Racism in Context:
An Exploration of Where and How Black Adolescent Males Respond to Racism

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Abstract of Dissertation

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Objectives: This qualitative investigation examined where Black adolescent males experience racism and how they respond to racism in those identified contexts. Methods: A sample of 10 Black adolescent males (M age = 15.7) from an urban metropolitan area completed semi-structured individual interviews regarding the contexts where they have experienced racism and how they chose to respond to racism in those contexts. Interviews were coded using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results: Results indicated that participants experienced racism in five different contexts: school, store, law enforcement, online, and travel. Participants also reported that they have two common responses to racism: shrug it off and that gut feeling. Participants highlighted that they overwhelmingly shrug it off in 4 of the 5 contexts while law enforcement caused them to have that gut feeling. Conclusions: Implications for practice and programming to support the mental health of Black adolescent males are discussed.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the family and friends who have supported me in small and large, direct and indirect, spoken and unspoken ways throughout the past 7 years. They believed that this Black man, who grew up on the Southside of Chicago, would one day become a doctor. I feel blessed that the prayers, love, and words of encouragement were never-ending. I wish to especially acknowledge:

Mom who has taught me to always put God first and to pursue every dream I desire.

Dad who has taught me that if you work hard, you will succeed in life.

Courtney, my wife and best friend, who has taught me to tirelessly fight for social justice and to always be an example for those around me.

Sharon who has taught me to be a researcher and an activist.

I also want to dedicate this to the family members who have passed on but continue to shine their light down on me: Grandma Sal and Grandpa David.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the United States (U.S.), racism is prevalent and has negative effects on Black[1] adolescents. While theoretical models suggest context is important for adolescents' experience of racism, most research has not explored the contexts in which racism occurs. Among research that has explored context, there are two limitations. First, research has not explored the myriad of contexts in which Black adolescents experience racism. Research that has explored the contexts in which Black adolescents experience racism has typically asked about a single context instead of multiple contexts in which racism may occur. Among researchers who have examined more than one context of racism with Black adolescents, studies have predetermined the contexts in which adolescents report their experiences. Second, despite models suggesting the importance of context for how individuals experience racism (Clark et al., 1999; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Myers, 2009; Paradies et al., 2013), research has not examined how Black adolescent males' responses to racism may change in different contexts. This is important because the way Black adolescent males respond in different contexts may have implications for the impact and severity of the negative outcomes associated with racism. To address these limitations, this study will explore the contexts in which Black adolescent males experience racism and if their responses vary depending on the context.

Prevalence and Negative Effects of Racism

In the United States, racism is prevalent and has negative effects on Black adolescents (Krieger, 2005; Marmot, 2005; Marmot, et al., 1978; Romero & Roberts, 1998; Williams & Collins, 2001; Williams, et al., 2003). The Pew Research Center (2017) reported that from 1995-2017, U.S. Americans' belief that racism was a

significant problem increased from 41% to 58%, indicating that racism is becoming increasingly salient in the United States. For Black adolescents, the experience of racism is common in their lives (FBI, 2018). Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers and Jackson (2008) reported that Black adolescents experienced at least one incident of racism in the previous year and that older adolescents (i.e., ages 14-17) reported more experiences than their younger counterparts (i.e., ages 10-13). Nyborg and Curry (2003) also reported that Black adolescents perceived racism in their daily lives. And for Black adolescents, racism was prevalent within their schools (Fisher & Wallace, 2000; Seaton & Douglass, 2014). The prevalence and effects of racism are particularly important during the adolescent period.

During adolescence, Black youth undergo developmental differences such as identity development and increased awareness of racial discrimination. One aspect of adolescent development is identity development. As adolescents begin to formulate their own identity they start to evaluate potentially threatening incidents they may encounter within their environments (Spears-Brown, & Bigler, 2005). Black adolescents' acquisition of advanced knowledge, as they develop their own identity, help them to begin to conceptualize ideas and issues related to race and Black culture (Sellers et al., 2006). During adolescence, youth begin to perceive and appraise social situations differently than in childhood (Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988). As Black adolescents begin to evaluate potentially negative racial incidents, they are better equipped to identify and understand subtle, racially-charged instances (Cross & Cross, 2008; Spears-Brown, & Bigler, 2005; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams 1990). Characteristic of adolescent development, adolescents begin to think about others within social contexts in more

abstract ways (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997). Black adolescents become cognizant of the fact that they may be viewed negatively because of their racial group membership (Dubois et al., 2003; Fisher, Wallace & Fenton, 2000). Even though Black children can identify their racial group as early as the preschool years (Katz, 2003), they lack the terminology and more sophisticated cognitive abilities to articulate racism in the United States (Jernigan & Daniel, 2011). Although Black adolescents have an increased understanding of their experiences with racism and greater language to describe racism, the language that they use to describe their experiences may not translate to the language used by Black adults. Critically, the experience of racism during adolescence contributes to a myriad of negative outcomes for Black adolescents including high blood pressure (Chen et al., 2004; Goosby et al., 2015), high allostatic load (Brody et al., 2014; Hope et al., 2015), low academic achievement (Eccles et al., 2006), depressive symptoms (English et al., 2014; Sellers et al., 2006; Tynes et al., 2008), anxiety (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009), and substance use (Cooper et al., 2008; Gibbons et al., 2012; Gibbons, et al., 2004). Given this, it is important to understand Black adolescents' experiences with racism and how they respond to racism.

The Role of Context in Adolescents' Experience of Racism

Context may be one factor that will aid in the understanding of Black adolescents' experiences with racism. Specifically, *context* is defined as the interdependence of personal, physical, and social aspects of a given environment, setting or situation (Clitheroe et al., 1998). Two models that help to explain the role that context may have on Black adolescents' experiences of racism are Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model

(Bronfenbrenner, 1994) and Garcia Coll and Colleagues Integrative Model (Garcia Coll et al., 1996), which are described below.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (1994)

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; see Figure 1) provides a helpful framework for understanding Black youth's experiences with racism and the consequences of racism for their health and wellbeing. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model posits that different contexts can impact an individual's developmental outcomes. Bronfenbrenner's model has five systems that are interconnected: 1) the Individual 2) the Microsystem 3) the Mesosystem 4) the Exosystem 5) the Macrosystem and 6) the Chronosystem. Together, the five systems in Bronfenbrenner's model highlight the importance of context on developmental outcomes, which may help to enhance the understanding of the role context may play in the experience of racism for Black American adolescents.

Gender is one *individual* factor that is important for understanding the experience of racism and the response to racism. Black adolescent males and females may differ in the frequency of experiences with racism, the perceptions and stereotypes of physical appearance associated with being Black, and the reactions adolescent males and adolescent females have to racism.

Black adolescent males report more racial discrimination than their female counterparts (Seaton et al., 2009). Black adolescent males typically experience more unfair treatment in the classroom than their female peers, (Honora, 2002; Swanson et al., 2003) such as more discipline in the classroom (Davis, 2003), more social exclusion by teachers and peers (Roderick, 2003), and more negative criticism in the classroom

(Noguera, 2003). Subsequently, implicit racial biases of educators may be a possible reason for the racial disparity in school suspensions. For example, educators tend to characterize Black males' behavior as disruptive, even when it is similar to other children's behavior (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016). In addition, Black adolescent males are more likely to be stereotyped as having learning disorders, difficulty sustaining attention, behavior and emotions, and low academic motivation and involvement (Ferguson, 2000; Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 1998; Neal McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003; Noguera, 2003; Thomas & Stevenson, 2009).

There is also evidence that society views Black adolescent males' and females' physical appearances differently. Black boys are perceived as older than females beginning at age 10 (Goff et al., 2014), viewed as Black adult males (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Spears-Brown, & Bigler, 2005), and perceived as more threatening in the United States (Goff et al., 2014; Kahn, Goff, Lee & Motamed, 2016; Rattan, Levine, Dweck, & Eberhardt, 2012); thus, police officers are more likely to use force against males than females (Goff et al., 2014). As a result of Black boys being perceived as older, Black adolescent males are disproportionately racially profiled in American society (Cochran & Warren; 2012; Warren et al., 2006; Weatherspoon, 2004). Current media related incidents emphasize that Black adolescent males are perceived as adult-like as demonstrated by the policing, criminalization, and deaths of Black adolescent males such as Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice and Michael Brown (Chaney & Robertson, 2015). For example, George Zimmerman and his legal team referred to Trayvon Martin as "suspicious" and "a scary Black man," (Allen, 2013), and the Cleveland police officer who shot Tamir Rice stated, "Shots fired, male down, Black male, probably 20," (Dewan & Oppel, 2015). These

examples illustrate how the experience of racism can differ based on the physical maturation of Black adolescent males who are being perceived as adult-like Black males although they remain adolescents.

Black adolescent males and females may also have different reactions to their experiences with racism. Research has shown that Black males cope with their experiences of racism differently than females (Cunningham & Walker, 1999; Spencer et al., 2004) such as more substance use (Assari et al., 2018), and less reliance on the support and assistance of others (Danoff-Burg et al., 2004). There has also been evidence that Black males who experience personal racism report more general stress than their female counterparts (Dubois et al., 2002). The *Microsystem* focuses on the relationship between the individual and the immediate environment (e.g., school, home, workplace, neighborhood, etc.). It is in the microsystem that the most direct interactions with the individual take place, such as with parents, peers, police, and teachers. The individual is an active participant in the context and helps to create and identify the context. The *Mesosystem* is the intersection where two microsystems merge. Examples of the mesosystem are the relationship of family experiences to school experiences, school experiences to church experiences, and family experiences to peer experiences. For example, parents' relationships with teachers can directly impact the child's interactions with the teacher. The *Exosystem* describes interactions between two or more contexts that do not involve the individual but affect the individual. They encompass, among other structures, the world of work, the neighborhood, mass media, agencies of government (i.e., local, state, and national), the distribution of goods and services, and social networks. The *Macrosystem* is the overarching pattern of the lower order systems within

the framework of culture, belief systems, lifestyles, and customs. With the individual at the center, the macrosystem encompasses aspects of all previous systems (e.g., cultural norms). The *Chronosystem* encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to a child's environment. Some of the features within this system can include both internal and external experiences over time, such as the psychological understanding of societal norms or the passing of a family member. As children get older, they may react differently to environmental changes and may be better able to determine how these changes will influence them.

Garcia Coll and Colleagues' (1996) Integrative Model

Bronfenbrenner's model (1994) suggests that examining the role of context is central to understanding adolescents' experiences with racism. However, Bronfenbrenner's interconnected systems fail to theorize about the experiences of ethnic-minority youth specifically. To address this shortcoming, Garcia Coll et al. (1996) conceptualized an integrative model that highlights the developmental competencies in racial/ethnic minority children with particular attention to environments and contexts where adolescents may experience racism. Related to Bronfenbrenner's model, Garcia Coll and colleagues emphasize how adolescents' social position can magnify or diminish their environments. Specific environments may influence racism through societal norms such as oppression, segregation, and ecological/adaptive cultures that are rooted in traditions, cultural legacies, and economic or political histories. As a result, racism may occur in multiple environments such as schools, neighborhoods, healthcare contexts, and police contexts. These various environments can influence how adolescents respond to racism (e.g., child characteristics and familial environments), which lead to cognitive,

social, and emotional developmental outcomes. Garcia Coll and colleagues' model emphasizes that the environment where Black adolescents experience racism influences their responses and developmental outcomes. This model complements Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model and suggests how experiences with racism may differ depending on the context in which experienced. Despite this strength, Garcia Coll and colleagues' model fails to consider whether these various environments influence how adolescents respond to racism. Similarly, models that describe the effects of racism on individual's outcomes do not examine response. Understanding both where the experience of racism occurs, and the response is important to informing intervention. These responses must be examined as they may help to shape adolescents' cognitive, social, and emotional developmental outcomes following experiences with racism.

Racism Experiences in Different Contexts

Together, Bronfenbrenner's model and Garcia Coll and Colleagues' model suggest that context may play an important role in whether Black adolescents' experience racism in which racism was experienced (see Figure 1). Black adolescents' experiences with racism are not uniform and they may experience racism across multiple systems.

Microsystem

There are several different microsystems that are salient for Black adolescents' experiences with racism, such as school, classroom, traffic stops, neighborhood, work, online and stores. However, the only two contexts that are commonly studied in racism literature are the school and online contexts. Seaton and Douglass (2014) conducted a study that examined the school context as a moderator of the relationship between daily racial discrimination and depressive symptoms. They found that 97% of Black

adolescents reported having at least one discriminatory experience per day over a two-week period. Rosenbloom and Way (2004) explored Black adolescents experiences with racism in the school context and found that Black adolescents reported experiencing racial discrimination in school from their teachers, such as unfair treatment and low expectations. Cogburn et al. (2011) also explored racism in the school context and found that for both Black boys and girls, more experiences with racial discrimination were associated with more depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem.

Several studies have examined Black adolescents' experiences of racism online (Stewart, et al., 2019; Tynes et al., 2014; Tynes et al., 2015; Tynes et al., 2018). Tynes et al. (2008) examined the associations between direct and vicarious experiences of online racial discrimination (e.g., experiencing people saying rude or mean things because of their race) among White, Black, and multiracial adolescents. They found that 29% of Black adolescents and 42% of multiracial adolescents experienced individual online racial discrimination. They also reported that 71% of Black adolescents and 64% of multiracial adolescents witnessed online racial discrimination happen to their peers. Another study of Black and Latino adolescents' experiences with online racial discrimination found that Black and Latino adolescents reported an increase in direct online racial discrimination over time (Tynes et al., 2015).

While research has mainly explored racism in the school and online contexts, Black adolescents may also experience racism in other microsystems such as stores (Gabbidon, 2003; Lee, 2000); their neighborhoods and with the police (Stewart et al., 2009). Some research suggests that boys and girls may experience racism in these contexts differently. For example, Wiehe et al. (2010) examined the association between

Black and Latino adolescents' experiences with racism. They explored racism at school/work, neighborhood, shops, and police. Wiehe et al. found that Blacks girls reported more racism in shops while Black boys reported experiencing more racism with the police. Black adolescents reported having similar experiences of racism in the school and neighborhood contexts. Their experiences in these contexts may shape how they interact and respond to racism in different environments.

Mesosystem

The Mesosystem includes the interaction between the different microsystems where racism is experienced by Black adolescents. For example, Black parents' experiences with school teachers may subsequently impact the adolescents. Parents who perceive their adolescents' school to be unfair may socialize their children to be prepared for biases with teachers. It is also possible that Black families' experiences of racism are related to their adolescents' peer experiences. Black families may have certain norms within the home that differ from those of the child's peers. These different norms can impact how their children engage with others such as peers from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Studies suggests that parents' experiences with racism influences the type and amount of racial socialization messages they deliver (Hughes et al., 2006). For example, Hughes and Johnson (2001) found that the more racism parents reported, the more cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages they delivered to their children. Similarly, parents who experience racism in social, community, and occupational contexts (e.g., Hughes, 2003) deliver more frequent messages about racial bias to their children, possibly because they anticipate that their children will encounter racism.

Exosystem

The Exosystem functions as the connection between contexts that Black adolescents do not interact with but are affected by events that occur in those contexts. For example, when a Black adolescent hears about a peer being shot by a police officer in their community, it may change how they interact with officers in both the school and community context. In addition, Black parents' experiences in the workplace (i.e., racism, downsizing, not receiving a promotion; Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Wingfield, 2007) may alter how parents interact with their children. Black parents' experiences at work may then impact the services that they normally provide to their children such as providing food for their children, housing stability, and even racial socialization messages about how their children should interact with authority figures at work.

Macrosystem

The Macrosystem includes societal policies and practices such as institutional racism. Institutional racism is defined as the failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to individuals because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin (Gillborn, 2006). Historically, the beliefs about the inferiority of Blacks has been translated into policies that limit the resources available to them. Research has shown that Blacks often experience institutional racism in schooling (Ross & Jackson, 1991), policing (Phillips, 2011), and racial segregation (Williams & Collins, 2001). For example, Ross and Jackson (1991) assessed teachers' expectations of Black males' and Black females' academic achievement. Teachers reported more negative expectations of Black males even when they had equivalent qualifications.

In the education system, Black adolescents are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline, such as out-of-school suspension and expulsion than their White peers (Skiba et al., 2002). These early experiences in schooling can create a snowball effect, resulting in overrepresentation of Black youth in the justice system including, arrest, referral, convictions (Engen et al., 2002; Hsia et al., 2004). Relatedly, there is also evidence of institutional racism in policing practices and policies with Blacks. National survey estimates reveal that more than 40 percent of Blacks living in the United States reported being discriminated against or treated unfairly by the police at some point in their lives because of their race (Weitzer & Tuch, 1999, 2005). There is also evidence that Black adolescents also report negative experiences with the police (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Hagan et al., 2005; Leiber et al., 1998; Stewart et al., 2009). The higher frequency of racism by the police also may reduce Blacks confidence and trust in the law and agents of the criminal justice system (Anderson, 1999; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

Institutional racism has also been reported through racial segregation in the United States, which affects Black adolescents. Williams and Collins (2001) suggest that racial segregation is the primary cause of racial differences in socioeconomic status for Blacks because it decides who receives which services and resources in different communities. For example, Blacks are more likely to live in high poverty neighborhoods than other races (Firebaugh & Acciai, 2016). Blacks living in high poverty neighborhoods may feel powerless to overcome the disparate economic and human resources between poor and middle-income neighborhoods. Additionally, societal norms including those seen by Black adolescents on the television and online (e.g., stereotypes

of Blacks in media) may negatively impact their self-perceptions (O'Connor et al., 2000; Ward, 2004).

Chronosystem

The Chronosystem highlights how racism over time can have similar or different effects on adults and their children. Historically, studies have shown that both overt forms of racism such as racial discrimination and covert forms of racism such as microaggressions and institutional racism have remained significant stressors (Bobo et al., 2012; Devine & Elliott, 1995; Dovidio et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2012). The experience of racism can change generationally, which may cause racism to occur in different environments, and affect those individuals differently as well. For example, Black parents who grew up during the civil rights movement, may have different experiences with racism than their children who play videogames, or watch a significant amount of television.

Variation in Perception and Responses to Racism According to Context

Together, Bronfenbrenner's and Garcia Coll's models highlight the importance for context for understanding youth's experience of racism. In addition, context may be a factor that determines whether an environmental stimulus is perceived or labeled as racism. Reflecting this point, Clark et al. (1999) contextual model (see Figure 2) describes the conditions under which a stimulus is perceived as racism. Clark et al. (1999) propose that sociodemographic, psychological, and behavioral, and constitutional factors determine whether racially discriminatory environmental stimuli are perceived as racism. Sociodemographic factors include social and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (SES). For example, Black males and

females may have different experiences and responses to racism. Another example is that SES is often associated with racial discrimination and can impact the way in which Blacks perceive different events based on where they live. Psychological and behavioral factors include, but are not limited to, self-esteem, anger expression, and perceived control that can influence how various events can be perceived as racial discrimination. Constitutional factors encompass the physical and mental characteristics of an individual. For example, Black adolescents' skin tone may cause society to differentially perceive and interact with them compared to their White counterparts. In addition, context may be another factor that informs whether or not an event is perceived as racism; in Figure 3, context is added between the environmental stimulus and the perception of the event within an adapted version of Clark et al.'s Biopsychosocial model. For example, Black adolescents may report that in various contexts (e.g., stores, traffic stops, video games, social media platforms) they commonly experience racism. This proposition will be tested in this dissertation research.

Clark et al. (1999) also highlighted race-specific coping responses (e.g., active and passive coping) that may alter the psychological and physiological responses that Black adults may use when they encounter racism (Figure 2). According to Clark and colleagues, some Black adults may have blunted or no psychological or physiological stress responses as a result of their coping responses while others may have varying psychological (e.g., anger, paranoia, anxiety, frustration, and resentment) and physiological (e.g., increased heart rate and increased blood pressure) stress responses. These stress responses can impact Blacks' health outcomes. There is also evidence that there are behavioral responses to racism such as antagonizing, avoiding,

freezing, or engaging with the perpetrator (Trawalter et al., 2009). While coping, psychological, physiological, behavioral responses have been highlighted for Black adults, it is also important to understand Black adolescents' myriad of responses to racism and how their responses may differ depending on the microsystem. For example, in the school context, Black adolescents may be more likely to confront their peers who discriminate against them and express anger but not their teachers because their teachers have the ability to alter their grades and apply disciplinary actions in the school. Black adolescents' responses to online discrimination might be different than in-person responses. For example, Black adolescents may be more likely to confront and publicize online racism because it does not pose an immediate threat to their well-being. Black adolescents´ responses to racism may differ based on societal norms. For example, the infamous Clark Doll Experiment (Clark & Clark, 1947) highlighted how Black youth chose and perceived the White doll to be nicer than the Black doll. The Clark Doll Experiment has often been replicated since the 1940's. The replicated studies supported the findings and revealed that White children showed a clear tendency to identify with their skin tone while Black children tended to reject their own ethnic group (Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009). At a very young age, Black youth had already internalized racism and perceived White children to be superior to them. Examples like the Clark Doll Experiment and common beauty standards and norms in television emphasize how societal racism can impact youth at a young age and affect their concepts of beauty, morality, and worth. Following the appraisal of racism, the model stipulates that coping responses directly affect an individual's psychological and physiological stress response and the consequent health outcomes experienced.

To date, prior research has not evaluated differential responses to racism depending on context. While Clark et al. (1999) describe different responses Black adolescents may have after an environmental stimulus is perceived as racism (i.e., interpersonal racism and substandard housing), their model (Figure 2) does not include factors that may account for variation in responses to racism. This dissertation research will also explore an adapted version of Clark et al.'s Biopsychosocial model in which context is added to the model between the perception of the event and Black adolescents' responses (see Figure 3). It is expected that adolescents respond to racism differently depending on the context in which the racism occurs.

Empirical Evidence of Context-Specific Racism in Literature

Despite the models that have suggested the importance of context, measurement of racism may only look at the event and not the context. The lack of focus on context prevents research from understanding how context influences the experience of racism. First, most surveys do not mention context. Instead, most focus on single events (e.g., being treated unfairly by a teacher) but not the different contexts in which these events may occur (e.g., the classroom vs. the lunchroom). For example, the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Scale has three subscales: institutional, educational, and peer. Items from the three subscales highlight some events: "You were hassled by a store clerk"; "you were hassled by police"; "you were given a lower grade than you deserved"; "you were wrongly disciplined"; and "you were called a racial slur", but not the contexts. Tynes (2015) created an eight-item subscale in her online victimization measure that includes items such as: 1) "People have said mean or rude things about me because of my race or ethnic group online"; and 2) "People have excluded me from a site because of my

ethnic group online". Although, it is possible that Black adolescents may perceive a videogame to be one context and social media to be another context in which they have experienced racism.

Second, if context is included, the focus is only on one or two contexts (Greene et al., 2006; Rosenbloom & Way 2004; Tynes, Del Toro, & Lozada 2015). One context that is commonly studied is the school context. For example, Niwa, Way, and Hughes, (2014) explored peer and adult discrimination profiles among Black, Chinese, and Dominican adolescents. They found that 64% of Black adolescents reported experiencing discrimination within the schools. They also found that adults were more likely to discriminate against students than their peers within the school context. Limited research has also solely focused on police experiences among Black adolescents. Brunson (2007) found that Black males between the ages of 13-19 reported negative experiences with police officers. Stewart, Baumer, Brunson & Simons (2009) found that Black adolescents reported more police-based racial discrimination in neighborhoods that had higher concentrations of Blacks. Finally, research has begun to recently focus on the online context as a space where Black adolescents experience racism. For example, Tynes (2015) explored racialized experiences of Black adolescents online and reported that Black adolescents experience online racial discrimination from peers and see it in the media. However, additional contexts that Black adolescents experience racism have not been explored in the literature.

The few studies that have explored multiple contexts have focused on the school and the neighborhood. There has been some research that has explored Black adolescents' experiences within multiple contexts. Benner and Graham (2013) studied the

antecedents and consequences of racism among a group of Black, Latino, and Asian American adolescents. They examined the school and the neighborhood (microsystem) as two contexts that can influence the experience of racism (mesosystem) for minority adolescents. They found that for youth that had more negative views of their environment (school and neighborhood), they experienced more racism by school personnel, peers, and societal institutions. While there is evidence that Black adolescents experience racism in multiple contexts, research has not thoroughly examined what those contexts are and how Black adolescents respond to racism in those contexts. Extant studies of youth's experiences with racism don't account for the various contexts where Black adolescents may experience racism. In this way, racism scales may be biased towards experiences of racism in the limited number of contexts identified by measures, resulting in the underreporting of experiences with racism in other contexts.

Third, because many measures were developed for adults and adjusted for adolescents (Pachter & Garcia-Coll, 2009), they may be missing key contexts relevant for youth as well as in other contexts that have not yet been identified by adult researchers unfamiliar with the full range of spaces frequented by adolescents today. Pachter and Garcia Coll (2009) reviewed the current literature on racism among youth and found that only 10 of the 28 studies that examined racism among adolescents used measures that were created for youth with the study age range. Many of the studies reviewed by Pachter and Garcia Coll used measures that were modified for adolescents but did not have sound validity for adolescents (Pachter & Garcia Coll, 2009). For example, the Perceived Racism Scale (PRS: McNeilly et al., 1996) has been consistently used on adolescent populations (Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009), but

McNeilly et al. (1996) developed and standardized the measure on an adult population that was 18 years and older. The Index of Race-Related Stress (IRRS: Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996) which measures race related stress experienced by African American adults as a result of specific daily events of racism was modified for adolescents but continued to use language that was relevant for adults. An exploration of the varied contexts in which Black adolescents experience racism must be identified by the adolescents themselves, who are the experts on their own ecological lives.

Fourth, existing measures fail to assess how Black adolescents' responses to racism may change in different contexts. Current literature discusses Black adolescents' psychological and physiological responses to the experience of racism. Black adolescents' responses to racism may vary as a function of the specific context in which the incident occurs. For example, a Black adolescent's response to racism in a video game or social media platform may differ from their response to racism with a police officer, a peer, or a teacher. The full array of responses to racism among Black adolescents in today's era is unknown and necessitates further study. Moreover, these responses may also vary by gender.

Taken together, the available quantitative tools for measuring racism cannot capture the multiple contexts in which racism can be experienced by Black adolescent males or their varied responses to racism across contexts. An understanding of both is critical for intervention because it will help researchers and clinicians develop tools to help mitigate the negative and long-lasting effects of racism and allow Black adolescent males to effectively express themselves and respond to racism in different contexts. Therefore, I used a qualitative approach to explore the myriad of contexts Black

adolescent males identify where racism occurs and their varied responses to racism across contexts. Because survey measures have not explicitly explored context, a qualitative study provided an in-depth exploration of where Black adolescents males experience racism to help bolster our ability to effectively prevent and/or address these encounters. Since studies have only explored one or two contexts, this qualitative study allowed Black adolescent males to identify multiple contexts they experience racism. In addition, this qualitative study moved the focus from Black adults' experiences with racism to Black adolescents' experiences with racism and gave Black adolescent males the chance to discuss in detail. This qualitative study also allowed for the exploration of how Black adolescent males' responses varied in these different contexts and enhanced our understanding of the methods Black adolescent males use to combat and cope with racist encounters. Lastly, qualitative analysis helped to inform the work of researchers and practitioners who endeavor to thwart the immediate and long-term negative effects that these experiences and responses confer, an undertaking of life or death consequences for the population focused on in this research.

The Present Study

While theoretical models (e.g., Bronfenbrenner 1994; Garcia Coll, 1996) suggest context is important for individuals' experience of racism, most research has not explored the contexts in which racism occurs, nor how people respond to racism in different contexts. The research that has examined Black adolescent males' experiences with racism have only explored racism in one or two contexts, which has not allowed Black adolescent males to identify and discuss various contexts where they experience and respond to racism outside of those predetermined contexts. Context may influence

whether an event is perceived as racism, and how one responds to a racist event. However, models exploring racism experience and effects (e.g., Clark et al., 1999) have not included context. Exploration of where Black adolescent males experience racism and how they respond to racism in various contexts is important because the way Black adolescent males respond in different contexts may alter the impact and severity of the negative outcomes associated with racism. Additionally, by exploring where Black adolescent males experience racism and how their responses to racism may change in different contexts provides more knowledge on how adults can discuss racism and socialize Black adolescent males as they navigate different contexts.

Black adolescent males and females differ in how they experience and respond to racism. Despite the acknowledgement of this difference (Assari et al., 2017; Seaton & Tyson, 2019), there has been little research that has provided a non-comparative within group understanding of Black adolescent males' experiences with racism (Bailey et al., 2021; Bynum et al., 2008; Neblett et al., 2009). Clark et al. (1999) discussed the importance of exploring gender as a factor that contributes to the experience and response to racism. Therefore, this dissertation study focused on Black adolescent males to further understanding their experiences with racism and used an adapted version of Clark et al. Biopsychosocial model to explore which contexts Black adolescent males experience racism and how Black adolescent males respond to racism in those different contexts. Thus, the current study aimed to (1) examine context as factor that influences if the environmental stimulus is perceived as racism (see Figure 3) and (2) explore whether the reaction to the perceived racism varies in different contexts (see Figure 3).

Chapter 2: Methods

A phenomenological qualitative approach was used to explore which contexts Black adolescent males identify as contexts where they experience racism and how they respond to racism in each of those contexts. Qualitative research is important for this study because the existing quantitative measures on racism do not capture the various contexts that are pertinent to Black adolescent males' experiences of racism. This study may help to explain why Black adolescent males underreport instances of racism in studies that examine racism by exploring which contexts Black adolescent males identify as environments where they experience racism. Qualitative research is also important for this study because the existing literature on racism does not explore Black adolescent males' responses to racism in different contexts. This study may also help to explain and clarify how Black adolescent males' responses may vary when they are navigating different contexts. Finally, qualitative research was important for this study because there were no existing tools available to understand how response varies by contexts.

Data Analysis Strategy

I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009) as my method for analysis in this study. The goal of IPA is "to explore in detail the processes through which participants make sense of their own experiences [by looking at respondents' accounts] of the processes they have been through and seeking to [use] an assumed existing universal inclination [toward] self-reflection" (Brocki & Wearden, p. 88). While other qualitative methodologies such as Thematic Analysis (TA) and Grounded Theory (GT) are commonly used in qualitative research, they are not the most appropriate methodologies for this dissertation. The goal of TA is to "search for themes

that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon, and therefore, as constituting a form of pattern recognition within the data." (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006: pg. 82). TA allows the researcher to interpret and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun et al., 2018). It is a method that analyzes, organizes, describes, and reports themes found within a data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). TA seeks to understand the experience of the individual whereas IPA seeks to understand what the individual is internalizing from their experience. The goal of Grounded Theory (GT) method is to identify and integrate categories of meaning from the data to produce a theory (Willig, 2013). Researchers who use GT focus on theory development and attempt to find theoretical saturation (i.e., the process of sampling and coding data until no new categories can be identified). While GT's emphasis is on the development of an explanatory theory of basic social processes, IPA aims to describe the lived experience of a phenomenon (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Therefore, IPA was the most appropriate method for this study because it allowed the participants to assign meaning to their experiences and helped the researcher further understand where and how they experience racism as Black adolescent males.

Participants

The criteria for participation in the study included self-identification as African American (to capture individuals of African descent who have been socialized in the United States) or Black and have a cis-gender identity of male who are between the ages of 14-17 years old since older adolescents may have more diverse and unique experiences with racism and may be able to better discuss their experiences. A total of 10 Black adolescent males were recruited to participate in the study to ensure a detailed case by

case analysis of each participant. While saturation is a goal of some qualitative research, it was not a focus here because when using the IPA method, it is more important to understand that each experience has uniqueness to it with the understanding that one can always find new information. Table 1 shows collective demographic characteristics for all participants.

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of Black Male Participants

Name/Pseudonym	**Age**	**Grade**	**Employment**
Allen	15	10th	Yes
Austin	14	9th	No
Jerome	16	11th	No
Kevin	17	12th	Yes
Matthew	17	12th	Yes
Noah	15	10th	No
Scott	15	10th	No
Sean	17	12th	Yes
Trevor	14	9th	No
Winston	17	12th	No

Research has shown that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis studies often have small sample sizes (e.g., 5, 6, 9, 15) to allow more in-depth analysis of each participant (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Participants were informed that the purpose of this study was to gain insight into where and how Black adolescent males experience racism. I, a Black adult male, interviewed all 10 Black adolescent males who participated in the study. Semi-structured audiotaped interviews, a non-directive interview style to encourage the participant to talk (Willig, 2013), were conducted with the subsequent 10 Black adolescents who are current residents of DC. Participants were monetarily compensated using virtual gift cards for their participation in the study.

Recruitment Strategy

Participants were recruited from a D.C. Public Charter school and by referral from participants who were located in Washington, D.C. Of note, participants were recruited during the time of the Racial Pandemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic from June 2020 to December 2021. Parental consent was obtained by the researcher virtually providing a letter that describes the study directly to adolescents and/or parents. Parents returned signed forms to the researchers via their adolescent, or via email. I described the study to adolescents and/or parents and collected consent forms via email. Adolescent assent was obtained on the designated date for the data collection. Each participant was assigned an ID number during the assent procedures. Interviews were conducted virtually via WebEx or Zoom Video Conferencing Services. Participants were given a brief overview of the goals of the study and were provided dates and times to participate in a one-on-one interview.

Procedure

I conducted one-on-one semi structured interviews where questions were focused on the context and response to racism in different contexts, among Black adolescents (see protocol, Appendix). Initial questions were open-ended, and designed to invite participants to narrate, and then reflect upon, their experiences with racism in different contexts. Sample questions about racism included: "What does racism mean to you?" "Where have you experienced racism?" "How does the experience of racism differ in [respondent's stated context]?" "How did you respond to racism in [respondent's stated context]?" "How did your response differ from your responses in a different context?" Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed by the lab members, and uploaded and

coded into the qualitative software NVIVO, Transcribed interviews were listened to and read thoroughly to ensure all elements have been transcribed from the interviews. As described above, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009) was used to analyze the interviews in this study.

During the interview process, I took written notes based on my own observations of participants' non-verbal communication. Furthermore, I kept a reflective journal during every stage of the research process to memo additional thoughts, questions, or internal conversations with myself and dialogue exchanged with my participants that might evoke further analysis or evaluation that occurred outside of the interview. Reflection of one's own perceptions, conceptions, and processes should occur throughout the process and is usually captured in a systematic fashion by keeping a reflexive journal (Smith, 2007). The data collected was immediately transcribed after each interview.

After data transcription, I analyzed the data using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which is concerned with making meaning of the participants' experiences (Willig, 2001). The first step required me to read and re-read the interview text, followed by makings notes that reflected my initial thoughts and observations as a researcher. The second stage of analysis required me to identify and label emergent themes that characterized each section of the text. Third, the themes were clustered together and given labels that capture their essence. The fourth stage of analysis involved the production of a summary table of the structured themes that clustered together for each individual participant. Finally, the themes were integrated into an inclusive list of master themes that were salient and reflected the experiences of all participants (Willig, 2001). After the master theme list was generated, I created a copy of

the master themes in the results section in an attempt to reconstruct the lived experiences of my participants. Master themes were applied to the adapted Clark et al. (1999) Biopsychosocial model (see Figure 3) to further understand how the context contributed to the experience of racism and the response to racism.

Reflexivity

I, a Black man, was the primary interviewer and coder of the interviews. I was intentional in having myself be the primary interviewer and coder because it is important in the phenomenological design to validate the experiences of participants. Corbin and Strauss (2008) propose that researchers who bring in their own experiences and acknowledge their subjectivity potentially improve trustworthiness. I acknowledge that there are inferences made by myself about what the adolescents were describing as their experiences. By hearing various experiences by adolescent Black males, at times it reminded me of previous experiences I had as an adolescent, experiences I have had as an adult, and similarities between feelings experienced by the participants and myself.

Throughout the process of coding these interviews and interpreting both the contexts and responses to racism, I realized that my age as a Black male in his early 30's helped me learn about the generational experiences of these adolescent Black males. While my experiences with racism mainly occurred in person, I had very limited experiences with racism online. Most of the Black adolescent males in this study experienced racism online. This was a new lens for me that challenged me to learn more about their own experiences. This study not only amplified their voices but provided space for interpretation from myself as an older Black man who could use the most applicable language to support the descriptions of their experiences.

Both the contexts and responses to the contexts directly relate to my own experiences as a Black man in the United States. I was reminded of the intensity and trauma of the experience of racism. These interviews also highlighted for me the importance of exploring the experience of racism with Black adolescent males, allowing them to put a voice to their own truths. I also believe that having me as the interviewer it removed a potential barrier of vulnerability in Black males sharing their own experiences and allowed them the space to voice their own experiences. Many of the participants stated that they had never been asked about their experiences with racism and appreciated this type of study. As I continued to interview my participants, it increased my motivation and drive to support these Black adolescent males in talking about their experiences. This was my way of amplifying the voices of Black adolescent males especially when myself and other adult Black men were never given the space to talk about their own experiences freely.

Chapter 3: Results/Findings

Five themes emerged from the data that reflected contexts where participants have experienced racism: online/social media, police, school, store, and travel. Additionally, two themes emerged from the data that reflected participants' responses to racism in the various contexts. Below, I defined each theme and provide illustrative quotations with pseudonyms, where appropriate. Table 2 also shows the different themes and the definitions of those themes. Consistent with IPA guidelines, I presented themes in order from most to least based on prevalence and richness (Smith, 2007).

Table 2.
Context and Response Themes and Descriptions

Type	Theme	Description
Contexts	Online/Social Media	Virtual environments where they are either playing a multiplayer video game or engaging with major social media platforms, such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Facebook.
	Police	Individuals associated with law enforcement (i.e., police officer, safety officer, mall officer) who engaged with them in various environments (e.g., mall, school, airport, sporting events, and while driving).
	School	The space in which they engaged with teachers, peers, and administrative personnel regularly.
	Store	A convenience store or retail store, where they would buy merchandise.
	Travel	Any instance of travel whether on a bus, a plane or being present in a different state.
Responses	Shrug It Off	Participants acknowledge their emotional response to the racist incident such as anger and frustration but chose to ignore or disengage from the incident as a form of self-protection.

Type	Theme	Description
	That Gut Feeling	Participants' fears of what will happen to them and their bodies primarily when they encounter law enforcement.

Online/Social Media Context

All participants identified online/social media as a context where they experience racism. Online/Social Media was defined as virtual environments where they are either playing a multiplayer video game or engaging with major social media platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Facebook. For instance, Sean described two experiences with the same context where he was scrolling through social media accounts and witnessed racist acts. He stated, "I've seen people when people say the N word. I've seen... like I was saying before Black people being shot by police were doing nothing while they're being pulled over. There's a lot." This description of their experience highlighted that there are multiple instances throughout the day where Black male adolescents are experiencing racism on social media. Jerome reported that he often casually sees racist media on Instagram, and while he might scroll past it, he still recognizes what was said. Matthew highlighted how social media can be a context where it occurs frequently.

> Facebook, sometimes Snap like I'm new to Snapchat, but Snapchat has been around for a while, but I know that there are popular people on there that get inboxed racist stuff, uh, Instagram is where I've experienced it the most, because a lot of people are ignorant on there and genuinely will try to combat you. Or like, I remember this one guy, this one racist White dude who just didn't want to openly admit it. I'd much rather you …be exposed and outspoken with their racism than

somebody try to go behind my back and, you know, kind of sneak me out with it. Like I won't, I don't want to be paranoid with you. I'd much rather just know where you stand.

Another example, was where Winston stated,

> I mean, I usually [experience racism] when I'm on like a game or something like that. I remember once they were just shouting out nigger and things like that… I'll probably say if it's like a very serious, serious game and it's like down to like a wire, if it's like 99, 99. And if you like miss like a wildly shot then yeah. I get called coon, nigger, and all that.

While video games may appear to be innocuous, these participants remembered the words that were said to them while playing virtually. Allen, Scott, Austin, and Trevor similarly discussed their experiences playing video games. They reported that it is fairly common to hear a racial slur being said by another player who is often of another race. Trevor said,

> I was playing Fortnite and I was playing with like, random people. And it was like three of them and they were just, calling me the N word saying Black boy and stuff. Like just making fun of me like stuff like that. They know I'm Black because of the sound of my voice and that makes them say what they say.

Police Context

All but one participant identified spaces where law enforcement was present as a context where they experience racism. Police were described as individuals associated with law enforcement (i.e., police officer, safety officer, mall officer) who engaged with them in various environments (e.g., mall, school, airport, sporting events, and while

driving). Participants overwhelmingly described having or witnessing negative encounters with law enforcement where they realized that this was an occurrence that was inevitable. Five participants described having encounters with police officers. Three participants described having experiences with security guards. One participant described the vicarious effect of seeing how law enforcement treated Black people. Kevin stated,

> I got stopped by police one time…I was walking out west and the police stopped me and he asked me why you couldn't have a gun on you, he said joking, like that's not nothing. Like, I feel like that was very racist.

Noah described an experience with a police officer in the mall,

> I was in Texas for, um, a family reunion and Texas, I don't know much about the law enforcement in Texas, but I did encounter a, a run-in I guess a Texas police officer walked up to me and a few cousins. And we were in the mall. I forget which mall we were in, but we were in Longview, Texas, and we were in the mall, and he just kept asking us questions. And I'm like, sir, we have nothing to hide. We have, you know, nothing to, we have nothing to hide. So, we're, we're walking around the mall doing a little bit of shopping and it, and that one, if I can use this term, it felt like prejudice. Like just this preconceived notion, you know, that he just has in the back of his mind. So, nothing really happened. But you could tell that he was, he felt that he needed to ask us so many questions just to, you know, whatever in his mind was telling him, these Black kids are not doing something right. one question he did ask was what's in the bags and I'm like, well, we're in the mall. So, there's clothes, there's shoes. There's, you know, there's different things that we were shopping for. And it seemed like it was like a, a

> street run in, you know, what's in the bags. So, it was kind of, it's kind, it was kind of a dumb question to me, but if he really needed to know, you know, we answered his questions. Um, another question was, where are you guys headed to? And I'm like, you know, these questions are questions that police officers would ask if you got pulled over on the side of this. So, my thing was this, isn't the right situation for you to be asking these questions.

Winston described an instance with his basketball team where he and his team felt like they were being racially profiled by state troopers. He stated "And then these cops, … I mean, there was like four to five pretty much there were like, I think Rangers or things like that. And then they made us leave." Another participant, Sean described what he had witnessed,

> If somebody get pulled over. So, if a Black person gets pulled over, they get shot just for trying to reach for their stuff. They could be reaching for anything like, and the White person think it's a gun. The White police think it's a gun. But when it comes to a White person, they show, their stuff, their driver's license, and then they keep on-going. They don't get worried about nothing. Like, they don't have to worry about. Their family don't have to worry about them getting shot or nothing. And they can just go home to their family…and Black people have to always watch their back, like from White police because the police are racist, like in DC and everywhere.

Sean described a general experience with the police over time.

> I just don't like racism. I wish it could stop. If I had wish I get rid of racism for real. The coronavirus, I could deal with it, but police brutality and racism, and me

> have to watch my back all the time. Yeah. I can't do that. Cause nobody should have to watch their back or deal with racism. Because God made us so all of us could be equal. But in this world. For real, I just want God to hurry up and come because 2020 was not it or the rest of year was not it because it was crazy.

School Context

All but two participants identified the school as a context where they experienced racism. Participants described school as the space in which they engaged with teachers, peers, and administrative personnel regularly. Often, participants described having similar encounters with teachers and administrative staff that were significant enough for them to remember. In one example, Matthew described multiple encounters with a teacher where "I always got in trouble for the smallest things. So, if my shirt wasn't tucked in the way she wanted it to she would say I'm calling your mother or go to the office." In his description, he noted that it felt like she was always singling out the Black students. He went on to say, "I remember she actually got fired because she referred to one of the, uh, either a group of, or one of the kids as monkeys or behaving like monkeys."

Kevin described an incident that involved peers and school personnel. In this incident he highlighted how Black students seemed to be targeted by Latinx students and how the Black students were the only ones disciplined.

> And like one day we were at lunch, and I think a Mexican threw a chocolate milk or something on one of the Black kids. And it's like, both groups just stood up trying to come towards each other, whatever or not like, I don't know if it was like racially intentioned, like, but he threw the milk at him but like it's a lot of little

> nitpicking going on around in school or whatever, not. And when the Dean came and handled the situation that supposedly happened, he sent all the Black students that were involved home and the Mexican students were still in the school and they threw first milk.

Austin described a similar experience with peers and school personnel,

> Like me and my friends we're at the, we're at the other side of the lunch table, end of the lunch table and the trashcan is on the right side. And there's like a group of like, Caucasians over there. Just like they-they made the mess and stuff but then as soon as they, as soon as much going on, they left but [school personnel] told us to stay back and clean it. We already cleaned up all our mess but they didn't clean up theirs, so we have to clean up theirs.

Scott also described an experience with peers in the school context,

> Uh, so I go to a magnet school and it's mainly, it's mainly made up of like Asians and Caucasians, and there's really not any Black. So, they joke, they say they're joking, but they like make fun of African Americans because there's not really a bunch of us. So, we can't like stand together and do anything to fight back against them. Cause they just outnumber us by so much. And then also if like you get in any fights or anything, you get kicked out of this school [because you are Black]. So, uh, I was in PE and there's this kid named Sebastian and, uh, I forgot what we were doing. We were playing some type of sport, but he was like faking like he was whipping, like using a whip to whip people and stuff.

Participants also described having individuals in the school context express racism through racial microaggressions. Winston described going to see the school nurse

and when discussing the name of the person he was going on a date with, the school nurse replied, “Are you sure it’s not Shawanda or something like that.” For this participant, this racialized experienced caused him to have less trust and comfort with the school nurse. In summary, participants overwhelmingly emphasized that racism occurred in the school context, whether it be in the classroom, in the lunchroom, or with the school nurse.

Store Context

Seven participants identified a store as a context where they experience racism. This context was defined as a convenience store or retail store, where they would buy merchandise. The majority of the time, participants expressed that they were either in this context with friends or by themselves. Winston described an experience where he and his friends had walked into the convenience store after school to get a snack. Throughout the store they noticed that the store clerk was following them around but pretending to restock items or move things around. Winston explained,

> We were just like looking at like all the food and then you could pretty much see he was like walking behind this or, or he was trying to like move bag chip to see what we were doing over there…I would say we felt super weird, and I mean, we were just like looking at him and then he was looking at us. It was... yeah, it was not fun.

Allen described a similar experience,

> I was buying something from a store and the lady... Well, I was at a shoe store. I was buying a pair of shoes and I pulled out my card to pay for it. And like my chip wasn't working. Well, my chip was working, but I swiped my card the wrong way. I was still new to using it. So, I swiped my card the wrong way. And the

lady, when she like told me the right way to fix it, she did it with an attitude and like laughed about it. And shook her head. And I was like, geez, like, you need to do all that. You could just say, oh, you're doing it the wrong way or something like that… my perception was like, she was thinking dumb Black people, or he doesn't have any money on his card, he's broke.

Scott also discussed two experiences he has had in different stores,

I remember one time at, I went to sporting goods to buy some, uh, football, like stuff for football. And I was there with my friend and his dad, and I had already checked out and got my stuff and they were still shopping around the store. And I was just looking at a pair of gloves that I thought I might also buy. And then I put 'em back but I guess I didn't put it back in the right spot. And the guy thought I was trying to steal the gloves for some reason. He walked up to me and he was like, you have to leave, you have to leave. And I was like, what, what did I do? And then he was like, I saw you trying to steal gloves. And I was like, what gloves? And then he showed me the pair of gloves and I was like, oh, I put those back. And he was like, and then I just walked to my friend's dad. And then the guy was like, is he with you? And then he just walked away. Wow. We kept shopping. And then we left.

Another situation happened two days ago when I was hanging out with my friends, and we went to the gas station to buy some snacks and drinks and stuff. The lady, she was just following us around the gas station, trying to act like she was restocking, but she was actually like watching us. I felt she was assuming just

> because we're some teenagers and uh, this color of our skin is brown. She thinks we're gonna steal and that we don't have money to buy the stuff in the store.

Most participants acknowledged similar instances where they experienced store personnel following, watching, or questioning their presence in the store. It also highlights how frequent these experiences occur for them, where Scott could recall an incident that had occurred just two days prior to the interview.

Travel Context

Travel was defined as any instance of travel whether on a bus, a plane or being present in a different state. Three participants highlighted experiencing racism while transitioning to or from different spaces. For instance, Matthew described two racist encounters that he believes are common occurrences.

> On public [transportation], not me personally, but I've seen people get into disputes with White people because they've made ignorant comments or have said something or moved a certain kind of way. You know what I'm saying around them? I feel like when you, when you walk down the same street as somebody that's White and they have kids, they'll clutch their, like their kids tighter, you know what I'm saying? They'll hold them closer to them because they feel like, again, it's that criminality aspect that's so into their mind where it's like, okay, this guy has on a Black hoodie. He has locks like me. And he's fair-skinned, this guy is definitely about to try something to me and my kids, it's that aspect of criminalization.

Trevor also reported that at times when he has traveled, he’s experienced racism.

I went to universal and, the person it was a person, he just, he was just looking at me like, I didn't belong there. Like, I shouldn't be there. Just like, the way he was staring. Like, he would stare they were like, staring hard, like, keep an eye on me.

Kevin stated, “like, even if I was to speak in all the situations, wouldn't anything change…it's just like you can't its life.” This was in reference to all contexts they referred to, school, police, and social media. This statement is a culmination of the feelings that many of the participants felt where they believed that certain situations, they could respond to but overall, nothing would really change, “it’s life.”

Responses to Racism

The results of my analysis revealed that two themes that emerged in the descriptions of participants’ responses after encounters with racism. These themes were: shrug it off, and that gut feeling. All but one participant indicated that their responses varied between the two depending upon the context they were in.

Shrug It Off

To shrug it off was defined as a strategy where participants would acknowledge their emotional response to the racist incident such as anger and frustration but chose to ignore or disengage from the incident as a form of self-protection. Participants used a range of distancing strategies ranging from choosing to walk away from perpetrators or “shrug off the [racist encounter].” Choosing to walk away and ignore perpetrators was often exhibited when they experienced racism in person while choosing to disengage was often exhibited online. In one example, Kevin said in response to a racist incident in the school, “And I mean, if I would've said something back, I just know that I would probably get pretty much booted at the school.” Experiences like these emphasize the

narrative of Black males throughout this study where walking away was a protective response to avoid confrontations. Participants frequently voiced that they experienced anger but often left the space where an authority figure was because "[they] did not want any trouble." For example, Matthew in response to a racist incident that occurred in school expressed, "In the moment, it made me feel angry. It made me feel not violated, but like disrespected I would say." This statement emphasizes his feeling of anger, but he later acknowledged that expressing his anger to the teacher was not an option because it would be viewed as disrespectful and was not worth it. Winston described his shrug it off response in the online context.

> It's certain things that it's just not worth my energy. So when I see racist comments, I'm like, Hey, I may be a little bit irritated. I may be enraged, but hey, what's the point? You know what I'm saying? Like, why would I invest seven hours, you know, trying to debate with a bigot? Why would I? Somebody who doesn't have any understanding, like our levels of understanding are not the same clearly his is inferior. And that's not to be egotistical. That's just true.

Participants frequently voiced that they were frustrated with comments but often shrugged it off and continued to play because it was a much easier response. Kevin reported similarly, where he became frustrated with the content that he was viewing online, but he chose to shrug it off and move forward. Another participant stated that most of the content he sees on social media and on the news is shocking and overwhelming, but it does not require a response from him.

> Like the internet is shocking. Like you think you go on the internet to like have fun, release stress, and do all that the whole time you're getting bashed on the

internet. It's not even racist. It's like body shaming, the music, and people like its social media. It's just a big thing. Like I don't react.

Similar to other participants, it was important for Matthew and Kevin not to engage with racist people. Allen described his response to online experiences as upsetting but "I'm desensitized. I don't take it that serious, but I do recognize it as being racist." His use of the word desensitized conveys that his experience in online environments is so frequent that the response is less sensitive to what happened because he does not take it personally. Lastly, one participant highlighted that when he travels, he often chooses not to engage but it does not negate his feelings. "I'll say it hurts, but I mean, you just get used to it. You, you, you do. Yeah. I mean, I mean, I get those looks all the time, all the time. Yeah. All the time, all the time." Noah also noted his response to online experiences,

> Um, you know, I, I don't respond to it because I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be in a argument and not saying that I can't argue cause you know, I can and argue. But I don't think people deserve attention for being the people that they are, the horrible people, the cruel people that they are, you know, I don't think people should give attention to, to those people who choose to do things out of the ordinary. Now you can talk about it. You can write comments about it and tell them how you feel. But people like that, because it's a small thing on being, like being on the game, they don't deserve the attention because it's, it's just them being them. They're gonna do it, whether they're on the game or not, you know? Right. And you can't cancel someone on the game. Like you can say your piece, but it's not gonna get far.

Participants highlighted that their responses to racial encounters were similar in stores, schools, and online where they often chose to shrug off the racism that they experienced. Trevor's consistent response to many of these settings was "keep it pushing" which emphasizes the point of shrugging it off and moving on so that the racial incident did not affect his day. Many of the participants did not describe awareness of physiological responses during these incidents, suggesting that they were managing their emotions both internally and externally.

That Gut Feeling

The theme that gut feeling describes participants' fears of what will happen to them and their bodies primarily when they encounter law enforcement. This response captured their physiological response of their heart beating faster than usual and the psychological response of being afraid. Allen described responding to a racist incident with a mall officer as scary. He stated, "I was extremely scared, I was not sure what was going to happen, I didn't know if he was going to hurt me and my friends." His psychological response was common among others with law enforcement where there was uncertainty if they would make it out of the situation and feeling that they did not have anywhere to turn. As Noah specified, "It's that gut feeling." And Trevor stated, "Yeah, like don't get under a [police officer's] skin like don't sit there and be disrespectful towards them…Or they'll tackle me to the ground next." Kevin expressed that because of the police officer's racist comment, he "immediately felt the plight of racism." In response to the encounter with the state troopers, "And I mean it was, it was, it was super, super scary. It truly was." He highlighted the fear both he and his peers experienced where they were unsure of the outcome and expressed feeling unsafe as the

state troopers entered the space. Many of them felt like they were targeted instead of heard by law enforcement. Matthew also highlighted his response to law enforcement.

> I [was] 12 years old and I [had] to worry about what I [said] or [did] if a, if a White person [felt] disrespected, but it sounds like segregation, this sounds like civil rights. This sounds like, uh, Jim Crow. You know what I'm saying? Like, you can't look a person in the eye. You can't say what you want to say. You can't fight back or you're going to be killed or you're going to be stomped on or you're going to be a George Floyd. Like what?

Sean reported that his response is,

> Man, whenever I see the police, I'm just [like] don't look that way. Like, cause if they are staring at you like I'm just keep on walking and stuff. And when you go across the street, I'm just let the police go because I feel like they are waiting for me, and they could be trying to make an excuse to do something.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This study used a phenomenological analysis of the experiences and responses to racism among 10 Black adolescent males. Participants were recruited and interviewed virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews identified contexts in which Black adolescent males experience racism and how their responses differ in various contexts. Black adolescent males in this study identified several contexts that they experience racism which highlights that racism occurs in a myriad of places and multiple responses that permeate the contexts that they experience racism.

Of note, Black adolescents often underreport their experiences of racism (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). This study highlights that Black adolescent males' experience racism in many different contexts, but the way in which they talk about and conceptualize their experiences may not be captured through quantitative measures. This study found that Black adolescent males reported that they experience racism in five different contexts: school, police, store, online/social media, and travel. This finding supports Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, which highlights the importance of exploring and understanding the contexts that influence their experiences; these contexts align with the microsystems of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model. Additionally, Clark et al.'s adapted Biopsychosocial model suggested context as a factor that informed whether an event was perceived as racism. For Black adolescent males, these five contexts were associated with environments they interacted with frequently where they believed they would experience racism. As Black adolescent males entered these spaces, they expressed that they expected racism to occur at some point. Black adolescent males highlighted that when it comes to racist incidents, they experience

racism primarily in the contexts they highlighted throughout the study and have very similar responses to each other. This finding also supports Garcia Coll et al.'s integrative model, where the environments where Black adolescent males experienced racism influences their responses. Consistent with literature, many of the contexts in which they reported they experience racism are contexts that Black adolescents have highlighted over time (Del Toro et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2000; Jackson et al., 2020; McNiel Smith & Fincham, 2016; Seaton et al., 2008; Tynes et al., 2018). Adding to the literature, Black adolescent males discussed the travel context as another space where they experience racism. It is important to acknowledge that racism for them can occur anywhere, but their most significant racist experiences occurred in the contexts they described in this study.

Black adolescent males acknowledged online/social media as the most frequent context where they experienced racism. Most participants reported seeing or hearing racial slurs. They found themselves hearing racial slurs more while playing video games while they saw it more while scrolling through Instagram. This finding highlights the impact of social media which has become a more recent context that increases the possibility and frequency of experiences of racism among Black adolescent males (Tynes et al., 2018). In addition, Black adolescent males may have viewed social media as a space where they sought to be entertained and have fun, but instead encounter racism that alters their experience and perspective of the context they must frequently interact with.

Of importance, participants highlighted law enforcement as another one of their most noteworthy contexts. Participants discussed either having their own encounter with law enforcement, witnessing an encounter with law enforcement, or experiencing both. When participants described their experiences, they often described feeling threatened

and afraid of the outcome. Their responses highlighted their fear of the consequences if they said the wrong thing or moved the wrong way. Each participant reflected the same truth-- that of a Black adolescent male experiencing fear, powerlessness, aggressiveness, and grief. This finding suggests that an encounter with law enforcement often can become a traumatic stressor (Bor et al., 2018; Rich & Grey, 2005; Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019).

The school context is often the most acknowledged and studied context within literature (Hope et al., 2015; Kohli et al., 2017; McNeil Smith & Fincham, 2016). As participants began describing their experiences, they highlighted the negative perceptions of school administration and teachers while they attempted to navigate their school environment. Most participants described having teachers who treated them differently by targeting them with disciplinary actions, making assumptions about their movements, and even perpetuating racial insults. For example, Matthew described hearing a teacher call Black students "monkeys," and being disciplined for having his shirt untucked. Previous research corroborated these experiences where teachers' negative perceptions and beliefs about Black adolescent males caused them to treat Black boys differently (Butler-Barnes et al., 2018; Collier & Bush, 2012; McNiell Smith & Fincham, 2016; Rowley et al., 2014).

Black adolescent males reported having two types of responses to racism: shrug it off and that gut feeling. Participants described shrug it off occurring in most contexts (e.g., school, travel, online, and the store) either in person with adults who did not pose an immediate threat to their wellbeing and online where it did not occur in person. For example, Winston described feeling angry about each racist encounter, but did not want

to engage because he believed nothing would change. This suggests that Black adolescent males experience a variety of emotions (i.e., frustration, anger, disgust) in many of these environments but choose not to speak up because they believe the outcome will not go in their favor and it is not worth it. Similarly, prior research has noted that this reported response of anger and feeling like it was not going in their favor is often captured in learned helplessness (Bailey et al., 2021; Heard-Garris et al., 2021). Noah also highlighted the difference in the physiological aspect of shrugging it off versus that gut feeling.

> Um, that gut feeling, I feel like in comparing it to all the other, um, situations that we talked about, that gut feeling you're standing right there, or you you're hearing it right there. Yeah. You will crawl into this shell literally and be, you know, this little turtle that doesn't really talk much or come out much because it's right there. But on social media, you know, you never know where these people are, what they're doing and where they come from, but it's out there, but it's not right here face front, you know… and, and like the way you respond, you know, your response is there, but it's not gonna get to their face. It's gonna be on a screen. Whether you hear it, you, you read it. It's not right here.

The complexity of the shrug it off response is acknowledged in their experience of various emotions and where the racist event occurred. For instance, when shrug it off occurred in the online context, Black males reported that they did not believe the experience elicited significant emotions from them except minimal frustration and annoyance, and their external response was not one that would be felt directly. In contrast, the shrug it off response to racist incidents that occurred in person elicited

feelings of anger and frustration, but they believed that there was nothing that could be done to change the incident and it was not worth their energy to engage with the perpetrator because it would potentially stop them from being able to achieve their goal. While participants described the same response in various contexts, this highlights how there are different factors that may contribute to the characteristics of their response. One factor may be if the incident occurs in person versus virtually. If the incident occurs in person with an individual who does not pose a threat to their physical safety at the moment, they may shrug it off because it is the quickest way to move towards the goal they had in sight.

One of the most significant experiences among participants was their encounters with law enforcement. Sean's final words in the interview sum up the overarching experience of racism during the pandemic.

> I just don't like racism. I wish it could stop. If I had wish I get rid of racism for real. The coronavirus, I could deal with it, but police brutality and racism, and me have to watch my back all the time. Yeah. I can't do that. Cause nobody should have to watch their back or deal with racism. Because God made us so all of us could be equal. But in this world. For real, I just want God to hurry up and come because 2020 was not it or the rest of year was not it because it was crazy.

Sean's words highlight the consequences of repeated exposure to racism and the reported response of that gut feeling. Taken together, having that gut feeling while navigating law enforcement as a context creates a sense of hyperarousal and hypervigilance where Black adolescent males believe they always have to watch their backs (Phan et al., 2020). Thus, racism affects Black Americans at the time of the event

and considerably after, identifying the experience as traumatic in nature (Carter et al., 2013; Henderson et al., 2019). Although the experience is traumatic in nature, the repeated exposure to racism creates a coping response of desensitization and minimization (Carr et al., 2014; Ortiz, 2019). The prolonged stress that results from direct and vicarious experiences of racism in various contexts may be one of the most pronounced threats to positive health outcomes for Black adolescent males (Jernigan & Daniel, 2011; Kaholokula, 2016). Although the coping response of that gut feeling could be initially protective, the compounding effect of that response could result in diminished empathy and reduced emotional reactivity (Mrug et al., 2015)

Overall, the results from this study highlight the need to conduct qualitative research that amplifies the voices of Black adolescent males. Previous studies have used quantitative measures but have failed to explore and understand the experiences of Black adolescent males. Specifically, this qualitative study provided Black adolescent males the space to talk about their experiences utilizing their own language. Developmentally, Black adolescent males may not use the same language that adults use to describe their experiences with racism. Black adults may use language such as microaggressions, micro insults to describe their experiences, and trauma, desensitization, avoidant coping to describe their responses to the racist incidents. Therefore, this study allowed for Black adolescent males to describe in their own words the contexts and responses that they have to racism.

Implications

Recognizing the psychological and emotional effects of racism on the Black male psyche, culturally relevant interventions and preventions for assessing and treating race-

based trauma (e.g., post-secondary police induced race-based trauma, exposure to racially charged language in video games, and school induced racism) are required. There have been some culturally relevant interventions that have begun the process of assessing and treating race-based trauma and stress (Jones et al., 2020). For example, The Bakari Project intervention was developed with the notion that adulthood is defined by mastery rather than age and youth must accomplish six areas of mastery (i.e., self-awareness and self-knowledge, history, relationships, skill development, leadership, and community service) over the course of 4 years (Caldwell-Gunes & Parham, 2020). Anderson et al. (2018) developed a five-week Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race (EMBRace) racial socialization intervention to enhance coping strategies for parents and adolescents and reduce adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems. This intervention has highlighted the importance of racial socialization to improve coping strategies used to deal with racism. Stevenson's (2003) Preventing Long-Term Anger and Aggression in Youth (PLAAY) is described as a racial and cultural socialization intervention. In this intervention, therapists and mental health professionals work with participants to teach racial socialization and coping strategies that youth can utilize when they encounter racism. These interventions have been effective in helping Black adolescents identify the stressor, reduce their stress levels, and develop coping strategies to deal with racism. While these interventions are some of the most culturally relevant interventions to date, more research needs to be done on race related interventions to support Black adolescent males as they navigate various environments throughout their lives.

Additionally, mental health professionals and educators must be aware of the different ways in which trauma can manifest in Black adolescent males' lives (e.g., rage, depression, avoidance, dissociation, and hypervigilance). For example, Black male distrust towards law enforcement has previously been associated with the idea that a Black man's vigilance is a result of them being caught in a deviant act. Contrary to this notion, several of the experiences collected from this study revealed that even in the absence of deviant activity, there is still widespread fear and suspicion of law enforcement. In addition, depending upon the context where racism occurred for the Black adolescent male, their perception of the severity and the type of response they provide may vary. Therefore, simply adapting treatments that were developed for DSM-5 disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may not be sufficient in the case of racism. The diagnosis of PTSD requires that the individual has direct or vicarious exposure to death, threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence, there are intrusive symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, emotional distress, or physical reactivity, there are overly negative thoughts about oneself or the world, and symptoms must persist for more than one month. For Black adolescent males, they may automatically be screened out because the perception of racism does not fit in the stressor category, while experiencing the intrusive symptoms and negative thoughts for much longer than one month. Williams et al. (2018) posit that racism is a trauma that often meets the criteria for PTSD and they developed a clinical measurement tool that examines individuals for PTSD in the manner of racial trauma. PTSD can be the result of a discrete traumatic event or be a cumulative reaction to a series of stressful, interpersonal events. The experience of racism among Black adolescents, including the cumulative effects of

racism, enhances the development of clinically significant distress and an identifiable trauma reaction. Racism is not a fixed stressor that requires one specific treatment, racism necessitates careful and tailored consideration based on individual experience and context. Therapists should provide more unstructured space for patients to create and process their own experience, appraise the impact, and inform clinicians about their own culturally relevant coping techniques.

Therapists and mental health programming also have a unique opportunity to encourage coping with racism. Some interventions developed for Black adolescents focus on increasing racial identity while teaching problem-solving skills (Belgrave et al., 2004; Gilbert et al., 2009; Ngwe et al., 2004). In addition to identifying, processing, and validating racial stress and trauma (Hardy, 2013), clinicians have utilized diverse types of behavioral (e.g., collective coping, social support, engaging in racial socialization with others) and cognitive (e.g., relaxation, storytelling) strategies (Harrell, 2000; Stevenson, 2003, 2014). Identifying, processing, and validating racism while also teaching coping strategies will provide Black adolescent males with additional tools they can use to improve their own racial identity, engage in empowerment, and manage their responses to help them heal and combat future encounters with racism.

Perpetrators of racism have a significant amount of responsibility in creating an antiracist culture for Black adolescent males. It would be important for law enforcement agencies, schools, and social media companies to engage in antiracism curriculum, training, and systems. For instance, in many of the contexts Black adolescent males identified in this study, there needs to be creation of inclusive and tolerant climates that celebrate multiple perspectives, cultures, and ethnicities. In addition, there needs to be

further exploration of local policies that may disadvantage one group of over another. Law enforcement programs should be tailored to training officers on how to address racial bias, recognize signs of mental illness and trauma, and how to de-escalate situations and avoid use of force. For example, Strategies for Youth is an organization that does consistent work related to training officers and improving police/youth interactions (Strategies For Youth [SYF], 2022). They often work with law enforcement agencies to analyze and adjust policies and train them on racial bias and normal adolescent development. The goal is for them to work with the community and become guardians for all youth instead of enforcers of the law.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

This is the first study to examine Black adolescent males' experiences with racism across multiple contexts. This research makes an important contribution to the current literature because it helps to detail the stress process associated with racism with greater precision and, as a result, helps clinicians and researchers identify ways to intervene instantaneously following racist experiences for Black adolescent males.

These strengths should be evaluated in the context of study limitations. First, the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant stressor that impacted the participants of this study. The effects from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Racial Pandemic may have added additional stressors such as contraction of the coronavirus, loss of social connections, and fear of a loved one dying, and loss for my participants. In addition, the prevalence of psychological stressors such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder worsened for adolescents during the pandemic (Magson et al., 2021) which may have made it more challenging to distinguish between whether the

pandemic or their racialized experience was more significant. The COVID-19 pandemic may have also impacted recruitment with this study because throughout the course of recruitment, schools and businesses completely shut down and for several months the U.S. and countries around the world went on a lockdown. This decreased the accessibility to Black adolescent males in a large metro area.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented time in the United States for multiple reasons. In addition to the global pandemic, the United States was dealing with another pandemic that was rooted in systemic racism. Acts of racism against Black Americans became increasingly visible via social media and news coverage (Bjornstrom et al., 2010; Bor et al., 2018). For example, videos of George Floyd's and Ahmaud Arbery's killings were widely shared, a video of a White woman who called the police after a Black man asked her to leash her dog went viral, and media of blatant racism towards Black Americans was replayed through news and media outlets which lead to global protests. In a study done by Pew Research Center (2020), Black Americans said that it is as common or more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about people who are Black. Blacks also reported that along with Asian Americans, they were among the most likely to report adverse experiences due to their race since the start of the pandemic such as witnessing people express discomfort due to Black Americans wearing a mask in public. Overall, the salience of these experiences may have impacted youths' willingness to talk and discuss their experiences while the country was actively processing systemic racism. Additionally, the racism pandemic may have impacted the contexts participants engaged with regularly and thus altering the spaces that they may have engaged with prior to 2020. Together, the COVID-19

pandemic and racism pandemic have permanently impacted how Black adolescents navigate the world around them. Future research needs to examine the longitudinal implications of COVID-19 stress and race related stress in various contexts.

In addition to study challenges related to COVID and racially motivated events in the news, the sample used in this research was geographically-bound to predominantly Black, low-income neighborhoods in Washington D.C. and was derived using convenience sampling methods. As such, the generalizability of these findings should be considered limited to urban, east-coast areas until additional research has been done with other Black adolescents in different geographic areas. While studies on Black adolescents' experiences with racism have assessed multiple urban areas and found similar results (Herda, 2016; Lanier et al., 2017; Rengifo & Pater, 2017), but each geographic location has its own history. Additionally, these were the most salient themes reported by the participants in this study who reside in an urban metropolitan city. It may be possible that Black adolescents from other communities may be experiencing racism in different contexts than the ones that were identified by these participants. Given that this study was conducted with 10 participants primarily in Washington, D.C. on the East coast, it will be important to expand the study to Black adolescent males in other cities around the United States to increase the generalizability of the results.

I also relied on the ability of participants to remember past events with some level of accuracy, and these were particularly negative memories. Talarico et al. (2004) found that the emotional intensity of memories often leads to distortion when recalling specific events. To improve the trustworthiness of findings it may be important to expand the interviews with Black male youth at earlier stages of development. Expanding this work

could broaden conclusions of Black male youth at earlier points in development and validate similar encounters with racism in different spaces. Finally, this study limited the experiences of racism to Black adolescent males. Black adolescent males reported that they experienced racism in schools, stores, law enforcement encounters, travel, and online. It is just as important to acknowledge that Black adolescent females also experience racism in multiple contexts. Future phenomenological research should study Black adolescent females to understand where Black adolescent females experience racism, how they commonly respond to racism in those various contexts, and how those contexts overlap and differ from those of Black adolescent males. It is just as important to amplify the voices of Black adolescent females, especially when it comes to their experiences with racism.

Conclusion

Racism continues to be a significant stressor with deleterious effects on Black adolescents. Black adolescent males in this study identified several studied contexts (e.g., police, school, store, and online) and one new context (i.e., travel) where they experience racism. Participants also reported that they generally have two different responses to racism: shrug it off and being fearful of the consequences. This shows that there are individual level responses based on the context where racism was experienced as suggested in the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. Additionally, the characteristics of the event, such as the context, shape the perception as suggested in the Clark et al.'s adapted biopsychosocial model. Lastly, the contexts where Black adolescent males experience racism can influence how they respond to racism. The results of this study add to the existing literature of how Black adolescent males describe their experiences and

contextualize where and how they experience racism. And thus, highlight the importance of culturally relevant intervention and prevention programs that focus on Black adolescent males' experiences with racism and useful methods on how to cope with racism in various contexts.

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Appendix A

Figure 1.

Bronfenbrenner Bioecological Model

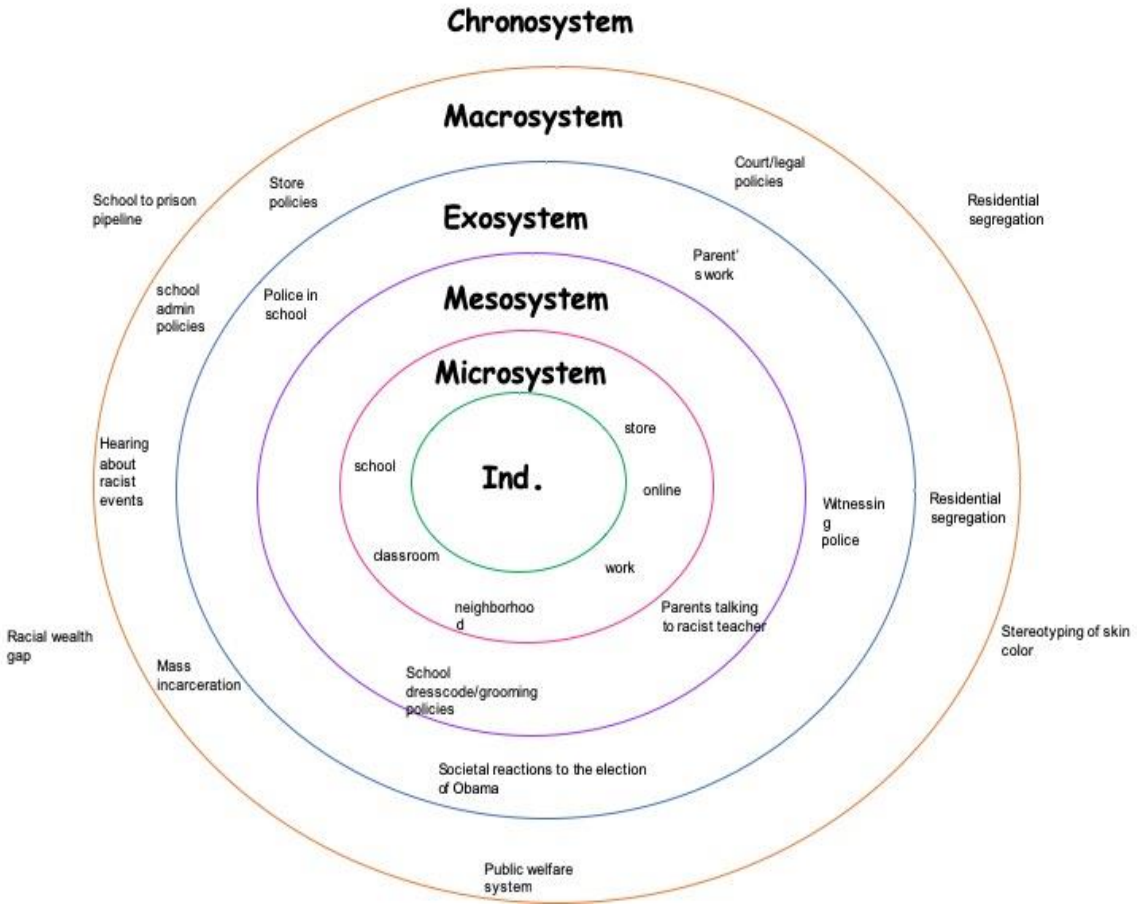


Figure 2.

Clark et al. Biopsychosocial Model

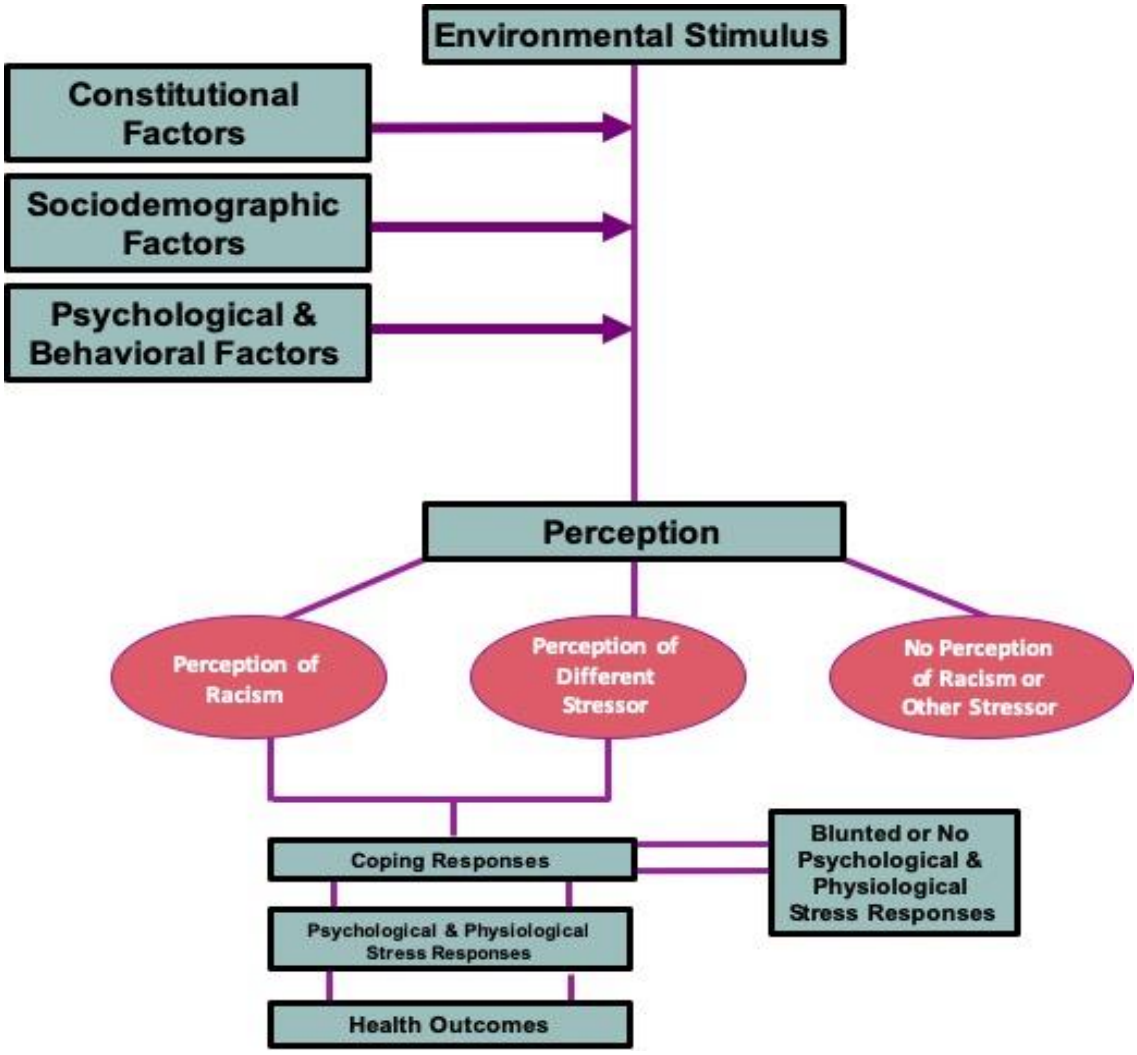
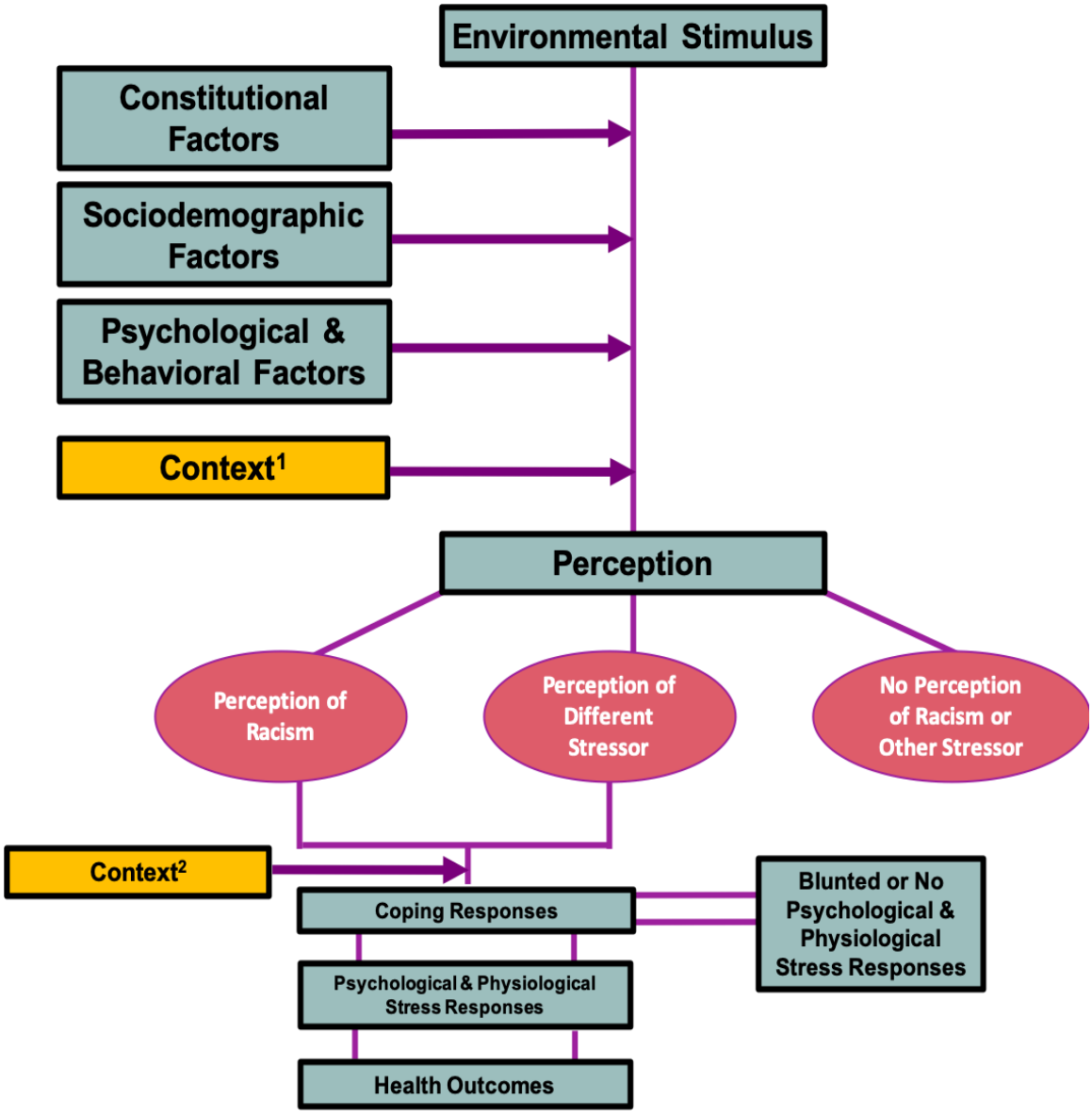


Figure 3.

Adapted Clark et al. Biopsychosocial Model



[1]Examines context as factor that influences if the environmental stimulus is perceived as racism.

[2]Explores whether the reaction to the perceived racism varies in different contexts.