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Assessing Interaction of Black Racial Identity and Perceived Neighborhood Factors on Educational Utility

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ASSESSING INTERACTION OF BLACK RACIAL IDENTITY
AND PERCEIVED NEIGHBORHOOD FACTORS ON
EDUCATIONAL UTILITY

BY

CLIFTON BERWISE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

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OF

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ABSTRACT

Previous research findings have indicated that there continues to be an increased need to assess the impact of neighborhood and community factors on educational outcomes for Black Americans. When investigating neighborhood factors for this population, two understudied variables are perceptions of trust in neighborhood police and collective socialization, particularly in examining their impact on academic outcomes. Furthermore, it is unclear how Black racial identity interacts with the effects of these perceived neighborhood factors on educational outcomes. The present study attempted to add to the literature by exploring how the interaction of racial identity and perceived neighborhood factors impact how Black American young adults view educational success as a means to personal success and well-being (academic utility values). Using a community sample of 298 Black American young adults from across the country, this study measured whether racial identity (i.e., Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard) moderated the effect of two different perceived neighborhood factors (i.e., neighborhood police or collective socialization) on academic utility values. This interaction was measured using two hierarchical multiple regression models. The study also assessed whether reports of neighborhood factors and aspects of racial identity differed based on educational attainment using two multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) models.

Results found a negative association between perception of neighborhood police and academic utility values and a positive association between perception of

collective socialization and academic utility values. However, results differed from expectations, as racial identity did not moderate the effects of these neighborhood factors on academic utility values. Also, participants with some college or more did not report more positive perceptions of neighborhood factors or overall difference in racial identity characteristics. Study limitations, implications and future directions are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Academic success in American society has well-established links to enhanced life satisfaction and well-being (Chavous et al., 2003). There is extensive research that has found higher educational attainment and better academic performance associated with better mental health outcomes and more economic opportunities. Literature indicates that obtaining a postsecondary education can lead to increased job opportunity access, higher salaried employment and overall better quality of life (Knight-Diop, 2010). Regarding mental health outcomes, college degree obtainment was found to be associated with reduced suicidal behavior for men and women (Phillips & Hempstead, 2017). Furthermore, a study conducted by Gaydosh, Schorpp, Chen, Miller and Mullan Harris (2017) found that non-Hispanic Black American young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds who attain a college degree report fewer depressive symptoms compared to their peers who do not complete college. These findings speak to the overall importance of individual academic success and attainment. However, obtaining strong academic skills is also important to the community and nation as a whole, as individuals with poor academic skills are ill prepared to add to the more technologically advanced workforce (Gardner, Rizzi, & Council, 2014). Historically, Black Americans have underachieved academically when compared to most other racial groups in the United States. Given the link between education and academic achievement to positive outcomes, it is imperative to gain a better understanding of variables that contribute to the success for this historically underachieving group.

Black Americans have reported a rise in their socioeconomic class during recent years, a pattern mainly attributed to a rise in the attainment of higher academic degrees (Hunt & Ray, 2012; Landry & Marsh, 2011). Yet, despite these improvements in college attendance observed in recent decades (Aud et al., 2013; Garibaldi, 1997; Harvey, 2008), educational attainment in the Black community is still disproportionately low compared to other racial groups. Over the past 50 years, the racial differences in the achievement gap have been well documented as White students have historically performed better than Black students academically (Jeynes, 2015). A study conducted by Hoover and Yaya (2010) investigating educational attainment among Blacks, Hispanics and White Americans indicated that Blacks had lower educational attainment scores (9.65 versus 10.35 years of schooling) compared to Whites, contributing to lower overall income.

There is a wide array of literature discussing risk variables that deter the academic success of Black Americans. Numerous factors include lack of school engagement and/or classroom discrimination (Daresbourg & Blake, 2014; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Helms, 2006; Milner, 2007). Also, discrimination in school settings has been linked to lower academic achievement among Black Americans (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, & Hardes, 2002; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). Additional variables impacting academic underperformance for Black Americans include impoverished living/teaching conditions and lower teacher expectations (Lee et al., 2011; Milner, 2007; Noguera, 2003). A study conducted by Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) exploring discrimination in schools found that adolescents who encountered

more frequent acts of racial discrimination reported lower grades, lower academic curiosity and lower academic persistence. Not surprisingly, school failure during adolescence contributes to difficulties obtaining well-paying jobs and other struggles in adulthood (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Kimbrough & Salomone, 1993).

There is a dearth of knowledge about variables leading to high academic achievement among Black Americans. Some variables that have been identified as corresponding to improved academic outcomes for Black Americans are positive reports of racial identity and transmission of racial socialization messages (Chavous et al., 2003; Darensburg & Blake, 2014; Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Witherspoon, 1997). Recently, greater emphasis has been paid to understanding how characteristics of one's neighborhood can impact Black Americans. Collective socialization or presence of positive neighborhood role models has been identified as a factor contributing to positive gains (e.g., academic success) for Black youth, which is often carried into adulthood (Ainsworth, 2002). Another neighborhood characteristic, a negative perception of confidence in neighborhood police, has been associated with negative outcomes, such as increased violence or lack of neighborhood safety for Black Americans (Kahn & Martin, 2016). However, little research is available regarding perception of these two neighborhood variables and their potential association with the academic achievement of Black Americans. This relationship is important to understand, as previous research by Shin (2011) found that among a sample of African American third graders, those who reported feeling safe and connected in their neighborhoods reported greater confidence in their academic abilities. Since neighborhood police are the primary agents of safety for most

communities, it is important to assess how perceptions of neighborhood police shape Black Americans' academic confidence and performance. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to also assess how community personnel outside of the immediate household or family can impact academic performance as well. It is likely that greater emphasis on positive influences would provide insight into factors that lead to more positive outcomes for Black Americans.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What does “Black” mean?

For the purposes of this review, the term “Black” was used to describe individuals who self-identified as racially Black (i.e., individuals of African descent or the Black diaspora within the United States) regardless of their ethnic identification. This approach incorporates many ethnicities and cultures, embodying a very heterogeneous group. Despite the heterogeneity within this approach, conducting research with this inclusive lens allows for examination of shared experiences of Black individuals in American society.

Black American Academic Achievement

As of 2015, less than 53% of Black Americans aged 25 and older reported having some form of college education. That is the second lowest rate across all racial/ethnic groups in the country (U.S. Census, 2016). The lower academic achievement and the achievement gap between Black and White people in America is well documented (Jeynes, 2015). Some factors contributing to the underperformance of Black students include societal (Banerjee, Meyer, & Rowley, 2016) and low peer and parental academic expectations (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014; Dotterer et al., 2009).

Those studies viewed academic achievement through the lens of a “success model” that relies on mainstream measures of academic success or failure. These indicators are standardized test scores, grade point averages, dropout rates, relative number of students in advanced/ “gifted” courses and admittance into institutions of

higher learning or professional degree programs (Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Wiggan, 2014). However, Carter (2008) reported that this mainstream ideology about achievement requires individuals to take ownership of their successes and failures, but it does not account for structural conditions that might constrain or obstruct students' abilities to achieve their full academic potential. It has become apparent that although American society defines academic achievement in one way, Black students may define achievement in different ways. This disconnect of individual and institutional meanings of achievement can complicate school expectations and expose flaws in interventions aimed at improving academic outcomes for Black students (Wiggan, 2014).

Studies of high achieving Black and African American adolescents and college students have defined academic success as engaging and mastering the learning process and successfully managing complexities of school, family and personal life while making progress toward academic goals, such as receiving college degrees (Carson, 2009; Wiggan, 2014). It appears that being able to effectively juggle multiple competing ecological systems, while maintaining positive attitudes toward education is how many Black students define academic success. Mickelson (1990) found that African American students' beliefs about the personal utility of education (e.g., how useful education was to offering a higher quality of life or the belief that school and formal education is helpful for one's personal success) most strongly predicted their academic performance, highlighting the value of assessing academic utility values over more traditional predictors of educational achievement. In addition, Caldwell and Obasi (2010) found that value of education was positively correlated with GPA and

moderated the relationship between motivation to achieve and academic performance. This finding suggests that even students that are motivated to succeed and have high self-efficacy, if they do not value education, their academic performance will be negatively impacted. Despite these findings about how Black Americans view academic achievement, more research needs to be conducted to inform policies and communities about the differences across racial/ethnic groups regarding the definition of academic achievement. This more informed approach may help shift the negative trends of Black academic performance in a more positive direction.

Neighborhood Factors

Multiple studies have explored the role of neighborhood characteristics on the wellbeing of Black Americans. Findings have illuminated the importance of understanding how community and neighborhoods shape individual outcomes of this population. Byrd and Chavous (2009) indicated that the quality and use of neighborhood social networks, capital and additional neighborhood residential resources play important roles in how Black youth understand their chances for success and developing the skills necessary to obtain that success. However, some neighborhood characteristics act more as risk factors and deter the achievement of Black Americans.

Black adolescents in neighborhoods with more households below the poverty level and increased exposure to community violence reported: a) viewing school as less important for future success and b) lower college aspirations (Butler-Barnes, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2011; Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007). Also, exposure to direct violence in the neighborhood was found to be highly correlated with increased

violence at school which increased fear among Black middle school students and predicted poorer academic performance (Patton, Wooley, & Hong, 2012).

Furthermore, increased violence in the neighborhood has been associated with strong emotional and behavioral responses, such as aggression that detract from a student's abilities to focus on academic responsibilities and lead to negative academic outcomes (Busby, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2013; St. Mary, Calhoun, Tejada, & Jenson, 2018). This is prevalent in urban, lower income neighborhoods where there is an over-representation of Black Americans. Other prominent neighborhood risk factors that are associated with lower academic outcomes for Black Americans are increased neighborhood discrimination, lack of prosocial and economic opportunities, higher incidences of crime and illegal behaviors, and lack of structured community activities (Banerjee, Meyer, & Rowley, 2016; St. Mary et al., 2018; Williams & Bryan, 2013; Williams, Davis, Cribbs, Saunders, & Williams, 2002).

Despite the many risk factors associated with neighborhoods, research has also identified some protective factors for the academic success of Black Americans within neighborhoods. Byrd and Chavous (2009) found that increased neighborhood institutional resources, better schools, tutoring opportunities and after-school programing, was related to higher GPAs for Black youth. Additionally, qualitative research conducted with African American young adults who were raised in single parent urban households in the Midwestern United States reported that participants stated that community resources and institutions such as churches, community centers, libraries, youth organizations and local businesses contributed to their academic achievement (Williams & Bryan, 2013). The authors indicated that this positive

impact may be driven by several factors: a) constructive activities leading to feelings of safety, b) fostering and creating positive relationships with adults and peers, c) opportunities to develop and explore interests outside of the school context and d) create involvement in systems that did not include gangs and drugs (St. Mary et al., 2018; Williams & Bryan, 2013). These factors are particularly important because they foster opportunity for academic growth and achievement during non-school time, which accounts for almost 80% of students' waking hours (Bowen & Richman, 2002). Furthermore, it is apparent that these factors may moderate and buffer the negative effects on academic performance for Black Americans that have been associated with living in lower income households and communities with higher rates of crime and violent incidences.

Turley (2003) found that Black children who lived in neighborhoods with higher incomes and a high composition of Black people performed better than Black children who lived in high income neighborhoods that are mostly White. This finding speaks to how the interaction of SES and racial composition in neighborhoods can lead to positive academic outcomes. Newton and Onesimo Sandoval (2015) found that African American adolescents who had a favorable perception of the quality of their neighborhood were more likely to value education. These results are similar to findings from Patton, Wooley and Hong (2012), who found that among a sample of 9th grade African American males, increased parent social and school involvement around the neighborhood buffered the negative effects of community violence and problem behaviors, which indirectly promoted academic achievement. This finding suggested that increased parental presence in the neighborhood and schools may lead to higher

self-esteem for youth who are frequently exposed to community violence and this connection increases ability to cope with violence exposure and continue to focus on educational activities.

Though, these findings are promising and can add more to society's understanding about positive achievement in Black American communities, it is imperative to acknowledge that many studies only investigate contextual factors (e.g., college graduates in a specific neighborhood, number of single parent households). Very few studies have assessed the perception of neighborhood factors from the views of the Black American. These perceptions are important to understand within these various ecological systems because one's perception of their environment and surroundings impacts their behavior more than the physical environment itself (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997).

This study intended to add to the literature about how perceptions of neighborhood characteristics contribute to education utility values of Black American young adults. Although there are many neighborhood variables that impact this group, two of the less studied variables in relation to academic achievement is perception of confidence in neighborhood police and perception of positive collective socialization. As these variables contribute to the development of many ideals among Black Americans beginning in childhood and carried through adulthood, it is vital to assess how these neighborhood variables impact beliefs about education for this group.

Police perception. A comprehensive systematic review conducted by Peck (2015) found that Black Americans perceived police as more discriminatory against them and they display less confidence in the police when compared to other racial

groups. This negative perception can be detrimental because it can lead to Black communities trusting police less, decreasing the likelihood of police contact in crime situations and ultimately leading to increased community risk and unsafety (Kahn & Martin, 2016). This lack of trust and communication can create a dangerous cycle of violence and continue to damage the neighborhood perception of police, since African Americans are more likely to rate satisfaction of police services with their perceptions of the neighborhood, as opposed to objective crime rates in the neighborhood (Huebner, Schafer, & Bynum, 2004). These views may be tied to the increased media coverage of Black people being killed by law enforcement officials. Brooms and Perry (2016) found that Black men respond to these deaths with emotions such as sadness, frustration, and powerlessness. These emotions can contribute to attitudes that negatively impact academic motivation and performance for Black Americans. Given this pernicious cycle, it is not yet established how African Americans' negative perception of neighborhood police can impact school outcomes. Since various neighborhood factors, such as community violence and increased victimization, have been found to negatively impact school performance, and those variables are often monitored by neighborhood police, research should assess the relationship between neighborhood police perception and academic outcomes among Black Americans.

Collective socialization. Ainsworth (2010) defines collective socialization as the process that takes place when a young person, over time, is conditioned to behave in certain ways or adopt certain values that are reflected in the role models present in his or her community. For Black Americans, learning and development occurs inside and outside of the household, which is why collective socialization is important to

understand. Role models are particularly important for minority youth, as they can help youth better navigate educational success and still maintain a sense of racial authenticity (Ainsworth, 2010; Graham & Anderson, 2008; Tatum, 2004). For Black Americans, in neighborhoods with fewer positive role models, children are less likely to believe that they can maintain their racial authenticity, while being an academic high achiever, given mainstream society's beliefs that Black students who do well in school are "acting White" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Therefore, Black youth in these neighborhoods are less likely to learn important behaviors and attitudes that lead to success in school, due to lack of exposure and no evidence that those behaviors and attitudes are useful or desirable (Ainsworth, 2002).

Neighborhoods with greater perceptions of positive collective socialization have been associated with numerous positive outcomes among Black Americans. Simons, Simons, Conger & Brody (2004) found that higher perceptions of collective socialization was associated with reduced conduct problems. Similarly, Parker and Maggard (2009) found reduced African American juvenile arrest rates for aggravated assaults in areas where there were more perceived Black role models. Furthermore, studies have found increased health and well-being, and more positive academic behaviors (Ainsworth, 2002; Nicotera, Williams, & Anthony, 2011), among adolescents and in particular young males (Holland, 1996) in areas reporting higher levels of collective socialization. Although collective socialization is associated with positive academic outcomes, it is still unclear how it interacts with individual internal constructs such as racial identity to influence positive academic outcomes for Black Americans.

Identity

In 1993, Helms' defined racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular group" (as cited by Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 40). Core aspects of racial identity include: centrality of one's identity, awareness of racism and private regard: how favorable one feels about their racial group and public regard. Racial identity for Black Americans has been associated with various positive outcomes including improved mental health and academic achievement (Ajibade, Hook, Utsey, Davis & Van Tongeren, 2016; Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith & Demo, 2015; Lee & Ahn, 2013). In regards to mental health, Ajibade et al. (2016) found that among African American adults, racial/ethnic identity was positively associated with life satisfaction. Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Lee and Ahn (2013) reported that Black youth and adults with higher ratings of racial centrality/private regard reported lower levels of psychological distress and public regard was negatively related to both racial discrimination and psychological distress across multiple studies. In addition to decreasing negative symptoms, racial identity among Black Americans was also associated with increasing positive attributes. Hughes et al. (2015) found that African American adults with high ratings of centrality and private regard also reported higher levels of self-esteem and greater self-mastery. Despite the increased risk factors that Black Americans face, racial identity has been found to act as a moderating and coping variable contributing to overall health and well-being.

Black academic achievement and racial identity. Racial identity has also been correlated with increased academic achievement, primarily by increasing one's

confidence in academic ability and limiting behaviors associated with poor performance. Chavous et al. (2008) found that higher racial centrality, relying on race as your primary cultural identification for African American adolescents, was associated with increased school performance and positive school importance attitudes. Butler-Barns, Williams and Chavous (2012) found that African American adolescent boys who reported increased private regard also reported higher academic utility values. Additionally, other studies have found that Black high achieving college students reported that sense of collectivism and support from within the Black community are key contributors to their academic success (Carson, 2009; Harper, 2006), highlighting that they are not only succeeding for themselves, but also for their community.

Among a sample of Black adolescents in an urban community setting, private regard was significantly associated with academic self-efficacy (Butler-Barnes et al., 2011). When assessing behaviors, Byrd and Chavous (2009) found that racial importance, a variable similar to racial centrality, was negatively associated with school absences among African American adolescents. Despite the underachievement of Black Americans in society, research has found that a strong positive racial identity has been associated with positive outcomes for Black students.

Neighborhood and racial identity. Neighborhood characteristics and racial identity interact in many ways to impact the lives of Black Americans. Given the multiple systems that this population experiences daily, understanding what variables within the neighborhoods have the strongest interaction with racial identity is vital when trying to maximize positive outcomes for Black Americans. Some studies have

found that racial composition of neighborhoods and appraisal of neighborhood safety predicts racial centrality (Bennett, 2006; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009) among Black adolescents. Other studies have found that racial identity moderated the relationship between neighborhood risk and drug use intent (Corneille & Belgrave, 2007) and neighborhood racial composition and depressive symptoms (Hurd, Sellers, Cogburn, Butler-Barnes, & Zimmerman, 2013).

However, these types of studies primarily evaluate the relationship of contextual factors within the community and rely less on the individual's perception. Although understanding what physical factors interact with racial identity and ultimately academic achievement is essential, it is also important to understand perceptual evaluations. Also, it is becoming increasingly important to investigate how perceptions of infrequently studied neighborhood factors, such as perception of neighborhood police or perception of collective socialization, impact academic achievement to continue to gain more insight about what can help foster flourishing communities for Black Americans. Regarding Black Americans this is especially important since this population has been found to respond differently than other racial groups in similar physical settings (Turley, 2003). This author explored racial differences regarding the effect of neighborhood income and racial composition on tests scores, reports of self-esteem and behavior for children under the age of 13 who lived in urban settings. Finally, given the importance of a strong positive racial identity reported by high achieving Black Americans, it is worthwhile to pinpoint what promotive factors are enhanced by a positive racial identity, as well as, what risk factors are buffered against.

The Current Study

The current study aimed to measure the moderating effects of racial identity on the relationship between perception of neighborhood police or perception of neighborhood collective socialization on academic utility values. Since this community has had less academic achievement compared to other American racial groups, measuring the effect of these perceived neighborhood factors, as moderated by racial identity, on academic utility values can provide information about variables that can lead to greater success. Furthermore, this study aimed to add to the dearth of literature regarding the perceptions of neighborhood characteristics for Black young adult populations. Also, the study measured how educational attainment status impacted reports of racial identity and perception of neighborhood factors.

Guiding theory. Ecological systems theory suggests that development is influenced by the experiences, roles and activities within multiple environmental systems (e.g., neighborhood, work, school), as well as, the interactions of these environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Regarding academic achievement for Black Americans, many different ecological variables have been studied independently and in relation to each other (e.g., racial socialization, parental education, or teacher and peer expectations). Many of these variables have been assessed across the individual level, microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems. These environments happen within an individual, their home, their neighborhood and other intersecting aspects of their life.

This study was driven by the phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST; Spencer et al., 1997). PVEST suggests that one's perception of the

system has a greater influence than the physical system itself (Spencer et al., 1997). Therefore, subjective evaluations of neighborhood characteristics and racial identity will contribute to development of academic attitudes and behaviors of Black Americans and their resulting academic achievement. It is important to note that there are many ecological variables that impact the academic achievement of Black Americans, but this study focused on the assessment of racial identity, perception of positive collective socialization and perception of neighborhood police, as these variables have not been studied in relation to each other.

Study variables. There were six variables in this study. There were two independent variables. The first independent variable was: perception of neighborhood police. The second independent variable was perception of neighborhood collective socialization. The three moderating variables were aspects of racial identity: 1) Black centrality, 2) Black private regard, and 3) Black public regard. The sole outcome variable was academic utility values.

Research Hypotheses

Based upon some of the previous literature and logical suppositions, the following hypotheses were tested in the proposed study:

1. Participants who report a more negative perception of neighborhood police will also report lower academic utility values.
2. Participants who report a more positive perception of neighborhood collective socialization will report higher academic utility values.
3. Black centrality and Black private regard will moderate the relationship between perception of neighborhood police and academic utility values.

4. Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard will moderate the relationship between perception of collective socialization and academic utility values.
5. Participants identified as completing some college will report more positive perceptions of neighborhood police and more positive perceptions of neighborhood collective socialization.
6. Participants identified as completing some college will report higher ratings of Black centrality, Black private regard, and Black public regard.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 391 individuals accessed the online survey. After applying study requirements: 1) identifying as Black/ African American and 2) identifying between the ages of 18 and 25 and excluding cases with excessive missing data or incomplete data entry, a total of 298 participants were used in the analysis. An overall summary of participant demographics can be found in Table 1. The average age of participants was 21.27 years old ($SD = 2.31$, range: 18 – 25). Of the total participants, 67.1% identified as women ($n = 200$), 30.2 % as men ($n = 90$), 0.3% as genderqueer ($n = 1$), 0.3% as transman ($n = 1$), 0.3% as gender nonconforming ($n = 1$) and 0.3% preferred not to answer ($n = 1$).

Of the total participants, 32.9% reported an estimated household income between \$0 and \$14, 999 ($n = 98$), 17.8% reported an estimated household income between \$15,000 and \$24, 999 ($n = 53$), 25.8% reported an estimated household income between \$25,000 and \$49,999 ($n = 77$), 14.4% reported an estimated household income between \$50,000 and \$79,999 ($n = 43$), and 8.7% reported an estimated household income above \$80,000 ($n = 26$; Table 1). Also, 5.0% of participants reported having some high school education but not graduating ($n = 15$), 34.9% of participants reported obtaining an high school diploma or GED education ($n = 104$), 38.6% of participants reported having some college, but not graduating ($n = 115$), 16.8% of participants reported having a bachelor's degree ($n = 50$), and 3.7% of participants reported having a graduate/professional degree ($n = 11$; Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics Information of Overall Sample

Variables	Overall Mean (SD)/N	%
Age	21.27 (SD = 2.31)	
Gender		
Man	90	30.2
Woman	200	67.1
Genderqueer	1	.3
Transman	1	.3
Gender nonconforming	1	.3
Prefer not to answer	1	.3
Missing	4	1.3
Education		
< High School	15	5.0
High School/ GED	104	34.9
Some College	115	38.6
College Degree	50	16.8
Graduate/ Professional Degree	11	3.7
Missing	3	1.0
Household Income		
\$0-14,999	98	32.9
\$15,000-24,999	53	17.8
\$25,000-49,999	77	25.8
\$50,000-79,999	43	14.4
\$80,000+	26	8.7
Missing	1	.3

Note. N = 298

Regarding neighborhood setting, 47.3% of participants reported living in an urban environment ($n = 141$), 42.6% of participants reported living in a suburban environment ($n = 127$), and 9.1% of participants reported living in a rural environment ($n = 27$). The participant frequencies based on neighborhood settings can be found in Table 2. Additionally, 22.5% of participants reported living in a neighborhood with mostly White residents ($n = 67$), 50.3% of participants reported living in a neighborhood with mostly racial minority residents ($n = 150$), and 26.2% of participants reported living in a neighborhood with a racial demographic that is fairly equal ($n = 78$). The participant reports of racial diversity can be found in Table 3.

Table 2

Neighborhood Setting

	N	%
Urban	141	47.3
Suburban	127	42.6
Rural	27	9.1
Missing	3	1.0

Table 3

Neighborhood Diversity

	N	%
>50% White	67	22.5
>50% Racial Minority	150	50.3
50% White/50% Racial Minority	78	26.2
Missing	3	1.0

Procedure

This study used purposive sampling (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) to recruit participants identified as Black. Recruited participants were recruited via CINT, a targeted participant recruitment agency that collects data for individuals across different mediums (e.g., internet). CINT provides participants with individual incentives for partaking in each study. Use of this company allowed access to a nationally representative sample based on geographic location and household income. Participants were recruited in summer 2017 after approval by the URI Institutional Review Board. Participants were directed to a secure and encrypted online survey administration website (Qualtrics) where they completed the study survey. Participants were assured about confidentiality regarding identity (e.g., no identifying information or IP addresses, were collected).

Once participants accessed the site, they were asked the two screening questions: (*Are you between the ages of 18 and 25?* and *Do you identify as Black-*

regardless of ethnicity including Hispanic?). Although, there is a large amount of heterogeneity within members who identify racially as Black, it is important to assess this group as a whole to indicate potential barriers or difficulties that they collectively share. Negative responses to either or both screening questions led participants out of the survey to a page thanking them for their interest. Affirmative responses to both screening questions led participants to the informed consent form. Those who met the criteria were asked to read the Informed Consent Form for the study (Appendix A). Those who agreed to participate were asked a series of questions regarding their demographic information, perception of confidence in neighborhood police, perception of positive role models in the neighborhood, racial identity and beliefs about the importance of education.

Measures

Demographic questions. Participants were asked to indicate various demographic characteristics including age, gender identification, ethnicity, sexual orientation, level of education completed, household SES, neighborhood setting, and neighborhood composition (Table 2; Table 3; Appendix B).

Perception of police. The perception of police in the neighborhood variable was assessed via six items adapted from Vogel (2011), who created a perception of confidence in neighborhood police measure (See Appendix C). Participants were asked their views about police practices in their neighborhood. A sample item from this scale is, “*Police officers in my neighborhood are helpful to people.*” This scale evaluated responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). First, reverse scoring of item 5 was conducted by subtracting the

participant response from six. After reverse scoring was complete, the score of this index was computed by summing the total of all individual responses. Higher sums indicated a more positive perception of police within one's neighborhood. This index has been found to have adequate internal consistency in another study (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$; Vogel (2011). As presented in Table 4, internal consistency for this scale in the current study, as measured by Cronbach's α was .83.

Collective socialization. Collective socialization was assessed via eight items adapted from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN; See Appendix D; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Participants were asked about their perception of positive adult role models in their neighborhoods. A sample item from this scale is, "*One of my neighbors would do something if a group of neighborhood children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner.*" This scale was adapted to evaluate responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). First, reverse scoring of specific items was conducted by subtracting the participant response from six. After reverse scoring was complete, the score of this index was computed by summing the total of all individual responses. Higher sums indicated a perception of more positive collective socialization in one's community. This scale has been used in other research and has been found to have adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$; Simons, Simons, Conger, & Brody, 2004). As presented in Table 4, internal consistency for this scale in the current study, as measured by Cronbach's α was .74.

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity. Racial identity was measured using the 21-item Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; see Appendix

E; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). These items compose three subscales (i.e., *Centrality*, *Private Regard*, *Public Regard*) of the MIBI. Centrality measures whether race is a core part of an individual's self-concept. A sample item in the centrality subscale is, "*Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.*" A higher score on this scale indicates that an individual is more likely to define him/herself by his race as opposed to other social identities (e.g., gender, religion). Private regard measures how positive or negative an individual feels toward Black people and being a member of that group. A sample item in the private regard subscale is, "*I am happy that I am Black.*" A higher score indicates that an individual feels positive toward Black people and his/her membership in that group. Public regard measures the extent to which an individual feels that others view his/her race positively or negatively. A sample item in the public regard subscale is, "*Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.*" A higher score on this scale indicates that an individual believes that others view Black people more positively.

These scales all evaluate items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Specific items regarding each subscale are detailed in Appendix E. Each subscale is scored separately. First, reverse scoring of specific items was conducted by subtracting the participant response from eight. After reverse scoring was complete, the average of each subscale was calculated and used as the subscale's overall score. The MIBI has well-established face validity because it was conceptualized using the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Sellers et al. 1997). Furthermore, centrality has adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$). Private regard has a relatively low level of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .60$),

however it is used here because the cutoff was established at .60 by the developers' research. The developers dropped public regard from the analysis because this factor only had two items. However, given the popularity and frequency of use of this measure, the current researchers deemed it an appropriate fit for this study's aims. As presented in Table 4, internal consistency for Black centrality as measured by Cronbach's α was .67, internal consistency for Black private regard as measured by Cronbach's α was .82 and internal consistency for Black public regard as measured by Cronbach's α was .64.

Academic utility values. Achievement values will be assessed using a measure adapted from Mickelson's (1990) abstract educational attitudes scale (see Appendix F). The scale will assess participants' personal views about education and its ability to lead to personal success. A sample item from this scale is, "*Achievement and effort in school lead to job success later on.*" This scale evaluates responses on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). First, reverse scoring of item 5 is conducted by subtracting the participant response from eight. After reverse scoring is complete, the average of scale is calculated and used as the overall score. Higher means indicated greater beliefs about the utility of education in one's long term success. This measure has been found to have adequate internal consistency in other studies (Cronbach's α ranging from .71 - .86; Butler-Barnes, Williams, & Chavous, 2012; Mickelson, 1990). For this study, the Cronbach's α for this scale was .83, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Internal Consistencies of Scales

	Cronbach α
Confidence in Neighborhood Police	.83
Collective Socialization	.74
Black Centrality	.67
Black Private Regard	.82
Black Public Regard	.64
Academic Utility Values	.83

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

An *a priori* power analysis conducted in G*power 3.1 for linear multiple regressions fixed model, R^2 , deviation from zero analysis revealed that a sample size of 85 would suffice for a moderate effect size, $f = .15$, $\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .80$ and four independent variables. Another power analysis was conducted for MANOVA: Special effects and interactions indicating that a sample size of 179 would be suitable for a moderate effect size, $f^2 = .0625$, $\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .80$ for two groups, one predictor and three response variables. An additional power analysis was conducted for MANOVA: Special effects and interactions indicating that a sample size of 196 was suitable for a moderate effect size, $f^2 = .0625$, $\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .80$ for two groups, one predictor and four response variables. These preliminary analyses indicated that the study was adequately powered to detect effects.

After data cleaning, exploratory data analysis and descriptive statistics were assessed to confirm that assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and homogeneity of regressions were met. Skewness and kurtosis values for perception of neighborhood police, collective socialization, aspects of racial identity and educational utility were within normal limits satisfying the assumption of normality for these variables. Evaluation of variances and scatterplots allowed for assessment of the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity which were also within normal limits. Assessment of correlations did not indicate multicollinearity between the primary

grouping variable, and any dependent variables allowing for the acceptance of the assumption of homogeneity of regressions (Harlow, 2014).

Internal consistencies analyses for the overall sample were conducted to assess the psychometric characteristics of the scales used in the current study. Coefficient alphas for the scales ranged from .64 to .83. Internal consistencies for all scales are displayed in Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for all scales are displayed in Table 5. The four main analyses that were conducted to test the study hypotheses are presented below.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Academic Utility Values

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Confidence in Neighborhood Police	293	14.81	4.99	6.00	30.00
Collective Socialization	288	25.41	5.91	10.00	40.00
Black Centrality	286	4.42	1.01	1.00	7.00
Black Private Regard	283	5.54	1.14	2.86	7.00
Black Public Regard	291	3.66	1.04	1.00	6.83
Academic Utility Values	286	4.98	1.10	1.63	7.00

Analyses

Pearson correlations were conducted to assess the relationships between academic utility values and the perceptions of neighborhood police or perceptions of collective socialization. Two separate hierarchical multiple regression models were conducted, one for each independent variable. The models measured the effect of the study's perceived neighborhood characteristics and their interactive effects with the three aspects of Black racial identity on academic utility values. The interaction effect of perception of neighborhood police and the three aspects of Black racial identity were measured to test for a moderation effect on academic utility values. This was also the case for the perception of collective socialization independent variable. In addition, two multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) models were conducted to test whether level of education led to group differences amongst outcome variables, while accounting for gender as a covariate.

Perceived Neighborhood Factors and Education

To test the hypothesis that a negative perception of neighborhood police will also be associated with lower academic utility values (i.e., a positive correlation), Pearson product-moment correlations among the variables were obtained. It is important to note that research has found that Black Americans tend to have a negative perception of police and this study was most interested in exploring if this negative perception led to detrimental academic outcomes. Contrary to the hypothesis, amongst the sample in this study, perception of neighborhood police was found to have a negative association with academic utility values ($r = -.13, p = .03$). This finding

indicated that participants in this study who had a more negative perception of neighborhood police had a higher report of academic utility values.

To test the hypothesis that a positive perception of neighborhood collective socialization would also be associated with higher academic utility values (i.e., positive correlation), Pearson product-moment correlations among the variables were obtained. In accordance with the hypothesis, perception of collective socialization was found to have a positive association with academic utility values ($r = .20, p < .01$). This finding indicated that participants in this study who had a more positive perception of collective socialization had a higher report of academic utility values.

Significant correlations across the overall sample included the relationship between perception of neighborhood police and collective socialization, Black centrality and Black public regard, and perception of collective socialization and Black private regard. Other significant correlations across the overall sample included the relationships between the aspects of racial identity, Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard, as well as, the relationship between academic utility values and all other variables assessed in this study. Correlations among the variables for the entire sample are displayed in Table 6. When assessing correlations after separating the sample by neighborhood type (e.g., urban vs. rural), significant correlations differed. For example, perception of neighborhood police was significantly negatively associated with academic utility values for those from rural settings ($r = -.41, p = .04$), but non-significant for urban ($r = -.07, p = .41$) and suburban settings ($r = -.15, p = .1$). Correlations among the variables for urban, suburban and rural settings are provided in Tables 7, 8 and 9, respectively.

Table 6

Correlations Matrix of Perceived Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Academic Utility Values for Overall Sample

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Confidence in Neighborhood Police	-					
2. Collective Socialization	-.25**	-				
3. Black Centrality	.13*	.04	-			
4. Black Private Regard	-.02	.20*	.44**	-		
5. Black Public Regard	-.22**	.04	-.15*	-.19**	-	
6. Academic Utility Values	-.13*	.20**	.19*	.31**	.16**	-

Note. N=298, * p < .05, **p < .01

Table 7

Correlations Matrix of Perceived Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Academic Utility Values for Participants from Urban Setting

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Confidence in Neighborhood Police	-					
2. Collective Socialization	-	-				
	.25**					
3. Black Centrality	.11	-.03	-			
4. Black Private Regard	-.05	.12	.47**	-		
5. Black Public Regard	-.22*	.06	-.18*	-.21*	-	
6. Academic Utility Values	-.07	.16	.10	.28**	.17	-

Note. N=141, * p < .05, **p < .01

Table 8

Correlations Matrix of Perceived Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Academic Utility Values for Participants from Suburban Setting

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Confidence in Neighborhood Police	-					
2. Collective Socialization	-	-				
3. Black Centrality	.32**		-			
4. Black Private Regard	.15	.09		-		
5. Black Public Regard	-.04	.30**	.40**		-	
6. Academic Utility Values	-	.07	-.08	-.07*		-
	.24**					
	-.15	.22*	.31**	.35**	.20*	

Note. N=127, * p < .05, **p < .01

Table 9

Correlations Matrix of Perceived Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Academic Utility Values for Participants from Rural Setting

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Confidence in Neighborhood Police	-					
2. Collective Socialization	.04	-				
3. Black Centrality	.20	.16	-			
4. Black Private Regard	.25	.17	.43*	-		
5. Black Public Regard	-.21	-.16	-.29	.58**	-	
6. Academic Utility Values	-.41*	.39	.03	.34	-.16	-

Note. N=27, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Neighborhood Factors, Racial Identity and Education

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to test the hypothesis that Black centrality and Black private regard would moderate the relationship between perception of neighborhood police and academic utility values (see Figure 1). The dependent variable was academic utility values and the predictor variable in Step 1 was perception of neighborhood police. Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard were added in Step 2. Three interaction terms, Black centrality x Perceived neighborhood police, Black private regard x Perceived neighborhood police and Black public regard x Perceived neighborhood police, were added in Step 3. Step

1 of the hierarchical multiple regression found that perception of neighborhood police yielded a small to moderate significant effect on academic utility values ($R = .15$, $R^2 = .024$, $F(1, 259) = 6.27$, $p = .01$).

Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard were added in Step 2 of the hierarchical multiple regression. Results indicated a moderate to large effect on academic utility values ($R = .40$, $R^2 = .156$, $F(4, 256) = 11.85$, $p < .01$). Micro-level assessment of this step found small to medium effect sizes for Black private regard ($\beta = 0.27$) and Black public regard ($\beta = 0.22$), but non-significant results for perception of neighborhood police and Black centrality.

The interactions of Black centrality x Perceived neighborhood police, Black private regard x Perceived neighborhood police and Black public regard x Perceived neighborhood police were added in Step 3 of this regression model. In Step 3, results indicated a moderate to large significant effect on academic utility values ($R = .42$, $R^2 = .176$, $F(7, 253) = 7.72$, $p < .01$). However, after microlevel assessment, neither of the interaction terms added significantly to the overall model. Since neither interaction significantly accounted for additional variance within the model, this finding disproves the original hypothesis that Black centrality and Black private regard would moderate the relationship between perception of neighborhood police and academic utility values. A summary of this hierarchical multiple regression model is displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

*Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Perceived Confidence in**Neighborhood Police and Black Racial Identity as Predictors of Academic Utility**Values*

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Step 1	.15	.02		6.28	.01		
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police					.01	-.03	-.15
Step 2	.40	.16	.14	11.85	<.01		
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police					.02	-.03	-.12
Black Centrality					.07	.12	.12
Black Private Regard					<.01	.26	.27
Black Public Regard					<.01	.23	.22
Step 3	.42	.18	.02	7.72	<.01		
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police					.07	.18	.82
Black Centrality					.08	.31	.29
Black Private Regard					<.01	.61	.64
Black Public Regard					.13	.26	.25
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police * Black Centrality					.29	-.01	-.34
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police * Black Private Regard					.11	-.02	-.72
Perceived Confidence in Neighborhood Police* Black Public Regard					.79	-.00	-.06

Note. N = 260, For Step 1, *F*(1, 259); For Step 2, *F*(4, 256); For Step 3, *F*(7, 253)

A second hierarchical multiple regression model was conducted to test the hypothesis that Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard would moderate the relationship between perception of neighborhood collective socialization and academic utility values (see Figure 1). The dependent variable was academic utility values and the predictor variable in Step 1 was perception of neighborhood collective socialization. Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard were added in Step 2. Three interaction terms, Black centrality x Perceived neighborhood collective socialization, Black private regard x Perceived neighborhood collective socialization and Black public regard x Perceived neighborhood collective socialization, were added in Step 3. Step 1 of the hierarchical multiple regression found that perception of neighborhood collective socialization yielded a small to moderate significant effect on academic utility values ($R = .18$, $R^2 = .031$, $F(1, 258) = 8.35$, $p < .01$).

Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard were added in Step 2 of the hierarchical multiple regression. Results indicated a moderate to large effect on academic utility values ($R = .40$, $R^2 = .157$, $F(4, 255) = 11.84$, $p < .01$). Micro-level assessment of this step found small to medium effect sizes for Black private regard ($\beta = 0.28$) and Black public regard ($\beta = 0.22$), but non-significant results for perception of neighborhood collective socialization and Black centrality.

The interactions of Black centrality x Perceived neighborhood collective socialization, Black private regard x Perceived neighborhood socialization and Black public regard x Perceived neighborhood socialization were added in Step 3 of this regression model. In Step 3, results indicated a moderate to large significant effect on

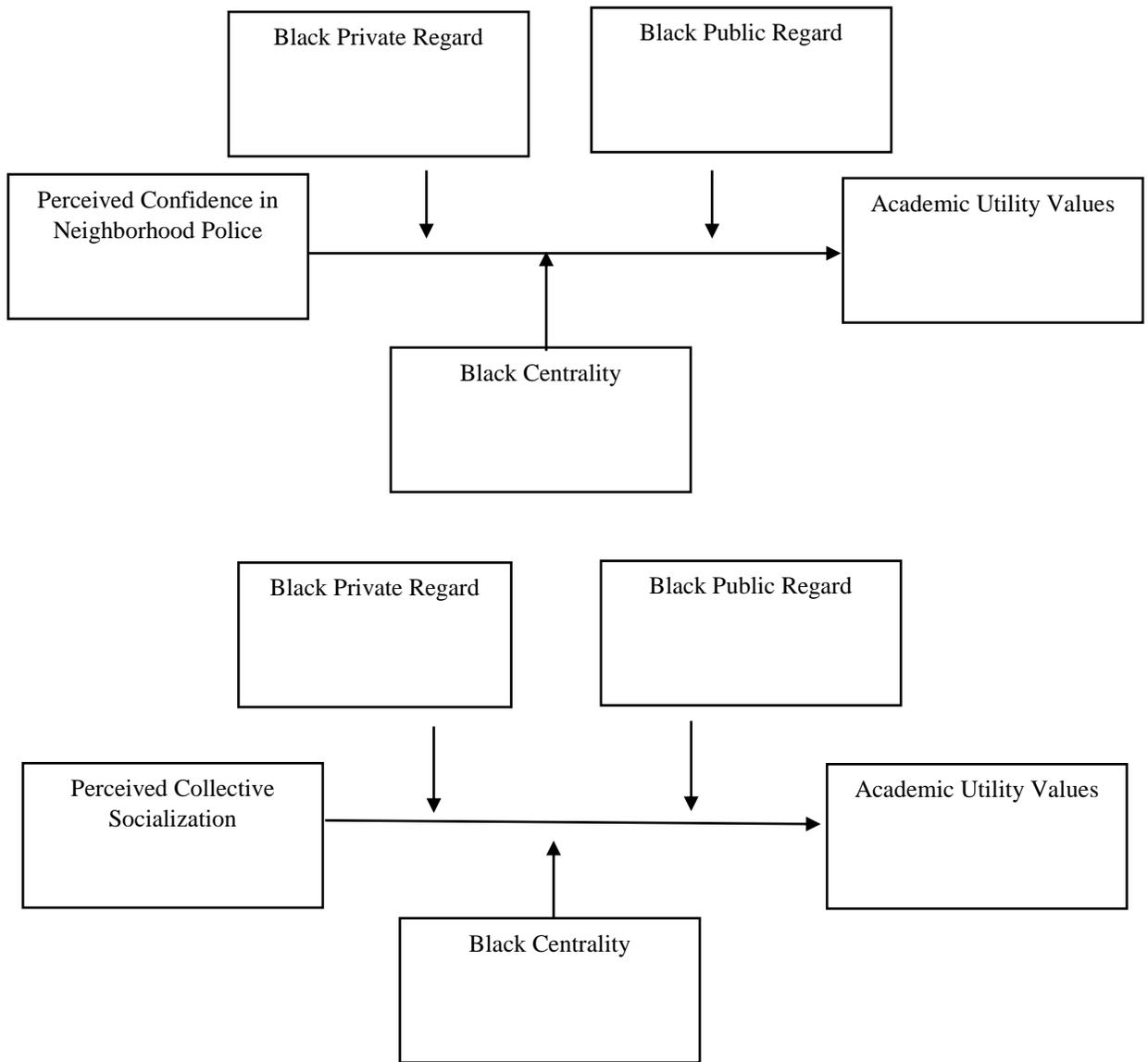
academic utility values ($R = .41$, $R^2 = .168$, $F(7, 252) = 7.28$, $p < .01$). However, after microlevel assessment, neither of the interaction terms added significantly to the overall model. Since neither interaction significantly impacted the model, this finding does not support the original hypothesis that Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard moderated the relationship between perception of neighborhood collective socialization and academic utility values. A summary of this hierarchical multiple regression model is displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Perceived Collective Socialization and Black Racial Identity as Predictors of Academic Utility Values

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Step 1	.18	.03		8.35	<.01		
Perceived Collective Socialization					<.01	.03	.18
Step 2	.40	.16	.13	11.84	<.01		
Perceived Collective Socialization					.06	.02	.11
Black Centrality					.11	.11	.10
Black Private Regard					<.01	.27	.28
Black Public Regard					<.01	.23	.22
Step 3	.41	.17	.01	7.28	<.01		
Perceived Collective Socialization					.04	.15	.83
Black Centrality					.70	.09	.09
Black Private Regard					.02	.68	.72
Black Public Regard					.06	.48	.45
Perceived Collective Socialization * Black Centrality					.30	-.01	-.31
Perceived Collective Socialization * Black Private Regard					.14	-.02	-.76
Perceived Collective Socialization* Black Public Regard					1.0	<.01	<.01

Note. *N* = 259, For Step 1, *F*(1, 258); For Step 2, *F*(4, 255); For Step 3, *F*(7, 252)



In the first model, the effect of perceived confidence in neighborhood police in Step 1, followed by the effect of the elements of Black racial identity in Step 2 and the interactive effects of perceived confidence in neighborhood police and each aspect of racial identity in Step 3. The same analysis was conducted in the second model with the independent variable being perceived collective socialization.

Figure 1. Moderation models predicting the impact of perceived neighborhood factors and racial identity on academic utility values.

Educational Attainment, Neighborhood Factors and Racial Identity

Two separate one-way multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) models were conducted to investigate the relationship between educational attainment and perception of neighborhood characteristics and educational attainment and racial identity. Participants who had accomplished at least some college and greater were in one group and participants who had completed graduation of high school or less were in another group. In the first MANCOVA, the independent variable was educational attainment, the co-variate was gender and the dependent variables were perception of neighborhood police and perception of neighborhood collective socialization. The MANCOVA did not produce significant results, $F(2, 276) = 0.80$, Wilks' Lambda = .99, $p = .15$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Since the main effect was not significant, follow up tests were not conducted. This result indicates that there was no significant differences between those who attended at least some college and those who had completed high school or less in regards to their perceptions of neighborhood police or neighborhood collective socialization.

In the second MANCOVA, the independent variable was educational attainment, the co-variate was gender and the dependent variables were Black centrality, Black private regard and Black public regard. The MANCOVA did not produce significant results, $F(3, 261) = 1.89$, Wilks' Lambda = .98, $p = .153$ partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Since the main effect was not significant, follow up tests were not conducted. This result indicates that there was no significant differences between those who attended at least some college and those who had completed high school or less in regards to their reports of the aspects of racial identity.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The decreased academic performance and attainment of Black Americans is well documented. However, there is still little literature that assesses what contributes to positive academic outcomes for Black Americans. Greater emphasis is being placed on neighborhood characteristics and how they impact functioning of Black Americans such as their beliefs about education. Furthermore, given positive findings in the past, racial identity has been identified as a promotive factor for greater educational attainment for Black Americans. The current study sought to assess the influence of two understudied neighborhood factors for the Black community. It investigated how perception of neighborhood police and perception of collective socialization influenced academic utility values, while also measuring the potential moderating effect of racial identity in a sample of Black American young adults.

The present study adds to the dearth of knowledge about the interaction between perceived neighborhood factors and racial identity and how these variables influence the importance of education of Black American young adults. This population is infrequently studied in the literature regarding levels of educational achievement values. This study also gathered information from a community sample as opposed to the typical college sample, contributing to the robustness of the study's findings. The phenomenological variant of the ecological systems theory (Spencer et al., 1997) was the guiding theory utilized in steering this research. This theory states that the self-appraisal of interacting systems in one's life has a greater influence than the actual systems themselves. Since this study assessed perceptions of neighborhood

factors, racial identity and beliefs about education, the participants were evaluating information from many levels of the ecological systems model. Also, given the perception of these variables and non-objective accounts of specific neighborhood characteristics (e.g., number of college graduates in an area), the PVEST framework was sufficiently informative.

Results demonstrated that perception of neighborhood police was significantly negatively correlated with academic utility values, which countered the original study hypothesis. This finding was inconsistent with findings from other studies. Priest and Carter (1999) found that educational attainment was positively associated with positive evaluations of police performance among a sample of African American adults. Also, Mbuba (2010) found that among a sample of college students, minorities mean responses spoke to a strong positive rating of police. However, the current study's findings were aligned with Wu, Sun and Triplett (2009) who found that African Americans in more socially advantaged neighborhoods (e.g., greater educational attainment), had more negative attitudes toward police. The difference in findings between the current study and other studies can be tied in to how the variables were measured. While the current study assessed *confidence* (belief and confidence that police will do a good job, treat everyone fairly, and not abuse their power) in neighborhood police, other studies assessed *trust* (beliefs that police will be fair and be just in their policing) in police or *satisfaction* (how satisfied or pleased they are with the police enforcement) with neighborhood policing. In addition, while this study assessed beliefs about education, other studies drew conclusions only using educational attainment. Also, current national climate regarding police mistreatment

and killing of Black Americans was likely to impact results. With the use of social media as a platform to widely publicize these events and the age of the participants in the current sample closely matching the demographic information of many individuals who have died at the hands of the police, there is likely to be an overall negative perception of police by Black Americans across all education levels. Also, of importance to note, when assessing correlation differences among geographical neighborhood types, the negative association between these two variables was strongest when participants identified living in a rural community. These findings signify that community type may have a large impact on confidence in police and education.

Results also demonstrate that perception of neighborhood collective socialization was positively correlated with academic utility values. These results are in accordance with findings from Byrd and Chavous (2009), who found that increased Black positive role models were associated with less academic disruptive behaviors (e.g., school absences). This further provides evidence about the positive association that positive collective socialization has for academic outcomes of Black Americans. These findings show that collective socialization was associated with enhanced views about the value of education, in addition to a lower likelihood of educational disruptive behaviors, which both were associated with more positive academic outcomes. Furthermore, Taylor et al. (2003) found that African American males who were members of community building organizations (e.g., church) headed by some form of community leader were more likely to rate going to school as leading to better job opportunities than a sample of Black adolescents who identified as gang members.

When assessing different community types, collective socialization was significantly associated in suburban communities but only approached significance in urban and rural communities. Although, sample size for rural communities can impact study results, this finding is also consistent with a study of African American adolescents within a rural setting that found that collective socialization was not significantly associated with academic achievement (Berkel et al., 2009). It is possible that living within a rural setting may minimize the impact of positive role models, given less contact with community leaders or greater emphasis placed on parental monitoring and racial socialization within the household. Future studies should assess the interaction of these variables specifically within the rural community and assess for differences across urban and suburban communities.

Counter to what was hypothesized in the current study, the results demonstrated that Black centrality and Black private regard did not appear to moderate the effect of perceived neighborhood police on academic utility values. It is important to note that when entered into Step 1 of the model, perception of neighborhood police had a significant effect on academic utility values, but this effect disappeared once aspects of racial identity were entered in Steps 2 and 3 of the model. All three steps of the model were significant, but results were driven by the individual aspects of Black racial identity and not the interaction terms. When viewing perception of neighborhood police as a variable assessing individuals' views on neighborhood safety, these findings differ from previous studies. Butler-Barnes, Chavous and Zimmerman (2011) found that private regard moderated the relationship between community violence and academic importance among a sample of African

American adolescents. For the sample within the current study, it is possible that the overall negative perception of neighborhood police hindered the likelihood of a interaction effect. Although these perceptions are consistent with how Black Americans have historically rated police (Peck, 2015), future studies should strive to incorporate results using a wider range of perceptions of police, when assessing moderation effects.

The findings from the current study also demonstrated that Black racial identity did not moderate the relationship of perceived neighborhood collective socialization on academic utility values, also countering the original hypothesis. Of note, collective socialization had a significant impact on academic utility values during Step 1 of the model, but not for Steps 2 and 3. Similarly to the previous regression model, all three steps were significantly associated, but microlevel assessment indicated that the interaction terms were not significant, therefore refuting the moderation. Although contrary to the original hypothesis, these findings are consistent with findings from other studies that found that Black youth who rated high racial importance had a positive association with school utility, while those who rated more positive role models in their community indicated that there were less school disciplinary actions (Byrd & Chavous, 2009). These findings hint at the possibility that aspects of racial identity and collective socialization impact academic outcomes in different ways. While racial identity may have a stronger association with utility beliefs, collective socialization may have a stronger association with reduced academic damaging behaviors. As both of these factors lead to more positive outcomes for Black Americans, these findings still indicate the importance of

environments with role models outside of the household, while simultaneously building their private regard.

The current study also found that there were no significant differences between participants who had completed at least some college education in regards to their reports of perceived neighborhood factors. This counters findings from multiple studies. Ensign (2002) interviewed Black and White participants from a mountain community in Virginia and found that Black participants who went on to attain more education cited community relationships as having a great influence on their educational aspirations. Furthermore, Wu (2014) found that Black Americans who were college educated, had reports that were positively associated with perceptions of police bias. However, the current findings are consistent with a study that found that among a sample of Black Americans who were identified as coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, neighborhood characteristics (e.g., wealthier residents, greater percentage of workers in professional or managerial positions) were associated with lower high school dropout rate, but had no effect on college graduation rates at age 25 (Vartanian & Gleason, 1999).

Therefore, the current study adds to the mixed findings regarding the significance of neighborhood factors on education for Black Americans. It is important to note that the unequal group sizes may have impacted results. These unequal sample sizes may have occurred due to natural selection bias from the recruitment method. Also, over 70% of the sample reported living within a neighborhood that was mostly minority or 50% White residents, 50 % minority residents. With the larger percentages of models within the community, educational

attainment may have had a diminished effect among this sample's perception of collective socialization.

The current study also found that there were no significant differences between participants who had completed at least some college education in regards to their reports of aspects of Black racial identity. These results add to the overall mixed findings regarding the relationship between academic outcomes and racial identity. Hurd et al. (2013) found that African American adolescents identified as at-risk academically who reported high private regard were more likely to attain a higher level of education and more positive ratings of academic beliefs than those who reported lower private regard. These findings were non-significant for centrality and public regard. It is possible that participants in the current study may be at odds regarding how education fits into their individual perception of their race. Some participants may view educational attainment as a point of pride for themselves and their race, while others may view obtaining a higher educational attainment as "acting White," therefore minimizing their desire to pursue higher education (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Although continuing to result in mixed findings regarding academic outcomes, racial identity continues to be an important variable to be assessed for Black Americans.

Limitations

It is important to note that this study had several limitations. Due to the non-experimental design of the current study, causality cannot be determined. Therefore, although significant correlations were found among aspects of racial identity and academic utility values, there is no evidence that these variables caused the beliefs

about education. Also the cross-sectional design of the current study provided a snapshot from the perspectives of a subset of the larger Black American population, thus leaving results with limited generalizability. Since participants were not followed over time periods, it is not clear how recent events have influenced their perceptions. Future research should gather longitudinal data to assess if specific neighborhood factors contribute to changes in academic utility values overtime. Furthermore, given the nature of the questions within the survey, participants were asked about perceptions of events past, without having the opportunity to provide extensive feedback regarding their experiences. Future research should utilize mixed-method or qualitative data collection to enhance the data collected and allow investigators to gain a larger perspective from study participants.

Another limitation of the current study is the nature of the recruitment for this study. These participants were all individuals who had the time and resources to complete an online electronic survey, as the sample participants were selected from a bank compiled by the recruitment company, and targeted to meet the needs of the researchers. These participants' desire to participate in online research resulted in a highly specific sample and may not mirror the general population of Black Americans. Therefore, future research should strive to seek opportunities to gain a more representative sample of Black Americans, possibly proactively recruiting in person in different community settings such as churches and/or barber shops or beauty salons.

Also, the current study recruited participants between the ages of 18 and 25, therefore naturally limiting the opportunity for educational attainment for many participants. There is a large possibility that many participants will further their

educational attainment and given the cross-sectional nature of this study, their perceptions of neighborhood factors will not be accounted for with their changed educational attainment. Furthermore, over 60% of the participants in this study identified as female. Given the well-documented differences regarding academic achievement for Black men and women, this lack of gender balance may have impacted the results. Future studies should aspire to collect more equal gendered samples.

Another limitation of the study can be associated with the choice of measures used, specifically the MIBI in assessment of Black racial identity. Since there are presently different psychometrically sound measures that have been used to assess aspects of racial/ethnic identity, such as the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) or the Collective Self-Esteem Scale-Race (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), results may differ given the way these measures are constructed. With the different theoretical constructs of these measures, it is possible that varied tools of measurement may result in different results regarding neighborhood factors or educational utility values. Future studies should evaluate these variables with different constructed measures of racial identity.

Also, the current study found non-significant results for the overall sample across multiple analyses but significant results when individual community types (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) were evaluated. Future studies should run separate analyses to assess differences between these groupings as this can provide information about perceptions of neighborhood police or collective socialization in different areas.

Implications

Despite the study's limitations, it has provided valuable data regarding the impact of understudied neighborhood factors, racial identity, geographical setting and academic utility values, specifically for Black American young adults, a population that there is a dearth of information on in research. Results have indicated that there is a negative association between perception of confidence in neighborhood police and academic utility values. This relationship continues to be worthwhile to explore, especially given the growing presence of police in schools that many low-income predominantly Black Americans populate. Understanding qualities that mitigate the negative perception of police and continue to allow students to have high aspirations is important. Identifying these qualities can help create interventions that lead to positive academic outcomes for Black Americans, particularly in situations where there may be a lack of perceived safety or lack of positive connections with authority figures. Another finding from this study is that collective socialization was associated with academic utility values, speaking to the importance of continuing to incorporate positive models into programs that increase academic outcomes for Black Americans. Results can also inform community programs on how perceptions of neighborhood factors can in fact differ by geographical neighborhood setting (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) and speak to the importance of assessing these variables within these settings. Furthermore, this study adds to a limited amount of literature highlighting environmental based factors and how they contribute to the academic beliefs/success of Black American young adults. Lastly, this study increases awareness about the

importance of assessing perceptions in addition to objective measures of neighborhood factors and their impact on Black Americans.

Future Directions

The present study is among the first to explore perceptions of neighborhood police, collective socialization and their interactive impact with racial identity on academic outcomes for a sample of Black American young adults. Future examinations should strive to incorporate a larger sample of Black Americans with greater equality within geographic neighborhood types and gender identifications. These samples would strengthen research findings and allow for an assessment of intergroup differences. Also, since this study assessed perceptions of variables, it would be beneficial to incorporate qualitative responses as well. Therefore future studies should consist of mixed methods or qualitative study designs. Qualitative responses would provide insight as to how participants believe variables relate to each other and also provide individual perspectives about the significance of police, role models and racial identity in their academic pursuits.

Since the current study asked participants to rely on retroactive perceptions of neighborhood characteristics, it would be beneficial to assess these variables in a longitudinal design. This would monitor changes in perception of variables and also give more time for participants who did not have the opportunity to attain educational milestones in the current study. Furthermore, future studies should assess for gender differences amongst the sample. It is well documented that Black American males report greater amounts of racial discrimination than females, and it is important to see if their perception of neighborhood police differs as well and impacts academic utility

beliefs. Lastly, since the current study did not find racial identity as a moderator of the relationship between perception of these neighborhood factors for this population, investigators should try to identify other variables that function as moderators in order to determine variables that serve important functions in academic success for Black American young adults.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to add to the literature exploring the interactions of perception of neighborhood police and racial identity, as well as perception of collective socialization and racial identity's impact on academic utility values. Both of these perceived neighborhood factors was significantly associated with academic utility values. There was a negative association between perception of neighborhood police and academic utility values and positive association between perception of positive collective socialization and academic utility values. Differing from expectations, racial identity did not moderate the effect of perception of neighborhood police or perception of collective socialization on academic utility values. Also, level of educational attainment did not lead to differing reports of perceived neighborhood factors or reports of racial identity.

The present study demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between these perceived neighborhood variables and how Black Americans view the usefulness of education. There are many studies that detail the impact of contextual neighborhood factors, but few that discuss perceptual or subjective accounts of neighborhood factors. Furthermore, confidence in neighborhood police, a major predictor of neighborhood safety has rarely been assessed in relationship to academic outcomes for Black

Americans. The use of alternative research methods such as mixed methods or qualitative measures to assess the influence of neighborhood variables and racial identity is important. Future studies should investigate the differences between gender groups and geographical settings to evaluate the different impact on the lives of Black American young adults to better inform interventions for this population. Also, greater detail should be paid to the perceptions of different variables that contribute to the overall academic success or failure of Black American young adults. It is vital to learn how they interact to create the most effective community and individual interventions for this population.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Rhode Island
Department of Psychology
Chafee Hall
10 Chafee Rd
Kingston, RI 02881

Title of Project: Assessing Interaction of Black Racial Identity and Perceived
Neighborhood Factors on Education

PLEASE PRINT THIS FORM FOR YOURSELF

Dear Participant,

You have been invited to take part in the research project described below. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact graduate student investigator, Clifton Berwise, M.A. (cberwise@my.uri.edu) or faculty investigator, Paul Florin, Ph. D., (pflorin@uri.edu).

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of perception of specific neighborhood variables in conjunction with racial identity on academic achievement. Findings from this study would lead to improved understanding of how individuals' racial identity may serve as a coping response used to minimize the adverse effects associated with negative perceptions of one's neighborhood. Responses provided by participants will be collected and stored online through an encrypted website. It will then be gathered and stored on a password protected computer.

You must be between 18 and 25 years old to participate in this research project.

If you decide to take part in this study, your participation will involve completing an online survey pertaining to individual beliefs around positive role models in the community, trust in neighborhood police and perceptions regarding the Black race.

The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal, although you may feel some discomfort or emotional distress while answering questions relating to trust in neighborhood police. However, if any discomfort should arise, you have the right to immediately withdraw from the survey. You may also contact the investigators with any concerns that arise due to participation in this project.

Although there are no direct benefits of the study, your answers will help increase knowledge about responses to perception of negative neighborhood characteristics and how it may impact academic achievement for Black young adults.

Your participation in this study is anonymous. Your answers are private. No one else will know you participated in this study or find out your specific answers. Scientific reports will be based on group data and will not identify you as participant in this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in this study, you may quit at any point or skip any question that you feel uncomfortable answering. You will not be penalized in any way if you do not wish to participate or quit the study before you complete this survey.

Participation in this study is not expected to be harmful or injurious to you. However, if this study causes you any injury or stress, you should email Clifton Berwise (cberwise@my.uri.edu) or Dr. Paul Florin (pflorin@uri.edu) at the University of Rhode Island. In addition, if you have other concerns about this study or if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Rhode Island's Vice President of Research and Economic Development, 70 Lower College Road, suite 2, URI, Kingston, RI, (401) 874 – 4328.

You are at least 18 years old. You have read the consent form and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. Your filling out the survey implies your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Please print this consent form for your records. By clicking “NEXT” at the bottom of this screen you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the information above and freely give your consent to participate in this research study.

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. What is your current age? _____
2. What is your ethnicity? _____
3. What is your gender?
 - a) Male
 - b) Mostly Male
 - c) Intersex
 - d) Mostly Female
 - e) Female
 - f) I choose not to answer
4. What is your sexual orientation?
 - a) Only attracted to women
 - b) Mostly attracted to women
 - c) Equally attracted to men and women
 - d) Mostly attracted to men
 - e) Only attracted to men
 - f) I choose not to answer
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a) 8th grade or less
 - b) Some high school but did not graduate
 - c) High School Diploma/ GED
 - d) Some college (e.g., one year, Associate's degree)
 - e) College degree (i.e., Bachelor's degree)
 - f) Graduate degree and/or Professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, JD, PhD)
6. What is your estimated household income?
 - a) \$0 - \$14,999
 - b) \$15,000 - \$24,999
 - c) \$25,000 - \$49,999
 - d) \$50,000 - \$79,999
 - e) \$80,000 +
7. What kind of setting would you describe your neighborhood?
 - a) Urban
 - b) Suburban
 - c) Rural
8. How diverse is your neighborhood?
 - a) More than 50% White

- b) More than 50% racial minority (e.g., Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American)
 - c) Even split (50% White and 50% racial minority)
9. How often do you see law enforcement officials in your neighborhood (e.g., police officers on foot patrol) that were not immediately responding to an incident?
- a) Once a day
 - b) Once a week
 - c) Once a month
 - d) Less than once a month
 - e) Never
10. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood when alone at night?
- | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Very unsafe | | | Very safe |
11. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood when alone during the day?
- | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Very unsafe | | | Very safe |
12. Have you ever had any direct contact/ encounter with the police over the past year? If yes, please answer parts a and b below.
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
- a. Describe the nature of the contact/ encounter. (e.g., traffic stop, random conversation, questioning, etc...) _____
 - b. Who initiated this contact/encounter?
 - 1) The police officer
 - 2) I did
13. Over the past year, how often would you say that critical incidents have occurred in your neighborhood that should have require police involvement? Critical incidents can be defined as: homicides, suicide, domestic violence, robbery, violent crimes, unsupervised property damage, life threatening events, etc...
- a) More than once a week
 - b) Once a week
 - c) Once every month
 - d) Once every six months
 - e) Once a year
 - f) Less than once a year

27. People in this neighborhood do not share the same values.

1
(Strongly disagree)

2

3

4

5

(Strongly agree)

47. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.
- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| (Strongly disagree) | | | | | | (Strongly agree) |
48. Society views Black people as an asset.
- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| (Strongly disagree) | | | | | | (Strongly agree) |

* Items 28 - 35 represent the centrality subscale of the MIBI
 ** Items 36 – 42 represent the private regard subscale of the MIBI
 *** Items 43 – 48 represent the public regard subscale of the MIBI

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