

MULTIPLE VOICES, MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: AN EXAMINATION OF IDENTITY
CONSTRUCTION AMONG FOUR ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN ADOLESCENTS

By

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To Ryann Olivia, the light of my life and my inspiration

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Chair: Ester J. de Jong
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Research is plentiful on identity development in both non-English speaking immigrant and native groups. However, we know a lot less about how Anglophone Caribbean adolescents construct, describe, and express their linguistic, racial, and cultural identities in the context of school. This study investigated identity construction among Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and the ways in which schooling has shaped their experiences. The two research questions that guided this study were 1) how do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents describe and construct their identities and 2) how do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents' perceive that their schooling experiences have shaped their identities?

Qualitative research methods were used to answer the research questions. While several themes emerged in the individual cases, findings from the cross participant analysis suggest that participants: 1) constructed “third space” identities characterized by multiplicity and multidimensionality, intersecting and shaping each other; 2) displayed a lack of linguistic indicators of hybridity suggesting a disjuncture between lived experiences and the ways they discussed their identities; 3) viewed space as an important consideration in the limitation and/or expansion of valued identity options; 4)

suggested that identity saliency is influenced by the demographic profile of the communities in which participants resided, their peer groups in schools, and the extracurricular activities in which they were involved; 5) viewed schools as producers of deficit discourses; 6) viewed schools as avenues for identity affirmation; and 7) used language choice as a way to index their various identities.

This study confirms previous research on the benefits of constructivist and poststructuralist understandings of identity as opposed to frameworks based on structuralism. It provides implications for teacher education and professional development settings where discourses regarding identity construction must include “third spaces” if the identities of all students are to be affirmed.

Four areas for further research with identity construction in this population are highlighted: 1) gender differences in identity development; 2) The role of familial socialization; 3) The role of religion and its influence; and 4) participants’ views of the purposes of U.S. American schooling in regards to identity construction.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Anglophone Caribbean Immigrants in the United States

Post-1965 immigration has brought an unprecedented number of Anglophone Caribbean immigrants to the United States. These immigrants are even more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, culture (including language variety, religion, and traditions) and socioeconomic characteristics than their predecessors. This influx has added a significant dynamic to the American Black population, which historically, has maintained the smallest proportion of immigration in the 20th century (Rong & Fitchett, 2008).

The Black immigrant population has grown rapidly in the past four decades, especially since 1991. There were over 254,000 foreign-born Black people in the United States in 1970, accounting for 1% of the overall Black population. By 2005, more than 2.7 million Black immigrants resided in the United States. Foreign-born Blacks and their children now account for almost 8% of the entire U.S. Black population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009). The majority of these immigrants come from the islands of the Caribbean, where English is the official language and is spoken alongside Creole English varieties. The Anglophone Caribbean consists of the following islands: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bay Islands, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, Turks & Caicos, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Figure 1-1). These Anglophone Caribbean immigrants make up less than 1% of the overall foreign-born population.

Caribbean natives have immigrated to United States from more than 15 nations and territories. With a population of over 700,000, Jamaicans are the largest Caribbean

immigrant group, followed by about a half million Haitians. Trinidadians make up the third largest group with a population of approximately 200,000. Of the 2.8 million Caribbean born immigrants, 90% settle in the New York City or Miami metro areas (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009).

Caribbean immigrants claim one of four native languages (Dutch, English, French, and Spanish) and several creolized varieties based on these languages. In 2000, over 90,000 school-age children reported being born in an officially English-speaking Caribbean country. Like the overall Caribbean immigration trend, Jamaicans made up over half of that student population, with more than 55,000 students indicating it as their homeland (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009).

Caribbean Immigration

There have been two major waves of immigration from the Caribbean to the United States (McGill, 2005; Nero, 2001). The Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965 was a major catalyst that drew the first wave of Caribbean natives here. This Act abandoned the national origins quota system that favored Europeans and led to the immigration of people from the Caribbean who were previously subjected to very small quotas (Frum, 2000). Prior to 1965, English-speaking Caribbean natives had been included in the 120,000 ceiling for the Western Hemisphere, which included South America, North America, and the Caribbean. Congress had established a quota of 20,000 immigrants per country. An important aspect of the legislation was the encouragement of family reunification whereby immigrants could sponsor close relatives at home to come to the United States. As the number of immigrants started to grow, the number of people in the Caribbean who were eligible to sponsor relatives also increased.

The number of emigrants leaving the Caribbean grew significantly in the decades following the passage of the Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965. According to Kasintz, “By the 1980’s approximately 50,000 legal immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean and another 6,000 to 8,000 from Haiti were entering the United States annually” (as cited in Nero, 2001, p. 8). These immigrants were primarily from middle- and upper-class socioeconomic backgrounds. Job opportunities in the United States served as a pull factor, especially for those who were proficient in Standard American English and could afford to migrate, since the unemployment rate in the Caribbean was high.

A second wave of immigration to the United States in the 1980s was prompted by economic stagnation and political instability in the Caribbean. During this time, unprecedented numbers of Caribbean natives were forced to flee their homelands. Those who came to the United States during this period were predominantly poor and English Creole speakers, who had limited proficiency in Standard English. Guyanese and Jamaicans were foremost among them. New York City was the primary destination of this second wave of Caribbean immigrants (Table 1-1).

The statistics show that, of the nearly 900,000 new legal immigrants in New York City between 1982 and 1991, the four Anglophone Caribbean countries together accounted for a total of 183,633 legal immigrants, or approximately 20% of that population. At the time, these statistics translated directly to public school and college enrollment in the New York City area. Between 1989 and 1992, 10,000 Jamaican students enrolled in public schools there followed by 7,000 Guyanese students (Nero, 2001; Rivera-Batiz, 1994).

Florida is the second largest settlement area for Caribbean immigrants. In 2003, the *American Community Survey* showed that nearly 600,000 Floridians reported Caribbean ancestry in 2003, up from about 100,000 from three years earlier. Following the national trend, Jamaicans comprise the largest number of Caribbean immigrants living in Florida. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 255,520 Floridians claim Jamaican ancestry. The vast majority of these (68%) reported speaking languages other than English at home, and 48,177 (22%) were of school age.

The precise number of Anglophone Caribbean students being served in Florida's public schools is difficult to determine since data is not collected specifically about this. Table 1-2 represents a subset of data related to foreign-born English language learners (ELLs) that districts are required to report. Students from the Caribbean make up less than 1% of ELL population. Home language surveys, completed by parents or guardians upon school enrollment, indicated that 575 PK-Grade 12 students had Jamaican Creole, Jamaican Patois, or Jamaican Patwa spoken in their homes (Florida Department of Education, 2010). Although all three are often considered the same dialect of the same language, respondents spelled them in a variety of ways when completing the home language survey.

Language, Education, and Identity in the Caribbean

Anglophone Caribbean countries contain historically complex ethnolinguistic (i.e. ethnic and linguistic) contexts due to a long history of slavery and colonization. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the late 1400s, various Native American groups populated most of the Caribbean. By the late 1500's, the Spanish empire began to decline, due in part to deaths of natives from diseases brought by the Spanish explorers. By the early 1600's, there was a significant British presence throughout the Caribbean. In the

hundreds of years to follow, the various countries of the Caribbean would be colonized and re-colonized by the Spanish, French, and Dutch (Higman, 2012; Rogonzinski, 2000).

English Creole and many other Creole languages (e.g., Haitian Creole, Papiamentu) were the direct result of colonization and linguistic contact between the natives and colonial powers. In an attempt to prevent insurrections, British slave masters banned the use of ethnic languages by slaves and indentured servants who were brought from Africa to work on sugar plantations. This resulted in an English Creole, which became the native language of the Caribbean people who lived under British rule (Nero, 2006). The language itself can be described on a continuum where at the one end, it is very similar to British or American English, yet in its most creolized form, it is not mutually intelligible to speakers of other varieties of English.

While the evolution of the English variations spoken in the Caribbean is similar to that of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) spoken by a large number of African Americans in the United States, the context and subsequent development was very different. AAVE developed in a country where the majority of the population continued to speak a variety of English valued by the dominant culture. As a result, AAVE is believed to have undergone significant de-creolization so that it has converged with Standard American English. In contrast, Caribbean English Creole has not undergone this process as rapidly because of the relative lack of access to a population that both speaks and has a loyalty to British English. Like AAVE, the distinct language variety of the Caribbean people is symbolic of their distinct culture and identity as it helps to distance them from the culture of their former colonizers.

While many of the present-day Anglophone Caribbean countries are more racially homogeneous than the United States, they are also characterized by linguistic and economic stratification. From the post-emancipation period until the present day, the social status of a citizen in the Anglophone Caribbean countries was not always based on skin color. Rather it was based on the degree to which one's speech approximated or deviated from Standard British English (SBE) (Nero, 2001). In the Anglophone Caribbean, the high status of SBE has been reinforced by education systems that use SBE solely for instruction and often devalue Creole English. SBE was promoted in the countries' quest for self-governance; however, the immediate pre- and post-independence periods were marked by the widespread use and acceptance of Creole English in most domains, as it was an affirmation of Caribbean identity and a rejection of colonial domination (Christie, 1983; Nero, 2001).

During this same time period, the majority of Creole English-dominant speakers began to gain access to schooling beyond the primary level as part of the restructuring of the education system. This restructuring included the relaxation of admission standards that were based on language proficiency in SBE and socioeconomic status. The new goal was to provide post-primary education for all students regardless of these factors (Devonish, 1986).

Providing educational access became policy because the developing Caribbean nations needed to build a productive work force. The language of instruction continued to be SBE, the language of the minority elite, and Creole English continued to be stigmatized and associated with low racial, social, political, and economic status (Nero, 2001; Winer, 1993). Knowing little, if any SBE, put students at a disadvantage

academically and caused them to be viewed as less capable. To counteract this, Caribbean natives who spoke Creole English claimed proficiency in SBE and denounced their native language in public domains. Even today, sounding British continues to be the basis upon which a social hierarchy in the Caribbean has been constructed (Bailey & Maynor, 1987; Fasold, 1981; Rickford, 1999; Trudgill, 2000). Having a British accent places individuals higher in the social hierarchy.

Language, Education, and Identity in U.S. Schools

Anglophone Caribbean students are a unique group when they enter the U.S. education system. Even though they are considered immigrants, they do not match the traditional characteristics typically associated with immigrants, in particular the lack of English proficiency. In addition, Anglophone Caribbean students come to the United States with significant knowledge of the English language. At the same time, many are categorized as African American by schools, which ignores the linguistic, cultural, and historical differences that exist between the two groups (Nero, 2005; Pratt-Johnson, 1993; Waters, 2000).

Research has examined how Anglophone Caribbean immigrants are vulnerable to misidentification due to their language variety and immigrant status. Because of the racialization processes in the United States that identify people with certain physical characteristics as African American, Anglophone Caribbean immigrants with these characteristics are incorrectly classified as African-American. In her study of Jamaican Creole English-speaking students in New York City public schools, Pratt-Johnson (1993) found that upon entering school, these students were not provided the opportunity to linguistically self-identify and when they did self-identify as native speakers of English, school personnel often challenged them. She noted that they were

usually faced with one of three possibilities: (a) they were classified as ELLs when their language seemed decidedly creolized; (b) they were identified as native English speakers when they were from English-dominant speaking countries; or (c) they were classified as disabled and assigned to special education classes in hopes that the smaller class size and slower pace would solve their obvious 'problems.' Because these students fell outside of the native speaker/non-native speaker paradigm, they were often misidentified in terms of their native language, were diagnosed as having learning disabilities, or were (mis)identified as an African American native English speaker. This phenomenon was also demonstrated in Rong & Jo's (2002) study of identity transformation of Chinese and Jamaican immigrant teens. They observed that Jamaican teens, in particular, were never questioned regarding their ethnic and linguistic identities and were assumed to be African American, despite linguistic indicators of their Caribbean heritage.

When Anglophone Caribbean students come to the United States, they not only face language barriers, but they often encounter ideologies regarding race and racism. In the United States, race plays a major role in regards to identification and perceptions of success and failure. Institutional racism is evident in the incorporation of institutional policies, practices, attitudes, and values that work to disadvantage students of color. This can include (a) differential allocation of resources and tracking practices that consign many students of color to low tracks with less experienced teachers (DeCuir, 2004; Duhon, 2002; Kershaw, 1992; McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Weisglass, 2006); (b) the unquestioned acceptance by the institution of white-middle-class values (as reflected, for example, in the scarcity of authors of color in many secondary schools' English

curricula) and (c) schools' passive stance in the face of prejudiced behavior that interferes with students' learning or well-being. An example would be failure to address harassment or teasing, or meeting it with punishment instead of attempting to build communication and understanding) (Banks, 1993; Delpit, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Loewen, 1995; Motha, 2006).

Students from the Caribbean are accustomed to social hierarchies that are based on language and class more so than race. Therefore, transitioning to a society where physical characteristics cause assumptions about status can be difficult (Rong & Brown, 2002, 2001). In the Caribbean, racism and colonialism are seen as struggles with powers that are geographically far away, whereas in the United States, African Americans view racism as a fight against local power structures. Moreover, what constitutes "Black" or "white" is also quite different in the Caribbean and United States. Alexander (1977) reported that middle-class Jamaicans in Kingston used a five-category system of categorization, which consists of the designations white, fair, brown, dark, and Black. Waters (1999) concluded that for light-skinned, middle-class Caribbean immigrants, it can literally be true that they only "become Black" when they arrive on U.S. soil. They may have been accustomed to only being labeled (and judged) on the basis of their socioeconomic status and language use in their home countries. Rong & Fitchett (2008) maintain that African Americans often see themselves as a Black race and emphasize their Blackness with a pride and power that is derived from triumphs over a lengthy and brutal racial history of resisting discrimination in the United States. However, Caribbean natives have no such point of reference and prefer to emphasize their identification with national origins and socioeconomic status. This is

because their socialization takes place in a more favorable climate of the Caribbean where they have always been a racial majority and have had less direct contact with people of other races.

In short, the legacy of colonization that Anglophone Caribbean immigrants bring with them when they enter the United States, and in particular the American school system, potentially challenges traditional definitions of both what it means to be Black and immigrant in the United States. Anglophone Caribbean immigrants are a unique population in that they fall outside of existing research frames. They are Black, immigrant, and English-speaking. Because the vast majority of Anglophone Caribbean immigrants are English-speaking, they do not have the same experiences as immigrant ELLs. Because they are immigrants, they do not have the same experiences as African Americans. Although they share characteristics with both immigrants and African Americans, they defy both categories, being in a class all their own.

Problem Statement

Although a growing population, few studies have considered how adolescents from Caribbean English-speaking backgrounds who reside in less urban cities in the United States negotiate their ethnic, linguistic, and racial identities within the structure of traditional identity definitions and ideologies that dominate U.S. society and schools. It is important that we begin to understand the ways in which these adolescents describe their identities and the contexts in which they construct and negotiate their identities. Furthermore, it is important to know and understand the role(s) that schools play in influencing identity construction within this population so that their experiences are acknowledged and their unique identity and educational needs might be considered as they are served in the U.S. American school system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the construction of self-ascribed identities of Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and their perceptions of how their schooling experiences have shaped their identities.

Questions Guiding the Study

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents describe and construct their identities?
2. How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents' perceive that their schooling experiences have shaped these identities?

Value of the Study

The value of this study is twofold. First, it contributes to the knowledge base regarding Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and identity construction in the context of U.S. society, particularly schools. Many of the other studies on Caribbean immigrants either focus on adults or do not consider the role of schools in identity construction. Secondly, the study focuses on giving voice to the participants regarding their identities. Kincheloe (2005) suggests that since adolescents construct and are constructed by their worlds, it is important to explore their perspectives. Nieto (2000) states, “by listening to students, we can learn how they experience school, how social and educational structures affect their learning, and what we can do to provide high-quality education for them” (p.6). I was unable to find any studies that gave voice to Caribbean immigrant youth who reside in less urban areas of the United States.

Finally, identity has been theorized in many ways, but typically either from a racial perspective (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1986; Poston, 1990) or an immigrant perspective (Berry, 1983, 2003; Sue & Sue 1971; Waters, 1999). Anglophone Caribbean

adolescents represent the intersection between these two broad categories. It is hoped that an examination of identity (construction) through Anglophone Caribbean adolescents' discourses might encourage scholars to re-examine the ways in which we think and talk about identity and identity construction.



Figure 1-1. Map of the Caribbean. (Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CaribbeanIslands.png>. Last accessed November, 2011).

Table 1-1. Legal immigrants moving to New York City from 1982 to 1991 from most to least

Country of Origin	Immigrants
Dominican Republic	151,712
Jamaica*	87,112
China	79,841
Guyana*	67,729
Haiti	48,518
Soviet Union	36,593
Colombia	26,834
India	24,938
Korea	24,361
Ecuador	22,857
Philippines	19,791
Hong Kong	13,737
Poland	12,712
Honduras	11,381
Britain	11,054
Israel	10,073
Peru	9,920
Pakistan	9,803
El Salvador	9,689
Barbados*	9,450
Bangladesh	8,695
Ireland	7,321
Trinidad & Tobago*	19,342
Total	898,213

* Anglophone countries: Source: New York City Department of Planning (1993)

Table 1-2. Florida's English language learners by Caribbean country of birth (2007-2008)

Country of birth	Number of students	Percent of all ELLs
Antigua & Barbuda	4	< 1
Bahamas	137	< 1
British Virgin Islands	1	< 1
Dominica	56	< 1
Grenada	1	< 1
Jamaica	134	< 1
St. Lucia	8	< 1
Trinidad & Tobago	8	< 1
Turks & Caicos	8	< 1
U.S. Virgin Islands	76	< 1
West Indies	6	< 1
TOTAL	439	< 1

Source: Florida Department of Education, Office of Achievement through English Language Acquisition (2010)

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesis of the literature on identity and identity construction. It begins with definitions of identity that have been used in the literature across disciplines. These definitions include the interaction between the “self” and others. The second section considers identity construction from three broad theoretical perspectives: structuralism, constructivism and post-structuralism. The review then turns to identity construction and the role(s) of schools to include language and culture. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the implications developed from the literature regarding identity construction of Anglophone Caribbean adolescents within the context of U.S. American schools, and the theoretical perspective on which this study was designed.

Individual and Social Dimensions of Identity

There are many different ways that identity has been defined and conceptualized. This is primarily due to its interdisciplinary nature and changing views of language, identity, and the relationship between the two. Fearon (1999) summarizes “brief definitions and clarifications” of identity from various articles (p. 4):

- Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, p. 2)
- Identity “refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities” (Jenkins, 1996, p. 4)
- Identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self” (Wendt, 1992, p. 397)
- “the term [identity] references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other” (Katzenstein, 1996, p. 59)

- “Identities are...prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationships to each other” (Kowert and Legro, 1996, p. 453).

Several different epistemological perspectives are evident in the above conceptualizations of identity. Apart from these variations, two main themes penetrate these and most other definitions of identity: both the “self” and the contextual importance of “other(s) That is, the individual and the individual as a part of a group (social identity). This is important because it helps us to understand agency and the importance of others in identity construction. Notions of identity based on structuralism, constructivism, and post-structuralism are discussed further.

Notions of Identity Based on Structuralism

Structuralism is predominantly associated with the linguistic research of Ferdinand de Saussure (1966). Claude Levi-Strauss sought to apply de Saussure’s work to anthropology. The structuralist approach to culture and identity based on Levi-Strauss’s (1976) work has long dominated scholarship on language, identity, and identity construction. In essence, structuralism suggests strict categories, linear formations, hidden rules, and binary oppositions to describe identities and other aspects of culture. For structuralists, language and identity exist in a one-to-one relationship. The linguistic system guarantees the meaning of signs (the word and its meaning) and it assumes that each linguistic community has its own set of signifying practices that give value to the signs in a language. Structuralists conceive of signs as having idealized meanings, and linguistic communities as being relatively homogeneous and consensual. In this conception, language is understood as a relatively fixed, neutral, medium of communication (Norton, 2010). In this section, I discuss how structuralist insights shape

our definitions of identity and provide examples of identity models grounded in a structuralist approach (developmental and acculturation theories).

Structuralists' Definitions of Identity

Given a structuralist perspective, identity is defined as something that is linear (i.e., developed in a particular order) and relatively fixed (i.e., stays the same).

Structuralism views one's identity as an end product that can be described in terms of categories with defined boundaries. For example, structuralism suggests that people have a primary racial, ethnic, linguistic, and/or gender identity. As suggested in the developmental and acculturation literature, researchers within this tradition define the process of identity development as a predictable process consisting of stages through which individuals are assumed to navigate on their way to an achieved, structured identity.

When applied to multilingual settings, researchers working within this paradigm have traditionally viewed identity in essentialist ways. That is, they believe that there is a set of characteristics or properties, all of which any persons who identify a certain way must have, as well as a one-to-one correspondence between ethnicity and language (Giles & Byrne, 1982; Kim, 1996). That is, individuals are classified (or asked to classify themselves) as either native or non-native speakers of different languages and they are expected to identify with one national ethnicity and language over others.

Identity Models Based on Developmental Theory

Table 2-1 outlines five of the most widely cited stage models for identity development within a structuralist framework. With the exception of Erikson (1968), these models conceptualize identity as developmental in terms of the stages. They also view identity as one-dimensional because they focus on a single aspect of identity –

race, ethnicity, or language. These models were often used to place or gauge a group or individual's position within these models for the purposes of describing their identity and stage of identity development (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1986, 1995; Phinney, 1992; Poston, 1990).

The earliest model, Erikson's (1968) Psychosocial Development Model, is different from the others in at least two ways. First, it does not specify a particular ethnic or racial group for whom this model is to be applied. It is assumed to be applicable to all populations. Moreover, unlike the other models represented in Table 2-1, progression through the stages is dependent on age and not necessarily race and/or ethnicity.

The models describe identity construction as a linear progression from one well-defined stage to the next. The stages are expected to be predictable, well-defined, and there are clear boundaries between one stage and the other. Finally, there is presumed to be a predictable outcome –an ideal social, racial, or ethnic identity.

Identity Models Based on Acculturation Theory

Acculturation theory is another example of a structuralist model of identity. Early models attempted to explain the changes that occur when cultural contact happens between minority or immigrant groups and the host group. Many contemporary acculturation models are in part based on the importance of an individual's relationship to the in-group - her/his own culture, and the out-group – the host culture. Unlike models based on developmental theory, these models acknowledge the role of macrostructures, the overall organization of society in identity construction. They attempt to account for the role of society in identity formation processes, specifically for immigrants.

Berry's original and subsequently revised model of acculturation (Berry 1980, 2003) is one of the most commonly used models based on acculturation theory. He describes acculturation as an overarching process of adjusting to a new culture that involves changes in identifications with one's cultural group and larger society. The majority of acculturation research from the late 1970s and early 1980s viewed individuals' orientations toward their cultural group and the larger society as two opposite ends of a continuum. According to this bipolar perspective, the extent of loss of one's ethnic culture is an indicator of one's level of acculturation into the larger society.

Berry's (1983, 2003) model of acculturation (Table 2-2) describes the acculturation process as an intergroup process that results in differing types of identities. In this model, immigrants and groups that accept the culture of the community into which they have migrated, while continuing to accept their culture of origin, would fare best socially and psychologically (integration). Immigrants who accept the dominant culture while rejecting their heritage culture would lose touch with their roots (assimilation). These individuals or groups may fare well socially, but not psychologically. Weinreich (2009) suggests that psychological "ghettoisation," isolation from the host culture, can occur when individuals reject major aspects of the dominant culture while continuing to revere one's heritage culture. Finally, Berry's original model suggests that an individual or group's rejection of both the dominant culture and their heritage culture would seem to leave the persons without any viable modes of interacting with members of either the dominant or heritage culture and lead to marginalization.

Berry (2003) revised his original model as current research on language and cultural maintenance suggest that immigrants and their American-born children adopt

some values and customs of the host culture while retaining significant elements of their own culture (Lee, 2002; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Tse, 2001). In an attempt to create a more multicultural model of acculturation, Berry included integration/biculturalism as a category. He defined this typology as one where people maintain the values and customs of their native culture while adopting the values and customs of the host society so that they will be viewed as full participants in the host society. Table 2-3 provides a sample of the various typologies found in current research based on acculturation theory. While Berry is more conceptual, Waters (1999) and Sue & Sue (1971) are empirical works.

Sue and Sue's (1971) research on Asian immigrants is one such typology. They categorize individuals based on their orientation towards a host culture and their desire for cultural maintenance. They found that individuals of Asian descent fall into one of three categories: traditionalists, marginalized, and Asian American. Traditionalists, who are typically foreign born, strongly accept parental cultural values and typically socialize only with members of their own ethnic group. A marginalized person rejects Asian values, wants to assimilate into American culture, and tends to socialize with Caucasian Americans. These individuals tend to have ethnic identity that is associated with Asian culture. Finally, Asian Americans achieve balance and pride in their ethnic identity by combining different aspects of traditional Asian values and Western influences.

Waters' (1999) study of Caribbean adolescents' identities at two NYC high schools revealed three types/categories of identities: an American identity, an ethnic identity, and an immigrant identity. Of the 83 participants in her study, 42% embraced an American identity. Her study revealed that participants who considered themselves

American downplayed their Jamaican and Trinidadian heritages. Another 30% embraced a very strong ethnic identity that involved a considerable amount of distancing from Black Americans. Waters suggested that it was important for these respondents to “stress their ethnic identities and for people to recognize that they and their parents were not American. These participants tended to believe that there were strong differences between Americans and West Indians and that West Indians were superior to American Blacks in their behaviors and attitudes” (Waters, p. 73).

A final 28% of participants had what Waters (1999) calls an ‘immigrant identity.’ They did not feel as much pressure to choose between identifying with and distancing from Black Americans, as did either the American-identified or ethnic-identified adolescents. They related strongly to their or their parents’ national origins, but were also neutral toward American distinctions between Caribbean natives and Black Americans. Unlike the models based on structuralism, the typology models allow for multilingualism and biculturalism.

Strengths and Criticisms of Notions of Identity Based on Structuralism

Structuralist views of identity were influential in the quest by early scholars to define identity and to understand how one comes to achieve their identity. Although they have been critiqued regarding the ways in which they have conceptualized identity, developmental, acculturation, and typology models, all based on structuralism, have helped us to understand the psychological (mind, brain, personality) and to a certain extent, the social (external relationships, environment) aspects of identity development. The individual stages in each of the developmental models have added to our knowledge of identity. For example, Erikson (1968) has contributed to our knowledge of the role of adolescence in identity development. The first stage of Poston’s (1990)

Biracial Identity Development Model highlights the pressure that society and/or individuals place on biracial individuals to identify with one race or the other. These factors –both developmental and external – are often explored and taken into consideration in contemporary research on identity and identity construction.

While structuralism has provided a useful lens through which to view identity, it has not been without its critics. The development models have been criticized for describing identity development among immigrants as linear, one-dimensional, predictable, and static. Contemporary research suggests that such straight-line models of acculturation fail to accurately characterize the various pathways adopted by America's newest immigrants, such as Asian, Latinos, and Caribbean immigrants.

According to Portes & Zhou (1993) some immigrant groups follow the traditional straight-line model and assimilate into the white middle class (e.g., light-skinned Cubans in Miami). Other groups, however, assimilated but into an underclass which has resulted in a less prosperous path for them (e.g., Haitians in Miami). Moreover, contemporary research suggests that it is possible to attain upward mobility in a tight-knit immigrant community. Portes & Zhou termed this phenomenon segmented (or selective) assimilation. It is characterized by parents and children belonging to ethnic networks and institutions that have enough resources to offer support that is often unavailable outside the ethnic community. In this case, economic prosperity and assimilation is achieved through ethnic homogeneity.

In Gibson's study of Punjabi Sikhs in northern California, parents highlighted their Punjabi identity as an alternative to becoming "Americanized" and forgetting the Punjabi way of life. Punjabi students were encouraged by parents to select and adopt the most

beneficial aspects of the white majority population, such as speaking English, while continuing to stay true to their Punjab values (Gibson, 1988). The Punjabi example supports Glazer and Moynihan's (1963) assertion that remaining immigrant or ethnic-identified can constitute a resource for achieving economic and social success (Alba & Nee, 2003; Bean & Steven, 2003; Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Lee & Bean, 2007) and counters the structuralist assumption of linear, unidimensional paths.

The research suggests additional paths. The acculturation models posit or predict that the more acculturated individuals achieve social stability and upward mobility while those who maintain their heritage are more likely to be less successful (Rudmin, 2009; Tardiff-Williams & Fisher, 2009). However, in the case of Anglophone Caribbean immigrants in New York (Waters, 1999) and the Vietnamese population in Louisiana (Zhou & Bankston, 1998), casting off one's immigrant identity often led to downward mobility. These findings directly challenge the dominant paradigm of straight-line assimilation to upward mobility (Gordon, 1964).

The majority of traditional developmental models considers only a single construct (i.e., race, ethnicity, or sexuality) and analyzes its impact on identity development separately. They do not portray the intersections of various identity constructs (Jones, 1990; Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Helms, 1986; Yeh & Huang, 1996). This conceptualization is seen as problematic because each aspect of identity interacts with the other and each aspect needs to be considered when conceptualizing identity. For example, racial identity might play a role in an individual's ethnic identity development.

Third, these models conceptualize the stages and types of identities as predictable and universal. In the developmental models, identity formation results from a

unidirectional progression through various stages and is assumed to be the same for different groups and individuals. The models do not account for or explain the contextual factors that can contribute to or promote progression from one stage to the next stage. They also do not acknowledge the possibility of an individual being in more than one stage at a time or skipping stages. It is unclear how change from one stage to the next is to occur, as the mechanisms for change are not discussed in these models.

The acculturation models rely on the assumption that acculturation has universal regularities that are independent of immigrant histories, time, or geographic location (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Chirkov, 2009; Weinrich, 2009). This is problematic because other research has shown the effects of contextual factors (Ibrahim, 2009; Jones & McEwen, 2000; McKay & Wong, 1996). For instance, Ibrahim (2009) showed that for his French-speaking African research participants' identification with race or "Blackness" was directly linked to the students' inability to relate to dominant groups and their relative ignorance of the cultural norms of the host society.

Fourth, the developmental models that focus specifically on ethnic and racial identity begins with the assumption that individuals are at a place where they lack an understanding of racial injustices or they harbor feelings of ambivalence, confusion, or shame. Stage one of Helms (1986), Cross (1991), Poston (1990), and Phinney's (1992) models suggest that people begin with some level of identity conflict. In their critique of traditional identity development models, Miville (2006) and Yeh & Huang (1996) looked at biracial individuals and Asians respectively and found that the biracial group did not view their racial identities as problematic, as would be suggested by traditional

developmental models. In fact, their findings suggest that many biracial and multiracial individuals relish the blurring of America's Black/white color line.

Finally, structuralism does not allow for the myriad of language choices that individuals make. They assume that language choice has a one-to-one correlation with ethnic and racial identity (Norton, 2010). Yet, studies such as Baumann's (1996) have observed that cultural and linguistic phenomena do not form one-to-one correlations as people change their cultural, linguistic, and communal identification based on context and topic of conversation. Baumann's (1996) ethnography of the Southall suburb of London found that people from different origins use 'culture' and 'community' to refer to different things at different times, depending on who and what they are talking about. The membership of the cultural groups to which they refer changes depending on whether they are talking about music, community events, where they shop, or where they lived.

Notions of Identity Based on Constructivism

Constructivism reflects the view that our knowledge is constructed, in that it is contingent on convention, human perception, and social experience. In this viewpoint the mind takes a central position, in that cognitive processes such as emotional development and management, philosophical thinking, and self-efficacy are essential in the meaning making process (Jackson, 2001; Makiaiau, 2010). Constructivists believe that although individuals are often influenced by societal factors, they are not passive, but active, in identity construction processes. Agency is an important concept in understanding constructivist notions of identity and the role of the individual in identity construction. Holland (2001) suggests that Iden's (1990) definition of human agency is appropriate when considering individual identity. Human agency, Iden says is:

the realized capacity of people to act upon their world and not just know about or give personal or intersubjective significance to it. That capacity of the power of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex relationships, with one another to reiterate and remake the world in which they live, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action possible and desirable (p. 23).

Similarly, Bourdieu (1977) suggests that agency accounts for the individual's ability to mold their own identities, even if they are within existing parameters.

Researchers who subscribe to an agency framework suggests that individuals are not just subjected to the identities that others ascribe to them, but they have the knowledge and experiences to react and to a certain extent, choose the identities that they construct and project.

Constructivist Definitions of Identity

In the cognitive tradition of Berzonsky (1988, 1990, 1993), Kelly (1955), Epstein (1973), Inhelder and Piaget (1958), identity is conceptualized as an implicit theory of oneself. They define this self-theory as “a cognitive structure composed of a loosely organized system of personal constructs, assumptions, hypotheses, beliefs, schemas, and postulates relevant to the self-interacting in the world” (Berzonsky, 2011, p. 56). In other words, one's identity is comprised of several dimensions, and related to those identities are the ideologies and beliefs that people hold as truth. Constructivists further suggest that identity provides a personal frame of reference for self-relevant information, solving problems, and making decisions. Identity in this epistemological perspective suggests that human agency is central and that identity is a process that “governs and regulates the social-cognitive strategies used to construct, maintain, and/or reconstruct a sense of personal identity” (Berzonsky, 2011, p. 55).

Identity Theories Based on Constructivism

Identity theory, social identity theory, and identity control theory are three prominent theories of identity and identity construction that are based on constructivism. Substantial similarities and overlap amongst these theories have resulted in debates on whether or not these theories should be linked in fundamental ways (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1999 and Stets & Burke, 2000). However, for the purposes of this review, I discuss them separately while highlighting differences, as well as the role of human agency in these theories.

In identity theory, the core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance. Identity theorists argue that the self consists of a collection of identities, each of which occupies a particular role (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identities are constructed and can be defined as one's answer to the question, "who am I" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Individuals construct three types of identities. On the first level, personal identities are constructed. Personal identities are the unique, biological, being that one is. On this level, individuals construct those aspects of themselves that are different from those around them. These aspects allow them to perceive themselves and be perceived as a unique person. Another type of identity that people construct is role identities. Role identities define what it means to be in a role such as daughter, son, mother, father, or teacher. Although role identities are relational, individuals make decisions to construct (or not) these roles for themselves. Finally, people construct their social identities. These identities define what it means to part of a group or a category, such as American. It assists in the construction of a sense of security and belonging. In sum, people construct many

identities and perceive themselves in different ways for each of the many persons they claim to be, roles they have, and groups and categories to which they belong.

In identity theory, emphasis is placed on the cognitive processes of self-verification and self-efficacy. For example, contemporary studies on leadership role identity suggest that when individuals' leadership identities are not verified it negatively impacts self-efficacy. When individuals are unable to negotiate leadership performances in a group to match leadership identities, they become less satisfied and are less inclined to remain in the group (Riley & Burke, 1995). Likewise, Burke & Stets (1999) suggest that when different, yet interrelated, and complementary spousal roles are successfully negotiated and verified, a strong emotional attachment to each other and a commitment to the marriage develops.

Identity control theory (ICT) grows out of identity theory (Stryker, 1994; Stryker & Burke, 2000). ICT focuses on the nature of peoples' identities (who they are) and the relationship between identities and behaviors within the context of the social structure within which the identities are embedded. Burke (2007) suggests several tenets of ICT that are important to individuals' construction of self. He suggests that "meaning" is central to the individual's construction of identity. What does it "mean" to be a mother, or daughter? What does it "mean" to be an American? He suggests that an identity is a set of meanings applied to the self that define who one is. Burke (2007) further suggests that each identity is viewed as a control system with four components. The set of meanings for a given identity is held to an identity standard. The 'identity standard' holds the self-meanings tied to roles. People act in ways to verify their identity standard.

The next of the four components is the 'input' or perceptions. This is how an individual believes he/she comes across in any given situation. The third component is the 'comparator.' This component compares the meanings from the input and the standard. The final component of the theory is the 'output.' The output represents the differences that result from the perceptions and the identity standard. These components work together to control identities that are constructed. So, if there is a discrepancy between the identity standard and output, Burke (2007) suggests that there would be a change in behavior in order to reduce discrepancy. Qin's (2009) study regarding gendered expectations in Chinese adolescent immigrants suggested that there were both school and family/cultural identity expectations that were sometime conflicting. The female participants in the study, however, were sure to change behavior outside of school (i.e. at home) to subscribe to the gendered identity expectations of their Chinese parents. These expectations included a disregard for fashion, popularity, and an interest in boys.

Social identity theory is another widely used constructivist framework. Although there is quite a bit of overlap with the previous two theories, its emphasis is on intergroup relations rather than role behavior. Its primary aim is to link individual and group identities. Tajfel (1974) defines social identity as "a part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social (or groups) together with emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 69). Within any given social context, individuals tend to label themselves, allocate labels to others, and learn the value associated with membership in particular groups (West, 1992).

A person's membership in a group influences an individual's actions and interactions with others (McDermott, 2004). To explore this concept, Shih, Pittinsky & Ambady (1999) studied social identity and stereotype susceptibility with a group of Asian-American female undergraduates. They did this by giving them a math test under three conditions. A third of the students completed a questionnaire focused on their female identity before taking the test. Another third completed a pre-test questionnaire that focused on their Asian identity. The control group filled out a gender and ethnicity-neutral questionnaire. Results show that, relative to controls, participants earned the highest test scores when the questionnaire emphasized their Asian identity and the lowest when it emphasized their female identity. Shih et al. (1999) conclude that the questionnaire changed the women's performance according to powerful stereotypes associated with each identity, i.e., Asians possess excellent quantitative skills and women do not.

Strengths and Criticisms of Notions of Identity Based on Constructivism

Constructivist notions of identity, in one form or another (e.g. social constructivism), are apparent in recent contemporary research on identity construction. The strengths of this epistemological view are that it emphasizes that cognitive mechanisms are important in the process of identity construction. In particular, individual agency is at the center of the creation of reality and identity. This view highlights the role of cognition (or philosophical thinking), which is not addressed in notions of identity based on structuralism.

The strengths of these notions of identity are also considered their weaknesses. First, the most common critique of constructivist notions of identity is that the concept of identity is reduced to relativism, meaning that if there are no absolute truths, it would be

impossible to make comparative judgments about statements regarding identities or other aspects of identity (e.g., beliefs, customs, and language). It would therefore be difficult to claim any type of truth even about concrete or physical identity characteristics.

Second, the traditional view of identity as primarily a cognitive representation minimalizes the importance of social context and conditions on an individual's identity construction processes. Jackson (2001) suggests that by the time children reach third grade, the sense of wonder with which they entered kindergarten – wonder out of which authentic thinking and thus thinking for oneself develops – has begun to diminish. By sixth grade, it has practically disappeared” (p. 459). Lipman (1991) suggests that the “standard paradigm of normal practice” in the school setting (p. 13) is regimented scheduling, uniform language, and decontextualized learning, which disrupts the agency of individuals to the point where philosophical thinking on their part is discouraged. This suggests that social contexts and relationships play important roles in identity construction processes.

Notions of Identity Based on Post-Structuralism

Poststructuralism is primarily associated with the works of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Judith Butler, and Julia Kristeva. A post-structuralist epistemology defies the rigid structures that are assumed in society. Identity is only one such structure. Poststructuralism suggests an interrogation of the binary oppositions that are often found in research based on a structuralist theoretical framework. In identity research, poststructuralists undermine the notion of an essentially stable self (identity) and instead, acknowledge identity as a complex phenomenon that is multiple, fluid, dynamic, and shifts depending on interactions within social contexts. There is not

a one-to-one correlation between identities and language or signs (words) and meanings within a community in a poststructuralist theoretical framework. Instead, constructions are fluid, dynamic and always open to interpretation. In this section, poststructuralist definitions of identity and identity models based on this framework are discussed.

Post-Structural Definitions of Identity

In identity research, poststructuralists undermine the notion of an essentially stable self (identity) and instead, acknowledge identity as a complex phenomenon that is multiple, fluid, dynamic, and shifts depending on interactions within social contexts. In this section, poststructuralist definitions of identity and identity models based on this framework are discussed. Poststructuralist theories move conceptualizations of identity beyond a search for universal and invariant laws of humanity to a nuanced, multileveled, and more complex framing of identity. Poststructuralist approaches view identity as having less structure and being delimited or unbounded (Block, 2007; Derrida, 1983). They acknowledge the multifaceted, hybrid, and dynamic nature of identities (Joseph, 2004; Minami & Ovando, 2004; Ricento, 2005; Siebers, 2004; Weedon, 1987; 2004). Although they are all closely interconnected, for the purpose of analysis, these three concepts will be discussed separately below.

Identities as Multiple

A poststructuralist epistemology suggests that individuals construct multiple identities as they interact with different groups throughout their lifetime. An individual's gender, racial, ethnic and linguistic identities are all a part of who they are (Ajayi, 2006; Ashmore et al., 2004; Bailey, 2000; Dinkha et al., 2008; Lee, 2003; Liang, 2006). McKay & Wong's (1996) study of four Chinese immigrants who were enrolled in a California

public high school showed that the participants constructed various identities to avoid alienation and to provide counter discourses to the ones produced in the context in which they found themselves. They were able to trace the students' negotiation of their sometimes contradictory, yet often multiple, identities. For example, one of the participants, Jessica Ho, constructed a musician identity to counteract those discourses that marginalized her because of her lack of English proficiency and her quiet demeanor. Her identity as an accomplished musician became more salient (i.e. visible or apparent) in the context of the United States, because it was a testament to her worth despite her lack of proficiency in English.

An example of a model that aims to reflect group identities from a more post-structuralist perspective is Reynolds and Pope's Multidimensional Identity Model (MIM). In the researchers' conceptualization of identity, one has a core identity that has dimensions related to race, gender, religion, culture, and sexual orientation. Reynolds and Pope's (1991) model addresses what they term 'multiple oppressions' and possible ways that one can negotiate multiple oppressions. Oppressions are those identities that are often stigmatized, such as being female, Black, and or homosexual.

They use several case studies to provide examples of how individuals might deal with their multiple oppressions. In creating the MIM, Reynolds and Pope (1991) suggest four ways of identification for individuals belonging to more than one oppressed group. They make the argument that a Black female immigrant who speaks a language other than English or a non-standard variety of English could simultaneously or selectively identify with four oppressions: racial minority, immigrant/ethnic minority, gender minority, and linguistic minority.

Jones and McEwen's (2000) study built on and expanded MIM by highlighting the contextual factors that influence identity construction. Through in-depth, open-ended interviewing, they explored the self-perceived identities and the multiple dimensions of identity of ten racially and ethnically diverse female college students who ranged in age from 20 to 24. The contextual influences that emerged as significant included race, culture, gender, family, education, and relationships with those different from oneself, and religion. Based on their findings, Jones and McEwen conceptualized a person's identity as a personal identity, somewhat protected from view (i.e., not always visible), which incorporates "valued personal attributes and characteristics" (p. 408). The model portrays identity dimensions as intersecting rings around a core, signifying how no one dimension can be understood singularly; they can only be understood in relation to other dimensions. Surrounding the core and identity dimensions is the context in which a person experiences her life, such as family, socio-cultural conditions, and current experiences (Figure 2-1).

Jones & McEwen (2000) model attempts to address many of the shortcomings of more structuralist models of identity. First, it can be used with any segment of the population. Second, there is no pre-determined or expected outcome regarding identity construction. Third, this model portrays identity as multiple by highlighting its various dimensions and assuming that there is an intersection of these dimensions. The model also suggests that there are macrostructures that influence identity, such as family background, sociocultural conditions, and current experiences.

Identities as Dynamic

Identities become more salient in specific contexts and change over time. Although the stage models discussed before presume that the nature of one's identity

changes over time, an important difference within the post-structural view is that multiple identities are possible and there is no assumption of a one-to-one relationship between language and cultural identity. Jones & McEwen (2000), in their model, portray identity as dynamic (i.e. constantly changing), and more or less salient (i.e. visible and valued) across contexts. The concept of salience is important in identity construction theory because the salience we attach to our identities influences how much effort we put into each role we have been socialized into (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). According to Stryker (1968, 2000), the various identities that comprise the self-exist in a context-dependent hierarchy of salience, where the identities that are ranked highest are most likely to be invoked in a particular situation or context. Likewise, with language choice in multilingual situations, the language that is ranked highest or has the most value in a particular context for/to the individual becomes more salient.

These two examples illustrate how identities can become more or less salient depending upon the context. Ibrahim (2009) suggests that immigrant youth identify differently with race and immigrant status, depending on context. Ibrahim (2009) found that French-speaking African immigrants in Ontario quickly ‘became Black’ in response to society’s racialization (i.e., identifying them by race in lieu of other ways). In their home countries, they wouldn’t identify with race because they came from more racially homogeneous societies. Their identification with Blackness was due to a desire to be a part of a group “...to belong to a society” (p. 188). Ibrahim suggests that this identification with Blackness was linked to these students’ inability to relate to dominant groups and their relative ignorance of the cultural norms of the host society.

James & Woll (2004) describe identity options for Black Deaf individuals in England. In their study, these individuals experienced loneliness as they were growing up in hearing families. As a result, they self-identified as primarily Deaf in the context of their families. At the same time, they experienced racial discrimination at work and in the larger white, Deaf community. In the latter contexts, they self-identified as Deaf Black or Black Deaf, respectively.

In her study of linguistic interaction in a dual language school, Fitts (2006) discovered that students' linguistic identities changed over the course of their matriculation in a dual language program. She suggested that after 5 years in the dual language program, children's linguistic proficiency did not always match their designated native language, and some children had even switched their linguistic affiliation because their skills in their first language had become weaker than their second language. This study demonstrated how flexible identities are and how they change over time.

Identities as Hybrid

The emerging nature of identity has been challenged by globalization and transnational migration. Transnational individuals live their lives simultaneously participating in social relations across borders. Transnational migration suggests a more or less permanent state of being between one location and another (Stephen, 2005; 2007 a & b). Globalization and transnational migration has led poststructuralist philosophers to posit the notion of *hybridity* as an additional explanation of identity. The term hybridity originated from the life sciences to describe genetic and racial mixing. It was subsequently employed in linguistics and the social sciences in the nineteenth century. Homi Bhaba (1994), one of the major contributors to discussions of the effects

of hybridity on culture and identity, defines hybridity as “the sign of the productivity of colonial power, shifting its forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority)” (p. 159). Hybridity directly challenges essentialist notions that emanated in conversations regarding culture and identity.

In response to diverse contexts, Smith & Leavy (2008) suggest, “hybrid identities emerge: when a false dichotomy fails to represent identity fully, when identities merge across bordered spaces to span the previously established boundaries, and when cultures fuse within boundaries” (p. 11). Others have used the term ‘third space’ to describe this hybridity, an identity space that enables the appearance of new and alternative identity options that transcends binarisms and develops inclusionary and multifaceted identity possibilities (Bhaba, 1994; Bhatt, 2008; Bakhtin, 1981; Kanno, 2003).

Hubinette (2004) suggests that Korean adoptees provide the perfect example of existence in the third space between their country’s utopian dream of a global ethnic Korean community, where adoptees are essentialized as Korean brethren, and a Western culture demanding assimilation and loyalty. This group, he suggests transgresses categories of race (as the first Korean adoptees were mixed race), citizenship, language, religion, and culture.

Another example of the relevance of third spaces to hybridity is Kanno’s (2003) study of Japanese returnees. Her study revealed that once her participants moved back to their homeland they created identities that were not just a simple blending of

Japanese and American cultures, but their identities consisted of new characteristics that were unique to each of them. Similarly, James & Woll (2004) point to the emerging Black Deaf community and its creation of organizations, clubs, and its own communicative repertoire, a black variant of British sign language.

Strengths of Poststructuralist Notions of Identity

Poststructuralism allows for the examination and explanation of identities as situated within larger socioeconomic, socio-historical, and sociopolitical processes. Given the complexity of the world, with migration, globalization, and other causes of population movement, poststructuralism allows for more variation, optionality, nuanced, and context-sensitive ways of framing identity. Poststructuralist frameworks of identity acknowledge the multiple, dynamic, and hybrid nature of identity. This framework is well equipped to capture identities in postmodern societies where emphasis is often placed on the role of languages, power relations, and where dichotomies are discredited. Within societies, languages are not only markers of identity, but are used to index resistance, solidarity, and discrimination.

Identity Construction Processes

The previous sections addressed the different ways in which identity has been conceptualized. It highlighted some important concepts that describe both structuralist and poststructuralist notions of identity. In this section, the idea that identities are socially constructed or mediated between the individual and society is explored in more depth. First, socialization theory and language socialization is addressed. Next, the section concludes a discussion regarding language and power in identity construction and the ways in which languages and discourses are used as acts of identity.

Language Theory

Socialization refers to how individuals are assisted in becoming members of one or more social groups or communities. Grusec & Hastings (2008) suggest that the word “assist” is important because it infers that socialization is not a one-way street. New members are active in the socialization process and selective in what they accept from older members of the social group. Furthermore, “socialization is ongoing throughout the course of life and can be accomplished with the assistance of a variety of individuals including parents, teachers, peers, and siblings as well as by schools/daycare, the media, the Internet and general cultural institutions” (p. 2). For society or communities, inducting individual members into its moral norms, attitudes, values, motives, and social roles is the method by which that social and cultural continuity is attained (Schechter & Bayley, 2004). Socialization occurs through interaction. It is through this interaction that identities are constructed.

Socialization processes and outcomes are influenced by cultural differences in socialization practices. Cheng & Kuo (2000) suggest the socialization process of ethnic identities in the children of immigrants consists of two integral, mutually influential parts. One part is the extent to which the family transmits native or primary cultural and ethnic information as part of the development of the children's identity; the other part is the formation, expression, and interpretation of information made by the children themselves. In the former process, members of the social group, such as parents, family members or other kin, are considered active agents in socializing children. They define and interpret the symbols, the meaning of their culture and other aspects of identity to their children, as well as provide social reinforcement through reward and

punishment to shape children's behaviors. In the latter, children have agency and control over the construction of their identities.

This process also applies to and occurs through language. As individuals are socialized into languages and are taught the value or consequences of using particular languages, they are also being groomed to construct and negotiate identities.

Individuals construct their identities through specific language practices (Baquendo-Lopez & Kattan, 2008; di Lucca et al., 2008; Field, 2001). This process or aspect of socialization, termed *language socialization* is “the process of getting socialized *through* language and the process of getting socialized *to* language” (Duranti, 2001, p. 25).

While language plays a role in identity construction processes, it is also an important aspect of our identity that is often left out of most models of identity formation. As Weedon (1997) notes, it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across a range of sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak.

For example, multilingual children are often socialized through several languages or language varieties. Luykx (2002) suggests that bilingual Aymara-Spanish speaking children are socialized at very young ages to discern which contexts are appropriate for the exclusive use of one language or another. They also learned how, when and with whom one may mix and alternate languages. The use of particular languages in particular contexts also indexes identities for that specific context.

Language and Power in Identity Construction

While we are socialized through language, we also understand the value placed on certain linguistic codes. As Bourdieu (1977) notes, the value ascribed to speech

cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships. Every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship across time and space. Our gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among other characteristics, is all implicated in these negotiations of identities. Hence, our language choices are sometimes based on value that others have bestowed upon it.

Foucault (1979, 1980) suggests that language, social relationships, ideology, and power should be addressed layer by layer when examining identity construction. One should consider how language use and choices privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems; what sort of relationships a piece of language is seeking to enact with others; and what are the beliefs (or messages) that a piece of language or language choices might be carrying. Wassink's (1999) study revealed that Jamaican participants' reported discomfort in using Jamaican Creole in a number of U.S. contexts because of its perceived negative attributes.

For Foucault, discourse, or the language(s) that one speaks and power is inseparable. Foucault believes that discourse produces power effects. That is, languages and thoughts about those languages determine people's desire to use them to display their linguistic, social, and cultural capital. He argues that human thought and behavior are understood as discursive practices, constituted in and through the structures and uses of language.

Gee (1996) and Norton (2001) also emphasize the role of discourses, but they go one step further to address language and social relationships in one's identity

construction. Gee's (1996) notion of "big D," Discourse, explains the interrelations of language, social context, relationships, and self-perception/identity. By Discourse, Gee means not only language itself but also ways of "behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles (or 'types of people') by specific groups of people" (p. 8). He further defines Discourses as "being people like us," "ways of being in the world," or "ways of knowing. In other words, Discourses are not just linguistic; they go beyond language itself into ways of thinking, behaving, and relating to others. Gee also points out that Discourses always entail the ideologies behind them. By ideology, Gee means the tacit theory that is taken for granted in each Discourse, which shows "what counts as a 'normal' person and the 'right' ways to think, feel, and behave" (p. 9). This intimate connection between language and social relationships is the essence of Discourse. Gee notes that a variety of social contexts and social relationships within those discourse-producing contexts can lead to multiple identities.

Acts of Identity

Language is one of the ways in which individuals are socialized. As alluded to in the previous section, Discourses are not neutral. Since Discourse includes language and social relationships, it entails "positioning. Davies and Harré (1990) suggest that positioning is the locating of oneself within a conversational structure. Agency and choice are critical in positioning. That is, individuals respond to how they are positioned by others and they respond by using linguistic and other tactics to position themselves. How one decides to position oneself or how one is positioned by others in certain contexts, is directly related to one's identity or how one perceives his identity in relation

to others. There are two examples of interactionist frameworks in which positioning and power relations are created through discourse.

First, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) provide a framework of identity construction as discursive and illustrates how power relations reenacted through discourse. To them, identities are relational and are shaped through interaction and expressed in discourse. That is, we use language and interaction to indicate our identities and relationships with others. They propose that individuals co-construct identities and express these identities through interaction using four tactics of intersubjectivity to ally themselves with or distance themselves from specific social groups or individuals. These tactics are “adequation and distinction” (p. 599), “authentication and denaturalization” (p. 601), and “authorization and illegitimation” (p. 603). Adequation” refers to the ways an individual may emphasize similarities in order to align herself/himself with a social group to which she/he may not otherwise be able to claim membership. “Distinction” or “distinguishing” tactics are those discursive moves that serve to create distance between an individual and a specific social group. Authentication” is the way speakers demonstrate or prove that they are indigenous members of a particular group. Tactics of “denaturalization” come into play when an individual (the listener) makes inaccurate assumptions about the particular linguistic ability of another (the speaker) based on physical appearance or name. In these instances, individuals may correct others on the pronunciation of names, may refuse to use a particular linguistic variety, or may surprise their audience with their linguistic abilities. The final pair considers the structural and institutional aspects of identity formation. “Authorization” involves the affirmation or imposition of an identity

through structures of institutionalized power and ideology. “Illegitimation” addresses the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored.

Second, LePage & Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Nero (2005) conceptualize language use and choice in varying contexts as 'acts of identity' or ways of performing who we are. They suggest that language use reveals both individual identity and our sense of social and ethnic solidarity and difference with a specific group. In her book *English with an Accent*, Lippi-Green (1997) suggests that when people reject an accent, they are rejecting the identity of the person speaking with the accent because in many cases, his or her race, ethnic heritage, national origin, regional affiliation, or economic class is intertwined with language.

Morgan's (2002) study of language in an African American community suggests that language choice and use is quite complicated. To identify as African American, but embrace Standard American English and be a monolingual speaker of it, is to reject African American culture. However, be unable to speak SAE by young adulthood would cause one to be viewed as uneducated and of a lower socioeconomic class by those of the same ethnicity as well as the general population. Speakers of AAVE have to negotiate their identities as to be legitimized by their African American peers as an authentic (and powerful) member of the group, while also being perceived as educated.

There are a number of other studies within the second language acquisition literature that suggests that code switching is an exploratory choice when one wants or needs to construct and present specific identities (Bosire, 2006; Liang, 2006; Myers-Scotton, 2000; Ruan, 2003). So, code switching becomes a strategy of performing an identity. Zentella's (1995) ethnographic study of Puerto Ricans in NYC showed that

students used multiple dialects of both English and Spanish to construct identities that were appropriate for the context in which they lived and went to school. Bosire (2006) suggest that urban Kenyan adolescents construct an urban, hip, sophisticated identity through the use of Sheng, a mixture of several Kenyan languages and English. Meyers-Scotton (1986) suggested that Puerto-Rican Spanish-English bilinguals in New York City can be contrasted with French-English bilinguals in Ottawa. She cited Poplack's (1985) study that indicates code switching as unmarked amongst bilingual Puerto Ricans in New York City. In fact, these individuals regularly code switched in informal situations with peers. In contrast, such code switching was rare amongst French-English bilinguals in Ottawa. Pollack (1985) suggest that the difference was the result of each groups' attitudes toward the desirability of a bilingual identity in their interactions with peers. Becoming identified as a bilingual is positively evaluated by the Puerto Ricans when speaking to ethnic group peers. This is not the case with the French participants. They speak English and also use English for switching as a marked choice when speaking with ethnic group peers. But the dual identities symbolized by overall switching between French and English are not positively evaluated for peer interaction.

Constructing Identities in the Context of School

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of identity construction in the context of U.S. American schools and the role of schools as a socializing agent. In this section, language and culture in the school setting is addressed and a brief overview of the response to language varieties in the classroom is provided. This section concludes with a brief overview of the literature on Anglophone Caribbean students and identity construction.

Language, Culture, and Identities at School

Schools are key sites for socialization, including language socialization. Research has pointed out that schools play a legitimizing role in identity construction as they condone particular cultural and/or linguistic practices while ignoring others. The identities of minority and immigrant are often denigrated at school through overt and covert educational policies and practices which undervalue their languages and ways of life (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Kanno, 2003; Masten et al., 1990; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1995, 1997, 2000; Skapoulli, 2004; Thompson, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas & Foley, 2002). Institutional racism is evident in the incorporation of institutional policies, practices, attitudes, and values that work to the disadvantage of students of color. This can include (1) differential allocation of resources, or tracking practices that consign many students of color to low tracks with less experienced teachers, from which they can seldom escape (DeCuir, 2004; Duson, 2002; Kershaw, 1992; McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Wigless, 2006); (2) the unquestioned acceptance by the institution of white-middle-class values (for example, the scarcity of authors of color in the English curricula of many secondary schools) and (3) schools' passive stance in the face of prejudiced behavior that interferes with students' learning or well-being (for example, not addressing harassment or teasing, or meeting it with punishment instead of attempting to build communication and understanding) (Banks, 1993; Despite, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Loewe, 1995; Motha, 2006).

The discourses in schools and by teachers have the power either affirm or disempower students' identities. McKay & Wong's (1996) study is one of many that demonstrate how immigrant, English Language Learners (ELLs) are positioned in the context of school. In their case study of four Chinese immigrant students, one of the

teacher participants, an ESL teacher, viewed any knowledge that students brought with them (including native language literacy and school experiences) as irrelevant. Although he did allow the use of bilingual dictionaries during writing assignments, he made no effort to find out about his student's literacy experiences and writing proficiency in Chinese. In his framework, the students came across as "rather ignorant and pitiful, indeed infantile (p. 590) In this instance, the teacher did not legitimize or acknowledge the students' native language literacy skills and experiences.

The same holds true for the role of peers and their effect on students' identity construction (Cummins, 1996). This point is supported by analyses of classroom discourse and interactions (Cazden, 2001; Hellerman, 2006; Hellerman and Cole, 2008; Markee, 2004; Miller, 2007). These studies indicate that peer group discourses also influence students' identity construction and negotiation. There are instances where L2 students themselves relegate each other to inferior positions. Miller (2007) investigated three immigrant students from Laos, Tibet, and China. The classroom interactions were videotaped once a month for over a year. Based on her data, she maintained that power and identity are a matter of "positioning" and is strongly influenced by roles. The students positioned the teacher as an authority figure as the interaction began, but as students began to see themselves as good language learners, they interacted with others in ways that positioned themselves as "speakers of English" and relegated other less proficient students to lower positions. One of Miller's participants, Song, corrected another student's grammar in ways that seemed insensitive and rude. Song's deployment of her linguistic knowledge resulted in a favorable position within the

classroom context, while the other student was relegated to a less than favorable position.

Bingham's (2001) work, influenced by Taylor's (1994) essay titled "The Politics of Recognition," suggests that how others recognize us is central to how we construct our identities. In other words, how we are viewed by others negatively, or positively, influences how we perceive and portray our own identities. Schools have the power to empower students by affirming their differences or they can marginalize them by delegitimizing their knowledge and experiences.

Language Varieties in the Classroom

More than forty years of scholarly attention to the intersection of language and education have resulted in a rich body of literature on the role of immigrant languages (Auerbach, 1995; Baker, 2011; Fishman & Garcia, 2011; Garcia, 2009; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Park, 2005; Toohey, 2000) and vernacular language varieties in the classroom, such as AAVE (Paugh, 2001; Rickford, Sweetland, & Rickford, 2004; Siegel, 1999, 2006, 2007; Silverstein, 1996). Researchers continue to document the persistently negative perceptions and attitudes of teachers regarding these immigrant languages and English language varieties (Gay, 2000; Heath, 1983; and Michaels, 1981).

In examples from the AAVE literature, Gay (2000) found that teachers praised the topic-centered writings of white students, while reprimanding Black students for their topic-associated styles of writing. Fordham (1999) found that African American adolescents sometimes use AAVE and slang as a way to resist what they see as a racist school establishment, adopting what Ogbu (1999) calls oppositional language

frames. Students felt that they were unfairly forced to use Standard English and abandon AAVE; therefore they used AAVE to demonstrate their cultural pride.

Students' perceived rejection of their cultural identities through the rejection of their languages sometimes results in resistance. Non-standard variety speaking students may resist 'standard' forms of language. Lippi-Green (1997) views this as standard language ideology, or a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogeneous language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions and which has as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class. This represents a belief in a standard, uniform way of speaking, which is thought to be a better way of communicating, and also that this is the normal way that language exists. In Delpit and Dowdy's (2002) book, *The Skin that We Speak*, Ernie Smith, a linguist and African American Vernacular English speaker describes the linguistic conundrum in which he found himself at school. He explains how he was confronted by the fact that his language was different from the expected linguistic behavior of the school and how that difference was perceived as a deficiency in need of correction. He states:

teachers and other school officials often used such terms as "talking flat," "slovenly speech," "corrupt speech," "broken English," "verbal cripple," "verbally destitute," "linguistically handicapped," and "linguistically deprived" to describe the language behavior of my Blackclassmates and me. They suggested that our language differences were deficiencies that were related to physical and/or mental abnormalities (Smith 2002, p. 17).

For young African Americans, speaking Black English promotes cultural solidarity, authenticity, and legitimacy (Carter, 2005). But as Delpit (1995) points out, it also puts them at risk in school. Mainstream teachers often view students who speak African American Vernacular English as ignorant, they lower their expectations for them, and

they fail to provide appropriately engaging and challenging instruction (Carter, 2005). In addition, a teacher's suggestion that something is wrong with the student and her family takes a psychological toll and creates resistance to mainstream learning and teachers (Delpit, 2002).

Anglophone Caribbean Immigrants and Identity Construction

Few studies have considered issues of language socialization, identity, and schooling for Anglophone Caribbean immigrants. Table 2-4 summarizes relevant studies. It is interesting to note that most studies have focused on adult or college-age students and only a few have included school-age children. Moreover, they have primarily been interested in Anglophone Caribbean immigrants in urban settings and applied a qualitative design using a social constructivist framework.

Together, these studies confirm the importance of viewing Anglophone Caribbean identities as multiple and hybrid (Foner, 1997; Nero 2005; Richards, 2008; Waters, 2001). Moreover, like other minority populations, Anglophone Caribbean individuals have often been marginalized, misidentified, and misplaced in (and out of) language education programs. Their language use varies between Standard English varieties, AAVE and English Creole and reflects their identities in different contexts (Nero, 2005; Pratt-Johnson, 1993).

Foner (1997), for example, conceptualizes the formation of new (hybrid) identities among Jamaican immigrants as a “creolization” process such that “Jamaican immigrants do not become exactly like Americans, Black or white. Nor are they any longer just like Jamaicans in the home society. Instead, new meanings, ideologies, and patterns of behavior develop among them in response to the conditions and circumstances they encounter in the United States” (p. 967). Waters (1999, 2001)

further suggests that many Black Caribbean immigrants taut their West Indian heritage, nationality, and socioeconomic status over race in order to succeed socially and economically. This identity choice occurs, according to her, because when Black Caribbean immigrants lose their distinctiveness as immigrants they “become not just Americans, but Black Americans” (p.5). As they inherit the label of Black American, they gain the stereotypes and disadvantages that come along with this label in a racialized society, such as the United States.

In her study of West Indians in Brooklyn, Richards (2008) argues that the growth and concentration of West Indian immigrants in certain boroughs and neighborhoods in New York City has facilitated the hybridization of the various Caribbean island cultures represented amongst second generation youth. Richards suggests that the youth who she interviewed are like their African American counterparts in many ways. “Most of them do not have accents, many of them like hip hop and rap, dress like African Americans, celebrate Kwanzaa in school, join their school’s step team, and discuss issues of race and racism in their Black Heritage Society meetings” (p. 288). None of the youth in Richards’ study (2008) had a problem interacting with their African-American peers as fellow Blacks. Even so, the majority of students were clear on the fact that they are also culturally Haitian, Jamaican, or Trinidadian. She found that most of these students interacted primarily with other second generation West Indians in their neighborhoods, schools, and churches. This reinforced a shared feeling of being ethnically distinct. In fact, having foreign-born parents and relatives from the Caribbean was a source of pride and prestige within these predominately West Indian peer groups. These two examples illustrate the complex nature of identities within this population.

Finally, the negotiation of race, language, and ethnicity is also related to language choices. When bidialectal (SAE/Creole) Caribbean adolescents use Patois or Creole English in specific situations they are enacting a specific identity (LePage&Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Gesslbauer (2003) found that African Caribbean adolescents in Britain use Creole as a symbol of Black identity. In the U.S. American context, Waters (1999) found that Black immigrants of Caribbean descent used Creole to highlight their immigrant status and distinguish themselves from Black Americans.

Concluding Remarks

The conceptual and empirical works on identity and identity construction in the context of the United States cited above deal with two major groups: bilingual immigrant populations (linguistic minority, immigrant) and African Americans (racial minority; non-immigrant). There have also been a number of studies on African immigrants who have been categorized as racial and linguistic minorities. However, there is still a dearth of studies on the experiences of English speaking, Caribbean students from their perspectives. In addition, few if any of these studies explore identity construction and negotiation outside of the larger metropolitan cities of the United States.

While early empirical studies in the field tended to lean on essentialist notions of identity, more recent work has embraced the multiple, dynamic, and hybrid nature of a person's identity. More contemporary studies have highlighted the importance of both human agency and interaction through language in conceptualizations of identity and identity construction processes. Many of these studies have also used school as a setting where in almost every instance; schools were sites of struggles or conflict for non-mainstream students. Through a constructivist epistemological perspective, this study sought to explore how Anglophone Caribbean adolescents make meaning of,

construct, and negotiate their identities in the context of U.S. American schools in a more rural, less diverse context.

As outlined in this literature review, there are many epistemological perspectives, theories, and models that address the bases of identity (the “what”) as well as describe the processes by which identity is constructed (the “how”). In this study, identity is defined as a set of meanings applied to the self (Burke, 2007; Burke & Tully, 1977).

This study takes the theoretical perspective that identity construction involves cognitive processes by which individuals verify, and negotiate their personal, role-related, and social identities.

1. Context-dependent identity standards, and perceptions thereof, are internalized for each of an individual’s identities;
2. Information is cognitively processed about whether (or not) beliefs, behaviors, (and appearance) meet the perceived identity standards. This is often referred to as verification;
3. If individuals perceive identity standards to be consistent or congruent with their own, the beliefs and behaviors are continued. However, if there are discrepancies or inconsistencies between the standards, beliefs, and behaviors, people negotiate, construct messages and adapt behaviors to counteract discrepancies and bring identities into alignment with identity standards.

The above identity construction processes are ongoing and complicated by a number of factors, most importantly those that are contextual. Changes in contexts (and therefore perceived identity standards) trigger these cognitive processes to be repeated and identities to be re-constructed and negotiated again and again. It is also important to note that identity standards do not stay the same. Just as identities change across contexts and time, so do identity standards.

Table 2-1. Selected Models of Identity Development

	<i>Psychosocial Development Model</i>	<i>White Racial Identity Model</i>	<i>Black Racial Identity Model</i>	<i>Biracial Identity Model</i>	<i>Ethnic Identity Development Model</i>
	Erikson (1968)	Helms (1986)	Cross (1991)	Poston (1990)	Phinney (1992)
Stage 1	Trust vs. mistrust need to develop a sense of trust (birth to 18mths)	Contact Status oblivious to racism, lack an understanding of racism, have minimal experiences with Black people, and may profess to be color-blind	Pre-encounter feelings of ambivalence and shame	Personal identity individual feels pressured to choose one racial identity over another	Diffusion-foreclosure feelings of ambivalence regarding identity
Stage 2	Autonomy vs. shame & doubt need to achieve personal control over physical skills (2 to 3)	Disintegration status believing one is nonracist, yet not wanting one's son or daughter to marry a minority group member	Encounter feelings of anger and anxiety	Choice of group categorization person identifies with one group more so than the other	Moratorium feelings of hostility and/or shame regarding identity
Stage 3	Initiative vs. guilt need to assert power & control over environments (3 to 5)	Reintegration status sense of entitlement to white privilege and feelings of superiority	immersion feelings of rage and pride	Enmeshment and denial feelings of guilt for identifying with one group over the other	Identity Achievement feelings of pride and acceptance about identity
Stage 4	Industry vs. inferiority need to cope with new social & academic demands (6 to 11)	Pseudo independence The person begins to attempt an understanding of racial, cultural, and sexual orientation differences	Internalization secure and calm	Appreciation of multiple identity and exploration of heritages	
Stage 5	Identity vs. role confusion need to develop a sense of self & personal identity (12 to 18)	immersion status There is an increasing willingness to truly confront one's own biases	Internalization/ commitment feelings of resolution and empowerment	Integration and valuing of multiracial identity	

Table 2-1. Continued

	<i>Psychosocial Development Model</i>	<i>White Racial Identity Model</i>	<i>Black Racial Identity Model</i>	<i>Biracial Identity Model</i>	<i>Ethnic Identity Development Model</i>
Stage 6	Intimacy vs. isolation need to form important relationships (19 to 40)	Autonomy status Increasing awareness of one's own Whiteness, acceptance of one's own role in perpetuating racism			
Stage 7	Generativity vs. isolation need to nurture things that will outlast them (40 to 65)				
Stage 8	Ego integrity vs. despair need to reflect on life (65 to death)				

Table 2-2. Berry's Model of Acculturation

	<i>Cultural Maintenance</i> YES	<i>Cultural Maintenance</i> NO
Contact Participation YES	Integration/biculturalism	Assimilation
Contact Participation NO	Separation/ Segregation	Marginalization

Table 2-3. Sample Typology Models based on Acculturation theory

Berry (1980/2003)	Waters (1999) TYPES OF IDENTITIES	Sue & Sue (1971)
Integrated /(biculturalism)	American	Hyphenated American (e.g. Asian American)
Assimilated	ethnic	marginalized
separated/segregated	immigrant	traditionalist
Marginalized		

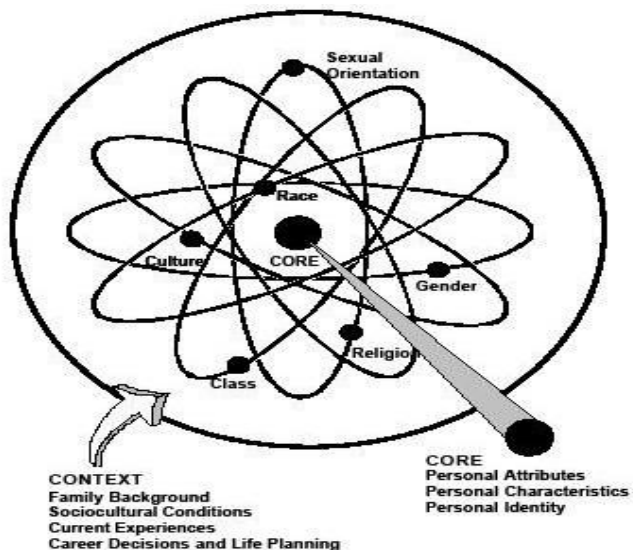


Figure 2-1. Jones & McEwen's (2000) Multidimensional Model

Table 2-4. Selected studies of Anglophone Caribbean and West Indian immigrants' identities.

Author(s)	Participants	Location	Methodology	Findings
Foner (1997)	All immigrants, including Immigrant Caribbean families	NY	Conceptual	Identities as "creolized" or hybrid
Gesslbauer (2003)	Afro-Caribbean adolescents	Britain	Qualitative	Inequalities in education; Language as symbolic
LePage&Tabouret-Keller (1983)	West Indian and British West Indian immigrants	Various communities in the Caribbean and London	Qualitative	Language as acts of identity
Nero (2001/2005)	College-level Guyanese and Jamaican students	NYC	Qualitative	Mismatch between self ascribed linguistic identities and identities ascribed to them; complication of (language-based) dichotomies
Pratt-Johnson (1993)	Newly arrived K-12 students of Caribbean ancestry	NYC	Qualitative	Misidentification and misplacement in language programs
Richards (2008)	Adults and adolescents of Caribbean ancestry	NYC	Qualitative	Hybridization of West Indian cultures
Waters (1999/2001)	Adults and adolescent girls of Caribbean ancestry	NYC	Qualitative	Multiple identities; identity salience and negotiation; identity typology for West Indian immigrants

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-ascribed identities of Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and their perceptions of how their schooling experiences have shaped their identities.

Questions Guiding the Study

The study was guided by the following questions:

- How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents describe and construct their identities?
- How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents' perceive that their schooling experiences have shaped these identities?

Constructivism

Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert “paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her research approach” (p.116). They explain that a paradigm may be viewed as the belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of methods but in epistemologically fundamental ways. The paradigm which fundamentally informed and guided this inquiry was constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Constructivists seek understandings of phenomena based upon individual values, beliefs, perspectives, experiences, and meaning-making processes. So, one person’s knowledge, reality, and/or truth might be totally different from another’s. Constructivists believe that knowledge and reality are created within the individual, but are influenced by social relationships and interactions. I approached this research on identity with the belief that:

- while identities are constructed as a result of individual agency, social influences play an important role;
- identities are dynamic, hybrid, and multidimensional; and
- identity(ies) is/are constructed and enacted through language.

Constructivist researchers also “focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants” as they influence perspectives (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Thus, I was also interested in participants’ schooling experiences and its role in their identity construction. I focused specifically on the schooling context because identity construction is more pronounced during adolescence, as teens are beginning to construct and reconstruct their identities based on the messages of peers and macrostructures such as schools.

It is important to note that the constructivist paradigm does not claim to be “value free” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). First, there were alternative ways of framing this research study. Both my epistemological stance and foreknowledge of the phenomenon under study influenced the research questions and protocol questions. Examples of those questions are: “describe the ways that you represent your culture,” “describe how this photograph depict aspects of your identity and “describe how people of _____ heritage are/were treated at your school.” Second, the data and findings are interpretable, so there may be various interpretations of the data.

The Participants

Among their identities, the four participants for this study self-identify as first generation Americans of Caribbean descent. They represent the Bahamas, Jamaica, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Thomas). They are a representative population of females and males, as Waters (2001) and Rumbaut (1994) suggest gender shapes the

meanings attached to different types of ethnic self-identity, including an American identity. A number of researchers have concluded that the boundaries between different types of identity are more fluid and permeable for girls than for boys and that the task of developing a racial and ethnic identity is bound up with issues of gender identity as well (Dion & Dion, 2001; Qin-Hillard, 2003).

Participants were selected through criterion sampling. In criterion sampling the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has the defining characteristics. The criteria used for this study were:

- Self-identified first or second generation of English-speaking Caribbean descent;
- Adolescents aged 13 to 19.

All of the participants currently live and attend(ed) high school in Florida. The participants range between the ages of 17 and 19. I elected to study participants in this age range as opposed to younger children or mature adults because individuals in late adolescence through young adulthood are faced with a number of changes that affect their understanding of their group and individual identities. These changes include their maturing cognitive abilities, greater interactions outside of their communities and concerns with their appearance and social life (Phinney, 1989). Below is a brief description of each participant. Pseudonyms are used to ensure that their identities are protected.

Elise

Elise is a 17 year old black female who self-identifies as Jamaican and American. She is 5'2, slender and wears her hair in long, natural braids. Elise is extremely soft-spoken and shy. She was born in South Florida. Both of her parents were born in Jamaica. While her mother currently resides in Florida, her father lives in Jamaica. She

has a 20 year old sister who is very involved in the Jamaican Student Association at the college she attends. Elise is a senior at a high school in a predominately white community in Northeast Florida. She is an honors student in the International Baccalaureate program. She enjoys playing the piano and spending time with family. After high school, Elise plans to attend college to pursue a degree in the medical field so that she can travel the world to help others.

Kendall

Kendall is a 17 year old black male who identifies as St. Thomian. He is 5'8 slender, and has long, dark brown locks. Kendall was born in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. He and his mother moved to Florida when he was in was in 5th grade. His parents were both born in the U.S. Virgin Islands. His mother is from St. Croix and his dad was born in St. Kitts. He lives with his mother and step-father in Northeast Florida. His birth father, however, still lives in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He visits his biological father and his maternal grandparents often. Kendall has four sisters and one brother. Only one of his siblings, a younger sister, lives in the same household. Kendall is a scholar athlete and attends high school in a predominately white community in Northeast Florida. He is in the 11th grade and has always attended Florida's schools. He enjoys poetry, specifically spoken word and playing soccer. He plans on attending college, where he wants to double major in business and psychology.

Nicole

Nicole is a 19 year old black female who identifies as Jamaican. She is 5'4" tall, has brown eyes, and long, Black, natural hair. She was born in South Florida. Both of her parents were born in Jamaica. Her father still lives in Jamaica, but her mother lives in Florida where she teaches high school English. She has four sisters and three

brothers. Nicole has attended Florida schools throughout her elementary and secondary years. She is currently in her 2nd year of college at a Florida college where she is an active member of the Caribbean Student Association and the Jamaican Student Association. She also travels to Jamaica and the Caribbean quite often. Nicole enjoys writing and analyzing poetry and musical lyrics. She plans on pursuing the doctorate degree so that she can eventually teach at the university-level in Jamaica.

DeAndre

DeAndre is a 19 year old black male who self identifies as Bahamian and American. He is almost 6' tall and has light brown eyes. DeAndre's mother came to the United States for a short period of time while she was pregnant and gave birth to him here. He was born in Northeast Florida. Both of his parents were born in the Bahamas where they currently reside. He is an only child. He attended elementary school, middle school and his first three years of high school in Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas. He moved to Northeast Florida to complete his senior year of high school. He is currently in his first year of college in a Historically Black College in Florida. DeAndre travels to the Bahamas during the summers and for the Christmas and Thanksgiving holidays. He enjoys playing football and spending time with friends. DeAndre plans to pursue a career in architecture and construction after completing college.

Setting

This study took place in a medium-sized, rural area in northeastern Florida. While Florida is the second largest settlement area for Caribbean immigrants (US Census, 2000), their population in northern Florida is quite small. The majority of Caribbean immigrants settle in southern Florida. The population in the northern part of the state has increased as families decide to move to less populated areas or move north for

better employment opportunities. As mentioned in the descriptions above, the immediate environment in which each of the participants lived and went to school varied. Participants were allowed to choose the setting where data were collected. The interview sites varied from local public libraries and restaurants to participants' homes.

Access and Entry

The University of Florida contends that the dissertation committee of the doctoral candidate must approve dissertation research. In addition, the researcher must obtain permission from the Institution Review Board (IRB), which can be done with the committee chairperson's permission prior to full dissertation committee approval. To maintain compliance, I sought approval from my committee to conduct this study. I then submitted the required IRB-approval application, which consisted of an overview of the proposed research and included copies of the participation invitation, consent form, and data collection documents, to the IRB office for review and approval by the board.

Once IRB approval was obtained, I recruited potential participants through Caribbean American community and student associations. Emails were sent through the Caribbean Student Association (CSA) listserv at one university and flyers were posted at another. Potential participants were identified and asked to participate on a strictly voluntary basis. While several people responded to my requests, only four completed all of the tasks required in order for me to complete the collection and analysis. Elise's sister, an elected officer in the CSA, provided me Elise's contact information. Kendall was referred to me by a colleague who had just completed her dissertation study, which took place in his English class. Nicole, a member of the CSA, contacted me directly to volunteer for the study, and DeAndre responded to one of the flyers posted on his campus. The necessary informed consent forms were obtained to

ensure research standards were followed, which included the guarantee that participants' identities would remain confidential (Appendix A). Written permission was also obtained from the parents of those participants under the age of 18 (Appendix B).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study took place from January 2010 to April 2010. During this time, I collected data through general background questionnaires, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, photo elicitation, and bi-weekly questions/prompts delivered via email. Table 3-1 shows the alignment of the research questions and data collection tools.

Table 3-2 provides details regarding the data collection timeframe for each of the participants. While it was proposed that the study would take place over a 12 week period, postponements, cancellations, recruitment issues and failure to submit documents on time resulted in the data collection phases being extended.

Research Instruments

Several research instruments were used to collect data for this study. Upon collection, interview data were transcribed, and saved into electronic files. Transcribed interviews and other hard copies of data sources were labeled and placed into folders so that there would be both electronic and hard copies of data.

Background Questionnaires

Background questionnaires (Appendix C) allowed me to gather general demographic information about participants and their families. I used the background questionnaire to gauge the interests, hobbies, and talents of participants. The questionnaire consisted of 18 short answer questions. Each participant answered all of

the questions. These responses informed the interview protocols as the researcher believed necessary.

Interviews

Carspecken (1996) states that there are many qualitative studies that aim to study the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of individuals through qualitative interviews alone. He states that

the most effective way to use qualitative interviews with subjects is to get them to describe events they remember taking part in: to begin at a concrete level where a specific action situation is recalled and then work toward articulations of interpretative schema that the subject applies in many diverse situations (1996, p. 39).

The in-depth interview method is open-ended and discovery oriented, having the goal of exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, feelings, and beliefs (Carspecken, 1996; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Many researchers believe that semi-structured interviews are the ideal type of qualitative interviews. The semi-structured interviews allow a respondent the time and scope to talk about their views on a particular subject. The focus of the interview however, is decided upon by the researcher as there may be areas that the researcher is interested in exploring in depth. Semi-structured interviews also eliminate the problem of the research totally pre-determining what will or will not be discussed in the interview. With few pre-set questions involved, the interviewer is not pre-judging what is and is not important information.

I attempted to build rapport with the participants by structuring the interview like a conversation. Additional, probing questions were asked when I felt it appropriate to ask them. For example, if a participant was hesitant about qualifying his or her answer, I waited until further in the interview to revisit the question. Although I had interview

protocols (Appendices D-F), our conversation were not bound by them. Semi-structured in-depth interviewing allowed me various opportunities to create a positive rapport between the participants and myself. This was especially important since there was a significant age difference between the participants and myself and ethnic and/or national affiliations differed. Spradley (1979) breaks the rapport building process into the following stages:

My goal was to decrease any power structure that would compromise the validity of the interview process by establishing rapport and assisting participants toward the participation stage. I established rapport by engaging in informal meetings with participants beforehand, allowing participants to lead conversations, and catering to the interests of participants in terms of preferred interview location (as long as it was conducive to interviewing).

While there were many positive attributes to using this method, it was not without its challenges. I had to think of appropriate follow-up questions during the interview process. Because the interviews were not totally standardized, it was more difficult to generalize and find themes/motifs, as respondents were sometimes asked different follow-up questions. When I found that a question was not asked or phrased the same way, I searched for additional instances or chunks of discourse to confirm the existence of a theme and I asked participants for follow-up interviews.

In order to avoid prescribing the content of the participant responses towards the researcher's point of view or perspective, Carspecken (1996) advocates the use of lead-off questions that would introduce the topic domain that the researcher would like the participant to address. The lead-off questions were formulated as concretely as possible

(e.g. how would you describe yourself to someone who couldn't see or hear you?). To get to abstract issues or concepts, questions were posed to get participants to talk about concrete events and then, generally with appropriate participant responses, the participant was facilitated towards generalizing some of the background issues to her contexts of life (e.g., Can you tell me a time when an experience in school made you feel good to be _____?). Each of the interviews lasted for no more than 30 minutes during each of three sessions. Each interview was transcribed and filed by date. This data collection method resulted in 73 pages of transcribed interview data. There was an average of 16 total pages per participant.

Photo-Elicitation

Photo elicitation is a qualitative research method in which photographs are integrated into the interviewing process. Photo elicitation was used to allow the participants to more clearly show their realities and perceptions visually. At the conclusion of the first semi-structured interview (Appendix D), each participant was asked to prepare for the next photo-elicitation interview (Appendix E). Reflexive photography was used to gather photos. Reflexive photography is where participants take photographs or collect images in which the subjects are people, objects, or events that reflect the photographer in some way (Harper, 1987).

Over the last century, the use of photographs for social science purposes has waxed and waned. It has gone from being popular to being ignored. However, in the past decade, there has been a considerable renewal of interest (Bank, 1995, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2001; Rose 2001). In comparison with other data collection methods, relatively little has been written on using the visual medium as a method through which photographs can enhance the interview process.

In this study, photographs were used to evoke a response (Harper 1984) and extract information (Heisley & Levy, 1991) from participants. It has been used across disciplines and topic areas in order to determine ethnic identification (Gold, 1986); understand behaviors (Wessels, 1985); work with young children and adolescents (Foster et al., 1999; Salmon, 2001); and talk about difficult, abstract concepts (Curry & Strauss, 1994; Bender et al., 2001). Douglas (1998) asked Black students to present their pictures of a predominately white university and he used them in subsequent interviews to gauge their experiences at these institutions. Ziller (1990) asked students from four nationalities to take pictures depicting what the U.S. meant to them and then to talk about it. He found that their photographs were quite different from those taken by American-born students. Participants reported this technique was more engaging and promoted deeper levels of reflexive thinking than interviews alone would have done.

Fang & Elwein (1990) and Wang (2001) contend that photo elicitation has the potential to be used at any stage of the research, bridge psychological and physical realities, allow the combination of visual and verbal language, assist with building rapport, and provide a component of multi-methods triangulation to improve rigor (Hurworth, 2003). Hurworth (2003) also contends that many participants prefer photo elicitation over conventional interviews.

My purpose for using photo elicitation was two-fold. First, I was aware that people generally enjoy talking about images that represent who they are. It provoked participants to talk considerably more than when they were in the other interview sessions. Participants were also more apt to answer follow-up questions that referred to images and not just their thoughts regarding abstract concepts such as identity.

Second, photo elicitation was a way to triangulate the data collected during the other interview sessions and email questions. During subsequent interviews, I was able to refer back to the images and photographs that participants provided to confirm motifs and ask follow up questions.

Participants were provided detailed verbal and written directions (Appendix E) for this portion of the study. They were also provided one 35 mm, 24 exposure disposable camera. Three of the four decided that they would use their own cameras. Participants were specifically asked to photograph anything that represents their identities and or the expression of their identities. They photographed symbols, people, events/occasions that depicted aspects of who they are. They were also given the option to bring in previously taken photos, use Internet images, or borrow pictures from family members or friends. Participants gathered 7 to 36 photographs/images over a two week period (in most instances). Once photographs were developed or uploaded by the participants, they were asked to design PowerPoint presentations and provide captions for their selected set of photographs and/or images. There were a total of 28 captions comprised of one to three sentences each.

Samuels (2002) and Taylor (2002) highlight a few of the disadvantages of photo elicitation. They say that:

- Photos do not automatically elicit useful interviews;
- Photographing takes time and energy that participants may not be willing to spend;
- Participants may focus on or be apprehensive about the outcome or quality of the photos; and
- Some people do not see photographs as being able to capture their reality or to act as metaphors.

There were two major challenges in using photo-elicitation for this study. First, participants sometimes took pictures that seemed irrelevant to the purpose of the study or they could not explain how particular images relate to their identities. Second, the quality and length of the photo-elicitation interview was dependent upon the quality and quantity of the photos. If students had few photos, then there was less to talk about or if the photos did not relate to their identity, it was difficult to redirect the conversation.

Email Questions

Electronic mail was a resourceful tool for collecting data, as it provided unlimited accessibility, allowed for indirect, informal interaction that could possibly alleviate anxiety or stress that could occur with face-to-face contact. Like the photographs, it proved a useful source of data for triangulation to confirm and disconfirm motifs and themes. Participants were told to not worry about spelling and that they could use any language variety with which they were comfortable. Each of three questions was emailed to participants so that they might inform the interview protocols (Appendix G). They were asked to answer or respond to the following prompts and to email their responses to me within a two-week time period:

- **Email Question #1**
List the various aspects of your identity in order of importance (most to least) and explain why it is important for you to acknowledge these identities.
- **Email Question #2**
I show pride in my _____ identity by _____.
- **Email Question #3**
Are there any teachers, principals, guidance counselors, or coaches that share your identity(es)? If so, in what ways do they share your identity(s)? How does your school support your identity?

Participants were provided Email Question #1 and the Demographic Questionnaire at the same time. Questions # 2 and # 3 were sent immediately after Interviews #1 and

#2, respectively. There were several instances when interviews had to be postponed due to questions not being submitted in enough time for them to inform the interview protocol. For example, one participant decided that he would bring his responses with him to the actual interview. I accepted the questions at that time, but postponed the interview so that I would have enough time to analyze his response.

The length of the written responses for the email questions varied. For Email Question 1, each of the participants' generated lists that ranged from five to ten self-ascribed identities. Each participant generated a paragraph (5 to 7 sentences) for Email Questions 2 and 3, respectively.

Researcher's Reflective Journal

Keeping a reflective journal allowed for a level of reflexivity that was necessary for me to bracket my personal views on ethnicity, race, and identity. Reflexivity, in the form of journal keeping, helped me to maintain personal integrity and an awareness of personal views versus that which was evidenced in the data. It also allowed me to record observations regarding participants' actions and unrecorded conversations that either conflicted or confirmed findings or themes. Original notes were handwritten and typed into columns that provided participant's names, interview dates, raw notes, conceptual notes, and next steps. An example is provided in Table 3-4.

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis was used as an analytical tool at the macro level. It is a method that is compatible with constructivist, objectivist, and subjectivist frameworks, and is widely used across different epistemologies as a foundation for discovering or constructing meaning. Like other analytic methods that include themes "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in data" (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). It is an inductive and interpretive procedure that illuminates the salient and connective threads between participants' thoughts and actions. By engaging in thematic analysis one can not only recognize how individuals make meaning of their experiences and identities, but also discover how meaning is made within socio-historical constructs.

I analyzed the interviews, PowerPoint/photograph captions, and email questions using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process. The thematic process, as an inductive analysis procedure, is divided into five phases detailed below.

First, I transcribed and familiarized myself with the transcribed data through repeated readings prior to creating codes. I recorded thoughts and ideas as I transcribed and read the transcripts. I bracketed those thoughts and ideas for the time being. Second, I open-coded across data sources based on meaning units, retaining some of the context with the code. The meaning units used as much of the participants' words as possible as opposed to always rephrasing those meaning units. Some meaning units potentially had multiple codes. The following are examples from the DeAndre's original code sheet.

- Relationships and connections with family
- Relationships and connections with U.S. American friends
- Time to be U.S. American
- Living a new life
- Identity-Language Connections
- Misrecognition in schools
- Lack of affirmation in schools

Next, I gathered the codes and began combining the open codes into larger codes or potential themes. Some codes became sub-themes, or themes within a theme. For example, *Identity and Language Connections* was a major theme for DeAndre. Under

that there were three sub-themes: *Bahamian accent as a tool of distinction*, *Bahamian accent as a liability*, and *U.S. American accent results in U.S. American identity*. At this point, I also searched for what I might have left out of the coding and thematic processes by reviewing each line in each of the data sources to see if they had been included initially. My initial codes helped at this point. Reviewing or “clustering themes” (Boyatzis, 1998) occurred as leading themes emerged. When a theme re-emerged across data sets, I determined compatibility between them by asking whether the themes reflect the same meaning across the data sources.

In the last stage, the “essences” of each theme and the “story” within the theme were created. I then considered what these stories said about participants’ perceptions of their identities, their identity construction processes, and the role of school in these processes. These steps were repeated for each participant and resulted in a list of themes that were woven throughout at least two data sources. The themes and examples from the interview transcripts were then matched with the most relevant research question as indicated in Table 3-5.

Once the individual coding, analysis, and theme production was done for each set of data (for each participant), I went back to the original codes for each participant, and looked across participants’ data for codes that were similar. I recorded these along with participants’ examples onto another code sheet designed specifically for the cross case analysis. As this was being done, I searched for general themes that emerged, patterns, and significant differences in the code for participants. For example, I made note of themes that emerged from the females’ data, but not the males’ data and vice versa.

This process resulted in the four common themes outlined in chapter 8 and the subsequent discussion in chapter 9.

Gee's (2005) I-statement analysis was used as the analytical tool of choice for the micro level analysis of the data. Gee suggests that one of the ways that we can get to know how teenagers build different identities through language is to look at when they refer to themselves by speaking in the first person as "I." Following Gee (2005), I categorized different I-statements in terms of the type of predicate that accompanies "I," that is, in terms of what sort of thing the participant says about her or himself. Gee distinguishes the following types of I-statements:

- a. Cognitive statements - The participant talks about thinking and knowing (e.g., "I think...", "I guess...");
- b. Affective statements – The participant talks about desiring and liking (e.g., "I want...", "I like...");
- c. State and Action statements – The participant talks about his or her states of actions ("I am mature," "I hit him back," "I paid the bill");
- d. Ability and Constraint statements – The participant talks about being able or having to do things ("I can't say anything to them," "I have my paper route"); and
- e. Achievement statements – The participant talks about activities, desires, or efforts that relate to "mainstream" achievement, accomplishment, or distinction ("I challenge myself," "I want to go to MIT or Harvard").

(Gee, 2005, p. 141-142)

At the micro level, I analyzed "I" statements to understand how the participants build socially situated identities. To conduct the I-statement analyses, I applied the following process for each participant's interviews, email questions and photo/image captions:

- Select a type of I-statement to code.
- Create an I-statement analysis worksheet.

- Select examples of these I-statements from the interview transcripts, email questions, and photo/image captions.
- Examine the results for preliminary themes/motifs and examine how/if they answer the research questions.
- Repeat the process for different types of I-statement.

While Gee's (2005) I-statement categories were adequate for the majority of the data, as I worked on my analysis, I realized that another category of I-statements was necessary. I called this category "Subject of Others' Statements and Actions." The participants used these type of I-statements when recollecting how they had been viewed by others (e.g., I get grouped with the bad kids; I am labeled by others as...).

Aline-by-line analysis occurred and all I-statements were categorized as such: The findings of both macro and micro level analyses are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Establishing Validity

The trustworthiness, or credibility, of qualitative research findings is of "utmost importance" (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). Although there seems to be no agreed-upon definition of validity, it often refers to the truthfulness or "soundness" of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research and explicitly offered these as an alternative to more traditional quantitatively-oriented criteria. They felt that their four criteria better reflected the underlying assumptions involved in much qualitative research. Those four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The credibility criterion involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand

the phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. The qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. The person who wishes to "transfer" the results to a different context is then responsible for making the judgment of how sensible the transfer is.

The idea of dependability, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study.

Qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study (Trochim, 2006).

For this study, validity was established through data triangulation, member checking, researcher subjectivity (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2001).

Data Triangulation

Researchers suggest collecting multiple sources and examples of data in order to triangulate data and confirm findings (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995).

Triangulation in this study occurred in two ways. First, multiple sources of data were

collected and analyzed – audio-taped interviews, email questions, and photos/images with captions. Having multiple sources of data allowed me to confirm or disconfirm themes as well as provide counter-examples. Second, I adapted and employed Gee's (2005) suggestions to ensure the validity in thematic analysis by using the following elements:

- Coverage – all of the data were analyzed with consideration given to each theme. Excerpts were not analyzed in isolation. Segments before and after were analyzed so as not to miss elements or to avoid analyzing participants' responses out of context.
- Convergence – Similar data (within the same narrative) led to similar conclusions. For example, although data sources varied, themes regarding ethnicity were similar across interviews, email questions, and photo captions.
- Agreement – There is some sort of agreement amongst peers working on the same data set, or research and participants. This is similar to peer review and member checking, respectively. Whenever disagreements arose, varying perspectives were shared in the discussion chapter.

Member Checking

Member checking is a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants to check the accuracy of the account. This check involved taking the findings back to participants and asking them (in writing or an interview) about the accuracy of the report. To both insure the validity of my findings and ensure that my participants' situated meanings were interpreted accurately, I allowed them to qualify statements, provide definitions, question interpretations, and add new information. This was done before the second and third interviews and at the completion of each case.

For example, during one of the member checking sessions, a participant told me that I had interpreted the term "swag" incorrectly. He proceeded to tell me that "swag" is short for "swagger" and simply refers to a person's style, to include the type of clothing he or she wears as well as their hairstyle, haircut, and make-up. The same term was

used in a subsequent interview with another participant. He agreed with my revised interpretation of his use of the term.

Researcher Subjectivity

Another way to establish validity in qualitative studies is by acknowledging possible researcher biases and reflecting on my position as a researcher. Qualitative research is interpretive in nature, requiring the researcher to be self-reflective and disclose prior experiences, assumptions, orientations, beliefs and values that may affect perspectives about the phenomenon under study and the interpretation of data (Seidman, 1998; 2006). Therefore, it is important that I acknowledge some identities and experiences that I have had to bracket during this study: my identity as a black person, my beliefs, and my experiences with Anglophone Caribbean students. I bracketed my biases by writing how I felt about the data collected or the participants. I would later revisit the entries to insure that my perspectives did not cloud my representation of the data.

My Identity as a Black Person

I am very conscious of my racial identity. If someone were to ask me to describe myself, I would probably identify myself first by race. For as long as I can remember, my parents have used race and racism as a way to motivate and encourage me to do well in grade school, complete high school, complete college, and further my education. They would tell me that a very low percentage of blacks ever finish high school. A smaller percentage earns a college degree, and an even smaller percentage earns advanced degrees. They would tell me that it was important to do well in school because the odds were already against me and that education was the great equalizer. My identity as a black person provided intuition about how some of the participants felt

about being treated different than non-minority students and being accused of “acting white” by black peers; however, I was careful not to express my feelings and experiences in order to ensure that my participants’ voices were their own and not influenced by my experiences.

My Experiences with Anglophone Caribbean Students

My years as both a teacher and a student afforded me many opportunities to interact with first and second generation Anglophone Caribbean students. As an ESOL teacher, many of these students were placed in my classroom despite the fact that they were English proficient. Although they stayed with me only a short time, that is where I first learned that being or speaking differently can be viewed as being deficient or not proficient. As a language teacher and native speaker of a stigmatized dialect of English, I have some strong views regarding language and social status. Again, I was careful not to impose these experiences and feelings as I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

Journaling

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a research journal was kept to record thoughts, personal reflections, comments, and or wonderings. This kept me aware of any biases during the process and gave me an outlet to express such. Furthermore, the journal was used as a tool to refine the subsequent interviews and/or other forms of data collection.

Limitations

Limitations for this study cover four different areas. First, my perspective of participants’ identity construction may differ from that of the participants and readers of the study. Second, the participants were not representative of the Anglophone

Caribbean population in Florida or the United States. These participants represent only three of the English-speaking Caribbean nations. This was because the English-speaking Caribbean population in the geographical area in which the study took place is quite small. Adolescents who claim Caribbean ethnicity were difficult to track because school districts generally categorized these students as African American or black. Additionally, two of the participants were educated entirely in the United States, so they had no frame of reference in terms of the difference between education systems and experiences learning in a country other than the United States. Thus, the findings of the present study may not be generalizable to Anglophone Caribbean adolescents of different backgrounds and contexts.

Third, in terms of delving into Anglophone Caribbean immigrants' identities, the study is grounded in self-reported data, primarily the statements and stories of the participants, with little attempt to triangulate these data from a third party perspective due to the limited time for data collection and the complication of contacting third party participants. For example, I could have observed participants in their everyday settings. Considering that identity is constructed by positioning and being positioned by others, I could have interviewed the focal students' parents as well as friends to enrich their stories by integrating multiple perspectives.

Finally, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis and Gee's (2005) I-statement analysis were the primary methods of analyses used for this study. I acknowledge that it is quite possible that there are other methods of analysis that could highlight different aspects of these participants' identity construction that might be important in

understanding the role of schools, power structures, the negotiation of identities, identity and second-generation immigrants, or some other related phenomenon.

In the next four chapters, I present the findings in such a way that each of the participants' identity construction experiences is highlighted and their voices are heard. The themes and findings for each participant are confined to his or her chapter. I provide a view across the various perspectives in Chapter 8. This provides the reader with opportunities to view the similarities amongst the participants. A discussion of the findings is provided in Chapter 9, and Chapter 10 concludes with a summary of findings and implications for education and future research.

Participant	Age	Country of Birth	Parents' Countries of Birth	Ethnicities	Languages
Elise	17	Hollywood, FL	Mother – Jamaica Father - Jamaica	Jamaican American	SAE Patois
Kendall	17	St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands	Mother – St. Croix, U.S.V.I. Father – St. Kitts, U.S.V.I.	St. Thomian Cruzan African American	English AAVE Creole
Nicole	19	Miami, Florida	Mother – Jamaica Father - Jamaica	Jamaican American	Patois SAE
DeAndre	19	Daytona Beach, FL	Mother – Bahamas Father - Bahamas	Bahamian (Black) American	English Bahamian English

Figure 3-1. Participant Profiles

Table 3-1. Alignment of Data Collection Methods and Research Questions

Data Collection Tools	Research Questions	
	How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents construct their identities?	How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents perceive that aspects of their identities are shaped by their schooling experiences in the U.S.?
Demographic Questionnaire*		
Semi-structured interview #1	X	
Photo elicitation interview #2	X	X
Semi-structured interview #3	X	X
Email Questions (written)	X	X
Journal**		

* Demographic questionnaires provided background information that informed protocol.

** Journal was for reflexive note-taking and to adjust interview protocol as necessary.

Table 3-2. Data Collected

	Demographic Questionnaire Submitted	Email Question #1 Submitted	Interview #1	Email Question #2 Submitted	Photo/Image Details	Photo-Elicitation Interview #2	Email Question #3 Submitted	Interview #3
Participants								
Elise	01/20/10 Week 1	01/22/10 Week 1	02/6/10 Week 3 12:39	03/01/10 Week 7	36 photos total (collage style) 20 internet images	03/18/10 Week 9 15:01	03/19/10 Week 9	03/25/10 Week 11 22:28
Kendall	01/20/10 Week 1	01/24/10 Week 2	02/28/10 Week 2 15:43	03/05/10 Week 7	10 photos total 3 internet images	03/15/10 Week 9 19:49	04/01/10 Week 11	04/11/10 Week 13 15:00
Nicole	03/15/10 Week 1	03/15/10 Week 2	3/31/10 Week 3 10:10	4/15/10 Week 6	7 photos total 2 internet images	05/13/10 Week 7 15:09	04/28/10 Week 8	06/02/10 Week 13 18:11
DeAndre	01/15/10 Week 1	1/20/10 Week 2	01/25/10 Week 3 18:44	3/20/2010 Week 10	13 photos total 2 internet images	03/25/10 Week 11 14:42	03/28/10 Week 12	04/15/10 Week 15 24:22

Table 3-3. Building Rapport during the Interview Process (Spradley, 1979, pp. 78-83)

Stage	Characteristics & Procedures
Apprehension stage	There is always apprehension. Explain purpose and relax. Get informant talking. Descriptive questions – Can you tell me about your childhood/family/school? Keeps informant talking.
Exploration stage	Participant tries to figure out what I want, explores the interview and relationship; don't push at all in this stage—no pressure to cooperate. Wait out any feelings of tension. Make repeated explanations, restate what participants say (don't reinterpret, just restate—nonjudgmental), don't ask for meaning but ask questions to get more use of the term.
Cooperation stage	Participants and interviewer not worried anymore about making mistakes. More cooperation. Informant spontaneously corrects interviewer, helps toward the goal of the interviews.
Participation stage	Final stage, only sometimes reached. Participant realizes he/she is teaching interviewer. Heightened cooperation, full participation in project.

Table 3-4. Excerpt from Researcher's Reflective Journal

Participant/ Interview # Date	Raw Notes	Conceptual Notes	Next Steps
Elise Interview #1 02/06/10	Dressed in Jamaican colors (black, green, & yellow). Wore Bob Marley/flag t-shirt. Wore black and green beret with long dreaded braids. Mentioned that she doesn't usually dress this way, but today is Marley's birthday and "Jamaicans usually celebrate it." Seemed quite uncomfortable, almost confused when discussing race. Whispered whenever she used racial terms such as white and black...said "I don't know" a lot despite seeming quite knowledgeable about issues/concepts. Jamaican vanity plate on car.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanity plate, wearing colors and knowledge of Marley's birthday as a way to self identify and/or have others identify her as Jamaican • Categorization by race as improper, insignificant, or inappropriate 	Consideration for int. #2, #3 and subsequent data analysis
Kendall Interview #2 03/15/10	Constantly used the term niggas and rednecks...hmmmm? Uses these terms to refer to himself and peers of African descent and all whites...quite derogatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial (derogatory) terminology as inclusive and exclusive 	Continue to allow participants to speak freely.

Table 3-5. Example of Themes Originating from Open Codes

Research Question 1: How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents construct their identities?			
THEMES			
Valuing & maintaining the relationships and connections he has with others.	Believing ' <i>time</i> ' is a factor as he constructs his identity	Representing the other (American) ' <i>half</i> '.	Constructing and reconstructing identity through the use of a particular language or accent.
<p>Email Question #1 indicates relationship with God, family members and those who look to him for advice is significant to identity construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acceptance comes through relationships with friends "having a nice personality" and "knowing how to treat people" (Email Question 2). Family and friends affirm his identity because he can "be myself around them (D1/Lines 66-69) 	<p>The concept of time is significant in that DeAndre refers to the amount of time that he has spent vs. the amount of time he has spent in the United States (D2/Lines 28-33).</p>	<p>Space and time is significant as his discourse suggests that there are definite boundaries around his two nationalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I gotta start now on the other half of my life" (Email Question 2) "I have to represent the other half now" (Email Question 2) "the other half is my USA half...I gotta represent that (D2/Lines 28-33) "I am glad that I got the chance to move to the next half of my nationality so that I can experience a new life" (Email Question 2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes when I talk, I go from American to Bahamian and they're like yeah...he from the Bahamas (D2/Lines 34-46). "But really, I didn't have to tell them because they usually assumed I was from the Bahamas just by the way that I talked (D3/Lines 1-7) Like last semester...'cause like my language changed so I'm not talking like how I used to talk when I first came over here...I speak more like everybody else [American peers].(D1/Lines 58-60)

Table 3-6. Sample Code Sheet for I-Statements

Transcript Code	Line Number	Sample Text	Comment
E3	53-55	I feel that immigrants take the uhmm, the what's it called? Take the opportunities in America more seriously...	Affective
E3	76-78	I didn't feel the same way about many things,	Affective
E3	124-126	I didn't understand a lot and I felt bad	Cognitive
E3	128-129	I felt that they [African Amer.] were the only people I could relate to because there were only whites and blacks...and then some Spanish.	Affective/State & Action
E1	20	I understand and occasionally speak in patois.	Cognitive/Ability& Constraint
E1	22	I don't know if you would consider that [patois] another language.	Cognitive
E1	42	I guess...I am considered black because of my skin tone.	Cognitive/Subj. of Others'
E1	42-43	I guess I consider myself black not the African American.	Cognitive/ State & Action

CHAPTER 4 ELISE

I felt lost. You know the kids called me white. I wasn't black, but I know I wasn't white either.

-Elise

Analysis of the data revealed three major themes related to Elise's identity construction. First, Elise constructed a Jamerican identity which helped her to maintain her role as a member of a Jamaican family and to build relationships with her American peers. Second, Elise at times contemplated negotiating her identity to fit in with other African Americans in North Florida and realized that being "black" in the cultural context of North Florida was not necessarily the same as being "black" in South Florida. Finally, Elise's identity as a student seemed just as important as her other identities. These three themes are illustrated in detail below.

Constructing a Jamerican Identity

Elise was born in South Florida to Jamaican immigrant parents. While her mother currently resides in Florida, her father lives in Jamaica. Elise, her mother and sister, moved from an urban community of Jamaicans and other West Indians to a suburban community where the majority of her neighbors were white Americans. Elise explained that where she had lived in South Florida, everyone was West Indian. Therefore, she too identified as West Indian, specifically Jamaican. Her family's relocation was the catalyst that resulted in her rethinking and reconstructing her Jamaican identity. When she first moved to North Florida, Elise pondered her identity in the context of her new home. In reflecting on her family's relocation, she stated, "I [became] kind of unsure what I [was]. I guess nationality is where you are born, I was born in America, but I

guess I have Jamaican blood, so see, I didn't know which way to go...[shrug of shoulders]" (2/Lines 12-17).

Shortly after the move to North Florida, Elise began to self-identify as 'Jamerican,' a term that she thought appropriate because it highlighted both her Jamaican and U.S. American heritages. Elise stated, "I describe myself as Jamerican. [A Jamerican] is a Jamaican American, 'cause I was born in America but my bloodline is Jamaican" (1/Lines 4-10). Elise's relationship with her aunt opened the door for a conversation whereby Elise would be introduced to the term 'Jamerican'. As evidenced in lines 1 and 2, Elise's aunt used the term to describe people like Elise – those of both Jamaican and American heritage.

1. My aunt coined that term [Jamerican]...my aunt uses that term...Uhhh...I
2. guess I noticed it [my Jamerican identity] more when I moved up here
3. because it wasn't a big deal in Miami because everyone was from the
4. Caribbean...I noticed it when I got up here and there weren't any to none
5. Jamaicans. In Miami or Hollywood...it was no big deal...because everyone is
6. from somewhere...it's kinda like Chinatown. It's America but everyone was
7. from the Caribbean, so even if you were born there [Jamaica] or not, you
8. identify yourself as Jamaican. (1/Lines51-55)

In lines 1 through 8, Elise explains that her Jamerican identity became more salient when she moved to North Florida where there were few Jamaicans ("I noticed it when I got up here and there weren't any to none Jamaicans," lines 2-3). She uses Chinatown as a point of comparison to explain the ethnic homogeneity in the community from which she had moved.

Some of Elise's family members objected to her identifying as solely Jamaican and others objected to her identifying as solely American. She experienced this as a "no win" situation where both she and her sister were caught in the middle ("we're like in between," lines 11-12).

9 It's basically you can't win...if I don't act Jamaican enough, my family gets
10 mad but if like my sister...when me and my sister tries to embrace it [her
11 Jamaican identity] they're like "no, you're American"...so we're like in
12 between...okay at least with some family members. (1/Lines 76-79)

In the context of Elise's new home (i.e. North Florida), claiming certain aspects of her identity became important in enabling her to fit in with her new neighbors and some of her schoolmates. Elise stated that her ability to speak 'proper' English impressed her neighbors. She stated, "sometimes people they ask me where I'm from because I speak a bit more proper...like one time this lady asked me if I was...we were from England...I don't know maybe we just speak more proper" (3/Lines 104-105). When analyzed in the context of the discussion, Elise's ability to speak "proper" English made her fit in and stand out. That is, she fit in with her neighbors who were mostly white and upper middle class and it made her stand out as a black teenager who was proficient in Standard American English and comfortable using it.

Elise's home language and religious practices were important to the maintenance of familial relationships. One way she expressed her Jamaican identity was through the use of Jamaican English Creole, referred to as Patois by its native speakers. She stated, "...when you talk Patois...when you use the terms and slang, you have to be a part of the culture to understand [the importance of language]" (1/Lines 80-84).

In addition to using Patois, Elise's religious beliefs were an important aspect of her Jamaican identity as evidenced by one of the first images that she chose to discuss (Figure 4-1). Elise stated that Figure 4-1 represented "the crucifixion of Jesus Christ who died for our sins and it was through my religion that I have had many opportunities to meet people with whom I identify most" (3/Lines 93-94).

Elise also stated:

13 A good majority of Seventh Day Adventists are Jamaican...our religion came
14 from my dad's side of the family... we don't watch TV on Saturday. Saturday
15 is the time that we pay homage to our savior. (3/Lines 91-92)

Elise's identity as a Christian, and more specifically as a Seventh Day Adventist, has given her opportunities to meet and bond with other Jamaicans and Jamaican Americans of the same faith.

Elise's Jamerican identity was defined in contrast to the African-American identity often ascribed to her. Elise's self-identification as 'Jamerican' references both the hard-working Jamaican immigrant identity and her American identity. Elise's experiences in the context of North Florida have also shown her that there is an ethnic hierarchy (lines 16-20) upon which black people place themselves and others.

16 I've noticed...like if ...I don't know I've noticed that some people think
17 that it's [Jamaican] the preferred ethnicity...like if you have darker skin
18 you don't just wanna be plain African American and I've noticed that a lot
19 of people like feel that way or they'll prefer to be Jamaican instead of
20 Haitian and it's the preferred ethnicity in general. (2/Lines 83-88)

She is aware that this identity places her higher on an ethno-racial hierarchy, which she has observed in the context of school and society in general. She suggested that her Jamaican values in part distinguish her from other blacks and secondly, some of these values are admired by mainstream American society.

In discussing some differences between African Americans and Jamaicans, Elise stated:

21 I know personally that uhmm Jamaicans, we have a stronger work ethic than
22 a lot of Americans, I think but maybe not intellectually, maybe we're just hard
23 workers instead of intellectual [lowering of voice]. (3/Lines 14-17)

It was Elise's perception that while society in general believed that Jamaicans have a work ethic that is superior to that of a lot of Americans, they are not viewed as being equals with regard to intelligence. In lines 22-23, Elise uses "we" to position herself as Jamaican only while discussing how that identity is perceived.

24 I feel that immigrants take the uhmm...the what's it called? Take the
25 opportunities in America more seriously [than African Americans] and I think a
26 lot of [immigrant] parents try to instill that in their [children's] generation...to
27 strive for a lot more 'cause we know what it's like not to have a lot. (3/Lines
28 52-56)

In the lines 24-28, Elise elaborates on the immigrant mentality that is an integral part of her Jamaican identity ("to strive for a lot more 'cause we know what it's like not to have a lot," lines 27-28). This suggests that she has been taught that immigrants are more hardworking than mainstream Americans, particularly African Americans.

Negotiating 'Blackness'

Elise's use of the term "black" was not uniformed and varied. There were instances where Elise self-identified as black. During the second interview session, Elise stated, "like I just always knew I was black" and "I think, of course...uhmm...we, we blacks are perceived as not being as intelligent..." In both of these quotes Elise refers to a 'black' identity. The claim was more explicit in the former quote ("like I just always knew I was black..."), while in the latter, Elise used the inclusive pronoun "we" as a referent for "blacks." Yet, in the first interview she also said, "I wasn't black, but I know I wasn't white either." Like many, Elise uses black to refer to both a racial identity to include all black people, and as a specific American ethnic group (i.e. African Americans).

She identified as "black" in a show of solidarity (e.g., "we blacks are perceived as not being as intelligent"). She also distanced herself from African Americans (e.g. "this

math teacher always groups me with blacks”) in situations where African-American students were being characterized as unintelligent or unsuccessful in academics. There were other instances where she implied that the label “black” was imposed onto her by others. In the first interview, Elise talked specifically about racial identity. She stated, “I guess I am considered black because of my skin tone. I guess I think that’s what that means.” Elise stated, “I just get grouped as black American or African American” (2/Lines 22-23).

When Elise first arrived in Newtown she was confronted with a different racial and ethnic peer group in school than in Miami. This prompted a new process of identity negotiation as her identity options shifted from being Jamaican to American and any other combination thereof, to being ascribed as having a solely Jamaican, American, or African-American identity (lines 29-34).

29 When I moved to North Florida, my elementary school was all white and then
30 when I got to middle school...I got introduced to more...just African
31 Americans and Whites...I can’t even think of any Jamaicans. I would group
32 myself with the blacks oh African-Americans [correction], but I really didn’t
33 understand their culture or know a lot about their culture, I’m like wait...why?
34 Oh...I’m not...because I’m Jamaican [laughter]. (3/Lines 117-120)

Given the choice between white and African American, she initially aligned herself with the African Americans (“I would group myself with the blacks....”) even though she had little in common with them (“I really didn’t understand their culture...”). Elise might have made these decisions in order to build relationships with those who she felt she was most like. This might have been an attempt to adopt an identity that she felt was already ascribed to her and more acceptable in the cultural context in which she found herself.

Constructing an African-American identity for Elise involved gaining an understanding of African-American pop culture and being able to understand and use AAVE. She stated, “I really didn’t understand their culture or know a lot about their culture,” and “you know like I had never really listened to like...hip hop and all that”.

35 I tried to educate myself on black American culture...you know like I had
36 never really listened to like...hip hop and all that...like mainstream black
37 music...I mean African-American culture. And you know I felt like lost. You
38 know a lot of kids called me white. I wasn’t black but I know I wasn’t white...
39 I noticed that difference, but looking back I think that’s why they [peers] called
40 me you know...preppier (1/Lines 59-66).

Elise didn’t always feel comfortable embracing an African-American identity (Lines 35 through 40). She felt lost (Line 38, excerpt above) and out of place due to her lack of proficiency in AAVE and African-American culture. To her peers, if she did not have African-American cultural knowledge, she was not one of them. She must be the opposite – white.

41 ‘Cause I used to feel...you know how African Americans have their sayings?
42 You know everyone has their own words. I remember in the seventh grade I
43 didn’t understand a lot and I felt bad and it dawned on me that I do have my
44 own culture and I shouldn’t feel bad that I can’t relate [to African Americans],
45 but I felt that they were the only people I could relate to because there were
46 only whites and blacks [African Americans]...and then some Spanish (3/Lines
47 120-129).

Elise discussed another reason that she felt out of place claiming an African-American identity. In lines 50 through 52, she suggested that African Americans carry a burden that she did not necessarily carry.

48 Hmm...well the first thing that popped in my mind, maybe uhmm blacks,
49 African-Americans [correction] seem more... they have more of a chip on
50 their shoulder sometimes. It seems...you know like I guess...from slavery...
51 and I just...I don’t think we carry that same burden...maybe that’s it (3/Lines
52 67-73).

While Elise and her African-American peers may have had the same skin color, the similarities ended there. They were quite different culturally. One of the ways that her peers responded to her inability to fit in was by asserting that she “acted white.” This was evidenced in lines 38 through 41 above when she stated, “You know a lot of kids called me white. I wasn’t black but I know I wasn’t white....I noticed that difference, but looking back I think that’s why they [peers] called me you know...preppier” (1/Lines 59-66).

During her high school years, Elise claimed she most often identified as Jamerican. She also said that there were times when she felt it most appropriate to claim a black American or African-American identity. She stated, “There are times when...I don’t go around saying it a lot....I just...if it comes up, I’ll say it [identifying as black]. But I don’t discuss it a lot...I’ll check black if I’m like doing a questionnaire” (1/Lines 38-39).

Embracing a Student Identity

Being an academically successful student meant that Elise was also being a good daughter. Elise held her student identity in high regards. She rated it only behind being a Christian and a family member (Email Question #1). She created a PowerPoint slide that contained three images that symbolized this aspect of her identity.

Regarding her student identity and the screenshot image above, Elise stated, “School is really important to me. Like right now, I’m about to go to college and I’m nervous, but I know there’s nothing else that I want to do” (3/Lines 159-160). When asked what the two lower photos symbolized, Elise stated, “I want to work in the medical field, not necessarily in a hospital, but I want to take care of people...maybe in other countries...”(3/Lines 162-163). Referring specifically to the International

Baccalaureate symbol, Elise stated “the program, International Baccalaureate, has given us a world view of things; we have to realize that we’re just ...the world’s just not around Newtown, Florida. I’m glad that I got that from the program” (3/Lines166-168).

Elise’s discourses revealed that her identity as a successful student and her willingness to embrace school was connected to her relationship with her mother and her identity as a person of Jamaican heritage.

Elise thought it important to maintain or exceed the expectations set by her mother.

53 Like school... [laughter]...I have no other choice...my mother doesn't even
54 have to tell me...it's implied...it's a given. I think that school is the most
55 important thing because from where my mom came from until where we're at
56 now...like we just gotta keep improving ourselves, and that's what education
57 will do and that's the most important thing that's been instilled [in me].
58 (E2/Lines 13-15)

As indicated in the excerpt above, Elise constructs her student identity based on the expectations that her mother has set for her. She views educational achievements as an indicator of her student identity.

59 I love my mom because she came up here so she could keep her job and so
60 we could come up here and eventually go to college so we could have a
61 better life... even though we didn't know anyone up here. I love her for that.
62 She's always there for me. (3/Lines 135-138)

Referring again to the level of importance her mom has placed on education, Elise stated:

63 Like she's one of those moms who is always talking about what her mom
64 used to say...you know like every generation should be better. I mean...like I
65 have to strive for better...like anything else is unacceptable...I think it's a part
66 of our culture [Jamaican] to keep improving and my mom is the one that
67 instilled that. (3/Lines 142-145)

Elise's student identity is influenced in part by the socialization processes that she has gone through in regards to the value of a good education.

Discourses of School

The discourses prevalent in Elise's school were not supportive of her or her black peers. She notes, "For our senior class of IB students, out of the 43, there is me, Brandon, Ruby, and James. James is Haitian, I'm Jamaican, and Ruby and Brandon are black (3/Lines 41-42)." Elise discussed how she believed the black students in her school were perceived as being less intelligent.

68 I think, of course...uhmm we, we blacks are perceived as not being as
69 intelligent...and, because I have had a couple of teachers, you know,
70 group me with blacks and like I actually had one teacher last year call me
71 stupid, he said all the blacks in my class are stupid...I'm like okay. But I
72 don't know...from what I have seen maybe it's stereotypical that African
73 Americans aren't that smart (3/Lines 33-36).

Elise has been exposed to negative discourses regarding African-American students' academic abilities and achievement. These discourses have made Elise aware of how African-Americans are perceived in the context of school and the possible consequences of claiming an African-American identity. In response to being misidentified or mislabeled, Elise stated, "I don't mind because I know who I am and I don't have to be recognized by everyone...it's not that important" (2/Line 26).

In lines 74 through 77, she further discussed the insensitivity of that same teacher towards the black students.

74 It was me . . . I'm in the IB program, International Baccalaureate, I don't
75 know...this teacher...I don't know...he's not a very good teacher. He just
76 groups us together like he made...I wasn't there but he made a comment...oh
77 all my blacks are just stupid...I was just like...uh (3/Lines 36-39).

Although Elise only reported the comments of one teacher, his comments were enough to make Elise aware of the dominant discourses surrounding students who look like her.

Summary

This chapter has presented three major themes about Elise's identity construction processes. Elise's Jamerican identity is comprised of her identity as both a Jamaican and an American. Elise's Jamerican identity was constructed as a result of familial influences. It is through her experiences in a new environment - specifically learning the culture and building and maintaining relationships in this environment - that constructing a "Jamerican" identity becomes important. This identity was a way by which she could maintain her familial relationships and build new relationships in the context of her new home in North Florida. Her use of the term "Jamerican" to describe herself is symbolic of her multiple identities and relegates neither identity to an inferior position.

Second, Elise's identity construction included the ways in which she understood the dynamics of being black in the context of North Florida. Elise attempted to construct an African-American identity by learning African-American culture and language. This, she felt, would allow her to fit in with her peers. Elise also understood the repercussions of embracing such an identity and would quickly identify herself as Jamaican versus black if she felt that the prevailing stereotypes would disadvantage her. While Elise negotiates her various identities with ease, it is evident that there were more identity options in the more urban context of South Florida.

Third, Elise's identity as a successful student was significant to her. It fulfilled the expectations her mother. Her construction of her student identity was also based on the premise that educational achievement would bring her future economic and social

success. In sum, school supported Elise's student identity, but it was highly influential in that it provided discourses that would shape Elise's identity construction processes.



Figure 4-1. Elise's PowerPoint Slide # 1



Figure 4-2. Elise's PowerPoint Slide # 4



Figure 4-3. Elise's PowerPoint Slide # 2

CHAPTER 5 KENDALL

I always knew I was different. I just had to learn to embrace it.

- Kendall

Analysis of the data reveals three themes and multiple sub-themes relating to Kendall's identity and identity construction within the context of school. Kendall viewed himself as ethnically and culturally unique because of his multiple identities. For Kendall, constructing both a Virgin Islander identity and an African-American identity was important in sustaining and maintaining relationships with his peers. Constructing and negotiating these identities influenced and was influenced by Kendall's experiences and the socio-political discourses of prejudice and discrimination inside and outside of school settings. The three themes and sub-themes are illustrated in detail below.

Multiple Identities: Being Different, Being Unique

Kendall is an 11th grader who was born in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. His parents were both born in the U.S. Virgin Islands. His mother is from St. Croix and his dad was born in St. Kitts. During this study, he lived with his mother and stepfather in Northeast Florida. His birth father, however, still lives in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He visits him and his maternal grandparents often. Kendall has four sisters and one brother. Only one of his siblings, a younger sister, lives in the same household. Kendall is a scholar athlete and attends high school in a predominately white community in Northeast Florida.

When asked about his nationality and ethnicity (Lines 6-9), Kendall explained that he was different from his West Indian and African-American peers because he, Kendall, describes himself as St. Thomian (St. Thomas), Cruzan (St. Croix), and African

American (Lines 1-4). Kendall referred to these three identities throughout the interviews and in his list of identities, which he provided to me via email:

- 1 St. Thomians are from St. Thomas...then I am between both because I was
- 2 born on one, but raised as a Cruzan. St. Johns... I don't know what you call
- 3 them 'cause they are like the lone island...They just kinda like to do their own
- 4 thing.(1/Lines 17-20)

Kendall's perceptions of being "between both" indicate that he feels as if he is not completely St. Thomian or Cruzan, but both. Kendall explained that while he was born on the island of St. Thomas, he spent several years on the island of St. Croix where he learned the culture and ways of the Cruzan people. Kendall also claimed an African-American ethnic identity (he listed it as one of his claimed identities in response to Email Question #1). Kendall explained that his background makes him different from his West Indian and African-American peers. He says:

- 5 I always knew I was different. I just had to learn to embrace it. Growing up,
- 6 I knew I was different from everybody else. I mean, I tried to hide it and not
- 7 really explore that side of me and then I realized as I got older that it's good to
- 8 be unique. It's good to be different and it has always been a part of me so I
- 9 just chose to embrace the different sides of me. (2/Lines 54-57)

In the excerpt above (lines 5-9), Kendall explains how maturity has helped him to see that being different is not something that has to be hidden. He goes from being ashamed of who he was in his preadolescent years to embracing his ethnic and cultural backgrounds in his adolescence years.

Kendall's claim to an African-American identity was primarily due to the sociopolitical relationship between the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands¹ as

¹The Virgin Islands were originally settled by the Ciboney, Carib, and the Arawaks. Over a three hundred year period, the islands were held by many European powers, including Spain, The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark-Norway. Finally, the Danish sold the islands to the U.S. in 1917 for \$25 million. (CIA Factbook, 2010)

indicated in lines 10 through 13. He also acknowledged the identities that he constructed depended on the ethnic make-up of his friends and the cultural awareness that he believed his to peers have (or not have) regarding his identities. He explained, “some [peers] are aware that I’m not just African American because of the clothes I wear, or the things I say, how I talk or maybe my hair or something...but other than my close friends, they don’t know and my teachers don’t know [that he also identifies as St. Thomian]” (3/Lines 191-192).

He added, “uhm huh [head nodding yes to whether he also considers himself African American]...African American. I think so...first of all we’re a U.S. colony, so we actually get citizenship, so I consider myself African American as well...after you break it down...subtitle. (1/Lines 36-42)

In the context of our conversation, Kendall used the word “subtitle” (Line 13) to refer his African-American identity in relation to his St. Thomian identity. This suggests that he views himself first as St. Thomian, and then African American. He further stated, “When I am around my friends I describe myself as African American, but when I know people have an awareness of cultures, I say St. Thomian” (1/Lines 47-49).

Kendall pointed to the U.S. Virgin Islands flag when asked if there was any one person or thing most symbolic of his identity (Figure 5-1).

He stated:

14 My flag...Of course this flag reminds me of home. I could be driving and catch
15 any glimpse of the colors [of the V.I. flag] and know that person is from
16 home...and I would just go up to them and ask them where they’re from
17 [city]...I was at a track meet and there was this little kid and I saw something
18 like the white and the green or blue sticking out of his shirt...you can’t even
19 buy a necklace like that from here...you only get it from Jouvert, so I was like
20 where you from? He’s like St. Thomas and I was like “word”...you too? So I
21 talk with this little dude like for hours. We was going back and forth...I mean

22 it's just a way for us island folks to find each other cause you always go out
23 you always have your flag...somewhere around you. I have it in my room, on
24 my door...pretty much anywhere that people can see it. So if another person
25 from the V.I. sees it, he can say...oh...he's from the V.I. and we can pretty
26 much link ourselves to someone else. (3/Lines 80-89)

In Line 14, he explains that the flag bears significance as it is the one symbol that reminds him of his V.I. heritage. It is the one item that he said helps to locate others who are of V.I. heritage and sends a signal to others about his identity as a Virgin Islander.

The rest of the excerpt illuminates the significance of the V.I. "colors" in relation to Kendall's ability to make connections and build relationships with other Virgin Islanders. For example, seeing the "white and green or blue" t-shirt was "a way for us island folks to find each other." He felt connected to those who wore the Virgin Island colors as indication of their V.I. roots.

Being a Virgin Islander

For Kendall, identifying as St. Thomian was very important. He was the only Virgin Islander at his school and he felt either ignored or like a case of mistaken identity because people never provided a correct guess regarding his ethnicity. Kendall explained that people who hear him speak Creole English generally think that he is Jamaican.

27 [They think I am] Jamaican... pretty much, in a nutshell. Cause I know if I go
28 out and speak in my accent, [students are like] "you Jamaican?" No, I'm not
29 Jamaican [emphatic]...and it was just like an automatic stereotype. Probably
30 because Jamaica gets a lot of attention in the West Indies so anyone who has
31 an accent will automatically be kind of profiled as Jamaican. (3/Lines 3-14)

Kendall admitted that being mistakenly identified as Jamaican "makes [him] angry. That's like telling a Puerto Rican she is like Dominican or something. It's like a nationality thing...we take it very seriously."(3/Lines 14-16)

In response to a question regarding his classmates and teachers' thoughts about his identity when they first met him, he stated "they probably assumed I'm just African American or Haitian...surprise, I'm not" (3/Line 16). Kendall believed that his accent (and to a certain extent, his appearance) has caused people to assume that he is from every other Caribbean country without giving any consideration to the U.S. Virgin Islands. Being misidentified has resulted in Kendall becoming more adamant about identifying as a Virgin Islander. He is proud of his heritage and would like for his identity to be known.

West Indies Kids

Kendall has embraced several outlets as ways to affirm his Virgin Island identity. He is a member of a social group and he looks forward to participating in the annual culture night that his school puts on. It is through Kendall's relationship with the other members of a social group called the West Indies Kids that Kendall constructs his identity as a West Indian. In lines 32 through 43, he explained that he, along with a group of his West Indian peers, created an organization that has been influential in his life.

32 Well...I got here my freshman year and my cousin Kevin...he graduated and
33 goes to FAMU [Florida A & M University] now. So, he is from...his parents are
34 from St. Kitts. So, he hooked up with this guy named Jesus who is from
35 Puerto Rico, Rosa from Haiti...uhmm I forgot the other guy's real name...we
36 call him Mr. Panama and uhh he's from Panama and also these girls from
37 Costa Rico. We started a little group we called West Indies Kids and
38 whenever they'd go out they call everybody and say let's hang out and we'd
39 have our different flags and other island kids would hang out and we'd throw
40 parties and have fun. Like this year we had a party and charged at the door.
41 You can have all the fun you want and we will send monies back [to our home
42 countries]. Like this year we sent the monies to Haiti and help Haiti and things
43 like that. (K1/Lines 90-100)

It is through Kendall's membership with the West Indies Kids and his relationship with others who identify as West Indian that Kendall's identity as a Virgin Islander is affirmed. This is done through "hanging out," displaying "different flags," and "throwing parties" where other island kids would hang out.

Annual Culture Night

While Kendall supported his school, he was disappointed about the lack of diversity amongst its faculty and staff and the absence of V.I. history from its curriculum. He wrote, "There are no West Indian teachers and there are one or two teachers who share my identity of being African American and they help me by supporting me and trying to put more black culture in our school system" (Email Question #3). Kendall voiced his concerns to several of his teachers. This resulted in an annual cultural showcase where students of varied backgrounds have the opportunity to display aspects of their culture.

44 It's our second annual Culture Night. Riverside High School has a big one. It's
45 like a talent show with no winners. We started it last year and it was pretty
46 good. And this year, we're trying to make it bigger instead of just being
47 Spanish like it was last year...trying to reach out to other cultures. So I am
48 doing spoken word from the V.I., you have someone doing another poem in
49 Spanish, you have a girl belly dancing, you have someone...a little stomp
50 team stepping like America...and then you have people bringing in food from
51 different countries and cultures, so it's pretty cool. (3/Lines 103-108)

As indicated in the tone displayed in lined 44 through 51, Kendall was satisfied that such an event had been instituted. However, he felt that not enough had been done to encourage students from varied cultures to participate "instead of just being Spanish."

In the context of his school, Kendall's ability to speak Creole indexed him as more than just an African American. It had been a factor in getting him an acceptance to perform at the annual culture event.

52 I went to try out for our culture fair and this lady... I let her read it...the poem
53 that I was gonna do, and she was like, "I wanna see you perform it." She's
54 never heard me use my accent, like I've known her for two or three years and
55 she's never heard me use it, so I go in there and I say like four lines and she
56 says "that's it, that's it...you're in". (3/Lines 92-97)

Lines 52 through 56 demonstrated how his ability to speak Creole authenticated his identity as Caribbean.

Being African American

Constructing an African-American identity was significant to Kendall as he self-identified as African American and many of his relationships were based on this cultural identity that he shared with so many of his friends. On multiple occasions, Kendall self-identified as "black" and African American. He stated, "I just see myself as a young, black, African American, pretty much...from the islands" (1/Lines 11-12).

Kendall used language as one of the ways in which he constructed an African-American identity. While Kendall used a combination of AAVE, SAE, and CE linguistic features throughout his interviews, he also used a lot of slang terminology associated with African American Vernacular English while off the record. He usually greeted me with a, "Hey Ms. Kisha, what's up yo," and when we departed he would say something like "catch ya later yo." As I searched through my transcripts, I found instances of him using significant amounts of slang terminology.

57 My friend...I didn't find out that he was Haitian until...like J.P., I met J.P. last
58 year in my second period class...He walked in and he was fresh from New
59 York. He walked off the plane and came to school. I was like "yo' b do you
60 mind if I call you Swag?" I didn't even know his name. He was like "yea," [he
61 didn't mind]. I was like "yo' dog, you just walked up in here with your New
62 York swag," like it's rare to see swag at this school. So we just became
63 friends like that and I just went by his house...I gave him a ride after school
64 from track practice and I was like I heard his dad talk and I was like "yo,
65 where y'all from" and he was like "yo, we from Haiti"...and I was like "oh,
66 that's cool" and it just made us better friends (2/Lines 83-90)

In this excerpt, Kendall discussed meeting J.P. for the first time. In lines 59 through 65, he uses the term “yo’ b” and “yo’ dog” as terms of endearment which are often used in the African-American community amongst friends. He discussed admiring his ‘swag’ or style (lines 60 & 62), and them eventually forming a friendship.

Kendall explained that constructing an African-American identity was particularly consequential (Lines 68-72).

63 ...first of all no one expects me to do the things that I do. Like when I came
64 out and said I was a poet. Everyone was like...you write poetry? [imitating a
65 doubtful questioner]. Yes [his response]...and it’s actually good pretty much
66 [referring to their final impressions of him]. And there are times when it’s a
67 negative... like I don’t know people just like be douches. (K2/Lines 20-24)

As indicated in line 68, he felt that there were different, even lowered, expectations for him and his black peers. He even alluded to a self-fulfilling prophecy for blacks. He wrote “being black has its faults. Everyone, even my own race [of people], believe that we as a people will fail, but I plan to show them [everyone] otherwise” (Email Question #1).

Kendall suggested that he and other black students are not viewed as high achievers in school because the majority of his African-American peers don’t apply themselves.

73 Well, I guess it’s more of a stereotype because most of the other black kids in
74 my school don’t do anything...so it gives out a negative light so I guess with
75 me and the other few that do stuff, get it done...they’re like “oh wow, I didn’t
76 expect blah, blah, blah, blah” [mocking a teacher]. So I mean I guess it’s a
77 stereotype...I assume. (2/Lines 30-33)

Lines 73 through 78 is indicative of Kendall’s belief that the majority of his teachers view black kids who “don’t do anything” as the norm and therefore assumed that he too does not value education.

Athletic Expectations of African-American Peers

Kendall's identity as an African-American was connected to the extracurricular activities in which he chose to participate. Kendall said that he was often perceived as "acting white" by his African-American peers because he plays soccer. He speculated the reasons why most of his African-American peers question his interest in soccer.

They often asked "What black kid plays soccer" (2/Line 60). Kendall stated that he normally responds with a sarcastic answer like "one that might get paid more for one game than you will in your lifetime" (2/Line 61). He thought his African-American peers gave him such a hard time about playing soccer because they perceived it as a "white" sport and as less challenging.

78 Well...uhmm...honestly in America the focuses are football, basketball and I
79 say track in the black aspect. Strength, speed in basketball...[Long
80 Pause]...How do I say this? In our school I don't think Black people ...they
81 look at it like one, 'soccer...what is soccer?' and two, 'how do you play it?' Like
82 they see super short shorts and a bunch of white guys running around with a
83 ball at their feet and they're like I'm not doing that...sorry. I see that [soccer]
84 as one of the hardest sports in the world compared to football. Our pads are
85 like...inches...they come up to my shin...while football has helmets, shoulder
86 pads and all this other stuff...when me and you crash [while playing
87 soccer]...we're going head to head, shoulder to shoulder and whatever else
88 makes contact... so I've seen shattered knee caps, broken bones, shattered
89 ankles, torn fibulas, everything...so I don't see football as such a hard sport
90 as they make it out to be...(K1/Lines 184-193).

Kendall thought that his African-American peers distanced themselves from soccer for several reasons. They viewed soccer as a sport played by a "bunch of white guys" (line 82) and football as more difficult than soccer. Kendall disagrees. He's seen injuries such as "shattered knee caps, broken bones, shattered ankles, and torn tibulas." (lines 87-90).

Kendall's realization that soccer is not the preferred sport of African-American athletes at his school resulted in him changing the way that he identified when talking about soccer.

91 The team consists of I wanna say between 13 and 15 people and our varsity
92 side of the team is me playing left outside striker, I'm St. Thomian...A.J. who
93 we bumped up last semester, he's from Jamaica, then you have a white
94 Mexican, Juan from Ecuador, Josh, he's Puerto Rican, and everybody else is
95 white American. (1/Lines 158-161)

In lines 91 through 95, Kendall named the major players and described them in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and race to further illustrate that there are few blacks on the team. More importantly, in the context of this conversation about soccer, he describes himself as "St. Thomian" (Line 92).

Embracing an Identity Through Rastafarianism

Embracing the principles of Rastafarianism was another important aspect of Kendall's identity. He connected his appearance, particularly his dreadlocks, and people's responses to them, to his belief in and respect for Rastafarian.

96 Ok. I was like 11 or 12 and I was like "oh ma, I want locks" and she said "what
97 does it mean?"....So after I found out what it means I said "ok. I wouldn't mind
98 having dreads."First they came from Rastafarians, which came from Africa
99 where the flags are mainly red, yellow, green. Where the red means blood that
100 was spilled for the Rastafarian war. Gold is for the wealth that people came
101 over after and green is for the vegetation mean ...that's why they are
102 vegetarians. I still haven't gotten the vegetarian thing 'cause I gotta have my
103 protein so I'll work on that after high school. Also in another aspect,
104 Rastafarians are like...like people who seek insight and like we the ones that
105 read between the lines and on the religious aspect of it if...I guess if u don't
106 know, they worship Judah...which is...I consider myself a Christian but I also
107 study other religions. I study Buddha. My mom, she just converted to Muslim
108 so I looked at the Qur'an...I would rather look at different religions and learn
109 from them. (1/Lines 133-143)

Kendall only mentioned his Christian identity once in the interview sessions. As evidenced in lines 96 through 109, his discourses revealed that his belief in the

principles of Rastafarianism played a more significant role in his identity as a person of African descent. He explained the importance of dreadlocks to Rastafarians and discussed it in relation to the stereotypical remarks that people make regarding his appearance (Lines 110-113).

110 So like when I go out...like I don't go out to the mall often especially on
111 Saturdays because I know...I don't care if I walk in for a split second to get
112 some food...before I leave that mall someone's gonna ask me if I have some
113 weed and/or paper. It never fails... ever... ever. (K2/Lines 197-199)

Kendall reported that people often look at his dreads, hear his accent and come to the conclusion that he smokes weed as indicated in lines 112 through 113.

Furthermore, Kendall felt that there was a lack of respect that Americans have for Rastafarianism and dreadlocked hair (Lines 114-116).

114 And...as far as dreads...I look around the US and the one thing that has me
115 kinda heated is that people kind of get dreads for a fashion and these are
116 more than fashion. They have meaning behind them. Like with the Rastas,
117 they tell a story. I have been growing my hair for like five years as of
118 Wednesday. So I mean, as far as I'm concerned, they hold a story for the last
119 five years that I've had them in. They show the change in me coming from 6th,
120 7th grade when I had like glasses and braids...'til now. (1/Lines 143-148)

In the above excerpt, Kendall juxtaposes U.S. American's wearing of dreads for "fashion" to his growing them for "meaning" and the "story" that they illustrate regarding his change throughout the years.

Kendall felt that his school lacked an understanding of and a tolerance towards his appearance, specifically his dreadlocks.

121 Let them (students) live their culture. I know like when I came back I dressed
122 like I'm from St. Thomas...I got my cap and my dreadlocks. I was ready to go
123 to school. I mean they told me to take off my cap...that was against my
124 religion...you know that, right? I was like "no really, I'm not supposed to show
125 my dreads"...it's a big thing even though they didn't let it fly. That hurt me as
126 a freshman and I was like oh...I hate this school...because at any other
127 school if I told them that was my religion, it would have fly...it's like you're

128 telling me not to be me...pretty much. (3/Lines 216-22)

He viewed this intolerance as an affront to his cultural identity (lines 121-128). He explained that the lack of tolerance for his head covering caused him to “hate this school” and to form an extreme dislike for the school and its policies when they tell “me not to be me” (line 126).

Perceived Discrimination

Kendall was particularly sensitive to the ramifications of being black as he perceived discriminatory practices within the school’s curriculum, athletic program, segregation amongst racial and ethnic groups, and some unfair treatment by the school’s administration.

The Curriculum and Faculty Demographics

Kendall was disappointed about the lack of diversity amongst the high school’s faculty and the absence of V.I. history from its curriculum.

129 I ask that they go more in depth about the Caribbean or V.I. [Virgin Island]
130 history...when I was in the V.I., we did American history. We’re part of the
131 U.S., but we don’t take V.I. history which is kind of weird. I don’t recall going
132 into any depth about that. The most we kind of went into depth about
133 Caribbean history are the locations...like where the islands are in relation to
134 Jamaica....but they never go into depth about this happens in this year like
135 how they do with American and World history. (K3/ Lines 165-17)

He also wrote, “There are no West Indian teachers and there are one or two teachers who share my identity of being African American and they help me by supporting me and trying to put more black culture in our school system” (Email Question #3).

Kendall believed that the absence of certain topics from the curriculum rendered them insignificant. He used several negative terms when describing the curriculum as implemented in his school. For example, he stated “we don’t take V.I. history,” “I don’t

recall going into any depth about that,” and “they never go into depth....”

Kendall suggested that it was not just V.I. history that was lacking within the curriculum, but that there was very little black history in general.

136 I guess since I spoke on the topic in school, they did a piece on black history
137 during Black History Month cause we never had anything that
138 happened...you know like some teachers you know write like this day this
139 happened during history...such and such did this, so we did not go in depth
140 into it all and I said something about it uhmm last year, so this year they
141 asked all the black teachers at the school, which is like three or four like what
142 they felt on it...and me and a couple of students like why should we do black
143 history...I felt we should do black history...like they celebrate it everywhere
144 else. Like last time I checked, black people built the country. I’m pretty sure
145 we built schools, roads, economy, so I mean, I feel like...a black guy invented
146 the AC [air conditioner]. I’m pretty sure it’s pretty important and needs to be
147 talked about. (2/Lines176-185)

In lines 139-144, Kendall discussed how he helped to get the faculty and administrators to sponsor a Black History event. In the previous lines, Kendall discussed what teachers did and suggested in lines 137-138 that the lessons were not as in depth as he would have liked. He ended this section by pointing out some of the contributions of blacks. Kendall sees the deliberate lack of focus placed on Black History Month and the contributions of blacks as a denial of the worth of black students and indeed of black people in general.

The Athletic Program

148 Like I was at a practice last week, Thursday I wanna say...no it was Tuesday,
149 and I’m the only black kid on the field and I’m the only one not getting the
150 ball, yet I’m the fastest, so I’m kinda wondering. I’m like if you wanna win you
151 gotta pass me the ball and you’re not passing me the ball [sarcastically]. So
152 I’m kinda like standing on the sidelines waiting for a pass that never came.
153 (2/Lines 24-28)

In lines 148 through 153, Kendall describes an incident that made him wonder if he had been the target of discrimination. Kendall appeared uncomfortable mentioning other incidents, but while off the record, he mentioned that discrimination in athletics

was quite common at his school and he described tactics that some of the coaches would use to not play or promote their black athletes. When asked further about the role of sports and his teammates, Kendall asserted “the best athletes, by coincidence, on our team are black...and they’re from the West Indies or they are African American”.

(K3/Lines 93-94)

Self-Segregation at School

The student body at Riverside High School often formed homogeneous ethnic, racial, and social groups during non-instructional times (i.e., before school and after school). For Kendall, self-segregation was one of the ways he constructed his identities in the context of Riverside High School. Figure 5-2 is Kendall’s diagram of his school and where the various groups congregate before and after class.

154 Ok. So when you walk in the school, there’s like a redneck hallway...It’s a big
155 hallway and it breaks off, it’s like I don’t want to say all the nerdy kids, but like
156 the outcasts and then you have the wanna be preppy kids... I guess wanna
157 be popular kids and then you have...I guess...if there was preppy like
158 whatever preppy is, but in between nerds...that’s where those kids would
159 be... and on this back hallway, near the cafeteria...you know...niggas gotta
160 be by the cafeteria. Niggas gotta be by the cafeteria [repeated]...So, this is our
161 designated area [pointing to where he said the African Americans or “niggas”
162 would congregate]...where the minorities gather every morning like it’s a
163 religion. (2/Lines 39-54)

In lines 154 through 163 Kendall describes the school setting during the morning hours and before classes began. He distinguishes the different types of students using some colorful terms: “redneck” (line 154), “nerdy” (line 155), “preppy” (line 156), “outcasts” (line 156), and “niggas” (line 159). When asked if other minorities congregate in the same area, Kendall said, “There’s a little Latina quarters here, the Asians here [pointing]...we don’t do it on purpose. It’s just kind of magnetic...because you feel more

comfortable around people you have been around your whole life.” (3/Lines 58-63). It is through this self-segregation that they build and maintain relationships.

In lines 164 through 175, Kendall discussed the black wall further and supported a common claim that all minorities, especially blacks, crave chicken.

164 I told this to my track coach Ms. Martin...We had ah...we started selling
165 chicken biscuits from Chic-Fil-A to raise money for track on Wednesday and
166 Friday mornings. I said, “Look Ms. Martin, come to the black wall and sell
167 your chicken biscuits.” She thought I was playing so when she came and
168 showed up she had to at least go through two or three coolers full of chicken
169 biscuits cause people come by buying 4,5,6...they \$2 a piece. All of a sudden
170 you see minorities...chicken...like walking around with chicken in their hands
171 like they’re so excited ‘cause that’s actually something good to eat at school.
172 So, I mean we just kinda post up right here and it’s like...it’s
173 ridiculous...So...I’ll come eat breakfast and I’ll just come chill right here
174 [pointing to the African American dominated area] and talk to my close friends
175 around me and everybody else would be like in their own little groups.
176 (3/Lines 48-55)

It is through the above excerpt that Kendall exhibits expert knowledge of minorities, particularly black people (Lines 166-171). He is acting (or talking) in a way that suggests that he is an authority figure who knows enough regarding this particular group to know that the organization would be successful in selling a particular food item. He enjoys being where his close friends are, as indicated in lines 174 through 175. The self-segregation in the mornings allows students to bond with their friends.

176 There was one [conflict]...like we [blacks] used to be over here [pointing
177 to another area] like there used to be like a little glass wall that’s right here
178 and we used to chill right here, but there was so many people that was
179 spread out and it was getting into the hallways so they moved us over here,
180 but across the school...rednecks just be like “this is our TV production area,”
181 ...like all in the main hallway where everything intersects in the school...and
182 they [white students] come from the back of the hallway into the middle of the
183 hallway and just stopped...and nothing happened...that was a big thing
184 because like why do we have to get moved but they don’t get moved. So it
185 was just the assumptions. That’s the only thing that we’ve had to deal with
186 (3/Lines 67-73).

Lines 176 through 186 suggests that he is also convinced that this act of self-segregating has led to the minority group being treated unfairly by the school's administration. In this instance, Kendall believed that the "black" group was being unfairly targeted when they were asked to move because there were too many people in the area. He expressed that when the "redneck" group (Line 180) had blocked the hallway, no one had addressed the issue despite the fact that they were more numerous. In this instance, Kendall's perception was that the administration supported the dominant group.

Summary

This chapter has presented three themes and multiple sub-themes about Kendall's identity and identity construction. First, being different and unique was particularly significant to Kendall's claimed identities. When asked about his nationality and ethnicity, Kendall explained that he was different from his West Indian and African-American peers because he identified as St. Thomian (St. Thomas), Cruzan (St. Croix), and African American. Kendall has had to negotiate his ethnic and national identities in order to build and sustain relationships with his peers. Being unique and different was a thread that ran throughout Kendall's discourses.

Second, being a Virgin Islander was important to Kendall as he listed it as his primary ethnic identity. However, in the context of the school, Kendall felt that his V.I. identity was either ignored or that he was most often mistaken for being either African American only, Jamaica, or Haitian. As a result, Kendall attempted to form relationships and engage in activities that would affirm his V.I. identity. He wore and displayed the colors of the V.I. so that others would recognize him as a Virgin Islander. He embraced many of the principles of Rastafarianism and grew dreadlocks in an attempt to build

connections with his Caribbean ancestry. Kendall performed V.I. poetry in the annual culture night at his high school and he joined a group called the West Indies Kids in order to build relationships with other West Indians thereby affirming his identity as a Virgin Islander.

Third, Kendall took pride in his African-American identity despite the socio-political ramifications of identifying as such. He constructed his African-American identity in many ways. He had command of AAVE, knew commonly used slang phrases used by African Americans, and knew much about African-American culture and history. Being African American, however, also meant that Kendall was expected by his African-American peers to embrace perceived African-American norms, which included curricular and extracurricular interests (and non-interests). Kendall's discourses revealed perceived acts of discrimination from coaches and school administrators. His discourses further revealed activities such as self-segregation and self-degradation. Kendall congregates with those who were like him and his discourses reveal that he has both faced (and even sometimes voiced) some mainstream beliefs and stereotypes about African Americans.



Figure 5-1. Flag of the U.S. Virgin Islands – Kendall's PowerPoint Slide # 7

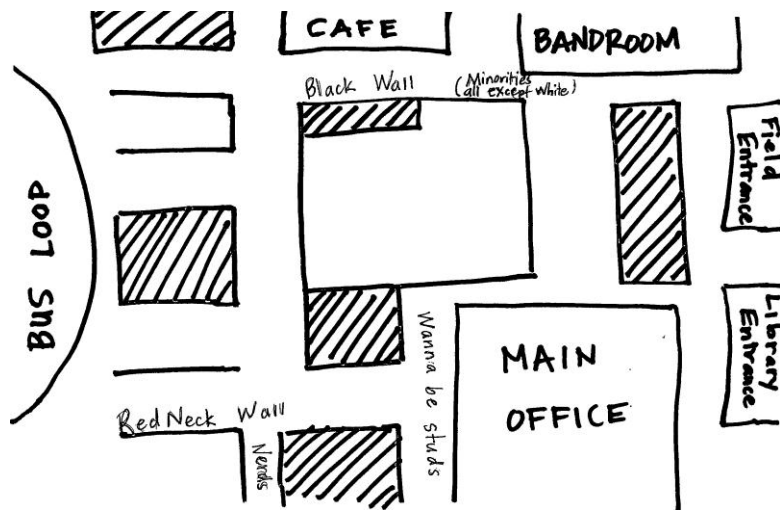


Figure 5-2. Riverside High School Layout based on Kendall's illustration.



Figure 5-3. Kendall's dreadlocks – PowerPoint Slide # 3

CHAPTER 6 NICOLE

I was told that God made us in his image, and I feel that if I am black then my Jesus is black.

- Nicole

Introduction

Analysis of the data revealed three major themes related to Nicole's identity construction. First, 'being Christian' was a central aspect of Nicole's identity. It was through Nicole's beliefs in the principles of Christianity that she felt that she had become a better family member and an overall better person. Second, being more or less black was evident in Nicole's identity construction process, as she negotiated her identities in situations where she felt a need to be more or less Jamaican or African American. Finally, Nicole acknowledged changing identities as she experienced several different school settings and schooling experiences throughout her K-12 matriculation.

Being Christian

Nicole's identity as a Christian was most salient. In the writing activity, she listed it as her primary identity. There were many more instances throughout the data that confirmed the significance of her relationship with, and beliefs about Jesus Christ as they influenced her identity, relationships with family and peers, and views about schooling. Nicole reported, "I always describe myself by my religion first...I always say I'm Christian. That's usually...if somebody asks me who I am the first thing I'll say is that I'm a Christian" (1/Lines 20-21). Nicole further explained, "It is important for me to acknowledge this identity [Christian] first because without it, I would have no morals or standings to uphold" (Email Question #1). It had not always been this way.

- 1 It's only been recently, like three or four years ago that I started describing
- 2 myself as being Christian. Once I became a Christian, I started describing
- 3 and seeing myself as a Christian first. I went to prayer camp one year and I

4 just ...that's when I got saved...I have always been in the church, very active
5 in the church. My youth group ...well when everybody was going out, I would
6 be at church. But in 2006, that's when I gave my life completely over to
7 Christ...and once I did that, everything around me completely changed. I
8 wasn't doing the same things. I wasn't cursing as much. I wasn't listening to
9 all the kinds of music I once listened to. My attitude just changed. Everything
10 just did a flip...and it wasn't drastic at first, but slowly but surely everything
11 just fell into place with my Christian lifestyle. Therefore, I acknowledge myself
12 as being a Christian first because my life before I was a Christian just wasn't
13 the same so it must mean that being a Christian is such a big deal that it must
14 be first in my life. (1/Lines 28-36)

Lines 1 through 4 describes the circumstances under which Nicole decided to become a Christian and the life changes that she made as a result: "I wasn't doing the same things," "I wasn't cursing as much," "my attitude just changed."

Figure 6-1 was the image Nicole selected as most symbolic of her identity.

Nicole discussed her reactions to this image and why she selected it.

15 It's so funny because yesterday I was looking on the computer for a picture of
16 Jesus because I am Christian and that's what I first identify as. And I'm
17 looking for Jesus and I find pictures of Jesus being white, but when I think of
18 my Jesus because I was told God made us in his image and I feel that if I am
19 black then my Jesus is Black. So I Googled black Jesus and this was perfect.
20 This was of him being born, and him being whipped, him praying, and him
21 being resurrected. So this was perfect because when I think of Jesus, I think
22 of him being born for me, him being whipped for me, him dying for me, and
23 him being resurrected so I can have life eternally and these pictures were
24 perfect as they were just what I envision Jesus to be...the perfect picture.
25 (2/Lines 65-72)

Lines 15 through 25 illustrate the connection that she has drawn between her ethno-racial identity and her religious identity, specifically when she stated, "I was looking on the computer for a picture of Jesus because I am Christian and that's what I first identify as." In sum, it is through the tenets of Christianity that Nicole measures and affirms herself, relates to others, and views the world. She searched for a "black Jesus"

and rejected all other images of Jesus so that she was able to simultaneously symbolize her racial and religious identity.

Being More or Less Black

Nicole viewed race as a significant aspect of her identity. In Lines 16 through 21 above, she discussed her search for images that portray aspects of her identity. She stated, "I found pictures of Jesus being white, but when I think of my Jesus because I was told God made us in his image and I feel that if I am black then my Jesus is black" (2/Lines 67-68). She had not always seen herself as a racial being or "black." This identification was influenced by her experiences in trying to identify with peers at different schools throughout her elementary, middle, and high school years as well as in her church:

26 Before, I wasn't even black and Jamaican, I was just Jamaican. But then of
27 course, when I'm filling out paperwork there's never a Jamaican bubble to fill
28 in. There's always black or African American...and I don't necessarily fit into
29 the African-American group. I don't believe I am because I don't know...my
30 Mom's Jamaican, my Dad's Jamaican...my whole family's Jamaican so I
31 always felt like that's the group that I belong to (1/Lines 38-42)

The above excerpt provides a snapshot into Nicole's thoughts about her ethnic identity and identity options. She was born in the U.S., but hesitates to identify as African American because both of her parents are Jamaican. She questions the ethnic categories found on paperwork that asks her to identify her ethnicity. Her statements suggest that the absence of a Jamaican category forces other blacks to identify as African American and subsumes the black self-identify into African American.

Nicole also spoke of being more or less black in the context of her church.

32 I feel less black when I am around people from my church...they always play
33 all this music and doing all these dances and it's funny because I never know
34 them. I'll sit there and they'll play whatever song and dance is latest and I'm
35 kinda sitting there and thinking I don't know that dance, or that song. And

36 they'll say something and I'm like I don't know the words...just the way they
37 speak sometimes...I be done did...I just don't understand what they're trying
38 to say and it confuses me because I don't understand and I feel less black
39 because I always have to ask them what does that mean? (2/Lines 47-53)

In the above excerpt, Nicole is referring to the other American-born Jamaicans who attend her church. It is evident that while she feels religiously connected to the members of her church, there is a cultural disconnect between them and Nicole. They have been socialized into African-American culture and language. She, on the other hand, struggled to understand the type of music played in church, and the way the other congregants danced and spoke. This made her feel less a part of their (Jamaican-African American) culture and more like an outsider.

40 It's predominately a Jamaican church but the kids who are my age were all
41 born and raised in America...like most of them. So the schools that are in that
42 area like Carol City High and ...like these are schools that are known...see
43 I'm from Pembroke Pines and not that I am uppity but everyone calls me the
44 Starbucks girl, because I'll have Starbucks and they'll have the McDonalds
45 frappe. "You know, you're the white girl of the group." They always say that.
46 That is my identity with them and they're definitely ...that area is just known to
47 be a quote on quote bad area. That area has curfew for kids who are 17 and
48 younger. The schools around that area are Cs and Ds and Fs. They speak
49 differently. Their proper English would be "ain't" or "ya'll did" or something that
50 I don't think is proper English. Those are usually the people I am with,
51 especially at church. (2/Lines 55-63)

The above quote suggests that Nicole understands the value placed on certain identities and the differences between the ethnic identity that she has constructed and those of her peers. In the excerpt above (Lines 42–51), Nicole differentiates herself from her church peers who are also American-born Jamaicans. She does this in three ways. She alludes to their socioeconomic status (lines 42-45), the quality of the schools they attend (line 48), and their linguistic features (lines 48-50). She uses comparative language to compare herself to them. First, she mentioned that she lived in Pembroke

Pines, an affluent suburb of Miami, while her peers lived in Carol City, which is considered by some to be one of Miami's most dangerous neighborhoods. She drank Starbucks, while they had McDonald's Frappes. Second, the schools in the area where they lived were not "A" or "B" schools like those in Pembroke Pines. Third, her peers used AAVE and they seemed to not have the ability to distinguish between AAVE and "proper" English. Nicole contended that because of these differences – where she lived, attended school, and how she spoke – she was often described as "acting white" or being "the white girl of the group."

52 My sister was born in Jamaica. But my sister is half and half [Jamaican and
53 African American]. She identifies with being African American as well as
54 Jamaican....my sister doesn't necessarily identify with being Jamaican all the
55 time, well she does but she embraces African-American heritage as well
56 because when she was going to high school there were a lot of home
57 invasions and a lot of Jamaicans were participating in that activity and that
58 was negative so for her it wasn't like she wanted to identify with that aspect.
59 Reggae music was also really big at that time, so at that time she was like I
60 can embrace the good. She went to school where there were a lot of African
61 Americans. Especially when she went to college she was deemed African
62 American. She was a part of the Black Student Union. She was an African
63 American Student Advocate because that's how the school identified her. She
64 definitely sees that as being a part of her identity. (2/Lines 89-100)

Nicole credits her sister with helping her to embrace her African-American identity. She stated, "She was into the American culture – the rap music, the hip hop, the arts, everything that was deemed to be American and she's black so she helped me find that sense of my identity or that side of my identity" (1/Lines 50-53.) According to Nicole, people construct their identities in relation to their experiences. When she (Nicole's sister) first arrived in the United States, "there were a lot of home invasions and a lot of Jamaicans were participating in that activity and that was negative, so for her it wasn't like she wanted to identify with that aspect" (Lines 56-58). Nicole's sister therefore

embraced an African-American identity to avoid negative stereotyping. The identity choices and ethnic affiliations of Nicole's sister was a backdrop for the identity choices that she would make.

Being Jamaican

Being Jamaican meant embracing her Jamaican ancestry, meeting the educational expectations of family members, and being patriotic. Nicole reported "constantly surrounding myself with Jamaican things. For instance, I always wear my Jamaican anklet and I make sure to listen to Jamaican music" (Email Question #2). She claimed that it was important to wear the Jamaican colors. In a caption provided for Figure 6-4, Nicole wrote "When I bleed, I bleed black, green and gold. Being Jamaican gives me a sense of pride that I love. I chose that picture of me because this picture is the essence of me because the shirt says *Out of Many, One People* which is the saying in Jamaica." In one of the interviews, Nicole stated, "My peers, even in middle school, people knew I was Jamaican because I would wear the colors..." (3/Lines 22-23).

Although family members expected her to claim Jamaican as her primary ethnic identity, Nicole reported that when she would describe herself as Jamaican, her family would jokingly respond, "you're not Jamaican because you were born in America" (1/Lines 56-57).

Being Jamaican was connected to Nicole's role as a daughter, granddaughter, aunt, and sister... (Email Question #1).

65 I connect with my heritage and background. This portion of my identity is one
66 of the biggest impacts of my life because I was raised in a Jamaican
67 household with Jamaican morals. Therefore, this comes second. The third
68 identity [daughter] is important because I am very family oriented and they
69 mean the world to me... (Email Question #1).

She explained the importance of her Jamaican identity and familial role in lines 65 through 69. Nicole reported that her family members have a really close relationship with one another. The number of pictures of family members that Nicole provided evidenced Nicole's claims regarding the influence of family members on her Jamaican identity. About 60% of the images that Nicole provided as symbolic of her identity were images of family members.

Nicole's mother and grandmother were major influences on her ethnic identity and her pride in being Jamaican.

70 My mother gave me a sense of pride in being Jamaican. She's always...from
71 day one, I went to Jamaica before I turned one and I knew the Jamaican
72 national anthem for as long as I can remember so she gave me that since of
73 pride about being Jamaican. My grandmother too did the same thing as my
74 mom. (1/Lines 46-50)

In lines 70 through 74, Nicole explained that her mother and grandmother instilled in her the values and ways of the Jamaican people in the United States. Nicole wrote, "My mom and I have an amazing relationship and had it not been for her, I would not be the young lady I am today. I would not know anything of my Jamaican heritage or be proud of it." (Email Question #2)

Negotiating Identities

Nicole reported that her perception of her identity and the ways in which she has self-identified has changed throughout her lifetime. At the time of this project, Nicole claimed that she was a very proud Jamaican.

Nicole reported that she had not always been so quick to tout her Jamaican heritage. In fact, she indicated that her identities shifted throughout her K-12 matriculation.

75 In elementary school, I was Jamaican and that's mainly because I had a very

76 heavy accent. That's because although I was born in the United States,
77 everyone in my household spoke Patois like it was water. They spoke it...it
78 came so naturally for everyone and I had a strong Jamaican accent, and so
79 when everyone would ask, "where are you from," I'd say "I'm Jamaican" but
80 then I kind of grew out of my accent and I was around my peers more often
81 and I sort of adapted to the...not necessarily Ebonics, not so much Patois, but
82 the proper English. And then in middle school, I wasn't always Jamaican.
83 When someone would ask me my nationality, I would say, "I'm American, but
84 my parents are Jamaican." But then in high school, I'd always say, "I'm
85 Jamaican, but I was born here," like I kind of just adapted to both nationalities
86 [in high school]. (3/Lines 4-12)

As indicated in lines 75 through 86, Nicole's perceptions of her identities and how she described herself changed from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. She went from being Jamaican only, to being American only, to being both Jamaican and American. In lines 79 through 84, Nicole explained why she began to describe herself as American during her middle school years.

87 'Cause in middle school, I really think it was that you kind of wanted to be
88 accepted by everyone around you and everyone around you was African
89 American. It was a predominately African-American school, and it was not
90 very diverse. But when everybody else was an American at school, I was like
91 that's the thing to be now. So, I wanted to jump off the Jamaican side to be an
92 American for a little while. (3/Lines 16-19)

During Nicole's middle school years she felt extremely vulnerable about her ethnic identities and its impact on the relationships that she hoped to have with her peers. As a result, she decided to claim the same identity that the majority of her peers had claimed – an African-American identity. Halfway through her middle school career, Nicole changed schools again. This time, the school was more diverse and this allowed Nicole a sense of comfort in claiming multiple identities.

93 It was one middle school that I went to and I followed along with the kids from
94 my elementary school and all of those kids were African American, except for
95 Guerda who was Haitian American, but everyone else was black American.
96 And then when I went to my other middle school for 7th grade, that's when the
97 diversity really hit and that's when I had Hispanic friends, and white friends,

98 and Jamaican friends. But, it was definitely a big split. At first it was just black
99 American friends and then from 7th grade and onward I had a wide variety, a
100 huge variety of friends. (3/Lines 38-43)

While at her first middle school, Nicole demonstrates the lack of diversity by singling out Guerda, a Haitian American girl who eventually became her best friend. Nicole describes her experiences changing middle schools as one where “diversity really hit” and one where she could have “a wide variety, a huge variety of friends.”

It is important to point out the importance of language in Nicole’s decision to embrace certain identities. When she spoke Patois in her early years, she reported feeling more Jamaican. This was indicative of her “very heavy accent.” Her language was a more obvious indicator of her Jamaican identity. However, as she lost her accent and began to speak like her peers, she felt as if she had lost an important aspect of her Jamaican identity.

Negotiating Identities in the Context of School

Nicole tried to reconcile her religious beliefs and the politics of religion at the schools she had attended. She did not understand why her teachers did not embrace religion-based answers.

101 Christianity was never really touched on in school... but religiously, especially
102 in science classes when people discuss evolution versus creationism...I know
103 that my teachers were definitely in all my science classes (pause) they were
104 adamant about evolution and I’d always be the one that would be like “I don’t
105 agree” they would be like, “well Nicole, how do you think this happened” or
106 “how do you think that happened” and if I’m like “God.”...they wouldn’t say I
107 was wrong, but I would get the look like, “Nicole, that doesn’t seem scientific
108 and we’re in a science class.” I see that as being insensitive and going
109 against what I believe. I didn’t like that but I got used to it. (3/Lines 99-106)

In the lines above, she specifically addressed the lack of coverage in the curriculum regarding different religions or worldviews. Nicole seemed to interpret the remarks of her science teachers as challenging to her belief system and religious

identity. She characterized her teachers as “adamant” about their beliefs (Line 104), “insensitive” and “going against (lines 108 and 109) what I believe.” She also mentioned that they would often challenge the validity of her religious-based claims by making remarks like, “Nicole, that doesn’t seem scientific and we’re in a science class” (lines 107-108).

Nicole reported that while in middle school (Lines 110-114), she started noticing that there weren’t any extracurricular activities that were geared towards religious groups. Neither were there any organizations that addressed the concerns of immigrant or other minority populations.

110 In middle school when I really got into my religion, I noticed, like that’s when I
111 started noticing that there weren’t any religious groups that I could participate
112 in and I also noticed that there weren’t any Jamaican or Caribbean student
113 associations. So, I was always the big one on campus who was very much
114 into starting groups or being with people was just like me. (3/Lines 69-73)

In an unrecorded conversation, Nicole mentioned that it was important to her to find an avenue by which Christian and minority students would be accepted and allowed to express their thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. She was responsible for forming two groups she perceived would help her and other students maintain their Christian beliefs and cultural pride.

115 A Christian friend of mine, she and I began a group in our middle school
116 called The First Priority and that was a Christian group that we started in the
117 7th grade and then another friend of mine who is Jamaican, he and I began
118 another organization, a multicultural student organization that was great. So,
119 even though there weren’t any in place at the time, I said to my friends, we
120 have to get something going for the ethnic background that I associate with.
121 And as far as I know, First Priority isn’t as strong as it was, but it’s still there
122 and the multicultural organization is still very much alive at my middle school.
123 I’m excited knowing that I was the beginner. (3/Lines 73-79)

In lines 115 through 123, Nicole discussed the founding of First Priority and the multicultural student organization. She expressed the pride she feels in knowing that the organizations still exist. She felt these organizations would fill a niche by affirming religious and ethnic diversity within the school's population. As a result of Nicole's initiative to bring aspects of her identity to the forefront through the creation of these organizations, her teachers began to seek her viewpoint and look to her for her opinion regarding a variety of topics throughout the curriculum (Lines 125-129).

124 In middle school...definitely, especially because of the groups that my friends
125 and I had begun, there were many times that my teachers would call on me
126 and ask, "well Nicole, how do you feel as a Christian young lady" or "how do
127 you feel as a Jamaican"? I know that homosexuality was discussed and
128 questioned a little in high school and the teacher would say "well Nicole what
129 is it like in your culture...what do people believe?" I mean you'd have to deal
130 with homosexuality and I was the person who was called on not only because
131 I was known to be a Jamaican or Christian, but also because I always had the
132 opinion and I liked playing devil's advocate. That was always my job and in
133 addition to that, I was always the Jamaican Christian girl in class. (3/Lines 84-
134 96)

By initiating and organizing two student groups that affirmed her (and other students') identities, she made her presence known, as evidenced by her teacher consulting her to get her opinion: "Well Nicole, how do you feel as a Christian young lady," or "how do you feel as a Jamaican?" The excerpt above revealed that even if teachers didn't agree with her beliefs, they began to respect Nicole's beliefs and ways of knowing because she was relentless in displaying and applying her religious knowledge.

She talked further about the negative and positive perceptions of Jamaicans that she had to endure throughout her middle and high school matriculation.

135 I think there are a lot of different ways that Jamaicans are perceived. Uhhh,
136 the first is that everyone always asks...especially when I went to college and

137 people didn't know that much about Jamaicans. They would ask, like, does
138 your mom or dad smoke weed or do you smoke weed and I'm like really, that
139 is what you identify me with...and always the weed smoking, but on the
140 positive side there's that crazy, interesting, unique style of music and flare
141 that comes along with being Jamaican. Someone who is not Jamaican would
142 say that is cool because they have Bob Marley and they have Usain Bolt who
143 is the fastest man in the world and they have these pretty beaches. There are
144 two very wide spectrums or one that range from the negative, weed smoking,
145 killing side to the positive, beautiful island, sandy beaches, great music, and
146 great food. (2/Lines 4-12)

Nicole said that people's negative perceptions (lines 137-139) of her family or other Jamaicans would not deter her from embracing her Jamaican culture. Nicole does not have any hard feelings towards people who stereotype her. In fact, she suggests that having stereotypical thoughts are "normal."

147 I think of it as being normal 'cause I see it as when I see or meet someone
148 from a different culture, I always think of the negative and the positive, so
149 even if I don't know anything about them...I'll think they say that this
150 country...not even a different country...if I meet someone from a different
151 state. (2/Lines 14-16)

In lines 147 through 151, Nicole explained that she felt that it was natural to think about a person's culture in terms of both the negatives and the positives and that is what she had done in the past regarding her peers from different parts of the United States.

Nicole's experiences with and her perceptions of classmates, teachers, the academic curriculum, and extracurricular activities have played an important role in her identity construction. In lines 152 through 158, she expressed that there had been times when she was extremely conscious of her ethnic, racial, and religious identities in the school setting.

152 I feel like I think about it [my identity] most when I am at school, when I am
153 not around my family or friends because the majority of my friends are
154 Jamaican. When I am around people who are African American or white...

155 That's when I am most conscious...not that I have to prove it, but that's when
156 I have the most pride as that sets me apart from everyone else. When I'm in a
157 group where everyone may all be the same and I'm the different one. (2/Lines
158 22-26)

In the above excerpt, Nicole stated that she felt more Jamaican when she was around her "African American or white" peers. It is in these situations that she feels proud of her Jamaican heritage, as it was what sets her apart from others.

Nicole said that although the usual stereotypes about Jamaicans persist, her peers always respected her Jamaican heritage and asked questions about her ethnic background. This is indicated in lines 159 through 162.

159 My peers are usually...it's funny because they were usually like, "speak
160 patois for me" or "what do you eat when you go home"? Little things like that
161 but it wasn't necessarily treated differently. I saw it as people being inquisitive
162 about where I was from. (3/Lines 31-33)

Nicole stated, "in middle school, I really think it was that you kind of wanted to be accepted by everyone around you and everyone was African American...so I wanted to jump off the Jamaican side to be an American for a little while." (3/Lines 16-19)

Nicole also felt that the diversity at the middle school where she transferred during her 7th grade year was significant in helping her to embrace her Jamaican identity.

163 My friends who were Jamaican...because their parents were so ready to
164 meet Nicole...they were like, "oh, you have a Jamaican friend? Let me meet
165 her." "Let me talk to her mom." Like they were just so open to have like this
166 second daughter in their family. (3/Lines 46-49)

At that school, Nicole met other students who were Jamaican and whom she perceived had some of the same cultural values and beliefs she did.

Nicole was also fortunate to have teachers who she perceived shared her identities. She wrote, "Ms. Bianca-Cooke, who was a Christian, Jamaican lady, shared all of my identities. She had the same moral and ethical views I did and we always saw

eye to eye” (Email Question #3). Throughout her middle and high school years, Nicole reported that she had a number of Jamaican teachers who treated her well and encouraged her to succeed academically. She discussed this in lines 167 through 172.

167 I had Jamaican math teachers in 7th and 8th grades and they were both very
168 much on my tail by making sure my work was up to par because they didn't
169 want to see a Jamaican American student falling back and of course if there
170 was anything I needed help with they were very much like, "I'll tutor you," or
171 "let me help you with this," or "let me talk to your mom to see what we can
172 work out." (3/Lines 24-28)

Nicole felt that she had to succeed academically because she knew that these teachers, who genuinely cared about her because she shared aspects of their identity as a Jamaican American, set the standards high for her. She discusses the relationship that she built with Jamaican teachers in lines 174 through 188.

174 I had three Jamaican teachers in middle school and two of them are still, we
175 keep in contact a lot and we will call and text and email me or check on me to
176 see how I am doing. I must say that those three teachers, their main interest
177 was they had my best interest at heart my entire middle school career. So
178 we're still very connected and very close. In middle school, I had a teacher
179 who was from the islands. I don't remember where. She was my 3rd grade
180 teacher. She still calls me and emails me to see how I am doing. She wants
181 me to come visit her. All the teachers who I've had who have been from the
182 islands or Jamaica has definitely kept in contact just to make sure that I keep
183 on track. And I like that because I have someone who I can say are
184 accountable for making sure that I do well. To live up to their standards as
185 well as mine is always a great feeling so that you never fall back and those
186 teachers for sure, I can think of 4 main teachers who are islanders or
187 Jamaicans...I can even think of a teacher who emailed me last month to see
188 how school is going and it's a good feeling. (N3/ Lines 54-64)

Lines 167 through 190 reveal that Nicole believed her Jamaican teachers to be more accountable to her and for her than her other teachers by them taking the initiative to “call, text, and email to check on” her. They cared about her and therefore kept in contact with her throughout her K-12 schooling and her first year in college.

Nicole reported that she realized that people had both positive and negative perceptions of Jamaicans.

189 I can definitely remember in high school my teachers not being very
190 knowledgeable about my Jamaican culture and I know that for a fact because
191 I've been in a class where a teacher has asked, "Oh, do your parents smoke
192 weed," or "do your parents have drugs?" Questions that I think that are not
193 ignorant questions, it is just that they don't know that had a negative
194 connotation and they were just inquisitive and had no clue on what Jamaicans
195 were like. They just didn't know when it came to my Jamaican culture. It
196 wasn't a negative vibe or anything. (3/Lines 95-100)

As indicated in lines 189 through 196, during her matriculation through secondary school, Nicole experienced teachers who asked questions about Jamaicans that were based on myths or stereotypes. She indicated that they would ask questions about her parents regarding the usage and possession of drugs, particularly marijuana (lines 191 and 192)

Summary

This chapter has presented three major themes about Nicole's identity construction processes. These themes were *being Christian*, *being black*, and *shifting identities*. Nicole's discourses revealed that being a Christian was significant in that it was the core of her being and how she primarily identified. She talked about Christianity in a way to make it clear to me that she was indeed Christian. She attributed her successes and morality to her belief in Christianity. Nicole said, "It is important for me to acknowledge this identity first because without it, I would have no morals or standings to uphold...I acknowledge myself as being a Christian first." Nicole's discourses further revealed the connections that she had drawn between being a Christian and being black. She said that she was taught that God made us in his image and because she is black, God must be black. It was through her belief in the tenets of Christianity that

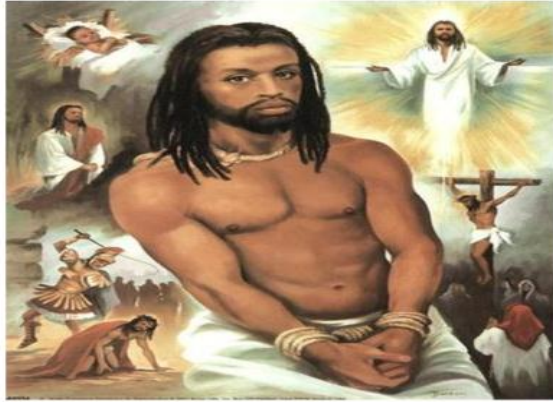
Nicole found fault with schooling practices, particularly the lack of acknowledgement and affirmation of her Christian identity, and subsequently formed a Christian organization.

Analysis of Nicole's discourses revealed that there were places and times when she felt most conscious of her Jamaican identity. There were places where she felt less "black" because she knew much less than her peers about African-American culture. Although she listed African American as one of her identities, she expressed that an African-American identity was often imposed upon her with no consideration given to her Jamaican heritage. She stated, "Although I am Jamaican, people always assume I am African-American." Nicole implied that it was important to fit in with peers and build relationships. Her discourses revealed the connection between her Jamaican-born sister's experiences "growing up African American" and her yearning for knowledge about African-American culture. Nicole stated, "...she helped me find that side of my identity."

Being Jamaican was particularly connected to Nicole's role in her family. Nicole reported that her family has a really close relationship. Her mother, grandmother and sister have all taught Nicole about aspects of her Jamaican identity. She reported, "My mother gave me a sense of pride in being Jamaican...I knew the Jamaican anthem for as long as I can remember." Nicole also revealed that being Jamaican may have influenced her relationships with her Jamaican teachers. She stated that her Jamaican teachers made her feel that she had to succeed academically because they felt a sense of responsibility for her. Being Jamaican and showing that she was Jamaican through

the wearing of the Jamaican colors became even more important as she became even more aware and proud of her Jamaican heritage.

An analysis of Nicole's discourses revealed that different identities became more salient at different points in her schooling. For example, she claimed a Jamaican identity in elementary school. In middle school, she claimed an African-American identity, and in high school she began to embrace both her African American and Jamaican identities. Nicole explained that her changing identities were the result of existing relationships and the desire to fit in. She explained that her relationship with her family in elementary school resulted in her claiming the same identity as they did. She was reared in a household of Jamaicans, therefore, she was Jamaican. During her middle school years, there weren't any other Jamaican students and she felt pressured to identify as her peers did in order to build and maintain relationships.



Jesus

I am a Christian before I am anything else. My faith has brought me through every trial and obstacle I have ever gone through. Knowing that Jesus got on the cross and died for MY sins makes me try harder each and everyday to be a better person.

Figure 6-1. Image of black Jesus – PowerPoint Slide # 1



Mommy

My mom and I have an amazing relationship and had it not been for her, I would not be the young lady I am today.

Figure 6-2. Nicole and her mother - PowerPoint Slide # 2



Aunt Dor

No words can describe this wonderful lady. She's my backbone, my strength, my role-model. My grandmother helped raise me and to this day, she still makes sure I am always well taken care of.

Figure 6-3. Nicole and her grandmother - PowerPoint Slide # 4



Jamaica

I was born in the United States but raised in a Jamaican household. When someone asks me "what are you," without thought my mouth utters "Jamaican." My parents and their parent are from Jamaica. When I bleed, I bleed black green and gold. Being Jamaican gives me a sense of pride that I love.

Figure 6-4. Nicole's Jamaica paraphernalia - PowerPoint # 6

CHAPTER 7 DEANDRE

I am glad I had the chance to move to the next half of my nationality to experience a new life.

DeAndre

Introduction

DeAndre was born in the United States, but was reared in the Bahamas. He viewed his return to the United States as a new beginning, and as such, his main priority was to construct his U.S. American identity. 'Being black Bahamian' was a central aspect of DeAndre's identity. The second theme that was evident throughout DeAndre's discourses was his eagerness to 'construct the other half.'

Being Black Bahamian

DeAndre's discourses revealed that being black Bahamian was at the core of his identity. DeAndre discussed his Bahamian identity in the excerpt below.

DeAndre: I would say I'm a Bahamian.

KB: Ok. So you're Bahamian and you would see that as your race?

DeAndre: (Nodded yes)

KB: So what about your nationality?

DeAndre: Nationality? I think my nationality is black....I would say yeah...I'm a black Bahamian. (1/Lines 16-20)

One of the images that DeAndre selected to depict his "black Bahamian" identity was the Bahamian flag. The Bahamian flag was one of the items that he felt represented his identity and the people he identified with most. He discussed the Bahamian flag with pride, "This is our Bahamian flag. The blue is for the color of the ocean...the yellow is...[pause] for the beaches...and this [pointing to the black triangle] represents the black people"(2/Lines 100-103).

An analysis of DeAndre's discourses indicated that being Bahamian has affected his relationships with his peers in ways that have been both positive and detrimental.

1 Well, actually I don't have to identify or say I'm Bahamian. People be
2 identifying me. Sometimes like when I talk, I go from American to Bahamian
3 and they're like yeah...he from the Bahamas. [I can tell who is Bahamian or
4 not] by their accent...by their accent... 'cause I mean in this day and time,
5 everybody looking alike, everybody, so I mean...if you don't hear the accent
6 you don't know who is from where...but sometimes the way they dress. The
7 way some people dress...different swags...the different ways you dress or,
8 like the different styles... (2/Lines 34-46)

During one of the interview sessions, DeAndre discussed how he often addressed his high school peers and teachers when they inquired about his ethnic identity.

9 I would say to tell you the truth, I lived in the Bahamas all my life, well 17
10 years, but I was born here [in the U.S]. So, if they say, "you're from the
11 Bahamas," I'd say, "if you want to put it that way then go ahead"
12 [sarcastically]. But really, I didn't have to tell them because they assumed I
13 was from the Bahamas just by the way that I talked. Automatically, like
14 everyone wanted to know me. I was like what is so amazing about me? [Is it]
15 just because I have an accent? (3/Lines 1- 7)

DeAndre's sarcasm in Lines 11 through 13 of the above excerpt suggested that many students and teachers didn't even consider that DeAndre could have been American-born. Because of his accent (line 15), they automatically identified him as Bahamian without thinking that he could possibly be Bahamian-American. Although DeAndre wanted people to recognize his American identity, he felt that his Bahamian accent contributed to his popularity in high school. He talked more about his experience being the only person of Bahamian heritage at his high school and "fitting in."

16 I was the only Bahamian. That's what makes it so crazy. Everybody loved me
17 because I was one of a kind. Everybody wanted to be like me. People started
18 talking like me because they were like "that's a cool accent and I wanna learn
19 it. (3/Lines 20-25)

During high school, DeAndre felt that being Bahamian contributed to his popularity and everybody "liking" him or wanting to talk "like" him. His Bahamian accent and heritage was something that not many of the other students had.

DeAndre also felt that there were instances when his language and culture were denigrated. He said, "Sometimes I would feel like they were trying to mock me in a negative way (pause)... because of my accent" (3/Line 27). As indicated in Lines 20 through 23 below, he also believed that while his peers and teachers genuinely liked the Bahamas as a tourist destination, their beliefs about the lifestyle and culture of the Bahamian people were stereotypical and most times inaccurate.

20 People at school didn't believe that we live how ya'll live over here. Like
21 houses and cars. They think we drive 'round in boats and stuff...I'm like
22 nawww...They say we live in huts. My house is bigger than probably 80% of
23 the world's population. (2/Lines 10-14)

DeAndre provided two pictures that he said he would show his peers and others so that they could see that he lived a similar lifestyle in the Bahamas as they do in the United States.

The misconceptions of DeAndre's peers were extensive.

24 I let them research and find out for themselves. 'Cause I used to hear them
25 [classmates] say they're going there [to the Bahamas] and they're not going
26 to rent a hotel because they were just going to stay in a hut on the beach but
27 when they go there they will just spend all their money on a hotel and a
28 [rental] car. (3/Lines 50-55)

As indicated in lines 24 through 28, DeAndre's peers imagined Bahamian living facilities and norms as quite different from U.S. American society.

Despite the barrage of misconceptions regarding his identity and Bahamian culture, DeAndre felt it important to make connections and build relationships with his teachers in the U.S. so that they would be able to understand and affirm his Bahamian identity. He wrote:

In the written data above, DeAndre explains that his school doesn't really support his identity, but to him it is "okay" because he wouldn't want to be "put on the spot" or be

the one for whom his teachers have to adjust their way of doing things. In a subsequent interview he stated, "I wish I did [have teachers of Bahamian heritage] but it was still good...But I could have related to them better than I could relate to the American teachers...they [American teachers] would tell me to slow down because they thought I talked too fast" (3/Lines 28-45). In both excerpts, DeAndre suggest that being Bahamian resulted in a lack of affirmation from his teachers.

For DeAndre, being Bahamian in the context of the United States sometimes came with a level of discomfort around those with whom he did not or could not identify.

29 [I identify most with] parents and family... point blank family and co-workers.
30 People who I work with back at home...because I feel as though I can be
31 myself around them [emphatic]. They just who been around basically all my
32 life. They are Bahamian (1/Lines 66-69).

As indicated in lines 29 through 32, DeAndre identified most with family members and co-workers in the Bahamas because that is where he was enculturated and socialized. They were the people who taught him the Bahamian way of life and have since affirmed his Bahamian identity. DeAndre also identified with a few of his friends. He reported that being with his college friends is like "being back at home."

33 I identify with a couple of friends at the college. Cause it's like... just being
34 back at home. You could just be yourself...chill...and do all the stuff you used
35 to do at home. Talk the way you talk and just be you. Some is from Orlando,
36 some is from like Belle Glades...all that...Ft. Lauderdale...and Tampa and all
37 that. Most of them is on the football team (3/Lines 70-79).

Lines 33 through 37 show that for DeAndre, both family and friends are important in his identity construction processes.

Constructing the Other Half

An analysis of DeAndre's discourses regarding his dual citizenship and identity revealed that he felt extremely privileged to be able to cross borders with relative ease.

38 I mean I'm one of the lucky few that grew up in the Bahamas and could just
39 come here for school and didn't have to go through all of the
40 inconvenience. Like you need to apply for a green card if you want to come
41 over here and if you want to go to school you got to get all these documents
42 and forms... I am also a U.S. citizen. (3/Lines 14-19)

As indicated in lines 38 through 39, DeAndre considered himself "lucky" and speaks of the "inconvenience" other immigrants face when coming to the U.S.

Because he is also a U.S. citizen, DeAndre felt it imperative to construct a U.S. American identity right here and now.

43 I basically have spent almost all of my life in Bahamas...because I was raised
44 there. I gotta start now on the other half of my life...I feel more Bahamian at
45 the moment 'cause basically all of my life so far was over there. I only spent
46 like almost two years over here [In U.S.]. (1/Lines 53-57)

DeAndre felt like the time was now for him to take agency in his identity construction by embracing and learning American culture. His assertion in line 44 that "I gotta start now on the other half of my life" indicates that he perceived a clear demarcation between his Bahamian and American identities.

In a subsequent interview session, DeAndre further commented on his Bahamian and American identities.

47 Well everyday [he feels Bahamian]...but I've already been there for 17 years,
48 but I wasn't born there. I have to represent the other half now. The other half is
49 my United States of America half....I gotta represent that. (2/Lines 28-33)

Lines 47 through 49 suggest that DeAndre is now more concerned about constructing his American identity than he is about maintaining his Bahamian identity as he states "but I've already been there for 17 years." This assertion is further supported by his written response in Figure 7-5 where he was asked to write about the ways in which he shows pride in his culture.

There were several significant findings or themes that ran through DeAndre's written response in Figure 7-5. He chose Bahamian culture instead of American culture as the object of his response (Sentence 1). DeAndre claimed that he shows pride in his Bahamian culture by "representing where [he] comes from." However, he shifts from discussing Bahamian culture to emphasizing the need to be accepted into U.S. culture (Sentences 4 – 6). He ends the excerpt by discussing the opportunity to be an American and live "a new life" and "complete [his] nationality" (Sentences 7 - 8). Although his peers were fascinated with his Bahamian culture, DeAndre still found it important to be nice and make a lot of friends so that people would like him in his new home "across the waters." He felt like having a nice personality would allow him acceptance into U.S. American society.

The following image captured his feelings about his identity at the moment of departure from the Bahamas.

He stated, "This picture shows that I can go anywhere and do anything with a passport and money" (2/Lines109-110). In this photograph, DeAndre's holds his U.S. passport and U.S. American money. While DeAndre had other photos where he displayed images of himself with Bahamian money, it was this photo that he chose to symbolize his identity at this point in time in his life.

Speaking Like Everybody Else

One aspect of 'constructing the other half' was learning to speak like his peers. DeAndre stated, "like last semester, 'cause my language changed I'm not talking like how I used to talk when I first came over here...I speak more like everybody else" (1/Lines 58-60). Being able to speak more like an American has helped him to feel more American. In an effort to get me to understand the differences between how he speaks

and how I speak, DeAndre explained the relationship between his language and the English spoken in the United States.

50 It's just basically the same as English. It's just we sound funny saying it, that's
51 all. It's just some of the words ya'll pronounce we just sound funny saying it. It
52 is English... (pause)...Yeah (emphatic). It is English (self-confirmation). We
53 just sound different saying some words...that's all. I can't really remember [an
54 example] of it now... 'cause it's like certain stuff...Let me see. Let me see if I
55 can try to think of a word or something we would say different. Like some
56 people would be like /yo/ and we would just say /boi/. Like yeah...ok.
57 (D1/Lines 30-40)

As indicated in Lines 50 and 52, DeAndre believed that his language was the same as English, but it sounded funny and different. He also explained that when he first arrived in the U.S. he had some difficulty understanding people because they spoke too fast. He stated, "When I first came over here yeah...Sound like they was talking fast, so I had to listen hard...and they said that that's how I sound to them" (1/Lines 41-42).

DeAndre reported that his language is one of the reasons that his family members in the Bahamas have come to realize that his identity is "changing" (Line 69) and that he is in the process of becoming more U.S. American.

58 They expect me to be Bahamian (emphatic). Yeah. 'Cause I was over there
59 most of my life...but I think they are starting to change now and say..."Oh
60 yeah...he's American." Ummm my voice (laughs) [makes them view me as
61 American]. That's what I think, my voice, 'cause everything else is still the
62 same...yeah...my language. (D1/Lines 86-95)

The above excerpt revealed that DeAndre felt that his family has always expected him to identify as Bahamian and they label him as such. Lines 58 through 62 indicate that his family now realizes that he is using several dialects of American English instead of his native Bahamian English. They are beginning to realize that the longer he lives in the U.S., the more he sounds U.S. American.

Summary

This chapter has presented two major themes about DeAndre's identity construction processes – being black Bahamian and constructing the other half. One of the ways that DeAndre constructs aspects of his Bahamian identity is by maintaining the relationships and connections he has with family and friends. DeAndre indicated “he can be himself” around family and friends, whether they are in the United States or back in the Bahamas. They support and affirm his Bahamian identity. His American friends allow him to “chill and do all of the stuff he used to do at home,” “talk the way he talks” and “just be himself.” Relationships and connections are also important as DeAndre constructs his American identity. He believes that “having a nice personality” and “knowing how to treat people” is critical to his success in making friends in school and having those friends accept him as one of them, as an American.

DeAndre constructed and reconstructed his Bahamian identity through use of a particular language or accent. DeAndre used his ability to code switch between the different dialects so that people would recognize him as either Bahamian or American. Language was an important aspect of his identity construction process. As his family saw a change in his language, they too began to acknowledge his American identity. DeAndre indicated that although his Bahamian dialect resulted in increased popularity and everyone wanted to speak like him, it also caused his peers to ignore his American identity at a time when he wanted his them to view him as American.

DeAndre felt that there were instances when his language and culture were denigrated. There were times when his peers would mock his Bahamian accent. DeAndre also believed that while his peers and teachers genuinely liked the Bahamas as a tourist destination, their beliefs about the lifestyle and culture of the Bahamian

people were sensationalized and therefore inaccurate. Their discourses regarding the Bahamas framed it as less civilized than the United States.

Although DeAndre acknowledged that he was proud of his Bahamian heritage, he clearly perceived that it was time for him to construct the other half of his identity. DeAndre perceived time to be a factor in his identity construction. The concept of time is significant in that DeAndre refers to the amount of time that he has spent in the Bahamas versus the amount of time he has spent in the United States. Although he identified as both Bahamian and American, DeAndre suggested that because he had already spent seventeen years in the Bahamas, his Bahamian identity was undeniable. He said that it was “ok that his school does not support his Bahamian identity.” I argue that the lack of affirmation found in his high school was fine with him because he did not view that as the purpose of U.S. American schools. He was more interested in learning U.S. American culture. He indicated “I’m able to represent my other half now” that he is living in the United States and that he “now has the chance to complete my nationality.” In addition, his parents and family members “are starting to change now and say, oh yeah, he’s American.” For DeAndre, now was the best time to embrace and construct his U.S. American identity.

DeAndre’s discourses are significant in that his use of the term “half” revealed that he perceived his ethnic and national identity to be totally separate from one another, as if there was an invisible boundary around the two. Throughout the data he referred to his American half. He stated “the other half is my USA half” and “I gotta start now on the other half of my life.”



The flag

Our flag back at home.

Figure 7-1. The Bahamian Flag – PowerPoint Slide # 10



Figure 7-2. DeAndre's home (inside) in the Bahamas – PowerPoint Slide # 9



Figure 7-3. DeAndre's home (inside) in the Bahamas – PowerPoint Slide # 7

It would be beneficial to have teachers who share ~~your~~ the same identity as me because they would know how to communicate with me on different levels. My school doesn't really support my identity but it's ok because I don't really like to be put on the spot to do anything like that.

Figure 7-4. DeAndre – Excerpt 2 (Email Question # 3).

I show pride in my Bahamian culture by representing where I'm from. I moved to Florida after my Junior year of High School. I made alot of friends, but it was not just because of my accent or being from the Bahamas. It was mostly because I have a nice personality and I know how to treat people. It wouldn't be a good thing for you to go in another country across waters and try to be the Boss. You can get hurt or cause people to hate you and want bad things to happen to you. I am glad that I had the chance to move to the next half of my nationality so that I can experience a new life. I now have the chance to complete my nationality by being and living in both places.

Figure 7-5. DeAndre's response to Email Question/Prompt # 2.



Love it.

I can go anywhere and do anything I want to do.

Figure 7-6. DeAndre's passport and money – PowerPoint Slide # 13

CHAPTER 8 A VIEW ACROSS

Chapter eight highlights another dimension of this research. While the previous four chapters provided an individual voice to each of the participants, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss patterns, experiences, and discourses that were found to be similar across participant stories. The second section of the chapter includes an analysis of participant language choices that often serve to index their identities. Chapter eight ends with a cross participant analysis of “I” statements and a summary of the chapter.

Similarities Among Participants

There were several recurring themes across participants’ stories. First, the context-based nature of saliency seemed to be of significant importance in these participants’ identity construction processes. Secondly, the participants all primarily constructed their identities as social and relational. Third, they each identified negative discourses and positive experiences regarding their identities in school.

Multiple Identity Options

All of the participants acknowledged multiple aspects of their identities. Elise described herself as a Christian, Jamaican, Jamerican, daughter, sister, and student. Kendall described himself as St. Thomian, Cruzan, and an athlete. Nicole described herself as Christian, Jamaican, African American, and a family member. DeAndre described himself as a Child of God, a son, grandson, American, and a Bahamian.

Relocating, which resulted in changing demographics, played an important role in the identities the participants’ constructed and described. Identity options and the costs and benefits associated with specific identities differed according to the context in which

participants found themselves. Different contextual factors affected which identities participants emphasized or constructed and the means for their construction. For example, Elise's Jamaican identity became more salient upon her family's relocation to Northeast Florida. Elise said that she claimed a Jamaican identity in South Florida. Once she and her family moved to the north Florida community where there were fewer Jamaicans, she felt that claiming a (black) American identity was perhaps more beneficial to building new relationships.

Like Elise, DeAndre's move to the United States resulted in additional identity options. He expressed that emigrating was central to 'constructing the other half' of his identity. DeAndre felt that his move signaled a new beginning, the time to begin constructing a U.S. American identity. He stated, "I basically have spent almost all of my life in Bahamas...because I was raised there. I gotta start now on the other half of my life... (D1/Lines 53-57)." DeAndre felt like now was the time for him to take agency in his identity construction by embracing and learning American culture. His assertion that "I gotta start now on the other half of my life" also indicated that he perceived a clear demarcation between his Bahamian and American identities, and that crossing borders provided the opportunity for him to construct and/or highlight his other identities.

Kendall most often identified as African American, especially in the context of school where he perceived there were four distinct racial groups: blacks, Latinos, Asians and Whites. However, in the context of athletics – particularly on the soccer field, his St. Thomian identity became more salient. Kendall realized that his African-American peers did not understand why he was so passionate about soccer. They could not relate to his affinity for the game and questioned, "What black kid plays soccer

(K2/Line 60)?” He understood that his love for the game of soccer made him, in some respects, “different” from his African-American peers and more like those students who claimed immigrant and white American identities. Therefore, when discussing soccer, he described himself as St. Thomian.

Similar to Elise, Nicole acknowledged that her identities shifted throughout her K through 12 matriculation. Nicole’s perceptions of her identities and how she described herself changed from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. She went from identifying or describing herself as Jamaican only, to being American only, to being both Jamaican and American. In her early years, she identified as Jamaican. This was significant as it was evident of her role in a Jamaican family and her relationship with those family members. During her middle school years, she began to construct an African-American identity. In the context of the first middle school she attended, Nicole’s language revealed that she felt a sense of vulnerability about her ethnic identity and its impact on the relationships that she hoped to build with her peers. In an effort to be accepted, she decided to identify in the same way that the majority of her peers did – as African American. Nicole transferred to another middle school during the middle of her 7th grade year. At her new middle school, there was a diverse student population that included other students of Jamaican descent. She indicated that this environment was more conducive to her embracing both her Jamaican and American identities.

Identities as Relational and Role-Related

It was through the construction of a Jamerican identity and the use of this term to self-identify that put Elise’s family at ease with regards to her self-identification. Elise’s relationship with one aunt in particular opened the door for a conversation whereby

Elise would be introduced to the term 'Jamerican.' The use of the term 'Jamerican' seemed to be neutral territory where neither her Jamaican nor U.S. American identities were relegated to an inferior position. Elise's aunt used the term to describe people like Elise – those of both Jamaican and American heritages. Some of Elise's family members objected to her identifying as Jamaican, while others objected to her identifying as American.

Participants tend to select from identity options based on the relationships that they view as important or those they are building in a particular context at a particular time. Nicole used terms like "family-oriented," "amazing," and "wonderful" to describe the relationship between her and her family members. She wrote in response to one of the questions posed, "The third identity [daughter] is important because I am very family oriented and they [her family] mean the world to me" (Email Question #1). Nicole reported that her family has a really close relationship with one another. The number of pictures of family members that Nicole provided evidenced Nicole's claims regarding the influence of family members on her Jamaican identity. In Email Question #2 she wrote, "My mom and I have an amazing relationship and had it not been for her, I would not be the young lady I am today. I would not know anything of my Jamaican heritage or be proud of it" (Email Question #2). Nicole described her grandmother, who helped to raise her, as wonderful. The caption of one of her pictures read, "No words can describe this wonderful lady. She's my backbone, my strength, my role model". Her grandmother, she claimed, instilled in her pride in her Jamaican heritage.

During her middle school years, Nicole was greatly influenced to label herself as African American because she admired her older sister who identified as African

American and Nicole wanted to fit in with her African-American peers. She credits her sister with teaching her some African-American culture. She stated, “She was into the American culture – the rap music, the hip hop, the arts, everything that was deemed to be American and she’s black so she helped me find that sense of my identity or that side of my identity” (E1/Lines 50-53).

An analysis of Nicole and Kendall’s discourses revealed an interesting similarity. To them, peers were important because they helped to create a sense of belonging. When she transferred to a school with a more diverse population, to include other students of Jamaican descent, Nicole became more eager to identify as Jamaican or Jamaican American. Kendall’s assertion regarding his ethnic identity was also dependent upon the peer group in which he found himself, and was done for the purposes of building and maintaining relationships. He stated, “When I am around my friends I describe myself as African American...but when I know people have an awareness of cultures, I say St. Thomian” (K1/Lines 47-49). Since the majority of Kendall’s friends and classmates of color were African American, he felt an imperative to fit in with them. He explained, “some [peers] are aware that I’m not just African American because of the clothes I wear, or the things I say, how I talk or maybe my hair or something...but other than my close friends, they don’t know and my teachers don’t know [that he also identifies as St.Thomian]” (K3/Lines 191-192). Therefore, identity options that were valued were context dependent and were determined by relationships that needed to be built or maintained.

It was through Kendall’s relationship with the other members of a social group called the West Indies Kids that he constructed his identity as a West Indian. He

explained that he, along with a group of West Indian students, created an organization that had been influential in his life. It was through Kendall's membership with the West Indies Kids and his relationship with others who identified as West Indian that Kendall's identity as a Virgin Islander was affirmed through "hanging out," displaying "different flags," and "throwing parties" to benefit different organizations in the Caribbean community.

An analysis of DeAndre's language suggested that the identities that he constructed were also relational. He constructed identities that both his friends and family members would be able to relate to and be comfortable with. In talking about his relationship with college peers, he said, "You could just be yourself...chill...and do all the stuff you used to do at home. Talk the way you talk and just be you (D3/Lines 35-36)." This suggests that DeAndre is comfortable being who he is around this group of friends. His family, however, is the means by which he measures his progress in becoming an American. He stated "...but I think they are starting to change now [from seeing him as solely Bahamian] and say..." "Oh yeah...he's American" (D1/Lines 87-90). This comment suggests that he values the relationship that he has with family and friends' and that their perceptions of his identities really matter.

Identity Construction within the School Context

There were many instances that demonstrated how schooling practices, teachers, and other students, shaped the identities and identity options of these participants. Each of these participants had to negotiate identities that were valued and devalued within the official curriculum (i.e. classes), as well as those outside of that curriculum. Participants often felt that they had to choose specific identities in order to become a part of peer groups. They also saw through the actions and comments of teachers that

certain identities were valued, while others were stigmatized. Participants often negotiated their identities by considering which identity options would best serve them in the context of school and their peer groups.

Both Elise and Nicole expressed that at one point or another in their K12 matriculation, they felt they had to choose an identity. No one told them this explicitly. However, the culture and dynamics of the school, with students self-grouping by ethnicity and in the absence of a Jamaican group, Elise and Nicole had to pick a place among White or African-American students. They weighed their identity options. Both chose to identify as African American, at first. However, their lack of knowledge regarding African-American culture and AAVE and the deficit discourses used by school personnel when they spoke of African-American students made this a less desirable option for both Elise and Nicole.

Kendall expressed similar sentiments as he described the morning and afternoon routine of his peers. He and his friends, most of whom he described as “black,” congregated at what he affectionately called the “Black Wall.” While he felt embraced by his African-American peers in the general school setting and when they were at the “Black Wall,” Kendall described himself as St. Thomian when playing soccer, because he felt that his African-American peers did not accept his love for and knowledge of the game and would view him as unlike them.

An analysis of Elise and Kendall’s language revealed that their identity as a person of color was consequential in that black people were viewed as less intelligent or incapable of succeeding academically. They both felt that the teachers made comments that were indicative of their ideologies regarding the academic success (or failure) of

black students. Kendall explained that constructing an African-American identity was particularly consequential in the context of school. He felt that there were different, even lowered, expectations for him and others of African descent. He also alluded to a self-fulfilling prophecy for Blacks.

While DeAndre did not detect racist ideologies as the other participants did, his classmates' ethnocentric views were prevalent. He believed that his classmates and teachers' beliefs about the lifestyle and culture of the Bahamian people were stereotypical and most times inaccurate. As he constructed an American identity, he also tried to debunk the myths regarding Bahamians by showing his peers and teachers pictures of his country, the people, and their lifestyles. There were also instances where schooling practices and teachers affirmed participants' identity. For example, Elise, Kendall, and Nicole were involved in cultural-based school activities for which they found an outlet to show pride in and learn about their Caribbean heritages. Nicole's teachers (those of Jamaican descent) held high expectations for her because she identified as Jamaican.

Nicole, in particular, felt fortunate to have teachers who she perceived shared her identities. She wrote, "Ms. Bianca Cooke, who was a Christian, Jamaican lady shared all of my identities. She had the same moral and ethical views I did and we always saw eye to eye" (Email Question #3). Throughout her middle and high school years, Nicole reported that she had a number of Jamaican teachers who treated her well and encouraged her to succeed academically. Nicole felt pressured to succeed because she knew teachers who genuinely cared about her set the standards high for her and because she shared their Jamaican-American identity.

Given their personal histories and experiences, participants sometimes constructed identities that were valued in the official curriculum, and sometimes they resisted these identities and/or constructed and maintained identities that were less valued and stigmatized.

Language Choice and Use as Acts of Identity

Participants used or reported the use of Standard American English (SAE), African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Creole to get recognized as taking on certain roles or identities (Gee, 2005). Their language choices and use often indexed specific identities in specific contexts.

Constructing Caribbean identities

Caribbean language varieties were important to all of the participants as they were used to index and authenticate their Caribbean identities in contexts where it was necessary and/or desired. Elise and Nicole constructed their Jamaican identities by using Creole. Referring to herself, Elise said that one aspect of being Jamaican is “when you talk Patois...when you use the terms” (E1/Line 83). Likewise, Nicole suggested that the ability to speak Patois, her first language, signified her Jamaican identity. She stated:

In elementary school, I was Jamaican and that’s mainly because I had a very heavy accent. That’s because although I was born in the United States, everyone in my household spoke Patois like it was water. They spoke it...it came so naturally for everyone and I had a strong Jamaican accent, and so when everyone would ask “where are you from,” I’d say “I’m Jamaican”. (N3/Lines 4-6)

For Nicole, speaking “Patois like it was water” and describing how “it came so naturally to everyone” suggests that speaking Patois was the norm for her family and at that time, it was not only natural, but everyone, including her, was proficient in Patois.

This is significant as her proficiency in Patois waned in later years as she began to construct other identities.

Kendall and DeAndre also used Caribbean language varieties, Creole and Bahamian English respectively, to construct their Caribbean identities. In discussing his tryouts for the culture fair and his teacher's surprise at his ability to use Creole, Kendall stated, "She's never heard me use my accent, like I have known her for two or three years and she's never heard me use it, so I go in there and I say like four lines and she says, 'that's it, you're in'" (K3/Lines 99-101). In this instance, Kendall made the decision to use Creole because it indexed his Virgin Islander identity and he knew it would surprise and impress his teacher so much so that she would allow him to represent the U.S. Virgin Islands in his school's annual culture fair.

DeAndre's use of Bahamian English served to index his Bahamian identity when he felt it necessary. He indicated that there were times when his "accent" helped him to stand out in a crowd. DeAndre stated, "I don't have to identify or say I'm Bahamian. People be identifying me. Sometimes like when I talk, I go from American to Bahamian and they're like yeah...he from the Bahamas. [I can tell who is Bahamian or not] by their accent...by their accent..." (D2/Lines 34-36). DeAndre understands that identities are constructed through language choices, and uses it to his advantage to index either his U.S. American or Bahamian identities.

Caribbean language varieties were important to all of the participants as they viewed those as the languages that indexed and authenticated their Caribbean identities in contexts where this was necessary and/or desired.

Constructing U.S. American Identities

Participants' language use and choices indexed their different U.S. American identities. There were some significant differences between the language use and choices of the female participants and their male counterparts. The female participants used language and made language choices that indexed their U.S. American identities, but also distinguished them from their African-American peers.

Elise said, "People ask me where I am from because I speak a bit more proper [than her African-American peers]" (E3/Lines 104). In this instance, Elise is not only highlighting her ability to speak the standard language of the U.S., she is distinguishing herself from her African-American peers.

Similarly, Nicole highlights her proficiency in SAE, while distinguishing herself from her African-American peers. She discussed growing out of her Jamaican accent and constructing a U.S. American identity through "proper" English. She said, "I'm Jamaican but then I kind of grew out of my accent and I was around my peers more often and I sort of adapted to the...not necessarily Ebonics, not so much Patois, but the proper English" (D3/Lines 6-7). Despite the fact that her peers were mainly African American at that particular time in her life, Nicole makes it clear that it was not "Ebonics" that she acquired, but proper English. Referring to her African-American peers, Nicole said, "They speak differently. Their proper English would be "ain't" or "ya'll did" or something that I don't think is proper English" (N2/Lines 91-93). She contrasted their ability to speak Standard American English to her own.

In sum, both Elise and Nicole constructed their U.S. American identities by using SAE. Their proficiency in SAE also served to distinguish them from their African-American peers. In addition, Elise's experiences indicated that her ability to speak SAE

caused people to reconsider their assumptions that she was only African American and a low achiever. An analysis of Elise and Nicole's discourses suggest a connection between SAE, schools, and upward mobility. SAE marked them as serious students and provided distance from the dominant language ideologies and deficit discourses often evoked when referring to African-American students. They felt that their level of proficiency and consistent use of Standard American English provided a clue to those around them that they were academically successful.

In contrast to their female counterparts' language choices and use, the male participants embraced AAVE and perceived it as a necessary linguistic resource. For the male participants, there was no explicit indication of the value (or lack thereof) placed on SAE or AAVE. In the interview settings, Kendall and DeAndre's language use displayed a variety of SAE, AAVE, and Creole phonological and morpho-syntactic features. In addition, they used much of the slang used by urban, African-American youth. While Kendall understood the ideologies surrounding African Americans and academic achievement, the language was necessary if he were to identify as African American.

Kendall used language as one of the ways in which he constructed an African-American identity and often demonstrated his knowledge of AAVE. While Kendall used a combination of AAVE, SAE, and CE linguistic features throughout his interviews, he also used a lot of slang terminology associated with African American Vernacular English while off the record. In discussing the first time he and his best friend, J.P. met, Kendall talked about his admiration for J.P.'s 'swag' or style and the dialogue in which he told J.P. that he thought his 'swag' was cool. Kendall's use of AAVE and slang

indicated his knowledge and the value of AAVE in building relationships. Knowledge of Caribbean English was also important in Kendall's identity construction in order for his identity as a St. Thomian, or Virgin Islander, to be recognized in an environment where there weren't many Virgin Islanders.

Similar to the other participants, DeAndre's language proficiency and use indexed his identities. An analysis of his discourses revealed the connection between language and the dynamism of ethnic identity. He explained that his identity had changed since moving to the United States. DeAndre stated "like last semester, 'cause my language changed I'm not talking like how I used to talk when I first came over here...I speak more like everybody else" (D1/Lines 58-60). DeAndre suggested that his ability to speak more "like everybody else" has helped him to feel more American (e.g. authentication). Like Kendall, DeAndre has embraced AAVE and slang. DeAndre's "everybody else" happens to be his peers who are proficient in AAVE and who attend the same Historically Black College that he does.

Using "I" Statements to Describe Identities

A different snapshot of the participants' language in the interviews and written data evolved when considering their I-statements. Where these participants chose to speak as an "I", tells us something about how they were constructing their 'here and now' identities in and through language (Gee, 2005). Table 8-1 shows the distribution of different types of I-statements in terms of the number and percentage of I-statements participants used.

Participants most often used state-action statements to describe their identities. For example, Elise stated "I describe myself as Jamaican", "I speak English", "I was born in America", and "I speak more proper". Kendall stated "I am with other Island

kids”, “I started writing poetry”, “I was at a track meet and there was a little kid there”, “I went to try out for the annual culture fair”, and “It’s a part of who I am [Virgin Island identity]”. Nicole stated, “I am a Christian”, “I am black”, “I went to prayer camp”, and “I am Jamaican”. DeAndre stated “I am a black Bahamian” and “I was raised in the Bahamas but born American”.

They also used state-action statements to discuss the activities that were connected to these varying identities. For example, for Elise, being born in America is significant to her Jamerican identity. For Nicole, going to prayer camp was an activity that changed her life. It was there that she constructed a Christian identity. Kendall discussed how becoming a poet was an identity that was incongruent with the expectations of his black peers, but something that he felt was a part of him and an avenue through which he could express his identities. For DeAndre, being born in America was a testament to a U.S. American identity that he was so eager to construct.

Across the participants’ interviews, cognitive I-statements were most often used to speculate about ethnic and racial categories and how these categories are used in context of U.S. society and in school settings. For example, Elise speculated about why she was considered black. She stated “I guess I am black because of my skin tone”. She also discussed the stereotypical discourses. She stated “I guess the stereotypical things come up but no one really knows the actual how Jamaicans are ...only what they see from TV and everything” and “I think we blacks are perceived as not being as intelligent”. Through her cognitive I-statements, Elise also hinted at the results of a history of oppression when she stated, “I don’t think we carry the same burden [as

African Americans]”. The burden to which Elise refers is slavery, prejudice, and discriminatory practices.

Kendall also used a great number of cognitive I-statements to speculate about the deficit discourses (some that he had believed resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy) that he regularly encountered. For example, he stated “I guess it’s more of a stereotype [blacks being less intelligent] because most of the other black kids in my school don’t do anything”. When he stated, “I think some are not aware [that he’s not just African American]”, he was explaining that to his dismay, he was most often identified and labeled by teachers and peers as African American.

Like the others, Nicole’s cognitive I-statements revealed the dominant discourses regarding her various identities. For example, she stated, “I think there are a lot of different ways that Jamaicans are perceived”. She went on to talk about how they are perceived both negatively as drug users and abusers and more positively as a creative and fun loving people. She stated “I think about it [my identity] most when I am at school”. This suggests that Nicole is cognitively aware of the possibilities and problems that her identities, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious, pose in the context of school. She explains this by stating, “I really think that you [I] kind of wanted to be accepted by everyone and everyone around you was African American.”

DeAndre had the fewest number and percentage of cognitive I-statements among the participants. Yet, like the others, it was the second highest category for him.

DeAndre’s cognitive I-statements focused on the various changes that he had made to become more U.S. American-like and whether or not those around him viewed these changes as congruent to their identities. For example, DeAndre stated, “I think they are

starting to change [the way they view me]”. And “I think my voice [is changing] cause everything else is still the same”.

Summary

In sum, analysis of the data suggests that 1) participants construct different identities in response to varying contexts; 2) participants constructed identities that they felt were important in building and maintaining roles in their family as well as their friendships; 3) participants’ used or reported the use of Standard American English (SAE), African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Creole to get recognized as taking on certain roles or identities. Their language choices and use often indexed specific identities in specific contexts; and 4) participants often negotiated their identities by considering which identity options would best serve them in the context of school and their peer groups.

Analysis of I-statements provided a different snapshot of the participants’ language. Where these participants chose to speak as “I”, told us something about how they constructed their ‘here and now’ identities in and through language. While all of them most often used state-action statements to describe their identities, the I-statement analysis confirmed the connection between activities and identities and the ways in which participants were subjected to deficit discourses regarding their identities.

Table 8-1. "I" Statement Distribution Table

	"I" Statement Types & Frequency							
	Elise		Kendall		Nicole		DeAndre	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Affective	14	11	13	9	14	6	5	7
Ability-Constraint State-Action	13	10	6	2	7	3	4	5
Subject of Other's State-Actions	46	37	158	64	154	71	48	71
Cognitive	5	4	1	<1	1	<1	2	2
Achievement	44	35	63	25	39	18	12	17
TOTAL	4	3	6	2	2	<1	1	1
	126	100	247	100	217	100	68	100

CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-ascribed identities of Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and their perceptions of how their schooling experiences have shaped their identities. Four Anglophone Caribbean adolescents provided interview data, written answers to prompts, and presented pictures and images that they felt were symbolic of their identities. Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Themes were extracted and analyzed to respond to the research questions and to gain an understanding of what participants say and do to construct their identities; the role of relationships on identity and identity on relationships; the influence of various sign systems; and the role of power and ideology in identity construction processes. Following Gee (2005), participants' I-statements were also analyzed for patterns and themes that surfaced to further highlight how participants construct their here and now identities.

This chapter discusses the major findings related to identity description and construction, particularly within the context of the participants' schools, and situates it within the literature on identity construction in education. The findings are grouped under two major headings, Describing Identities: Constructing the Self in/as a Third Space and Identity Construction in Schools: Dominant Discourses and Acts of Identity. The first section discusses the multiplicity and situationality of identities as examples of Third Spaces. This is followed by a summary of findings related to the ways in which school discourses play a role in identity construction.

Describing Identities: Constructing the Self in/as a Third Space

An analysis of the data shows that participants described their identities in ways that allow for multiple constructions of identities that were dependent on a number of variables such as time and space. These constructions are examples of “Third Spaces” in that they defy the unidimensional, static, false dichotomies (e.g. native/nonnative speaker, U.S. American/immigrant) often used to describe people’s identities (Bhabha, 1994; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Although all of the aspects of Third space identities work in tandem, I discuss them separately below in an effort to highlight the ways in which participants described their identities.

Participants’ Identities as Multiple and Multidimensional

Identities are not an either or proposition, but that individuals often identify in multiple ways. The participants in this study constructed and perceived their identities as both multiple and multidimensional. Participants had metaphorical identity knapsacks that contained different types of identities (e.g. linguistic, racial, ethnicity). The participants in this study often used specific terms to describe their ethnicity, religion, language, and race (e.g., Jamaican and American, and American English and English Creole and/or Patois). These identities simultaneously reflected collective/group identities (e.g., Bahamian, Jamaican, Christian), familial identities (e.g., brother, sister), and non-familial identities (e.g., student). These findings confirm contemporary conceptualizations of the multiplicity of identities (Ajayi, 2006; Ashmore et al., 2000; Bailey, 2000; Dinka et. al, 2008; Lee, 2000; Liang, 2006) and fit well within current models that represent the co-existence of multiple identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

However, the study also showed that there were different dimensions to these identities and that they overlapped and intersected with one another. One’s ethnic and

linguistic identity could consist of several different ethnicities and linguistic identities. For example, Kendall claimed a Virgin Islander ethnicity as well as an African-American ethnicity. He also claimed proficiency in and use of Creole, AAVE, and SAE. Moreover, these multiple identities were not disconnected, but intersected and shaped each other. For instance, Kendall suggested that all Virgin Islanders were technically African American because the Virgin Islands are a U.S. territory.

This study suggests that the lines between these identities are porous, that is different aspects of different identities influence each other in complex ways. Nicole's racial identity as a black person influenced her religious identity in the form of her perceptions of what Jesus looked like. Kendall identified as African American as well as Caribbean; therefore, he thought it important to have linguistic identities that were indicative of his African American identity as well as his Caribbean identity.

In other instances, emerging intersections led to a questioning of identity options and choices. For example, Elise first saw an African-American identity as a viable identity option. However, when she realized that she did not have the cultural knowledge or language proficiency in AAVE, she no longer felt as if it were a viable identity option for her. Nicole's sister taught her some African-American culture, so even though she did not claim proficiency in AAVE, she was able to claim an African-American identity in middle school because she knew enough African American pop culture.

Participants' Identities as Hybrid

Hybridity is an important concept in the context of transnationalism, migration, and globalization (Darboe, 2008; Foner, 1997; Irizarry, 2007; Lyall Smith, 2008; Kamada, 2010; Kanno, 2003). Hybridity is often indexed by language crossing, mixing (Ogulnick,

2000; Rampton, 2005), codeswitching (Bosire, 2006; Liang, 2006; Myers-Scotton, 2000; Ruan, 2003), and the use of new labels, such as Spanglish to refer to the mixing of Spanish and English, and Nuyorican to refer to second and third generation Puerto Ricans residing in New York City (Callahan, 2004; Morales, 2003; Otheguy & Stern, 2011). The search for new labels is used to contrast what has often been perceived as 'static' representations of identity with labels that are less dichotomous, less bounded representations of identity.

The participants in this study used few linguistic signifiers of hybrid identities. Only Elise's discourses provided any explicitly linguistic indication (i.e., her use of the label 'Jamerican') of the hybridization that is often mentioned in the research (Gonzales, 2008; Hesse-Biber & Barko, 2008; Weiner & Richards, 2008). While the others did not explicitly label their identity as hybrid in the way that Elise did, they certainly constructed their identities in ways that could be labeled as hybrid, especially when hybridity is interpreted more broadly as an individual indicating multiple identities at the same time. For example, Kendall talked about the importance of using specific languages in specific domains. He specifically mentioned his use of Creole in the context of his West Indian friends and AAVE in the context of African-American peers. In the interview settings, he often code-switched between AAVE and SAE.

Of all the participants, DeAndre discussed his national/ethnic identities in the most static ways. For example, he discussed his identities in terms of "halves" that were separate and bounded by time and context and were somewhat in contrast to one another. He seemed to espouse the idea that he could only be U.S. American or African

American in the context of the United States and Bahamian in the context of the Bahamas.

The findings regarding hybridity raise two important questions regarding participants' linguistic representation of their identities: 1) why did participants not seem to represent their identities as hybrid in their own discourses despite their negotiation of multiple identities in their lived experiences; and 2) why were DeAndre's discourses regarding his identities so different from the others?

One explanation for the difference in participant's descriptions of their lived realities and their discourses might have been developmental. It is known that very young children are able to label themselves and others racially (Bernal et al., 1990; French et. al, 2006; Phinney, 1990; Sheets; 1997; Spencer, 1985). In this case, however, adolescents were asked to describe multiple identities in different contexts. Few studies have focused on children or adolescents' ability to describe their ethnic identities in conjunction with their lived experiences. It is therefore possible that the disjuncture between their discourses and lived realities is a function of limited ability to discuss identity at both abstract and concrete levels due to developmental level.

Another explanation for the absence of linguistic indexing of participants' hybrid identities might be that the discourses of these adolescents reflect the dominant discourses of their surroundings. In the context of their communities, these participants' peers most often identified as white American, African American, Asian, or Latino. Their schools categorized students in the same manner. So, hybridity was not an option because it was not the norm in their communities or schools. In the context of DeAndre's high school, students were categorized as either African American, white, or

another ethnicity. When his peers identified him as Bahamian, he asserted his identity as a U.S. American-born Bahamian, by reminding his peers as often as necessary that he was born in the U.S. and was raised in the Bahamas. Likewise, in the context of Kendall's school, students self-segregated based on U.S. racial categories (i.e. blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians). He most often congregated with the African-American students, as that was the most viable identity option in the context of that school. There were no other Virgin Islanders at his school and few others who identified as English-speaking Caribbean/West Indian.

As suggested in the literature review, the vast majority of studies that examine hybridity or Caribbean immigrant identities are set in large, urban cities in the Northeast. So the patterns of hybridity that emerge in those studies are rooted in those particular settings. Those settings may allow for a greater range of identity options because of the diversity of population and the tolerance that the societies and communities have for hybrid identities. In fact, in some metropolitan cities with large immigrant enclaves, hybridity, at least amongst the second and third generation, might be the norm. In contrast, the participants in this study lived and studied in smaller rural and suburban areas with less diverse populations. Hence, significant differences between the way urban and rural Caribbean immigrants speak of their identities must be noted.

Soja's (1996) conceptualization of "third space" can help to understand this difference between rural and urban centers and the importance of space in identity construction. Soja uses "third space" as a lens to analyze what he calls "real-and-imagined" urban centers, such as the city of Los Angeles. Soja (1996) shows how urban centers exist as triads of the spatial (place), social (social structure), and historical

(time), despite our tendency to consider them exclusively in the realm of social and historical. In short, the demographics and population of places influence identity standards and therefore has an important role in identity construction processes.

Situationality of Identity Options

Identity options varied depending on the situation and/or context. Even small moves within a broader geographical area but different social contexts, such as a transfer from one school to another, or involvement in different activities within the school settings, results in a change in identity options as well as the costs and benefits associated with those options.

Border crossing. “Border crossing” is a useful notion in explaining changes in participants’ identity options as they move from place to place and space to space (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Foley, 1995; Johnson & Michaelson, 1997; Saenz, 1997). Current research suggests that crossing imagined, social, or physical geographic borders increases identity options (Anderson, 1991; Anzaldúa, 1987; Bhabha, 1994). However, the role of context has been underemphasized in the literature. This study illustrates that valued identity options can be expanded or limited/constrained by moving across contexts.

For example, when Elise lived in south Florida, she claimed a Jamaican identity. Although being Jamaican was preferred, she also had the option of claiming an American or Jamaican American identity. However, when she moved to northeast Florida, there were fewer benefits associated with claiming a Jamaican identity and more associated with claiming an American identity. Moreover, this move introduced new identity options, namely African-American identity as part of her schooling

experiences. She knew this African-American identity was important for her to fit in; yet she was also aware that African American students were devalued in the school.

Migrating to the U.S. expanded DeAndre's identity options. While he most often self-identified as an American-born Bahamian, he also had the option of identifying as African American within the context of the United States. In the context of the Bahamas, he had one option, a Bahamian identity. His move to the U.S., with its diverse population, allowed for him to claim all of his identities, although they were not valued equally.

Due to the politics and ideologies within particular contexts, certain identity options may become less desirable. Furthermore, on a geographical level, different levels of change in space affect identity options. For example, the crossing of international borders, or migrating from one country to another; relocating from one city to another; and/or transferring from one school to another, affected participants' identities. So, border crossing is not just about geopolitical borders (i.e., immigration) but also within-state migration, or even changing schools within the same town. This analysis helps us understand the fragile and fluid nature of identities and the effects of border crossing on valued identity options and identity construction processes.

Saliency and identity options. Saliency of the various aspects of the participants' identities was determined by the perceived valued identity options within a specific context. Saliency is defined as the prominence of the different dimensions of one's identity and considered in the context of their environment (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). According to Stryker (1968, 2000), the various identities that comprise the self exists in a hierarchy of salience,

where the identities that are ranked highest are most likely to be invoked in situations that are most conducive for that identity option(s). This study suggests, however, that in poststructuralist fashion, identities are not necessarily in a hierarchical relationship, but they are constructed as appropriate for the context. In this study, identity saliency was influenced by two contextual factors: the demographic profile of the community and peer groups, and the availability of identity-based extracurricular activities.

First, the demographics of a community and peer groups may result in an expansion, limitation, or change in valued identity options. When each of the participants relocated to communities with a different demographic structure, they renegotiated their identities, as they wanted to become members of their new communities. Negotiation of identities was influenced by options that were provided and valued in a context. For example, when Elise moved to Northeast Florida, she felt that she had to identify as African American as there were no West Indians in her community – only White Americans, African Americans, and Latinos. She felt that she was expected to identify with those who she looked most like if she were going to be a part of the community. There was a cost associated with identifying as Jamaican. On the other hand, DeAndre's valued identity options expanded when he moved to the U.S., as he felt that he could not comfortably self-identify as a U.S. American in the context of the Bahamas.

Similar to the demographics of the community, the demographic profile of peer groups influences identity choices. When participants were amongst a diverse student population that included Caribbean students, they were more likely to identify as Caribbean. However, when they were in a less diverse peer group, they were more apt

to identify as African American (even when it was uncomfortable), as this was the dominant minority group in the contexts in which most of the participants found themselves. This finding confirms the research that suggests peer groups have a major influence on adolescents' identity construction and negotiation (Hellerman, 2006; Hellerman and Cole, 2008; James & Woll, 2004; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Markee, 2004; Miller, 2007; McKay & Wong, 1996; and Morgan, 2002). Lemke (2002) suggests "peer groups provide resources, or guides that instantiate larger-scale social stereotypes for gender, class, age, and culture-specific identities" (p.76). When participants used a particular language, participated in certain activities or even dressed a certain way, this helped them to achieve identification with a peer community's prestige status, values, and lifestyle, granting, at least, acceptance, and at best, popularity.

Identity salience was also influenced by participants' participation in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities and clubs were a means of identity representation for the majority of these participants, a finding supported by other studies (Eccles, et al., 2003; Hansen et al., 2003; Sleeter & Grant, 2007; Zou & Trueba, 1998). These participants' involvement in identity-based groups, clubs, or social activities, cultural showcases, or sports allowed individuals the space to employ identities that they felt may not have been represented or fully accepted in the context of school. For example, Kendall's participation in The West Indies Kids, Elise's ability to participate in an annual cultural event, and Nicole's founding and participation in a religious club allowed them an outlet to express those identities that are limited within the main curriculum, and to contribute to the school community. Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt (2003), for instance,

investigated the connection between student participation in an extracurricular activity and adolescent development. They found that involvement in a school organization or sports can facilitate adolescents' identity development needs and can contribute to one's identity as an important and valued member of the school community.

Identity Construction in School: Dominant Discourses

As others have noted, schools are often sites where minority identities are contested or ignored, rather than embraced or affirmed, particularly as it relates to identities linked to race, ethnicity, and/or language (Auerbach, 1993; Cahnmann, 2005; Currie & Cray, 2004; Morgan, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2001). An analysis of the participants' discourses regarding schools suggests that schools were both producers of deficit discourses and provided (and/or allowed) avenues for identity affirmation.

Schools as Producers of Discourses of Deficiency and Tolerance

The participants in this study described the discourses they encountered related to diversity in their schools in similar ways. While these discourses were primarily negative and deficit-oriented, more tolerant and affirmative discourses emerged as they were involved in extracurricular activities.

Deficit discourses. The first dominant discourse the participants mentioned could be labeled "*being Caribbean and black are the same.*" All of the participants suggested that their peers and/or school officials most often labeled them as African American without any consideration of their Caribbean identities. According to Elise, if you had dark skin, you were assumed to be African American (and speak AAVE). When Nicole enrolled in a middle school with a large African-American population, her ethnic identity choices and options became more consequential as she wanted to fit in with her peers. Because she was black and did not have a pronounced Jamaican accent, her peers

constantly labeled her African American. Nicole's experience illustrated that to belong to a larger, more powerful group (in the context of her school), she had to make a choice whether to label herself in the same way and learn the culture of that group. Kendall and DeAndre were also both ascribed African-American identities by school authorities and peers. Kendall mentioned that when he spoke Creole, it was even worse, as his peers would ascribe to him a Jamaican identity.

The second dominant school discourse was, "*To be black is to be a low achiever.*" The ethno-racial dichotomy was accompanied by clear stereotypical views and negative attitudes, which made the (ascribed) identity of being African American less desirable. Elise overheard one of her teachers making the comment that blacks were not as smart in math. Elise noticed that it had become quite the norm for African Americans to be referred to as less intelligent than the other students. She was an 'A' student, yet she was grouped with the other "black" students who weren't succeeding in this course.

Kendall also suggested that there were deficit discourses surrounding the black students, particularly African Americans, in his school. He, however, suggested that these discourses were in fact true because the majority of his African-American peers were less focused on academics. He reported that his teachers were surprised when he would achieve academically and they were surprised when they discovered that he was interested in poetry.

Third, participants also encountered discourses that suggested that certain kinds of diversity were more acceptable than others. The participants perceived that ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity was ignored within the official curriculum and by the teachers. Nicole found that teachers made disparaging comments and developed

unpleasant attitudes whenever she referred to her religion or used it as a basis from which she drew academic conclusions. They would mostly ignore her or become sarcastic when she answered scientific questions from a biblical perspective. Kendall complained that his school's curriculum did not adequately cover the contributions and accomplishments of African Americans in its academic curriculum. He also voiced concern that there was blatant discrimination in athletics. He said it seemed that the more talented athletes, who happened to be African American or black, were played less during soccer games and were not promoted for collegiate athletic scholarships. Instead of distancing himself from his African-American peers, he voiced pride in his African-American identity and spoke with his teachers, coaches, and administrators about his concerns regarding the curriculum and what he perceived to be discrimination in athletics.

Discourses of tolerance and affirmation. Although its occurrence was outside of the mainstream curriculum, schools provided discourses of tolerance and spaces for the expression of marginalized or minority identities (Coover & Murphy, 2000; Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009). The two ways that this was done are outlined below.

Clubs and cultural events were one of the ways in which the participants had opportunities to construct their identities. Elise found recognition and affirmation of her Jamaican identity through school events and cultural organizations supported by the school. Similarly, Kendall enjoyed participating in the annual culture night event that provided students from multiple ethnic and cultural groups an opportunity to showcase both their talents and culture. He found affirmation in becoming a member of West Indies Kids, a service group that raised money for West Indian non-profit organizations.

Nicole took the initiative to co-found a Christian organization and a multicultural group while in middle school. She credits these two organizations with providing her a forum for which she and other students like her could “be themselves” by escaping the judgment of faculty and peers.

Second, self-segregation was another method that Kendall said allowed him to affirm his identity. While Kendall was upset by what he considered to be discriminatory practices at his high school, he embraced this particular practice that was initiated by students at his school. He explained that he and his peers, dependent upon race or social status (e.g. black, white, jock, and nerd) congregated to different areas of the building. He implied that for him, self-segregation contributed to an increased sense of solidarity. It provided peer groups an opportunity to talk about school from their unique perspectives and it provided him an opportunity to learn more about his African-American peers.

In sum, the findings from this section suggest that schools are not “either/or” sites. Within the context of the formal curriculum and school day, they often provide negative dominant discourses. And although these opportunities are outside of the legitimized, sanctioned curriculum, extracurricular activities and events can provide opportunities and outlets for students to construct, express, and perform those identities that are seemingly less valued within the structured curriculum.

Discourses, Identity Options, and Identity Choices

In response to the dominant discourses of school, participants negotiated their identities in ways that served to either align them with the valued discourses and identity options and/or to reject the dominant discourses. Identities that were less valued at the

macro-level were constructed because it provided some participants enough capital that helped with relationship building amongst peers at the micro-level.

Context and identity negotiation. Participants' responses to school discourses support Pavlenko & Blackledge's (2004) theory of identity negotiation. They suggest that the interplay between the individual and the larger group, where the larger group positions individuals (i.e. interactive positioning) and individuals' responses result in what they term reflective positioning, whereby an individual positions him or herself (self-representation) in relation to others so that they are perceived as legitimate members of a group.

Participants varied in their responses to and perceptions of the deficit and affirmative discourses they encountered in schools. Elise was clearly aware of the interactive positioning (the ways in which others attempt to position individuals or particular groups in varying contexts) that resulted from the dominant school discourses (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). She did not want to be labeled or perceived as being a low achiever. Her internalization of these negative discourses about black students influenced her decision to position herself reflectively and construct an identity that would highlight the Jamaican dimension of her ethnic identity and at the same time distinguish her from those students with whom she shared the same racial identity, mainly African Americans.

Unlike Elise, Kendall and Nicole had been enrolled in schools with larger African-American populations. In these contexts, even when there were negative discourses and stereotypes resulting in interactive positioning at a macro-level (i.e. school), there was some level of power and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in identifying as African

American at a micro-level (i.e. peer groups). Kendall did not allow these deficit discourses or even his perceptions of his African-American peers to affect his desire to be a part of that group. Instead, he set out to defy the stereotypes by positioning himself to succeed academically while identifying as African American. While Nicole would sometimes identify as African American, she viewed ethnic and racial identification as less of an issue than her religious identity. Participants' responses to these deficit discourses suggest that the interplay between individuals and larger groups is significant in that it influences identity choices (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Participants' negotiation of their identities supports Bingham's (2001) work, influenced by Taylor's (1994) essay titled "The Politics of Recognition," in that it suggests that how others recognize us is central to how we construct our identities. In other words, how others view us – negatively or positively – influences how we perceive and portray our own identities.

DeAndre as a unique case. DeAndre was a unique case, as his perceptions of identity and his identity construction seemed to differ from the others. DeAndre seemed to be quite unaware of the dominant, macro-level discourses regarding blacks and African Americans in the United States. His discourses did not reveal a belief or a perception that African Americans were perceived more negatively than any other Americans. At this point in his life, he saw there was power and social capital in being a U.S. American, regardless of the ethnic label (i.e. black American, African American, white American).

How do we account for the reasons why DeAndre did not perceive discrimination or acknowledge that same types of discourses surrounding African Americans that the

others did? First, he arrived in the United States only three years prior to the start of this study. Therefore, he was a fairly recent immigrant. Second, because he attended a predominantly African-American high school for a year and a half before he went on to a historically black college, his experiences were completely different from the others. He seemed to have even fewer identity options than the others did. DeAndre said that there were times when his African-American teachers and peers' discourses and ideological beliefs about Bahamian language and culture were less than flattering. He described how his peers would jokingly mock his accent without reprimand from the teachers or staff. DeAndre also discussed the ways in which he felt that Bahamian culture was sensationalized and its people and way of life framed as less civilized than that of U.S. American people and culture. Despite these experiences, his written responses suggested that he felt that a level of discomfort was to be expected when entering a new environment. He did not expect anyone to cater to him or affirm his identity as a Bahamian. He saw his arrival in the U.S. as a time for him to learn the U.S. American way of life. Although DeAndre felt uncomfortable, his discomfort was overshadowed by his determination to construct a U.S. American identity.

DeAndre's responses can be paralleled by Ogbu's findings on voluntary immigrants. Ogbu (1998) suggests that voluntary immigrants have a positive dual frame of reference regarding their experiences in the United States. They generally see more opportunity for success in the U.S. than back home. As a result they are willing to accommodate and to accept less than equal treatment in order to improve their chances for economic success.

Immigrants like DeAndre, who have spent less time in the U.S., tend to think that any discrimination is temporary and may be the result of their “foreigner status.” DeAndre did not perceive racial discrimination, ethnic, or language hierarchies (amongst U.S. American varieties) within the context of school or society. He viewed SAE and AAVE, equally, as cultural capital – as a means to becoming a U.S. American and an indicator of being a U.S. American.

For DeAndre, crossing both geographical and cultural borders at the same time influenced the way he perceived and articulated his identities. He grew up knowing that he was a U.S. citizen by birth, but unlike the other participants, he never had the opportunity to learn U.S. American culture or interact with (African) Americans on a daily basis. Living in the U.S. was an opportunity to be American. At this stage in DeAndre’s identity life, claiming a hybrid Bahamian-American or American-Bahamian identity could potentially interfere with the “American” image that he is attempting to portray.

Language as an Indicator of Identity within the Context of School

Participants indexed their U.S. American and Caribbean identities primarily through the use (demonstrated and reported) of different languages – specifically Standard American English (SAE), African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Creole. Through their use of SAE, participants indexed U.S. American identities and in the female participants’ case, used it to distinguish them from their African-American peers. They used AAVE to mark themselves as African American, and they used and talked about their use of Creole, Patois, and Bahamian English to mark their Caribbean identities.

Speaking AAVE, gender, and identity negotiation. As mentioned in Chapter 8, Kendall and DeAndre, unlike their female counterparts, displayed a level of comfort

reporting their use of AAVE and using this variety in the interview settings. Two major factors could explain why they appeared more comfortable positioning and/or identifying themselves as African American and speakers of AAVE. First, they more often found themselves in environments where it was more acceptable for them to claim an African-American identity. Kendall was a member of several different athletic teams. The majority of his teammates were African American. In addition, there was the “Black Wall,” the area of school where all of the black students, the majority of whom were African American, congregated in the mornings and during other times throughout the day. DeAndre attended a majority African-American high school for his senior year and enrolled in a Historically Black College after graduating. In these settings, AAVE is a linguistic resource that is necessary in constructing an African-American identity and building relationships with African-American peers. In these settings, students were not as marginalized or stigmatized as they might have been in the female participants’ schools (Bucholtz, 1999, 2004; Morgan, 2002; Tatum, 2003; Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999).

Second, both DeAndre and Kendall spent an enormous amount of time engaged in activities where African Americans were accomplished (e.g. various sports) and where AAVE was not only valued, but also used as a primary means of social, and sometimes academic, communication. A number of studies suggest males are more likely use non-standard varieties as a tactic of ‘adequation’ (i.e., emphasizing similarities) and/or ‘authentication’ (i.e., portrayal of identity as original or real) to solidify their membership in African-American peer groups. Similar findings were reported by Morgan (2002) and Rickford (1999) as both studies suggest that proficiency in AAVE is

necessary if participants are to be legitimized and accepted by their African-American peers as an authentic member of the group.

Although not the intended focus of this research, the findings from this aspect of the research regarding language, gender, and identity is significant in that it suggests that we should further question the role of gender in language choice/use decisions within this population, as there were some clear similarities among gender lines. This confirms previous research that suggests gender differences as an important variable in adolescents' choice of linguistic code (Dion & Dion, 2001; Qin-Hillard, 2003; Rumbaut, 1994; Waters 2001). There has been a number of studies that have examined white (Cutler, 2002; Gentile & Walsh, 2002), Latino (Dunstan, 2010; Irizarry, 2007; Sweetland, 2002), and Asian American adolescents' (Bucholtz, 1994; Chun, 2001; Igoudin, 2011; Reyes, 2007) use of AAVE and other varieties of English. However, very few have examined Anglophone Caribbean students' views, particularly female adolescents' views, regarding what they perceive to be the costs and benefits of using AAVE and identifying as African American.

As suggested in much of the sociolinguistic literature on gender and language choice (Cheshire, 2002; Fuller, 2007), the female participants in this study appear to be more socially constrained in their code choices. Eckert (1997) illustrates this phenomenon by correlating phonological variation among suburban American adolescents to gender and peer groups. Identification with the values and lifestyles of desired groups, correlated to specific language practices, helped her female, rather than male, subjects to achieve the prestige status among peers. This study supports claims

that girls gain prestige through constructing and displaying more socially acceptable identities, utilizing language as a means.

This finding also suggests that nonstandard language varieties are not always stigmatized, but that such stigmatization is social in nature and contextually bound. While a language or code may be stigmatized in one domain, it may be a necessity and highly functional and effective in another context.

Speaking Creole. Creole was important to all of the participants as they viewed it as their native language and it functioned to authenticate their Caribbean identities when they were in the presence of their West Indian peers and within the context of family. It was also used as a signal to remind others that their identities were multiple and multidimensional – that they were not just African American (e.g., Kendall's audition for the annual culture fair). Like one of the participants in Bailey's (2000) study, Kendall often switched from SAE (or AAVE) to Creole when it was least expected. DeAndre also reported that he would use his ability to code switch between the different dialects so that people would recognize him as either Bahamian or (African) American. So with these participants, Creole played a similar role as AAVE, but in different contexts. Creole was used to validate and authenticate participants' Caribbean identities in an effort to maintain and build relationships with their Caribbean peers. It was used with teachers and school personnel, however, to disrupt those race-based identities (i.e. African American) that were often ascribed to them.

Linguistic choices as risky business. Participants' language choices and use was a way for them to construct identities that were relevant and important to them at this stage of their lives. The identities that they constructed and negotiated were related

to their unique situations, life circumstances, and experiences at the time of this study. Elise and Nicole both saw academic success and social mobility as their goals. They were aware of the negative perception of African Americans and tended to see more differences between themselves and African Americans. As such, they viewed the linguistic game as a risky proposition. While White, Asian and Latino immigrants' ethnic identities aren't compromised when they use AAVE for sub-cultural capital, Elise and Nicole were willing to risk sub-cultural capital and perceptions of being "cool," in order to be perceived as academically successful. A number of researchers who theorize about the phenomenon of "acting white" suggest that there is often a trade-off between doing well and rejection by peers when adolescents come from (or are perceived to come from) a traditionally low-achieving group (Buck, 2010; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fryer, 2006).

In a Bourdiean (1991) sense, Elise and Nicole understand the symbolic power that is inherent in language choice and use in the context of the United States. They both view SAE as the legitimate language of school that will lead to academic success and social mobility.

Being a new immigrant, DeAndre's identity goal was simply to 'become American' (Waters, 1999). As a first generation immigrant, his racial identity was not central and being viewed as African American or using a particular language variety was not of consequence to him. That was because he was not yet aware of the symbolic power and capital generated by different language varieties in the U.S. context, and was still in the process of constructing a semblance of a U.S. American identity.

For Kendall, his racial identity was more central as he had perceived discrimination in schools and the larger U.S. American society. He wanted to be perceived as black (African-American and Caribbean), cool, and smart. Kendall's appropriation of SAE, AAVE and Creole appeared to be driven by a quest to show membership and power within his peer groups (African American and Caribbean groups) while demonstrating his ability to succeed in the classroom despite his use of AAVE and Creole within the context of school. Analysis of Kendall's discourses throughout this project suggest that he was aware of how language(s) and racial identity connoted symbolic power; yet his experience and strong desire to identify with African Americans provided him the impetus to challenge the status quo and construct and embrace his multiple identities even within the context of school.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-ascribed identities of Anglophone Caribbean adolescents and their perceptions of how their schooling experiences have shaped their identities. The study was guided by the following questions: 1) How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents construct and describe their identities, and 2) How do Anglophone Caribbean adolescents' perceive that their schooling experiences have shaped these identities?

With regards to question one, participants described their identities in ways that can be characterized as "third space" identities. That is, their descriptions defy the dichotomous terms often used to describe immigrant adolescents. Their descriptions further suggests their identities are multiple and multidimensional, hybrid, and dynamic. Linguistic indicators of hybridity were not evident as there was some disjuncture between the way participants described their lived experiences and the way they

discussed their identities. However, agency accounted for the ways that participants' language use and choice indexed specific identities. Location was important in constructing 'third space' identities. Changing spaces, or border crossings were important considerations in the limitation and/or expansion of valued identity options and the negotiation of and enactment of specific identities, or their saliency, was influenced by the demographic profile of the communities in which the participants' resided, their peer groups in schools, and the extracurricular activities in which they were involved.

With regards to question two, schools were found to be producers of deficit discourses. In addition, they were sites of tolerance and affirmation. In response to the dominant discourses of school, agency accounted for the ways in which these participants either aligned themselves with the valued discourses and identity options and/or rejected these dominant discourses and constructed identities that were less valued at the macro-level, but provided them capital and helped with relationship-building amongst peers at the micro-level.

In addition to the findings above, this research suggests that an ideal framework must account for human agency, and allow for multiplicity, hybridity and the dynamic nature of identities to be revealed. It must be flexible, consider the role of language, and consider the influence dominant discourses and relationships might have in the identity construction process.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that identity construction is a complex, ongoing process that is dependent upon a myriad of factors, those that are cognitive and agentic as well as those that are contextual. The model in Figure 9-1

attempts to account for the role of identity standards (within and across contexts) in shaping available identity options and the role of human agency in the identity construction process.

Context or environment shapes available identity options because of the influence of dominant discourses and ideologies that are found in these spaces. Identity options are expanded or limited depending on the domain and the demographics of a particular geographical location, and the extent to which discourses and ideologies in them are supportive and inclusive of identities that defy “norms”. For example, in urban centers like Miami, Los Angeles, and NYC, it is more likely to find spaces where hybrid identities are the norm and a viable identity option for immigrants. However, in rural areas of the U.S. where there is much less ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity, black immigrants may have fewer or different identity options that are acknowledged or valued within those areas.

First, the model argues that within any context, schools being one of them, certain identity standards or identities are taken for granted to be the norm. These standards influence which identity options are valued and devalued (context-based identity standards). For example, schools often produce deficit discourses regarding linguistic diversity, more specifically lack of English proficiency, and negative ideologies about students who are racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. These ideologies and discourses suggest that minority students are less capable of succeeding academically than mainstream, native English-speaking, White students.

In this model, identity options may shift according to the space and demographic profile of the community or peer group. Identity options can be expanded or limited

depending on the domain and the demographics of a particular geographical location. In this study, participants' identity options shifted depending on whether they were with family members, in the classroom, in the hallways with friends, or on the soccer field. Elise, for example, encountered a black/white dichotomy when she moved from south to north Florida that changed how she had to negotiate her Jamaican identity. Kendall's identity options shifted when he was with his soccer teammates. He perceived a St. Thomian identity as the most viable identity option in this context because his African-American peers made it known that soccer was not an "African-American sport". In short, as a result of the situated nature of identity standards and its associated (valued and devalued) identity options, identity options may differ for an individual as they move across contexts and time.

Contextual norms alone do not determine identity options, however. The second part of the model posits that agency also plays an important role in identity construction. As individuals negotiate their sense of self and the messages that they receive within varying contexts, they exert agency in which identity options to reject, embrace, appropriate. In this study, we see that Kendall's sense of an 'African-American self' was so strong that he sometimes constructed and enacted this identity even in contexts where it was stigmatized. His sense of identity came from 'being himself' even if others viewed him as less capable than his peers.

Individuals determine whether desired and viable identity options (for the self) are compatible with the identity standards of the context. Ultimately, they select the identity option that best allows for self-efficacy or a sense of personal identity or they succumb to the pressures of the context and select identity options that are valued in a particular

context. The latter was evidenced in this study when the female participants both opted for an African-American identity, as they perceived that to be the identity standard and the most viable (and expected) option for them in the context of their middle schools.

As the model illustrates, Identity choices or outcomes are the result of the negotiation of context-based identity standards and human agency. These choices are then enacted and self-verified. They are enacted linguistically and through other behaviors (such as forming identity-specific groups and wearing paraphernalia associated with a culture). In this study, language choice and use played an important role as mechanisms that indexed how participants enacted the various identity choices they saw available to them and/or those they negotiated. Participants in this study used language in ways that marked them as “intelligent”, African-American, Caribbean, or they codeswitched to show themselves as occupants of a third identity space. The female participants used SAE so that their teachers would view them positively. They understood the ramifications of speaking non-standard varieties of English in the school setting. The male participants used AAVE with their peers and in the context of school to index their African-American identities. Their ability to speak AAVE was symbolic of the cultural capital necessary to be a part of their peer group. All of the participants used Creole to index their Caribbean identities and there were instances, though minimal, of code switching in the data that indexed identities that can be characterized as hybrid.

In this study, identities were also enacted through behaviors that included self-segregation, where one participant chose to only be with students who identified as he did, and through the creation of groups that carry identity labels that refer to a geographical region, ethnicity, or religion. These types of discourses and Discourses

(Gee, 1995) function to index and make salient individual's multiple identities in any particular context.

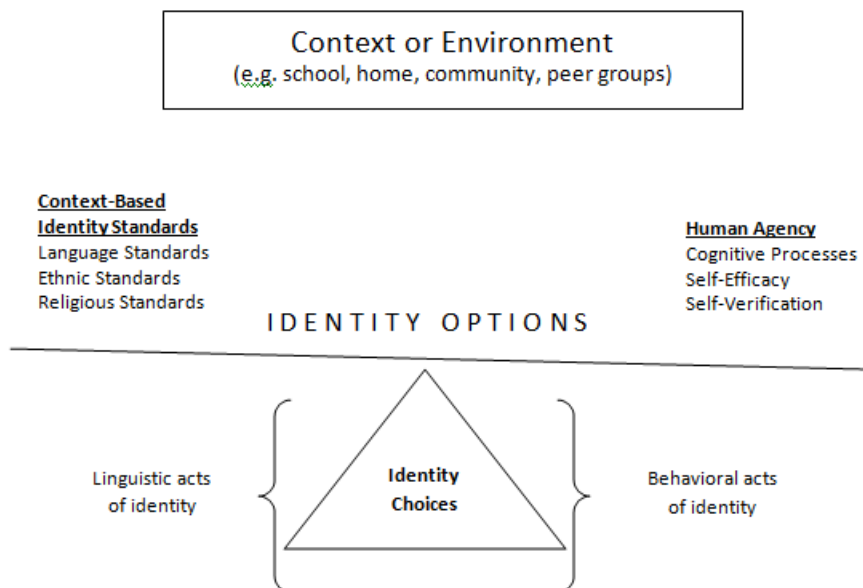


Figure 9-1. Model for identity construction in specific contexts

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

Anglophone Caribbean immigrants are a unique population in that they fall outside of existing research frames that are often used to describe identity and the identity construction processes of minorities, immigrants, and second language learners. They defy the African-American label because they either do not identify as African American or they identify as both African American and other ethnicities. They defy the immigrant label because they were either born in this country or have been here since they were very young. Because the vast majority of Anglophone Caribbean immigrants are English and Creole proficient, they often do not have the same language learning experiences as immigrant English language learners.

Summary of Findings

This research has produced the following findings:

1. Participants' described their identities in ways that can be characterized as multiple and multidimensional. These identities not only intersected, but shaped other aspects of participants' identities.
2. There were very few linguistic indicators of hybridity and a disjuncture between participants' lived experiences and the ways identities were discussed. Participants often discussed their identities in ways that were static and bounded.
3. Space was an important consideration in the limitation and/or expansion of valued identity options and identity saliency. When participants crossed borders, their valued identity options often changed. They then constructed and negotiated identities that were more valued by macro structures like society or schools, and/or they opted to construct identities that were "third space" identities that were more valued by micro structures like peers.
4. Identity saliency was influenced by the demographic profile of the communities in which the participants resided, their peer groups in schools, and the extracurricular activities in which they were involved.
5. Schools were found to be producers of deficit discourses. The research participants often internalized these discourses and constructed and negotiated

identities that were more valued by schools, and/or they opted to construct identities that were more valued by micro structures like peers.

6. Schools were found to be tolerant and provided (and/or allowed) avenues for identity affirmation. The participants often became members of these groups which resulted in identity affirmation.
7. Language choice was one of the ways that participants indexed their various identities. While all of the participants used SAE to index their U.S. American identities, the female participants used their proficiency in SAE to distinguish themselves from their AAVE-speaking peers by rupturing the assumed identity ascriptions that people often placed upon them. African American Vernacular English was used by the male participants to index an African-American identity, while Creole, Patois, and Bahamian English were used to index participants' Caribbean identities.

Implications for Scholars

This research was unique in that it amplified the voices of a population that has been virtually silent in the research literature on identity construction. This study has several methodological implications for scholars. First, the findings suggest that scholars interested in identity research must consider the voices of the population in which they choose to study. Scholars often interpret what they see and hear without considering how participants interpret their own identities and the contexts in which they are constructing these identities.

Second, identity is a complex phenomenon and is not the same for any one person, and is even more complicated when examined across cases because of the varying backgrounds and experiences of those that are often categorized as 'similar'. In addition to interviewing techniques, I would suggest observations of participants in a variety of settings. Observation provides a variety, depth, and breadth of information to research that is difficult to obtain with other data collection methods. This would be especially beneficial as few studies have focused on the ability of children or adolescents to describe their ethnic identities in conjunction with their lived experiences.

It is therefore possible that disjunctures between participants' discourses and lived realities are a function of children and adolescents' limited ability to discuss identity at both abstract and concrete levels due to their level of cognitive development. So, observational data might allow an observer to effectively facilitate and enhance conceptualization and understanding of phenomena not readily obtained by interviewing, or other data collection methods (Morse & Field, 1995).

Analysis of the data reveals that there is no single theoretical framework that could possibly account for the various ways in which individuals construct and talk about their identities. Therefore, we must consider aspects of various theoretical frameworks if we are to create an accurate picture of identity and identity construction. An ideal framework must allow for multiplicity, hybridity and the dynamic nature of identity to be revealed. The framework must also consider the role of language, dominant discourses, and relationships in the identity construction process.

Implications for Educators

This study also has practical implications for educators. The findings from this study suggest that educators consider the role of the contexts in which identity construction and negotiation takes place. Educators should consider the ways in which they can support these processes – especially with those students who defy the labels that are often ascribed to them. Like Cummins (2001) and Nero (2005), I suggest that we examine the discourses promoted in the school setting and the interactions with our students so that we do not promote false dichotomies by positioning students in a way that they are forced to identify in one way or the other or limit them in the ways in which they can identify.

Secondly, educators should find avenues of and allow for the expression and affirmation of identities within the main curriculum while encouraging students to participate in those extracurricular activities that promote identity affirmation.

Finally, teacher education programs and professional development programs must be more systematic in addressing identity construction processes so that educators might be taught how to build positive environments and use discourses that are not dichotomous, disrespectful, or harmful, but instead, affirm the many ways in which adolescents describe, construct, and negotiate their identities. Two of the ways that identity can be addressed are through required coursework, such as a course on identity construction in educational settings, and experiential learning experiences whose primary focus should be to examine identity construction in the context of schools and to determine and reflect on schooling practices that minimize and maximize identity options.

Considerations for Future Research

This study revealed several possible avenues for future research. First, we must consider the role of geographical location in the identity options that immigrant students perceive are available to them. It might be that a hybrid identity was not considered to be a viable option in the more rural Northeast Florida. Due to the dominant discourses that pervaded this context, participants may have felt more pressure to choose one identity over the other in this context than they would have in a more urban, metropolitan context like Miami or New York City. Thought should also be given to whether the expression of a hybrid identity through discourse is developmental; that is, whether children and teens are less able to express hybrid or third space identities because they have not yet developed the capacity or intellectual ability to do so.

Hybridity examined over time is another area in need of research, as not many studies look at the identity development over time within the same individual and the factors that shape identity choices.

The role of gender and language choice should also be a consideration for future research identity construction within this population. An analysis of participants' discourses is in line with research that suggests gender plays a role in identity construction (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Goodenow & Spin, 1993; Pavlenko et al., 2001). Gilligan's research (1979, 1982, 1988) and that of others (Lyons 1983; Miller, 1976), maintain that the identity development process for females is quite different from that of males. This research suggests that speaking "proper English" seemed to be an important aspect of the females' ability to construct a U.S. American identity.

Female participants' discourses also suggested a more important role for the family in socialization and identity construction. While there is a body of research on socialization theory and acculturation, there is a dearth of research on the role of familial socialization in the English speaking Caribbean population – especially where the children are second generation Caribbean Americans. Relationship building and maintenance were major factors in the discourses of participants. Therefore, I suspect that the role of the parents as well as extended families have a lot to do with how adolescent participants describe themselves in relation to both other Caribbean immigrants and the African-American population in the United States.

An additional area in need of research is the role of religion in the identity construction processes and its relation to ethnic, racial, and linguistic identity. Religion emerged as a topic of conversation in three of the four cases. Elise talked about the

importance of being a Christian. Kendall talked about how his research on Rastafarianism has caused him to embrace its principles. Religion was a central theme in the case of Nicole. Nicole used religion as a way to come to terms with her racial identity. During one of the interviews, she said that she was taught to believe that God made us in his image. She supported this with pictures of black Jesus wearing dreadlocks. She came to the conclusion that if she is black and is of Afro-Caribbean descent, then surely Jesus Christ must be as well. Her strong religious views have also caused her to be aware of a more contentious relationship between herself and some of her teachers.

APPENDIX A PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

Participant Assent Form

Dear _____

I am a graduate student in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. I am interested in how teenagers and young adults of Caribbean descent view their languages and cultures. The results may help us understand who you are and help schools improve how they relate to you. I would like for you to participate in this research.

If you agree to be in my study, I will ask you to complete a background questionnaire to tell me about yourself. This will take about 20 minutes. Over a period of 3 months, I would like you to do three (3) interviews with me, which won't last more than one (1) hour each. I am also going to give you a disposable camera to take no more than 24 photographs over a 2-week period to illustrate who you are and what is important to your life. It is important that you realize that you may not take pictures of the following kinds of things.... This is illegal. If you take pictures of people, make sure you ask them it's okay to take the picture. Finally, I will electronically send you one short question on a weekly basis for about six weeks. It will probably take you about 15 minutes per question.

With your permission, I will audiotape the interview sessions so that I can make sure that I hear and understand everything that you say. This research is about what you think. So, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I ask because it is not a test. You will not miss any class/school time, as research will be conducted after school and/or on weekends.

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You will be assigned a fictitious name. The list connecting your name to this fictitious name will be kept in a locked file in my faculty supervisor's office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list, photographs, the background survey, audiotapes, and your written responses will be destroyed. Your identifying information or picture will not be used in any report.

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. You will not be penalized in any way. You also have the right to withdraw consent for participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to you. As a participant, you will receive \$8.33 after each of the three (3) interviews.

Signing this paper means that you have read this and had it read to you and that you want to be in the study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign the paper. Remember, being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you don't sign this paper or even if you change your mind later.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2009-U-1229
For Use Through 12-07-2010

APPENDIX B
PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Parental Consent Form (for participants under 18 years)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. I am researching how adolescents of Caribbean descent describe and construct their identities as well as their perceptions of the role of schools in this process. The results may have implications for schooling practices and policies in the Florida and the United States. With your permission, I would like to ask your son or daughter to participate in this research.

I would like your child to complete a background questionnaire which will take about 20 minutes and in three (3) interviews which will not to last more than (1) hour each. I would also like him/her to take a maximum of 24 photographs with a researcher-provided, disposable camera over a 2-week period. To get their perspectives I would also like them to weekly answer short questions that I will send electronically to them. Answering these questions will not take more than approximately 15 minutes per question. Your child will not miss any class/school time, as research will be conducted after school and/or on weekends.

Your child's name will be replaced with a pseudonym and their identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law. The list connecting your child's name/username to the pseudonym will be kept in a locked file in my faculty supervisor's office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list, audiotapes, photographs, background surveys, and responses to the online questions will be destroyed. Your children's identifying information or his/her picture will not be used in any report.

You and your son or daughter has the right to withdraw consent for participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. Participants will receive \$8.33 after each of three (3) interviews. If you have any questions, please contact me at [redacted] or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Ester J. de Jong at [redacted] 280. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the UF IRB office, University of Florida, Box 11250, Gainesville, FL 32611; (352) 392-0433.

Kisha C. Bryan

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in Kisha Bryan's study on identity construction. I have received a copy of this description.

Parent / Guardian

Date

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2009-U-1229
For Use Through 12-07-2010

APPENDIX C DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire | 2010

Please answer the following questions. Feel free to write as much as you would like, or as you feel is necessary to explain your answers.

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. Where were you born (city, state, & country)?
4. Where were your parents born?
5. Where do your parents live?
6. What does your father do for a living?
7. What does your mother do for a living?
8. How many sisters do you have?
9. How old are your sisters?
10. How many brothers do you have?
11. How old are your brothers?
12. Where did you go to middle school (city, state, & country)?
13. Where did you go to high school (city, state, & country)?
14. What is your grade level or classification?
15. What is your favorite subject/course in school?
16. What is your least favorite subject/course?
17. What are your interests or hobbies?
18. What are your plans after graduating from college?

Thanks for completing this questionnaire!!

Name:

Date:

APPENDIX D INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

Descriptions of Self – Interview #1

There are lots of ways of thinking about the term “identity”. During our discussion today, I’d like us to think of “identity” as the different ways that we see or understand ourselves, in relation to others. For example, I might see myself as an American, a woman, as a Black person, as a student, etc. You should feel free to speak in whatever language (variety) you would like. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this is not a test.

I’d like to ask you about the different ways that you see yourself. Specifically, I would like to know what different groups or categories, if any, that you would use to describe your identity, or your sense of self.

1. Describe your race.
2. Describe your nationality.
3. Describe your ethnicity.
4. Describe the languages that you speak.
5. Are there any other ways that you would describe yourself?
6. So you have described yourself as _____. Have you always described yourself this way?
7. When did you begin to see yourself as _____?
8. Describe the people who you identify with most.
9. How does your self-identification conflict or agree with how your family expects you to identify?
10. Thanks you for talking with me today. Is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion?

APPENDIX E INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

Identity Perceptions & Photographs – Interview #2

You should feel free to speak in whatever language (variety) you would like. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this is not a test.

1. How do you think people of _____ descent are perceived by others?
2. How do you feel about your _____, _____ etc. heritage?
3. When are you most conscious of your ethnic background?
4. Do you ever feel that you are different from other people because of your ethnic background? Can you describe how this feels?
5. Earlier, you mentioned that you ethnically identify as _____. Sometimes people identify differently in different situations or around different people. Are there any times when you feel more or less _____. Tell me more about where you might be or what you might be doing at those times. What kinds of things do people do that let you know that they are _____?
6. Can you tell me how Photograph #1 depicts aspects of your identity?
7. Can you tell me how Photograph #2 depicts aspects of your identity?
8. Can you tell me how Photograph #3 depicts aspects of your identity?
10. Thanks you for talking with me today. Is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion?

APPENDIX F INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 3

School Influences on Identity - Interview #3

You should feel free to speak in whatever language (variety) you would like. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, as this is not a test.

1. If someone were to ask you your nationality at school, what would you say?
2. Do you ever feel that you are treated differently (both positively and negatively) because of your heritage?
3. What are some experiences that have caused you to feel you were singled out because of your heritage?
4. Do some of your friends include members of your ethnic group? If yes, is the shared ethnic background the reason for your friendship?
5. Are some of your teachers members of your ethnic, racial group?
6. What does your school teach you about people who are like you?
7. What contributions about your ethnic and cultural background are you asked to make in the classroom?
8. How knowledgeable are the teachers and other students about your ethnic and cultural background?
9. What specific efforts do teachers make to accommodate your ethnic background in classroom instruction?
10. Thanks you for talking with me today. Is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion?

APPENDIX G EMAIL QUESTIONS

EMAIL QUESTION #1

In our first interview, we will talk about your identity(es). List the various aspects of your identity in order of importance (most to least) and **explain** why you have ordered them this way. You are also free to arrange them in any other order that signifies importance.

EMAIL QUESTION #2

I show pride in my _____ culture(s) by

EMAIL QUESTION #3

Are there any teachers, principals, guidance counselors, coaches or other school personnel that share your identity(es)? If so, in what ways do they share your various identity(es)? How did your high school support your identity(es)?

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kisha C. Bryan was born in Beaufort, South Carolina. She attended the public schools of Beaufort County and graduated from Beaufort High School. She attended Voorhees College in Denmark, SC and earned a bachelor's degree in English in 1999. She returned to Beaufort County where she taught middle grades reading and language arts. In 2001, Kisha accepted the W.H. Burghardt Fellowship to study at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, Long Island, New York where she completed her master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 2002.

Kisha began her career in higher education in 2003, when she was hired as an Assistant Professor at Edward Waters College in the Teacher Education Program. She helped to design the ESOL stand alone and ESOL-infused courses for elementary education. In addition, she supervised pre-service teachers during their ESOL internships.

Kisha began her doctoral studies in ESOL/Bilingual Education in 2005. In addition to completing her doctoral studies, she has held various positions on the Sunshine State TESOL Board of Directors and has been a staunch advocate for linguistically and culturally diverse students. She has presented her research on language and culture at both regional and national conferences.

She received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 2012. She currently resides in Jacksonville with her daughter, Ryann Olivia.