

Intraracial Microaggressions and African Americans: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract

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The existing literature on racial microaggressions has been vital in illuminating how these phenomena may be experienced within marginalized groups (e.g., Wong et al., 2014), including Black communities (e.g., Soloranzo et al., 2000; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). However, the literature in the area of intraracial microaggressions (IRMs) among African Americans, or racial microaggression incidents where both the receiver and offender are Black, is scarce. As such, the current study explored the phenomena of Black-on-Black racial microaggressions. The principal investigator utilized Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 1997) to explore the phenomena of IRMs. The current study aspired to answer research questions that addressed how IRMs may appear in the African American community, how frequent IRMs are experienced, their influence on psychological/emotional wellness and coping behaviors, the function of the perpetrator's ethnicity, and variations between inter- and intraracial microaggression experiences. The results suggested that, typically, IRMs are experienced in which one's Blackness is challenged, the perpetrator's ethnicity is African American/Black American, and the offender's ethnicity is perceived as having affected the microaggressive incidents. Moreover, the current data indicate that African Americans usually have negative reactions to IRMs, and IRMs have frequently had an impact on the daily lives of individuals. The current findings support the continual enrichment of training, practice, and research by furthering knowledge in a developing area of knowledge and multicultural competence.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iv
Dedication.....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	5
2.1 Racism and Historical Stereotypes of African Americans.....	6
2.1.1 Black Women.....	7
2.1.2 Black Men.....	11
2.2 Everyday Expressions of Racial Stereotyping: Racial Microaggressions.....	15
2.2.1 Racial Microaggression Basics.....	17
2.2.2 African Americans and the Experience of Racial Microaggressions.....	20
2.2.3 Interactions: Black Women.....	23
2.2.4 Intersections: Black Men.....	25
2.2.5 Reactions to Racial Microaggressions.....	26
2.3 Internalized Racism and Its Manifestations.....	29
2.3.1 Intra-racial Colorism Among Blacks.....	30
2.3.2 Intra-racial Stereotyping Within the Black Community.....	33
2.4 Intra-racial Microaggressions Among Blacks: A Gap in the Literature.....	36
2.5 Statement of Problem/Purpose of Study.....	42
Chapter 3: Method.....	45
3.1 The Qualitative Method: CQR.....	45
3.1.1 Consensual Qualitative Research.....	46

3.1.2 Participants.....	47
3.1.3 Procedure	47
3.1.4 Data Analysis	49
3.2 Methodological Integrity	51
3.2.1 Data Collection	51
3.2.2 Data Analysis	54
Chapter 4: Results	57
4.1 Domains	57
4.1.1 Domain 1: Experiences with Intra-racial Microaggressions	58
4.1.2 Domain 2: Characteristics of the Perpetrator(s) of Intra-racial Microaggressions	72
4.1.3 Domain 3: Emotional Responses to Intra-racial Microaggressions	75
4.1.4 Domain 4: Feelings About Being Black	89
4.2 The Principal Investigator’s Reflections.....	90
Chapter 5: Discussion	92
5.1 Prototypical Case Narrative	93
5.2 Integrating the Research Questions and Data	93
5.3 Notable Data Beyond the Research Questions	101
5.3.1 Reported Differences and Similarities Between Participants and Perpetrators	101
5.3.2 Racial Identity	102
5.4 Limitations	103
5.5 Future Research	104
5.6 Implications.....	105
5.7 Conclusion	106

References.....108

Appendix A: Participant Letter120

Appendix B: Informed Consent121

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire125

Appendix D: Interview Protocol.....127

Appendix E: Domain 5: Experiences with Interracial Microaggressions and
 Domain 6: Emotional Responses to Interracial Microaggressions130

Appendix F: Domain 7: Experiences of Other Interracial and Intra-racial Incidents146

Appendix G: Table 1: Domains, Categories, and Frequencies, and Table 2: Participant
 Demographic Information.....148

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A. P-R.

Dedication

To Mrs. Ossie Bell David, Mr. Jack David, Mrs. Elma Saunders, Mrs. Elizabeth Washington, Mrs. Barbara Freeman, Ms. Regina “Bunny” Lundy, Mrs. Ella Walker, Bishop Ezra N. Williams, Mr. Mark “Uncle Kevin” Anderson, Mr. Norman Messiah, Ms. Paulette “Scarf Lady” Gay, Ms. Eva Petty, Mrs. Nancy Snaggs, Mr. Robert Hickey, and all of my many ancestors:

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Until we meet again...

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the summer of 2018, two White women were shamed on social media for their racist acts (e.g., Guynn, 2018). In one case, a White woman contacted the police regarding a gathering of Black individuals who were having a cookout (Jerkins, 2018). The woman was concerned that the grilling material being utilized was prohibited in the location where the individuals were situated (Mezzofiore, 2018). In a second case, a White woman reportedly called law enforcement regarding a Black child who was selling water, seemingly concerned that the young girl lacked a permit to sell the water (Guynn, 2018). Along the same lines, a White Yale student called the campus police on a Black Yale student who happened to fall asleep in a communal area of a residential space (Griggs, 2018).

It is not surprising to learn that racist incidents have occurred and have been exposed recently (see Guynn, 2018). Nevertheless, some people may think the individuals who summoned the police were just abiding by the law. So, how would one know these were racist acts? Would the police have been called if the gathering of people having a cookout were White? Would an individual call the police on a White child selling water? Would the campus police have been called on the Yale student if the sleeping student were White? Can Black people carry out everyday, mundane activities with the same freedom as White people can? Such questions may begin to clarify what is racist and to describe the institution of racism.

Arguably, racism affects almost every aspect—if not every aspect—of African Americans' lives (e.g., Belgrave & Allison, 2010). Apparently, as noted in the anecdotes above, Black people cannot enjoy a cookout, sell water, or sleep without racism seeming to interfere

with what may be seen by others as everyday activities. More tragic are the Black lives who have been taken by law enforcement with seemingly, more times than not, minimal to no punishment (e.g., Hafner, 2018). Unfortunately, U.S. racism does not seem to have a foreseeable end point, but rather is ingrained in the spirit of the country (e.g., Bell, 1992). Furthermore, racism has been observed to continue via the statements and policies of recent U.S. leadership (e.g., Finnegan & Barabak, 2018; Linskey, 2018; Smith, 2018).

One continuing manifestation of racism exists in the form of racist stereotypes, and numerous racist stereotypes exist regarding African Americans. One might propose that police brutality is a product of the stereotype that Blacks are criminals (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). A Black woman's concerns at her place of business might stereotypically be dismissed as an expression of her angry nature (e.g., West, 1995). Additionally, another inference may be that a White hiring manager did not hire a Black applicant because the hiring manager assumed that the applicant was unintelligent (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). Other stereotypes pertain differently to Black individuals depending on their gender. For example, the stereotype of aggressiveness is associated with Black men (e.g., Bogle, 2002), and the stereotype of being loud is connected to Black women (Thomas et al., 2004).

All these stereotypes may have a damaging impact on the lives of African Americans, as demonstrated through the analysis of *racial microaggressions*. Racial microaggressions are the "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Examples of racial microaggressions might include a salesperson following a person of color around in a store (e.g., Sue, Nadal et al., 2008), the assumption that affirmative action is the reason a student of color is

in college (Watkins et al., 2010), or a lower quality of customer service that is given to people of color as compared to Whites (Rivera et al., 2010). Numerous studies have documented the deleterious effects of racial microaggressions on Black people and other people of color (e.g., Wong et al., 2014). The majority of these studies seem to focus on interracial microaggressions—interactions that involve a White aggressor and a person of color who is the recipient of the action. However, very few studies have mentioned the existence of intraracial microaggressions (e.g., Black aggressors and Black recipient), which may be interpreted as expressions of internalized racism.

Internalized racism is “the acceptance of negative attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and stereotypes perpetuated by the White dominant society as being true about one’s racial group” (Molina & James, 2016, p. 440). Further, in her discussion regarding internalized racism in the African American community, Leary (2005) explained:

Through the centuries of slavery and the decades of institutionalized oppression that followed, many African Americans have, in essence, been socialized to be something akin to white racists. Many of us have adopted the attitudes and views of white, racist America. Many of us look at ourselves and our community through white eyes. We both mold ourselves to accommodate white prejudices and endeavor to adopt their standards.

(Leary, 2005, p. 139)

Literature has suggested that internalized racism may materialize in the lives of Black people as intraracial colorism and intraracial stereotyping (e.g., Leary, 2005; Wilder, 2010). As these issues are a part of the lived experiences of African Americans, one may argue that intraracial microaggressions may be included as well. However, there is a significant gap in the literature corresponding to intraracial microaggressions within the African American community.

Existing research barely grazes the possible experiences of intraracial microaggressions among Black people. The current author aimed to investigate the frequency and nature of intraracial microaggressions, emotional reactions, and coping mechanisms with regard to interracial microaggressions, as compared with intraracial microaggressions. Sue and Sue (2008) stated that understanding the experiences and worldview of clients of varying cultural backgrounds is necessary to the skill development of multiculturally competent clinicians. Thus, the advancement of knowledge regarding microaggressive experiences is not only clinically important for treatment and diagnosis, but also essential for research and training purposes.

In this study, a qualitative method was used to explore experiences of intraracial microaggressions in keeping with the appropriateness of such methods for topics that are being newly investigated (Morrow et al., 2001), as well as its suitability for culturally pertinent principal creation (Morrow, 2007). In addition, qualitative studies honor the good practices of multiculturally competent clinical work (e.g., Sue et al., 1998) in that they allow the investigator (for example, via interview) to have the opportunity to comprehend the worldview of persons with varying cultural backgrounds. Moreover, qualitative methods are appropriate for research surrounding oppressed communities by offering silenced groups a chance to be represented (Morrow et al., 2001). Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 1997) was the specific qualitative method utilized, as its open-ended interview style and analysis process allowed the current researcher to garner in-depth responses and understanding regarding participant experiences with intraracial microaggressions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

It is not uncommon for people being held captive to take on the views and attitudes of their captors. At times, under the stressful conditions associated with being held captive, people can identify so closely with their tormentors they become like them. This transition has been known to occur after months of captivity and sometimes after only a few weeks. So what do you think might happen to a people who have been held captive for generations? (Leary, 2005, p. 139)

The following literature review outlines the related research that has provided the rationale for the current study's goal. Specifically, the literature review covers a summary of the historical stereotypes of Black men and women, an overview of racial microaggressions, and research examining African Americans' experience of racial microaggressions. In addition, the current literature review discusses intraracial microaggressions among Blacks, which include examples of internalized racism within the African American community. Finally, the literature review explains the rationale for the current study and presents the statement of problem/purpose of study.

One might argue that *multicultural counseling/therapy (MCT)* (Sue & Sue, 2008) has become almost synonymous with the field of counseling psychology. Indeed, Constantine, Miville et al. (2008) cited several works (such as the American Psychological Association's [APA, 2003] "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice and Organizational Change for Psychologists") when they stated that counseling psychologists have

played a significant role in highlighting the importance of multiculturally competent counseling. In addition, Delgado-Romero et al. (2012) discussed counseling psychology's strong ties to multicultural issues. Further, a key aspect in the practice of multiculturally competent counseling is "practical knowledge concerning the scope and nature of the client's cultural background, daily living experience, hopes, fears, and aspirations" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 45). The current study aimed to contribute to and enhance the study and practice of multicultural counseling by providing clinicians with a more in-depth view of African Americans' experiences of racism and its psychological consequences. The researcher hopes this knowledge will provide valuable insight for practitioners into a possible part of the daily experience of Black clients. In this review, the terms *African American* and *Black* are used interchangeably in keeping with U.S. Census Bureau practices.

2.1 Racism and Historical Stereotypes of African Americans

Experiences of racism are arguably woven into the fabric of African American history and experience. A number of definitions for racism have been developed (Belgrave & Allison, 2010), and the current author used Jones's explanation, as cited by Belgrave and Allison (2010):

J. Jones (1997) defines racism as the transformation of race prejudice through the exercise of power against a racial group perceived as inferior. This exercise of power can be expressed by both individuals and institutions and be either intentional or unintentional. (p. 102)

From discussions of the effects of slavery to the advent of Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and affirmative action (Feagin, 2000), it is clear that racism has played a significant role in the lives of African Americans. Racism has continued to be a salient factor of Black American life in recent decades, as Landrine and Klonoff (1996) stated:

[R]acism is alive and well and rampant in the lives of African Americans: 98.1%... reported experiencing some type of racist discrimination in the past year, 100% of the sample reported experiencing some type of racist discrimination in their lifetimes, and 99.4% of the sample indicated that this racism was a source of stress. (pp. 158-159)

Similarly, Belgrave and Allison (2010) suggested that all Black Americans are influenced by racism. The following section develops this idea by discussing racism's manifestations in historical stereotypes of Black women and men.

2.1.1 Black Women

West (1995) cited Weitz and Gordon (1993) and Collins and Sims-Wood (1988) in categorizing the three most popular historical stereotypes of Black women: (a) the "highly maternal, family oriented, and self-sacrificing Mammies"; (b) the "threatening and argumentative Sapphires"; and (c) the "seductive, sexually irresponsible, promiscuous Jezebels" (p. 459). Whereas a number of White females were pushed to embody certain qualities (e.g., purity), a separate assortment of qualities or representations were assigned to Black American females (Collins, 2000). The *Mammy*, for instance, is pictured as a "faithful, obedient domestic servant" (Collins, 2000, p. 72). The Mammy figure dates back to slavery, emerging from the southern region of the United States (West, 1995). West (1995) described Mammy's image, noting physical characteristics related to African ancestry. Mammy is also portrayed as overweight, wearing a scarf, and dark-skinned (West, 1995).

Collins (2000) stated that the Mammy stereotype represents White culture's views regarding the model Black woman. Care for the Mammy's own family comes second to tending to the needs of the White family who employs her (Collins, 2000). Indeed, the family for whom the Mammy works might love her, and she might possess some power, but she is aware of her

inferior position (Collins, 2000). Collins (2000) described the Mammy stereotype as the norm to which Black females are compared, a way to rationalize the perpetual maid role of Black females and legitimize the possession of domestic slaves.

The Mammy figure can also be described as the *Aunt Jemima* figure (Weitz & Gordon, 1993). In her work examining stereotypes and representations of Black women, Sims-Wood (1988) cited Jewell's (1976) work focusing on the Aunt Jemima and Mammy representations. Jewell stated that the unfavorable images of Aunt Jemima and Mammy are connected to old ideas about Black female worth. Aunt Jemima and Mammy portray Black females as women who do not possess traits that one would link to being a woman (e.g., attractiveness, femininity; Jewell, 1976). The Aunt Jemima and Mammy depictions also insinuate that Black females do not desire social elevation; they are happy with servicing others (Jewell, 1993). It is possible that the Mammy stereotype influences Black females in particular ways, as West (1995) stated:

The Mammy image has appeared to impact the psychological functioning of Black women. Concerns related to eating patterns, emphasis on particular physical features, and the conflict in caretaker and wage earner roles may be attributable, in part, to the perpetuation of this Mammy image. (p. 460)

The Mammy stereotype persists within contemporary media and audience interpretations of it. Jewell (1993) pointed out links between the representation of Mammy and viewer reactions to Oprah Winfrey. In discussing "contemporary mammies" (p. 184) on television, Jewell observed that, in the talk show format, the present-day version of the Mammy could be seen as a caretaking African American woman. The author noted an instance when Oprah received a negative reception from many viewers after losing a significant amount of weight and posited that the negative response stemmed from Oprah's alteration in physique, as she was no longer in

line with a characteristic of what American Whites thought a caretaking African American female was—overweight.

The *Sapphire* stereotype has been described as one that centers on weakening the African American man via verbal attacks and being long-winded, bold-faced, noisy, and animated (Jewell, 1993). Thomas et al. (2004) described the Sapphire similarly: “The perceptions of African American women from this character include arrogance, being controlling, loud, hostile, obnoxious, and never satisfied (Bell, 1992; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995)” (p. 429). In addition, the Sapphire is not thought of as a serious figure, as she is considered humorous (Jewell, 1993). Internalization of the antagonistic Sapphire stereotype might result in trouble exhibiting anger (Thomas et al., 2004). Furthermore, hostility may become the default method for displaying other feelings/experiences or may be employed to hide true feelings (West, 1995). Today, the representation of the Sapphire figure can be found on cable television, largely appearing on such reality shows such as *Love and Hip Hop* (Heglar, 2012), *Basketball Wives*, and *Real Housewives of Atlanta* (Folan, 2010), to name a few. Viewers of these shows may notice that verbal and physical fights are commonplace between the “characters,” illustrating the aggressive (e.g., West, 1995) image of the Sapphire.

Mitchell and Herring (1998) described the *Jezebel* image as follows: “The Jezebel stereotype reduces Black women to the equivalent of dogs in heat. This stereotype says we are animalistic in our desire, unable to control our sex drives or the effect they have on men” (pp. 60-61). In other words, the representation of White females regarding sex differs from that of the Black female (Davis, as cited in West, 1995). Whereas White females are historically perceived as modest creatures, Black females have not been viewed as such (Davis, as cited in West, 1995). The Jezebel figure can also be described as over-sexed (Mitchell & Herring, 1998).

The image of the Jezebel was used to rationalize sexual interactions with female slaves (Thomas et al., 2004), representing the sexual abuse/mistreatment suffered by these women (Davis, as cited in Collins, 2000; Thomas et al., 2004; West, 1995). Not surprisingly, the aforementioned descriptors of the Jezebel (Mitchell & Herring, 1998) and sexual perceptions of Black females (e.g., Bell, 2004) overlap. Consequences of the Jezebel image are numerous (West, 1995). For instance, Black females may either distort their sexuality as a tool for influence or worth, or experience shame as a possible result of trying to reject the Jezebel stereotype (West, 1995):

If a Black woman perceives her sexuality as one of her few valuable assets, it may become a source of esteem or a negotiating tool to manipulate men rather than an expression of pleasure and caring. At the other end of the sexual continuum, shame and repression of sexual feelings can be the outcome of attempts to distance from the Jezebel image. (p. 462)

One may posit that the current image of the Jezebel would be the hip hop/rap video model. In addition, other recent representations would be female rappers popular in the 1990s—namely, Lil’ Kim and Foxy Brown (Woodard & Mastin, 2005), although one can argue that Foxy Brown and Lil’ Kim embody both Jezebel and Sapphire.

Because it is critical to discuss the historical stereotypes of Black females and the potential, subsequent consequences of such representations, it is also important to explore how these stereotypes are absorbed by others (Weitz & Gordon, 1993). Weitz and Gordon (1993) studied White college students’ views about Black females. Subjects were asked to pick traits from a list that described U.S. females generally, and one that pertained to Black females alone. The researchers discovered that the characteristics the subjects assigned to Black females were more unfavorable than those assigned to females in general (which were greatly favorable)

(Weitz & Gordon, 1993). The researchers explained that “American women in general, but not black women, are characterized as (among other things) sensitive, attractive, sophisticated, career-oriented, and independent, while black women are characterized as loud, aggressive, argumentative, stubborn, and bitchy” (pp. 26-27). One might find similarity between the characteristics ascribed to Black females in Weitz and Gordon’s study and the Sapphire stereotype. In addition, Weitz and Gordon also reported that “45% characterize women in general as intelligent but only 22% characterize black women this way” (p. 26). Weitz and Gordon reiterated the observation that representations of females in general are not universally applied to ethnic minority females. One of the most interesting findings in the study was the popular impression that Black females were hostile, although the impression that Black males are hostile is more historically ingrained (Weitz & Gordon, 1993). Nevertheless, Weitz and Gordon asserted that Black women have frequently been represented by entertainment media as tyrannical in nature.

2.1.2 Black Men

In his classic text *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, Donald Bogle (2002) described the common historical stereotypes of Blacks as represented in film over time. Bogle stated that movie characters were mostly exaggerated reflections of images of Blacks that were previously embedded in American culture, dating back to slavery. Bogle presented several stereotypes or prevalent images of Black men that included the “brutal black buck” (p. 4). The “brutal black buck” was first seen in the controversial film, *The Birth of a Nation* (Bogle, 2002). Bogle explained that there were two types of this particular stereotype: “black bucks” and “black brutes” (p. 13). The “black brute” was an aggressive being, as Bogle stated: “The black brute was a barbaric black out to raise

havoc” (p. 13); he also stated that in *The Birth of a Nation*, “the black brutes, subhuman and feral, are the nameless characters setting out on a rampage full of black rage” (p. 13).

Bogle’s (2002) description of this portrayal of Black men in *The Birth of a Nation* appears to be echoed in popular culture. The representation of the Black man as an aggressive being has its origins in the American Reconstruction period (Milton, 2012). During the late 19th century, this stereotype was used to secure segregation (Milton, 2012). More recently, as a more militant image of Black men emerged during the 1960s (reflective of political changes of that time), depictions of Black men (e.g., Black Power) during the 1960s and 1970s helped to foster the image of the hostile Black man (Milton, 2012). Milton (2012) went on to state: “Of all the Black male stereotypes created over the last 150 years, that of the violent criminal has been methodically cultivated, commodified, and outright embraced by US society” (p. 19).

One way to illustrate how the stereotype of the “black brute” (Bogle, 2002) is woven into present-day American society is to study the relationship and experiences of Black men surrounding crime and the media. Quillian and Pager (2001) studied data from three different cities to examine specific factors that affect how individuals perceive crime in residential areas. The investigators found that the perception of criminal activity is higher when there is a higher number of Black male residents. It is important to note that Quillian and Pager’s study focused on Black males who were younger in age (approximately preteen to 30 years of age). Quillian and Pager’s (2001) findings, revealing how individuals understood neighborhood criminal activity in relation to the presence of Black males in this particular age group, served as a backdrop to recent, prominent cases of Black men dying as a result of profiling and/or police brutality (e.g., Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile,

Eric Garner, George Floyd). Further, one may argue that these horrific cases reflect the same type of bias demonstrated in Quillian and Pager's (2001) study.

A tragic example of the historical stereotyping of Black men is the case of Trayvon Martin. Trayvon Martin, an adolescent Black male, was coming home one evening after purchasing candy when a man began to follow him (Lee, 2012). The man, George Zimmerman, was a "white Hispanic" (Alvarez, 2012, para 3). Zimmerman was a neighborhood watch member and thought that Martin looked suspicious (Lee, 2012). Zimmerman continued to pursue Martin, despite instructions from a 911 operator to stop following him (Blow, 2012). Some time after, a scuffle ensued, which ultimately ended with the fatal shooting of the unarmed Martin and Zimmerman claiming self-defense (Blow, 2012). It took almost 2 months (Alvarez & Cooper, 2012) for Zimmerman to be charged with anything, despite seemingly overwhelming evidence—including witnesses (Blow, 2012) and public 911 calls (Trotta, 2012)—against him. In July of 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted of the charges against him (manslaughter and second-degree murder; Alvarez & Buckley, 2013).

One might speculate about many reasons for the acquittal, why the charge was delayed, or why Martin was even shot. However, in light of Bogle's (2002) description of the "black brute" and Quillian and Pager's (2001) findings, it might be hypothesized that Trayvon was a victim of the "black brute" stereotype—that Zimmerman and the police department based their behavior on a stereotype that characterized Martin as hostile and menacing, or to use Bogle's (2002) terminology, "a barbaric black out to raise havoc" (p. 13). The Trayvon Martin case, therefore, not only illustrated a common representation of Black men, but it also provided a prime demonstration of the destructive nature of such stereotypes.

As in the Trayvon Martin case and others like it, the notion of Black men being suspicious or menacing is mirrored in the qualitative accounts of African American men who participated in Smith et al.'s (2007) study. One of the most frequent issues discussed by the participants was the reality that African American men were equated with being criminals (Smith et al., 2007). In discussions with the students, these particular racial microaggressions seemed to be the most corrosive and prevalent (Smith et al., 2007). One participant shared how campus police had made him surrender two forms of ID to prove that he was a student as he tried to work in a computer lab over a weekend. The reason given to the student for this surveillance was that he seemed to be a "suspicious-looking person" (p. 563). Another participant described being stopped by police to provide ID as he was strolling through campus (Smith et al., 2007). The authors offered this summary:

To reduce their fear of the Black male presence in these historically White spaces, Whites sought to eliminate the perceived threat and to reestablish environmental control via activation of increased Black misandric surveillance and restrictions. As a result, campus and local police were consistently deployed to suppress and control the Black male body. In short, community policing tactics were used 'to keep them in their place.' (p. 563)

Citing a previous study by Oliver and Fonash, Oliver (2003) provided another example of the "black brute" image of Black males. The Oliver and Fonash study had explored identification errors involving persons suspected of crime reported in news media (Oliver, 2003). Participants read one of four newspaper articles that involved crimes, two of which were violent and two that were not violent (Oliver, 2003). In addition, both violent and nonviolent articles featured either a picture of a Black man or a White man (Oliver, 2003). Subjects then shared their understanding of the articles and attempted to match pictures of people (both containing men linked to the

articles and not linked) to each crime article (Oliver, 2003). One of the key results in this investigation was termed the *violent/nonviolent mistaken identity* (Oliver, 2003), according to which “black men were especially likely to be misidentified with violent rather than nonviolent crime” (p. 14). Interestingly, pre-measured attitudes surrounding race did not affect results, implying that the representation of Black males as offenders acts unconsciously (Oliver, 2003).

2.2 Everyday Expressions of Racial Stereotyping: Racial Microaggressions

Racial stereotypes and the characteristics associated with them find their way into everyday interactions in a number of forms. One of those forms corresponds to the emergence of a certain type of racism that is not as overt and obvious as pre-Civil Rights Era racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). For this review of literature, the researcher utilized Sue et al.’s (2007) conceptualization of *racial microaggressions* to explain the nuanced, complex form of daily racism that is frequently experienced by persons of color.

Microaggressions as a construct emerged from scholarship regarding the nature of racism in the post-Civil Rights Era. For instance, Sue et al. (2007) cited Sears’ (1988) discussion of “symbolic racism,” McConahay’s (1986) examination of “modern racism,” and Dovidio et al.’s (2002) exploration of “aversive racism” to identify and/or describe the multifaceted quality of present-day racism. Sue et al. (2007) summarized the aforementioned research by stating the following similarities:

racism (a) is more likely than ever to be disguised and covert and (b) has evolved from the “old fashioned” form, in which overt racial hatred and bigotry is consciously and publicly displayed, to a more ambiguous and nebulous form that is more difficult to identify and acknowledge. (p. 272)

Further, Mercer et al. (2011) pointed out that the ambiguity surrounding this evolved form of racism allows offenders to refute transgressions easily, and simultaneously makes it challenging for receivers to distinguish them. For this reason, it is possible that neither party is confidently able to identify whether a racial offense even occurred (Mercer et al., 2011). Consequently, it is not uncommon for receivers of these subtle racial slights to wonder about the appropriate reactions to such events (Mercer et al., 2011).

Subtle, implicit types of racism (such as racial microaggressions) may not be as easy to recognize as more overt historical forms, yet they may be just as pervasive. By way of example, Sue et al. (2007) described a personal situation that occurred on an airplane. Sue and another colleague of color were chosen by a flight attendant to move their seats to the rear of the aircraft so that she could “distribute weight on the plane evenly” (p. 275). Sue experienced the request as microaggressive and indicated this, but the flight attendant seemed unwilling to acknowledge that the request might have been troublesome. Many other scenarios and incidents of racial microaggressions may demonstrate the complexities of this form of racism and subsequent psychological consequences of such experiences (e.g., Hill et al., 2010; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Lin, 2010; Rivera et al., 2010; Watkins et al., 2010). For example, Watkins et al.’s (2010) study described a participant’s observation that a professor appeared more jovial and approachable towards White students yet acted “superior” (pp. 35-36) when around Black students and other students of color. In addition, a participant in Rivera et al.’s (2010) investigation described receiving the message that she was too intelligent to be a member of her specific Latinx nationality, and an Indigenous participant in Hill et al.’s (2010) study also reported comments from non-Indigenous persons that indicated surprise at the participant’s intelligence regarding a specific topic.

In each of the studies referenced above, racial microaggressions were studied as perpetrated by White individuals and experienced by people of color. Another potential variety of interaction is represented by the phenomenon of intraracial microaggressions among African Americans. This topic has received scant attention in the existing literature, as addressed in a later section.

2.2.1 Racial Microaggression Basics

Not only did Sue et al. (2007) elaborate on the construct of racial microaggressions, but they also proposed a classification system for them. They specified three categories of microaggressions: *microinvalidations*, *microassaults*, and *microinsults*. In addition, nine specific themes of microaggressions were hypothesized to fall within those three general categories: *environmental invalidation*, *alien in one's own land*, *criminality/assumption of criminal status*, *color blindness*, *myth of meritocracy*, *denial of individual racism*, *second-class status*, *pathologizing cultural values/communication styles*, and *ascription of intelligence* (Sue et al., 2007).

The term *microassault* was defined as “an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Microassaults are the most overt type of microaggression and, therefore, are closest to the more stereotypical or obvious forms of racism associated with the past (e.g., Sears, 1988). As an example of a microassault, the authors cited the use of the word “Oriental” to label an individual. Another illustration of the perpetration of a microassault is when parents attempt to prohibit an interracial marriage (Sue, 2010).

Sue et al. (2007) described microinvalidations as “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (p. 274). An example of a theme that falls within the microinvalidation category corresponds to being treated as an alien in one’s own land (Sue et al., 2007), which refers to the supposition that Latinx or Asian American individuals are perpetually seen as immigrants (Sue, 2010, Table 2.1). In other words, these individuals may receive the message that they are not authentically American (Sue et al., 2007). This theme could be demonstrated by an individual commenting on an Asian American’s command of the English language (Sue, 2010).

Lastly, microinsults were “characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). An example of a theme classified under the microinsult type is called ascription of intelligence (Sue et al., 2007). In these instances, racial/ethnic minority individuals may receive the message that they are less intelligent than a White person (Sue, 2010, Table 2.1).

Sue et al. (2007) noted that the more conscious, willful nature of the microassault category is most comparable to the more brazen racism of the past. Conversely, the microinvalidation and microinsult forms of racial microaggressions seem more representative of contemporary racism, as these categories appear to be more unconscious and inadvertent in nature. The characteristically subtle nature of microinvalidations and microinsults may render them especially damaging to ethnic minority individuals (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). In fact, Sue et al. (2007) stated that “In some respects, people of color may find an overt and obvious racist act easier to handle than microaggressions that seem vague or disguised (Soloranzo et al., 2000)” (p. 277). Similarly, in their study exploring racial microaggressions within the Black community, Sue, Nadal et al. (2008) stated that

many Black individuals may find it easier to deal with microassaults because the intent of the microaggressor is clear and obvious, whereas microinsults and microinvalidations involve considerable guesswork because of their ambiguous and invisible nature (Sue et al., in press). (p. 331)

Sue (2010) cited several additional works suggesting that it may be more difficult for members of marginalized racial and gender groups to process ambiguous forms of prejudice than the overt, unambiguous variety. For example, Salvatore and Shelton (2007) researched the negative effect of racial-prejudice cues on cognitive functioning. Black participants were exposed to reading material that contained either covert prejudice, obvious prejudice, or non-prejudice content. The participants then took a test measuring cognitive functioning after being exposed to the above material. Salvatore and Shelton's data revealed that covert prejudice appeared to cause a greater decrease in cognitive functioning than an obvious form.

Therefore, microinvalidations and microinsults may offer a potentially important focus for analysis with regard to understanding an individual's experience of racial microaggressions (e.g., Mercer et al., 2011). More specifically, microinvalidations and microinsults appear to be a more appropriate representation of current-day racism as compared to microassaults (Sue et al., 2007), and may therefore provide a more relevant portrayal of a person's encounter with racism on a daily basis. Further, considering the above literature, it could be argued that the study of microinvalidations and microinsults corresponds to the sources of the most negative consequences with regard to racial microaggressions—knowledge that would be valuable in informing training, treatment, diagnosis, and future research in the field of counseling psychology.

2.2.2 African Americans and the Experience of Racial Microaggressions

What does the literature reveal about racial microaggressions as experienced by African Americans in particular? Sue, Nadal et al.'s (2008) qualitative research addressed this question, discovering that several microaggression themes—criminality/assumption of criminal status, second-class status, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles (emerging in a slightly different form, as *assumed superiority of White cultural values/communication styles* [Sue, Nadal et al., 2008]), and ascription of intelligence—coincided with the themes extracted from interviewee reports and experiences. However, the experiences of the subjects also revealed additional themes: *assumed universality of the Black American experience* and *assumption of inferior status*. An example of the universality theme is when an individual is expected to be a spokesperson for the entire Black population (e.g., believing that an African American person must know the pronunciation of every name that appears Black [Sue, Nadal et al., 2008]). An illustration of the inferior status microaggression might be the supposition that an African American individual does not possess a high-status occupation (Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). Moreover, Sue, Nadal et al. found a subtheme to the assumed superiority of White cultural values/communication styles microaggression—*White standards of beauty are superior*. A demonstration of the aforementioned subtheme may be a Black woman feeling it necessary to change her hair for a job interview (e.g., Sue, Nadal et al., 2008).

In addition, in their study investigating racial microaggressions and Black college students, Watkins et al. (2010) discussed the stereotypes that students reported. These reported stereotypes corresponded to Sue et al.'s (2007) and Sue, Nadal et al.'s (2008) themes, including assumption of criminal status, ascription of intelligence, assumed universality of the Black

American experience, second-class citizen, and pathologizing cultural values/communication styles.

Furthermore, Constantine and Sue (2007) investigated Black supervisees and their experiences with racial microaggressions committed by their White supervisors. In their qualitative study, the authors discovered seven themes that were derived from participants' responses: *focusing primarily on clinical weaknesses, blaming clients of color for problems stemming from oppression, offering culturally insensitive treatment recommendations, reluctance to give performance feedback for fear of being viewed as a racist, making stereotypic assumptions about Black clients, making stereotypic assumptions about Black supervisees, and invalidating racial-cultural issues*. Participants' responses provided examples for each theme.

For example, one participant shared an experience where her supervisor continually gave her negative feedback, despite the generally positive feedback she would receive from her colleagues, illustrating a primary focus on clinical weaknesses (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Regarding the theme of blaming clients of color for problems stemming from oppression, a participant discussed an instance of a supervisor suggesting that a client adjust to the oppression that said client was experiencing at the workplace. More, the authors quoted a participant who explained that a supervisor advised him to tell a client to separate himself from his family when the client was experiencing conflict within his family unit. As such, the supervisor's advisement demonstrated the theme of offering culturally insensitive treatment recommendations. Another participant discussed a supervisor who provided universally positive feedback because of the supervisor's reluctance to give performance feedback for fear of being viewed as a racist. As a result, the participant indicated that they had to seek honest feedback elsewhere. Moreover, regarding the themes of making stereotypic assumptions about Black clients and making

stereotypic assumptions about Black supervisees, participants described the experience of their supervisors making racially microaggressive statements and/or stereotyping that was in line with historical stereotypes of Black people. In addition, the authors highlighted a participant's experience of a supervisor who downplayed the importance of discussing how race impacts clients' lives (invalidating racial-cultural issues theme).

Constantine et al. (2008) discussed additional experiences that (specifically) Black people have with racial microaggressions. In their work, the authors studied racial microaggressions as experienced by Black faculty in counseling and counseling psychology programs and their impact. Seven themes were extracted from the participants' interview material. One theme was *self-consciousness regarding choice of clothing, hairstyle, or manner of speech*. A participant described wearing certain clothes to make others comfortable and speaking a certain way to avoid stereotypes. In addition, one of the female participants discussed *difficulties determining whether subtle discrimination was race- or gender-based*. Moreover, another participant explained her experience of *receiving inadequate mentoring in the workplace*, as she felt that other colleagues did not want her to excel in her career. One of the male participants described the *organizational expectations to serve in service-oriented roles with low perceived value by administrators or other faculty colleagues*. The faculty member discussed his experience of receiving requests to take on extra tasks because of his race, yet not being compensated for said tasks. Furthermore, another theme was *alternating feelings of invisibility/marginalization and hypervisibility*. One faculty member indicated that she felt exploited when her colleagues needed her knowledge for a particular reason, yet also felt ignored because of the nature of her research (race-based topics). In addition, numerous faculty members described the experience of their *qualifications or credentials questioned or challenged by other faculty colleagues, staff*

members, or students. Further, participants discussed their *coping strategies to address racial microaggressions*, which included spiritual approaches, utilizing a support system, being selective in confronting racial microaggressions, and others.

2.2.3 Intersections: Black Women

The racial microaggressions literature regarding the experiences of Black women highlights the importance of investigating *intersectionality* (see Cole, 2009) in racial microaggressions. Williams and Nichols (2012) asserted that information seemed to be lacking on how gender may influence certain details about racial microaggressions. Specifically, Williams and Nichols (2012) stated, “it is possible that gender affects the nature and content of RMA’s [racial microaggressions] rather than the frequency” (p. 78). The authors reported that participants experienced “The ‘Universal’ Black Woman” (p. 88) microaggression, in which Black women reported feelings of being held to certain ideas about Black females that were reflective of historical stereotypes (e.g., West, 1995). For instance, the notion that “they are all exotic and sexual” was one of the popular stereotypes experienced by subjects (Williams & Nichols, 2012, p. 88), demonstrating the intersection between being a woman and being Black (Williams & Nichols, 2012).

In addition, Hamilton (2016) investigated *gendered racial microaggressions* among Black women in a predominantly White collegiate environment. Much as Williams and Nichols (2012) noted in their findings, Hamilton (2016) stated, “In both the classroom and white social settings, the respondents faced gendered racial microaggressions that placed them as the spokesperson for Black culture/Black womanhood and assumed there is a universality in the Black experience” (p. 47). Further, Hamilton (2016) found that participants experienced gendered racial microaggressions in social spaces that were related to historic, sexual stereotypes

of Black women (see West, 1995). Moreover, Hamilton's study revealed that the participants experienced gendered racial microaggressions in academic settings regarding the idea that Black women are less intelligent. In addition, both Hamilton (2016) and Watkins et al. (2010) discussed participants experiencing microaggressions at the crossroads of race and gender regarding existing negative notions about Black women's physical attractiveness.

Lewis et al. (2016) took research on Black women and gendered racial microaggressions a step further when they created a taxonomy of microaggressions that combined aspects of both gender and race. The authors conducted focus groups of Black women who attended a predominately White university. Using responses from said focus groups, Lewis et al. extracted several themes and subthemes of gendered racial microaggressions. One theme was *projected stereotypes*, which is based on historical stereotypes of Black women (see West, 1995). Subthemes under the projected stereotype theme included *expectation of jezebel* (e.g., the assumption that Black women are hypersexual) and *expectation of the angry black woman* (e.g., the assumption that Black women are hostile). Another theme was *silenced and marginalized*, a feeling that participants reportedly experienced in several settings. A subtheme under silenced and marginalized was *struggle for respect*. For instance, a participant described a group assignment experience where two White male students attempted to override her authority. The second subtheme was *invisibility*, where a participant described the experience of feeling ignored and isolated in an academic class setting. The last theme mentioned by the authors was *assumptions about style and beauty*. Subthemes of assumptions about style and beauty included *assumptions about communication styles* (e.g., assumptions that Black women are "loud"; p. 771) and *assumptions about aesthetics* (e.g., assumptions that Black women have a specific body type/shape).

2.2.4 Intersections: Black Men

Regarding microaggressions at the intersection of race and gender for Black men, Williams and Nichols (2012) highlighted research by Smith et al. (2007), which focused on African American men attending historically White institutions (HWIs) and experiencing *racial battle fatigue* and racial microaggressions. As explained by Smith et al. (2007), “Racial battle fatigue addresses the physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism” (p. 555). Smith et al. utilized the concept of racial battle fatigue “as a theoretical framework for examining social-psychological stress responses...associated with being an African American male on historically White campuses” (p. 552). Smith et al. suggested that the experience of African American men in hostile surroundings will be different than other groups (e.g., Black women), and that “African American male college students have ‘raced’ and gendered’ experiences at all stages of the educational pipeline” (pp. 552-553) which “are often detrimental to their educational aspirations and achievement” (p. 553).

Similar to the previous discussion on intersectionality and Black women, attending to the cross between the status as a Black individual and a male appears to be important, as it allows for a thorough and precise investigation of experience—in this case, racial battle fatigue and racial microaggressions (Smith et al., 2007). For instance, the participants reported that African American men experience a heightened, negative atmosphere (compared to other demographic populations) at HWIs (Smith et al., 2007). In addition, stereotyping was one of the most popular themes that arose from participants’ reports of racial microaggressions (Smith et al., 2007).

As participants were often treated as criminals (e.g., being stopped or questioned by police for no apparent reason [Smith et al., 2007]), these reports were consistent with the

historical stereotype of Black men as aggressors (e.g., Boggle, 2002). Similar experiences were found in McCabe's (2009) study on microaggressions that are both gender- and race-based in a predominately White collegiate space. Black male participants discussed the experience of being targeted by resident assistants and campus police and receiving harsher punishments for infractions compared to their peers. Participants also reported the frequent feeling that "others perceived them as a threat" (p. 139). McCabe (2009) summarized Black participants' views when she stated that "authorities in place to protect college students often perceive Black men as criminals and act on that perception to control black men's bodies and activities" (p. 139). Further, in his study "Black and Gay Today: Experiences with Perceived Racial and Sexual Orientation Microaggressions in Predominately White Colleges and Universities," Handy (2016) highlighted the report of a participant who deliberately changed the tone of his voice to avoid being perceived as "aggressive" (p. 66). Moreover, the aforementioned studies demonstrated that stereotypes appear to have a bold presence in the Black female and male experience (Smith et al., 2007; Williams & Nichols, 2012), as is discussed in a separate section.

2.2.5 Reactions to Racial Microaggressions

A number of research participants have displayed signs of emotional anguish as they shared accounts of their experiences with microaggressions and described ongoing, painful reactions to such accounts (e.g., sorrow, anger, etc. [Sue, Nadal et al., 2008]). These experiences correspond to the distress reported in such studies as conducted by Watkins et al. (2010) on racial microaggressions that were experienced by Black college students. The authors found that deciphering how to handle the experience of a microaggression could result in fatigue, disorientation, and anxiety (Watkins et al., 2010). In addition, Watkins (2012) explored self-regulatory behaviors, adaptation to college, and *college cultural congruence* regarding Black

students in universities. Watkins explained college cultural congruence as “the cultural fit and inclusiveness between an individual’s cultural values and the college’s endorsed institutional culture” (p. 53). The study included the finding that college cultural congruence is adversely affected by racial microaggressions (Watkins, 2012). Results also suggested that racial microaggressions have a deleterious effect on adaptation to college (Watkins, 2012).

Constantine and Sue (2007) examined racial microaggressions within the relationship of Black supervisees and White supervisors. Results indicated that Black supervisees experienced serious, damaging emotional responses to microaggressive incidents within said professional relationships. Participants (Black supervisees) reported experiencing anger, incredulity, invalidation, frustration, suspicion, disappointment, and shock (Constantine & Sue, 2007).

Constantine, Smith et al. (2008) investigated Black faculty members in counseling and counseling psychology and their experience with racial microaggressions. Participants shared emotions that emerged as a result of their experience of racial microaggressions, which included feelings of self-consciousness, isolation, and being ignored (Constantine, Smith et al., 2008).

Michael-Makri (2010) explored racial and ethnic minority master’s and doctoral-level students in their CACREP-accredited (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) counseling programs at predominantly White institutions and experiences of racial microaggressions. Results revealed that, indeed, participants experienced racial microaggressions and emotional reactions to said microaggressions (Michael-Makri, 2010).

Although the author did not discover any significant differences among minority participant groups, there were important findings regarding African Americans. Specifically, Blacks were one of two minority participant groups that reported more racial microaggressions. In addition, Blacks were also one of two minority participant groups that reported more emotional reaction to

the reported racial microaggressions. Similarly, in a study called “Racial Microaggressions: The Schooling Experiences of Black Middle-Class Males in Arizona’s Secondary Schools,” Allen (2010) noted participant reports of feeling invisible and being treated in a more negative manner (e.g., receiving harsher punishments) as compared to their peers.

Torres et al. (2010) conducted a study on high-achieving African Americans (doctoral students and graduates) and incidents of racial microaggressions. Several themes relating to racial microaggressions emerged from the qualitative portion of Torres et al.’s study, including *assumption of criminality* and *second-class citizen*. However, of the themes that were extracted, *underestimation of personal ability* (questioning one’s intelligence and capabilities regarding academia) seemed to be particularly meaningful regarding participants’ mental wellness. Specifically, the presence of this theme appeared to be connected to increased depressive symptoms (Torres et al., 2010).

Further, Crawford (2011) investigated factors that would predict African American students pursuing mental health services. One of the factors that Crawford considered was racial microaggressions. The author found that “the more perceived racial microaggressions in counseling, the least likely a person would seek psychological services” (p. 24). Additionally, Granger (2011) investigated the influence of racial microaggressions in the experiences of Black men in higher education. Several main themes emerged from participant reports regarding emotional reactions and coping, including *fear*, *anger*, *hopelessness*, *hypervigilance*, *spirituality*, and *culture shock*. Despite mention of some positive coping mechanisms, Granger indicated that most themes could manifest as a variety of detrimental outcomes (e.g., physical illness, substance abuse, inappropriate coping mechanisms, mistrust, isolation, a sense of indifference,

etc.). The above examples demonstrated how damaging racial microaggressions are in the lives of African Americans.

2.3 Internalized Racism and Its Manifestations

Pervasive racist biases and stereotypes tend to be received to some extent by all members of a culture—even when one belongs to the group that is the target of the stereotype. Along these lines, internalized racism is a sign that a marginalized group member has adopted the detrimental stereotypes of their own group that are assigned in the dominant culture. This section explores the meaning and consequences of internalized racism. Specifically, the section focuses on the manifestations of internalized racism within the Black community, including intraracial colorism and intraracial stereotyping.

Molina and James (2016) summarized Jones's (2000) description of *internalized racism* “as the acceptance of negative attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and stereotypes perpetuated by the White dominant society as being true about one's racial group” (p. 440). In the current discussion, usage of this term follows Jones (2000), who explained internalized racism as the following:

[A]cceptance by members of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth. It is characterized by their not believing in others who look like them, and not believing in themselves. It involves accepting limitations to one's own full humanity, including one's spectrum of dreams, one's right to self-determination, and one's range of allowable self-expression. It manifests as an embracing of ‘whiteness’ (use of hair straighteners and bleaching creams, stratification by skin tone within communities of color, and ‘the white man's ice is colder’ syndrome); self-devaluation (racial slurs as

nicknames, rejection of ancestral culture, and fratricide); and resignation, helplessness, and hopelessness. (p. 1213)

One of the best-known demonstrations of the concept and presence of internalized racism is represented in the work of Mamie Clark and Kenneth Clark (Pyke, 2010). The Clarks' doll study revealed that Black children would generally rather play with a White doll instead of a Black doll (Russell et al., 1992). In addition, the children assigned more positive attributes to the White doll (Russell et al., 1992). As the years have passed, the Clarks' work regarding racial preferences has been challenged on the grounds of validity (see Burnett & Sisson, 1995; Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009), yet it seems safe to say that the Clarks helped to unveil a significant issue that predated their work. Indeed, internalized racism has been conceptualized as a consequence of slavery (e.g., Leary, 2005). Further, various works or literature (e.g., Culbreth, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Leary, 2005; Moore, 2016; Taylor, 2008; Wilder 2010; Wilder & Cain, 2011) have suggested that manifestations of internalized racism have continued to affect the lives of African Americans ever since. In fact, Speight (2007) stated that "the internalization of racism may arguably be the most damaging psychological injury that is due to racism" (p. 130).

2.3.1 Intraracial Colorism Among Blacks

Jones (2000) described internalized racism as "manifest[ing] as an embracing of 'whiteness' (use of hair straighteners and bleaching creams, stratification by skin tone within communities of color[...])" (p. 1213). One might argue that in this passage, Jones described the issue of *colorism* as a form of internalized racism. Landor (2012) explained *colorism* as follows:

The second system of discrimination is through the level of skin tone, or colorism. This system privileges lighter skin individuals over darker skin individuals both within and across racial categories. Given the general preference for whiteness and the advantages

lighter skin individuals acquired during and after slavery, lighter skin individuals are valued on the basis of their skin tone (Glenn, 2009; Keith & Herring, 1991; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). (p. 7)

As indicated by Landor's (2012) explanation, colorism is considered to have roots in slavery (e.g., Keith & Herring, 1991). History has shown that African Americans with lighter complexions received certain key benefits (e.g., financial) that African Americans with darker complexions were generally denied (see Keith & Herring, 1991). This chapter opened with a passage from Leary's (2005) book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* that described a phenomenon called *racist socialization*, a concept that may also be conceptualized as internalized racism. Along these lines, Leary stated that "it is not uncommon for people being held captive to take on the views and attitudes of their captors" (p. 139) and suggested that Black people would eventually experience internalized racism as a result. In addition, Leary proposed that this experience may be expressed as colorism perpetuated within the African American community—a phenomenon that can be termed *intra-racial colorism*. Intra-racial colorism appears to impact individuals of different skin tones within the African American community, with research suggesting that Black people of various complexions can be either perpetrators or victims of intra-racial colorism (Hunter, 2005; Iheduru, 2013; Wilder, 2010).

For example, the "brown bag test" (Hunter, 1998, p. 523) is an example of a tactic that was used to determine which individuals were allowed an opportunity to access certain influential African American social groups (Hunter, 1998). Specifically, an African American individual had a chance to join high-ranking Black social groups if the person's complexion was fairer than the bag (Hunter, 1998). The literature has indicated that intra-racial colorism continues to affect the African American community in recent decades (e.g., Hall, 1998; Moore, 2016;

Myers, 2015; Wilder, 2010; Wilder & Cain, 2011). For instance, Culbreth's (2006) research indicated that Black-on-Black colorism is indeed present in many places of business, and Black individuals with darker skin tone and women (respectively) may be more likely to encounter discrimination in business environments that stem from Black-on-Black colorism. Similarly, in Myers's (2015) investigation of Black professional women's work experiences, a participant was explicitly told that she would not secure a position due to her skin tone.

In their article, "Colorism within the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)," Gasman and Abiola (2016) cited Taylor (2008), who mentioned the history of colorism within these institutions as well as the more current presence of colorism at HBCUs:

The professor noted that modern day brown paper bag tests occur within social groups, within the Homecoming Court, and when choosing students for leadership roles. For example, at both Howard and Hampton Universities, student leaders have complained that they were not selected for leadership roles due to skin color, despite having better qualifications than their light-skinned counterparts (Taylor, 2009). (p. 43)

In addition, research has indicated that colorism occurs in Black fraternities and sororities (Bryant, 2012). For instance, a participant in Bryant's (2012) study recalled a chapter president who indicated that members with lighter skin tones projected a more positive image than those with darker skin tones. Moreover, Moore (2016) explored possible skin color-based prejudice and/or favoritism among Black educators employed in secondary schools. Moore's data indicated that, regarding their Black pupils, the classroom and/or disciplinary experiences of students were influenced by colorism bias. Intra-racial colorism appears to extend to (but is not limited to) the family unit (e.g., Wilder & Cain, 2011) and also has social implications (e.g., Hunter, 1998; Wilder, 2010) and apparent emotional or psychological consequences (e.g.,

Pearson-Trammell, 2010). Colorism may also operate within interracial stereotyping of both Black women and Black men (e.g., Wilder, 2010).

2.3.2 Intraracial Stereotyping Within the Black Community

Conceptually, intraracial colorism is closely related to the notion of intraracial stereotyping, and research has indicated that Black-on-Black stereotyping occurs as a function of colorism. For example, Wilder (2010) investigated the current common views and speech that influence the comprehension and conversation around colorism among young Black women on a day-to-day basis. Wilder suggested that skin tone may be linked to ideas about an individual's intelligence, aggressiveness, and attractiveness, and seems associated with a number of negative attributes (e.g., "loud"; p. 195) and so on. Further, regarding romantic partnering, Black women have expressed the experience and/or perception of being rejected for having a darker complexion (e.g., Watson, 2015). In addition, African American women have also expressed the assumption or idea that lighter-skinned Black women are considered more beautiful (e.g., Wilder, 2010). Hochschild and Weaver (2007) provided a summary of previous research in stating:

[people] offer or remember stereotypes or information based on skin color, especially those that fit traditional assumptions; and they are less able to repress such stereotypes than ones based on race (T.J. Brown et al. 1998; Blair et al. 2002; Yip and Sinha 2002:999; Blair, Judd and Fallman 2004). (p. 646)

In other words, this literature has suggested that stereotypes rooted in skin color are more stable than stereotypes that are race-based. The indication that complexion-based stereotypes are more stable than race-based ones allows one to conjecture just how significant complexion-based stereotypes are—especially the negative ones. As Hochschild and Weaver (2007) explained,

“dark skin evokes fears of criminality (Dasgupta et al 1999; Maddox and Gray 2002) or sharper memories of a purportedly criminal face (Dixon and Maddox 2005)” (p. 647). What is more alarming is how early stereotypes based on skin tone seem to be ingrained in children.

Hochschild and Weaver (2007) asserted that “even black first graders are better able to remember stories in which light-skinned individuals are portrayed positively (or dark-skinned people portrayed negatively) than the reverse (Averhart and Bigler 1997)” (p. 647).

Moreover, research has indicated that Black people of different ethnicities (e.g., Black Caribbeans, African Americans, Black Africans) may hold stereotypes about each other (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003). For example, some Caribbean Blacks and/or Black Africans appear to hold negative stereotypes about African Americans, which may include assumptions about character (e.g., poor work ethic; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013) and the idea that one group is “better than” another (e.g., Iheduru, 2013, p. 48). In fact, in discussing the experience of early Black Caribbean immigrants, Hine-St. Hillare, (2006) noted:

The West Indians kept their communities and their cultures separate from the American-born Blacks in an effort to distinguish themselves from the southern African Americans, whom they often considered inferior. They failed to realize that the educational opportunities they had were not open to African Americans in the rural South and only on a limited basis in the North (Brandon, 1994). (p. 51)

Predictably, as the media have been shown to perpetuate stereotypes of Black men and women (e.g., Bogle, 2002; Littlefield, 2008; Sims-Wood, 1988; Woodard & Mastin, 2005), media have also been indicated as shaping the stereotypes that different Black ethnic groups hold about each other (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003). Considering the

historically troublesome images of African Americans in the media (e.g., Bogle, 2002), one could argue that the media support the preservation of internalized racism among Blacks.

Furthermore, there is the notion of “acting White” (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004). In their article “Black Students’ School Success: Coping with the Burden of ‘Acting White,’” Fordham and Ogbu (1986) described the concept:

Thus subordinate minorities regard certain forms of behavior and certain activities or events, symbols, and meanings as *not appropriate* for them because those behaviors, events, symbols, and meanings are characteristic of white Americans. At the same time they emphasize other forms of behavior and other events, symbols, and meanings as more appropriate for them because these are *not* a part of white Americans’ way of life. To behave in the manner defined as falling within a white cultural frame of reference is to “act white” and is negatively sanctioned. (p. 181)

Essentially, one may conceptualize “acting White” as a term used to describe a Black person who is perceived to be wrongly aligned with Whiteness in some sense, or failing to embody or perform Blackness well enough. There are many ways one may be perceived to “act White,” from punctuality and music taste to positive study habits and way of speaking (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The idea of “acting White” is especially interesting, partially because the perpetuation of the concept and term within the African American community appears to discourage association with Whiteness, while simultaneously working to maintain negative stereotypes about Black individuals (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). For example, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) explained:

Our main point in this paper is that *one major reason* black students do poorly in school is that they experience inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to

academic effort and success. This problem arose partly because white Americans traditionally refused to acknowledge that black Americans are capable of intellectual achievement, and partly because black Americans subsequently began to doubt their own intellectual ability, began to define academic success as white people's prerogative, and began to discourage their peers, perhaps unconsciously, from emulating white people in academic striving, i.e., from "acting white." Because of the ambivalence, affective dissonance, and social pressures, many black students who are academically able do not put forth the necessary effort and perseverance in their schoolwork and, consequently, do poorly in school. (p. 177)

As the above notions and/or biases appear to have been perpetuated within the Black community, one might posit that these same biases may emerge in the form of intraracial microaggressions. For instance, in light of the literature regarding Blacks and intraracial stereotyping, it is possible that they might correspond to the themes of racial microaggressions discussed previously, such as ascription of intelligence, assumption of criminal status, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, White standards of beauty are superior, second-class citizen, and/or assumption of inferior status.

2.4 Intraracial Microaggressions Among Blacks: A Gap in the Literature

History has demonstrated that racism has been and continues to be an omnipresent, disturbing reality for Black individuals (e.g., Belgrave & Allison, 2010; Feagin, 2014; Leary, 2005; Pieterse et al., 2012). Deep-rooted stereotypes of Black men and women are an example of racist ideology; sadly, these historical stereotypes have continued to be perpetuated, resulting in devastating consequences for the Black community. Moreover, detrimental stereotypes of Black people appear to contribute to the existence of racial microaggressions (e.g., Sue, Nadal et al.,

2008). Further, internalized racism appears to be a concomitant of cultural oppression (e.g., Leary, 2005), and intraracial colorism and stereotyping appear to be expressions of internalized racism within the Black community (e.g., Leary, 2005; also see Wilder, 2010).

Studies that refer to the existence or experience of intraracial microaggressions within the Black community appear to be few in number, based on the current author's recent review of the literature. For example, in Allen's (2010) study entitled "Racial Microaggressions: The Schooling Experiences of Black Middle-Class Males in Arizona's Secondary Schools," there were a small number of participant reports that may qualify as example(s) of intraracial microaggressions between Black persons. In one such report, a participant reported perceived differential treatment from his Black teacher (as compared with other Black pupils) due to his "Hip-Hop" style of clothing (p. 131). The student's issue with his teacher appeared to demonstrate the microaggressive theme, assumption of criminal status, although this theme did not seem to be explicitly stated or named within the article. Similarly, in Simmons's (2012) article "Exploring How African American Males from an Urban Community Navigate the Interracial and Intra-Racial Dimensions of their Experiences at an Urban Jesuit High School," the material on intraracial relations seemed to document possible intraracial microaggressions. However, in Simmons's investigation, the participant reports regarding intraracial communications seemed to be solely centered on the concept of "acting White" (p. 8). Further, Touchstone's (2013) dissertation, *Tie-Dyed Realities in a Monochromatic World: Deconstructing the Effects of Racial Microaggressions on Black-White Multiracial University Students*, indicated that participants experienced microaggressions perpetrated by Black individuals. However, the racial/ethnic background of the study's participants presented limitations on what can be generalized to individuals who are not Black-White multiracial.

Hamilton's (2016) thesis examined microaggressions that involved both gender and race among Black females within a primarily White university setting. In predominately White social and academic settings, participants reported exchanges that appeared to represent gendered racial microaggressions. Further, when involved in intraracial exchanges with Black men, said relations seemed to yield both gendered and *gender* microaggressive experiences. In other words, gender microaggressions are covert forms of sexism (Sue & Capodilupo, 2008), while gendered microaggressions are those in which covert forms of both sexism and racism occur at the same time (Lewis et al., 2016). Hence, although important nonetheless, Hamilton's (2016) findings regarding intraracial affairs did not appear to speak solely to *racial* microaggressions that occurred within race.

Comparably, in Lackey's (2021) dissertation, *But Where Are You Really From?: Black and Asian American Women's Experiences of Gendered Racialized Microaggressions*, results included reports of incidents that were unambiguously categorized as "intraracial and coethnic microaggressions" (p. 39). One may argue that Lackey's (2021) work produced significant information in the area of intraracial microaggression research, as results detailed a number of themes such as: *Whiteness as the Ultimate Goal, Not Black and Asian Enough, Body Talk, Intraracial Sexualization, and Within-Group Microaggressions: Respondents as Perpetrators*. However, similar to Hamilton's (2016) research, and as the author's title suggested, Lackey's (2021) study appeared to focus on the intersectional nature of microaggressions. Nevertheless, literature has highlighted the importance of considering intersections within the realm of racial microaggressions (e.g., Lewis et al., 2016; McCabe, 2009; Smith et al., 2007; Williams & Nichols, 2012).

Moreover, in Dillon's (2016) dissertation, *Black Male College Students' Resilient Coping Responses to Non-Stranger Racial Microaggressions*, several participants reported responses "to the race or ethnicity of the perpetrator" (p. 41). One participant in Dillon's study stated:

It's more hurtful to hear it from people that are of similar ethnic background to me than of someone from a different background. Because it's like, you know what...what we as a culture have to go through. You know...our history. So why then are you going to perpetuate that and project that onto people? (p. 41)

Although the above participant report may provide a glimpse into the existence of intraracial or intraethnic racial microaggressions, Dillon's (2016) research did not thoroughly examine the phenomenon.

In addition, Redding-Raines's (2016) study featured several participant accounts of what may be considered intraracial microaggressions. Redding-Raines's dissertation, titled *A Phenomenological Examination of Racial Microaggressions in Intraracial Therapeutic Counseling Relationships*, focused on Black frontline public service employees and their engagement with Black clients. Relevant to the current study, Redding-Raines's research questions addressed the influence that the employees' racial identity and microaggressive experiences had on counseling where both the counselor and client are Black.

Redding-Raines (2016) used both quantitative and qualitative methods in her research. The author administered both an edited version of the *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)*; Sellers et al., 1997) and the *Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS)*; Torres-Harding et al., 2012) to investigate racial identity and microaggressive experiences among employees, respectively. The findings that were relevant to the current study were located in the qualitative section of the study, where Redding-Raines (2016) conducted interviews aimed at

clarifying the information gathered via the aforementioned quantitative measures. Per the author, five themes arose from participant interviews, including myth of meritocracy, colorblindness, ascription of intelligence, colorism, and criminality. The theme of colorism appeared among the reported microaggressive themes, although it was not explicitly part of Sue et al.'s (2007) taxonomy. However, Redding-Raines (2016) decided to label colorism a microinvalidation for the investigation.

Participants reported what appeared to be expressions and/or incidents of colorblindness, ascription of intelligence, criminality, and colorism where the incident discussed involved another Black person or another racial/ethnic minority, or the offender may have been the participants themselves. For instance, in one of the interview excerpts, an African American woman stated, ““I don’t see color.... All I know is that I am colorblind!”” (Redding-Raines, 2016, p. 146). Alternatively, in a passage under the criminality theme, one interviewee talked about being followed while shopping: ““You don’t know how I look, you don’t know me, you’re perceiving me to be a thief or whatever. That just ticks me off. And our own people do it too”” (p. 144).

Regarding the ascription of intelligence theme, some excerpts described participants as the receivers of microaggressive experiences where the perpetrator was Black (or another ethnic/racial minority), and one quote where the interviewee seemed to be an offender. Nevertheless, it is worth noting an observation regarding participants’ experiences with the ascription of intelligence theme. As Redding-Raines (2016) summarized, ““What these narratives reflect is that, although both Whites and Blacks engage in this type of microinsult more times than not, it is the experience with the Black person that has more of an emotional impact on the participant”” (pp. 143-144). Lastly, several participants reported experiences with intraracial

colorism, with some perpetuated within the family. An interviewee described cases she witnessed where intraracial colorism was perpetuated within the family:

I've had clients that have been abused and neglected because they're different. They look different from their siblings, because they are darker and it's really sad because no one should be treated differently; treated that way because of the skin color—especially when it comes from inside the family. (Redding-Raines, 2016, p. 149)

Reviewing Redding-Raines's (2016) qualitative material, the participant interviews also seemed to provide more insight into what intraracial microaggressions may look like and how they may affect African Americans. However, Redding-Raines utilized a seven-person qualitative sample from a very specific population (e.g., Black frontline employees). Further, in Muhammad's (2018) study, *African American Women Managers' Experiences in Predominantly Black Work Environments*, the author investigated possible experiences of intraracial bias. Although Muhammad's study also contributed important and necessary data in an understudied area, the research focused on a very specific population.

Other recent literature that has addressed experiences with intraracial microaggressions also appears to possess similar limitations. For instance, Sibley's (2022) thesis, *Putting Colorism on Trial: Intraracial Colorism and Its Impact on Crime Trajectory Among African Americans*; Long's (2020) dissertation, *Impact of Race-Related Stress and Intraracial Microaggressions on Self-Efficacy of African Descendants*; and Crutchfield and Webb's (2018) work, "How Colorist Microaggressions Have Eluded Social Work: A Literature Review," all present valuable findings to consider within the current area of study. However, both Sibley's (2022) and Crutchfield and Webb's (2018) research seemed to be limited to the sphere of colorism. Similarly, in Long's (2020) study, the method used to evaluate intraracial microaggressions appeared to be limited in

scope. For example, Long employed an instrument that “measures ethnic teasing in areas of skin complexion, hair, and facial features” (p. 52).

Taken together, one may surmise that the relatively limited existing research that appears to discuss intraracial microaggressions does not constitute a full examination of a phenomenon. More studies on intraracial microaggressions are necessary to garner well-rounded, clear, and thorough information on an issue that appears to have an impact on the everyday lives of Black individuals. Thus, the existing literature demonstrates clear gaps in the research regarding racial microaggressions where both the perpetrator and victim are Black.

2.5 Statement of Problem/Purpose of Study

Although great contributions have been made in exploring and delineating how racial microaggressions are experienced in the African American community, including their possible emotional or psychological affects (e.g., Soloranzo et al., 2000; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008), gaps in this literature remain to be addressed. For instance, despite the aforementioned literature that indicated the possibility of Black individuals committing racial microaggressions against other Black persons, there appears to be a dearth of literature on the nature of intraracial microaggressions within the African American community.

Considering the issue of internalized racism in the Black community and the various ways it may manifest, it seems logical that one manifestation may be intraracial microaggressions. Given the indicated negative effects of racial microaggressions committed by Whites (e.g., Sue, Nadal et al., 2008), it seems likely that intraracial microaggressions among African Americans may have a comparable influence on psychological wellness.

Recognizing the deleterious impact of racism and other forms of oppression upon emotional well-being, counseling psychology has placed particular emphasis on the facilitation

of multicultural competence. In fact, attention to and discussion of multicultural issues has emerged as a hallmark emphasis within counseling psychology (e.g., Delgado-Romero et al., 2012). In recent years, counseling psychologists have increasingly “reflected a clearer sense of identity focused on multiculturalism, social justice initiatives, vocational issues, supervision, and positive-developmental psychology—mirroring central tenets spanning the historical development counseling psychology” (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012, p. 19). Sue and Sue’s (2008) outline of MCT competencies is an important demonstration of the significant counseling psychology-multiculturalism relationship. Sue and Sue’s guidelines included comprehension of different worldviews and utilizing treatment that considers one’s cultural background(s). Consistent with counseling psychology’s MCT principles, the current study holds promise for helping practitioners to possess a more thorough understanding of the lives of Black individuals.

In particular, this study’s purpose was to shed light on intraracial microaggressions (IRMs) as an understudied area of racial microaggressions (RMs) that may affect the lives of African Americans, which could in turn enhance treatment, diagnoses, assessment, and training to the benefit of diverse communities. The current study aimed to champion key elements of counseling psychology by continuing to facilitate awareness and understanding regarding the life experiences of oppressed communities. Specifically, the research questions that were explored in the study are:

1. What do intraracial microaggressions in the African American community look like?
2. How often do people identify intraracial microaggressions?
3. How do intraracial microaggressions affect psychological and/or emotional well-being?
4. How do people cope with intraracial microaggressions?

5. Does ethnicity of the perpetrator play a role in intraracial microaggressions?
6. Are there differences in the psychological and/or emotional experiences of inter- and intraracial microaggressions?

Given the scarcity of information regarding intraracial microaggressions among Blacks, the current study offers qualitative exploration of this area. As discussed in the following chapter, qualitative investigations are well-suited to the study of new areas of inquiry, in that they allow the earliest information to emerge from the voices and experiences of participants themselves rather than imposing the researcher's assumptions on them.

Chapter 3: Method

As discussed in the previous chapter, research has uncovered the effects of racial microaggressions (RMs) in various oppressed communities, including the Black or African American community (e.g., Wong et al., 2014). However, as outlined in the previous chapter, the current literature suggested that insufficient research attention has been paid to intraracial microaggressions (IRMs) within the African American community. Moreover, it is within the purview of multiculturally competent counseling research to address the worldviews and experiences of individuals of various cultural communities (e.g., Sue & Sue, 2008). Therefore, the current study aimed to provide practitioners and researchers with information that will assist them in better comprehending little-explored aspects of these worldviews and experiences.

As the research on IRMs among Black individuals is scarce, the current study was exploratory in nature and made use of the qualitative methodology. The specific qualitative method used was Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 1997). The following section provides the rationale for this method and discusses details of the research procedures, including research sample, instruments, data analysis, and methodological integrity.

3.1 The Qualitative Method: CQR

A qualitative method of research relies on the experiences of participants to develop an understanding of phenomena (Havercamp & Young, 2007). Discussing the advantages of employing qualitative methods within multicultural counseling research, Morrow et al. (2001) stated that “[qualitative research] provides an opportunity to explore previously unexplored or undefined constructs, many of which appear in multicultural counseling” (p. 583). Moreover, the

attempt to learn about realities or everyday experiences from community members themselves (in this case, instances of IRMs) is consistent with culturally competent practice (e.g., Sue et al., 1998). Thus, qualitative research was not only appropriate for the current exploratory research, but it is also in line with multiculturally competent professional activities.

Along these lines, Ponterotto (2010) indicated that qualitative research contributes to the growth of multicultural psychology. Furthermore, qualitative research can serve to amplify the voices of oppressed communities by providing a platform for community narratives, helping to bring attention and respect to their experiences (Morrow et al., 2001). Morrow (2007) stated that qualitative research is key in developing theories that are culturally appropriate. Additionally, Ponterotto (2010) summarized several authors (e.g., Hill, 2006) in stating that “qualitative methods are excellent for theory development given the inductive, iterative process of ongoing data collection, analysis, and interpretation; researchers become ‘intimate’ with data through this process” (p. 584).

3.1.1 Consensual Qualitative Research

CQR is a specific qualitative method that has several central elements (Hill et al., 1997). For instance, CQR data are comprised of the participants’ unrestricted responses to open-ended inquiries to explain experiences. In addition, participant responses are used to address research questions, as opposed to theories being investigated via responses in the form of statistics. Furthermore, a limited number of participant interviews are investigated by a small team of data analysts who argue each stage of the analysis to consensus. As the current study investigated an understudied topic regarding individuals within an oppressed community, CQR appears to be a suitable approach to gaining more insight into IRMs among Black individuals.

3.1.2 Participants

The research sample for this study included individuals who identified as Black and/or African American, were born in the United States, and were 18 years of age or older. The primary investigator interviewed 15 participants for the current study, as per the suggestion of Hill et al. (2005). Ten participants identified as female, while five participants identified as male. In addition, as participant years of age were reported via age ranges (see demographic form in Appendix C), participant age spanned from the 18-24 range to the 65-74 age range. Moreover, participants reported several ethnic backgrounds, including African American, Latinx, Afro Caribbean, and Biracial. Regarding socioeconomic class membership, participant responses ranged from low-income/poverty to upper-middle class. Finally, 14 participants resided in the northeast United States, while one participant lived in the southeast United States.

3.1.3 Procedure

Participants were recruited via purposive methods that are common to qualitative methodologies. As discussed by Devers and Frankel (2000), purposive recruitment refers to “selecting ‘information-rich’ cases, that is individuals, groups, organizations, or behaviors that provide the greatest insight into the research question” (p. 264); it is appropriate because CQR requires in-depth interview material to comprehend a participant’s uniqueness (Hill et al., 1997). These techniques include snowball sampling, which refers to a sampling method in which a participant identifies other participants who the researcher can contact (Noy, 2008). The current study utilized snowball sampling. In addition, recruitment consisted of the use of email and phone. Prospective participants were emailed a flyer approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). If the prospective participant reported interest in being interviewed, the researcher

arranged an interview date, time, and place via email and/or phone. The flyer utilized for electronic solicitation for this study is contained in Appendix A.

Written descriptions of the study indicated that participants in the study would be interviewed about race-related experiences. If an individual expressed interest in participating in this study, the principal investigator met and interviewed the participant in person at a time and private location of their choosing, such as a private office or room. The participant was presented with an informed consent form (Appendix B). As part of the consent process, participants were asked if they had any questions about the study and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants who agreed to give consent also received a brief form to complete that confirmed their eligibility for the study and contained demographic information (Appendix C). The interview began with a brief, prewritten explanation of racial microaggressions, followed by a semi-structured interview (Appendix D). The primary investigator read the written explanation of racial microaggressions aloud to the participant, and then started the interview.

The composition of the interview protocol was guided by the literature and the current study's research questions, as reviewed in the previous chapter. For instance, the current interview protocol was inspired by Redding-Raines's (2016) protocol.

The exact duration of each interview varied depending on the length of participants' answers. Nevertheless, each interview was completed in approximately 60-120 minutes. Interview questions were scripted ahead of time, yet the primary investigator diverted from said questions if appropriate (Hill et al., 2005). Participants' interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a transcription service.

3.1.4 Data Analysis

CQR utilizes team consensus at the core of its data analytic process (Hill et al., 1997). In this way, experimenter biases can be checked, and different views on topics or issues can be heard (Hill et al., 1997). The consensus process included several steps, including the creation of domains, core ideas, auditing, and cross-analysis (Hill et al., 1997).

Research Team, Biases, and Expectations. As suggested by Hill et al. (2005), the data analysis team for the current study was comprised of the primary investigator and two other graduate students from Teachers College, Columbia University. Both graduate students were women of color who were enrolled in the clinical psychology master's program. In addition, as suggested by both Hill et al. (1997) and Hill et al. (2005), an external auditor was used to oversee the primary research team's work. The external auditor for the current study had prior experience conducting CQR, and was an advanced doctoral student enrolled in the counseling psychology program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Any biases and expectations regarding the data were communicated at the first meeting of the team members to minimize their influence on the team process (Hill et al., 1997). Biases and expectations were documented and included in the final manuscript (Hill et al., 1997).

Domains. The CQR team began its analysis of the data with the creation of domains. Previous research and the interview protocol itself informed the creation of domains, which are broad themes within the data that share internal commonalities (Hill et al., 1997). The assignment of data to domains was executed independently by each research team member. Next, team members came together to arrive at an agreement about which data belonged to a certain domain (Hill et al., 1997). Data were assigned to a particular domain and, at times, to more than one domain (although double coding is not encouraged; Hill et al., 1997).

Core Ideas. The next step in the CQR process was generating the core ideas for each domain. In this step, data within the domains were summarized as shortened versions of what participants reported in the interview (Hill et al., 1997). More precisely, the core ideas were the main messages that were expressed in participant responses (Hill et al., 1997). As in the domain phase, researchers worked independently to create core ideas (Hill et al., 1997). Research team members then came together to share their extracted data and reach a consensus about which core ideas best represented the data (Hill et al., 1997).

Auditing. Auditing of the data occurred at the end of each stage of the process. An individual outside of the main research team (yet familiar with the study) examined the domains and core ideas to make sure that the data were properly placed, extracted, and summarized (Hill et al., 1997). Hill et al. (1997) suggested that having an auditor adds another viewpoint to the main research team, and multiple viewpoints are essential to reporting the data in an accurate manner. As such, the auditor contributed to the progress of the research team to help eliminate any errors that may have been missed by the main team (Hill et al., 1997). The auditor provided feedback to the research team about their organization of the data (Hill et al., 1997). The research team then considered the feedback and decided which feedback to incorporate or decline (Hill et al., 1997). Hill et al. (2005) suggested that the auditor be an individual who is experienced in the CQR process, and this was the case for the current study.

Cross-analysis and Auditing. The next stage of the analytic process was the cross-analysis. This process involved the study of core ideas from all participant responses, assessing if any core ideas resembled each other across participants' responses, and placing those core ideas with resemblances into categories (Hill et al., 1997). After categories were developed, the frequency with which each category appeared in the data was noted with the application of a

frequency label. Frequency labels offer a shared method of discussing data and enable investigators to examine data across studies (Hill et al., 2005). Labels include “general,” which “include[s] all or all but one of the cases.... *typical* would include *more* than half of the cases up to the cutoff for general,” and “*variant* would include at least two cases up to the cutoff for typical” (Hill et al., 2005, p. 201). Finally, *stability of findings* is when the topic of study is generally described by the data for a set of individuals. A stability check of the data is conducted via a process where two or three cases are omitted from the original analysis of the data. When said analysis is complete, the cases that were omitted are then analyzed to ensure that there are no significant variations regarding the results (Hill et al., 1997). Regarding the current study, a stability check was conducted using two cases, and the results were found to be stable.

3.2 Methodological Integrity

Levitt et al. (2016) suggested parameters for methodological integrity in qualitative studies. Specifically, the authors stated that

the Task Force recommends that integrity be understood as the *methodological foundation* of trustworthiness. It may be assessed by considering the criteria of both fidelity and utility in relation to a study’s research methods, goals, approaches to inquiry, and the characteristics of the subject matter and investigators. (p. 17)

Levitt et al. suggested parameters for both data collection and data analysis activities. These factors and how they relate to the current study’s research procedures, including those specific to the CQR process, are described in the following sections.

3.2.1 Data Collection

Levitt et al. (2016) noted that “fidelity is improved when data are collected from diverse sources that can shed light upon variations in the phenomenon as they are relevant to the study

goals” (p. 11). The authors further stated, “It asks researchers to consider how well they gain access to the comprehensiveness of and variations in the subject matter” (p. 11). As such, Levitt et al. advised scholars to gather *adequate data*. Employing CQR satisfied this point via the interviews that were conducted within the current study. Specifically, the primary investigator utilized an open-ended inquiry style, as recommended by Hill et al. (1997). In addition, the authors proposed that

diversity [of data] may be incorporated in many ways, including through the collection of data from...sources who have a reflective and longstanding engagement with a topic across contexts (e.g., extensive lived experiences), or sources who hold multiple viewpoints.... (p. 12)

The participant criteria for the current study were in line with achieving diversity regarding data, as the principal investigator was able to collect substantial, in-depth data from participants that covered a variety of experiences.

Moreover, Levitt et al. (2016) offered that academics contemplate *perspective management in data collection*. The authors stated that

fidelity is improved when investigators recognize and are transparent about the influence of their perspectives upon data collection and appropriately limit that influence to obtain clearer representations of their phenomenon—regardless of the researchers’ direct experience with or standpoint in relation to that phenomenon. (p. 12)

The CQR method is in agreement with said perspective management, as it involves built-in preventative measures to minimize bias. For example, the foundation of CQR—as suggested by the name—is consensus, which aids in limiting any prejudices (Hill et al., 1997). In addition, the current main analysis team discussed relevant preconceptions before the start of analysis (e.g.,

Hill et al., 2005) and utilized an auditor who assisted in curtailing interference from prejudices (Hill et al., 1997).

Furthermore, Levitt et al. (2016) suggested that scholars ponder *contextualization of data*, as they posed that “considering findings within their appropriate context (e.g., location, culture, historical epoch) improves their utility” (p. 15). The authors went on to assert that

strategies used in this process may include a historical account of the phenomenon or community under study, the consideration of demographic data, details about the participants’ or researchers’ experiences with the phenomenon, or the use of research or clinical measures to situate the participants in relation to a characteristic of interest.
(p. 15)

Indeed, the current investigator followed typical research practices, such as authoring a relevant literature review, that corresponds with the notion of contextualizing the data.

Additionally, Levitt et al. (2016) discussed the item *catalyst for insight*, which referred to the notion that “collecting data that provide rich grounds for insightful analyses will maximize the utility of the research” (p. 15). The authors continued:

It will advantage researchers to consider how best to identify or generate data that can support insightful analysis given their perspectives, skills, and positions. For instance, it may be that certain study personnel with specific training or understanding (e.g., knowledge, interview skills, shared experiences), access to data (e.g., proximity to data source), or interpersonal relationships (e.g., in-group membership) are better able to collect data. (p. 15)

Fortunately, the utilization of both CQR-specific procedures and the principal investigator’s characteristics were consistent with this point. For example, the current author followed Hill et

al.'s (1997) suggestion to employ open-ended inquiries, as discussed earlier. In addition, at the time of the participant interviews, the principal researcher had accrued several years of experience as a clinical trainee, which may have enhanced the data garnered from the interviews.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

Levitt et al. (2016) noted the point, *perspective management in data analysis*, in which they explained that

fidelity is increased when researchers consider how their perspectives influenced or guided their analysis (e.g., suspending, countermanding, or consciously using their perspectives, depending on their approach to inquiry) to enhance their perceptiveness in their analysis. (p. 13)

Also, when mentioning some approaches to attain perspective management in this area, the authors affirmed, “Other strategies include engaging multiple investigators, participants, or third parties in cogenerating research findings (e.g., Fine, 2013), using consensus methods (e.g., Hill, 2012), or seeking feedback on findings via participant checks (e.g., Morrow, 2005)” (p. 13).

The current study's methods were in line with this item, as the same CQR tactics suggested by Hill et al. (1997, 2005) and described in the above section on *perspective management in data collection* (e.g., consensus, auditor, pre-analysis dialogue regarding biases) apply here as well.

Next, Levitt et al. (2016) discussed *groundedness*, whereby they stated that “fidelity is enhanced when findings are based within data that support understanding. Groundedness refers to the degree to which the meanings identified in the analysis are rooted in data of good quality” (p. 14). In addition, the authors avowed that “to demonstrate this quality, qualitative researchers tend to explicate the process of deriving their results, often supported by rich exemplars from the

data (e.g., quotes, images, text) to an extent that allows the reader to judge the fidelity of the analysis” (p. 14). CQR is well aligned with this point, as Hill et al. (2005) advised scholars to include direct quotes from participants to demonstrate results effectively. Accordingly, the current investigator incorporated a liberal number of quotations in the results section to illuminate the results as best as possible.

Further, Levitt et al. (2016) highlighted the concept of *meaningful contributions*, in which they asserted, “using methods that enable a meaningful contribution in relation to the study goals increases utility. Meaningful contributions can take many forms (e.g., new theories, social change)” (p. 16). Moreover, the authors stated:

There are many ways in which researchers can enhance the meaningfulness of their studies, including forming questions that augment or challenge current representations of a phenomenon in the literature, selecting methods that can best expand prevalent understandings, and demonstrating the ability of findings to solve problems posed in their research (e.g., ability to prompt institutional change). (p. 16)

As with most (if not all) students embarking on the dissertation journey, the current investigator sought to choose a topic that would be a novel and valuable addition to the field. While examining the existing research for the literature review, this author observed that IRMs appeared to be a developing area of scholarship. As such, this author created research questions that aimed to yield necessary and useful data. More, one may also conclude that CQR’s proposed open-ended inquiry technique (Hill et al., 1997) is helpful in achieving this objective as well.

Finally, Levitt et al. (2016) discussed the notion of *coherence among findings*. The authors explained that:

this principle can aid considerations of inconsistent findings: *Delving into differences within findings and explaining how they relate to one another will enhance the coherence within the findings and their utility.* The findings developed in the analysis should make sense in relation to one another. When contradictions exist in the data, these should be explained so that the readers can understand their basis and function. (p. 16)

In describing tactics investigators may utilize to achieve coherence, Levitt et al. (2016) also noted that “highlighting contradictions and portraying them in context or seeking out alternate or discrepant meanings also enhances coherence (Morrow, 2005)” (p. 16). As such, within the discussion chapter, the current investigator presented conflicting information discovered in the data. This author accomplished this by grounding possible rationalizations within participant narratives.

Chapter 4: Results

The results of this Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) study are discussed in this chapter. Seven domains, or broad themes, emerged from the data, each containing categories that explained the data in more specific terms (Hill et al., 2005). Since the current study is centered on racial microaggressions, some categories mirrored themes that were identified in previous racial microaggression literature (e.g., Sue et al., 2007), including racial microaggression literature focused on Black individuals (e.g., Sue, Nadal et al., 2008). As advised by Hill et al. (2005), frequency labels were applied to categories to demonstrate how often each category appeared in the data. Utilizing Hill et al.'s (2005) frequency label format for the current study, *general* categories contained 14 or 15 cases, *typical* categories contained 8 to 13 cases, and *variant* categories contained 2 to 7 cases. Categories that contained only one case were designated as *rare* and were excluded from the results section (Hill et al., 2005). In the course of the interviews, participants also spoke about experiences of interracial microaggressions. Those results were analyzed, but as they are not central to the focus of the present study, they can be found in Appendix E.

4.1 Domains

The following sections describe the data as organized by the domains that emerged from the analysis. Domains are listed in the text below as headings, and category titles are indicated in italics. Although the current study's specific focus was on intraracial microaggressions, other forms of interpersonal events and encounters were also described by participants. First, the principal investigator felt that it might be somewhat counterintuitive for participants to reflect on

incidents of intraracial microaggressions; thus, each interview began with a discussion of interracial microaggressions, with the hope that discussing those incidents may enable participants to recall more easily similar or other microaggressive incidents that have occurred where the perpetrator was another Black person. As mentioned above, since these responses were not the focus of the current study, they are presented in Appendix E. In addition, participants offered examples of interpersonal incidents that they considered to be microaggressions, but that were reported in ways that distinguished them from microaggressive events, as characterized in this study. These experiences are reported in Appendix F within a domain that captured *experiences of other interracial and intraracial incidents*.

4.1.1 Domain 1: Experiences with Intraracial Microaggressions

This domain captured narratives of participant experiences with racial microaggressions as committed by other Black people. There were two typical categories and 12 variant categories identified in the domain. One typical narrative among the participants was *My or other Black/African Americans' Blackness have been challenged by individual(s) belonging to my racial group*. One participant recalled, "When I was in [name of country], one of the [persons from military branch] objected to the fact that I got along well with the White guys. So he called me an Uncle Tom." In addition, a participant remarked:

Sometimes if [Black people] think that you seem more educated or hold yourself in a certain way or, in terms of the way one acts, is more conservative, then it seems as if some people who are African American, not all of them, but some that I've encountered would seemingly be judgmental, and it is if you're not like them or something like that.

Another participant explained:

I think definitely just the way I speak and carry myself and people kind of picking on me about that. That's always stood out.... It usually starts at home. My cousins, on my mother's side, my cousins are like, "Oh, you're a White girl. You're this. You're that. You're an Oreo." I got Oreo a lot. My siblings...I'm the oldest of seven. My brothers, they skateboard. We play guitar. We were in band so we had different experiences than they have so when we met with them, it really draws the line of us and them.... I don't know...I think having my cousins, who I love and care for, say, "You're this" like you're not a part of us, you're this thing.

Similarly, a different participant stated:

I remember one girl when I went to camp, she would say, "You sound like a White girl. You sound like a White girl, you are a White girl.' And so I always remember that. Even though we're cool now. But that was something that I remember. I've heard that from a lot of other Black people or other people of color, I would say.... More so when I was younger, but people would say that or say, "Oh, you're an Oreo." And say it as a joking way, but it still isn't a joke. There was some truth to what they said or wanted to say.

The participant went on to assert:

...you're assuming because I speak a certain way or have had particular experiences or particular schooling that I'm not Black enough. And what is that, right? How do you quantify and qualify Blackness in a way? You can't do that, or you shouldn't do that, even though people do.

The second and last typical participant account within this domain was *I experience intraracial microaggressions monthly or every other month.*

Transitioning to the variant categories in the current domain, one was *My or other Black/African Americans' capabilities were assumed to be inferior by individual(s) belonging to my racial group*. One participant explained:

As an African American growing up in a household with parents who are from the South, who had witnessed Jim Crow or heard about hangings and who had experienced being chased down by White people. You know, walking 10 miles to school, not having any money, walking 10 miles back while the White kids rode and hollered “nigger” in the school bus. And to hear people, Black people from other countries say horrible things about African Americans. Like White people, like, we’re lazy, we’re not as intelligent, we don’t care about our kids, we have nasty homes, things like that. I don’t know where they heard that from, so that’s hurtful.

Moreover, another participant shared:

Many years ago I had a law office down in the [name of building]. I was so proud of myself. I didn’t know what to do. The fact that I worked seven days a week didn’t dull that, but I have to say the most painful part of that experience was not the microaggressions from White people. It was from Black people. I had a woman come to my office, another Black woman.... The wall behind me, the license was up here so if you sat down, the first thing you saw was a license and when we sat down, then you saw me. I did that on purpose because I didn’t want people to think for a moment that I didn’t have the credentials that you need to have that office in the first place.

The participant continued:

We had the interview and she kept staring at me and I kept thinking like, oh my hair, my makeup is okay. What’s going on? Finally, she said, “You know what? I just can’t

believe you are a lawyer. I just don't believe it." I was flabbergasted. I didn't know what to say. I just let her talk. I felt hurt and I didn't want her to know that I was hurt, so I said, "Well, I don't know." I said, "It's such an easy thing to check," and I said, "You see my license is on the wall." I said, "I don't know what more I can do." She left the office. I didn't expect to see her again. Two weeks later, she was back and she walked in and she said, "I called the bar to find out if you are admitted," and I said, "And?" "Well, turned out to be right".... I looked at her and I thought to myself, you cannot represent this person.... A person who is coming with that level of disdain for people who look like her, if it wasn't going to be that particular fight, it was going to be another one.

An additional participant had a somewhat similar experience:

So I left the [type of business]. And I had a severance package and I was waiting to get another job. And I eventually had to take a job working for the church I attended. And I went in for an interview for an administrative position at the church. And they asked me what my last salary was. And when I told them what my last salary was, they look to me and they say that's not possible. I said, "Why is it not possible?" Because they did not think that I was capable of making or commanding that kind of money. And all they had to do was to look at my annual given to the church, which was well above ten percent. And they would have known that that's what I was given, that's the salary I was making. It wasn't until I had worked for them. For three years, they came to the realization that not only did I make that kind of money, but I was worth that kind of money. And they were Black folks.

Further, another variant account was *I received, witnessed, or heard about microassault(s) from individual(s) belonging to my racial group*. A participant remarked:

When Black people call each other nigger, the N-word. That bothers me, because that was an awful term used during Jim Crow and onward, and I just don't like that, when I hear that, Black people calling each other that, or young people saying that to each other. Just throwing it around like that.

Additionally, a participant discussed the following:

I think every time I hear someone call me my nigger, that's a microaggression. Only because for me when someone says my nigger, it is a statement of possession. When overseers, owners, auctioneers said my nigger, it was always in reference to this piece of property that I own. That I'm going to allow you to purchase in exchange for money you can have my nigger, which means I own them, so when I hear young people go my nigger, or when somebody says "Yo, my nigger?" No, I'm not your, one, I'm not a nigger. Two, I'm not your nigger, 'cuz you don't own me, and so I don't think that people underst—understand the damage that...the term nigger has....

The participant went on to express:

Because they think they're using it as a term of endearment, as a term of affection, as a term of closeness, when in actuality, even when you try to explain it to them, they go, "No, you're taking it the wrong way." Well, that's what a microaggression might be. You might think you're saying it, and it's okay. But for me, it's offensive. And you don't recognize that. And the fact that you can't recognize that tells me that you are unaware of the damage it can do.

Moreover, a participant described experiencing the following:

The first time I experienced [intraracial microaggression] when I was in the military. I was in [name of country]. With a bunch of other [persons from military branch]. It's so

fucking weird. The party, which I did often, and the group of us passed by this Black ass [name of ethnicity] and he says, “Nigger.” Out of the blue.

In addition, another participant recalled:

I [work] in an all-White school. And there is a Black woman who I consider to be a mentor. She has a grandchild who is mixed race. And she started asking me how could she get her grandchild to come to my school? Because she does not want her grandchild to go to a school with other Black children or in a predominantly Black community. Or even with Black educators. She wanted her grandchild to go to a school that was predominantly White. And that she felt that because of the color of her grandchild’s hair, because of her hair would probably be longer than the other black girls’, that she didn’t want her granddaughter to have to interact with other Black children at such a young age. She would prefer that that child was around other White kids.

The same participant shared, “My grandmother used to say that I looked like a monkey.”

Furthermore, another variant theme identified in this domain was *Other Black/African American(s) have communicated to me that White standards of beauty are superior (e.g., colorism and texturism)*. One participant remembered:

[There] was a very light-complexioned guy at [name of university participant attended], and he was in love with a particular female who was dark-complexioned. And his family wouldn’t allow him to date her because she was dark, that’s it. It had nothing to do with her being a person, an intelligent woman, a driven woman who was going to be a doctor, who’s probably a doctor today. It doesn’t make any difference what she turned out to be, but their only reason was because she was dark and that was their prejudice against her. Because his whole family was like White people, they looked like White people.

In addition, another participant explained:

My grandmother is biracial. And she, for sure, treated her grandchildren and her children who looked more like her, or lighter, better than she did her grandchildren and her children who looked more on the blacker side of things. And I'm still dealing with that to this day. Maybe you could say the way I handle it is avoidance. Because I don't really interact with her, to the best of my ability. If I see her at a family event, I greet her and I keep it pushing.

The participant added, "I have cousins who are lighter than me and who have more European features. And [my grandmother] would say things like, 'They're more beautiful than you.' Moreover, another participant mentioned, "I had a friend who is Black-presenting Dominican who told me that I would look better with my hair straight." The participant also recalled one of the intraracial microaggressions they observed while in college, stating, "Yeah, just hearing comments like...you know, being playful, but that ended up translated to microaggression, where it's just like, oh, your hair is looking nappy...when someone decides just to wear their hair natural." In addition, the same participant expressed, "I think what's painful is...when I'm advised by...like, my grandmother, who's Black-presenting, and she just tells me not to stay out in the sun. I think that, for me, is just...wow."

Meanwhile, another participant explained their experience regarding a term that they have heard from both White individuals and people of color:

The thing is this idea of fair skin as a descriptor. And I don't care who says it. And honestly, I think I pay more attention when [Black individuals or other people of color] say it, frankly, because of colorism thing. And I'm very sensitive to it. I can't think of a person or an incident, but in the end, every time I hear it or like in that sort of vein, I'm

like, like I feel it. And then I don't know what to do with it. 'Cause then it depends so much on the rest of the context.

Moreover, another variant topic was *I've experienced or witnessed Black/African American individual(s) criticize or police others belonging to my racial group regarding physical presentation*. For example, one participant discussed the following discourse at their job: "We've been having conversations about dress code and whether or not to police.... Like the way that sometimes we police our kids in the way that they dress. I'm not a fan of dress codes." The participant went on to explain:

We have these policies where we've been trying to make moves and then teachers are creating policies within their classrooms that don't exist. Like, I don't care about hats. People are getting into fights with kids about not taking their hats off, right? The result was, I was just like really clear with our kids that that's not a rule. I started being really clear with our staff about why I don't believe in policing children and, like, naming it. Before it was like, I believe in free thought. I was like, no, no, I'm not oppressing other children because that's racist. I've been really been more explicit with my language and how I think certain things pertain to race in a way that there's not a lot of arguing about it.

Meanwhile, another participant commented:

An annoying comment that always...annoys me, thinking about it. I had a co-worker during training this summer...said that he doesn't like when Black women wear blond wigs. And, that, for me...I mean, it was just a comment that he made.... It just...doesn't sit right with me, and it still doesn't. Because I think it goes into...Black men just policing how Black women should wear their hair. How Black women should present.

In addition, another variant experience was *Black stereotypes were ascribed to me or other Black/African American(s) by individual(s) belonging to my racial group*. A participant remarked:

Oh, Blacks looking at other Blacks in stores thinking because they come in looking a certain kind of way, “Oh, this person must be coming to steal.” Why they got to be coming to steal? Maybe they just got off work, or just came from somewhere and coming in here to buy something because they’re going somewhere. Everybody, just because they look a certain kind of way, shouldn’t be profiled or identified as a criminal. Not only is it done from the opposite, or outside the race, but the race does it to each other. Or, if you’re in certain stores and, I never got this, but I’ve seen people do it to other people in certain stores with luxury items. This one person’s just asking for one item. Why is so many security here now? You can tell when folks start showing up, and they’re not shopping.... So I’ve seen that. I’ve seen Blacks do it to other Blacks, or colors.

Furthermore, another participant shared:

We were at my grandmother’s house, my aunt by marriage, her sisters, we all grew up.... We always, all family gatherings were together, but my aunt [name] said to my grandmother something in Spanish and it was too quick. I heard the word pregnant, I was maybe 17 at the time. But I couldn’t...I heard the word pregnant, but I didn’t understand everything. Then she was like, no, no she’s different, she’s not. Remember she’s not completely negrito. This is my grandmother, right? Who’s married to a Black man, you have these Black grandchildren. When I asked what she meant she was like, “[Participant’s aunt] asked if I thought you were going to get pregnant.” I was just like,

okay, this is bizarre. Even with my grandmother defending me, her defense was remember, she's not completely Black. I had no idea how to deal with that one....

Further, an additional variant sentiment within the domain was *I've experienced or witnessed general rejection by Black/African American individual(s)*. One participant stated: "For the most part, that would involve people who were hostile toward a fellow Black person because of that person's social standing and education. Sometimes that hostility would be considerable." The participant went on to explain:

I understood of having experienced it in certain ways myself. But to me, the thought that would go to my head was that's just something you have to deal with, you see. Because you're not going to change overnight. You're not going to stop being educated. You're not going to stop enunciating your words clearly. You're not going to stop looking light-skinned. You're not going to stop being biracial. You're not going to stop showing signs that you were raised in a cultural environment somewhat elevated from others, like a middle-class family or something like that. Those are you. So I mean, I'm thinking of myself. You have to find a way to suck it up basically. Let it pass.

In addition, another participant asserted:

I don't know if it's the society that we live in now, but I still feel that unfortunately, those African Americans who think in a more conservative manner are not looked at the same way, because I am a quiet person and conservative, and not politically. I told you about my personality. I'm not talking about politics. It seems as if African Americans, I feel African Americans.... Not all of them. I'm not putting them all in a bunch, but it seems that some don't understand that or they think that I'm stuck up or standoffish, and it's not that at all. I feel that people don't try to understand who people are. They just judge them

quickly by observing, some observations of a person, without really getting to know them.

The participant also mentioned:

There's certain things I experience, I would say, in life or in...I would say in places where I was employed. I was a [job title] in certain schools, and those African American [coworkers] who felt I did not relate to them, they seemed like they didn't talk to me the way they would to others.

Another participant noted some related experiences:

I listen to the West Indian station sometimes and the Caribbean station, and one day I called, I said, "How come you leave out African Americans? You have named every single country with Black people." And I called up, I was like upset, [the radio host and/or DJ] didn't know what to say. I said, "I'm Black, I'm African American. How come you don't include me in the discussion?" [The radio host and/or DJ] didn't know what to say.

The same participant recounted another incident:

I was at somebody's home and the aunt came from Canada...via Jamaica, first thing she asked me was "What island are you from?" And I said, "No, my parents are from the South." She had no more discussion for me. She didn't ask me anything else. You could see in her face that she no longer wanted to talk to me.

Furthermore, another variant response was *My or other Black/African Americans' cultural values and communication styles were pathologized by individual(s) belonging to my racial group*. One participant disclosed:

My dad really pushed us not to have accents based on where we were from. He really wanted you to have an intercontinental accent or a continental accent, and that was really important to him because he felt like no matter where you go, no one should be able to say, “Yeah [participant’s pronoun]’s from [state name]” or “[participant’s pronoun]’s mixed” or “[participant’s pronoun]’s ghetto” or “[participant’s pronoun]’s that.” He really worked hard on that because he didn’t want us to be profiled.

Another participant discussed the following observation:

I’ve really been paying attention to even Black people interacting with one another. Maybe they don’t even have to know one another all that well. But within an hour of being in a room together, someone is going to make, not all the time, I’m not going to say all the time, because it could easily sound like that. But I have found.... “You’re just being a loud, Black girl.” Or, “I don’t want to sound like the loud, ghetto, Black girl.” You have one Black girl saying that to a whole other group of other Black girls. Oh, we around a whole bunch of White people, we need to act right. Those are the things. They’re so subtle, but I feel like most Black people, I won’t say all, but most are keenly aware of Whiteness. And are aware that there is such a thing as the White gaze. And even not being in the presence of other White people, will still say these kinds of things to one another. You don’t need a White person around to do this fuck shit. You know?

An additional variant narrative was *I’ve witnessed Blacks/African Americans not unifying or demanding respect for our culture*. One participant remarked:

What I’m finding is that when we are in all-White spaces and there’s another Black person, just very few of us. I just find that if there’s a microaggressive comment, statement or anything that’s said that they’re more willing, I don’t know if it’s out of fear

or what, but just more willing to side with another White person. I'm finding that a lot in the professional setting. Maybe for fear of calling out this type of behavior, or just for fear in general of now maybe they'll be attacked next. Even though they're attacked just as much.

The participant went on to state:

Gucci recently, major fashion house, major luxury label, came out with these sweaters that are like...or turtleneck. When you flip the turtleneck up, it's blackface. And there was an outrage and outcry in the Black community. And you had Black celebrities really coming out and saying that they spent upwards of \$10,000 a month on Gucci products for themselves, for their friends, for their family as gifts. Just when they want to go shopping, just because. And that they were going to cancel Gucci, but only for three months, just in time for summer. It's like, you know.

The participant added: "And then you'll be back, supporting economically, lining their pockets with your Black-earned money."

Variant categories within the domain also contained *Ambiguous or unexplained racial microaggressions perpetuated by Black/African American individual(s)*. This category represented responses where there was not enough information for the analysis team to categorize the reported incident as a specific theme of intraracial microaggression. For instance, one participant discussed some intraracial microaggressions they observed in school, which included: "I feel like there's also a lot of microaggressions around language. And, Black folks policing other Black folks and how they speak. I feel like that happened a lot on campus." Looking at the participant's comment, it is unclear exactly how African Americans were "policing other Black folks and how they speak." Based on participant data, the comment in

question could be perceived in different ways. For example, the comment could indicate the category *My or other Black/African Americans' Blackness have been challenged by individual(s) belonging to my racial group* (e.g., participant reports of other Black individuals commenting that they speak like a White person); it could also have exemplified the category *My or other Black/African Americans' cultural values and communication styles were pathologized by individual(s) belonging to my racial group*.

Another variant observation was *Participant as perpetrator of intraracial microaggression(s)*. In other words, the remarks within this theme contained incidents where the participants of the current study were perpetrators of intraracial microaggressions, which were seemingly provoked by experiencing offensive incident(s) committed by other Black folk(s). For example, while discussing a coworker, one participant expressed:

Someone who I work with. I call them Oreos. Black on the outside, but White on the inside. He will associate with the White people, but when it comes to the Black people or showing something with them about a [workplace technology], how to learn it, he would not do it.

The participant continued:

I sense that he has a identity crisis. My opinion. Where he's either hating himself in this culture. Or there's something else there. He has never been, well, he was rude a few times, but then I walked away and I told my supervisor I cannot deal with him. You need to correct this before it gets out of hand.

Finally, the last two variant categories of the current domain captured the number of times participants reportedly experienced intraracial microaggressions within a year. These

categories were *I experience intraracial microaggressions rarely* and *I experienced intraracial microaggressions weekly or every day*.

4.1.2 Domain 2: Characteristics of the Perpetrator(s) of Intraracial Microaggressions

This domain captured participants' recollection of the perpetrator's characteristics (e.g., race and/or ethnicity; general similarities and/or differences), and their ideas about the function of the perpetrator's ethnicity. Regarding race and/or ethnicity, there was one typical reply (*African American/Black American*) and four variant descriptions (*Black but unknown ethnicity, Latinx, Black Caribbean, and African*).

Further, eight categories in this domain contained participant remarks in response to a general inquiry exploring the participants' perceptions of how the perpetrators of the reported intraracial microaggressions were similar or different from them. The categories, all variant, are named *Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's geographical background, Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's physical appearance, Reported ethnic/cultural difference between participant and perpetrator, I felt that the perpetrator was raised around more people of color, Reported age difference between participant and perpetrator, Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's schooling or education, Reported similarity in participant and perpetrator's occupational field, and Reported similarity in participant and perpetrator's geographical background*.

An example of similarities discussed is illustrated by this participant's statement: "We're similar as in born and raised in [name of city].... Both [name of occupation]." Further, regarding differences, one participant indicated that the perpetrators were raised in an environment with more people of color and noted variation in education:

I would say they were different from me. So they...the people that did say those things had a different...I would say definitely a different upbringing and were around more people...I would say more people of color versus having a more multicultural surrounding. And so I feel like meeting a person like me, not that I'm a unicorn, but because they didn't necessarily know or meet people that spoke like me or had particular upbringing or experiences like me or schooling like me, it was different from theirs. So, I would say yeah, there just...they were different. We didn't probably have the same upbringing or have the same experiences.

In addition, regarding ethnic/cultural differences, another participant explained:

They were different from me because they were [ethnicity]. That's another way that I feel an immense insecurity. Because it just feels like they have an identity and a pride in their identity. It always felt like, again, I was missing the mark when I was with them.

Meanwhile, another participant mentioned, "She's 30 years my senior nearly," while another participant commented on different clothing styles: "He was a cook but you wouldn't know it because he was clean, clean, clean. I looked like a slob."

Moreover, participants provided their thoughts on the role of the perpetrator's ethnicity on the reported intraracial microaggressions. One typical category and one variant category were identified regarding this topic. The typical response was *I believe that the perpetrator's ethnicity influenced the incident(s)*. For instance, in discussing their thoughts regarding other Black people challenging their Blackness by commenting that they speak like a White person, one participant stated, "I think for me I've heard it more from people that were African American versus people that were African or Afro Caribbean. And I think it has to do with your upbringing and the

experiences that you do have.” Moreover, another participant made the following comment when recounting having a difference of opinion with another Black person regarding dress codes:

This [perpetrator] is [Caribbean ethnicity], so particularly in [Caribbean country] when it comes to what schoolchildren wear, what schoolchildren are supposed to look like and act like, there’s clear British influence and that there’s a right and wrong when it comes to properness.

An additional participant asserted a similar opinion:

Oh, for sure. Yeah...I think it is related to culture, just because...[Latinx ethnicity] culture is just...it’s very complex. It’s very interwoven in anti-Blackness, and...a lot of language is just...there’s a normalization in language that’s innately anti-Black.

In contrast, the variant sentiment was *I don’t believe that the perpetrator’s ethnicity influenced the incident(s)*. For example, while reflecting on an intraracial microaggressive incident, one participant remarked, “So, in terms of ethnicity playing a role...I don’t think so, I think it was just race in the moment.” Another participant expressed the following thought:

I think White supremacy and the way in which the places people got like acculturated made a difference. I don’t think like [the perpetrators] being West Indian or Caribbean American or whatever titles we used to classify is the issue. I think it’s the way in which White supremacy fucked up their ship versus fucked up the shit I grew up...fucked up somebody else’s shit, and I think that it plays through them. I don’t think it’s them and I’m careful around them ‘cause I don’t want to point blame at the symptom of what the larger issue is.

4.1.3 Domain 3: Emotional Responses to Intra-racial Microaggressions

This domain included participants' reported reactions to intra-racial microaggressions. The domain includes five typical themes and eight variant themes. One typical sentiment was *I feel/felt a negative emotional, psychological, or physical response to intra-racial microaggressions*. In this area, participants expressed a number of reactions, such as sadness, disgust, hurt, anger, anxiety, defeat, frustration, and shock, as well as feeling awkward, ostracized, irritated, annoyed, judged, inadequate, and so on. For instance, one participant explained:

It's excruciating. It brings up immense pain. When I hear it from White people, it's just, you know, it's hurtful. But when I receive a microaggression from another Black person, it's just like razors. It just kills. It hurts so bad.

Another participant stated:

[The intra-racial microaggressions I reported] all affect me but they affect me to varying degrees, depending on who it was coming from. The closer relationship that I had, the more it hurt. Or the least that I was expecting it from one particular person, the more it was shocking. Or stood out to me.

In addition, a participant communicated their feelings about Black folks referring to other Black individuals as the N-word:

I just feel insulted and also really sad, saddened, because the individuals saying this are making excuses for using the word, or they're not thinking about the history of the word.... When I hear it, I get disgusted, but then that's about it. I'm so sorry that nowadays that awful word is used by my own people and thrown around like it's nothing.

Another participant conveyed their feelings about their credentials/achievements being doubted by another Black individual, stating, “Initially, I was nearly in tears because I never thought that I would be dealing with such a personal, hurtful thing coming from another Black [participant’s gender]. I just never thought about that.” Similarly, a participant reflected on having their Blackness challenged by other Black people:

It’s always so awkward. So just feeling awkward and not feeling Black enough all the time... Although I know the history, I know everything, it’s just always not feeling like I have my thumb on the pulse of what’s going on in the Black community ever.

The participant also shared:

Just feeling alienated, feeling like ‘the other’ in the room, even though you’re with people who look like you. I think...I said even from earlier, feeling like that in a room full of White people, that’s expected. I don’t expect to feel like, “Oh yeah. We’re going to hold hands and sing Kumbaya.” In fact, I would feel weird if I had that connection with someone who wasn’t Black, but to not have that connection readily with someone who is Black is always very hurtful.

Further, when discussing intraracial microaggressions experienced by family and from coworkers, a participant commented:

I get really annoyed. I don’t internalize it in the same way. Particularly as the other... When thinking about it as with White people, I get really irritated. When I think about even my relationship to the work I’ve been doing around race. I’ve figured out how to be able to center myself when a White person says something that’s ridiculous, but when Black people say something that’s ridiculous, I’m still trying to figure out how to navigate that.

A second typical narrative was *Intraracial microaggressions had/have an effect on my everyday life*. Several participants expressed that they are cautious when interacting with other Black people. For example, in discussing their Blackness being challenged by family, a participant remarked:

...I think having my cousins, who I love and care for, say, “You’re this,” like you’re not a part of us, you’re this thing. That really did affect the way that I perceived myself and other Black people because it was just...from the very beginning it was like, “No. No. You don’t speak right. You don’t do this right. You’re not a part of our culture.”

The participant went on to assert:

It’s just affected the way that I communicate with people who look like me. Usually I’m a little bit more hesitant. I have lot of international friends because of that...because they’re kind of like, “Hey! We don’t care. You’re our friend.” But then there’s also that downside of possibly having incidences of microaggression and just outright racism amongst those international friends.

Similarly, another participant shared the following after reporting incidents of other African Americans challenging the participant’s Blackness:

I think, to be honest, I’m probably more guarded with Black people than I am with anyone else, because I’m afraid that I’m going to be made fun of. I think that I have gravitated, for the most part, toward White people, ironically enough. It’s sad, to be honest, but I think because, like I said, because the risk is less in certain ways because it doesn’t hurt as much.

Furthermore, a participant who described several experiences of intraracial microaggressions stated:

Let me just get right to the point. [The intraracial microaggressions] do affect me. And the way in which they affect me is, I don't really know how much, I hate to say how Black is somebody? But there's some people who are a little bit more culturally responsive towards themselves and towards others. And because I don't know which is which, I am not that trusting of other Black people, either. I'm just going to keep it real with you. I feel like I'm more trusting or more willing to engage with them over a White person, for sure. But I'm still leery because I don't know what kind of Black I'm getting. If another White person shows up, are you going to shit on me? Or if they say something about my hair, or if they say something about, anything about Black people.... You're going to sit there and be complicit? Then I really don't trust you. And that's my thing, that sometimes I feel like I don't really trust a lot of Black people willingly.

Other participants mentioned additional effects of intraracial microaggressions on their daily experience. For instance, one participant commented, "As I got older, I became more objective. Not judgmental of [Black perpetrators of racial microaggressions], but objective, and I figured, 'Well, those people that I'm uncomfortable around even to this day, I just don't bother.'" Another participant explained the consequence of experiencing intraracial microaggressions regarding their children's hair, perpetrated by daycare employees: "I think I'm more self-conscious and I adapted to what they consider more appropriate for school." In addition, another participant indicated that an employment-related intraracial microaggression impacted their family's financial status. The participant declared:

It affected me because it had more of an effect on my family than it did on me. I had already been devastated by White folks. But now, this devastated my [romantic partner] and my...kids, because it changed their lifestyle.

Additionally, a participant reflected:

I feel like [certain incidents of intraracial microaggressions] just makes me think about more of my place. It makes me think more about my place. It makes me think more about my positionality. Because, like I mentioned, I feel like it's telling that I've experienced more interactions where I've witnessed other Black folks harm each other emotionally than I've experienced myself. And I think that's really telling of my skin color. That's telling of my hair texture and my ethnicity as well. And, for me, when I do experience moments like that, I feel like it just makes me reflect on my positionality and where I stand.

Another typical theme was *I coped/cope with intraracial microaggressions through self-care*. After the experience of intraracial microaggressions, participants expressed a variety of self-care strategies. One of the strategies was surrounding oneself with those deemed safe or accepting, and another was avoiding interactions with those perceived otherwise. For instance, after incidents of being treated as lesser by other ethnicities of Black individuals, one participant stated:

In some ways I ostracize, I don't even want to be around them because I don't have to be in a place where I'm going to feel less than. I mean, not that I do, I don't have to have those darts thrown at me.

The participant went on to explain:

So because of their clannishness, it makes me like that, I want to be with my people. It doesn't mean that I'm prejudiced against somebody else, I'm talking about me, me. But I want to be around my people, understand when I say my people, people from African American ancestry, particularly the South. Because I feel a kindredness, like going down

South, we do begin to speak the same language, you know like language? There is a language. You begin to feel comfortable in eating the same food, you feel comfortable in the speaking the same idioms, you know what they mean and everything. You feel comfortable in just sitting on a porch, you know? You feel comfortable in a lot of things. And sharing family stories and things like that, because we are of kindred spirit. Not saying that I'm not a kindred spirit with other people, but I feel more comfortable.

Moreover, another participant shared:

I find other Black people that I can amplify my joy with. And it's just that simple. Once I figure, once I identify, "You're cool. You're somebody that I can open up with a little bit more. I'm just going to be me anyway, but I'm safe being me. You don't really give me the impression that I can't be safe being me." Then I will align myself with you a little bit more and be willing to have deeper conversations. And if that's not the case, then I shut out any, doesn't matter, White or Black, I just don't want to be around them.

An additional example of a self-care method expressed among participants was dismissing the perpetrator(s) of the microaggression. In response to hearing a racially derogatory term and/or phrase frequently in the workplace, one participant remarked: "Some days I just walk away. Some days, I will reflect on it and wonder why they don't get it. And other days, I just dismiss it and go home." Similarly, when asked how they coped with some incidents of intraracial microaggressions, another participant disclosed:

I think honestly if I have to be, by otherizing them, right? Just being, "Oh, they don't even know what they are talking about." Or they.... Dismissive of whatever the comment was as they're just not woke enough or they just don't even know what they are saying. I guess dismissing them.

Another participant provided other examples of other self-care approaches:

The way I cope, like I mentioned, I cope with humor. Like, oh, so-and-so said this. But also, alongside with humor, I also cope with challenging. It's more of just like why do you expect me to do X, Y, and Z? Or, why are you thinking that? And, I feel like something that I've learned is not to be angry all the time. I feel like I came back from college, and I was just angry. And, I would hear comments, and I'm just like, I would just shoot back...like, a firecracker constantly. And, it just made me realize I'm hurting people who are directly impacted by the very issues that I talk about and I'm passionate about. So, even thinking about my grandmother, it's like whoa. How would I benefit her with my anger? So, that's something that I have constantly thought about, and just what are the best ways to challenge? And, how can I.... Anger, it's an important emotion, but how can I channel it in a healthy way? So, I think I cope with humor, but I also challenge. That's what I do.

The next typical account was *I coped/cope with intraracial microaggressions by educating others or speaking out against microaggressions*. One participant described how they coped with Black people and other persons of color challenging their Blackness:

When I was younger, I would just not really say anything. But as I've gotten older and had the language to explain, people just would be like "Okay, forget it. I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way." Because I'd break it down into White ideological understanding and I'd go to a place where people just...don't...they realize, "Oh, [participant pronoun] wasn't the right one for me to say that to because [participant pronoun] understands the larger, grand scheme view of it and the historical context to it and all this." And so I think for me, that's my way of coping with it, is educating people about how what you say to

somebody, particularly a person of color, and how detrimental that is and what you're saying, and the impact that that has. Even if it's a joke, it's not really a joke, right? So that's I guess how I coped with it as I got older.

Another participant's example related to intraracial microaggressions within the Black community:

I have spoken out against it when I hear it amongst other Black people. And specifically amongst youth, being in [participant's field of occupation] and really when I'm hearing it amongst young people, calling them out on it. Even something as simple as the book, *Native Son*, by Richard Wright. The book cover has a beautiful painting on the cover of it, but you can tell this person is inextricably, they're Black. There's no, you ain't mixed, you ain't nothing. Nobody, we can't tell if you're African Black, Afro Caribbean Black, African American Black, but we know Richard Wright is an African American author. This is a Black boy on the cover. And to hear another Black boy be like, "He's ugly," I asked him, "Why is he ugly? Where did you get this idea that he's ugly?" "Oh, that's my opinion." Opinions are formed by people, places, and things, so what were the people, places, and things that informed your opinion to say that he's ugly? And engaging in dialogue with students. For me, that's another way that I deal with it, is really talking things through. And bringing up, "You didn't just come up with this on your own, this type of thinking. Figure out where that thinking came from and address it."

Shifting to variant categories within the current domain, one variant experience was *I have mixed or contradictory feelings in response to intraracial microaggressions*. For example, one participant had the following reaction to being told by other Black people that they speak like they are White:

I took it, I would often take it the way I think it was. I would often take it as somewhat complimentary with more than a dash of insult. Yeah. I never took it as an expression of admiration because it wasn't meant to be. But it wasn't a total insult either. So that's basically how I took it.

Meanwhile, in response to intraracial microaggressions focused on their hair, one participant expressed:

I think, just shocked. But then, not shocked at the same time. It's more of just...wow, we really have so much work to do. So much work to do. But, I feel like I'm at a point where ...I love my hair. I've really reached that point where I love my hair, where when I hear comments like that, it doesn't really faze me at all. When I was younger, it would have. And, it would just circle back to the question, what's wrong with me? What do I have to change? How can I be loved? But now, it's just like, whoa, this is just... this is who I am, and I love it...

An additional variant report was *I coped/cope with intraracial microaggressions by internalizing and/or not expressing reactions*. Regarding intraracial microaggressions surrounding their children's hair, one participant remarked: "I think definitely I've internalized ...their hair needs to look a certain way thing." Similarly, after discussing a microaggression based in colorism, another participant recalled, "I mean, when I was younger, I internalized it, of course. I was just like okay...my grandmother doesn't like how I look when I'm in the sun, so I need to stay out of the sun." Other participants communicated that they, at least at some point, did not respond to incident(s) of intraracial microaggressions. For instance, one participant mentioned, "When I was younger, I would just not really say anything," while another

participant stated, “I just...think about what they said. I don’t say anything to them. It’s just I know that it’s wrong.”

Furthermore, another variant narrative was *I coped/cope with intraracial microaggressions by supporting others or receiving support*. For example, one participant explained how they support others:

Usually just talking it out with the person that it happened to. I think knowing that somebody else understands what you’re going through, I think it’s important, so having that as a technique to kind of cope is something I do often.

In addition, another participant discussed one of their sources of support:

Honestly, it just goes back to having a network of strong Black women who surround me, who I can fall back on, and who I can lean on, and who I can process with. And, I’m very grateful for that.

Also, a participant expressed they were seeking celestial support:

I will say this, it hurt my belief in God.... So yes, the short answer would be it left me reeling. So after that, I’ve been seeking other sources of spirituality other than what I was taught because what I was taught was not working. It no longer worked.

More, an additional variant account was *I continue to cope with the lasting effects of intraracial microaggressions*. Regarding the experience of individuals challenging their Blackness, one participant expressed:

How am I still coping with them? I think I still feel shame, I still am afraid to put myself out there. I’m still afraid to be heard.... Like I said, if you’re not friendly to me, I’m going to be very guarded. I’m going to think that you hate me. I’m going to think that you’re thinking all these things about me and judging me. It’s taken time. I’ve known [a

coworker] now for a year and a half and now, I'm very cool with her. But it took me a very long time to trust that I was going to be worthy of being in her presence, because I just assumed, "She's probably looking at me and saying to her own self that I'm not Black enough."

Further, in response to experiencing colorism, a participant shared:

Yes. I am still coping with these incidents. And I still have moments where I have to constantly, not even moments. It's an everyday thing that I have to remind myself that I am good enough, that things that were said about me that are hateful, hurtful things, are not true.

In addition, when discussing incidents of colorism and texturism, a participant explained:

I feel like they still sit in my mind. So, I feel like that stays a lot and is very telling. I'm in a better headspace, and I think, as I mentioned, it helps having words to explain why I felt a certain reaction at the given moment. But, I think it's really telling that there's experiences that I still have at the back of my head.... But, the way I cope with it is I mention it to my siblings. I mention it to my friends. Or, if I'm in spaces where we're processing about racial microaggressions or just like racial experiences, those are moments where I'm talking about it. So, I feel like that's my way of coping. If I do have a moment or space to talk about it, I talk about it.

An additional variant reaction was *intraracial microaggressions have not impacted or continued to impact my everyday life*. After describing others challenging their Blackness, a participant stated:

No [I am not still coping]. I don't try to keep things in my mind like that. But I just learned from them I think as I got older. I think when I was younger I did, but now that

I'm of a certain age, I don't really hold things against others, or myself as a matter of fact. I just know who my real friends are.

Additionally, referring to an employer who assumed their capabilities were inferior, one participant remarked, "I don't think about it that much. Like I said, my kids and my [partner] think about it more than I do."

The next variant theme is *I explain intraracial microaggression(s) in terms of White supremacy/culture*. This theme includes instances in which participants offered rationale in regards to the occurrence of intraracial microaggressions. For example, one participant asserted:

I think it's still very hurtful, like I said. It has definitely made an impact on me and my own sense of who I am. But that, at the same time, I know [it's the effect] of White supremacy. It's almost like, as much as it hurts me, at the same time, I'm like, "White supremacy works. It makes us ridicule and hurt each other. It makes us hate ourselves and one another." It's humanity's problem. It's not just mine.

Moreover, another participant explained:

I'm not going to lie to you. I'm able to accept [intraracial microaggressions] a little bit more from a Black person than from a White person. And sometimes it's so subtle coming from a Black person that it's kind of like, for me, I look at that Black person as, maybe I extend a little bit more grace to them. Because I'm like, maybe they were raised in an environment where colorism was all the rage. And maybe they were raised to have this ideology that White is right. And it's really hard to break away from that. And it's no excuse. I don't give the excuse to White people, either. But I sometimes feel like for Black people, there's so much dominant White culture and there's so many consequences for being Black. It's not that I'm giving Black people a pass, because I feel like you

should know more than anybody what it feels like because you experience this shit, just like I do. Don't play. But I might come up with a rationale for them, whereas for White people, I'm like, no. Fuck that. You're racist.

This domain also encompassed participants' reflections on whether their reactions to stated intraracial microaggressive incidents would have differed if the perpetrator was not Black. There was one typical theme and two variant themes discovered regarding this subject. The typical account was *I believe I would have a difference in reaction—a non-Black perpetrator would be worse*. For example, one participant asserted:

Well, if the person who said the N-word was White, then I would really, really feel like.... To me, it's different when it comes from a Caucasian person. It's racial when it comes from a Caucasian person. When African Americans and Hispanics throw it around, instead of saying that guy or whatever they say, "That N did this or that," without thinking unfortunately. But I feel that when a Caucasian says it, it's racial. That makes it even worse.

Furthermore, in response to another type of intraracial microaggression, another participant explained:

So if they weren't Black, I probably would not have as much patience. Especially at that young age, if I wanted to fight them, which I used to do a lot. I grew up [location] so there were a lot of White kids where we grew up at and constant fighting. I think that would have been my reaction.

In addition, when recalling intraracial microaggressive incidents that were similar in nature, a participant commented:

Yeah I would've been like, "That's extremely racist. You...first of all, you can't talk to me like that." It would have been a different reaction for sure. It's interesting to see the dynamics between the two and how lightly I can take one versus if the roles were switched and how that would affect me. I will be personally... I would feel targeted for a comment that a Black person would say if a White person said it.

Along these lines, another participant stated, "I feel like if the perpetrator was not Black, I would've not had empathy."

Moreover, one of the variant narratives regarding this matter was *I believe I would have a difference in reaction—a Black perpetrator would be worse*. For instance, one participant declared, "I don't think White people hurt me as much as Black people" and "I would've felt less hurt if the person was not Black." Additionally, another participant shared:

I think that when a microaggression comes from another Black person, it makes much more of a psychological impact on me.... I think it's because there's nothing like being rejected by one's own. Right? The first thing I can think of is, like if your mom gives you away or casts you out. That's not the same as somebody else kicking you out. There's just nothing as hurtful as just being rejected by one's own.

Further, another participant expressed the following:

I feel like there's a deeper wound that comes from someone who you identify with.... You assume that solidarity's guaranteed, but it's not. And, I think that's what is often difficult to grapple with. It's like okay, so we present the same, especially we share the same culture, right? But then, are we thinking the same? Do we respect each other? There's just so many layers. But, you would think that because you share...an identity, that would guarantee solidarity, but it doesn't always.

Lastly, the final variant sentiment within the current domain was *I would be indifferent towards a White perpetrator*. For example, a participant avowed:

I've been those experiences of being profiled, so if it was somebody else outside of being within my own race, I would be immune to it. This is normal course, this is normal for this type of living as a Black person. You're going to get followed in the store, you're going to be profiled, you're going to be convicted before you're proven innocent, we saw that on TV. We continue to see it. So yeah, this is something that happens as an African American.

4.1.4 Domain 4: Feelings About Being Black

The final domain was comprised of participants' responses to the question of how they felt about being Black. The inquiry was included in the interview protocol to gauge the presence (or lack thereof) of internalized racism among the participants. The domain included one typical category and one variant category. The typical category was *I have positive feelings and thoughts about being Black*. Participants' replies within this category were generally similar in nature. For instance, responses from five separate participants included, "I love being Black. I love my people"; "I am Black and I'm proud. I love being Black"; "I love being Black. I think it's amazing.... I couldn't imagine not being Black"; "I love being Black. I just love the music in Black people, I love the rhythms of Black people. I love my hair, I love just everything about me as being a Black as well as other Black people"; and

I love being Black. I think it's awesome. I think we have so much flavor.... I think even now more so than ever, I feel really proud to be Black because what's been going on in the media and mainstream, how there've been many attempts to imitate what we bring to the world as a people and try to duplicate.

In addition, the variant category was *I have mixed or conflictual feelings and thoughts about being Black*. For example, one participant stated:

I feel conflicted, I think, because one, just like I have...I wonder, "Am I Black enough?" I feel conflicted about that. But I also feel very...all I can say is intelligent and smart because I feel like I know things and feel like I'm a part of a club, if you would, or a community that not everybody gets to be a part of. I feel like.... So, yes. In that is a pride. Sure. I think. But there's also, it's more of a...I don't know. I feel like there's something special about me. I also feel misunderstood.

Another participant commented:

Good question. [I feel] mixed.... I've never been comfortable being Black.... It's hard to say I like myself as a Black person when there are so many things I can't have or do.... I look in the mirror, I kind of like myself for being Black, and that's about it.

4.2 The Principal Investigator's Reflections

Knox et al. (2012) suggested that authors consider the possible effect of personal experience on CQR data analysis. In keeping with these practices, the principal investigator added this final section to the current chapter.

As a Black woman who has experienced intraracial microaggressions throughout her life, I have always been curious about if and how this phenomenon manifests in the lives of other Black folks. Drawing from my personal relationships, and even social media, I knew that I was not the only Black person who experienced these types of incidents. I also knew firsthand, and from others, how these experiences could impact one's life. However, I wondered how common these events were, and I wondered about the impact they had on others. Hence, said experiences

and curiosities led to the selection of this dissertation topic and were the origin of the creation of my research questions.

As I embarked on collecting data, I was not sure what type of information was going to be revealed. However, in gathering interview responses, it became clear that intraracial microaggressions appeared to be both pervasive and damaging. I was saddened by the volume of negative experiences that were reported. Listening to the participants' recollections and reflections was at times difficult and upsetting. I felt both anger and sorrow that folks had to deal with such incidents, including whatever consequences may have been suffered in the aftermath. Nevertheless, I am eternally grateful for the gift of the participants' bravery, vulnerability, candidness, and their trust in me to hold their truths with respect, empathy, and compassion.

Furthermore, part of the data analysis period took place during the first spring and summer of the pandemic. With the summer of 2020 being a hotbed of social unrest, protest, and uprising, there was a moment when I felt a tinge of guilt regarding my dissertation topic. Who was I to be "airing our dirty laundry" when we are consistently being attacked from outside the community? Shouldn't the enemy always be White supremacy? However, after some thought, I reminded myself that internalized racism *is* a product of White supremacy. In addition, there will always be a need for awareness regarding the many consequences of racism—including the ability to reign as a destructive force sans the presence of White folks. Considering that thought, I hope this study will play a role in bringing more awareness to the occurrence and effects of intraracial microaggressions, and start conversations on how to acknowledge and combat these experiences, both inside and outside the field of counseling psychology.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore intraracial microaggressions (IRMs) within the African American community with the aim of enriching training, diagnoses, assessment, and treatment efforts within the field of counseling psychology in keeping with the fundamental components of the specialty. The following research questions were investigated:

1. What do intraracial microaggressions in the African American community look like?
2. How often do people identify intraracial microaggressions?
3. How do intraracial microaggressions affect psychological and/or emotional well-being?
4. How do people cope with intraracial microaggressions?
5. Does ethnicity of the perpetrator play a role in intraracial microaggressions?
6. Are there differences in the psychological and/or emotional experiences of inter- and intraracial microaggressions?

As research in the area of IRMs within the Black community continues to be relatively limited, the primary investigator utilized a qualitative research method to study these phenomena. This chapter discusses the data of the current study as they speak to the stated research questions. First, the principal investigator offers a prototypical case narrative, as recommended by Hill et al. (2005). Second, the discussion of the data is organized into sections that address each research question. In addition, this chapter addresses the meaning and significance of the findings within the context of existing literature, study limitations, future research possibilities, and implications.

5.1 Prototypical Case Narrative

Hill and colleagues (2005) suggested that researchers present a description of the prototypical interviewee who participated in the CQR study by creating a portrait based on the confluence of the general and typical categories from the analysis. As such, in the current study, the prototypical participant is an adult who racially identifies as Black and/or African American and ethnically identifies as African American, Afro Caribbean, and/or Latinx, and feels positive about being Black. The participant was born in the United States, currently resides in the Northeastern area of the United States, and identifies as middle-class. The participant reports having experienced intraracial microaggressions, especially microaggressions where their Blackness is challenged by other members of their racial group. The participant estimates experiencing intraracial microaggressions approximately monthly, and these microaggressions are usually perpetrated by African Americans/Black Americans. In addition, the participant reports a negative emotional or physical response to intraracial microaggressions, indicated that intraracial microaggressions have had an effect on everyday life, and the participant usually copes through self-care and/or by educating others or speaking out against microaggressions. The participant believes that the perpetrators' ethnicity influenced their reported incident(s) of intraracial microaggressions, and their reactions to reported intraracial microaggressions would be even more negative if they received it from a non-Black perpetrator.

5.2 Integrating the Research Questions and Data

What do intraracial microaggressions in the African American community look like? Participant responses indicated that African Americans experience a variety of intraracial microaggressive experiences, with one of the most common being the challenging of their Blackness. For example, reports of this particular theme typically described incidents where the

perpetrator was questioning or minimizing the participant's or others' belongingness to their racial group based on the receiver not fitting certain racial stereotypes around speech, education, family background, personality, hobbies/interests, or phenotype. This theme—the challenging of one's Blackness—is in line with literature that discussed the concept of “acting White” (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004), including the implications and consequences of the concept (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004). For example, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) explained:

At the social level, peer groups discourage their members from putting forth the time and effort required to do well in school and from adopting the attitudes and standard practices that enhance academic success. They oppose adopting appropriate academic attitudes and behaviors because they are considered “white.” Peer group pressures against academic striving take many forms, including labeling, exclusion from peer activities or ostracism, and physical assault. (p. 183)

Essentially, if one is accused of or labeled as “acting White,” they may be ostracized from the community to some extent (e.g., Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004). It is important to note the potential of this reality for some Black folks, as one may surmise the injurious effects of possibly being ostracized and isolated by non-Blacks and Blacks alike.

Furthermore, participant responses revealed a number of additional themes that were significant in meaning. For instance, since microassaults theoretically represent a more brazen form of racism (Sue et al., 2007), Black folks might be surmised to experience little to no microassault incidents from perpetrators who share the same race. However, the current study's data indicated that, while microassaults may not be the most frequently experienced type of intraracial microaggression, they are not as infrequent as might be thought. In particular, the

current study suggested that Black folks experience intraracial microassaults that involve being called blatantly racist derogatory names or witnessing the boldly discriminatory attitudes of others. In this study, for example, participants reported being called the N-word. These accounts of microaggressive behavior extended what has been found in previous research covering experiences that may reflect intraracial microaggressions within the Black community (Crutchfield & Webb, 2018; Lackey, 2021; Long, 2020; Muhammad, 2018; Redding-Raines, 2016; Sibley, 2022; Simmons, 2012), as said research suggested that this bolder display of racially charged events are reported less frequently, as compared to more covert forms. In addition, when analyzing the experience of offensive name-calling, this topic can be complicated when it comes to the African American community, as what is offensive to some may not be to others, such as the N-word. Specifically, some members of the African American community may argue that, if used in a particular way and within a particular context (e.g., received from another Black person whom which one is familiar), the N-word can be perceived as a term of endearment (Hoffman et al., 2009; Rahman, 2012).

Moreover, other key results indicated that Black folks experience intraracial microaggressions that communicate the ideal of or preference for White beauty standards, including discriminatory views and behaviors that reinforce these standards. Within the current study, microaggressions within this realm were experienced as expressions of colorism, texturism, and preference for longer hair length. This was similar to previous literature that discussed intraracial desirability regarding Eurocentric beauty traits (e.g., Bryant, 2012; Crutchfield & Webb, 2018; Culbreth, 2006; Lackey, 2021; Leary, 2005; Redding-Raines, 2016; Sibley, 2022). Additionally, it is important to note that African Americans may experience this type of intraracial microaggression, even if there is acknowledged privilege in this area. For

instance, if one possesses any of the phenotypic features historically associated with whiteness (e.g., preferred skin color, hair texture, hair length), one may still experience offensive events based on their looks that are perpetrated within the community (e.g., Lackey, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Sibley, 2022).

The theme regarding White beauty standards was similar to the separate yet similar finding describing the experience of Black folks receiving messaging that how they or others physically present is unacceptable. For instance, results suggested that Black individuals also experience intraracial microaggressions about physical appearance that are not based on phenotype, but on characteristics such as style of dress and hairstyle/artificial hair color. This finding was consistent with research that examined stereotypes assigned to Black individuals that are grounded in physical presentation (e.g., Allen, 2010; DeLongoria, 2018; Greene, 2011; Pager & Karafin, 2009), in addition to intraracial offenses based in internalized racism (e.g., Allen, 2010; DeLongoria, 2018). For example, Black men who wear clothing styles popular in hip-hop culture may be perceived negatively (e.g., Allen, 2010), and DeLongoria (2018) cited a legal case where a Black employee “was called a *wannabee* because her blonde hair and wardrobe choice where [*sic*] not Afrocentric enough for her [Black] supervisor” (p. 45).

Other notable findings relevant to this research question included themes that described the expression of various attitudes and/or behaviors mirroring additional White supremacist ideas. In particular, participant responses indicated that members of the Black community experience intraracial microaggressions where they are assigned certain racial stereotypes. Considering the results, it appeared that the stereotypes communicated to participants via several microaggressive themes may be based in beliefs about laziness, neglect, body parts (e.g., genitalia), criminality, teen pregnancy, second-class citizenship, neighborhood of residence, possession of a different

ethnicity, culture, or language than the perpetrator, communication styles, certain emotions (e.g., anger), SES, and personality. These results aligned with existing literature that has investigated intraracial stereotyping within the African American community (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003; Lackey, 2021; Watson, 2015; Wilder, 2010), from pejorative opinions about different ethnicities (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003) to assumptions about an individuals' body type or build (e.g., Lackey, 2021). For example, Lackey (2021) discussed a participant who received feedback that she was not feminine enough or was "like a man" (p. 77) due to her athletic and muscular body type, while another participant in the same study discussed how pubescent Black women are often viewed as promiscuous due to normal body changes.

In addition, results indicated that Black individuals may experience intraracial microaggressions that stem from perceived lack of unity or inadequate participation in anti-racism efforts. These findings built on literature that illustrated seemingly anti-Black behavior perpetrated by Black people, such as reported by Lackey (2021). In particular, Lackey's (2021) study found that:

Black women...experienced a pressure to assimilate and strive to whiteness and a pathologizing of their own cultural norms from their families and intraracial communities. For Black women, this microaggression was most often communicated through pressures to conform to white beauty standards, assumption of inferior intelligence,...pathologizing values, language, and other cultural norms. Pressure to date white romantic partners was also present in some experiences of Black women. (pp. 48-49)

The current study's data also suggested that anti-Black behaviors may be experienced as microaggressive events.

Lastly, the data suggested that the receivers of IRMs may express their own intraracial microaggressive sentiments as well (e.g., a participant describing a perpetrator as one of the "Oreos"). It is unknown whether the participants who made these remarks were aware of the nature of their own responses. However, this finding supported literature indicating that perpetrators can commit microaggressions unconsciously (e.g., Sue et al., 2007), as well as recent IRM literature where participants consider moments where they might indeed be the perpetrator (e.g., Lackey, 2021).

How often do people experience intraracial microaggressions? Findings indicated that, most often, members of the Black community experience intraracial microaggressions monthly or every other month. This frequency appeared to be sufficient to have an impact on the emotional responses and day-to-day lives of African Americans (discussed further later in this chapter). The reality of their subjective emotional/psychological impact suggested that intraracial microaggressions are as significant as interracial microaggressions in the lives of Black individuals. These data extended the existing literature which did not appear to address these specifics explicitly regarding the frequency of IRM offenses often or at all.

How do intraracial microaggressions affect psychological and/or emotional well-being? How do people cope with intraracial microaggressions? The current results suggested that African Americans typically experience a negative emotional, psychological, and/or physical response to intraracial microaggressions. These results were consistent with existing research that detailed similar reactions to events that may be categorized as IRMs (e.g., Dillon, 2016; Lackey, 2021; Long, 2020; Redding-Raines, 2016; Sibley, 2022), as well as interracial

microaggressions (e.g., Allen, 2010; Constantine, Smith et al., 2008; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Granger, 2011; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008; Torres et al., 2010; Watkins et al., 2010).

In addition, regarding coping strategies, results indicated that Black folks usually cope with IRMs via self-care and educating others or speaking out against IRMs. Furthermore, the data indicated that other, less-frequent coping mechanisms are also utilized by Blacks after exposure to IRMs, such as internalizing and/or not expressing emotions, supporting others or receiving support, and rationalizing the microaggressive experience within the context of White supremacy. These strategies were reminiscent of participant reactions documented in previous studies, such as those investigating interracial microaggressions. For example, studies of non-Black perpetrators have noted such coping reactions as receiving support from personal social networks, spirituality, centering the needs of self, externalizing negative reactions to the perpetrator, and doing nothing as a reaction (Sue et al., 2008; Watkins, 2012; Watkins et al., 2010).

Does ethnicity of the perpetrator play a role in intraracial microaggressions?

In the current study, reported perpetrators of IRMs among Black individuals were usually American/Black American, and less frequently of other ethnicities (e.g., Afro Caribbean, Latinx, African, etc.). These results seemed to make sense within the historical context of the experiences of Blacks in the United States and Blacks with non-American ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006). For instance, due to internalized racism, these groups may hold negative beliefs about themselves or their ethnically-different peers (e.g., Culbreth, 2006; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003; Leary, 2005; Moore, 2016; Pyke, 2010; Russell et al., 1992; Taylor, 2008; Wilder 2010; Wilder & Cain, 2011). However, this study adds to the existing IRM literature in providing data regarding what may be typical

characteristics of perpetrators of Black-on-Black IRMs. The novel information provided by the current findings included the identification of what may be a common ethnic background of IRM perpetrators. Relatedly, the findings suggested that members of the Black community typically feel that the perpetrator's ethnicity plays a role in their experience of IRMs. Once again, this finding was consistent with research examining the stereotypes that different Black ethnic groups have about each other (e.g., Hine-St. Hilaire, 2006; Iheduru, 2013; Jackson & Cothran, 2003).

Are there differences in the psychological and/or emotional experiences of inter- and intraracial microaggressions? Participant responses suggested that African Americans would typically have a more negative mental and/or affective reaction to a non-Black perpetrator's microaggressive comments, as compared to those of a Black perpetrator. However, it is important to note that, although seemingly less common than the typical perception, the data also indicated that a sizeable portion of the community may feel that a Black perpetrator would be more emotionally or psychologically problematic.

How might these two seemingly contradictory findings make sense together? Based on the interview narrative, it seems possible that it is more challenging for some Black folks to process and/or cope with IRMs, as opposed to racial microaggressions perpetrated by a non-Black perpetrator (e.g., a White offender). Specifically, members of the Black community may have a more difficult time with IRMs because they are not as expected as those from a non-Black offender. In addition, participant responses suggested that there is unique hurt stemming from the feeling of being rejected or betrayed by one's own racial group, a perceived lack of unity within the African American community, or perhaps the conflict of not being able to easily dismiss a perpetrator due to racial ties. These data coincided with findings from other studies in which participants have expressed similar sentiments. For example, as noted in the current study's

literature review, Redding-Raines (2016) stated that, when considering the experience of a certain kind of microinsult, "...it is the experience with the Black person that has more of an emotional impact on the participant" (p. 144).

5.3 Notable Data Beyond the Research Questions

Although the current study focused on exploring intraracial microaggressions within the African American community via specific research questions, other valuable information was uncovered via participant statements. As such, the following section reviews these data and their relevance to existing literature. These data fell into the areas of differences and similarities between participants, and perpetrators' and participants' perceptions of their own racial identity.

5.3.1 Reported Differences and Similarities Between Participants and Perpetrators

Participants identified certain aspects of the perpetrators' characteristics that participants assessed as either dissimilar or parallel to their own. These characteristics included variables such as basic demographic information (e.g., age, ethnic/cultural background, geographic background), physical appearance, occupation, education, and racial/ethnic makeup of person's environment during their formative years. Since the aforementioned information was derived from an exploratory interview question that was not directly related to the research questions, the data in this area of the current study are limited. In addition, all the relevant categories were of variant frequency, suggesting that no characteristics predominated in participants' reports. Nevertheless, one may begin to hypothesize connections and meaning regarding the variables and the experience of IRMs. Along these lines, based on the results, it is possible that perpetrators were raised around more people of color, and there may be differences between the perpetrator's and receiver's cultural/ethnic background, age (e.g., perpetrators may be older than

receiver), educational level, or schooling experiences. In addition, it appears that perpetrators and receivers may be employed in the same career field.

In fact, the expectation that different personal characteristics may influence IRMs was consistent with existing literature on *internalized racial oppression* (IRO; e.g., see Bailey et al., 2014). This may mean that reports regarding the experience of intraracial microaggressions may vary depending on differences in demographic information, social identities, and/or intersections of social identities. Thus, it appeared that the meaning of these variables within the context of IRMs would be an area ripe for future investigation.

5.3.2 Racial Identity

Results indicated that the participants of this study typically possessed a positive attitude regarding their racial identity. Moreover, participants reported a substantial number of IRM incidents and subsequent reactions. As such, one may posit that the current study's data suggested that African Americans with more positive emotions regarding their racial identity may experience and cope with more IRMs. Related, though different, findings did exist: previous literature indicated a connection between the racial identity stage and *internalized racial oppression* (e.g., see Bailey et al., 2014). For instance, citing foundational work on racial identity, Bailey et al. (2014) stated, "IRO attitudes are representative of less developed racial identity statuses (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990)" (p. 146). Bailey et al. further explained:

These manifestations of IRO are shaped by the context and intersection of other salient identities (e.g., gender, disability, sexuality, etc.) among African Americans.... Indeed, the characteristics of IRO are a complex composition of affective, behavioral, and cognitive distortions of one's attitudes about his or her race and other social group membership. (p. 146)

Hence, considering the aforementioned literature on IRO (e.g., see Bailey et al., 2014), one may conceptualize intraracial microaggressions as a manifestation of IRO. As such, it seems plausible that racial identity may influence the experience of intraracial microaggressions.

However, the findings in the current research raised a number of questions. For instance, why would more positive racial identity be correlated with increased reports of IRMs? Perhaps if individuals are securely grounded, satisfied, and proud of their identity, they are more likely to detect IRMs and be affected by these events. In contrast, do individuals with a more negative attitude towards their racial identity experience decreased levels of IRMs and/or distress in response to an incident? It is possible the current findings offer direction for future research about precisely how racial identity interacts with IRMs in their everyday occurrence.

Nevertheless, as racial identity was not a main focus of the current study, these questions were not addressed fully here.

5.4 Limitations

Several limitations should be borne in mind regarding the interpretation of the current findings. This study employed a qualitative approach with 15 participants, which was appropriate for the CQR method (Hill et al., 2005). However, as is the case with all qualitative research, the results are not meant to be generalized broadly beyond the population sampled here.

Relatedly, although the primary investigator and the CQR analysis team utilized several techniques to safeguard the rigor of the analysis, the results may have been different if analyzed by another group of researchers. With regard to the methodological integrity of the study, the current author consulted existing literature on that particular subject matter. For example, Levitt et al. (2016) provided suggestions for facilitating methodological integrity regarding qualitative investigations. Considering Levitt et al.'s strategies, the current study's employment of the CQR

method is reflective of said strategies. For instance, CQR includes procedures to safeguard methodological integrity, such as discussing bias and expectations pre-analysis, and utilizing team consensus, an external auditor, and stability check (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005).

Finally, while this is not a true limitation per se, it should be noted that the current study utilized the term *intraracial microaggressions* to examine the phenomena of Black-on-Black racial microaggressions. As such, the primary investigator mainly employed this term when performing literature searches, compiling, and presenting existing research on the topic. The IRM terminology (or similar wording/terminology) has been used by previous research that was either partially or fully centered on members of the Black community (e.g., Crutchfield & Webb, 2018; Lackey, 2021; Long, 2020; Muhammad, 2018; Redding-Raines, 2016; Sibley, 2022; Simmons, 2012). Yet, additional research exists that may describe the same or similar phenomena while using a different conceptual framework, terminology, and/or wording to describe them (e.g., see David et al., 2019). For the sake of clarity and specificity, the principal investigator primarily referenced literature that used the IRM term, or literature that utilized similar wording as opposed to other names. Nevertheless, although there were some expected limitations, the current study yielded important data that contribute to an emerging area of study that could help further center the experiences and voices of oppressed communities.

5.5 Future Research

As IRMs still represent a developing area of study, there are many opportunities to build on the current research and existing literature. For instance, it may be beneficial to develop a standardized name for the concept of IRMs, as there seems to be varying titles for the phenomena in previous research, including *within-group discrimination*, *intragroup marginalization*, and *lateral oppression* (e.g., see David et al., 2019). Having shared, widely-

understood terminology for IRMs can clarify how researchers and clinicians study and discuss IRMs within and outside the field.

Moreover, future studies can build on the current results by increasing the number of participants or employing a different research method to determine if results are stable with a larger sample. In addition, the criteria could be altered to study such groups as children, adolescents, or Blacks who were born outside of the United States. Sampling efforts that capture different or more varied demographic information may also yield interesting results that contribute to existing knowledge. Relatedly, as the current study's results may raise curiosity around the relationship between racial identity and IRMs, it would be interesting to observe data regarding how the intersection of different social identities may affect the experience of IRMs. Isolating certain demographics for study (e.g., social identities such as age, gender, SES, and ethnicity) may also produce fascinating data that could reveal similarities and/or differences in how different demographic groups experience IRMs. Indeed, as noted earlier, it appears that the exploration of racial identity, social identity, and intersectional identities and their impact on the experience of IRMs is a prime area for future research.

Finally, it is possible that altering the research design may garner noteworthy data. For example, it would be interesting to change the race of the interviewer to non-Black (e.g., White person instead of a Black person). Would participant responses be the same? If not, how might responses differ, and why? Having interviewers of different races may also supply data on implications and dynamics regarding inter- and intrarace therapy dyads.

5.6 Implications

There are several implications of the current study's findings. For instance, this study's data are significant because they contribute to our theoretical understanding of microaggressions

as a whole by helping to build knowledge of IRMs as a manifestation of internalized racism and an important branch of microaggression theory. Perhaps, in addition to creating shared terminology for the phenomena, a new taxonomy that represents IRMs would be a valuable development. A taxonomy, such as what Sue and colleagues (2007) created, may be beneficial in guiding research and training efforts, curriculum planning, and practical interventions.

In addition, as previous research has detailed the devastating consequences of racial microaggressions (e.g., Allen, 2010; Constantine, Smith et al., 2008; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Granger, 2011; Sue, Nadal et al., 2008; Torres et al., 2010; Watkins et al., 2010), the current data suggested that racial microaggressions perpetrated by members of one's own race have devastating effects. In fact, the current findings suggested that for some Black folks, the experience of IRMs may be worse than interracial microaggressions. As such, it is essential to consider the possible reality that African Americans experience both inter- and intraracial microaggressions and how these may influence daily functioning. For clinicians and supervisors, this would be valuable knowledge for the conceptualization of cases, diagnoses, treatment planning, and interventions. Moreover, one may speculate that the practical applications would be useful not only in therapist-client relationships, but also in supervisor-supervisee relationships as well with regard to the identification of roadblocks, challenges, and support networks.

5.7 Conclusion

The current study produced valuable, novel data regarding the experience of intraracial microaggressions in the lives of African Americans. Specifically, results revealed possible IRM themes, frequency of incidents, emotional and psychological reactions, coping strategies, and other more nuanced yet notable information. In addition, findings suggested directions by which academics may build on the current research to facilitate a better understanding of the

phenomena and enrich research, educational, and practical efforts. In these ways, the current study should facilitate continued growth in the areas of multicultural competency, enhanced support of Black communities, and overall theoretical development within the field of counseling psychology.

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Appendix A: Participant Letter

Dear friends and colleagues,

My name is Amber Proctor-Reyes and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am looking for individuals who would like to participate in my study on people's race-related experiences.

The study involves an individual audiotaped interview that should take approximately 60 minutes. In the interview, participants will be invited to speak about race-related experiences that they have had. The location and time of the interview is at your convenience.

In addition, participants:

- ***Must identify as Black and/or African American***
- ***Must be born in the United States***
- ***Must be at least 18 years old***

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

If you meet the above eligibility criteria and are interested in participating, please email me at akp2130@tc.columbia.edu

Thank you in advance for your participation. Also, I would really appreciate it if you could pass this message along to anyone else that you think may be eligible and willing to participate.

**This study has been approved by the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board: (19-203). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at akp2130@tc.columbia.edu*

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Protocol Title: Race Relations and African Americans
Interview Consent

Principal Investigator: Amber Proctor-Reyes, Teachers College
akp2130@tc.columbia.edu

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “Race Relations and African Americans.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you identify as Black and/or African American, were born in the United States, and are at least 18 years old. Approximately 40 people will participate in this study and it will take approximately 60 minutes of your time to complete.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to explore the race-related experiences of African Americans.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will first be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. This will take about five minutes.

Then, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss experiences involving race that may have occurred in your life. This interview will be audio-recorded. The audio-recording will be written down (transcribed) by a third-party service (“Rev” transcription services), and analyzed by the principal investigator and fellow research team members. The audio-recording will be erased after the study is complete. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. You will be given a pseudonym, false name, or de-identified code in order to keep your identity confidential.

All of these procedures will be done at a place and time that is convenient to you.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. For instance, you might feel uncomfortable discussing race-based topics, or race-related experiences you may have had. **However, you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don’t want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.**

The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym or de-identified code instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed the questionnaire and completed the interview. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The investigator will keep all written materials in a secure space. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be written down (transcribed) by a third-party service, and analyzed by the principal investigator and fellow research team members. The audio-recording will be destroyed after the study is complete. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym or de-identified code. Regulations require data to be kept for at least three years after the completion of the study.

For quality assurance, the study team, the study sponsor (grant agency), and/or members of the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the data collected from you as part of this study. Otherwise, all information obtained from your participation in this study will be held strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by U.S. or State law.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator. In addition, the results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your identity will be removed from any data you provide before publication or use for educational purposes.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

_____ I give my consent to be recorded

Signature

_____ I do not consent to be recorded

Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

___ I consent to allow written and audio-recorded materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College

_____ Signature

___ I **do not** consent to allow written and audio-recorded materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University

_____ Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes _____
Initial

No _____
Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes _____
Initial

No _____
Initial

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Amber Proctor-Reyes, at akp2130@tc.columbia.edu

You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Laura Smith at ls2396@tc.columbia.edu

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- Identifiers may be removed from the data. De-identifiable data may be used for future research studies, or distributed to another investigator for future research without additional informed consent from the subject or the representative.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document. My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Print name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Do you **racially identify** as Black and/or African American?

Yes

No

**If participants circle or indicate "No," the principal investigator will inform the individual that she/he will not be able to continue with the interview.*

Were you **born in the United States**?

Yes

No

**If participants circle or indicate "No," the principal investigator will inform the individual that she/he will not be able to continue with the interview.*

Are you **18 years old or over**?

Yes

No

**If participants circle or indicate "No," the principal investigator will inform the individual that she/he will not be able to continue with the interview.*

Please tell us a little more about yourself:

1. Sex: _____Male _____Female

2. Age: _18-24
 _25-34
 _35-44
 _45-54
 _55-64
 _65-74
 _75 years or older

3. How do you describe your **ethnicity** (check all that apply):

_____ African American
_____ Afro Caribbean
_____ African
_____ Hispanic or Latino/a
_____ Please specify if not mentioned above:

4. Which of the following best describes **your socioeconomic class** membership?

- Low-income/poverty
- Working class
- Lower-middle class
- Middle class
- Upper-middle class
- Upper class/wealthy

5. Which area best describes **where you currently live**:

- United States: North East
- United States: South East
- United States: Midwest
- United States: Northwest
- United States: Southwest
- Caribbean Island
Please Specify _____
- African Country
Please Specify _____
- Other
Please Specify _____

Thank you for your time and your participation!

**This study has been approved by the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board: (19-203). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at akp2130@tc.columbia.edu*

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Hello, and thank you again for participating in my study on race-related experiences. We will be speaking specifically about racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are brief, everyday remarks and exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group. Sometimes the person making the remark is not even aware of the impact of what they are saying, but the person on the receiving end usually is.

Possible follow-up prompts, which may or may not be offered, will be noted in italics.

Semi-Structured Interview Items

1. Have you ever experienced racial microaggressions (RM) from someone who wasn't Black? Can you tell me about some of those times?

Prompts: How often have you experienced RMs from people who weren't Black? What were they like? How did you feel? Did the incidents affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incidents? What was the race and/or ethnicity of the person(s) committing the microaggression(s)?

2. Tell me about a time that you experienced an RM from a person that wasn't Black that stood out the most or had the greatest affect on you.

Prompts: How did you feel? Did the incident affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incident? What was the race and/or ethnicity of the person committing the microaggression?

3. How do you feel about this incident now?

Prompts: Do you feel the same about it today? If yes/no—in what way(s)? Are you still coping with the incident? If so, how are you currently coping with the incident?

4. Have you ever experienced racial microaggressions (RM) from another Black person? Can you tell me about those?

Prompts: How often have you experienced RMs from Black people? What were they like? How did you feel? Did the incidents affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incidents?

5. Tell me about a time that you experienced an RM from a Black person that stood out the most or had the greatest affect on you.

Prompts: How did you feel? Did the incident affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incident?

6. How do you feel about this incident now?

Prompts: Do you feel the same about it today? If yes/no – in what way(s)? Are you still coping with the incident? If so, how are you currently coping with the incident?

7. Could you tell me more about the person who committed the microaggression? How they were similar to you? How they were different from you?

Prompts: Do you remember the ethnicity of the perpetrator (when the perpetrator was a Black person) e.g., Caribbean, American, etc.? (If so): Do you think ethnicity played a role in the incident? If so, in what way(s)?

8. Do you think there would have been any differences in how you felt if the perpetrator in that incident wasn't Black? Tell me about that.

Prompts: In what ways? Why do you think that is? Would you have felt more (insert feeling here) or less (insert feeling here) if the person wasn't Black?

9. Have you ever witnessed or heard about an incident(s) of racial microaggressions (RM) from one Black person to another? Tell me about that.

Prompts: How often? Which ones have you witnessed or heard about the most from one Black person to another? And the least? What was/were the incident(s) like? How did you feel? Did the incidents affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incidents?

10. Tell me about a time that you witnessed or heard about an RM from a Black person to another that stood out the most or had the greatest affect on you.

Prompt: How did you feel? Did the incident affect you? If so, in what way(s)? How did you cope with the incident? Do you remember the ethnicity of the people in that incident? (e.g., Caribbean, American, etc.) [If yes] Do you think ethnicity played a role in the incident? If so, in what way(s)?

11. Do you still feel the same about the incident now?

Prompts: Do you feel the same about it today? If yes/no—in what way(s)? Are you still coping with the incident? If so, how are you currently coping with the incident?

12. Thinking about this incident, do you think there would have been any differences in how you felt, were affected, or coped if the perpetrator in the incident wasn't Black? Can you tell me about that?

Prompts: In what ways? Why do you think that is? Would you have felt more (insert feeling here) or less (insert feeling here) if the perpetrator wasn't Black?

13. How do you feel about being Black?

14. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix E: Domain 5: Experiences with Interracial Microaggressions and Domain 6: Emotional Responses to Interracial Microaggressions

Domain 5

In this domain, participants reported their experiences with racial microaggressions that were perpetrated by non-Black individuals. There was one general, two typical, and 11 variant categories found within the current domain. One of the typical categories was *I received, witnessed or heard about microassault(s) from non-Black individual(s)*, which consists of participant's reports of directly or indirectly experiencing microassault(s), or more blatant forms of racism (Sue et al., 2007). One participant described attending a party and being accosted by another party-goer with racist jokes, particularly jokes about Black individuals:

At some point, one of the people in her party,...he had a lot to drink. He came to me, he sort of wanted to ingratiate himself on me in a way that White people do. They call you brother and then blah, blah, blah. Then he goes off into the spiel. It kind of caught me off guard. I didn't know a White person knew so many nigger jokes as this guy. This guy gave me a slew of nigger jokes one after the other for nearly an hour.

The same participant gave a more specific example of a racist joke that he heard from one of his in-laws, stating,

Some of the more offending jokes was like, there's this one, I even heard one of my nieces on the in-law's side say. It's like what does a Black man and an apple have in common? The answer is they both hanging from trees.

Another participant shared an experience while working in an academic setting:

And I've had...I guess things happen in terms of when I was working as an assistant director of housing, there was one family. I don't know if they knew what I was, but he basically, the father, didn't want the daughter to be in a room with a girl. It was a Black girl and her name sounded a particular way so he assumed she was Black. She was Black, but he was saying over the phone, "Oh, I don't have any issue with Black people, but..." you know?

The other typical category expressed within this domain was *My or other people of colors' capabilities were assumed to be inferior by non-Black individual(s)*. The participant responses within this category mostly expressed incidents in which they experienced non-Black individuals making assumptions or commenting about their (or other Black people's) intelligence, specifically indicating the underlying message that Black folks were not as intelligent as other race(s). One participant recalled:

One of my favorite examples is years ago, when I was listening to a conversation between two guys who happen to work in the same firm as I did in the financial district. Now, I had a fairly good idea of what they were talking about. I wasn't participating in the conversation. I was just listening. At one point during the conversation, one of them looks to me and says,..."How about those Knicks?"... The reason why I bring this up is, first of all, I don't follow basketball. So the question caught me aback because, first of all, like I said, I had a very good, I felt, understanding of what they were talking about, financial matters. But he chose to ask me something that to me, showed, exposed his attitude toward Black people. In other words, that all Black men are into basketball. This is basically all we can talk about.

Several participant responses in this category were recollections of non-Black individuals making assumptions about their speech, as one participant stated:

It was actually after I won a spelling bee...so I was in [southern U.S. state] and it was a county-wide spelling bee and I had won. One of the kids there was talking to me about, “Well, how did you know how to spell that word?” I was like, “Well, me and my dad practiced it.” He was like, “Oh, okay.” He was like, “Well, you speak really well for a Black girl” and kind of walked off. I’m like, “What?”

Similarly, another participant stated, “Even up until very recently, one major microaggression is, ‘Oh, you speak so well.’”

Of the variant categories discovered within this domain, one was *I was/other people of color were treated like a second-class citizen by non-Black individual(s)*. Two participants with responses within this category described the use of the phrase “you people.” One participant stated:

I worked in the schools, so it was hard to go into a meeting about a Black child or a Spanish-speaking child with them calling you, you people. Calling them, those people. Those are things that they don’t notice that they say, but they say them until I said one day, “Who are those people? What do you mean? Who are those people? And those parents?” They were separate, like it’s not me, it’s not White people, it’s you people that have the problem.

In a similar vein, the other participant mentioned “the you people’s, that happens in polite conversation.” Furthermore, another participant discussed a different type of incident within this category, as they described an experience ordering food:

I think I was ordering food, and the person that was cooking the food all of sudden has this attitude towards me, but everybody else they were fine and pleasant with, and respectful, and for me it was this total attitude. I don't know the person, never met them, this was my first time doing business with them. Once I placed my order, I stood back, because me knowing how cooks do in places, you know, there are other people that want to order. So I stood back where at least four or five people could get in front of me. As I stood there, but still in the middle, the person that I'm tell you about, they're going to look at me like I had five heads and say, "Oh, can you move over?" It's like I'm out of the way, there's room where four or five people could get in front, you know what I'm saying?... Everybody that got their food, he would call them up, "Hey, this is your food," and even hand it to them. When it was my turn, he just put it up there, and I took it. But, I also took it and put it in the trash, because I don't eat angry food. So that's one time I remember, and it wasn't a good feeling.

In addition, one of the current domain's variant themes was *Black stereotypes were ascribed to me or other individual(s) in my racial group by non-Black individual(s)*. For example, one participant indicated that they experienced being assigned the stereotype of criminality. The participant expressed that "some things are subtle. Sometimes...you could be in a store, a department store, and feel as if, because of my race, I was being observed more, things like that." Another participant discussed a socioeconomic stereotype that was assigned to them by a professor:

We were, I think, talking about *Native Son* or something of that nature. It was some book. It was a literature class. And he said, "Oh, [Participant name], you would know about the projects." And I was like "Actually, I don't." And it wasn't like...he wasn't meaning it

mean or anything like that. But I wasn't prepared. Whatever we were talking about, the assumption was that I knew about that. And I was like "Actually, I don't. But okay." And that in my freshman year, I remember that.

A third variant topic present in this domain was *non-Black/African American people have communicated to me that White standards of beauty are superior (e.g., colorism and texturism)*.

For instance, one participant described comments about their hair, stating:

I went to school with mostly White children. I don't know how to tell, say, but my hair was always the subject of attention, I guess. It was anything from "How do you brush your hair?" to "Your hair is so big" to "Why don't you blow your hair out? Why do you always wear it curly?" Then they're also, things like, "Oh, why do you always pull your hair back? I'll bet it's so nice when it's out." But it was always this fascination.

Referring to her racially diverse family, another participant stated:

For me, going through my entire childhood, it was always my family talking about my hair and how it needed to be straightened and how...comparing it to my sister, who has straight hair. And then, for me, it was just like okay, something must be wrong with me.

However, the same participant expressed their feeling that colorism has worked in their favor:

I have a lot of agency with my skin color, and I feel like because my family is very racially diverse, I have experienced a lot.... I've benefited a lot from colorism, compared to my cousins, who are darker than I am.

The fourth variant experience discovered within this domain was *My personal space or efforts have been disregarded or invalidated by non-Black individual(s)*. For example, one participant recounted a violation of their personal space:

I remember I went to [a music festival] and I had my natural hair out and it was raining. So my hair was doing that beautiful thing it does when it just starts to reach out, just like, “Water! Yeah!” The girl is like, “Your hair is growing” and put her hand.... I’m like, “Are you wild? Are you serious right now?” I had to tell her like, “Sweetie, that’s not okay. I’m a person. This is my body. If I wouldn’t just start yanking on your hair, you wouldn’t like it. You know.”

Moreover, another participant discussed an incident that occurred when they wrote a paper for their church:

I wrote a paper about three, four years old now. It was called Letter to [name of participant’s church] from a Dark Sister. That letter is a discussion about why people who are involved in climate, justice issues, environmental justice issues should also be involved in racial justice issues. I spent about three months to research, thinking about it, trying to connect all those types of injustices and trying to really writing a position paper on why we need to be working together in order to win these types of fights.... I finally got [the paper] together and then the real battle came now with the writing, there were two people on the team, both of whom were White women. They took it upon themselves to completely rewrite my article and throw the rest of it out. I was so angry.

An additional variant topic revealed in the current domain was *My or other Black/African Americans’ Blackness have been challenged by non-Black individual(s)*. For instance, a participant indicated that others rejected their racial identity due to perceived racial ambiguity:

Kids would say to me, “You’re not Black. You’re not Black.” Because I think my race is always ambiguous and when I would come out as Black, they’d be like, “You’re not Black.” How did they put it? It’d be like, “You’re not really Black.”

It appears that family members may also contribute to denying someone's Blackness, as another participant described:

I'm seen as the pro-Black one in my household, which is really annoying because...this is me being...myself. And so, for my family, it's just like, oh, here's [Participant Name] and her views. Or, if I'm wearing my hair like this, with my headwrap, it's like, oh, here's [Participant Name] trying to be Black. Where a lot of it was...it's just me being me. Or, me embracing an aspect of my identity. But, for my family, it's just like you're being something that you're not. And so, I feel like that's something I have to grapple a lot with.

This domain also includes participant recollection of the race and/or ethnicity of the person(s) committing the interracial microaggressions reported. There was one general category (*White*) and three variant categories (*Latinx*, *Asian*, and *Other*) identified within this domain.

Lastly, participants were asked about the frequency of their experiences with interracial microaggressions per year. The categories that displayed these frequencies all fell within variant ranges, which included *I experience interracial microaggressions rarely*, *I experience interracial microaggressions monthly or every other month*, and *I experience interracial microaggressions weekly or every day*.

Domain 6

This domain describes participants' affective and/or somatic reactions to the interracial microaggressions reported during their respective interviews, and how they have coped with the stated interracial microaggressions. There was one general category, three typical categories, and four variant categories discovered in the domain. All participants expressed the general sentiment that *I feel/felt a negative emotional, psychological, or physical response to interracial*

microaggressions. For example, one participant stated: “Well, you feel like you don’t exist. Like they don’t understand, they can say things to you, but we’re not supposed to have feelings. We’re not supposed to react to anything.” The participant went on to state, “So you feel almost like again, you continue to be the invisible man, like in the book. You’re the invisible man.” In addition, the participant described their reactions to experiencing racial microaggressions from an elementary school teacher: “I didn’t want to go to school. I had stomach aches.... I was sad in the beginning because I was being treated like that, I didn’t know what prejudice was, and racism was, until I entered that school.”

Another participant discussed their reactions to interracial microaggressions experienced as a child:

As a kid, I felt embarrassed, because I think the intention was, whether it was innocent, quote unquote, or if it was malicious, it always put me in a spotlight that I didn’t choose to be in. It made me feel like very much like I was an other.... I think I felt sad. It felt hurtful.

The participant, articulating their reaction to a specific memory of hearing students making offensive comments about Black individuals during class, added, “I think it definitely made me withdraw and feel ashamed.” In discussing their experiences with interracial microaggressions as an adult, specifically others making comments about the participant’s mixed-race children, the participant expressed:

Again, the word freak comes to mind. I think even when people kind of comment on my daughter or my son, it just feels like there must be something odd about us. Yeah, like there’s something wrong when I didn’t think there was in the first place.

Other participants voiced additional negative emotional responses, such as feeling “self-conscious,” “irritated,” “angry,” “upset,” “violated,” “annoying and frustrating,” “powerless,” and “vulnerable.”

The first typical category in this domain was *Interracial microaggressions had/have an effect on my everyday life*. One participant expressed:

I think it affected me in the sense that I made a very conscious decision in my social circles and where I worked at and where I even learned at, just to not be the minority in the room where the majority of people were not Black. The reason why I even chose to work here at [participant’s place of employment] is because I feel as though they take on a different stance. They’ll talk about that stuff openly, like, “This is what this is, this is wrong,” and they have a democratic process. That kind of fit into what I was interested in. Otherwise no, I would not have been here, because I just don’t surround myself with those who don’t look like me. I think that’s how it affected me, like I’m just like “No.”

Further, another participant communicated the personal consequences of a coworker indicating that the quality of a written piece authored by the participant was attributed to the use of an editor:

Well, that was maybe two weeks ago, and I’ve noticed myself rereading the emails I send to staff and rereading things in a way that I haven’t ever before. Even though I was like, what the hell is this dude talking about? And I was irritated simultaneously it’s impacted...I’m second-guessing everything that I write. I’m writing constantly on the daily basis something. It definitely had me in my...it has me self-conscious and second-guessing myself on a regular basis.

Moreover, another participant described the aftereffects of their experience with interracial microaggressions:

And questioning, really feeling like I have to over-analyze and question almost every interaction that I have with a White person who is in a professional or school-type setting.... I feel like unfortunately it has become so normal that if it affects me, it affects me in an everyday kind of a way. Just in a hyper-awareness of being Black. And I'm doing my best to not allow it to really just.... Really letting it take over my everyday existence. But I know that it's there. And I do feel that it has contributed to being more anxious in all-White spaces. And being just really aware of my behavior, my mannerisms, my reaction. And if I don't respond, then it still comes out some place else in my life. That's the best way that I could put it.

An additional typical narrative was *I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by internalizing and/or not expressing reactions*. One participant shared this metaphor:

It's like swallowing a salt.... When I was overseas in [name of country], we had to swallow salt tablets because of the heat, will make us sweat a lot. They're huge and they're hard to swallow, so it's like that. When you're in [an interracial microaggressive] situation like that, it's like swallowing a salt tablet. You have to swallow. Swallow to the point where you're really struggling and you feel like you're choking but you can't explode because if you explode, you're going to be unearthing a whole lot of other worms that you may not be able to control especially when you're alone. So you have to swallow and you swallow hard.

The participant went on to express:

You think about all kinds of things you could have said or done. But when you're in a social context, like a coworker's house where you can't afford to blow up if you're the only Black face there, most of it is compressed. You keep it in. You feel the anger until it eventually leaves. That can take days, sometimes longer. But essentially, you take a huge swallow. You keep it in.... You let the anger recede. Then you go on with your life because, you know, you realize that nothing is going to essentially change. White folks for the most part don't like to be reminded that they're guilty of these, of these cultural, social mishaps. They don't like being reminded. I don't like to be the person reminding them because that's going to affect my relationship especially if this person, I have to work with this person. Once you let it recede, then you return to life. Then it's as usual because, like I said, there's nothing you can do about it. Nothing essentially changes. You're going to encounter it again in another way, in another fashion.

Finally, the third typical experience identified within this domain was *I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by supporting others or receiving support*. One participant shared how they sought support from a Black colleague after experiencing a racial microaggression from a White coworker:

I kind of spoke to my colleague and I asked him, "Am I bugging out right now?" because I just needed to feel some type of validation that I wasn't out of line for thinking how I was thinking, for feeling like I didn't matter in that moment.

The same participant also recalled how they dealt with a microaggressive guidance counselor in high school:

Me and my friends again we would talk about it, we would seek validation with each other. Like, "Did you hear what she said?... She's bugging, she's crazy for talking like

that.” So a lot of conversation, conversation helps and it helps you release the anger and the feeling of being unsure about what just happened and the experience you just felt, you just gone through and it’s like, “Am I crazy? Why would she say something like this to we...to you?” And so, conversation definitely helped, for sure.

Meanwhile, another participant explained how they reached out to support other Black students after experiencing racial microaggressions from a professor:

I did talk to my fellow Black students on campus, I did share with anyone who was going to take that class to be very cautious when they took the class not to have high expectations that the professor was going to be fair integrating, but that if you put forth your best effort, you will learn a lot about [subject of the course] in this class. So, go get the most out of the class that you can. Don’t have a high expectation that you are going to be treated fairly in the class, but take what you need. So I would go and talk to my friends about that.

An additional participant discussed experiencing racial microaggressions from an elementary school teacher. The participant indicated that they employed coping mechanisms such as speaking with friends and believing in a higher being.

Again, having close bonds with friends, that way we could discuss things.... And so we would talk a lot about what happened in the school and stuff like that, so that helped me to cope with a lot of the things that I needed to cope with, and God.

Moving to the variant categories of this domain, one was *I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions through self-care*. One participant shared:

Because [interracial microaggressions] happen so regularly, it’s like...honestly, I just start to not see them. Partially because it’s like self-care. It’s like how much of this do I really

want to be present with and take home and then...you know? There's...it's a lot. So I think I do opt out. I've noticed the older I get, some of it I'm just like I don't have the energy for this, so whatever. It's not worth it to even engage by myself, even. Not even to come to the point of wanting to say something necessarily, but even...I'm not even... I'm going to leave that where you put it.

The participant also shared that they utilized humor as self-care while coping with a microaggressive incident:

In the moment I do what I do best. I made a joke...the default of people around you have to be comfortable because when they are not comfortable, you are not safe, especially White people and White males and no, White women because it's a different scariness about a White woman, and what she might do and then what that might, what repercussions that happens.

Similarly, another participant pointed to humor as a coping mechanism. However, the participant noted its limitations, stating, "I think, right now, as an adult who's more self-aware now, I just deal with humor. That's my coping mechanism. And, it's not to say that humor always saves me. It doesn't."

Another variant sentiment was *I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by educating others or speaking out against microaggressions*. One participant indicated how they sometimes deal with hearing the term *fair skin*:

It depends on when who said it, the context I hear, I hear it like it's really easy if it happens, if I think there's a...moment of grace to be had in it, you know, like a teachable moment. I work well with that.

The participant went on to state:

I'm quicker on my feet to say something about fair skin in particular,...with like, when we are talking about that, let's look that up. What do we mean by fair, do you know the definition of fair, quite like, nigger, if you look up that word, what does it actually mean? And so I feel more confident in doing that. Not always, not with all people. But I think that and I'm proud of that. It feels like I'm taking some power back. Like yeah, it's not okay to not know that you're doing this. It just what it's always been. And this was one of the little ways that sometimes I can interrupt that.

In addition, another participant discussed the response to a microaggressive article that appeared in their college newspaper: "When I was in college...there was an article written about the Black students or saying that...ultimately the person said that Black students were bused here from the inner cities to come to the institution." The participant went on to explain:

We all wrote back to the editor, a letter to the editor, and basically kind of wrote how we felt about it and how ridiculous this was. And I remember I think we all posted it on the bulletin board outside the office of multicultural affairs because of course, all of... everybody was kind of outraged that it even occurred. And that was kind of how we worked to manage it.... I guess I would say, yeah, it fueled activism. It fueled me to want to create spaces for other students of color to feel comfortable and welcome because that wasn't...that didn't feel welcoming at all. And we didn't do anything to deserve that.

Moreover, an additional variant topic was *I continue to cope with the lasting effects of interracial microaggressions*. For instance, a participant described how they continue to cope with the behavior of a high school guidance counselor:

From time to time, I still have conversations with my girlfriend who also went to the high school and we always reflect when we're reminiscing on high school ways, and we

always bring up our teacher, our guidance counselor and the way she interacted with us, and how many microaggressions just came out of the conversations you had with her. So, I guess you can consider that coping because if you still are almost in shock at the way that she handled us and dealt with us.

After discussing an incident where a supervisor made a microaggressive statement generalizing the physical features of Black individuals, a participant stated:

I want to say I'm coping with the incident, but I also want to say that I still experience pain from that incident and other incidents. Because even if you try to put the thought away, it resurfaces. It comes back with the incident, the memory of the incident comes back. And because I experience it so much and so frequently, it is overwhelming.

In addition, another participant expressed how they currently cope after experiencing racial microaggressions in the workplace, stating: "I've learned how to deal with White management. And I take White management with a grain of salt. I never take what they say serious. I never have high expectations that White management will support Black executives."

On the other hand, *interracial microaggressions have not impacted or continued to impact my everyday life* was another variant response. For instance, after recalling experiences of interracial microaggressions at their place of employment, a participant stated:

It didn't affect me because being that I do live in [Northeastern state], there's all types of people, so I don't let things like that bother me too much because I know there's all types of people out there, and I know there are quite a few ignorant people that don't know how to present themselves or speak to others. And then there are people who are prejudiced that don't show it, but it's there.

Moreover, when asked if they were currently coping with microaggressive incidents perpetrated by a supervisor figure, one participant expressed:

Oh, no. No, I'm not even.... This is the first time I probably brought Chief [name] up since I've left the military. It must have been years.... But, for the fact that I brought it up tells you it's still there.

Finally, a participant replied to an inquiry regarding current coping in response to a microaggressive piece in the participant's college newspaper, explaining: "No, I wouldn't say I'm still coping with it. I just, I can remember and think back to what it fueled and what it helped kind of created within me, and also within the institution."

Appendix F: Domain 7: Experiences of Other Interracial and Intra-racial Incidents

This domain contains participant reports of experiences that were not definitively reported as race-related or as microaggressions. Three variant categories were discovered in the domain, the first of which was *I was offended by White individual(s)*. For instance, one participant described their perception of being unfairly graded in a college course:

What happened was the English professor would put a B+ on my paper or an A, but with a bracket around it. I would look and say, “What is that?” I got I think an A and a B+ with the bracket around it and wound up getting a B for final grade and say, “Wait a minute, what is that?” I went and spoke to him about it because I knew that I did not write a B for a final grade on the final exam.... Anyway, the long and the short of it was when I went to his office, I was really uncomfortable. I was in my twenties and here I was, going to talk to this esteemed professor who had been teaching all these years in an area that I didn’t really have any strength in. I asked him about it, and he said to me, I mean I don’t remember a whole lot, but one thing he said really shook me up. He told me he had been teaching theater and drama for 20 years and in order for me to get that A, I would have to be better than the students that had come before him in that 20-year period.

Regarding participants’ reports of intra-racial incidents, one such variant category was *I have received and/or witnessed negative comments/attitudes/actions from other Blacks/African Americans*. For example, one participant shared:

Yeah, I've been a victim of that, for lack of a better word. People not wanting to support or encourage you, or uplift, because whatever story they created, they didn't want me to have what they think is going to make me benefit from.

Another variant experience was *Negative stereotypes or characteristics were assigned to other Blacks/African Americans*. For instance, a participant discussed a situation where a cleaning company made the decision not to clean a friend's home because of an item in said friend's home:

So a friend of mine...had hired people to come and clean his house. He's a student and so ...a doc student. And the people came and they...he had something on his table that I guess they didn't feel comfortable with, but they never asked him. And it was like actually a...it was a collector's item [a bullet].... And they pretty much ended up not cleaning, left, said they were going to come back and they didn't. And he asked what happened. And they said, "Oh, well you had this thing on the table." And he's like, "Well, that was a collector's item." And so they were like, "Oh, well, we just didn't...we feel threatened. We didn't feel comfortable." And so they ultimately essentialized that he was a particular type of way when he wasn't just off of one thing.

**Appendix G: Table 1: Domains, Categories, and Frequencies
And
Table 2: Participant Demographic Information**

Domains	Categories	Label
1. Experiences with Intraracial Microaggressions	My or other Black/African Americans' Blackness have been challenged by individual(s) belonging to my racial group	Typical
	I experience intraracial microaggressions monthly or every other month	Typical
	My or other Black/African Americans' capabilities were assumed to be inferior by individual(s) belonging to my racial group	Variant
	I received, witnessed or heard about microassault(s) from individual(s) belonging to my racial group	Variant
	Other Black/African American(s) have communicated to me that White standards of beauty are superior (e.g., colorism and texturism)	Variant
	I've experienced or witnessed Black/African American individual(s) criticize or police others belonging to my racial group regarding physical presentation	Variant
	Black stereotypes were ascribed to me or other Black/African American(s) by individual(s) belonging to my racial group	Variant
	I've experienced or witnessed general rejection by Black/African American individual(s)	Variant
	My or other Black/African Americans' cultural values and communication styles were pathologized by individual(s) belonging to my racial group	Variant
	I've witnessed Blacks/African Americans not unifying or demanding respect for our culture	Variant
	Ambiguous or unexplained racial microaggressions perpetuated by Black/African American individual(s)	Variant
	Participant as perpetrator of intraracial microaggression(s)	Variant
	I experience intraracial microaggressions rarely	Variant
I experienced intraracial microaggressions weekly or every day	Variant	

2. Characteristics of
the Perpetrator(s) of
Intraracial
Microaggressions

The ethnicity of the perpetrator was African American/Black American	Typical
I believe that the perpetrator's ethnicity influenced the incident(s).	Typical
The ethnicity of the perpetrator was unknown	Variant
The ethnicity of the perpetrator was Latinx	Variant
The ethnicity of the perpetrator was Black Caribbean	Variant
The ethnicity of the perpetrator was African	Variant
Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's geographical background	Variant
Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's physical appearance	Variant
Reported ethnic/cultural difference between participant and perpetrator	Variant
I felt that the perpetrator was raised around more people of color	Variant
Reported age difference between participant and perpetrator	Variant
Reported difference in participant and perpetrator's schooling or education	Variant
Reported similarity in participant and perpetrator's occupational field	Variant
Reported similarity in participant and perpetrator's geographical background	Variant
I don't believe that the perpetrator's ethnicity influenced the incident(s)	Variant

3. Emotional
Responses
to Intra-racial
Microaggressions

I feel/felt a negative emotional, psychological or physical response to intra-racial microaggressions	Typical
Intra-racial microaggressions had/have an effect on my everyday life	Typical
I coped/cope with intra-racial microaggressions through self-care	Typical
I coped/cope with intra-racial microaggressions by educating others or speaking out against microaggressions	Typical
I believe I would have a difference in reaction—a non-Black perpetrator would be worse	Typical
I have mixed or contradictory feelings in response to intra-racial microaggressions	Variant
I coped/cope with intra-racial microaggressions by internalizing and/or not expressing reactions	Variant
I coped/cope with intra-racial microaggressions by supporting others or receiving support	Variant
I continue to cope with the lasting effects of intra-racial microaggressions	Variant
Intra-racial microaggressions have not impacted or continued to impact my everyday life	Variant
I explain intra-racial microaggression(s) in terms of White supremacy/culture	Variant
I believe I would have a difference in reaction—a Black perpetrator would be worse	Variant
I would be indifferent towards a White perpetrator	Variant

4. Feelings About Being Black

I have positive feelings and thoughts about being Black Typical

I have mixed or conflictual feelings and thoughts about being Black Variant

5. Experiences with Interracial Microaggressions

The racial identity of the perpetrator of the interracial microaggression was White General

I received, witnessed or heard about microassault(s) from non-Black individual(s) Typical

My or other people of colors' capabilities were assumed to be inferior by non-Black individual(s) Typical

I was/other people of color were treated like a second-class citizen by non-Black individual(s) Variant

Black stereotypes were ascribed to me or other individual(s) in my racial group by non-Black individual(s) Variant

Non-Black/African American people have communicated to me that White standards of beauty are superior (e.g., colorism and texturism) Variant

My personal space or efforts have been disregarded or invalidated by non-Black individual(s) Variant

My or other Black/African Americans' Blackness have been challenged by non-Black individual(s) Variant

The racial identity of the perpetrator of the interracial microaggression was Latinx Variant

The racial identity of the perpetrator of the interracial microaggression was Asian Variant

The racial identity of the perpetrator of the interracial microaggression was Other Variant

I experience interracial microaggressions rarely Variant

I experience interracial microaggressions monthly or every other month Variant

I experience interracial microaggressions weekly or every day Variant

6. Emotional Responses to Interracial Microaggressions

I feel/felt a negative emotional, psychological or physical response to interracial microaggressions	General
Interracial microaggressions have/had an effect on my everyday life	Typical
I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by internalizing and/or not expressing reactions	Typical
I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by supporting others or receiving support	Typical
I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions through self-care	Variant
I coped/cope with interracial microaggressions by educating others or speaking out against microaggressions	Variant
I continue to cope with the lasting effects of interracial microaggressions	Variant
Interracial microaggressions have not impacted or continued to impact my everyday life	Variant

7. Experiences of Other Interracial and Intra-racial Incidents

I was offended by White individual(s)	Variant
I have received and/or witnessed negative comments/attitudes/actions from other Blacks/African Americans	Variant
Negative stereotypes or characteristics were assigned to other Blacks/African Americans	Variant

Note. General = applicable to 14-15 cases; Typical = applicable to 8-13 cases; Variant = applicable to 2-7 cases.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Information

Demographic Information	Categories	Quantity
1. Gender	Male	5
	Female	10
2. Age	18-24	1
	25-34	3
	35-44	4
	45-54	1
	55-64	2
	65-74	4
3. Ethnicity	African American	13
	Afro Caribbean	3
	Hispanic or Latino/a	3
	Other: Also Identify as Biracial	1
4. SES	Low-income/poverty	2
	Working class	1
	Lower-middle class	4
	Middle class	7
	Upper-middle class	2
5. Current Residence	United States: Northeast	14
	United States: Southeast	1