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IS BEING RESPECTABLE ENOUGH?: A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF CODE-
SWITCHING AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK LEADERS WHO
WORK AT NONPROFITS IN BRIDGERTOWN

A Dissertation

School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By

Ramona M. Crawford

August 2021

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Ramona M. Crawford

2021

IS BEING RESPECTABLE ENOUGH?: A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF CODE-
SWITCHING AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK LEADERS WHO
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ABSTRACT

IS BEING RESPECTABLE ENOUGH?: A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF CODE-SWITCHING AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK LEADERS WHO WORK AT NONPROFITS IN BRIDGERTOWN

By

Ramona M. Crawford

August 2021

Dissertation supervised by Gretchen Givens Generett, Ph.D

The current literature on Black nonprofit leaders is scarce, causing little to be known about the experiences that they have encountered when navigating their roles and responsibilities. Even less literature is available on these Black leaders and their usage of code-switching strategies when attempting to navigate those same nonprofits. Based on themes uncovered during the literature review this study employs an in-depth narrative inquiry qualitative methodology. While using theories such as critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 200; Ladson-Billings,1998), the politics of respectability (Higginbotham, 1993) and the theory of capital (Bourdieu, 1985; 1996) the researcher examines the leadership experiences of four Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown, a predominantly White Mid-Atlantic city. Based on themes uncovered during the literature

review and the researcher's lived experiences, initial deductive codes for code-switching were used to analyze the interview data; linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness. The primary findings of the data analysis suggested that code-switching was more than a matter of alternating linguistically, behaviorally, and consciously but rather a full embodying experience. Additionally, code-switching was not solely based on the act of alternation itself but also the why or reasoning behind that alternation. As a result, additional themes of code-switching were salient when studying Black leaders in this specific context: code-switching as inauthenticity, as survival, and as a means for advocacy. This dissertation not only plans to shed light on the experiences of these Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown but to also offer insights and implications for theory and practice.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I am, because you are.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, thank you, God. Matthew 19:26 states, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

I would like to acknowledge everyone who has prayed for me, spoken life into me, challenged me, and supported me during this dissertation process.

I would like to acknowledge the Ed.D faculty and staff at Duquesne University for developing and fostering a program of excellence that brings social justice to the forefront of educational leadership. This program has matured me and centered me exponentially. I am honored to have been chosen to study under a group of people who are dedicated to the things that they teach. A special acknowledgement goes out to my dissertation chair, Dr. Gretchen Givens Generett for her constant critical yet nurturing style of leadership. She was intentional in how she challenged me in this dissertation process in a way that instilled a certain level of confidence and self-assurance whenever I told her that I was tired and just ready to be done. She did not allow those my words to alter her expectations for me in the process. I would also like to acknowledge my dissertation committee members, Drs. Olson and Brown for their constant guidance and unwavering support throughout this entire process. Their ability to ask me difficult questions that furthered my thought process and methods, made me a better researcher, student, and person.

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Chapter 1: Rationale for Study

When I was twelve, my parents had two talks with me. One was the usual birds and bees...The other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me.

Funny how it works with White kids though. It's dope to be Black until it's hard to be Black.

- Quotes by Starr Carter (*The Hate U Give*)

The above quotes were taken from, *The Hate U Give* (2017), a young adult novel, turned film, by Angie Thomas that was written to recount race relations and the lived experiences of Black people in America. The term Black, although commonly used interchangeably with African American and person of color, is an umbrella term in which to view a collection of people whose ancestors were enslaved and brought to America years ago. The influx of immigration post-1960s, the civil rights movement and other historic occurrences in the United States have led to issues of race and identity formation that have caused back and forth tensions related to what to call Black people in America if not African American (Martin, 1991). Nevertheless, Black was the defaulted term used in this study because to me, it describes a collective experience of individuals, of African descent, who were born in the United States of America. To be Black in America, as proposed by Cottom (2019), is to have a Black American story of enslavement, displacement, resistance, mobility and even bootstrapping. Although, it is apparent that there are Black people on every continent and although different Blacks have diverse experiences in their places of origin, the reality remains that Black people in America, regardless of nationality, have far different educational, economic and workplace experiences than White people in America. In their article "Be Real Black For Me", Dumas and Ross (2016) refer to the Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway song (1972) by

the same name, which urges Black people to embrace being Black because doing so would be both empowering and liberating. Being boldly Black is a statement and to be Black in environments that uphold whiteness “engages and thus signifies an audacious and inspiring historical moment of black imagining, re-imagining and nation building” (Martin, 2008, p. 247).

“Given the United States’ racist history and culture, the collective Black community is affected and has specific needs that deserve specific considerations that do not always align with those of the White community. Therefore, a Eurocentric standard will not and cannot serve Black people in the same way” (Davis, 2018, p. 70). This study is an investigation of code-switching and the lived experiences of Black leaders in nonprofits and their use of code-switching strategies. Although this study will focus on Black nonprofit leaders specifically, some describe code-switching as a phenomenon where minorities of all races navigate the tension between upholding their own values and behaviors versus White normative values and behaviors thereby allowing them to engage with White people and benefit from those of power and privilege (Morton, 2014). Racism and microaggressions regarding the perceived incompetence of Blacks who choose not to code-switch, or conform to societal standards, have proven to be detrimental to the educational, economic and mobilization of the Black race (Allen, 2013; Dowdy, 2018). Microaggressions are verbal messages, nonverbal messages and environmental cues that affect all minority groups to belittle and invalidate the true experiences of disadvantage groups (Pierce, Carew, Peirce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978).

Despite the abolishment of Jim Crow and the perceived decline in Whites’ overt racism and discrimination, Black people continue to experience and perceive racial

discrimination (Laudrine & Klonoff 1996; Bledsoe, Combs, Sigelman & Weltch, 2001). Many Blacks have characterized their experiences in predominantly White spaces as isolating, unfriendly and sometimes tumultuous (Bernard, Hoggard, & Neblett, 2018); Walters, 2017; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). For example, Blacks and other people of color who have learned to align their dialect to White dominated Standard English, are oftentimes afforded opportunities and access to capital that could potentially advance their job attainment (Levinson, 2012). Although, a fictional character in high school, Starr's insightfulness "Funny how it works with White kids though. It's dope to be Black until it's hard to be Black" chronicles the real-life experiences of Black people as they navigate White systems that support the cultural norms valued by White people in America.

Along the same lines, in her book, *No Citizen Left Behind* (2012), Levinson talks about code-switching as it relates to the specific alternation of verbal communication, the clothing (and other aspects of personal appearance) and also the body language that a Black person or other person of color may choose to embody when interacting with those of power and privilege. Levinson, then goes on to describe code-switching as the embodiment of cultural, political, and experiential viewpoints when interacting with those of power and privilege. For this reason and more, some Black people have turned to code-switching. This is seemingly to combat the lack of access to resources, education, economic mobility and capital (economic, cultural and social) that continue to perpetuate the systems of injustice (Munger and Seron, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Economic and educational inequities have been and continue to be upheld by White systems of power and privilege because racism is embedded in all systems including

education, the professions and economics. For example, despite many significant efforts to increase college access, Black students remain at the bottom of most statistical metrics of success in education (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Hussain, M., & Jones, J. M. 2021).

Lorde (1992) defined racism as "the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (p. 496). Similarly, Marable (1992) defined racism as "a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (p. 5). In other words, dominant White ideologies of American society have used and continue to use skin color, as an identifier, to promote superiority and exploit and control people of other racial groups for their own development, success and growth (Marable, 1992). In the United States, people of color have never held the majority of power, privilege or capital.

The conundrums and complexities of what it means to be Black in a white-dominated world have been major topics of conversation for researchers of different races, creeds and disciplines. In her book, "Black is the Body", Emily Bernard (2019) recounts a conversation amongst Whites and Blacks in which they discussed how White parents teach their children how to live while we [blacks] have to teach our children how to survive. Due to their racial identity, the everyday life of Black people encompasses both overt and covert realities of discrimination, prejudice and decreased opportunities and "although they may hope for a better future world of fairness and racial equality, Black parents understand that they face an extraordinary challenge: to raise children who will be able to survive in a racist-oriented society" (Peters, 2002, p. 57). Black children have been and continue to be described as the most endangered kids in our society

(Keniston, 1978). All of whom are being forced to live through and engage with White systems of power and privilege.

Code-switching

Being two different people is so exhausting. I've taught myself to speak with two different voices and only say certain things around certain people. I've mastered it.

- Quote by Starr Carter (The Hate U Give)

I preface this section by acknowledging the complexities associated with formal writing. As mentioned by, Goodall and Taylor (2019), “for many students, the first person singular pronoun *I* is a troublesome feature of academic writing as some lecturers do not seem to mind it appearing in a piece of student academic writing, while others strongly object to it” (p. 135). In academia, first-person pronouns (“I,” “me,” “my,” “we,” “us,” etc.) are said to denote a more informal tone and can oftentimes be associated with a lack of confidence and assertiveness. As a Black scholar and researcher writing about code-switching, I have made the conscious decision to use first-person pronouns in this dissertation to combat the negative stigmas associated with Black academics in White, heteronormative systems like education.

My desire to be an educational leader and a behavior therapist has been greatly impacted by my personal, educational, and professional experiences as well as the educational and professional experiences of other Black people around me. Starr Carter’s quote provides insight into my lived experiences as a Black woman through the contexts of my personal life, school, and career. Although, my life has not been plagued with an excessive amount of negative police interactions, to me, Starr’s statement expresses the everyday trauma, stress and debilitating effects of having to be two persons – someone other than yourself. As evidenced by the quotation, Starr’s parents have done what many

other Black parents have been taught to do. Teach their Black children how to appropriately behave around persons/people in authority and those with institutional power because behaving “inappropriately” could prove to be detrimental or even fatal.

Behavior analysis is the study of behavior and although behavior modification programs are created to teach “socially acceptable” behaviors, it is important to note that terms like “normal” and “socially acceptable” are generic social constructs that cannot be defined outside of a dominant system of power and privilege. As a practicing behavior therapist, my professional role has been to engage students of all backgrounds as I address their behaviors and the perceived inappropriateness of those behaviors when they are not in alignment with societal expectations of normalcy. Through all my different professional experiences, one thing has remained true; Black people, from childhood to adulthood, especially from underprivileged neighborhoods, continue to struggle in terms of education, economic mobility, and career attainment due to outdated systems of power and authority. This is because the notion of whiteness is constantly upheld in the United States and other western societies. Whiteness will be described in greater detail in the upcoming chapters but Davis (2018) states, “the standard of whiteness is a form of property that dictates acceptable norms, behaviors, cultural practices, status, reputation, achievements, and performance in mathematics spaces and society. It also includes the exclusion of Black community” (p.70).

Starr’s quotations shed light on the understanding of both the conscious and unconscious processes that go into navigating a world that views Blacks as less than Whites in America. Starr mentioned, “being two different people is so exhausting.” As a child, it oftentimes felt like I was navigating two worlds; a phenomenon coined by

Diemer (2007) that describes a minority person's tendency to navigate their own spaces and White dominated political, educational, economic and career spaces in hopes of reaching success. As I reflect on Starr's words, I reflect on myself as a Black female from Opa Locka, Florida whose family has "made it" although statistically we should not have. I was born into a family of alcoholics/drug abusers and to teenage parents in Opa Locka; a city that still boasts a \$17,908 median household income and a poverty rate of almost 50%. Of the population for whom poverty status is determined, 47.2% of the people in the city live below the poverty line; a percentage that is higher than the national average of 13.1% (US Census Bureau, 2019). Furthermore, statistics show that in 2004, Opa locka had the highest rate of violent crime for any city in the United States. Even in 2013, the city was still considered "crime ridden". A released ranking, created using the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting database and municipal crime reports from 2010-2014, listed Opa locka in the top five "most dangerous" cities, based on the amount of violent crimes committed per 100,000 residents. All of that is important to note when considering how far behind I was before even starting in this race of life just by being a poor, Black female. According to an article by Lisa Harrison (2017), "fundamental to intersectionality theory is the belief that social identities, such as race and gender, intersect in a distinctive way such that each identity can only be defined through the intersection with other identities. With roots in Crenshaw (1989) and her work in Black feminist scholarship, intersectionality aims to identify how those ideals such as social identity, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, race and gender all overlap in a way that discriminates against black people; black women specifically. By the very nature in which White, heteronormative, male-dominated systems are uplifted in America, being a Black female,

born to young parents, in a poor and crime ridden city typically meant that I would probably be just another statistic.

Fortunately, by middle school, my family had “moved up in the world”, a colloquialism commonly used in the Black community to describe the upward mobility my family had experienced over time. Initially moving across city lines into Miramar, FL in 1998 and then moving again in 2005 to Pembroke Pines, FL. Both cities proved to be significantly safer and afforded more in terms of economic equity and education. Comparatively, Opa Locka’s median household income in 2018 was \$17,908 while Pembroke Pines had a median household income of \$66,816. Additionally, in 2018 there were 9.4% persons living in poverty in Pembroke Pines while 47.2% persons were living in poverty in Opa Locka (US Census, 2020). These statistics show how I transitioned from being in a poor and majority Black community where phrases like “steeped in scandal and debt” (Sallah and Weaver, 2016) and “crime ridden” were used to describe my hometown to spending the latter years of my life in predominantly White neighborhoods, on predominantly White athletic teams, in predominantly White service organizations and then going onto predominantly White institutions of higher education to obtain my bachelors, masters and now doctoral degree.

Nevertheless, moving up in class and across city lines was not enough to combat the pervasiveness and negativity associated with being Black in America. Another colloquialism “there is a time and a place for everything” has been frequently used in Black spaces to describe the perceived incompetence of individuals who stick to their own vernacular, behavioral and cultural norms where others believe they should assimilate to the norms of the dominant White culture. As my mother navigated both

racial tensions and gender inequities in her own journey from teacher to school administrator, she used her experiences as learning tools to teach my sister and me how a Black girl “should” conduct herself in professional environments; that is if she wanted access to White spaces and the opportunity to be treated equitably and with respect in spaces that were atypical for Blacks, especially Black women.

For example, at one point in my parent’s lives, they both worked in companies with a large population of Hispanic individuals. Accordingly, they made sure we were fluent in Spanish so that we would be able to code-switch when interacting with their colleagues and other people we would see on a regular basis. Additionally, I was also taught to never leave the house in anything that you would be ashamed of wearing if you met someone who later turned out to be a person that would be interviewing you for a job. On any given day this could mean no athletic wear even when running to the grocery store, or no dirty shoes even when playing outside. On one specific occasion, I can remember being scolded for going to baseball practice one evening in the third grade because I got my uniform dirty even though my parents were aware that I left my practice clothes at home and had approved of me going with the uniform; “now you look sloppy” my mother exclaimed. Another example would be the etiquette classes my mom enrolled me in because she thought it would provide me with what she considered adequate communication skills because American Standard English was promoted while other dialects, including but not limited to African American Vernacular English, were demoted. Historically in education, teachers have considered American Standard English the correct and more appropriate style of written and linguistic work (Delpit & Dowdy,

2002); anything that deviates from American Standard English is regarded as unprofessional.

As an adult, I am aware that my parents, in particular my mother, wanted to increase my access and opportunity, but ultimately it brought on feelings of inadequacy at an age when I could not even properly define and conceptualize what inadequacy was. As stated in *The Hate U Give*, “I can’t change where I come from or what I’ve been through, so why should I be ashamed of what makes me, me?” Here the author is hinting at this notion of perception; and everything that deviates from looking “kept” and “put together” reinforces stereotypes of Blackness in America.

Problem: To Code-switching or Not to Code-Switch

Despite the many efforts to promote equity in academic, professional and social settings, Blacks continue to be at an economic, academic and career disadvantage due to the unfair, discriminatory and unjust systems that maintain subordination and discord in the United States (Patton et. al, 2007). The intentionality that goes into code-switching for Blacks has been underrepresented in the literature because of the many constructs that go into code-switching strategies. It is not only a matter of appearance or even vernacular but the full embodiment of having to alter oneself for the perceived educational, economic and career benefits afforded to White people and others who choose to assimilate. For the purpose of this study, code-switching is defined as the ability to alter one’s linguistic dialect, consciousness and behavior in ways that allow those of power and privilege to feel comfortable in exchange for fair treatment, access to increased economic mobility, educational opportunities and social advancement. This is an all-encompassing definition that I created from the literature to accurately describe the

full experience of alternation and navigation that takes place for Black people in America. Code-switching is not random or done frivolously; it is multidimensional and requires skill and situational awareness. It is important to note that in earlier works describing this phenomenon of code-switching, the phrase “code-switching” was not used so this paper will reference historical yet similar ideals including double-consciousness and the politics of respectability to show how although code-switching started off as a term rooted in linguistics, it encompasses far more than linguistics for Blacks and other people of color. Nevertheless, it is important to note that although the themes of this dissertation (linguistics, double-consciousness and behavior) do impact identity formation, this dissertation is less about the formation of code-switching and more about the experiential nature of code-switching as discussed by the participants being studied.

Whether or not Blacks should be formally taught to code-switch has been discussed from several viewpoints (Levinson, 2012; Bicker, 2018; Morton, 2014; Hill, 2009). Levinson (2012) insists:

If civic empowerment is our goal, then educators need to teach minority students to ‘codeswitch’: to represent and express themselves in ways that members of the majority group – those with political privilege and power – will naturally understand and respect. Students should learn that in every community there is a language and culture of power. (p.87).

The reality is, the spreading and accrual of economic and political power has been recycled amongst those from White and affluent backgrounds and withheld from students and families of color. This is why some researchers would agree that code-switching would allow students of color to be accepted into the professional jobs market that would improve their livelihood and produce generational wealth. Levinson maintains, “even in the absence of outright prejudice and discrimination, there is a widespread cultural and hence civic and political bias toward White middle-class norms—norms of speech, dress,

personal appearance, body language, and cultural and historical references (Levinson, 2012, p. 75). Along those same lines, Levinson and others believe that students should not be taught to think of themselves as necessarily excluded from the wider civic community and that teachers should make it known to Blacks and other students of color, the importance of strategically crossing cultural domains. Carter (2005), agreed when stating “education is as much about being inculcated with the ways of the ‘culture of power’ as it is about learning to read, count and think critically” (p. 47). Morton (2014), compares code-switching to instances of bilingual students who alternate between languages as they speak in their native tongue versus when they speak in public. In that article she states:

Just as bilingual children switch between languages, children could be taught to switch between the dispositions valued by the labor market and those valued at home, thereby allowing students to stem the effect of the market on their engagement with other values, while retaining the economic benefits of learning the dispositions valuable in the labor market (p.267).
Ultimately, researchers believe that code-switching can allow those who lack power and privilege the opportunity to traverse the tension between conventional values and styles that support dominant White culture versus minority cultural values and styles.

However, according to Jack Bicker (2018), teaching Black people, students specifically, to code-switch could have negative effects on that student’s sense of autonomy, self-esteem and self-integrity. Bicker also believed that Blacks partaking in code-switching and assimilation could inhibit White student’s ability to see and therefore confront their own implicit and racial biases. In other words, by teaching one group of students to code switch, we are putting both groups of students at a disadvantage. Bicker (2018) remarks:

Instead, the remaking of minority students, and the quietening of their authentic voices, represents a perhaps accidental, and well intentioned, requisitioning of those students to support the social and political status quo; that is, to create future citizens who, rather than being in a position to criticize a conceptual system that pours scorn on their own cultural origins, are instead along with their non-minority peers – robbed of the opportunity to see through the ‘cultural phantasmagoria’ as a result of having been crudely enmeshed within it (p. 83). Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2007) supported this notion in their article, *Biculturalism unpacked: Components, measurement, individual differences, and outcomes*. They maintained that although learning and adapting to multiple cultures may lead to increased acceptance and respect from the dominant White groups, it may also lead to a partial rejection of one’s own ethnicity or race when adopting the dominant culture. Additionally, Blacks engaging in code-switching of any sort could lead to cognitive dissonance as well as oppositional social identity (Greene & Walker, 2004). Cognitive dissonance refers to conflicting feelings, thoughts, beliefs and attitudes regarding certain situations. Oppositional social identity refers to the social exclusion from a dominant group due to Blacks defining themselves not by who they are, but by how they oppose mainstream White culture (Carter, 2005; Ogbu & Davis, 2003). In other cases, engaging in code-switching could mean eradication from Black social groups and even culture due to feelings of “selling out”¹. This further describes the nuanced argument associated with code-switching strategies.

Purpose of the Study

As evidenced by the back-and-forth tensions regarding code-switching (Bicker, 2018; Morton, 2014; Levinson, 2012; Hill, 2009), researchers acknowledge that there are

¹ “Selling Out” – Refers to the discord felt by Blacks when navigating conflicts between strict self-interest and racial group interest thereby causing tension due to the social costs incurred when other blacks question their commitment to or standing within the group (White, Laird, & Allen, 2014)

positive and negative outcomes associated with all forms of code-switching. Whether or not code-switching is valuable is an area that is still being researched but the purpose of this study is not to argue one way or the other. The purpose of this qualitative study is to provoke discussion around Black nonprofit leaders and their use of code-switching leadership when navigating their roles and responsibilities in hopes of providing new insight surrounding this phenomenon. The benefits and drawbacks associated with code-switching are evident but the extent to which Black leaders of nonprofits use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities deserves to be further researched. The use of code-switching strategies could be advantageous to Black leaders of nonprofits navigating White systems of power and privilege. On the other hand, code-switching could be detrimental to the level of autonomy, self-esteem and self-integrity of those Black leaders.

Black leaders in nonprofit spaces are centered in this study because they represent a group of people who navigate corporate spaces but remain tied to communities at large. Given the tensions and disparities between Blacks and Whites in America, there appears to be an avoidance or gap in the literature that fail to discuss code-switching by nonprofit leaders as a means of addressing and transforming systemic inequities in the communities that many local nonprofits say that they support and serve. Nonprofit organizations are the social workhorses of the communities that they serve because they aim to meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities. Nonprofits serve the young, the old, and the disadvantaged while also feeding the hungry and housing the homeless. Nonprofit settings offer a personal approach to community engagement because they are created to recognize and then act on the daily barriers that community members face in hopes of

positively impacting multiple dimensions of their lives by addressing problems holistically (Dicke & Ott, 1999). Additionally, “Nonprofit organizations are also recognized as important vehicles for promoting civic engagement and furthering democratic ideals” (LeRoux, 2011, p. 565). Serving as voluntary associations and civic organizations, nonprofits are widely recognized as significant players in American policymaking and politics. By raising money and support for social causes and increasing public awareness of relevant issues, nonprofits are essential stakeholders in the policymaking process (LeRoux & Goerdel, 2009). For the purposes of this study, Nanus and Dobbs’ (1999) description of a nonprofit leader will be used. Nonprofit leaders are social entrepreneurs, energizers, visionaries, coaches, change agents and direction setters. They go on to say that effective leaders aim for the greater good of organizations by boosting organizational capital and producing real change within organizations and communities.

This study takes place in Bridgertown, a pseudonym given to a Mid-Atlantic city that was chosen because of its large number of nonprofits listed. For the state in which this city is located, there are currently an estimated 32,500 nonprofits (Gannon, 2020). The need for community-based organizations in the state and nationally has continued to rise even as government support has continued to decrease. Based on public record, there are over 3,000 listed community-focused nonprofits including rehabilitation services, afterschool services, mental health services, job training services and neighborhood revitalization in Bridgertown and its surrounding cities (Julian, 2017).

In Chapter 1 of this study, my intention was to first shed light on the unfair and unjust systems of power and privilege that have played a major role in the lack of

mobility of Blacks in America. As a Black woman, it has oftentimes felt impossible to infiltrate systems that would afford me the same educational, career and economic opportunities as my White counterparts. Chapter 1 was also written to provoke discussion around Black nonprofit leaders and their use of code-switching strategies when navigating the tensions between their roles and responsibilities at their predominantly White institutions, like nonprofits, and their roles and responsibilities when serving Black communities. Ultimately, there are complex back and forth tensions associated with code-switching and my goal is to illuminate the current gap between the existing tensions and the preferred usage of code-switching strategies. The following research question will serve as the main question that guides this study: To what extent do Black leaders of nonprofits in Bridgertown use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities in serving communities? In addition to the main research question, the following questions guide the investigation: 1.) To what degree are Black leaders, at nonprofits, in Bridgertown, familiar with code-switching? 2.) To what degree do Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, see code-switching as a positive tool or negative tool when navigating their roles as nonprofit leaders and community members? 3.) According to Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, what are the perceived benefits and risks of using code-switching?

Chapter 2 of this study builds a conceptual framework to deeply understand what is happening by presenting supporting arguments for the research questions. The literature review will include a discussion of critical race theory (CRT), which will serve as the foundation and through which to view other theoretical frameworks associated with code-switching. Additionally, I will use theoretical contexts like the politics of

respectability and the theory of capital to show why Black people in America have employed code-switching strategies to navigate different systems. Following the literature review will be Chapter 3. This chapter will describe multiple lines of inquiry used during the study. It will employ information to justify the research questions as well as documentation of the impact of the study. In this chapter I will also describe the nonprofit leaders selected to participate in the study, the methods used, and the practices monitored and evaluated. Chapter 4 will describe the principal outcomes of the study from each line of inquiry and all data sources. Finally, Chapter 5 will describe and discuss the implications of the data and analyses described in Chapter 4 to determine the impact of the implementation of improvement effort across stakeholders. The discussion will also draw conclusions from the findings and results to determine recommendations and leadership lessons that emerged from this study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

“It’s no disgrace to be black, but it’s often very inconvenient.”

— James Weldon Johnson

Prior to the common usage of code-switching as it is known today, it was used throughout the early 20th century but not investigated in depth until much later. In Redlinger (1979), the researcher referenced previous work that was rooted in research by Ronjat (1913) and Leopold (1939) where they spoke about ideals like code-switching as it related to bilingual research. However, the first expansive use of the actual word “code-switching” was in Hans Vogt’s (1954) review of Uriel Weinreich’s *Languages in Contact* (1953). As originally defined, code-switching “occurs when a bilingual introduces a completely unassimilated word from another language into his speech” (Haugen 1956, p. 40). In other words, code-switching referred to the fluctuation between multiple languages and dialects, in any active conversation, amongst people who have more than one language in common; normally one of the languages is dominant and/or preferred. As researchers in the late 20th century began to study code-switching in depth, they initially believed its usage was random and illogical but as more bilingual studies were conducted, researchers discovered that individuals code-switched according to certain situations and power groups. In a study by Blom and Grumperz (1972), with a Norwegian village, it was found that members of the village spoke two dialects of Norwegian and were meticulous about when they used each dialect depending on the situation in which they were involved and the people with whom they were conversing.

Currently, code-switching has evolved from a linguistic tool used by bilingual individuals to a complete mind, body and spirit skillset that individuals employ in hopes

of increasing access and opportunity. Inequities continue to be upheld and enforced by systems where racism is embedded in every intersection of life (Ramseur, 1991). Code-switching is one of the many tools that has been used to combat such systems of inequity, classism and racism. Nevertheless, before examining the various constructs associated with code-switching in the Black community, it is important to discuss the development of code-switching strategies for Blacks and how we have learned to adapt and even assimilate to this notion of whiteness using theories such as Critical Race Theory, Respectability Politics and Theory of Capital.

Critical Race Theory

Race is a social construction for which there is no scientific basis; racism is the foundation of that construction. I read and hear some version of these statements all the time; I repeat them in every course I teach. They are true. But when I am out in the world with my daughters, it is not a construction or its consequences that I fear will hurt them. What I fear are human beings, White human beings, who are not made of theory but of flesh and blood
– Emily Bernard (2019)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides the overall foundation and lens through which to examine code-switching and the historical context of Black people in America attempting to fit into White dominant spaces. Access to academic and economic resources is a crucial component of efforts aimed at improving the lives of Black people from groups unethically underprivileged and underserved. The fact is, economic and political power has been recycled amongst those from White and affluent backgrounds and denied to students and families of color due to structural barriers and societal prejudices. Such denial of access to adequate resources has hindered the academic and economic advancement of Black people in particular, and other minority groups of color.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), stemming from perspectives of critical legal studies, was created in 1989, in part for scholars and activist to challenge how policies, laws and culture are constructed in a way that reinforces the oppression of people of color and sustains the rule of White people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It is important to note that Critical Race Theory is constantly evolving and different theories have been created over the years that deal with specific groups including Dis/ability critical race studies or DisCrit (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013), Latino critical theory or LatCrit (Solorzano, & Bernal, 2001), Asian American critical race studies (Tamura, 2007), South Asian American critical race studies or AsianCrit (Iftikar & Museus, 2018) and American Indian critical race studies or TribalCrit (BrayBoy, 2005). The evolution of the CRT movement has transformed over time because activists and scholars are continuously interested in studying the conscious and unconscious relationships among race, racism and power from a broad economic and historical context (Delgado, Stefancic & Harris, 2017).

Critical Race Theory is important when attempting to understand the complexity of race in America and efforts to remedy injustices that will always be problematic (Bell, 2005). In the chapter entitled *Brown Reconceived*, Bell (2005) argues:

Imagining racism as a fixable aberration, moreover, obfuscates the way in which racism functions as an ideological lens through which Americans perceive themselves, their nation, and their nation's others. That is to say, the Court should position law as that which fixes racism rather than that which participates in its consolidation (p. 27).

The problem with using ideals such as race as a system to determine power and privilege is that it upholds a social construct that was invented and perpetuated over time rather than a reality (Gillborn, 2015). In his study, Leonardo (2009), went on to say that "Whiteness" is a racial discourse, whereas the category "White people" represents a

socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color (p. 169)”. In other words, race is a manmade ideal that does not have any biological basis for superiority. Whites did not attain power through fair means of accrual, rather by routinely and strategically stacking the odds in their favor so that Whites, specifically White males are viewed and treated as elite members of the American society (Brooks, 2009). Some CRT theorists believe that race, as a system upholding White supremacy, can be undone but it takes White people making active alterations and deconstructions in attitudes, feelings, teachings, values and beliefs (Gillborn, 2015; Ignatiev, 1997).

Whiteness, a multifaceted term used to describe how Whites are perceived and how they perceive themselves, is in a state of transformation. The way whiteness is being interpreted and defined by scholars and learners is different from how whiteness was interpreted and defined decades ago. Gallagher (1997) states:

The meaning of whiteness is not to be found in any single one of the preceding descriptions of how Whites imagine themselves or come to understand their racial identity. The contemporary meaning is an amalgamation of these White narratives. Whites can be defined as naive because they attach little meaning to their race, humane in their desire to reach out to nonwhites, defensive as self-defined victims, and reactionary in their calls for a return to White solidarity (p. 6).

In support of that ideology, Gallagher (2003) studied Whites students from around the country at various colleges and universities. It was found that many Whites view race from a color-blind perspective. In the study, color-blinded ideology does not ignore race; it recognizes race but disregards racial hierarchies in an effort to treat racial experiences as separate occurrences in everyday life. To collect data, Gallagher randomly selected students from 13 college and university settings, five liberal arts colleges and 8 large urban universities and used seventeen focus groups and thirty- individual interviews to collect his data. The study respondents were put in groups of about 6 that were comprised

of male and female students where the average age ranged from eighteen to twenty-two. A majority of the participants perceived the socioeconomic playing field as level. Gallagher states, “The passive interaction Whites have with people of color through the media creates the impression that little, if any, socio-economic difference exists between the races.”

A previous book by Lewis and Jhally (1992) attributed some of color-blindness effect to the perceived success of Black families in television shows like the Huxtable family in *The Cosby Show*. In this study, the majority of the participants also believed that their generation had purged themselves of overt racist attitudes and behavior which is directly linked to this color-blind narrative that White Americans have adopted. Take James, a nineteen student from the study who refuted the idea of white privilege by suggesting that everyone has the same opportunity. According to data collected from the interviews, James and other students believed in the ideals of the myth of meritocracy. James specifically believed that Blacks remained poor and those who were unable to leave impoverished neighborhoods were direct reflections of individual shortcomings not systemic obstacles or oppression.

Nevertheless, more than CRT focusing on ideals of race, power and privilege that benefit White people, it explores how assumptions of whiteness have historically affected decisions associated with supreme court hearings, governmental laws and criminality. Critical Race Theory also adds another layer to this unjust atmosphere of wrongfully disciplining and providing unequitable educational opportunities to Blacks and other minorities due to these students being looked at as culturally different and difficult. CRT examines society and culture and how those ideals are affected by race, law and power.

Critical Race Theory also offers insights, perspectives, methods, and strategies that guide my efforts to identify, analyze, and transform the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). Furthermore, CRT is an important theoretical framework that has the power to analyze deficiency in systems and how systems are affected by power and race amongst other things.

Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory

There are several basic tenets of Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, ak, 2017; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Some researchers note three main tenets while others note five tenets, but these are the overall beliefs that many critical race theorists subscribe to. This section highlights four tenets that are critical when investigating the lived experiences of Black leaders who work at nonprofits in Bridgertown.

One tenet of CRT is that racism has become a normal part of life and it is apparent in the way that society maintains and upholds systems of power and privilege. Becoming commonplace in American society makes it hard to combat racism because of the lack of acknowledgement given to it. Acceptance and acknowledgement are important when addressing inequitable ideals associated with race. The research is clear that the devastating impact of the cumulative effects of microaggressions (Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000) results in Blacks having a far different educational experience than their white counterparts. While blatant incidences of racism and discrimination may get addressed because they manifest in ways that are direct, microaggressions that people of color face daily may not get addressed; yet all forms of racism are important.

Another tenet of CRT is “interest convergence”. This theme says that since white people as a whole, regardless of economic status, benefit from racism, there is no urgency when it comes to white people and their desire and willingness to eradicate it. In other words, those who have, will continue to oppress the have-nots. The have-nots are typically minority groups who have been strategically and systemically silenced and discriminated against.

A third tenet of critical race theory is related to a phrase called “social construction”. Since race is a manmade construct, it has typically led to the detriment of other racial groups. Social construction refers to the idea that since race is constructed by man, and it is society that categorizes people in a manner that manipulates people accordingly. Critical race theorists would argue that race is a fixed ideal that corresponds to no biological reality, yet society frequently chooses to ignore this truth.

A fourth tenet of critical race theory is the powerful nature of storytelling and counter-storytelling. Storytelling is seen as powerful tool when trying to take actionable steps and move toward a more just and equitable country. Counter-storytelling is equally important because it provides counternarratives that are crucial when attempting to unlearn beliefs that have been perpetuated over time. This dichotomy, storytelling and counter-storytelling, is one of the more important tenets of CRT when it comes to studying Black leaders in nonprofit spaces in a city like Bridgertown. Stories frame this entire study. Therefore, the stories that these Black leaders tell will be critical during not only the future analysis of the data but more importantly, the theoretical foundation of a study of this nature. This tenet will be discussed more in detail.

Critical race theory provides the foundation for this study because due to never changing systems of power and privilege, White people have had and continue to have the most control over the resources in the United States. Rather than offering solutions to issues surrounding race and racism, critical race theory offers insight into the beliefs that guide and uphold systems of racism in the United States and other western societies (Gillborn, 2006). Critical race theorists would argue that Whites maintain this power, not to deliberately hurt people of color, but rather to maintain and exercise their elitism and privilege. As stated before, narratives, a major facet of CRT uses counter storytelling to convey messages about the complex systems of race and power to raise the awareness of the injustices of systemic oppression. Story telling in general is an important facet of Black and Hispanic culture and tradition due to important themes like community building. As described by Delgado (2000), counter stories are created by marginalized group members. These members are tasked with subverting the supposed reality, commonly held wisdoms, and shared understandings of dominant group members (Berry & Candis, 2013). In Critical Race Theory, counter stories aim to contradict the presuppositions of white narratives by uplifting the past and present positive narratives of oppressed people.

Ladson-Billings (1998) utilized the CRT framework to describe the current state of education and curriculum design “as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a white supremacist master script” (p. 18). About 80 percent of the preservice teachers in the United States are White, monolingual, young females (Lowenstein, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). If these teachers want to be transformative and make educational environments more equitable, they must make a deep-seated shift in their teaching strategies and reflect

on how their values, beliefs, biases, and experiences may guide their work with students of varying cultures. There is a longing for this promise of a better and increasingly inclusive public education; one that engages educational imagination for all students (Kaur, 2012). It is important for academic spaces to promote diversity and inclusion in ways that promote equity. Therefore, by looking through the lens of critical race theory, respectability politics and the theory of capital serve as additional theories used to describe why Blacks have employed code-switching techniques as a means of survival when navigating the tension between blackness and whiteness.

Politics of Respectability

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's work, *In Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*, referred to Blacks' politics of respectability as "uplift politics," where two audiences are important to address: Blacks, who were expected to be "respectable", and the whites, who needed to be shown that Blacks could be respectable. Respectability politics has three main facets. As described by Pitcan, Marwick, and Boyd (2018):

First, it reinforces within-group stratification to juxtapose a respectable us against a shameful other, such as unrespectable Black people or promiscuous gay men. Second, respectability endorses values that contradict stereotypes, such as presenting Black women as modest, thereby enforcing a dominant narrative that women should exercise sexual restraint. Third, practicing respectability involves impression management to align with White, middle-class indicators of class status and privilege, such as using standard English rather than African-American vernacular English in racially-mixed audiences (p. 165)

In Higginbotham's account, Blacks, especially women in the Baptist Church during the period of 1880 – 1929, rallied together to fight back against the physical, psychological and emotional distress caused by racism and microaggressions. Pierce et al. (1978) describe microaggressions as:

subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are “put downs” of blacks by offenders. The offensive mechanisms used against blacks often are innocuous. The cumulative weight of their never-ending burden is the major ingredient in black-white interactions (p. 66). Additionally, microaggressions are impactful and important to address as they can be both psychologically and spiritually distressing leading to negative experiences in schools and other settings (Franklin, 2004). Sue et al. (2007), provide a framework and classification of microaggressions that fall into three major categories: (1) microassaults, (2) microinsults, and (3) microinvalidations. Microassaults are active and deliberate, and either subtle or explicit biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are manifested through environmental cues, verbal criticisms, or behaviors; microassaults include but are not limited to name calling and displaying blatant racial symbols like swastikas. Microinsults manifest in ways associated with assigning degrees of intelligence to a person’s race, discrediting cultural values or communication styles, or assumptions of deviance. Microinvalidations are sometimes considered the most dangerous because they tend to encompass the first two major categories. Microinvalidations invalidate the lived reality of minorities by invalidating their experiences with instances of constructs such as racism and sexism. Microaggressions on all levels are embedded in everyday culture and life which makes it challenging for Blacks to thrive economically, socially and educationally.

Allen (2010;2013), discussed the lack of economic mobility experienced by Black people by highlighting the harsh realities associated with Black economics as it relates to white supremacy, microaggressions and racism. In a qualitative study with 10 Black male students, the students’ families, and 6 teachers from a suburban high school in a Western U.S city, it was found that Black middle class students and their families are more likely to experience incidences of microaggressions in school at a higher rate than students from

other ethnic groups even at seemingly diverse schools (Allen, 2010). Central High, the research site of the study, was described as a racially and economically diverse suburban high school with approximately 29% of the students being Black, 28% Asian, 19% Latino, 11% white and 13% Other; about half qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The interview data revealed that Black students typically experience negative feelings of nonacceptance relating to disapproving views of intelligence, assumptions of deviance and differential treatment in school discipline.

Allen (2013) discusses the perceived intellectual inferiority of Blacks in his study as it relates to the microaggressions encountered by Black students and their families. According to his study, microaggressions undermine the identity of Blacks and put at risk their ability to use education for social mobility. Males solely are not the focus for my specific study but research like this which encompass constructs such as code-switching, microaggressions and/or racism provide insight into the lives and experiences of Blacks.

Politics of Respectability is widely referred to as the politics of power. Recently, it has been described as a tool to combat the negative representations of people from various marginalized groups (Dazey, 2020). Historically, it was a term used to describe the efforts of Black women to intentionally police their own appearance, speech, and behavior as well as the appearance, speech, and behavior of other Blacks in the community. The idea was that Black women opted to refute racist stereotypes by deviating from the norms and values of white middle-class standards. In seeking to prove their respectable status, Black women distinguished themselves from “unrespectable” Black women, thereby validating entrenched categories of social worthiness. White (2010) described the politics of respectability by stating:

In *Righteous Discontent*, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (1993) gives a sophisticated analysis of this dilemma. She speaks of this contradiction as the politics of respectability.¹ She argues that a politically active woman was consonant with a respectable black woman; it was her duty to uplift the race. In contrast, respectable white women were urged to avoid the public sphere. Thus, whereas white women's lives were constrained by a cult of domesticity, African-American women were expected to enter the public realm. The politics of black respectability included the expectation that black women would represent the race by fighting for racial equality (p. 36).

This was done in hopes of getting Black people to assimilate into heterosexist, patriarchal, middle-class, white dominant ideals because doing so could mean increased respect, access and opportunity (Smith, 2014). Higginbotham (1993) coined the phrase “politics of respectability” as she discussed Black women and their place in the Black Baptist Church. To address social reform issues of racism and sexism Black women advocated for systemic changes through the policing of the behavior of Blacks. On one hand, the politics of respectability provided Black women with a foundation for gaining respect and equality in relation to Whites in America while also combating mainstream misconceptions about Blacks including redefining what patriarchy (i.e educating and raising Black children) looked like in the Black community (Forss, 2013). Forss believed that by following white mannerisms, Black women could counter stereotypes and microaggressions to lift themselves into a space of superiority above noncompliant Blacks and the working classes. Ultimately, Black women of that time were focused on teaching their communities how to behave by employing practices that mimicked various economic classes on dress, demeanor and deportment. In their eyes, the politics of respectability was about finding a quick route to social mobility.

Black women used periodicals to teach and convey messages about the Do's and Don'ts that Blacks should follow in order to gain access to resources. For example, the *Omaha Star*, which was owned, published and edited by Mildred Brown, featured weekly

tips and practices associated with the politics of respectability in the mid-1900s (Forss, 2013). The newspaper produced Do's and Don'ts, a guideline for proper etiquette, and Christine Althouse's Beauty Culture, a commentary on the latest majority fashions. Black women of that time truly believed that it was the duty of young citizens to refute stereotypes placed upon them because society oftentimes judged (and continues to judge) marginalized groups by its worst people as opposed to by its best. It had become common practice for middle- class Blacks, who used respectability practices, to differentiate themselves from the dress and the demeanor of those who they considered lower class, regular Blacks (Wolcott, 2001).

Although seemingly a helpful tool for Black people when combating racism and microaggressions, the topic has been debated and critiqued in the Black community especially by women who were expected to use the politics of respectability more frequently than their white counterparts and also Black males. Harris (2003) referred to respectability politics as a gatekeeping function where Blacks gain entrance to respect and full citizenship. In her work she argues:

Since the publication of *Righteous Discontent*, exploring the politics of respectability has enriched scholars' understandings of black reformism and intraracial class politics. The prevailing interpretation suggests that the politics of respectability undermined the rigidly scientific nature of racial categories, but generally tended to reinforce status distinctions within the Black community. These distinctions were about class, but they were defined primarily in behavioral, not economic, terms. By linking worthiness for respect to sexual propriety, behavioral decorum, and neatness, respectability served a gatekeeping function, establishing a behavioral "entrance fee," to the right to respect and the right to full citizenship (p. 213).

The above quote shows why some may consider politics of respectability practices to be questionable and pliable. Research by White (2001) confronted the assumptions of the politics of respectability, while others had their own uses for, and understandings of,

respectability. For example, White believed that the politics of respectability failed to have a united front and focused on racism solely as opposed to other important issues affecting Blacks like sexism.

Along the same lines as White (2001), Nyachae and Ohito (2019) viewed respectability politics as counterproductive by highlighting that, “these discourses advance respectability politics, thus reinforcing an exclusive model of ideal Black....as one aligned with White, Western, Judeo Christian, patriarchal, heterosexist, and middle-class values” (p.1). In their study, they used a feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (feminist CDA). According to Lazar (2007), feminist CDA examines “how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or (counter-) resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices” (p. 149). Sisters of Promise (SOP), the program being examined in their study, was created in Delaware to address the vilification, violence, discipline/over-disciplining and punishment of young Black girls. Accordingly, SOP was ultimately created to mitigate the number of school fights involving Black girls but also to provide a counternarrative to the reactionary over-disciplining of those Black girls. As mentioned in their handbook, the Sisters of promise creed is as follows:

I am a Sister of Promise
I love and respect myself and others
I speak to be understood and I listen to hear others
I promote sisterhood and not dissension
I lead through positive actions and words
I am balanced in mind, body, and soul
I am establishing a promising financial future
I embrace, encourage, and uplift my sisters
I carry myself with poise, grace, and dignity
I am a Sister of Promise — (SOP, 2012, p. 5)

In their study, the authors took a multilevel approach to CDA using proposed methods by Huckin (1997). Huckin's (1997) uses a multistep approach to CDA. Step 1: reading the written text uncritically. Step 2: re-reading the text with a critical lens. Step 3: analyzing the framing of the message(s) in the text. Step 4: analyzing specific words, phrases, and sentences. Aside from the creed, they analyzed several other documents from the SOP handbook including their mission statement, core values, participation requirements, purpose, behavioral plan, curriculum and other important documents. The documents were analyzed, through a feminist lens, with the primary focus being on how discourses about respectability are reinforced in SOP programming and material. Nyachae and Ohito (2019) found that by reinforcing politics of respectability, the SOP ultimately "shamed and blamed the individual". They wrote,

these discourses of respectability are circulated through language that first shames the individual Black girl for her appearance, and blames her for her behavior, and second, aims to discipline the Black girl's body, and third, promotes moral (self) policing and sexual propriety as pertinent to the attainment of proper Black girlhood, which is a precursor to proper Black womanhood (p.16)

They also found other embedded messages related to the politics of respectability like "disciplining the Black Girl's Body" and "Promoting Moral (self) Policing and Sexual Propriety" all measured using standards of mainstream ideologies of White, Western, Judeo Christian, patriarchal, heterosexist, and middle-class values.

Ultimately, ideals associated with the politics of respectability serve as both a hindrance and an asset to Blacks as they navigate white dominated spaces in search of fair treatment, respect and the capital needed to gain access to increased educational opportunities and employment. Nevertheless, the politics of respectability serve as one foundation in which to view code-switching and why/how Blacks, have developed ways of being in a world that promotes whiteness and demotes blackness (Gallagher, 1997).

The following section will address Bourdieu's theory of capital, also known as the "know how". This theory provides another lens through which one can explain why Blacks have learned how to lean away from their Blackness and embrace whiteness in hopes of increased economic mobility, educational opportunities and social advancement.

Theory of Capital and Class Distinction

Pierre Bourdieu, the noted French sociologist, is widely known for his work in the fields of education, anthropology, cultural studies and philosophy. Studying power dynamics in society, he is credited with the essay "*The Forms of Capital*" (1986) which changed how we have come to understand economics, socialization and education as it relates to power and privilege. In this sociological essay, Bourdieu went on to describe three categories of capital: economic capital (command of money/property), social capital (systemic and institutionalized social networks) and cultural capital (education/knowledge/intellect); which provide insight into how Blacks have been able to achieve success in higher-class academic spaces and social/professional settings. Although, it is evident that Bourdieu's Theory of Capital (1985; 1996) referred to systems in France, the United states has and still boasts an unprecedented disparity between Whites and Blacks and other people of color (Beatty, 2013; Chubb & Loveless, 2002; Desimone & Long, 2010; Franklin, 2002). The theory purports that socio economic classes teach preferred preferences of capital which foster environments of repeated cycles of oppression on one end and power/privilege on the other end.

Economic Capital, oftentimes viewed as the culmination of social and cultural, literally refers to the money and wealth that an individual or individuals possess that give them access to adequate educational opportunities and social networks; the material

assets. Bourdieu described cultural capital as the assets (education, intelligence, vernacular, appearance) that a person may possess that would afford them the opportunities for systemic upward mobility. There are three types of cultural capital. These are the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. Building on Bourdieu's theories, Franklin (2002) described cultural capital as the financial advantages that are evident for certain social classes and racial groups due to the higher levels of education they receive and their overall impact on culture. In other words, members of middle and upper classes have been and continue to be afforded educational opportunities that make them more likely to control power and to possess various types of cultural capital. The achievement gap is one of the biggest contributors to not only rising academic disparities but also rising economic and social disparities in the United States. Ultimately, "economic disparities are created in part because children from low-income households manifest reduced academic achievement leading to lower incomes when they become adults (Crook & Evans, 2014, p. 45). Disproportionate and unethical social, economic and political conditions compel Blacks to develop alternative cultural identities that would allow them to gain access to additional opportunity structures. Ultimately, "cultural capital is context-specific and its currency varies across different social spaces where struggles for legitimation and power exist" (Carter, 2003, p.137).

As previously mentioned, social capital refers to the social relationships and networks in which a person possesses that would allow them access and opportunity. Bourdieu believed that acquiring social capital was a meticulous process that occurred over time and typically passed onto subsequent generations. The dominant membership

entity, typically White middle and upper-class individuals are usually responsible for providing the resources which explains why White people, those with power and privilege, are given the credentials, leverage and status needed to constantly recycle the resources amongst themselves. Bourdieu (1986) believed:

Because the social capital accruing from a relationship is that much greater to the extent that the person who is the object of it is richly endowed with capital (mainly social, but also cultural and even economic capital), the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known ('I know him well'); they do not need to 'make the acquaintance' of all their 'acquaintances'; they are known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive (p. 250-251).

In other words, the possessors of social capital have the power to make more productive relationships that can be beneficial when accumulating other forms of capital. This is because social relationships and the exchange of social capital reinforce relationships and interactions that are of mutual recognition. Stemming from his research on social capital, Bourdieu also believed that language was not just the way in which we communicated because it could also be used as a mechanism of power. Dominant forms of language, i.e. Standard English in America, have been and continue to be the designated, respected and the most valued means of communication. It oftentimes denotes social status due to the mental representations and biases associated with those who deviate from the language of power and privilege.

Summary of the theory of Capital and distinction

Economic, cultural and social capital, or rather the lack of, continues to foster the inequity that we see in America between Whites and Blacks. Bourdieu (2000) believed that people are constantly confronted with the reality of their own existence and ways of being in this world. With that in mind, it is human nature to seek out the legitimacy or

justification for existence. Unfortunately, ideals such as existence, success and achievement are wrapped up in White-dominant societal standards. People oftentimes justify human behavior based on the judgment and recognition of others. For those reasons and more, Blacks use code-switching, in spite of both the costs and benefits, as a means of survival as it relates to economic mobility, educational opportunities and social advancement.

Historical Context of Code-switching

Researchers such as Ogbu (1988) believed that systemic oppression, racial discrimination, and inadequate socioeconomic resources force some ethnic minority groups to maintain culturally different methods and tools to navigate opportunity structures. For this reason and more, code-switching strategies have been deployed by Blacks as a means of survival but also as a tool for thriving when navigating predominantly white spaces. Code-switching, although heavily researched in linguistics has continued to evolve over time. In the 1940s and the 1950s researchers and scholars considered code-switching to be an inferior use of language. Although, since the 1980s, some researchers and scholars have come to regard it as normal, society continues to view those who deviate from Standard English, when vocalizing, as less than. Formally, other researchers and scholars have used code-switching in disciplines outside of linguistics, like literature, where it describes elements of written language from more than one language, as in novels by Chinese-American and Latino-American writers.

However, informally, the term code-switching has been used to describe alternations in behavior and consciousness as well, especially when it comes to people of color in formal spaces with their White counterparts. Davis (2018) states, “historically,

Black people who have had intellectual, material, economic, and political resources have used them to advance the collective agenda and interests of their people” (p.73). This collective effort also highlights the distinct cultural importance of the community over the individual. There have been a multitude of Ted Talks, NPR articles, podcasts and other mediums where Black students, researchers, educators, leaders and overall change agents have discussed code-switching from a direction that supersedes someone’s dialect and vocal registry. The following section will discuss the use of code-switching through linguistics and behavior, which are both conscious alternations that may take place for Blacks in America. Additionally, the following section will also discuss a more unconscious aspect of code-switching that includes alternations in thinking and feeling across different contexts.

Linguistics

Mother to Son

Well, son, I’ll tell you:
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
It’s had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I’ve been a-climbin’ on,
And reachin’ landin’s,
And turnin’ corners,
And sometimes goin’ in the dark
Where there ain’t been no light.
So boy, don’t you turn back.
Don’t you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it’s kinder hard.
Don’t you fall now—
For I’ve still goin’, honey,
I’ve still climbin’,
And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes, “Mother to Son” from *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*.

For this dissertation, the term “code-switching,” as it relates to linguistics, was defined as the manner in which people choose to adjust their vocabulary and change their pitch, volume or tone to better accommodate the expectations of their listeners who hold power and privilege in certain social situations (Nilep, 2006; Goffman, 1981; Gumperz, 1982). For decades, researchers have written about the ways in which Black people are seen as inferior when they stick to Standard Black English, African American Vernacular English or Ebonics (Toliver-Weddington, 1973; Williams, 1975; Flowers; 2000).

Flowers (2000) mentions:

In a country where the standard language (so defined because the dominant group speaks it) is spoken by those in power, another language or dialect spoken by those not in power will be ranked lower than that standard within the dominant culture context. Although the dominant group in the United States does not have to learn non-standard English, most members of the subordinate groups are obliged to learn the standard dominant language to get along in school, at work, or in any mixed group settings (p. 2)

Black English is a social process that is not solely indicative of a weakness in communication or language inadequacy of Blacks, rather it is a reflection of culture and identity (DeBose, 1992). Ultimately, linguistic code-switching allows the speaker to negotiate power as they cycle through different spaces occupied by Whites.

For instance, in a study by Glenn and Johnson (2012), the researchers described how Black male college students sought acceptance in predominantly White institutions by code-switching from Black English to standardized styles of English, the dominant form of English used by White people in America. The findings suggested that the participants in the study not only emulated Standard English, from their White counterparts, but also emulated White culture to dissociate themselves from negative stereotypes of Black identity. It was also found that the participants possessed feelings of

“selling out” as they acknowledged how emulating White students could undermine Black racial cohesion and consequently alienate them from their peers. However, as Sha (2006) pointed out in a different study, the degree of subjective racial belonging can vary depending on whether the identity is avowed, ascribed, and/or salient in any given context.

When we discuss “proper grammar” and “good English”, the assumption is that anything that deviates from what is considered Standard English is improper and incorrect; those who speak in other dialects and vernaculars are labeled as deficient communicators (Wheeler & Thomas, 2013). Consequently, this leads to a culture where the overcorrection and the eradication of home language is prevalent and repressed. Home language, as it relates to Blacks, is oftentimes described as Black English and refers to the communicative richness of the language in the Black community. African American English linguist, Labov (1998), pioneered research that shows the robust and powerful nature of communicative patterns in language vernacular that many Blacks speak. By allowing Blacks and other minorities the opportunity to engage in their familial or home language/vernacular, it decreases feelings of alienation by allowing people to continue to converse in ways that serve them efficiently in their familiar speech community.

Members of the Black community have used language and culture as a form of expression and communication. Mufwene (2001) states, “a language variety is typically associated with a community of speakers, and, in many communities, a language means no more than the particular way its members speak” (p. 21). In other words, people of certain societal or geographic groups tend to speak in similar ways that distinguish them

from other groups. Standard Black English and Black Vernacular English are just two subsets of a larger term used to describe Black English, the type of English spoken by or among most Black people. According to Spears (1998):

I use the term African-American English (AAE) as a cover term for Standard Black Englishes (SBE) and for African-American vernacular Englishes (AAVE), both of which are in turn the cover terms for the collections of standard and non-standard varieties of AAE respectively. In doing this, I am making two claims: (1) AAE comprises not one but a number of related standard and nonstandard varieties, and (2) varieties of AAE may have distinctively African-American traits while having none of the features widely agreed upon as being non-standard, e.g., the use of ain't and multiple negatives within a sentence (p.230).

Black English is all encompassing, but it ultimately describes variations between vernacular versus standard forms and rural versus urban forms.

In support of code-switching there are researchers who believe that Urban Classrooms are a unique setting in which teachers could employ their resources that would teach AAVE and Standard English features (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). There are many examples that have been prevalent for decades that depict the social and political issues associated with AAVE which describe why Blacks continue to be a talking point in education. As Baron (2000) states, in regards to the 1996 Oakland's attempt to have AAVE declared and treated as another language in a bilingual relationship with general English, "despite their revolutionary sloganeering, the teachers and administrators of the Oakland schools share with the public a conservative view of language that focuses, in the end, not on the language students bring to school, but on vague, idealized, and poorly understood standards of correctness that students are told to acquire" (p. 17).

Additionally, in a study by Hill (2009), the researcher observed 29 students in a seventh-grade English classroom at Barrington Middle School in a suburban neighborhood in the Oak Valley School District. This district represented a growing

phenomenon that showed an influx of working-class Black parents whose children were crossing district lines, from Detroit into Oak Valley, in search of better resourced schools and higher quality education. However, many of the teachers were not properly equipped to provide an equitable education experience to these students due to the teacher's implicit biases, microaggressions and negative perceptions of intellectual ability based on the students' use of Black Vernacular English. Consequently, bringing up feelings of inferiority and displacement as those students had to learn how to navigate being surrounded by peers and educational staff who seemingly did not care to understand their culture, dialect and speech patterns, potentially due to a lack of exposure, training, resources, etc.

Of the 15 girls and 14 boys included, 21 students were European American, 5 were African American, 1 was Asian American, 1 was French, and 1 was Ethiopian. In this study, the researcher assesses how Mr. Lehrer used a writing workshop model in his classrooms where he employed code-switching strategies to help students navigate their writing in a way that allowed them to preserve their voices while also teaching them how and when to use standard writing conventions. Mr. Lehrer was seen as an educator in the Oak Valley School District who developed a respect for diversity in language use in his classroom due to students, like Monet and Kiki (pseudonyms given) who were chosen as focal students for the study because they represented Black students from Detroit entering Oak Valley for the perceived educational equality and increased resources. Monet and Kiki were also selected because of their refusal to completely submerge themselves into the cultural norms of their new school district and their desire to preserve their home identity in their daily interactions including conversations, mannerisms and even writing

style. The class was observed for about 45 minutes, three to five days per week over a five-month period. Data was guided by relevant themes that surfaced through field notes, student writing samples and transcribed teacher and student interviews. Mr. Lehrer was recognized as an educator who valued the cultural differences amongst his students as noted by his choice of diverse literature used, diverse assignments, equitable and respectful feedback methods, and willingness to allow his students to use both American Standard English and Black Vernacular English in his classroom. Hill (2009) notes:

Mr. Lehrer facilitated a classroom community that nurtured students' awareness of language varieties from the onset of the school year. The ongoing use of code-switching pedagogies presented access to Standard English. Because they were presented with the same writing and revision opportunities, all students gained access to the dominant discourse, not just the Black students from Detroit. They drew from their home language to inform their voices in nonstandard writing contexts, and in some instances they negotiated their voices in standard contexts (p. 130).

When students like Monet and Kiki would resist his feedback and his attempt to scaffold from home language to standard writing conventions, he provided them with alternative opportunities and assignments that would allow for nonstandard writing contexts. Hill (2009) would suggest that students are empowered upon safeguarding their voice without the threat of overcorrection. According to Hill (2009), "current conditions in the overall context of schooling minimize the linguistic aptitude students bring to the classroom" (p. 130). Additionally, teachers are responsible for providing awareness of language features and students will inevitably decide what they want to say in standard and nonstandard contexts" (p. 131). Standard English should be a choice, not an imposition (Baker, 2002) therefore forcing Blacks to engage in code-switching linguistically should be choice and not forced upon students.

Although, AAVE is recognized as the primary language of Black people, many speakers of AAVE do not employ its features all the time, nor do all Blacks speak AAVE; linguistic code-switching. Teachers, especially White teachers, view AAVE as errors that warrant overcorrection. There are many examples of AAVE versus Standard English; one being the corresponding rule is owner's + owned = possession. The AAVE feature friend house, for instance, corresponds with the Standard English feature friend's house. However, rather than assume that students do not understand possession, teachers must compare/contrast grammatical differences and help students determine the appropriate context for use. Standard Black English is the most common form of African American English (AAE) spoken amongst urban, working- and middle-class Blacks; it is marked as having its own distinctive accent, grammar, and vocabulary features. On the other hand, AAVE is used in casual, intimate, and informal settings and it shows some slight variations by region or city. Labov (1998) loosely defined AAVE as “[T]he uniform grammar used by Blacks who have minimal contact with other dialects typically in contexts where only speakers of that vernacular are present. (p.115)” Although there is overlap between various elements of AAVE, Labov categorizes grammatical elements of AAVE into three distinctive sets: common, negative and positive. Authors Kachru and Nelson go on to elaborate on these AAVE elements, based off research by Labov, in their African-American Vernacular English chapter of *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*.

According to Kachru & Nelson (2006):

Common features are those found in AAVE and other varieties, including most basic structures and rules, such as uses of modal auxiliaries, required participial forms of verbs following auxiliaries, and many others. Negative morphosyntactic features are so named because of their absence in AAVE; examples include the absence of the attributive possessive -s morpheme ('this volume's readership') and third person present singular -s ('she goes'). The positive category comprises

features that AAVE exploits which are not, generally speaking, available in other varieties of American English. There are some overlaps with the usage of other varieties, such as use of perfect-form done in Southern white varieties, but the semantics and pragmatics of the forms are more extensive in AAVE. This category is exhibited mainly in aspectual elements such as be, done, and be done (p. 215).

Researchers like Labov, the main proprietor behind Black Vernacular English, believed syntax, semantics and pragmatics of AAVE, should be identified as positive and creative, not labeled as imperfect (Standard) English.

Behavior

For the purpose of this study, behavior is defined as the way in which someone conducts oneself. As highlighted in the literature review, Black people have constantly focused on teaching their communities how to behave, in a world that never wanted them to exist, by employing practices that educated other Blacks on dress, demeanor and deportment. In their eyes, the politics of respectability was less about accepting white values and more about finding a quick route to social mobility. What constitutes as proper behavior has been defined by systems that view whiteness as right and deviations from whiteness as wrong. This notion is engrained in our everyday education system, our work environments, and even social interactions. For example, according to Scott (1975) with reference to Black educational leaders for social justice:

[Professionalism] is the revelation of a defensible philosophical foundation undergirding programmatic thrusts and administrative actions. It is the indication of a level of social awareness sufficient to cope satisfactorily with the sociological and psychological manifestations of cause-effect relationships in the crises, confrontations and conflicts inherent in the pursuit of quality living and quality education (p. 435)

In other words, regardless of situation, including workplace environments and school settings, Blacks are obligated to abide by ethical standards of behavior even if those standards are rooted in unethical systems of power and privilege. This alternation of

situational behavioral patterns can be seen as code-switching. This is because race, although a manmade construct, is oftentimes used to judge a person's work ethic, expertise and performance (Dodge & Hughes, 1997). Additionally, Nunnally (2012) proposed that Black people are constantly concerned about the risk of being racially discriminated against, when in interracial interactions, largely because Blacks and Whites are more likely to misinterpret nonverbal interracial interactions than they are to misinterpret nonverbal intraracial interactions. Some researchers believe that blatant and overt discrimination appears to be declining in America, but more covert instances of prejudice are still prevalent (Dipboye & Colella, 2005). Nevertheless, studies have shown that covert instances may be no less damaging to the worker or work environment, threatening the mental well-being of the individuals involved (Offermann & Coats, 2018).

In a study by Morris (2007), on Black girls in the classroom, the researcher studied how educators viewed the behavior of Black girls and the implications of those observed behaviors. Although, this study focused on girls specifically, it shed light on the pervasive manner in which Black students are described in comparison to White students of the same age. The research included a 2-year ethnographic study of a public middle school that comprised about 1000 students. The school, given the pseudonym Matthews Middle School, served 46% African American students, 43% Latino students, 7% Asian American students and 3% White students; it was considered a poor and working-class neighborhood with about 66% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. Initially, the researcher made regular visits to observe Matthews Middle School, where he served as a tutor as a way to immerse himself into the culture of the school.

Additionally, he conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with the teachers and administrators of the schools. As a White, male researcher working with Black students, the researcher acknowledged the limitations associated with truly connecting with the students in a way that would promote bonding. Nevertheless, he uncovered things that are instrumental in terms of behavior and the perception of Black behavior in public spaces.

Morris remarked, “Many teachers encouraged these girls to exemplify an ideal, docile form of femininity, emblemized in the prescription to act like” (p. 490). For example, although the Black girls in the studies were advocates, AP-scholars and displayed classroom assertiveness when answering questions, Morris observed that their academic achievements were overlooked by their behavior. On several occasions, the Black girls were more frequently reprimanded in comparison to other students, because their teachers (mainly Black teachers) focused on them speaking without raising their hands. Although, Black teachers engaging in overcorrection is not uncommon (Tyson, 2003), it furthered the notion that Black girls should engage in certain behaviors as to not live up to the societal stereotypes of Black women. Black women in the school, engaging in methods of othermothering² (Case, 1997; Collins, 2000; Ware, 2002), thought it was important to teach social skills rooted in White dominant ideals of feminism. Morris also found that across the board, teachers considered the Black girls to be loud and combative. Several teachers realized that this notion of “loudness” was rooted in White ideals of

² Othermothering - Can be defined as African American women's maternal assistance offered to the children of blood mothers within the African American community. Originally traced to slavery, othermothering was a survival mechanism that served as a vehicle for educational and cultural transmission (Case, 1997)

behavior. One teacher remarked that he understood that Black girls tend to be more assertive and seen as “combative” because they have learned to stand up for themselves when oftentimes other groups forget to, however this assertiveness is usually seen as “unladylike”, obnoxious, and rude.

The study went on to uncover more about Matthews Middle School but the biggest take away is how the behavior of Blacks in various settings is oftentimes scrutinized when they are not in alignment with White, Western, Judeo Christian, patriarchal, heterosexist, and middle-class values. Instead of settings promoting cultural distances and individual differences, behavior that are seen as unconventional are subjective to talks of reform and adjustment. For this reason and more, Blacks, across various settings have learned how to engage in behavior alternations to avoid such scrutiny, stereotype threats and both covert and overt instances of racism and discrimination. Ultimately, code-switching is apparent in the myriad ways in which Black people interact interracially as well as intraracially.

Double-Consciousness

“One ever feels his twoness, -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

- W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Past studies have concluded that racial stratification increased race consciousness for members of both the White race and other racial groups like Blacks (Durrant & Sparrow, 1997; Allen, 1970). Researchers like Willie (1989) argued that race is the primary factor underlying the plight of Blacks in America and the most pervasive factor in what he called the collective “Black Experience”. In addition to code-switching

linguistically and behaviorally, Blacks in America have needed to alter the way they view themselves, feel and think when engaging with Whites.

For decades, awareness of Black inequality in White America has been viewed as an element of consciousness (DuBois, 1953). In his earlier version of *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 1903), highlights the Black experience of “double-consciousness”. Du Bois first used “double-consciousness in his article titled “Strivings of the Negro People.” For the purpose of this study, I will use DuBois’ definition of “double-consciousness” which is defined as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois, 1903, p. 3). In support of Du Bois’ work, Rabaka (2018) argued that “the concept of double-consciousness asserts that the very color-line that racially divides the white world from the black world simultaneously creates a tortured “two-ness” in blacks’ souls (p.76). This idea of two-ness, although not used explicitly by many other researchers, refers to the duality that takes place for Blacks in an effort to truly survive in this White democratic society; this sense of twoness can be seen as code-switching. Due to racial prejudice and discrimination against Blacks, some may hold the perception that their place and status in America are largely dependent upon their interactions with those with power and privilege. As Aronson and Steele’s (1995) work on stereotype threat discusses the notion that intellectual competence is not just a mental thinking but also the product of both real or imagined interactions with others. Perceptions can have a major influence on a Black person’s intellectual competence, motivation and identity. Bruce (1992) argues that double-consciousness reflects both the power of white stereotypes of

Black life as well as covert instances of racism that have and continue to hinder the upward mobility of Blacks in American society.

Ultimately, the assumption of most of the above conceptualizations of consciousness is that when members of a particular racial group become aware of their position and status in relation to other racial groups, they tend to develop a sense of collective identity that may be expressed in different social settings (Durant & Sparrow, 1997). In addition to his work with Black educational leaders and their professional behavior, Scott (1975) touched on matters of Black Consciousness which highlight the notion that being Black, in a country that promotes whiteness, takes grit, integrity and viability. He states:

Their [Blacks] demands for freedom, equality and self-determination have evolved from their historically suppressed feelings of anger and impatience with White America. The swelling influence of Black consciousness on the climate and conditions of life in America is such that it can neither be ignored nor miscalculated (Scott, 1975, p. 433).

Although, he did not explicitly use the phrase code-switching, he spoke about the quest for Black Americans as they fought against the effects of White democracy on their identity and consciousness. Scott (1975) showed how consciousness and identity formation are deeply rooted in participating, engaging, and following the rules and values of White people. Although Scott's work references the 1970s, it points to the reality of current day America; social reform is slow, and Blacks continue to be oppressed in America.

In a study by Cruz, Dahan, Danley, Hammell and Perry (2019), the researchers studied double-consciousness in college students from a racialized city. The purpose of their study was to examine the experiences of about 323 Camdem students attending a university in their home community to understand if and how their place identity changed

prior to and after attending the university. The researchers asked the following question to guide their study: “Do resident-students from racialized cities who attend civically engaged universities in their home community experience a change in their place identity consistent with a double-consciousness?” To answer that question, Cruz et al. used a qualitative phenomenological approach where they constructed a case study of 21 students at Rutgers University-Camden. This specific university was important to the study because the city represents an urban community where 47% of the population was Latino and 44% was African American. The 10-person research team found that resident-students inhabited two simultaneous identities of student and resident consistent with a double-consciousness. Although their study focused on double-consciousness in terms of student and community member, in the synthesis of Du Bois’ double-consciousness, they found that changes in identity and how people understood themselves in the world shifted to accommodate dual positions. Du Bois described double-consciousness as a veil that Black people, and other people of color, live behind, given conflicts arising between ideals of thinking about how to exist and adjust or code-switch within different contexts in a racialized American society. Du Bois believed that commitment to Black community would allow individuals to excel and work through these internal thoughts and feelings to assert themselves in White dominant contexts.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology of my study. As mentioned before, the following research question will serve as the main question that guides this study: To what extent do Black leaders of nonprofits in Bridgertown use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities in serving communities? In addition to the main research question, the following questions guide the investigation: 1.) To what

degree are Black leaders, at nonprofits in Bridgetown, familiar with code-switching? 2.) To what degree do Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgetown, see code-switching as a positive tool or negative tool when navigating their roles as nonprofit leaders and community members? 3.) According to Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgetown, what are the perceived benefits and risks of using code-switching?

Chapter 3: Methodology

“Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.”
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author

Systemic oppression, racial discrimination and inadequate socioeconomic resources force some ethnic minority groups to maintain culturally different methods and tools when attempting to navigate White dominant spaces (Ogbu, 1988). The purpose of this study is to provoke discussion around Black nonprofit leaders and their use of code-switching strategies when navigating their roles and responsibilities in hopes of providing new insight surrounding this phenomenon. The benefits and drawbacks associated with code-switching are evident but the extent to which Black leaders of nonprofits acknowledge and use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities deserves to be further researched. The data gathered for this study aims to understand the experiences of four Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgetown.

Social identities, such as race and gender, intersect in a distinctive way such that each identity can only be defined through the intersection with other identities (Harrison, 2017). Eight, self-identifying Black leaders, of different genders, who work in nonprofits across Bridgetown, were identified for the purpose of this research study. Their identification as Black is pertinent as it describes the lens in which to examine their experiences. By considering race, culture and identity, when constructing or retelling their stories, the narrative inquiry process gave these Black nonprofit leaders the space to reflect on themselves and their experiences. All of this was done to help them understand themselves in a world that promotes and oftentimes rewards assimilation.

Researcher's Positionality

As a Black educational and nonprofit leader, it is important to reflect on my experiences, in predominantly white nonprofits, that uphold heteronormative systems of power and privilege. It is important to note that I recognize that my experience does not highlight the experience of the entire Black race. Black people are multidimensional and multifaceted human beings who navigate various spaces in various ways throughout their lives. Nevertheless, the intricacies of what it means to be Black in white-dominated spaces continues to spark discussions from various viewpoints (Hill, 2009; Rust et al., 2011; Morton, 2014; Pitcan et al., 2018). As previously mentioned, research is lacking as it relates to Black leaders using code-switching strategies when having to navigate spaces such as nonprofits. This is partly because Black nonprofit leaders are lacking from nonprofit organizations. For example, available research confirms both racial and ethnic disparities, in nonprofit organizations where Black people hold leadership positions. Adesaogun, Flottemesch, and Ibrahim-DeVries (2015) remarked:

the race stratification that occurs in the nonprofit industry can be understood as the grouping of one racial group at the leadership and decision-making level within a nonprofit and the grouping of another at the front-line and entry-level positions within an organization (p.42).

Although, it is evident and known that an increase in minority representation could have positive impacts on nonprofit organizations (De Vita, Roeger, Niedzwiecki, 2009), the race stratification in the nonprofit industry tends to favor white leadership at the decision-making level while minorities work at the front-line of those organization. As an example, I have worked in nonprofits for 13 years and I have never worked for a nonprofit that had a Black CEO. Additionally, not only is there a lack of overall

representation, but there is also a lack of mentorship and support for those minority leaders who have managed to navigate those White systems and earn leadership positions. For instance, even when I served as a program manager for a student service nonprofit, I was the only Black program manager.

As a self-identified code switcher and a Black educational and nonprofit leader, I have continually found myself within the confines of predominantly White nonprofits that serve predominantly Black communities. This research study was important to me far before I knew that it was going to be; far before I knew that this alternation of language, consciousness and behavior had a formal term used to describe it. It was my hope that this study would shed light on the understanding of both the conscious and unconscious processes that go into navigating a world that views Blacks as inferior due to the unjust systems of power and privilege in America. As I continue to navigate life as a Black woman in America, while engaging with White dominated political, educational, economic and career spaces, I am reminded of Starr's words in the book turned filmed *The Hate U Give*. In the film, Starr utters "being two different people is so exhausting". Nevertheless, the work that I do as a nonprofit educational leader and behavior therapist seemingly feel more important now than ever as I reflect on the current racial, health and political climate that we live in today. Black people, in the year 2021, are currently attempting to survive during a "double pandemic", a phrase used to describe trying to survive the COVID-19 pandemic while simultaneously attempting to survive being Black in America. As I write this dissertation, I am also forced to reflect on the realization that Black people in America are currently being negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (physically, financially, and emotionally) at inequitable rates compared to

White people in America. I am also forced to reflect on the realization that I live in a country where in the same week that a White policeman is on trial for unlawfully killing a Black male In Minneapolis, Minnesota, that same city is still in a state of civil unrest because another Black man was murdered by a White police officer less than a year later.

However, as a Black female from Opa Locka, Florida whose family “made it”, life at certain times has always felt “pandemic-like” for my family and other Black individuals and families in America. Just like I was born into a family of alcoholics/drug abusers and to teenage parents, so many other Black people in America have come from similar or worse conditions. The emotional, mental and psychological trauma associated with being Black continues to be researched and although Black people are not monolithic in terms of their understanding of their places in society, this study serves as an investigation of the individual lives of Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown in hopes of making collective meaning of code-switching strategies.

Narrative Inquiry Methodological Approach

A qualitative methodological approach is more fitting than a quantitative methodological approach because it allows the participants to share stories outside of the confines of a structured system of inquiry. Qualitative research also fosters an environment of openness which is critical when attempting to interrogate, collect and uplift personal stories. It also allows for a more comprehensive and deeper approach than a quantitative research approach would. Aside from discussing the research questions, in this chapter, I will further describe the setting that this research is situated in, the participants studied, and the procedure used to collect the data. I began the study thinking to use a combined intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1990) lens, with the intention being to highlight the lives of these Black leaders by allowing them to share their past, present and future stories. However, although tenets of intersectionality are present, the main approach used was narrative inquiry.

Intersectionality was not used as a main tool of inquiry because the small sample size inhibited an analysis that would truly be generalizable. Additionally, the purpose of this study was less about analyzing the data across different intersections (i.e. age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity), rather analyzing their holistic experiences as Black leaders. By doing narrative research, the goal was to interpret the meanings of the data through meticulous analysis of thematic, social, and cultural experiences (Kim, 2016).

Interpreting the data meant understanding the embedded stories of how the experiences of the Black nonprofit leaders were shaped by the usage, or lack thereof, of code-switching strategies as they navigated their roles and responsibilities.

As previously mentioned, qualitative research is a method for understanding the ways in which people make meaning and make sense of their daily experiences and their interactions with the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1995; Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2003) explains that qualitative research is a process of inquiry based on distinct methodological traditions that explore a social or human problem. Narrative inquiry has been used since the 20th century as a method of data collection and analysis in disciplines such as behavioral science, sociology and education studies, among others. Originating from the work of Clandinin and Connelly and through work from John Dewey's philosophy, narrative inquiry involves the discussion of experiences that are relational, and situational, and if purposely explored, has the potential to be a powerful agent of change.

Narratives allow for the accrual and sharing of information and knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) remark:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study (p. 477).

Narrative inquiry approaches also allow researchers to capture the active and raw emotion that the participant is sharing which leads to a more active connection rather than passive one. Additionally, narrative inquiry methods are used to shape experiences allowing interviewers to go off-script and explore threads brought up by participants.

By using narrative prompts, it was my intention to gain insight about their past, current and possible future work experiences, as it related to their career and community lives, as well as their personal philosophies and strategies of code-switching. It was apparent that collecting these types of stories required a certain level of vulnerability, but the act of storytelling is prevalent and traditional in the Black community. In this study, participants were asked to share their stories as Black leaders as they navigated their professional lives as nonprofit leaders and personal lives serving Black communities. This study operates out of the belief that these Black leaders have a story to tell especially when considering the intersections of race and gender and their leadership statuses in a predominantly white system such as nonprofits. The process of storytelling is an experience that is important within and outside of various culture groups because stories are oftentimes predicated on oral traditions passed along from generation to generation.

Stories are inherently rooted in every aspect of social and cultural life because they promote insight, awareness, and the understanding of information. As Carter-Black (2007), eloquently states, “storytelling is a complex, dynamic, integral component of the process by which children are socialized into their cultural world” (p.33). Black people have used folklore and storytelling processes as a tradition passed on from grandparents, parents, aunts, children, and other family members. This included stories of faith, tenacity, hope, and courage as well as stories of turmoil, pain, and suffering. The art of storytelling has been helpful in passing along information in Black homes, communities and even churches. Consequently, when children are informed and taught about themselves and their own cultural world, it eventually leads to a better acceptance of other people and their cultures (Nakanishi & Rittner, 1992). On one hand, storytelling has been a process of teaching. On the other hand, storytelling has been a process of indoctrination. This process of indoctrination could potentially explain why some Black people have chosen to and been able to actively engage in code-switching practices even when it was done subconsciously. As previously mentioned, women in the Black church used the politics of respectability to teach the Black congregation how to obtain capital. In other words, they set out to teach Black people to alter ideals such as their behaviors, linguistics, dress and mannerism based on past experiences with and stories of sexism, discrimination and racism.

Nevertheless, the narrative inquiry qualitative methodology allows for the collection of stories and the sharing out of those experiences through data such as interview notes, journals and field notes. Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén (2014) explain, “its perspective is not to address or to try to address the whole. Instead of moving

horizontally within the topic and theme, it tries to find ways into moving vertically, digging deeper into nuances” (p.39). Through thorough and intentional lines of questioning, stories tell both individual and collective perspectives where the smaller details conveyed are used to interpret larger phenomena, in this case, code-switching. Narrative interview processes encourage and oftentimes push the interviewee to tell a story about some significant incident in their life from their social context.

Table 1: Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure

Interaction		Continuity			Situation/Place
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	
Look inward to Internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic, reactions, moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view.	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at context, time and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters’ intentions, purposes, and different points of view

Adapted from Connelly and Clandinin, 2006

Based on Dewey's theory, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expanded and advanced the three aspects of this narrative inquiry approach: *personal* and *social* (Interaction); *past*, *present*, *future* (Continuity); and *place* (Situation) as shown above. In this three-dimensional space narrative methodological approach, it is important to first consider interaction, or the personal and social experiences of the Black nonprofit leaders. It was my thought that in order to understand people we must first understand and interrogate their personal experiences while also interrogating their social interactions. Additionally,

we must interrogate their personal and social experiences along a continuum. Therefore, continuity, refers to the consideration the participants past and present experiences that ultimately shape their futures. Situation/place is also vital when analyzing their stories because physical locations and the participant's landscapes can impact their experiences as well. In this case, Bridgertown, a predominantly white city in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, was the focal point of the study.

The research was ultimately carried out in hopes of better understanding if Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown recognize, employ or consider the use code-switching strategies to navigate their professional roles as Black nonprofit leaders while serving communities. By using Clandinin and Connelly's narrative research methodology, it was my hope to study the intersections of race and gender while considering the past, present and future personal and social experiences of the participants being studied. As previously mentioned, social identities, such as race and gender, intersect in a distinctive way such that each identity can only be defined through the intersection with other identities (Harrison, 2017) Intersectionality has the potential to produce nuanced understandings of identity without obscuring its mission to examine overlapping axes of power (Duran & Jones, 2019).

Although the themes of this dissertation do impact identity formation, this dissertation is less about the formation of code-switching and identity formation and more about the experiential nature of code-switching. When considering intersectionality as a tool for analysis in this study, several characteristics are important to consider. Placing the lived experiences of Black leaders as a starting point for the development of theory means that it is important to explore the complexities of group identity,

recognizing that variations within groups are often ignored and essentialized (Dill & Zambrana 2009). Additionally, intersectionality “entails matrix thinking” (in terms of identities, inequalities, and systems of power) and “it is relevant to and ‘about’ all of us” (May, 2015, p. 12). When deciding to use intersectionality, as a tool for inquiry and analysis, Duran and Jones (2019) proposed that researchers, like myself, use the following ethical considerations:

What occurs when my own interpretations differ from those of the participants? In whose voices are results reported? How do I employ approaches to trustworthiness in my research? (p. 460)

Collins and Bilge (2016) argue that intersectionality is a tool for not only critical inquiry but also critical praxis. Thus, intersectionality should be understood not only as a “heuristic for intellectual inquiry” but is also an “important analytical strategy” when doing work rooted in social justice (p. 42). Ultimately, research should give participants the opportunity to “name their own reality” (p.13) by encouraging them to use their voice when telling their own stories (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.13).

Given the racialized experiences of Black people in America, this research study will add to the literature surrounding Black nonprofit leadership to first uplift and then address their experiences. As a result of this study, it will potentially be easier to understand the Black nonprofit leader and their experiences navigating their roles and responsibilities thereby providing support to improve the Black experience in predominantly White systems. Considerable literature on the relationships between race and gender has treated these ideals as separate and autonomous variables but these different social divisions do not exist or operate independently in social life (Trahan, 2011). Yuval-Davis (2006) appropriately states:

Social divisions...are expressed in specific institutions and organizations, such as state laws and state agencies, trade unions, voluntary organizations and the family. In addition, they involve specific power and affective relationships between actual people, acting informally and/or in their roles as agents of specific social institutions and organizations (p.198). However, experiences oftentimes exist at the intersection of ideals such as race, class, and gender and it is the combination of these constructs that often shapes people's experiences with leadership in predominantly white systems of power and privilege.

Participant Selection

This research study takes place in Bridgertown, a pseudonym given to a Mid-Atlantic city. Once known as a city of hope for large numbers of Blacks post-Civil War 1880s, it is described as one of the "most livable" cities (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019) by some and "the worst place" (Gender Equity Commission, 2019) for others. Based on broader data trends in the United States of America, studies show gender and racial inequality are present across health, income, employment and education in the city (Howell, Goodkind, Jacobs, Branson, & Miller, 2019). With a current population of about 300,000 people, the city has shown a steady decrease in the number of individuals living there. The U.S census describes the city as approximately 66.8% White, 23.0% Black, .2% American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.8% Asian, 3.5% Biracial and 3.2% Hispanic or Latino. Of the individuals living in the city, 42.9% have a bachelor's degree or higher and the median household income is \$45,831 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Nevertheless, the city was chosen due to its large number of nonprofits listed. To ensure that the results of this study were relevant and important, the participants were specifically recommended due to their connection to local nonprofits.

A nonprofit is an organization that has obtained a 501(c)3 tax status from the Internal Revenue Service. By achieving 501(c)3 tax status, an organization becomes

exempt from corporate income tax and any charitable contribution to the organization is deemed tax-deductible. In a nonprofit, only a small percentage of revenue can come from charging for a service; rather most nonprofits are dependent on donations, grants, or dues to cover their expenses. Nonprofits can vary in size and mission, but the overarching goal is to provide a service to communities. Nonprofit organizations are essential to local communities. In 2016, over 1 million nonprofits country-wide were registered with the Internal Revenue Service (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2020). Specifically speaking, in and the surrounding cities, there are over 3,000 listed community-focused nonprofits providing shelter services, mental health services, job training services, educational opportunities and neighborhood revitalization (Julian, 2017).

All of the participants were recommended using a community nomination process (Foster, 1991) and chosen based on their self-identification as Black, their ties to large nonprofits and their connections to various communities in the city. Much like snowballing (Vogt, 1999), community nomination is a process in which participants are first recommended by someone and then asked to give the name of other persons that they think would be beneficial to this study. This is useful when attempting to overcome the problems associated with sampling specific groups of people who are oftentimes isolated and left out of critical conversations (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Community nomination is seen as an ‘informal’ method to reach a certain population of interest. It is typically used in qualitative research, primarily through interviews. Researchers like Michele Foster and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) have used community nomination strategies in their work with Black teachers. This approach was used to select Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown. Foster (1991) further described the community nomination process as a

method in which informants are secured through direct contact with Black communities. In other words, Foster believed that participants' ties to Black churches and other organizations are crucial when telling collective stories. Ultimately, community nomination is an attempt to gain an insider's view of a certain phenomenon, in this case code-switching. By using community nomination, this study intended to take advantage of the networks of identified respondents in hopes of receiving even more critical participants and contacts.

Criteria for membership of the sample in this study was dependent on the nature of the research questions being posed. This study included four participants, both male and female, who self-identified as current Black nonprofit leaders in Bridgertown. The potential participants received an email (**Appendix A**) informing them about the study and asking them for their participation. After confirming their interest in the study, the participants were sent a consent form (**Appendix B**) and given a link to a brief anonymous survey (**Appendix C**) to collect demographic information. The demographic survey was initially used to justify their participation in the study by confirming their identities, their nonprofit involvement, race, gender, and other classifications. The general information was sought to learn both the context and variety of the previous experiences and professional settings of the participants. Data were collected for a period of four months, from the end of Fall 2020-Early Spring 2021. The participant introductions are as follows:

Participant 1: Ashley

Ashley is a current visionary, advocate and nonprofit leader whose education and background is situated in community engagement at both the government and nonprofit

levels. She currently serves as the chief operating officer (COO) of a local nonprofit in Bridgertown. Ashley has been awarded over the years for her activism and her involvement in diversity efforts, social justice policies and her community and civic engagement initiatives. Ashley prides herself on being a change agent who is dedicated to the improvement and overall success of marginalized individuals at every level of corporate and community system. Ashley holds both bachelor's and master's degrees..

Participant 2: Candice

Candice is a skilled and dedicated president and CEO of a nonprofit in one of Bridgertown's historic neighborhoods. Her work is equity-focused and her organization's key goals center urban redevelopment and community revitalization efforts. Candice advocates for marginalized communities by creating pipelines for home, residential property and commercial property ownership for Black families and business owners. She has been recognized for her outstanding work and leadership from various local and national entities. Candice currently holds a bachelor's degree in education from a Historical Black College and University (HBCU) and a master's degree from a local university in Bridgertown.

Participant 3: Dave

Dave is a poised and enthusiastic President & CEO of a foundation in Bridgertown. Before being appointed to that position, he worked as the President & CEO of a local nonprofit that served underprivileged students and families. Dave has worked in both traditional and nontraditional educational and nonprofit organizations for decades. During that time, he served in various roles such as a director, supervisor, social worker, consultant, etc. and has continued to develop and establish programs that aim to empower

at-risk populations. Additionally, Dave's work centers community organizing. Many of his programs have received awards and accolades due to his innovative leadership strategies and commitment to serving marginalized groups. Dave holds a Bachelor of Science in Education and Master's Degree in Social Work.

Participant 4: Vanessa

Vanessa currently serves as senior program officer for a local foundation in Bridgertown. Her responsibilities include creating and providing support strategies for the advancement of special initiatives for art and cultural initiatives in and around the city. Prior to this position. She has led initiatives rooted in racial equity by centering marginalized communities in Bridgertown. She is known as a community leader, artist and activist who strives to leverage diverse local and national networks by cultivating new partnerships. Vanessa is a graduate of a local university in Bridgertown and uses her experience to serve on numerous boards and committees that aim to promote equity and inclusion.

Table 2. Summary of Study Participant Demographic Data

Name	Gender	Race	Age	Level of Education	Employment Status	Title
Ashley	Female	Black/African American	35-44 years old	Master's Degree	Employed full-time (40+ hours a week)	COO
Candice	Female	Black/African American	45-54 years old	Master's Degree	Employed full-time (40+ hours a week)	President
Dave	Male	Black/African American	Over 55 years old	Master's Degree	Employed full-time (40+ hours a week)	President and CEO
Vanessa	Female	Black/African American	45-54 years old	Bachelor's Degree	Employed full-time (40+ hours a week)	Senior Program Officer

Data Collection and Procedures

To collect these stories, Zoom, a video communication software, was used to interview the participants in the study (Zoom Inc., 2011). While founded in 2011, Zoom was officially launched in 2013. Although its revenue has been rapidly increasing over the years, it has become more prevalent in day-to-day life and the need for steady communication amid quarantine methods adopted by companies and individuals as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, Zoom allows for teleconferencing, telecommuting, distance education and online chat services for peer-to-peer communication. Zoom was used for collecting the data for this study because it provides a physically safer interaction between individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Zoom meetings can be recorded which will allow for the revisitation of data to analyze the transcriptions from the various interviews.

Although, Zoom's videoconferencing software continues to be the go-to software for many companies it has been criticized for its security breaches. Critics of the company warn its users that a portion of the company's research and development team is in China, India and Singapore, among other countries, which could lead to additional breaches in security and privacy. Although this is a limitation, Zoom reportedly increased their security by purchasing Keybase in May 2020, an end-to-end encryption software company to better protect their products and to increase the security for their consumers.

In addition to Zoom, a handheld digital audio recorder was used to help capture the interview data and the audio from both Zoom and the digital audio recorder were transcribed using Microsoft 365's word software. I conducted 30- to 180-minute, individual, narrative inquiry interviews with four participants. The narrative inquiry

protocol included general prompts that the participants were asked to respond and expand upon. Field notes and memos about the participant and conversation after each interview included information about interview data, interactional undercurrents (e.g., body language and gestures), and fluctuation in the participants' word cadence and comfortability.

Initially, the following questions were used to guide the conversation between the participants and myself: 1) How do you define code-switching? 2) Do you use code-switching strategies to navigate your roles as a nonprofit leader and as a community member? 3) How, if at all, has code-switching affected the way you live your life? 4) If used, has code-switching affected your sense of self-identity or the way that you view self-worth? After reflecting on the initial interview with the first participant, the conversation seemed less organic than intended. Some read more like questions that warranted yes or no responses with little room for elaboration or reflection. Therefore, the questions were adjusted to mimic prompts in hopes of altering the fluidity of the conversations. After a critical review of the questions, the following narrative prompts guided the remainder of the participant interviews: 1) If asked to define code-switching, I would define it as... 2) I have/I have not used code-switching strategies when navigating my roles and responsibilities because... 3) If applicable, please talk about your use of code-switching strategies to navigate your roles as a nonprofit leader and a community leader. 4) Code-switching has/has not affected my sense of self-identity or the way that I view self-worth because...

It is important to note that these prompts were used only to fill in any extraneous space. The participants were initially tasked with telling their leadership stories that

highlighted past to current experiences as it pertained to being Black nonprofit leaders using code-switching strategies. The intention was to follow the narrative prompt protocol but allow time for deviations from the meeting schedule so that there was time to explore what the participants had to say (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). As stated before, as the interviews were taking place, notes were taken to capture nuances that may not have been captured on audio and to also capture my own insights. Possible insights included but were not limited to follow up questions, thoughts, emotions and feelings associated with what the participants are saying. After recording and transcribing took place, I listened to the audio several times to double check the efficacy of the transcription because transcription services sometimes fail to capture the dialect, proper expression and nuances associated with verbal communication.

Lastly, to identify convergence in the data all the interview transcripts and documents collected were analyzed and coded. “Coding and analysis are not synonymous, though coding is a crucial aspect of analysis” (Basit, 2003, p. 145). A code or “link” in qualitative methodology is described as the act of capturing, providing meaning and connecting a portion of language-based or visual data. Saldana (2015) goes on to say:

The portion of data to be coded during First Cycle coding processes can range in magnitude from a single word to a full paragraph to an entire page of text to a stream of moving images. In Second Cycle coding processes, the portions coded can be the exact same units, longer passages of text, analytic memos about the data, and even a reconfiguration of the codes themselves developed thus far (p. 3)

The data collected were analyzed and coded using ATLAS.ti 9 for Windows. ATLAS.ti 9 is described as a qualitative analysis software that analyzes large quantities of text, graphs, audio and visual data. Ultimately, the idea would be to code systematically and develop a system of meaning for the data collected in this research study. ATLAS.ti 9

offers an easy-to-use Unicode system with comprehensive search tools and a simplified software interface.

After uploading all the data, the coding process began by carefully examining everything presented in the software. It is important to examine everything as this allows for the initial grappling of data to try to make meaning of what is being presented. Coding is a very meticulous process and requires a certain level of detail, attention and reflection where interview data are categorized to facilitate analysis.

Research Questions

Qualitative research methodology was used to answer the question: To what extent do Black leaders of nonprofits in Bridgertown use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities in serving communities? In addition to the main research question, the following questions guided the investigation: 1.) To what degree are Black leaders, at nonprofits in Bridgertown, familiar with code-switching? 2.) To what degree do Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, see code-switching as a positive tool or negative tool when navigating their roles as nonprofit leaders and community members? 3.) According to Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, what are the perceived benefits and risks of using code-switching?

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of my positionality as a Black educational and nonprofit leader who currently lives in Bridgertown but who was born and raised in South Florida, an area known for its diversity of race, class and other demographics. Next, this chapter highlighted the use of a combined narrative inquiry and intersectionality approach to qualitative research. In the study, the intention was to

present narrative data on the lived experiences of Black leaders of nonprofits, focusing on their use of code-switching strategies to navigate their roles and responsibilities as nonprofit leaders. Following, this chapter included a discussion on the setting for the study as well as the participant selection process. The closing of this chapter described the data collection and coding process as well as the research questions. Prior to conducting the study, research showed that there are complex and multiple interpretations of code-switching that ultimately determine the beliefs and assumptions associated with the use of code-switching strategies. The next chapter will discuss the analytical process as well as what was uncovered in the interviews.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were Black and for no other reason. The limits of your ambition were, thus, expected to be set forever. You were born into a society which spelled out with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence; you were expected to make peace with mediocrity.

– James Baldwin “ - The Fire Next Time”

The main purpose of this study was to use a narrative inquiry process to uplift and interrogate the lived experiences of Black nonprofit leaders as they reflect on their use of codeswitching practices. The main research question that guided this study was: To what extent do Black leaders of nonprofits in Bridgertown use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities in serving communities? In addition to the main research question, the following questions guided the investigation: 1.) To what degree are Black leaders, at nonprofits in, familiar with code-switching? 2.) To what degree do Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, see code-switching as a positive tool or negative tool when navigating their roles as nonprofit leaders and community members? 3.) According to Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgertown, what are the perceived benefits and risks of using code-switching?

Data Analysis

The data presented were based on transcribed audio recordings that were collected through zoom interviews and audio recordings with the study participants. The transcripts were de-identified prior to them being analyzed in ATLAS.ti 9. A deductive coding process was used. According to Saldaña (2013) “some methodologists advise that your choice of coding method(s) and even a provisional list of codes should be determined beforehand (deductive) to harmonize with your study’s conceptual

framework, paradigm, or research goals” (p. 65). The three initial codes were linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness. In this study, the term linguistics, as it relates to code-switching, was defined as the manner in which people choose to adjust their vocabulary and change their pitch, volume or tone to better accommodate the expectations of their listeners who hold power and privilege in certain social situations (Goffman, 1981; Gumperz, 1982). Behavior was defined as the way in which someone conducts oneself. Lastly, DuBois’ definition of “double-consciousness” was used. He defined it as the “sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 3). Since the codes were pre-defined, the next step in the coding process was to then assign those codes to the qualitative data that was collected. It took about two weeks, per interview, of in-depth processing to identify meaningful statements that responded to the codes.

Transcriptions were not analyzed based on individual narrative prompts but rather holistically. This was done in an effort to see common themes in the experiences across participant stories as they related to code-switching behaviorally, linguistically and consciously. The stories shared by the participating leaders required a closer look at how these Black nonprofit leaders defined code-switching as a part of their personal leadership narratives in relation to larger narratives of other Black leaders.

Although, this investigation was originally framed around themes of code-switching as behavior, linguistics and consciousness, the study uncovered a need to further investigate the semantics of code-switching, rather than the usage of code-switching itself. Through a careful and meticulous analyzing process, additional themes

were uncovered that were pertinent to the study. Coding took place before, during and after the initial review of the data, to verify that emergent or new concepts or themes had actually been revealed. The additional themes uncovered were not extraneous to the ones found during the literature review, rather an extension of what was already been identified historically. In other words, the Black nonprofit leaders shared stories of code-switching that when taken into a broader context, expands on what Black people, who operate in White, heteronormative systems of power and privilege have been saying for decades. Code-switching is a full physical, mental, and spiritual process that allows for the navigation of systems and although it has historically benefitted some people, the act of code-switching itself has had both positive and negative connotations attached to it. Nevertheless, this study highlights the various experiences of Black leaders, in Bridgertown, as they have navigated both their career paths and life paths. The Black nonprofit leaders in this study shared stories about code-switching as behavior, linguistics and double-consciousness but also as a tool of survival and as a tool used for advocacy. Additionally, they shared stories that were deeply rooted in code-switching as “selling out” and “inauthenticity”. Therefore, this section will discuss the original themes as well as the subthemes that were identified: code-switching as survival, code-switching as advocacy and code-switching as inauthenticity. As the new subthemes arose, emergent descriptions of those themes were created using examples from interview transcriptions. The themes arose as the Black leaders responded to the narrative prompts and were given the freedom and space to share their leadership experiences and stories.

Research Themes

Following, is the data analysis process and the results of the study. The analysis process began by transcribing the data and reviewing each interview transcript. Through the combined lens of narrative inquiry and intersectionality, the study began with a deductive coding process (Saldaña, 2013) based on codes created from the literature review. As previously stated, the three initial codes were linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness. There were also three subthemes that were uncovered: survival, advocacy, and inauthenticity.

Code-Switching Linguistically

Within the theme of linguistics, the Black nonprofit leaders talked about code-switching as the manner in which people choose to adjust their vocabulary and change their pitch, volume or tone to better accommodate the expectations of their listeners who hold power and privilege in certain social situations. While some talked about code-switching as various communication patterns dependent upon their context and situations, others spoke about code-switching linguistically when building relationships with people for gain. The interviews highlighted an array of examples when it came to code-switching linguistically. In the literature review, it was said that code-switching has evolved from a linguistic tool used by bilingual individuals to a skillset that non-white individuals employ in hopes of increasing access and opportunity. Interestingly enough, at least one of the participants discussed how she observed White people, specifically in politics, employing code switching strategies to build relationships with people who were culturally and racially different from them. Code-switching linguistically is multilayered and multifunctional but the root of its usage is to navigate systems of contexts that may

differ from the users' own system. Below are examples of how the Black nonprofit leaders, in this study, talked about code-switching as it relates to linguistics.

Participant 1, Ashley said:

You have to be able to communicate in two ways, well in multiple ways. That could be dependent upon the relationships that are within the room, whether they are, you know gender to gender or cross cultures. You need to be able to speak and understand things and relay them at multiple levels, multiple intersections, and multiple pathways.

Ashley also mentioned:

You do have to use it [code-switching] when you live at multiple intersections..... You know White males, they can switch all the time. There is code-switching in that. Well, in politics that [code-switching] drives elections.....When they want to accomplish something without the fear of you know, sounding overtly racist or sounding overtly anything.

Comparatively, Participant 3, Candice mentioned:

Yeah, this is tricky because to speak Standard English, it is a language you might not like. You might resent it, you might be frustrated by it, but it is a language, right? And there are many, many languages. So if Standard English is the norm, right? Then you probably need to learn the "norm", but that may change, right? 'cause America is "Browning". Um, you know and so all of this may change, right? But now this [Standard English] is the standard in our country, and so if we're speaking you know, Ebonics or African American Vernacular English, I should say, then like I'm OK with that right, but I'm a Black woman..... How will using this [AAVE] impact our ability to navigate or to secure the resources that we need. and also my other question is are you just comfortable with me right or is this how you present to some other people 'cause you know you'll be locked out?

Participant 4, Vanessa remarked:

Or we might use a more professional voice. In order to talk to the people that we need to talk to or we may use some big words or whatever. Is this a constant attack against us as people? You don't have to try to use this big a** 12-page word to get your point across right? It's literally society, right? And it's the disrespect of lived experience, the disrespect of different forms of education, right? And it's disheartening, but it is what we work with.

These three participants, all female nonprofit leaders in Bridgetown, reflected on specific times where they, or others around them, had to adjust their communication pattern to navigate a situation or a conversation. Research on the presence of gender inequality in the workplace shows that women's underrepresentation in leadership positions in organizations is partially due to structural barriers to promotion in male

dominated, white collar industries (Ely and Rhode 2010; Gorman and Kmec 2009). Although, these women have reached leadership positions in top tier organizations, it appeared as though they were following the “rules of the game” even though said game was systemically set up for Black people, specifically Black women like them to fail. In other words, even if they did not agree with code-switching linguistically, they saw the significance of it when it came to navigating their career experiences in hopes of acquiring capital. Additionally, while some women have chosen to follow the rules of the game, others have chosen to render themselves invisible in the workplace. According to Ballakrishnen, Fielding-Singh & Magliozzi (2019), “research on the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace focuses on two explanations for women’s underrepresentation in the top tier of organizations: structural barriers to promotion and gendered behaviors internalized through socialization” (p.23).

Code-switching Behaviorally

Although seemingly a helpful tool for Black people when combating and navigating systems, code-switching, as it relates to the alternation and policing of behavior, has been debated and critiqued in the Black community just as code-switching linguistically and consciously has been debated. As proposed by Pitcan, Marwick and Boyd (2018):

“Respectability politics” describes a self-presentation strategy historically adopted by African American women to reject White stereotypes by promoting morality while de-emphasizing sexuality. While civil rights activists and feminists criticize respectability politics as reactionary, subordinated groups frequently use these tactics to gain upward mobility (p.163). Behavior and the perceived incompetence of behaviors, when they are not in alignment with white heteronormative societal expectations, have historically impacted not only how Whites view Blacks but also how Blacks view each other. Davis (2018) states, “The standard of whiteness is a form of property that dictates acceptable norms, behaviors,

cultural practices, status, reputation, achievements, and performance... It also includes the exclusion of Black community” (p.70). When defining code-switching overall, the participants broadly mentioned a behavioral component. Ashley, spoke about code-switching as alternation in behavior but not so much as inauthenticity; which I will get into later. She also alluded to the politics of respectability in reference to behavior and form of dress as she reflected on growing up in Black churches.

Ashley remarked:

I think we grew up code-switching in my house. I almost would consider it to be not as deep as multilingual, but you know how to keep family business in the house, or you know the equivalent of your verbal church clothes. Putting on your best when you're in public and [being] on your best behavior versus when you're in the house. And with my parents instilling that, I knew growing up knowing like the minute you step out of this house you can be called a multitude of things so what do you want to come off as and what do you want to be called?

Vanessa mentioned:

And to me it's these different expressions of identity of who we are. And again we have to dismantle it because it should not f**king matter if you wear braids down or up or in a bun. But again, there are these manuals, and these prescribed notions that come directly out of a white supremacy... They are the ones like they put these things in place.... and you're in this predominantly white institution, that has been used to getting away with saying you're supposed to look this way, you're supposed to do things this way.

Additionally, she mentioned:

So you know you knew how to get dressed when you were going to church. You knew how to get dressed when you were going to an interview versus laying around on the couch, right? Right? You knew those things because the culture showed you that.

Black people, specifically Black women are told to navigate unjust organizations and systems by simply fitting in as opposed to standing out and being seen. Therefore, they conform and maintain their “best behaviors” set by professional standards rooted in White supremacy. Some researchers have described this as a “double bind” (Eagly and Carli, 2007) where women who display masculine traits face backlash and women who

lack those masculine traits are also dismissed/disregarded as weak. In other words, women are constantly expected to fit into systems that are structured around White men thereby making it nearly impossible to fit in.

Code-Switching as Inauthentic Behaviors

It was particularly interesting hearing the way the Black nonprofit leaders talked about behavior as it related to inauthenticity. Within the theme of behavior, the participants, except for Ashley, almost always talked about code-switching in association with “selling out” or displaying inauthentic behaviors. As mentioned previously, “selling out” refers to the discord felt by Blacks when navigating conflicts between strict self-interest and racial group interest thereby causing tension due to the social costs incurred when other blacks question their commitment to or standing within the group (White, Laird, & Allen, 2014). The following examples provide insight into how these Black nonprofits leaders in Bridgetown talked about code-switching behaviorally and inauthentically.

Participant 3, Candice mentioned:

If I were to define code switching, I would define it as I'm changing behavior in order to assimilate. I have [code-switched] but I try to stay pretty authentic. I don't think that I do it [code-switch] to the degree that a lot of people do, but I have done it just by virtue and probably in ways that I don't even realize that I've done it [code-switched]. So, you know, some of it for me is like how to conduct business.

She then went on to say:

I guess the people whom I'm code-switching around I would say there's an impact there, but I do not take that home. I don't take that back to the office per se with me and feel like I've let my people down or that I have not been authentic to myself.

Just as Candice spoke about behavior and inauthenticity, Participant 2, Dave and

Participant 4, Vanessa, alluded to similar feelings of inauthenticity and remaining true to

themselves. In working environments, perception is important when it comes to navigating spaces. While some people have relied on the politics of respectability to personally police their own behavior when navigating white, middle class norms, others see the politics of respectability and code switching as a hindrance (Pitcan, Marwick and Boyd, 2018).

In his interview Dave mentioned:

I think I always show up as my authentic self... The system is all rigged for White men, no matter how bright you are, or mediocre, to maintain white dominance through economic oppression. So people like me, I am a risk to the whole ecosystem. And the fact that I speak my mind. If you talk to anyone that knows me, white or black they will say that I speak my mind..... I really don't give a f**k if you like me or you can not like me..... So what I mean is, I'm not going to spend my life trying to make you happy. I'm trying to get something done... Either you wanna work with me or not..... I'm not trying to be disliked, but I'm not putting any energy into if you like me.

In her interview, Vanessa stated:

I think it [code-switching] is important though I really do. I'm sure that there have been times where I have [code-switched], you know, before I came to this understanding who I was and what my work/ministry is. I'm trying to think of times, but I'm gonna tell you like this. I'm 47. Ok? I wanna say for at least the last 25-30 years I've been like this. And I remember telling them [career professionals], I'm just me. This is who I am. And I do honestly believe that most of us, if we take that stand on the side of justice, which is being able to be our true, authentic selves, things will work out.

She then went on to say:

It is a fight against the gaslighting that comes from when you're trying to be in these type of institutions, but very much so committed to trying to investigate [the system]. That's kind of how I see code switching and I'm gonna tell you, I have been very adamant of not trying not to do code switching in my entire nonprofit career. From my own lived experience [I have] been always told gotta act a certain kind of way.... So I was very much adamant that when I ran a nonprofit organization they were gonna get all of this here [all of me]. It's been very important to me 'cause we [Black people] a lot of times we have to do it in order to make it. And let me tell you. Uh, my mom would say to me. "I've never met" a stranger [because I stay true to myself], so I think that that helps me not have to code switch.

Research has shown that being respectable has traditionally reduced negative judgment potentially relieving the load of systemic racism and systemic inequities. Although, the politics of respectability was rooted in the struggles of Black Women, Black men and

other minorities have chosen to employ the same strategies to obtain capital.

Nevertheless, as Bell (2005) so eloquently stated, “beyond the ebb and flow of racial progress lies the still viable and widely accepted (though seldom expressed) belief that America is a white country in which blacks, particularly as a group, are not entitled to the concern, resources, or even empathy that would be extended to similarly situated whites” (pg. 282). The politics are the politics of the entire Black culture but some find its strategies to be demeaning and unnecessary, so they choose to remain their “authentic selves” even though authenticity is rooted in going against what people believe to be White normative practices. The definition of “authenticity” was not operationalized but would be important to study in future research regarding code-switching.

Code-Switching and Double-Consciousness

As previously mentioned, the definition of double-consciousness, as it relates to code-switching, was associated with looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. Within the theme of double-consciousness, none of the Black nonprofit leaders necessarily referred to a soul experience in itself but at least one focused on it [code-switching] being a full embodiment experience.

Participant 4, Vanessa, mentioned:

I hope I can be helpful in your investigation, but I think it's a topic and we've been grappling with it as a people for decades, right? Forever, James Baldwin called it a duality, right?
There is a constant struggle being experienced by Black people in America due to the duality of being both American and Black in a country that is highly racialized (Benjamin, 2005). Double-consciousness and duality have been discussed for decades, due to the dilemma of having to choose or alternate between identities, but it requires an

excess of expended energy. Interestingly, the participants did not speak a lot about double-consciousness even when they recognized the effects of having to alternate their behaviors, language, and identity.

Code- Switching as a means of Survival

Since the early 20th century, middle class Blacks have become excellent in teaching their children to code-switch (Wolcott, 2013). Often their success was realized because they were able to code-switch. This is seen as the case especially because research shows that doing so could potentially lead to increased capital. Within the theme of survival, the Black nonprofit leaders talked about how code-switching is associated with using the tools that you have, to navigate systems rooted in white heteronormative practices of power and privilege. Pitcan et al. (2018) stated, “ascription to respectability politics may allow individuals to succeed but doing so fails to address the systems of inequality and oppression that necessitate their use” (p.176). Therefore, although some participants dismissed employing respectability politics and code-switching practices, they almost always associated code-switching with a means of survival.

Participant 1, Ashley stated (code-switching linguistically as a means of survival):

Code-switching is survival. Code switching to me is really just about survival and driving messages to find a point to resonate with folks. It represents an understanding that in order to get from point A to B, you know a narrative that you're passionate about pushing forward, you have to be able to communicate in two ways, well in multiple ways. That could be dependent upon the relationships that are within the room, whether they are, you know gender to gender or cross cultures. You need to be able to speak and understand things and relay them at multiple levels, multiple intersections and multiple pathways.

She then went on to say (code-switching behaviorally as a means of survival):

Do I necessarily like that [code-switching]? No, because I think it's exhausting, but it's I think less exhausting than I'm sure what my ancestors had to go through to even get a seat at the table... And I think it again I go back to like survival

knowing that there is an expectation for professional Black person to look and act a certain way.

Participant 2, Dave did not explicitly say survival, but he eluded to the fact that there are certain “rules of the game” that Black people must abide by if they do not want to fail.

He stated:

There are unwritten rules at this level. When you get to the C-Suite level there are just unwritten rules and when you are Black, they don't tell you that s**t, right? They just let you fail, and this is the pressure that I always feel when I go to work every day. I gotta deal with microaggressions. I walk into the office. I cannot let a lot of microaggressions affect my disposition, right?

Participant 3, Candice, mentioned (survival):

We understand how to navigate these complex systems out in the world and we're gonna continue to challenge that. I mean, that's who we are. We want to survive. We have to challenge them, right? You wanna challenge system?
Address people in a way that, to get what you need and ultimately want.

Participant 4, Vanessa stated (code-switching linguistically as a means of survival):

I think in the broader context of navigating a white supremacist, capitalists, imperialists, landscape, it is about survival. But when we go home and we put that phone down and our survival is secured, we still know who we are. We don't lose our identities because we stop using profanity, for example. Or we might use a more professional voice. In order to talk to the people that we need to talk to we use some big words or whatever that is.

She then went on to say (survival):

I had a job that I loved.... So when I walked into those spaces, I did not need a job, right? And so I find that a lot of times we code-switch contingent upon what we perceive our needs to be... But we also have to honor the lived experience [of other Blacks] and understand what it's like to have to be in the welfare office with your baby on your lap. Trying to make a career in a living, to be able to provide for your family. Because this community, this world doesn't support Black women, it doesn't support artists. It doesn't support it or anything but you know, things that amplify White supremacy, right? And so members of society have to code switch. We be having to do what we gotta do to be able to take care of ourselves, our children sometimes, and even our households. You know we have our own issues within the black community whether that is colorism, whether it's homophobia. I think in a grand/the broader context of navigating a white supremacist, capitalists, imperialists, landscape, it is about survival.

Overall, even if the participants denied personally using code-switching strategies, they seemed to understand why other Black people would engage in them depending on the context. It was also interesting to see how the participants referenced code-switching as

survival but talked about survival in relation to the different original themes. For example, some spoke about code-switching *linguistically* as a form of survival while others talked about code-switching *behaviorally* as a form of survival. This goes to show that all of the codes, specifically linguistics and behavior, are interrelated and support the notion that code-switching is a full experience so its themes should be analyzed holistically instead of as separate occurrences.

Code-switching as means of Advocacy

Within the theme of advocacy, the Black nonprofit leaders talked about how code-switching is associated with ensuring that others, specifically other Black people, that come behind them have access and opportunities. For example, participant one, Ashley, used phrases like “carrying the weight of the race on her back” while participant 4, Vanessa mentioned “creating a pipeline for others”. Overall, this was a reoccurring theme which shows the community mindset that these nonprofit leaders have tried to maintain. In support of code-switching as advocacy, the participants had the following things to say.

Participant 1, Ashley remarked:

I've been able to kind of make a number of inroads and work kind of across silos and build ecosystems, but at the same time it comes back to that challenge of, you know, I'm the youngest person in the room. I'm often the only person that looks like me. And I can be the most educated person in the room, but I'm probably making only a fraction of what other White counterparts?... It is good and bad to be that Black person that does advocate for those [other Blacks] folks and not just give them, you know, carbon copy treatment.

Participant 2, Dave, stated:

From a leadership perspective, you gotta get allies. Like you gotta win over some white allies that will fight for your perspective... It's about getting leverage support from white people. Oftentimes leadership reflects the sacrifices. We're making a logical decision for the greater good. Like I'm a Star Trek fan, that's why the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Participant 3, Candice, mentioned:

How will this impact our ability to navigate or to secure the resources that we need [to help others].

Participant 4, Vanessa remarked:

Sometimes people feel a little bit more comfortable around [me] saying crack jokes, so you can be who you are without having the same parameters to appoint you as somebody that may have a, you know, a darker skin tone, so I ignore it, but I acknowledge my light skin privileges. And in spaces and a lot of times I try to bring people that don't look like me. People that don't have access that I have into these spaces with me, so we can start to demystify some of that [privilege] stuff. Therefore, employing strategies like code-switching or following the politics of respectability appeared to promote Black collectivism; Black people working together to socialize one another could potentially increase their access to capital. Starkey (2015) stated, "Blacks should enforce constructive social norms to police racial loyalty because doing so helps bolster Black solidarity, which is vital in promoting collective legal interests and ability to affect public policy" (p. 3). On one hand, it seemed as though some of the Black nonprofit leaders spoke against code-switching. Some of the leaders did not see their strategies as code switching. On the other hand, it is also seemed that they were willing to be respectable when engaging with others if it meant improving the chances of other Black people within and outside of the system.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings as they pertained to the themes of linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness. After a careful and thorough data analysis process, it was also revealed that code-switching was more than a matter of changing how one speaks, behaves, and thinks but rather full embodying experience that was both subjective and contextual. In other words, code-switching was not solely based on the act of alternation but also the why or reasoning behind that alternation. This led to the uncovering of additional themes of code-switching including inauthenticity, survival, and advocacy. The following chapter will provide the overall discussion of those themes,

highlight the implications for future studies as well as provide recommendations for moving forward.

Chapter 5: Recommendation Actions

Talkin' to God one day, he said power is in our melanin',
It's evident, Blacks got the power, it's like we're heaven sent.
They hesitant, want us to sink, but we keep peddlin',
Ancestors gave us freedom to live but we be failin' dem.
We're young, Black, and gifted is what we steady be telling dem,
Since no one wants to listen, BS is what we'll start sellin' dem.
Praying on our knees so much you would think we were some damn Reverends,
We're just tryna figure it out, before the world ends.
Money and happiness are always in comparison,
That's hard to come by, so our lives be in a world wind.
Taught to fake it till we make it... kumbaya...live in unison,
But we're damned if we act like us and damned if we act like dem.

- B.A.R.S

Just as the previous chapters have presented, the above poem, written using African American Vernacular English (AAVE), highlights the complexities associated with code-switching and Black people having to navigate predominantly White systems of power and privilege in America. The opening lines tell a story of Black self-love while living in a world that oftentimes does not outwardly show love for Black people. Two of the beginning lines state “they hesitant, want us to sink, but we keep peddlin', ancestors gave us freedom to live but we be failing dem.” The term “they” refers to the personification of the system of White Supremacy where inequitable laws, policies and resources have inherently led to discriminatory practices that continue to keep Black people at a disadvantage. Some Black people are constantly plagued with internal conflicts associated with knowing that our ancestors fought to overcome struggles yet still questioning whether more should have been or can be done to fight against injustices. Another important line, “we're young, Black, and gifted is what we steady be telling dem”, alludes to the struggle of constantly having to vocalize and overstate the importance of Black people in this country. It appears to support the notion that Blacks are more than what media may portray. This is reminiscent of modern-day protests

where signs are written, and chants are screamed that urge people to “say his name” and “say her name” because Black people are oftentimes reduced to less than humane monikers like “animal” and “monster”. The writer is encouraging readers to see Black people as enchanted people who are Heaven sent, educated and powerful beings with rich melanin skin.

The middle lines of the poem tell the story of the power of prayer that Black people have oftentimes relied on to get through the most trying times. The poem states, “praying on our knees so much you would think we were some damn reverends, we're just tryna' figure it out, before the world ends.” As the politics of respectability showed, Black people have historically used the institution of church to progress in life. Reverends are oftentimes revered as holy and ordained leaders of the church. It is assumed that these leaders spend a lot of time in prayer in hopes of building their relationship with God and the people of the church. Therefore, the writer is describing a situation in which Black people vigorously rely on prayer as a tool for progression with the same rigor as one would assume a Reverend does. The next line “money and happiness are always in comparison”, further describes the use of prayer as a tool for progression by illustrating a situation in which a person has prayed to obtain capital (money) even if economic gain would not necessarily lead to a more financially stable life and/or happiness. This is ultimately due to the constant economic injustices and inequities faced by Black people in America.

The closing lines of this free write poem ultimately appear to sum up the theme of this dissertation. The words “taught to fake it till we make it... kumbaya...live in unison, but we're damned if we act like us and damned if we act like dem” are written.

“Fake it till you make it”, another colloquialism commonly used in the Black community, oftentimes refers to this notion of adjusting behavior or adopting assimilation strategies. Kumbaya, a term rooted in spirituality and folklore, is said to be attached to efforts of harmony and unity. Therefore, the writer is describing a situation where a Black person can consciously assimilate, seek to live in unison and even adjust their behaviors to fit in but can still be “damned” because they are Black in a society that promotes whiteness.

The overall free write poem alludes to the inescapable lived realities of not only the Black leaders in this study, but also the lives of other Black people who have been told to live and prosper in a world that promotes a White, male-dominate agenda. In other words, regardless of a Black person’s desire to live in a world that is equitable, peaceful, and transformational, the reality can be anything but that. Additionally, regardless of a Black person’s alternation of speech, dress, behavior, thought process and intentions, the world has been and continues to be systemically oppressive to anyone who is not a White male.

Discussions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to provoke discussion around Black nonprofit leaders, in Bridgetown, and their use of code-switching strategies when navigating their roles and responsibilities. By using a qualitative narrative inquiry methodological approach and an intersectionality lens, these four leaders had their stories brought to light and interrogated in order to make collective meaning of code-switching strategies. More importantly is what their stories meant in the broader context of equity-based work in predominantly White systems such as nonprofits and community engaged organizations. As previously stated, stories, when told in depth, are relational, and

situational, and if purposely explored, have the potential to be powerful agents of change. The interviews allowed me to capture the active and raw emotion that the participants were sharing. The following research question served as the main question that guided this study: To what extent do Black leaders of nonprofits in Bridgetown use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities in serving communities? In addition to the main research question, the following questions guided the investigation: 1.) To what degree are Black leaders, at nonprofits in Bridgetown, familiar with code-switching? 2.) To what degree do Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgetown, see code-switching as a positive tool or negative tool when navigating their roles as nonprofit leaders and community members? 3.) According to Black leaders, at non-profits in Bridgetown, what are the perceived benefits and risks of using code-switching? The three initial themes were linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness. There were also three subthemes that were uncovered: code-switching as a means of survival, code-switching as a means of advocacy, and code-switching as inauthenticity.

As noted, in earlier works describing the phenomenon of code-switching, the phrase “code-switching” was not used so this paper referenced historical yet similar ideals such as bilingualism, double-consciousness and respectability politics to show how although code-switching started off as a term rooted in linguistics, it has transformed over time to include alternations in behavior and thought processes as well. This study started off with a deductive coding process based on the literature review. Themes such as linguistics, behavior, and double-consciousness were seen throughout the literature. In talking to the Black, nonprofit leaders, 3 subthemes (code-switching as a means of survival, code-switching as a means of advocacy, and code-switching as inauthenticity)

emerged. The definitions for the themes emerged from the literature as well as the interview processes.

Table 3. Themes and Definitions

Linguistics	the manner in which people choose to adjust their vocabulary and change their pitch, volume or tone to better accommodate the expectations of their listeners who hold power and privilege in certain social situations
Behavior	the way in which someone conducts oneself
Double-Consciousness	looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity
Survival	the act of living through adverse or unusual circumstances
Advocacy	to support, speak, or act on behalf of another person, place or thing
Inauthenticity	to act in a fake or insincere way in an effort to advance a certain agenda

Nonprofit organizations are the backbone of communities like Bridgertown. These organizations meet the needs of various demographics by providing support (mental health, children and family services, etc.) to community members facing economic inequities, systemic hardships and barriers. However, nonprofits are typically led by White leaders even when their target demographics are overwhelmingly non-White individuals. Additionally, Black nonprofit leaders, who have managed to navigate unfair systems of power and privilege, oftentimes do so by employing strategies such as code-switching. Nevertheless, the act of code-switching is rooted in White, heteronormative, male-dominated systems of power and privilege where people have had to assimilate or adjust themselves to attain capital and navigate their roles.

The reality is code-switching is a complex and divisive tool of navigation that is revered by some and completely disregarded by others at both its conscious and subconscious levels. The usage of its strategies has been argued by researchers, academics, educational leaders, community members, etc. but it remains a controversial subject that ranges in acceptance within and outside of the Black community. Although, this study was situated within the themes of linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness, the data revealed that code-switching is more complex than the breaking down of individual themes.

Overall, the intersections of gender or race did not appear to impact the participants' need to employ or accept code-switching strategies. The term "code-switching", commonly used in academic settings, appeared to have a negative connotation attached to it even when the term was broken down into individual instances of alternation (linguistics, behavior and double-consciousness). Of the four participants included, only one participant, Ashley, deliberately accepted the fact that they would code-switch on a regular basis. In other words, the participants appeared willing to accept that sometimes Black people needed to change the way they acted, dressed, spoke, thought and engaged, but when the term "code-switching" was used to describe that alternation, it was vehemently denied by the majority of the participants.

Furthermore, there was oftentimes a blatant disconnect between how they defined code-switching, when asked to do so, and how they spoke about code-switching in relation to themselves. This is interesting because as they reflected on their career paths, they would describe instances of code-switching but then would deny doing it because it was seen as "inauthentic". This leads me to believe that if another term was used instead

of “code-switching”, the nonprofit Black leaders would have been more willing to accept it as a necessary means of navigation. It also appeared that the participants assumed that accepting code-switching strategies could threaten their ability to appear relatable to other Black people in the communities that they served. This further shows the complexities associated with code-switching strategies. Nevertheless, their jobs are rooted in White systems of power and privilege that they have had to navigate from the beginning of their career journeys. As Bell (2005) stated:

By refusing to accept White dominance in our schools, places of work, communities, and, yes, among those Whites who consider us friends, we both show a due regard for our humanity and often convey enlightenment to Whites deeply immersed in the still-widespread, deeply held beliefs of a white-dominated society” (pg. 288).

Denying the use of code-switching strategies does not eliminate the problems associated with White Supremacy in America. Considering the status of the participants, CEOs, COOs and Organizational Founders, this denial of code-switching may have stemmed from their individual feelings of how they had obtained this upward mobility (Pitcan et. al., 2018). For example, America is structured inequitably which oftentimes leads to the stratification of people based on race and class. “Making it” and “selling out” are common colloquialisms in the Black community and both could mean being shunned and losing relationships with other Black people if the means in which they had “made it” were seen as inauthentic. As Durant and Sparrow (1997) stated “It should also be noted that racial and class groups overlap, which may sometimes lead to competing and conflicting behavior and attitudes of group members” (pg. 341). There are multiple and sometimes cumulative expressions of oppression for those with different combinations of race, class, and gender identities therefore producing qualitatively different lived realities (McCall, 2005).

Implications and Recommendations for the Field of Educational Leadership

There are great implications for furthering a study that highlights code-switching and the lived experiences of Black leaders in nonprofit spaces. The current study not only adds to the limited literature surrounding this phenomenon, it also allows for meaningful reflection for Black people in a variety of systems. Firstly, there is an overall lack of scholarship that highlights the importance of the Black leaders in nonprofit spaces. A study of this magnitude should be expanded upon to tell the story of Black people and how they navigate other White systems including schools, communities, public and private career spaces.

Another expansion of this study should highlight constructs such as age and gender and how that impacts the stories that Black leaders tell. Although, this study touched on demographics such as age and gender, age and gender were not the focal points or even listed as participant criterion. Those constructs merely added to the picture of the individual leaders because the overall purpose of the study was to gain insight into a bigger issue of Black nonprofit leaders navigating their roles and responsibilities using code-switching strategies. Therefore, the findings of this study should first force nonprofits to interrogate their systems in a way that makes the working environment safer, more inclusive, and more equitable for Black people in leadership positions.

Additionally, it is important for these community engaged organizations to realize that their organizations are not always an accurate representation of the communities that they aim to serve. Nonprofits oftentimes stand in the trenches and bridge the gaps between under resourced communities and resources that are oftentimes inaccessible to

those who need the most assistance. Although, code-switching was not a favorable topic to discuss and the complexities made it even harder to accept, the data presented in this study showed that advocacy was a central theme that most of them possessed even if that meant potentially accepting the usage of code-switching practices. As evidenced by the data presented, the nonprofit leaders included in the study, have made it their mission to look out for and continuously navigate under resourced Black communities in the city. This meant advocating for the addition of other Black people in the workspace as well as Black people in the communities that they serve. By not providing additional resources for Black leaders and by not making workspaces more equitable, organizations are inherently maintaining racist and discriminatory systems.

Implications and Recommendations for Theory and Practice

The major theories used in this dissertation were critical race theory (CRT), the politics of respectability and the theory of capital. CRT originated in law and policy studies and was extended to fields, like education (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Over the years, it has been used as a tool to examine, uplift and understand the experiences of Black students in traditional K-12 schools and higher education but more should be said about the use of CRT in nontraditional educational settings such as nonprofits. Hawkins (2014) states:

Although there are multiple large-scale manifestations of social hierarchy - all deserving attention - given its salience in scholarly literature and public life, we can pick up on this analysis of racism and focus on it as an emblematic form of the social harm that emanates from social hierarchy. Moreover, we can focus on racism by leveraging the preponderant worldview among critical race theorists that, even into the second decade of the twenty first century, racism continues to be impelled forward while our actions simultaneously deny its persistence (p.43). In other words, researchers, theorists, academics, and leaders oftentimes fail to truly examine and uplift the experiences of race and racism in all spaces because people have

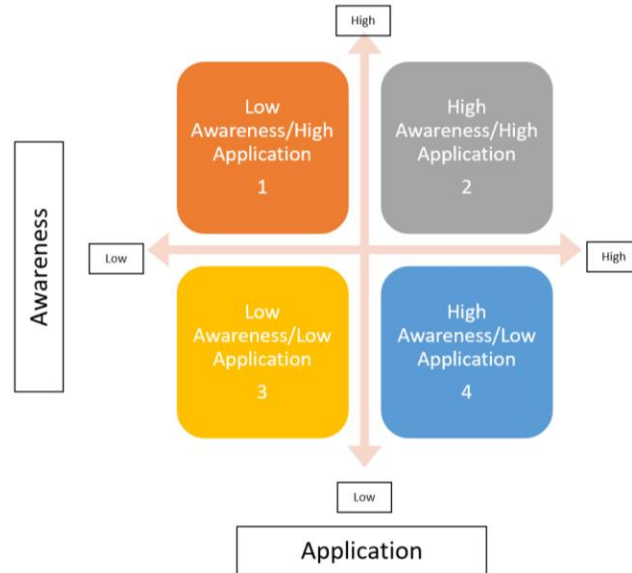
failed to truly interrogate how White supremacy is embedded in every system even if it is not displayed overtly. The same can be said about the politics of respectability and its ongoing practices that are still engrained in the lives and experiences of Black people. Two of the four participants (Ashley and Vanessa) either explicitly mentioned or alluded to being taught and still upholding respectability politics.

Given the experiences of the Black nonprofit leaders in this study, recommendations are as follows. Studies should aim to not only uncover similar stories but also use those stories to help other leaders navigate and address their experiences. The participants had a range of different experiences and outlooks on practices such as code-switching but the common theme was the lack of support and the lack of mentorship presence of other Black leaders in the same spaces as them. This sometimes led to them experiencing microaggressions, racism and even feeling like the entire Black race depended on them. Critical race theory does a good job of highlighting experiences and laying the foundation for interrogation but offers little insight on how to move forward. The politics of respectability places the action steps on the individual as opposed to the system that is inherently racist and discriminatory. It is one thing to interrogate the system and the experiences of Black leaders in that system. However, researchers and practitioners using CRT framework and the politics of respectability should discuss ways to improve the experiences of the people in the system even if that means not necessarily combating the entire system. For example, instead of focusing on the use of code-switching that has been used to navigate oppressive systems, organizations should offer resources such as mentorship programs for Black leaders who are in these positions. In

this case, it is placing the responsibility and actionable change on the system itself and not solely on the individuals in that system.

Aside from the above, the participants in this study reached a certain level of leadership, by using strategies such as code-switching, even when they denied or had not realized that they had employed such strategies. This further describes the complexities associated with the use of code-switching practices. That is because the level of awareness and the level of useability happens within a matrix. It is my belief that code-switching occurs at varying levels of consciousness and thereby is used at different rates and in different ways. I created the following theoretical matrix to better illustrate what I believe is occurring.

Table 4. Code-Switching Matrix



Code-Switching Matrix: Awareness versus Application

This matrix was created to illustrate how people use code-switching at varying levels of awareness and to varying extents. Based on the data retrieved and the analysis process, it

is suggested that people would fall into one of the four quadrants as opposed viewing code-switching as one singular process. For example, someone who actively uses code-switching practices but is not doing so consciously would fall into quadrant one. However, another individual may use code-switching practices frequently and is completely aware that they are doing so in a strategic and intentional way to navigate the systems that they are engaging; thereby, falling into quadrant two. An individual who does not use code switching practices and are not aware that such practices exist would fall into quadrant three. Finally, an individual who is highly aware of code-switching practices but consciously chooses to not engage in such practices often would fall into quadrant four. This matrix was created in theory and would need to be studied further, but it continues to highlight the intricate nature of code-switching.

As previously mentioned, it is my belief that code-switching is not a linear process. It occurs at varying levels of usability and consciousness for different people. Future work on code-switching could be important across other systems of practice outside of the context of Black nonprofit leaders. A study of this nature could impact the way that we think and speak about respectability and access to capital for various groups of individuals. For example, based off data and the conclusions drawn from this study, this notion of code-switching could branch off into additional studies where code-switching is discussed as it relates different fields including criminal justice, corporate organizations, and other educational sectors. As mentioned previously, my background is in student services and behavior therapy. I have held positions where behavior modification programs were created to teach “socially acceptable” behaviors, even though terms like “normal” and “socially acceptable” are generic social constructs that cannot be defined outside of a

dominant system of power and privilege. A study like this could be expanded upon to discuss code-switching as it relates to students with disabilities. From my experience, students with disabilities are oftentimes advised to seek behavior therapy and given behavior modification strategies to help them navigate their worlds and make them appear more “normal”. According to Green (2018) “disability is a subgroup that transcends different races, ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses” (p.143). She goes on to discuss social constructionism as it related to individuals with disabilities and navigating college campuses. She stated:

Using social constructionism, Vygotsky’s theory of social development was used to observe how higher psychological processes, such as social norms that evolve from college students, and how the culture of the college plays a role in the development of social skills and interactions. Through the use of communication tools, (e.g., smartphones, tablets, or computers), and identification of signs, that is, physical or observed behaviors that assist in navigating a culture (e.g., repeatedly posting an unflattering picture of a peer, Facebook groups providing information about campus activities), individuals learn how to communicate effectively with peers. As the students repeatedly observed and internalized certain behaviors that occurred in college, they begin to view said actions as cultural and social norms (Vygotsky, 1978) (p. 136).

This study by Dr. Green, highlighted the notion of “normal” and discussed how students with disabilities engaged with and viewed themselves in relation to their peers. It is important to note that her study specifically provided a foundation for how individuals with disabilities experienced bullying on college campuses. However, its findings point to the lived realities and the stories that individuals with disabilities tell about how they experience life at universities.

Universities are institutions of higher education that are founded on systems of power and privilege. Although, universities and nonprofits are two different systems, they are both rooted in practices that maintain and uphold White supremacy. Consequently, minorities, in this case individuals with disabilities, are told how to adapt and exist in a

system that is inflammatory and oftentimes unsupportive of anything that deviates from the norm. Nevertheless, literature on the degree in which individuals with disabilities code-switch is limited, much like the literature on Black nonprofit leaders and their usage of code-switching strategies.

Therefore, this matrix is multidimensional and in theory, describes the intricate nature of code-switching. In conjunction with the creation of some sort of code-switching awareness and usability survey, this matrix could provide a better illustration of the degree in which individuals use code-switching strategies to navigate their various roles and responsibilities.

Implications for Researcher's Agenda and Growth

For me personally, this study has promoted a sense of freedom, or at least the beginnings stages of it. As a Black academic, educational leader who also identifies as a poet, rapper and writer, I have constantly worked and lived within the confines of White systems such as nonprofits. This has meant regularly feeling like I have to choose one identity over the other in hopes of fitting into seemingly vastly difference groups. Throughout my doctoral process, I have struggled with what it meant to be all of those things while still attempting to combat imposter syndrome. According to Edwards (2019) “the imposter syndrome is a phenomenon that was first coined in the 1970s by psychologists Dr. Pauline Rose Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes to describe feeling like an academic or professional fraud” (p.18). I am now faced with the complexities of code-switching, and although seemingly helpful, can also be detrimental to self as well as the people around me. Edwards (2019) goes on to describe how imposter syndrome causes

people, especially women, to get into the cycle of playing into others' opinions of what they should do and how they should behave based on those assumed perceptions.

This study has allowed me to break free from the constant need to think, behave, speak and even write in ways that are in alignment with White heteronormative practices. This is not to say that I am disregarding all that code-switching has seemingly afforded me, I just recognize that continuing to do so, neglects to interrogate systems of oppression. I also recognize that continuing to do so will not automatically lead to increased capital, acceptance, and "success". Ultimately, that realization has refocused my attention. As a former behavior therapist, I was taught to alter the behaviors of clients, specifically those with physical and emotional difficulties, so that they were socialized in a way that would make their behaviors appear normal. Unfortunately, this notion of normalcy is subjective, contextual, and rooted in ideals such as the politics of respectability. This study has allowed me to see that oftentimes it is not the behavior of people that needs to be altered, but rather the system in which those individuals are operating in. Future studies on code-switching should be more intentional on not simply uplifting but interrogating and then changing the systems of power and privilege that continue to uphold standards of whiteness as they relate to ideals such as speech, appearance, behavior, and consciousness.

Limitations

There are several limitations associated with this study related the selection of participants, analysis and my own personal biases. First, the process in which the participants were chosen serves as a limitation. As previously mentioned, a community nomination process was used to select the participants. Processes such as community

nomination could be seen as problematic because of the bias associated with convenience sampling. The participants were not selected at random, so the research is dependent upon access to open and willing respondents that were recommended by other individuals. Therefore, samples were biased towards the presence of individuals with inter-relationships to the previous participant, and therefore may paint an over generalization of cohesive thought processes within that network of people (Griffiths, Gossop, Powis & Strang, 1993). Although, their study was specifically on drug users, it also uplifts problems of idiosyncrasy and problems of cohesiveness when studying small groups of marginalized individuals. Additionally, the lack of random sampling meant that it was difficult to make claims of generality.

Aside from limitations associated with the lack of random sampling, there are some issues associated with the small number of participants included in the study. Although approximately 10 participants were contacted, only four participants were included. Additional participants were considered but their personal work priorities, their time constraints, their availability, and their willingness to participate were factors that inhibited more participants from being included in this study. However, there was intentionality in the small sample size. The purpose of this study was to collect the stories of Black nonprofit leaders in the city but as data show, there is not a large percentage of Black people in the city. Even more important is the lack of Black leaders in the city, especially those who hold top, leadership positions in these organizations. Data show that Black people in Bridgetown make up one-quarter of the city's population but hold less than 0.1 percent of executive leadership positions (Carnegie Mellon University, 2018). This is why the study was inherently important. Uplifting their stories

provided insight into code-switching strategies but also provided bright spots and counternarratives. Diversifying the leadership team produces favorable outcomes (Adesaogun et al., 2015). Race is just one form of diversity that nonprofits and other companies fail at because organizations have chosen to maintain systems that inhibit Black leaders from holding these positions even when research has shown that doing so would increase effectiveness, culture and productivity. Therefore, although the sample size for the data was small, it was consistent with the small number of Black people who serve in leadership positions in the city and across the country.

For analysis, there are limitations associated with the coding process. Coding is critiqued as a very open art form that is largely based on perception rather than on concrete facts. Nevertheless, coding is a craft, and “any researcher who wishes to become proficient at doing qualitative analysis must learn to code well and easily; the excellence of the research rests in large part on the excellence of the coding” (Strauss, 1987, p.27). To increase the integrity, validity and fidelity of the study, triangulation was used by examining the convergence of information collected. Triangulation refers to the use of various methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomena; in this case code-switching (Yilmaz, 2013; Patton, 2002). In other words, the triangulation of data provides in-depth descriptions that establish credibility when attempting to establish patterns in data (Creswell, 2007). Patton (2002) identified four types of triangulation: (1) method triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theory triangulation, and (4) data source triangulation. I triangulated the literature review, the participant interview data, and the field notes collected during the interview. Additionally, after the interviews were

completed and the data were transcribed, individual member check-in (**Appendix D**) was used to establish the credibility of results. In other words, the data was returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Merriam, 2009). It allowed participants to remark on the transcriptions and themes. Member check-in also allowed for the expansion and amending of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Finally, as the sole researcher of this study, as self-prescribed codes-switcher and a Black nonprofit leader, I have my own subconscious biases that might have been revealed in the study. It was not my intention to highlight my own experiences, rather the experiences of other Black leaders in Bridgertown. It is important to note that Black people are not monolithic in nature, thereby my personal experiences, although similar, are not representative of the entire race. This is also why a member check-in process was used to review the data conclusion.

Conclusions

On the surface, this dissertation uplifts the lived experiences of Black leaders and their use of various strategies when navigating their roles and responsibilities, specifically in White dominant systems such as nonprofits. On a deeper level, this dissertation calls into question the overly White leadership representation of nonprofits in ways that should force us to first interrogate and then change this system. Although, one of my recommendations would be to make the working environment safer, more inclusive, and more equitable for Black leaders in nonprofits, it is even more important to not only change the overall structure but also the system of nonprofits in its entirety. A deeper understanding of the systems that Black leaders navigate during their leadership journeys

is important when understanding the blatant historical oppression of Black people in America.

Nonetheless, rather than focusing on the strategies that they had to employ to reach their positions, there should be a bigger focus on systemic changes that need to occur in the nonprofit sector. This study acts as a continued conversation to move towards actionable change. To what ends, I am not entirely sure but it further sheds light on the inequities faced by Black people in America. As previously stated, there are back and forth tensions associated with code-switching (Bicker, 2018; Morton, 2014; Levinson, 2012; Hill, 2009) but there is very little literature on the nature of it as it pertains to Black nonprofit leaders.

Based on the data presented, systems, such as nonprofits, should be more intentional when it comes to serving their Black employees, especially those in leadership positions. This study uplifted the lived experiences of Black leaders in nonprofits. Uplifting their experiences is merely step one in the process of actionable change. Nonprofits are a continued source of support for underserved communities and oftentimes due to systemic racism, these communities are typically filled with Black people. Therefore, Black representation in the organization would better serve the working environment as well as the intended communities that the organization is aiming to serve. When communities are better represented and better served, the people in those communities are inherently better protected and resourced. The Black leaders in this study, as well as others who have shared their stories with me, have not seen their communities taken care of as evidenced by the health, income, employment and

education disparities across the city. This study provides just one way to begin that change.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Email Sent to Prospective Participants

Good morning,

My name is Ramona Crawford and I am a current doctoral student at Duquesne University in their Educational Leadership, Ed.D program. My current focus is social justice in nontraditional educational settings and nonprofit services. I am currently seeking participants for my research study entitled: **“When Being Respectable Isn’t Enough: A Critical Investigation of Code-switching and the Lived Experiences of Black Leaders Who Work at Nonprofits in Bridgertown.”** Your name was provided to me by my advisor, Dr. Gretchen Givens Generett, because of your outstanding leadership in the non-profit sector in Pittsburgh as well as the impact of the work in the communities that you and your organization serve.

If you are interested in participating, please indicate accordingly and a follow up email will be sent with more information on the study. Upon indicating your willingness to participate, you will be notified of your rights, all risks, and the potential benefits of your participation in this study.

Best,

Ramona Crawford (Graduate Assistant)
Duquesne University
School Of Education
401 Canevin Hall
Dept. Of Educational Foundations & Leadership

Appendix B: Consent Form



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE:

Is Being Respectable Enough? : A Critical Investigation of Code-switching and the Lived Experiences of Black Leaders Who Work at Nonprofits in Bridgertown

INVESTIGATOR:

Ramona Crawford
Graduate Student
Crawfordr1@duq.edu

DISSERTATION CHAIR:

Gretchen Givens Generett, Ph.D.
Interim Dean; Professor
Noble J. Dick Endowed Chair in Community Outreach
School of Education
107 Canevin Hall
(412) 396-1890
generettg@duq.edu

SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in the School of Education at Duquesne University.

STUDY OVERVIEW:

This study is an investigation of code-switching and the lived experiences of Black leaders in nonprofits and their use of code-switching strategies. For the purpose of this study, code-switching will be defined as the ability to alter one's linguistic dialect, consciousness and behavior in ways that allow those of power and privilege to feel comfortable in exchange for fair treatment, access to increased economic mobility, educational opportunities and social advancement; an all-encompassing definition that the researcher created from the literature to accurately describe the full experience of alternation and navigation that takes place for Black people in America. Ultimately, there are complex back and forth tensions associated with code-switching and my goal is to illuminate the current gap between the existing tensions and the preferred usage of code-switching strategies.

PURPOSE:

You are being asked to participate in a study to examine the experiences of Black leaders in nonprofits and their use of code-switching strategies when navigating their roles and responsibilities.

In order to qualify for participation, you must be:

- An adult, aged 18+
- A Black nonprofit leader at an organization in Bridgertown

PARTICIPANT PROCEDURES:

For the purpose of this study, you will not be asked to give your name or the name of the organization for which you are employed. If you provide your consent to participate:

- You will be asked to engage in an hour-long narrative interview where I will use several narrative prompts to collect stories on your lived experiences as a Black nonprofit leader in Bridgertown, as it relates to the employment of code-switching strategies when navigating your roles and responsibilities.
- The interview will take place at any place via Zoom, Inc. due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Prior to your interview, you will be emailed a link to complete a demographic survey that asks questions related to your race, age, gender, education status, employment status and a description of your current position and title.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

The research is designed to benefit society by provoking discussion around Black nonprofit leaders and their use of code-switching strategies when navigating their roles and responsibilities in hopes of providing new insight surrounding this phenomenon. The benefits and drawbacks associated with code-switching are evident but the extent to which Black leaders of nonprofits use code-switching to navigate their roles and responsibilities deserves to be furthered researched.

There are risks involved in all research studies. Certain discussion points may evoke a variety of emotions. I ask that you let them come and flow through you as you share your story. A minimal amount of your personal time will need to be dedicated to the process. You should report any problems to the researcher so adjustments can be made to further limit discomfort on your part.

COMPENSATION:

There will be no compensation for participating in this study. Participation in this project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your participation in this study and any personal identifiable information that you provide will be kept confidential at all times and to every extent possible.

Your name will never appear and all recordings will be kept secure and private.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to start or continue this study. You can withdraw at any time without penalty or consequence by alerting the researcher via phone or email.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this study will be provided to you at no cost. You may request this summary by contacting the me and requesting it.

FUTURE USE OF DATA:

Any information collected that can identify you will have the identifiers removed and will not be used for future research studies, nor will it be provided to other researchers.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read this informed consent form and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, for any reason without any consequences. Based on this, I certify I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that if I have any questions about my participation in this study, I may contact any of the researchers listed above. If I have any questions regarding my rights and protections as a subject in this study, I can contact Dr. David Delmonico, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 412.396.1886 or at irb@duq.edu.

Participant’s Signature

—

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

Appendix C: Demographic Survey

Please indicate your gender

- Female
- Male
- Other: Please specify _____
- Prefer not to say

Please indicate your race

- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Latino/Hispanic
- Native American/American Indian
- Multiracial
- Other: Please Specify _____

Please indicate your age

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- Over 55 years old

Please indicate the highest degree or level of education that you have completed

- Less than a high school diploma
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA/BS)
- Master's Degree (e.g. MA/MS)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD/EdD)
- Other: Please specify _____

Please Indicate your current employment status

- Employed full-time (40+ hours a week)
- Employed part-time (less than 40 hours a week)
- Unemployed (currently looking for work)
- Unemployed (not currently looking for work)
- Student
- Retired
- Self-Employed
- Other: Please specify _____

Please Indicate your job title and provide a brief description of your current role including, but not limited to, the number of years you've held the position.

Appendix D: Member Check-In Email

Good Morning,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to start off by saying thank you again for your support on my research study. As a part of a member check-in process, I have attached a draft of my study for you to review. The first half of this study contains historical information as well as what drew me to this particular study.

However, I understand that you are busy so I would like to highlight that pages 46-81 are the most pertinent to you and the other participants. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about what was written, please let me know. We could schedule a follow up conversation, or you can respond directly to this email. Due to my timeline, I ask that any questions, comments or concerns be addressed by April 30th, 2021.

Please see attached.

Best,
Ramona Crawford (Graduate Assistant)
Duquesne University
School Of Education
401 Canevin Hall
Dept. Of Educational Foundations & Leadership