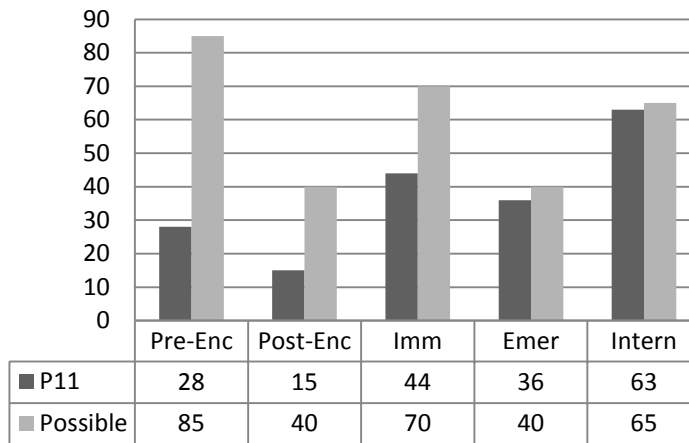|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
P12	39	17	35	26	57
Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 21. Racial identity profile for Participant 12 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 12: Pre-Enc = 39; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 35; Emer = 26; and Intern = 57. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65
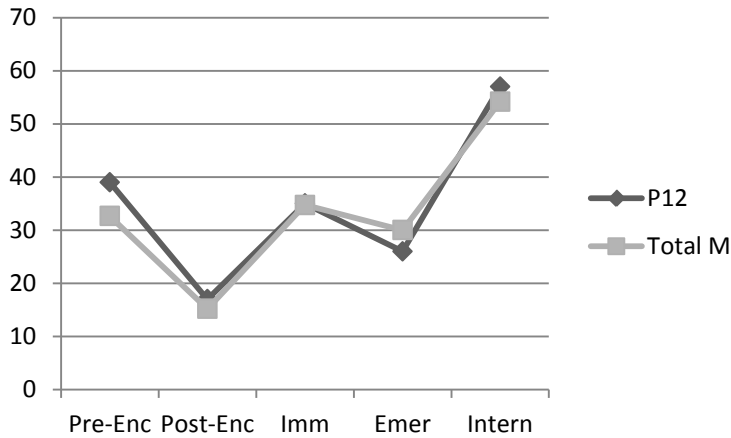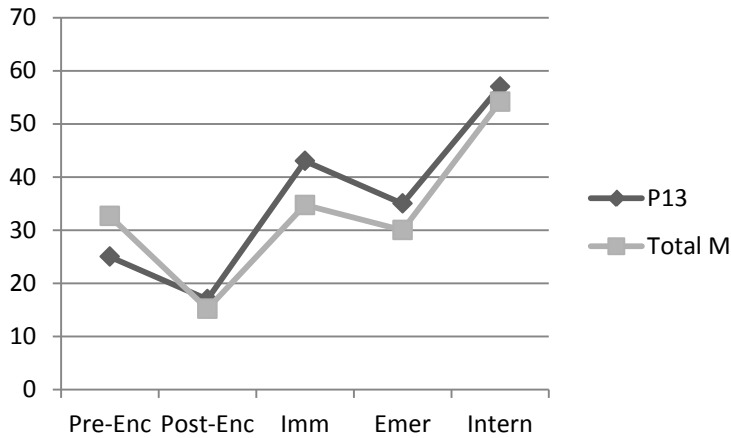
Figure 22. Racial identity profile for Participant 13 and total mean score of sample. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 13: Pre-Enc = 25; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 43; Emer = 35; and Intern = 57. Total sample mean: Pre-Enc = 32.64; Post-Enc = 15.18; Imm = 34.73; Emer = 30; and Intern = 54.18.

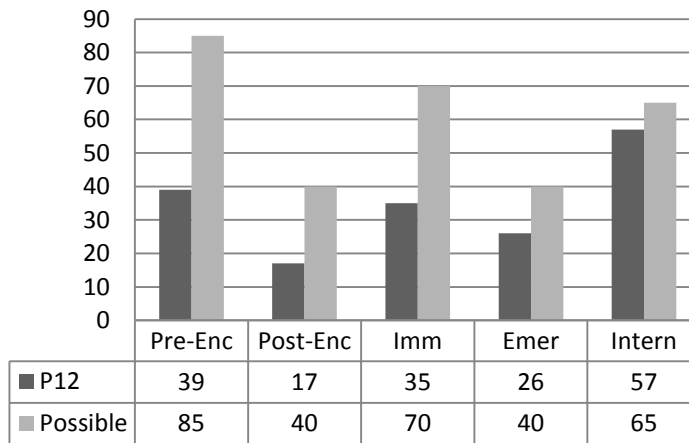|	Pre-Enc	Post-Enc	Imm	Emer	Intern
■ P13	25	17	43	35	57
■ Possible	85	40	70	40	65

Figure 23. Racial identity profile for Participant 13 and total schema score possible. Racial identity schemas are Pre-Enc = Pre-Encounter, Post-Enc = Post-Encounter, Imm = Immersion, and Intern = Internalization. Participant 13: Pre-Enc = 25; Post-Enc = 17; Imm = 43; Emer = 35; and Intern = 57. Total possible: Pre-Enc = 85; Post-Enc = 40; Imm = 70; Emer = 40; and Intern = 65.
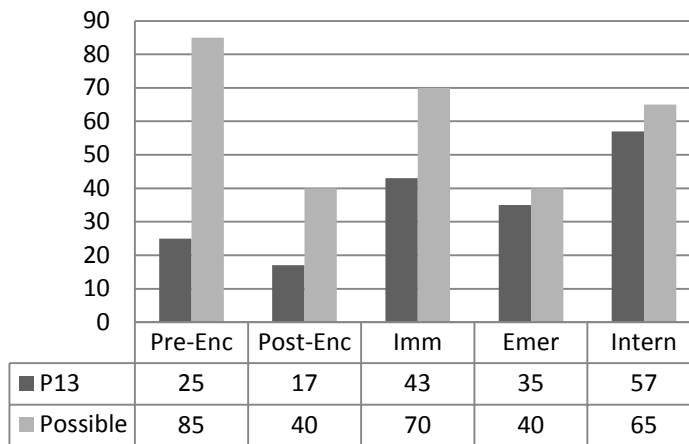
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