

UP THE HILL WITH JACK AND JILL:
THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF
INTERSECTIONAL COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation into the ways that intersectional social actors conceptualize their position as raced, classed, and gendered, and how they seek to pass down identity categories, cultural frames, and behavioral habits to their children. In particular, it is an examination of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. (“Jack and Jill”) as an intersectional social club, which seeks to socialize upper-middle class black youth into the habits that this community sees as legitimate and productive in modern society. Using interview, archival, and focus group data, this project analyzes the discursive frames of current club members, former child participants, and documentary evidence from historical correspondence. This project seeks to respond to racial formation and social reproduction scholarship by interrogating the ways that parents articulate the meanings of race, class, and gender, the ways such meanings are engaged by Jack and Jill, as a legitimating organization, and the absorption or internalization of such meanings by young people. It asks three questions to examine such mechanisms: 1) How do intersectional social actors talk about race, class and gender? 2) How do such community members engage social reproduction strategies that highlight their unique race and class positions? 3) How do recipients (children) rearticulate those messages and indicate their absorption or rejection of those norms?

I find that discourse around race frames blackness as a salient social stigma, despite socioeconomic privilege. Mothers engage race explicitly, having frank discussions about their hopes and fears around their child’s racialized bodies. Therefore, messages about race are illuminated in organizational discourse and are well-absorbed by children. Secondly, the study finds that discourse around class obscures the ways that cultural and social capital is accumulated and activated in the larger social world. While

discourses about class are largely silenced, Jack and Jill serves as a location for capital accumulation, developing ease with elite cultural forms, and cultivating dense social networks saturated with resource-rich nodes. Members talk very little about the role of class stratification in their lives. Finally, this project finds that parents articulate gender expectations according to the bimodal demands of black respectability politics. Whether mothers seek to protect children from state violence or sexual derogation is fundamentally tied to their children's gender. Further, the aspirational desires that they have for children, particularly for their children's future spouse, differed for sons and daughters in marked ways.

Ultimately, I argue that the substance of norms around race, class, and gender, as well as the processes of socializing such norms and discourses, serve to reproduce this intersectional community over time. Because of their intersectional positionality, discourses about race are saturated with simultaneous messages about gender or class, and vice versa. Not only do mothers perform mastery of such intricate narratives, but through individual work and the efforts of the social club, they enjoy success in socializing these frames into their children. These narratives are more than identification markers; they serve as strategies to minimize the effect of racial stigmatization experienced in their neighborhoods and at work, teaching children the behaviors and codes that are most useful in navigating away from the worst effects of a marginalized position. As the next generation grows up to develop their own native ideological frames, I predict that we will continue to see persistent meanings about racial marginality, socioeconomic privilege, and gender respectability as part of the vocabulary of these intersectional actors. Mastery of these meanings allows individuals access into this

private community and also serves as protection from the worst effects of local discrimination.

DEDICATION

For Theodore and Addie B.

For Paul and Mildred.

For Robert and Rhonda.

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I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all those who supported me, listened to my complaints, and kept me full of encouragement during this process. First and foremost, I would not be anywhere without the family who brought me here, both physically, but also symbolically. The great-grandparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles who saw potential in me as a little one, and believed that I could make something of myself; my mother and father, who made countless sacrifices, so that I could explore, express, and develop myself. I am privileged to have been surrounded by such deep, thick, unconditional love. Your love literally propelled me forward when I was sure I could go no further. It feels like my life's work is to be worthy of that precious investment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I interviewed Danielle and asked what she thought her parents wanted her to know about the world. She said that she believed that her parents were seeking to teach her a set of skills that she would need to navigate in the world. When I asked her to elaborate, she offered:

some of it was learning how to navigate different identities. I don't know if you've experienced any of this, but we were upper middle class, depending on the time period, and my parents are both educated, which set them apart from a lot of the parents of our black classmates that were lower class. We weren't necessarily on the same plane with other the black students. If we were lumped in with the black students, we were different from them in some ways, but then obviously, we were also different from the white students, the majority, because of race.

On the one hand, Danielle's lessons included lots of small, subtle lessons on "how to navigate, and not feeling like we had to change parts of ourselves to fit in with one or the other," yet, she argued that her parents sought to impress upon her that, "we weren't going to fit in all the time, because we were in a unique spot, and not to act out or blame ourselves for it." This example helps illuminate the experience of social actors at a particular intersection of race, class, gender, and place. It sparks questions about how social actors develop frameworks to think about ephemeral, yet meaningful, social phenomena in their lives, such as race and class. It invites research about where and how such knowledges are developed in young people. Early work on raced-class communities focused on how macro-level changes in policy shaped the occupational, educational, or family outcomes of the black middle class (Frazier 1939; 1957), but more recent work has shifted to look at raced-classed identity development at the mezzo and micro levels (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Lacy 2007; Moore 2008; Banks 2012). Furthermore, literature on

the black middle class has outlined the personal strain that many black, middle-class Americans feel between their elite (and therefore, overwhelmingly white) residential and professional lives and the stigma that their bodily race attracts (Cose 1993, Feagin and Sikes 1994; Lacy 2007). The goal of this dissertation process is to add to this growing body of literature on the black middle class. I aim to contribute some understanding regarding how these particular intersectional social actors engage their positionality as both socially marginalized and economically privileged, and how they reproduce local knowledge about race, class, and gender across time.

This project furthers the agenda of feminist scholars seeking to engage an intersectional turn in the academy. Intersectionality, as coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the early 1990s, represents a synthesis of a long history of marginalized minorities articulating, advocating for, and organizing from their own experiences (Crenshaw 1990). Intersectionality, as we understand it today, has roots as far back as Sojourner Truth's pioneering speech, "Ain't I A Woman?" at the 1851 Women's Rights convention. Her speech highlighted the raced-classed-gendered experience, unique to black women of the time. She had "borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery" and cried out with mother's grief; she had "ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns," doing the same labor as the black men in her racial caste; no one had ever helped her into a carriage (Truth 1851). Truth's address sought to teach the all-white Women's League how multiply-marginalized social actors must engage many identities at once. While strangers or privileged citizens sought to frame Truth as only a slave, her speech challenged the notion of what gender meant when intersected with race and class. In the decades after that speech, the interest around multiply-marginalized identities and the ways intersectionality mattered in access to resources grew. The charge largely

spearheaded by black women intellectuals including: Anna Julia Cooper (1899), Frances Beale (1979), and the Combahee River Collective (2014 [1977]). While these intersectional trailblazers were particularly interested in dynamics of oppression (being racially, socio-economically, and gender-oppressed), contemporarily, sociologists recognize that people's lived experiences are not simply about individual biographies, but are overwhelmingly determined by racial, gendered, classed, cultural, and other social experiences working in tandem to shape a social actor's life chances, ideological outlooks, and behavioral toolkits (McIntosh 1998).

Intersectionality has been used to describe not only social actors' self-identification and personal epistemology, but it also has meaningful contributions to contemporary sociological research; intersectionality can describe the way a researcher approaches theory, the methodological strategies with which we collect data, the analytical lenses through which we observe social behavior (Carbin and Edenheim 2013). To talk about how raced-classed-gendered social actors articulate and socialize discursive frameworks about the larger world requires that I rely on two intellectual linages: the Gramscian roots that sprout Michael Omi and Howard Winant's racial formation theory and Bordieuan roots that sprout contemporary social reproduction theory. I charge that none of the observed strategies in my sample can be explained by a racial formation frame or social reproduction frame alone. Rather, these two academic traditions must be in conversation with one another, to frame how these black actors seek to articulate a "positive" blackness that is distinguishable from the controlling images endorsed by the hegemonic center, and to illuminate how socioeconomic elites seek to distinguish themselves from their amoral and snobbish neighbors. Racial formation charges that our knowledge about race (as an organizing principle for social inequality) while rooted in

historico-political interests of the hegemonic state, are reified and challenged via dynamic processes of articulated racial projects. Such projects are activated in multiple locations and across micro, mezzo, and macro social strata and seek to (re)frame the boundaries around categorical race, re-distribute the material and symbolic resources across groups, or do both at once (Omi and Winant 1994). While racial formation theory is critical in an analysis of racial ideology, and the struggle for hegemonic prominence, it does not wholly explain how ideas about race are passed between social actors, nor how does it articulate how other simultaneous identities act as modifiers and co-creators of the boundaries and substance of racial categories.

Social Reproduction theory argues that class is not simply inherited, but it is acquired via a system of socialization mechanisms. Social actors absorb, and later activate, a range of embodied skills, cultural markers, and material resources to identify themselves, for example, as elites. The education and mastery of these capitals often take place within formal organizations, including schools, camps, or private clubs, where such ideological and behavioral habits can be efficiently socialized (Bourdieu and Passaron 1977; Bourdieu 1986; Kahn 2011; DeLuca and Andrews 2016). Private institutions in particular act as network anchors that tie communities together, and act as in-group touchstones as well as capital nurseries. My intersectional turn here, on the one hand, is to ask if and how Omi and Winant's theory can be used or modified to examine the cultural behaviors and attitudes of a racially marginalized and stigmatized group that is as socioeconomically privileged as other elites. On the other hand, I draw on theories of social reproduction to understand how such racially stigmatized, economically elite social actors engage the strategies of other socioeconomic elites to create and ensure greater social inclusion for themselves and their children.

Intersectionality argues that not only are categorical identities of race, class, gender, (dis)ability, citizenship, etc., co-constituted (by that, I mean the way a social actor's ownership and performance of gender is fundamentally shaped by their race or class identity, and vice versa [White 2001; Glenn 2002]), but also that a social actor's perception of the world, the inequalities therein, and the strategies that they employ to navigate such inequalities, are shaped by their intersectional social position. Seeing one's self as privileged, or oppressed, and the way one articulates and enforces strategies around their oppression or privilege, is similarly rooted in one's social position.

Following such logic, I argue that intersectionality is the most clarifying way to understand the strategies that my interviewees, and Jack and Jill as a formal organization, use to engage multiple demographic identities and create reproduction strategies that articulate their unique position as marginalized-privileged social actors. Jack and Jill of America, Inc., itself, is an organization with intersectionality at its heart; formal membership is restricted to those who identify as simultaneously black, middle-class, and a mother. Jack and Jill, and the social actors that inhabit it, constitute an intersectional community. By that term I mean that the social actors in this study are bound together by a particular race/class/gender positionality, which simultaneously shapes the ways that they are perceived by the world (as marginalized-privileged or privileged-marginalized), and shapes their epistemology for understanding the world and the inequalities therein. The particular intersectional homogeneity of this community fundamentally shapes the ways these social actors articulate norms and expectations around race, class, and gender; it shapes the way they engage threats of racism; it shapes their approach to parenting; and

it shapes their approach towards the accumulation of social, cultural, and economic capital. In other words, it shapes their strategies of social reproduction.

This is the reason I am so interested in the strategic positioning of intersectional social actors. I am particularly interested in the ways the social actors in my study account for their strategies and how they try to inculcate those strategies in others. To this end, I am not solely interested in how black middle-class individuals articulate their position and strategies to work towards full social inclusion. I am also deeply interested in the role of social organizations as a place of emotional comfort and capital acquisition.

I will return to a more robust summary of the organization's history in the methods chapter (chapter 2), but I want to outline some of the core attributes of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. Founded in 1938 by Marion Stubbs-Thomas, Jack and Jill was originally meant to get a small group of friends with small children together, where they could socialize while their children played. They pooled resources to throw parties or attend cultural enrichment activities, but the club had not yet developed any formal structure. After the near-simultaneous charter of the Philadelphia and Metropolitan (Manhattan) chapters in the winter of 1938, word spread through members' social networks, and interest in Jack and Jill clubs increased throughout major black metropolises, including Washington D.C., Baltimore, Chicago, and Memphis. By 1948, there were 17 additional chapters, and by the end of the 1950s, Jack and Jill of America, Inc. boasted another 68 chapters. By 2010, there were over 240 chapters (including military families stationed internationally), and there are now well over 40,000 mother-members worldwide. Early members were largely attracted to the clubs because they were, "desirous that [their children] be associated more closely and grow to manhood and womanhood enjoying and profiting by each other's society" (Metropolitan Chapter

1957), and that desire has been persistent ever since. In Jack and Jill chapters, children aged 2 to 18 engage in age-appropriate socialization and enrichment activities; when they are very small, children might come together for free-play or story time, but as they grow older, they go on field trips, do arts and crafts, and participate in community service projects. Once children reach the teen group (usually at age 14, when they enter high school), children become more agentic in the decision making around their own activities and projects within their participation in the institution.

Membership in the organization is by invitation only, which means that the following process (and arguably, the organization itself) is largely invisible to the general U.S. population. The membership process usually starts with the precondition that an existing member will have been in contact with someone who has “interest” (a member might approach someone that they think would benefit from the organization, or someone with interest might take initiative to seek out a current member). That existing member is then charged with the social vetting of the person of interest; they might invite them to Jack and Jill events or develop their own robust connection. The current member then must present the interested party to the rest of the club and advocate for their admission. Finally, the club takes a closed vote; if you receive enough votes you are granted membership in the club and receive a letter with the good news. As stated above, membership is restricted to demographically similar social actors (those who are black, middle-class, women), but members evaluate potential entrants on whether they are “FIT+L.” That is to say, voters were meant to assess if someone had the Financial capability to meet the monetary demands of the organization, which include baseline membership dues, but also the ability to fundraise for club projects, and the means to cover the cost of enrichment activities or travel expenses to organizational conventions.

Members are also meant to evaluate whether someone had sufficient Interest in the organization, and if they seem like someone who could invest the appropriate amount of Time into club activities. Of course, these measurements are fundamentally subjective, the standards of financial security, and time-freedom are deeply contextual within a cultural context. It is the final standard, Like-mindedness, that illuminates the ways that ideological similarity is linked to intersectional experience, and the ways that invisible standards serve to cohere this community together and ground an articulation of this community's collective identity. I will return to a conversation about like-mindedness in the substantive chapters, but I argue that this standard serves as a symbolic boundary that is simultaneously flexible ("like-mindedness" indicates a homophily of "values" without specifying exactly what those values are), and bright (any indication that a prospective member is not sufficiently like-minded is enough to disqualify them from membership).

The history of the organization, borne from Jim Crow segregation, perpetuated by elite social ties, and focused on a particular intersectional social actor, fundamentally shapes the experiences and discourses of my subjects today. Most of my subjects feel similar to the ways the founders did, that their occupational and cultural capital meant inroads to new opportunities for them and their family, yet the barriers of racial stigma—once legal, now *de facto*—limits their full social inclusion. Parents recognize that their blackness is still a meaningful barrier to social integration; they use Jack and Jill as a mechanism to minimize the effects of social segregation by developing cultural and social capital within the bounds of the organization.

This research project asks three questions that probe the experiences of intersectional identity-making, and the processes through which social actors reproduce identities over time: 1) How do intersectional social actors talk about race, class and

gender; 2) How do such community members engage social reproduction strategies that highlight their unique race and class positions; 3) How do recipients (children) rearticulate those messages and indicate their absorption or rejection of those norms? I utilized interview, focus group, and archival methodologies to collect narrative data on these questions. I find that the articulation and reproduction of these social identities involves negotiation between mainstream, and counter-frames, with the fundamental goal of minimizing the experienced effects of racial stigma.

After a discussion of the research design, data collection strategies, and reflexive considerations in chapter 2, chapter 3 is a discussion of how these actors engage race as an organizing principle in their lives. Racial formation theory argues that the hegemonic power of definition bounds the ways that we conceptualize physical bodies in social space, and micro-level actors must engage with the ideological norms that enable unequal and discriminatory treatment, in order to reify or challenge them. Bodies are assigned meaning according to the hegemonic ideological frame, and bodies that are racialized black, brown, or other, experience persistent social stigma in comparison to bodies that are racialized as white. This chapter finds that this intersectional community, despite their socioeconomic privilege, see themselves as stigmatized, and work to disrupt such social practices using Goffmanian strategies of socialization (as an in-group strategy) and self-presentation (as an out-group strategy). The mothers in my study grapple with balancing the discursive norms of the Post-Racial Era (an argument that race is not socially stigmatizing) with experiential evidence that their bodily race is disqualifying from full social respect. Therefore, they engage Jack and Jill as a particular racial project, one that operates as a protective mechanism—shielding young people from the emotional damage of social marginalization—and as a location to reframe the meaning of their racialized

bodies. Children tend to absorb the explicit messages that work against popular frames and that render their bodies as inferior. In response, Jack and Jill parents seek to socialize a “positive” frame around black bodies, culture, and relationships. Such identity development serves to strengthen ethnic bonds with other blacks outside of this specific intersectional community and illuminate a shared racial identity.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the social reproduction of the American elite. This Jack and Jill community utilizes the language and ideals of their white elite neighbors: that is to say, black elites seek to obscure class with discursive frames of democratic inequality while also inculcating classed capitals into the habitus of the next generation. At the same time, black elites use their marginalized actor positionality to minimize the “meaningfulness” of class and maximize the salience of moral norms (e.g., being nice and not spoiled, having the correct values). Ultimately, I find that my subjects see class as a partially-efficient destigmatizer; mastery of classed skills is seen to be a major mechanism for integration into elite white spaces. The implicit messages about class do not seem to be fully absorbed by children. Unlike race, there is no cohesive narrative that children share about class. I further argue that my sample’s engagement with class does not indicate an abandonment of embodied race, rather the classed norms engaged by them represent standards of the intersectional community. Mastery of class-obscure language, and class-distinct behaviors is a critical marker of membership in this intersectional community.

Finally, chapter 5 considers how Respectability, a system of gendered behavioral norms, fundamentally shaped by race and class intersectionality, works as a foundation for the ways parents talk about their children. Parents have bimodal concerns and expectations for their children that reflect the concerns and expectations of black

churchwomen of the 1900s as they sought to uplift the race. For the mothers in my sample, their concerns about police violence for their sons, and concerns about sexual deviancy for their daughters, is shaped by their raced-gendered subjectivity. Even more curiously, moms have bimodal desires for the reproduction of the community via marriage and childbearing; they largely seek elite husbands for their daughters, but black wives for their sons. I argue that this pattern goes to the heart of this community's goal, a biological, ideological, and social reproduction of a stable black-middle-class identity and community.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS OF INQUIRY: COLLECTION STRATEGIES, ANALYTICAL APPROACHES, AND REFLEXIVITY

To account for the ways that intersectional social actors engage discursive strategies in the service of social reproduction, I conducted a case study of an organization within that community, called Jack and Jill of America, Inc. I utilized interview, focus group, and archival methods to collect the data and I then coded and analyzed the data using Atlas.Ti software. All research was approved by Temple University's Institutional Review Board. In this chapter, I detail the methodological strategies, analytical approaches, and reflexive concerns of this project.

When seeking to examine a social phenomenon or bounded community within its native cultural contexts, the work of Robert Yin (1997; 2018) argues that a case study is an ideal mechanism for exploring, describing, and explaining the phenomena of interest. Case studies add to the rich arena of qualitative social inquiry, highlighting nuance rather than statistical centrality, articulating a constructive spectrum of behavioral processes rather than positivist categories of prescribed actions, and allowing for deep elaboration rather than shallow summaries (Feagin 1991). The main contribution of case studies to qualitative epistemology is their recognition of deep cultural embeddedness. They work to illuminate sociologically unusual phenomena or to deeply interrogate “normal” occurrences for the latent functions buried within. Case studies are unique from other strategies of inquiry in a few ways; first, they purposely engage multiple data-gathering techniques, what Norman Denzin has called methodological triangulation (Denzin 1970; Torrance 2012). Second, they serve to observe and analyze social phenomena where they are; facilitating analysis and theoretical contributions that are deeply grounded in the

experience of subjective research. Finally, they require reflexive engagement by the researcher to illuminate positionality considerations, issues of power and privilege, and design critiques (Malterud 2001). These collective benefits work together to garner an embedded analysis of social processes of meaning-making and boundary negotiation. When considering elite organizations, and the communities that they rest within, in particular, the patterns of privacy that are distinct to these groups make methodological triangulation, strategic sampling, and researcher reflexivity a critical part of the research approach (Sjoberg et. al. 1991).

Case studies are particularly suited to social inquiries that are so rooted in cultural context that the boundary between research phenomenon and social circumstance are not particularly discernable (Yin 2018). The definition of a “case” has significant flexibility in qualitative analysis; cases can be as small as a single nuclear family unit (Kindell et. al. 2014) or a medium-sized community organization (Gavaravarapu and Pavarala 2014) and as large as whole occupational industries (Williams 1991). Despite variability in the size and quality of boundaries in case studies, cases are only analytically fruitful if they are *bounded*—when there is a clear definition of what actors, materials, and behaviors are included within the scope of analysis. Other social actors and phenomena may become part of the case’s context as important and influential, but not directly represented in the data analysis (Yin 2018).

Site

The case for this study is Jack and Jill of America, Inc.; this includes both people who have been participants (either a mom, or a “child” of either gender. Fathers are not included in my analysis, though men who were participants in Jack and Jill as children, are), as well as archived organizational materials. I identified Jack and Jill of America,

Inc. as an epistemologically productive site for the interrogation of identity articulation and social reproduction processes for two main reasons. First, the organization is restricted to members who sit at the intersection of race, class, and gender. Jack and Jill is a non-profit organization, made up of black, elite-middle-class mothers. Each of these demographic categories are locally determined; what I mean by that is, there is no data, either in the archives nor in the interviews, that outlines explicit requirements for the race or class identities for potential members (membership is restricted to “mothers” in the bylaws). This allows for some flexibility in who counts as appropriately black or middle class. The ways that participants articulate these identities are a crux of this dissertation work.

Utilizing Jack and Jill as a case study on intersectional-community processes illuminates the identity substance of these communities as well as the processual strategies that actors utilize to determine which identities are markers of in-group status, and which ones are inconsequential. Secondly, Jack and Jill, as an organization, has socialization (and therefore social reproduction) as one of its main tenets. In one of the earliest organizational documents available in the archive, a Handbook for Members, the goals of the organization are described as: “1. To create a medium of contact for children, and 2. To provide a constructive recreational, social, and cultural program for children and mothers” (Handbook for Members 1948). In a 1952 version of this handbook, the second goal was amended to read: “to provide a constructive, educational, recreational, and social program for children *and their parents*” (Handbook for Members 1952, emphasis mine). In this way, Jack and Jill clubs extend Pierre Bourdieu’s work on sites of social reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) by operating as a third, middle-space between home and school. To be sure, the subjects in my work identify that their children

are learning things about identity, inequality, and the larger social world at home and at school. Nevertheless, they articulate lessons learned while in Jack and Jill spaces; lessons that are unique and, I argue, particularly driven towards the reproduction of the cohesive, intersectional community, rather than a single actor or single demographic asset.

Here, I want to give a brief history of the case site, both as an introduction to a community that is largely hidden from most Americans and to outline the mechanisms of the organization as a context that frames my methodological choices, and the analysis that follows. The club was initially organized for the children of black professionals to have structured playtime, cultural exposure, and community socialization. In the very early years of the organization, the 21 founding members (and the 26 additional “charter members”) organized group outings to museums, concerts, and other enrichment activities. In 1938, Philadelphia was in the latter part of the Great Depression and in the thick of Jim Crow. For black women, even ones of relative financial privilege, this meant that access to high-culture resources, like art, theater, and other cultural experiences, was restricted. So, members pooled their resources to buy tickets, organize travel, or host guests at club gatherings. Typically, members and their children met at a volunteer’s home, though they arranged to meet and have their children play at the local Y.W.C.A (1065 Catherine Street), where membership was \$1.00 per year, and children could run in open space and play on available equipment (Baker et al 2000). Gaining membership to the club was largely a practice in in-network access. Most of the founding members had known each other since their school years, as church members, or through their husband’s occupational networks. Word spread from the founding members to other women in their social networks, and soon, Jack and Jill clubs were organized in New York City and Washington D.C. (1939 and 1940, respectively). There were 17 additional

chapters within a decade, and by the time the original Jack and Jill club was 20 years old in 1958, there were 89 chapters nationwide. Today, there are more than 240 chapters worldwide, and more than 40,000 mother-members (Jack and Jill Inc. 2015).

Many of the structural and substantive qualities of the first chapters have persisted over the years to solidify a stratified structure of local, regional, and national, directors and programs. Jack and Jill of America, Inc. the national level, facilitates the institution's financial business, charitable giving, organizational rosters, and sets annual macro-level programming. The national board also arbitrates the work of the Jack and Jill Foundation—the philanthropic wing of the club—which fund charitable donations internally (for chapters' community service or enrichment programs), and externally (with scholarships and research funding) (Baker et. al. 2000). The national structure is divided into seven geographic regions, which is then further divided into local chapters. Although the organizational objective is for the programs, activities, and narratives at the lower chapters to be reflective of national standards, most chapters are fairly autonomous. While there is a homogeneity in structural forms (each chapter has officers, and follow Robert's Rules of Order when making most decisions), the substantive quality of members, programs, and behaviors, can be quite varied. Acquiring membership is identical to the model set out by the Philadelphia Founders: a prospective member has to be invited into the organization by a current member in good standing. Then, they must be voted on, by the current chapter members, before she is admitted. Membership is reserved for mothers who have children between the ages of 2-years and 18-years old, and once a mother is a member, any subsequent children she may have are automatically in the organization as participants. Chapters occasionally enforce informal requirements for membership (they might decide that the chapter needs more boys, for balance. Or,

they might say that they are only looking for 5-year-old's in a particular year), but these requirements are flexible and transient. Children who “graduate out,” or leave the chapter in good standing after graduating from high school, or simply being 18-years old, have automatically secured *legacy membership*, where they can enter any chapter, without the formal interview process. Legacy membership is open to both males and females who graduate out, but for fathers with legacy status, it is still their wives (even if the wives did not participate in Jack and Jill as youth) who retain membership. Club meetings are still held in members' residences, almost exclusively, though large gatherings are often held in rented venue spaces, hotel conference rooms, or other semi-private locations.

This research focuses on Jack and Jill, Inc.'s Eastern Region as a sub-site; it has 58 chapters as far north as Buffalo, New York and as far south as Washington, D.C. This particular region is valuable for my inquiry because the Eastern Region has all of the original chapters, making it a particularly fruitful location to observe historical change. Additionally, it also holds the most substantive archive of Jack and Jill materials that I could find while pursuing this research. Finally, gathering interview and focus group data required me to find and meet members in residences, or in their offices; the locations made these subjects accessible, where a more distant subject-region would have been unattainable.

Data Gathering

My methodological strategies for this project have evolved from a negotiation between the desire to answer my research questions and the empirical nature of Jack and Jill's structure; particularly, that much of their workings are done in private. The subjects of my study, the mothers and children of Jack and Jill, are best described as a “hidden population,” and therefore, examining these subjects requires a delicate approach to

inquiry (van Meter 1990). Early research on hidden populations often focused their attention on social outsiders—those who experience disenfranchisement, transience, or recalcitrance—all people who would typically be outside the framework of a representative survey sample (Lambert and Wiebel 1990). More recently, scholars have argued that hidden populations are not just those on the legal or residential margins, but rather communities that may live or work in a larger worlds, but have some behavior of sociological interest, that is obscured either by the social actors or by the nature of the community that is being examined (Browne 2005).

The mothers and children of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. constitute one such hidden population—they are not hidden by nature of their deviance, but rather they are selectively hidden (or made visible) through the actions of the organization's headquarters and individual members. Structurally, this means that researchers, new members, and other strangers only gain access to the community via gatekeepers. Similarly, the physical materials of the organization (handbooks, flyers, etc.) are often passed down from chapter president to chapter president, or are placed and then forgotten in someone's storage space. There is not currently a cohesive archival system for Jack and Jill materials, rather materials are either eventually thrown away, or potentially donated, as was the case for the archival record at New York Public Library's Schomburg Center, which I relied upon heavily in my research. Both the formal and informal characteristics of the organization allows for the community to be hidden, and their sociological processes to be obscured at the macro level. I will return to the sociological utility of this practice in the analytical chapters, but for now let us focus on why this trend matters, methodologically.

When dealing with a population that lacks high social visibility, it is necessary to examine the communities from the bottom up, piecing together local narratives in an attempt to illuminate the modal ideological trends as well as the tensions at the community's margins (van Meter 1990). While a population that is visible and public is easily engaged with what van Meter calls "descending methodologies"—survey data and statistical analyses—hidden populations are better suited for "ascending methodologies," where "research strategies elaborated at a community or local level and [are] specifically adapted to the study of selective social groups" (1990:32). These methodological strategies include non-random and snowball sampling, collecting data via ethnographic, documentary, and interview methods, and using interpretive analytical frameworks to illuminate local meanings.

Snowball samples are one mechanism of gathering subjects, particularly when a research population is hidden in some way due to small numbers, a lack of institutional presence, social stigma, or "hidden by choice" (Atkinson and Flint 2011; Beirnaeki and Waldorf 1981; Faugier 1996; Noy 2008). In this case, because of the largely closed nature of Jack and Jill—there is no public roster to reference, nor is there a single place to simply show up and introduce oneself—access to the cohesive community requires gatekeepers to provide entrée to research spaces, as well as ease interactions with potential subjects. Snowball, or "chain," sampling is best described as when researchers utilize contacts and gatekeepers to gain access to potential subjects. Then when data has been collected, a researcher will ask the subject to point them in the direction of further subjects. Noy's work on social geography (2008) argues that this method is important in understanding the intricate relationship between sampling and data-gathering. Engaging in snowball sampling methods illustrates a researcher's interest in seeking to capture

“social knowledge [in its] emergent, contingent, interactive, and heterogeneous characteristics” (Noy 2008:331).

While purposive sampling methods, like the one this dissertation project utilizes, are often perceived as insufficient because of concerns around generalizability, the use of snowball sampling illuminates constructivist notions of knowledge. That is to say, knowledge is a social phenomenon, rather than an objectified phenomenon; researchers socially construct knowledge *with* research subjects, rather than “extracting” it *from* subjects (Holstein and Gubrium 2004). Snowball sampling, because it rests on social networks, illuminates the constructivist argument that knowledge is contextual and local. It allows researchers to get very close to the real communities where subjects create knowledges, and encourages close, thick, readings of our phenomena of interest.

Secondly, snowball sampling illuminates the problem of power inequality within research relationships. In one way, it is different from other non-probability frameworks because researchers relinquish their power to identify ideal types, or to purposefully target what the researcher deems as the ‘full range’ of the population (Noy 2008). Snowball sampling gives an inordinate amount of power to the respondents to “choose” the future subjects in the research, and indirectly choose the direction of the research. While I never talked about the substance of a previous interview, snowballed subjects likely talk to one another about the work, and those conversations likely shape attitudes and responses to me. Therefore, subjects are not only critical to the transcribed substance of the data, but they are engaged in the substance of the analysis in a very real way (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Noy 2008). When elite communities are “hidden by choice,” and therefore wield their social power in order to monitor and control access to the social actors within, snowball sampling makes plain the “social dynamics of

accessibility in terms of power and rights: who may find and possess what type of knowledge about whom?” (Noy 2008;338).

Snowball sampling makes visible the power of social capital in social research, and in my research topic, especially. My subjects are simultaneously utilizing their social capital to gain symbolic and material resources inside, and outside, of the organization (Odenhal and Shaw 2001; Browne 2005). Any member can act as a gatekeeper, inviting non-members to participate in an event or join the organization, or denying access to the organization through silence, or an active vote against a potential inductee. Using snowball sampling put me, as a researcher, in the middle of these processes.

I began the dive into the research site by tapping my own networks for current and former members of Jack and Jill. After finding a gatekeeper that was willing to introduce me to some of the current mothers in Jack and Jill, I interviewed those subjects, and then asked each subject for one or two people that they thought she should talk to. After completing 16 interviews, I then asked a child of a participant to sit for an interview. After the interview was collected, I again asked for recommendations and contacted the suggested social actors. There were 15 ‘child’ (all “children” were over the age of 18) interviews in total.

Interviewing

I collected semi-focused interviews for this project; the interviews are “focused” in that the interviewees share a particular social-actor position as Jack and Jill members, and the interviews are “focused on the subjective experiences” of a local system of cultural reproduction (Merton and Kendall 1946). These were meant to be guided conversations, whereby subjects discussed their experiences, expectations, and interpretations on a topic outlined by me, the interviewer (Kvale 1996). Since this project

seeks to tackle the articulation of local cultural norms, in preparation for the interviews, I developed a rigorous interview protocol, which interrogate the three main questions of this study (1: How do intersectional social actors engage social reproductions strategies that articulate their unique race and class positions? 2: How is Jack and Jill a meaningful location, particularly as a site for the transmission and reproduction of those identities 3: How do recipients (children) rearticulate those messages and indicate their absorption or rejection of those norms?) through smaller, more pointed questions (Rubin and Rubin 2005). To that end, I sought to meet Kvale's criteria for quality interviewing: I developed questions that would encapsulate a "complete" experience of social reproduction, in that the transcript data would be both expansive and "self-containing." I asked concise but open questions to allow the subject to talk at length; when obscure or interesting topics emerged, the interviewer sought to elaborate or verify meanings in collaboration with the subject, in real time (Kvale 1996). I closed each interview with the question, "Is there anything that you wished I had asked, that I didn't?" This question serves two important strategies, that are useful for data collection: first it re-establishes my subject's position as an expert in their own experience, and secondly it allows for new paths of conversation that my original protocol might have overlooked (Owens 2006). Several subjects had nothing to add after an hour or more of talking together, but others contributed stories with unexpected self-analyses that were analytically valuable for this project.

After finalizing the protocol and contacting the research participants, I scheduled a meeting time and travelled to meet interviewees between 2016 and 2018. Nearly all of the mother's interviews occurred at their residence, or at their place of work. Three interviews were done at a café. The children's interviews were collected at cafés, or while having lunch at Chipotle (these college students love Chipotle). I collected 31 interviews:

16 of mothers, and 15 of children. The analysis section, below, contains a univariate summary of participants. Interviews with the mothers lasted an average of 90 minutes, the children's interviews lasted an average of 50 minutes. All interviews were recorded (there is about 2200 minutes of audio, total) with permission, using my cell phone and then immediately transferred to a secure electronic file. Research on qualitative interviewing tells us that while a dialogical transcript is necessary for analyzing interview data, the use of a recording device may impact a subject's willingness to be forthcoming or relaxed. Some subjects add spontaneous additional thoughts while chatting after the end of an official interview; other subjects may explicitly say they feel free to talk now that they are "off the record" (Warren 2001). I thought about the obtrusiveness of my recording devices at the beginning of this study, and deemed that a cell phone, face down but actively recording, is a common and innocuous sight. There were no obvious signs that the presence of the recording device was an inhibitor to any of the interviews. When a subject had additional thoughts after the interview, I took mental or written notes about the conversation if it supplemented the existing conversation, and wrote memos to amend that transcript. If a subject talked at length, I would ask if I could turn my recorder back on, and the subject and I would continue with our discussion.

Focus Groups

The analysis for this project relies heavily on interview and archival data, but data from focus groups also have meaningful contributions to the analysis. Focus groups represent an additional discursive method to interviews, but they provide new and complementary data in a few ways. First, focus groups can facilitate emotional and psychological security, participating with a group of peers can provide a "non-threatening and permissive environment," which is particularly useful when working with

populations that have been traditionally marginalized in scientific study (Morgan and Kreuger 1993:15; Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005). Secondly, focus groups reshape the interviewer-interviewee dynamic from a “vertical” interaction into a “horizontal” one. The adjustment of this dynamic “can lead to the collection of especially rich information that will eventually result in accounts that are replete with ‘thick description’ and rich in verisimilitude” (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005:898). Finally, the social nature of focus groups make them ideal locations for discovering cultural negotiations, as participants engage the interviewer’s questions collectively and reveal important processes of interactive negotiation and communal knowledge (Albrecht et al. 1993; Macnaghten and Meyers 2004). Moments of agreement, policing, and negotiation during the focus group sessions reveal valuable data about similar social processes in their larger community. In the analysis of this data I was particularly attuned to moments of collective conceptual ambivalence, collaboration, and divergence (Macnaghten and Meyers 2004) when focus group members discussed race, class, Jack and Jill, and their social identities in the larger world. This project includes data from two focus groups of Jack and Jill mothers, each session was about 2 hours long. One focus group contained 8 participants, and the other contained 5 participants.

Archives

Archives represent a contextual telling of history. Organizations, and the private citizens within them, make decisions on what to archive, and what to disregard. Those decisions are reflective of subjective narratives about the organization, reputations to protect, and materials that are given value, or deemed meaningless. Furthermore, the donation, organization, and analysis of archival data reflects autobiographical characteristics of donors, archivists, and researchers alike (Stanfield 1987). The archival

materials are located in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which is a subset of the New York Public Library system, and the Blockson Collection, which is part of the special collection library at Temple University. I visited the Schomburg archive approximately 10 times during 2015 and 2016, and observed and photographed as many relevant materials as possible during the open hours of the library. This archive was donated to the library by the Metropolitan Chapter of Jack and Jill in 1991, and includes two linear feet of materials including correspondence, meeting minutes, membership registries, bank records, organizational files, and early editions of *Up the Hill*, Jack and Jill's organizational newsletter (first published in 1948). There is about 2 linear feet of archival material, and additional *Up the Hill Magazines* in their research stacks. In total, this archive represents a partial local history of the first 50 years of the Metropolitan Chapter of Jack and Jill. I visited Temple University Library's Blockson Collection three times during 2016, taking special interest in the Marion Stubbs collection. This archive is mostly useful for biographical contact for Mrs. Stubbs, and historical context for the black elites of Philadelphia in the 1930s-1950s, but they are only marginally productive to my analysis as a whole. It contains correspondence and records from both her and her two husbands, as well as awards and acknowledgements of Mrs. Stubbs' work on Jack and Jill.

This archive does several kinds of work for the present analysis. Firstly, it acts as a primary-source history—what Michael Hill calls a “spatiotemporal chronology” (1993). In the first years of Jack and Jill, the only two chapters were Metropolitan (Manhattan, NYC) and Philadelphia. This data gives us a material account of the initial decades in Jack and Jill; as a historical anchor, it is useful in thinking about how the language, structure, and ideology of the organization's materials are linked to macro-level

ideologies in the larger social world. The data in the archives gives us a first-hand documentary account of the founding families, the initial ideologies, and the inner workings of the first Jack and Jill chapters. Secondly, the archive operates as a record of backstage ideological negotiations that become apparent in frontstage publications (Hill 1993). Correspondence, invitations, membership files, and meeting minutes create a temporal outline of the creation of the organization, and also work to illuminate the latent interests of the organization from a local perspective between 1940-1998. Thirdly, access to this archive led me to think about using a case methodology as the most effective way to approach this project. Because of the privacy of chapters, regions, and national bodies, along with the inherent diversity between chapters (particularly geographically), I decided that a deep dive into a single case was the best way to interrogate the processes of identity reproduction in this population. Finally, I do not understate how valuable the archival data was in helping me conceptualize one of the main themes of the project: that Jack and Jill is a fundamentally intersectional community. It was not until I was organizing and reviewing the archival materials, that I began to see that focusing my analysis on race and class alone, had silenced the fundamentally gendered aspect of the organization. The original 21 Philadelphia members came together because they were black, elite-middle-class mothers; even the early clubs never included fathers. Work on white elite communities illuminate how important women's social connections are in reproducing community boundaries (Ostrander 1984), and my research adds evidence to this assertion.

I also gathered archival newspaper documents dated between 1938 to 1988, selectively choosing Black Newspapers located in cities with early chapters: *Amsterdam News*, *Philadelphia Tribune*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Baltimore Sun*. This newspaper data

was largely supplementary, and non-central to my analysis, but it allows temporal contextualization to examine the flow of ideas, norms, and discourses between club chapters and the larger social world at the time. I gathered this data using ProQuest tools to search for “Jack and Jill of America,” and gathered all articles on the topic. After all materials were gathered, the archival data was organized and analyzed in the model of Lee and Scott’s archival work on racially reproductive public space (Lee and Scott 2016; Marshall and Rossman 2006). First, data was retrieved and organized independently from the interview transcripts, and then reviewed for general themes. The archival data was then coded according to the existing coding schema used for the interviews, and finally analyzed for conceptual coherence across data sources.

Analysis

After gathering all of the interview, focus group, and archival data, I turned to the analysis of the empirical evidence. All human respondents received pseudonyms according to confidentiality requirements as outlined by Temple University’s IRB. I also disguised significant identifiable characteristics of my respondents, though I kept the spirit of the information (for example, if a respondent was a student loan officer at Temple University (no one was), I disguised their occupation to ‘academic administrator at a university’). Since the archives contained documentary data only, I changed nothing.

After the interviews were collected, they were transcribed, some manually and others by Rev.com, and then checked for accuracy and completeness. They were then uploaded to Atlas.Ti, along with the archival materials, and coded. The coding was done in several rounds, with a first pass dedicated to the surface meanings of the subject’s narrative (what are they explicitly saying when they talk about race? What literal words

do they employ when talking about class?). Subsequent coding schemas were developed in order to organize the raw “natural units” into larger, cohesive “meaning units” (Kvale 1996: 194). In the end, the data was coded both deductively, searching for units directly linked to my theoretical frameworks of social reproduction and racial formation, and also inductively, highlighting concepts that respondents share that I didn’t expect (narratives around bodily pride, or cultural navigation and destigmatization). Finally, the data was analyzed by comparing within groups (mom vs mom) and across groups (mom vs child), and noting patterns of concurrence and dissent and linguistic patterns and idiosyncrasies. Narrative patterns were evaluated both as a “mode of reasoning and a mode of representation,” in that the transcripts reveal negotiations around identity, organizational function, and other topics of theoretical interest (Stewarton 1998).

All interviewees belong to chapters in the Eastern Region, specifically chapters in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia. There are 2 sets of mother-children pairs (Mrs. Tucker/Jasmine, Ms. Coleman/Laura). The sample of mothers was occupationally diverse, but reflective of America’s professional elite; 43% of the sample were lawyers, and 19% were educational administrators, the rest were business executives, physicians, and one civil servant. They were all between the ages of 37-62, and all of them had attended university, with nearly all of them holding advanced degrees. 75% of the moms had sent their child to private school, and most of them were heterosexually married—those who were not married talked about former male partners (most often the fathers of their children), but did not disclose any non-heterosexual identity. The sample of “children” was much less diverse. 86% of them were currently in college, 13% were in post-grad education. 33% of the children’s sample were young men,

the rest were young women; all of them had attended private school for some time between kindergarten and graduating High School.

Table 1. Study Design

Method	Number	Qualitative Data
Interviews	30 total (16 moms, 14 children)	Approximately 2200 minutes of interview audio
Archives	NYPL Schomburg Center Temple Library Blockson Collection	10 visits, 2+ linear ft of documents 3 visits, 1 linear foot of documents
Focus Groups	2 sessions (8 participants, and 5 participants)	Approximately 240 minutes of focus group audio

Reflexive Methodological Considerations

A researcher’s demographic starting point, as well as her experiences in the field, impact the epistemology from which her analysis flows (England 1994; Luff 1999). The ability for researchers to see themselves as part of the construction of knowledge, requires that we examine places of “sameness and difference” with our subjects, and think about why that matters in terms of access, data gathering methods, and analytical translation (Valentine 2002; Browne 2005). I am a black woman in her thirties, with a secondary education, raised in a lower-middle class family, and my own race and gender demographics went a long way to facilitate rapport with the subjects. A casual conversation with a Jack and Jill mom not interviewed for this project, included the statement, “you have to understand, these women see you as if you were their daughter.” This communicated and illuminated two trends in the data collection: first, that these women had an emotional investment to want to “help” me as a researcher, that the women perceived me as part of their community of co-ethnics (more on this racial

impulse in the race chapter), and perhaps even part of a more specific community of co-ethnics with education, classed habitus, and ideological similarity. The similarities between researcher and subject meant that developing rapport was easier than had I been outside one of those demographic categories—though I think a black man would likely have an easier time building rapport than a white woman. Secondly, the hypothetical positioning of me as a surrogate “daughter” illuminated the power relationship between researcher and subject. That is to say, rather than positivist methodologies, where researchers must take account of how their structural or institutional power shapes a subject’s narrative, their own interpretation of that data, and the public perceptions of their work, my experience is far more aligned with England’s role of researcher-as-suppliant (England 1994). It was not hard for me to perform my role of researcher-as-suppliant. Not only did my status as a young woman and graduate student mark me as socioeconomically beneath my respondents, but they knew very well that I had only sat across the table from them because I had been vouched for by someone else. These methodological mechanisms—network selectivity, and a balance between topical expertise, and performed naivete—together shaped the narrative data I was able to document for this project. This pseudo-familial closeness facilitated an emotional incentive for the subjects to be open to the research, but simultaneously placed me in an inferior position.

The role of researcher-as-suppliant also coalesced around the specific socioeconomic inequalities between researcher and subject in this project; namely the moms’ position as elites, and my position as a student. As stated above, elites can represent a population that is “hidden by choice”; the moms’ closed social networks meant that gaining access to research spaces was a persistent challenge (Odendhal and

Shaw 2001; Ostrander 1995). When interviewing elites, Odendhal and Shaw (2001) argue that researchers must maintain a balance between supplication and expertise. Because elites are in decision-making positions in their given realm (occupational, religious, neighborhood, or racial elites), approaching an elite interview with humility allows the research subject to engage a role that feels very natural to them. Simultaneously, a productive interview exchange occurs best when the power inequality between interviewer and the interviewee is minimized; researchers can achieve that by displaying their own expertise in a topic. Displaying expertise can both increase rapport with a subject, and give the researcher some credibility to press on questions that subjects fail to answer to the researcher's satisfaction. To display a level of expertise, I leaned on my previous work done in the archives, and my expertise in the literature on black class differentiation, private clubs, and social reproduction. The archival work was particularly useful to cite, in the moment, as it displayed an intimate knowledge of the research community. So, although I could not be a "native," "the use of personal documents, memoirs, [and other materials, act as substitutes] for anthropological participation in some areas of culture that take long years of participation to really understand" (Nader 1947: 307).

In nearly all of the interviews for this project, a subject would ask me some variation of "Were you in Jack and Jill?" to which I would reply, "No, but I've done a lot of research." The question about membership does two things: first, the subject's question is fundamentally about insider status, and the amount of "trust" subjects can have with the researcher's analysis of the data. As indicated above, my demographic similarity to my subjects helped me to establish ease with subjects fairly quickly, and it likely led my subjects to assume that I had been a participant in my youth. Jack and Jill

and other elite black communities have evaded academic examination largely due to their privacy; most of the public writings about the organization are journalistic, and some members would argue, unfairly salacious. Many of the members are very protective about the image of the organization, and are quick to follow up any critical statement with several sentences about why the criticism is irrelevant to the core experiences of the community. I took great care to communicate that I am not a journalist, but an academic; that I had little interest in some moral referendum on the organization and was instead interested in the processes, ideas, and behaviors the community engaged.

The second purpose of the subjects evaluating my connection to the organization is more closely linked to the communication of data; namely, this question helps the subject gauge how much I “know,” and how much they are able to gloss over (sometimes pertinent) details of their experience. Sometimes, after hearing that I was not a member of Jack and Jill, but is knowledgeable about many facets of the organization, subject would reply “oh, then you already know about [some topic being discussed].” When I noticed that a subject was using this tactic to summarize for brevity, I would often say “tell me more about that” or “I *don't* know about that, what do you mean?” Placing oneself in the inferior position allows for more expansive remarks by the interviewee, whether due to emotional likability, elite pandering, or a dedication to analytical clarity.

Limitations

Finally, the limitations of my work are connected to the methodological decisions made both in design and in practice. Other methodologies were considered for this project, but they were discarded due to feasibility and access issues. Neither an experimental design nor quantitative research would have provided the interpretivist data that this project needs. An ethnographic study would have been fruitful, to study the

organization's unique contribution to social reproductive processes, but that strategy limits historical analysis. I have spent time at informal community events, but those have served largely as contextualizing experiences, rather than empirical data-mining opportunities.

The drawbacks of using a non-probability sample are well documented (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Baxter and Eyles 1997; Faugier 1997). Since snowball sampling primarily relies upon the social networks of both the researcher and the subject, data gleaned through this sampling framework is a reflection of those networks (Browne 2005). Consequently, there is a clear danger for response bias. Because the sampling strategy creates the boundary of subjects, it also shapes the spread of data—if snowball sampling, and other non-probability methods, are ‘sampling for meaning’, small N datasets can still be useful as analytical mechanisms. Similarly, individuals who refuse participation in the sample, and what subjects don't or won't say to researchers, are as valuable data considerations as much as the subjects and data present in this study (Grogger et al 1999). Tight-knit networks, like the ones present in this study, often experience ideological, behavioral, and intrapersonal homophily; communities focused on ‘likeness’ become more homogenous over time (McPherson et al 2001). So, while my sample may, in fact, represent the variety of experiences and interpretations of black elites in Jack and Jill, it is far more likely that my data is only applicable at the very local level. Generalization is therefore limited, without further interviews, but as there is a noted dearth of empirical work concerning this community, and Jack and Jill in particular, this research represents a step forward in the empirical literature concerning processes of social reproduction.

There are a few data-collection paths not taken in this project; each would have undoubtedly led to the assemblage of different kinds of data, and therefore a different analytical story. Ethnographic methodologies are great for observational data, and the ways that individuals interact with one another in real time. An ethnographic study would have undoubtedly illuminated *actual* subject behavior, and not simply how they talk about behavior; but this methodology was untenable due to limited access to formal club proceedings. I considered a survey, to be distributed to members across the Northeast region. This method was rejected not only because of access limitations (I would have had to cold-call members and ask for their research consent, then distribute the survey), but surveys, while great for accumulating a wide breadth of respondents, also limit the depth of data that I could glean. Face to face conversations (3 of the interviews were done via Skype) allowed for interview protocol flexibility, as well as my ability as the interviewer to read body language or encourage subjects to clarify any unclear answers. My study focuses on developing internal rigor through conceptual validity and reliability (Baxter and Eyles 1997; Yin 2018). The goal is for analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization; while site specificity puts limitations on generalizations to a broader population, in return you get richly descriptive analysis of the intrinsic case, that also contributes to theoretical debates about socialization, stratification, and intersectional identities (Williams 1991; Yin 2018).

CHAPTER 3

(RE)PRODUCING RACE: NAVIGATING STIGMA, FACILITATING ESTEEM, SOCIALIZING BLACKNESS

Lawrence and I meet for dinner in early March; he's chosen a TGIFriday's for our interview (his guilty pleasure). Between bites of chicken parmesan, we discuss his experiences growing up just outside of New York City on Long Island, in an area that is 8.6% black (84.5% white), and constitutes one of the most persistently racially- and economically-segregated counties in America (Powell and Kearney 2002). In 2017, the median income for the county was \$92,838, and the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$379,400 (Census 2017). We talk about growing up there as a black boy, feeling simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible, and the ways that his racialized body came to have meaning in the Jack and Jill community and in the larger social world.

Interviewer: What do you think your parents wanted you to know about race?

Lawrence: That it exists. A lot of people live in this world and they think, and it's cool, especially as a kid, you're not taught racism, but if you put two, you know, babies of different races and colors, then a white room and have them grow up together, they wouldn't treat anybody different. Race is a social construct. But it's easy to get caught up in a suburban lifestyle, you don't have any disadvantages, or you don't get treated differently, it's a good life over here, you know? The police don't come over here, so it's just like, they don't bother you. The neighborhood's quiet, I can't remember the last time I saw a cop car in the neighborhood. We would go to my Nana's house in Queens, there's a cop car on every block. I have friends who grew up over there and cops stop and frisk, you know, something I can't relate to. I'm just like, "Damn. That sucks." But I've had my little experiences, like I said, but nothing on something crazy, where I thought my life could end. My parents always told me it's real life, they sat me down and had me watch *Roots* at five years old. I knew what was good, I knew it existed. It didn't really hit me until I had my own little personal experiences, I'm like, "Oh shit. This shit is real." But they wanted me to understand that this does exist, and don't be surprised when something happens, just know how to respond. Like for example, when I get followed around at a store, and it's just like, "Why are you following me?" I could've easily cursed him out and been like, "Why are you fucking following me? You're racist blah, blah, blah." That's not gonna do anything. I mean, it'll make you feel good in the moment, but it's just like, she'll probably call the cops, be like, "You're a problematic dude." She's getting what she wanted.

Situations like that, my mom always told me to call her and to call my dad. Make sure that they take care of it. You know, that's when I was a kid. Now, if I would've known how, I would've had to sit down with her and have a conversation and be like, "Why are you doing that?" Back then, you had to educate yourself. I didn't wanna say I wasn't educated, but I didn't know how to formulate my thoughts into words. You're a kid, so you're just like, "Why is this happening?"

Interviewer: Is that something that your parents sat you down, and were like, "Listen, if somebody follows you in the store, you call us?"

Lawrence: They had the talk with me about dealing with police. Sad that's a thing now, but it's just like, every black man should, or does, have that conversation and explain to their kids. It's kind of like the sex talk, it's like the mandatory talk. It's just like, "This thing does happen. When you do get in this situation, listen to the officer, make sure your hands are seen. Call me immediately after, do not be disrespectful. Do not reach into your pockets." You know, just stuff like that. You ask your questions like, "Why is this?" And then they gotta explain racism and just prejudice and all this extra stuff. I mean, you know you're bring harassed cause you know something's not right. You notice it in the back of your eye, like why is this lady following me? You know she works here, I see the little name tag, she's pretending she's looking at something, but looking and seeing what you are doing. I guess I was just more so perplexed by it. I was just like, "Wow, this is really happening." I told my mom, she came to the store and she told the lady off about it.

Interviewer: Your mom came back to the store?

Lawrence: Yeah, she was like, "Were you following my son blah, blah, blah." My mom had her looking stupid. My mom's a lawyer, so she does this stuff on the regular. At that time, I didn't know how to do it. Now I know how to do it. She sat down with me, taught me about race and how to handle the situation.

The subjects in my study illuminate three concomitant patterns that together facilitate a local reproduction of racial identity. Despite collective professional and social advancements, nearly all respondents articulated race as a persistent barrier to full integration. There is a quandary around the symbolic meaning of phenotypical bodies, despite individual, occupational, and economic success. I argue that Jack and Jill communities are engaging hegemonic frameworks of race and racism via a multifaceted

racial project, where the community facilitates conscious socialization of black identity, engages with culture to reframe racial-meanings across generations, and itself operates as a race-based safe-space for comfort, commiseration, and cultivation. These projects insert this community in a historical debate about the shape and substance of racial inequality in America, the role of socioeconomic class in integration efforts and the efficacy of individual, organizational, and state interventions to facilitate racial equality.

Changing Status, Persistent Alienation: The Black Middle Class Post-Civil Rights

In 1990, Roy Brooks, a law professor at the University of San Diego, argued that “deep class stratification within African-American society is without a doubt the most significant development in the ‘American dilemma’ since the civil rights movement of the 1960s” (Brooks 1990; xi). In truth, black Americans have never been truly socioeconomically homogenous; even before the civil rights movement, scholars were doing work on the structure, culture, and function of the black elite. Pre-Civil Rights scholarship highlighted the diversity in black American experiences, while also grappling with persistent caste relationships between blacks and whites. Scholarship on black economic diversity in the Jim Crow era is particularly illustrative of this complicated pattern: at the time, the class system was flexible enough to support a burgeoning black middle class, but cultural, economic, and social markers of mobility were ineffective in transforming the caste structure of Jim Crow. There was opportunity for social ascension within the black ranks, but “when some of those beneath this [racial] barrier [began] to acquire characteristics which *prima facie* should [place] them higher up in the stratification system, the effect [is] not to breach the barrier but to tip it diagonally, so

that there [is] the possibility of an individual negro becoming an upper-class negro, just as there was a possibility of a white becoming a poor white” (Rex 2000:178).

The post-emancipation era fostered opportunities for academics to explore the intra-racial relationships of class-diverse blacks, and the interracial relationships between black elites and white elites. On the subject of black elites in black communities, W.E.B. Du Bois contributed one of the lasting ideas about black-elite identity and responsibility: the Talented Tenth, who “is, as he ought to be, the group leader, the man who set the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and heads its social movements,” and who “rises and pulls all worth saving up to their vantage ground” (Du Bois 1903). By 1940, with the bulk of the Civil Rights legislation to come within the next ten years, Du Bois, and others (most notably E. Franklin Frazier), recognized that the relationship between the black masses and the black elite was not as seamless and mutually transformative as they had hoped. In a speech to Sigma Pi Phi, a black fraternal organization of medical professionals, he admitted “that it was quite possible that my plan of training a talented tenth might put in control and power, a group of selfish, self-indulgent, well-to-do men, whose basic interest in solving the Negro problem was personal; personal freedom and unhampered enjoyment and use of the world, without any real care, or certainly not arousing care, as to what became of the mass of American Negroes or of the mass of any people. My Talented Tenth, I could see, might result in a sort of interracial free-for-all, with the devil himself taking the hindmost and the foremost taking anything they could lay hands on” (Du Bois 1903). Instead, he presented the Guiding 100th, a fraction of the Talented Tenth who would be men who were “not simply educated and self-sacrificing, but with a clear vision of present world conditions and dangers, and conducting American Negroes to alliance with culture groups in Europe,

America, Asia, and Africa, and looking toward a new world culture” (1903). This leadership would impress a culture of “plain living and high thinking” to combat mainstream American values of “noise, waste and display,” and would work towards “the rehabilitation of the indispensable family group, by deliberate planning of marriages, with mates selected for heredity, physique, health and brains, with less insistence on color, comeliness, or romantic sex lure, mis-called [sic] love; youth should marry young and have a limited number of healthy children.” (1903). His frustrations were that given the opportunity for economic advancements, racial meanings and solidarity would disintegrate amongst black elites. That instead of maintaining group cohesion, the advancement of black professionals would be associated with a splintering of the cohesive racial community.

Du Bois’ final frustrations with the black elite echoes in the flag work of E. Franklin Frazier, who like Du Bois, framed most of his writings from the standpoint of racial uplift, claiming that the black middle class had the charge of “raising the general economic level of our group rather than the eruption of peaks of affluence to dazzle the mob” (Frazier 1924:296 [Landry 1978]). Much of the contemporary attention to Frazier’s scholarship centers on his monograph *Black Bourgeoisie*, which was published near the end of his academic life, yet he spent the entirety of his career examining black Americans in the Civil Right Era. Frazier took particular interest in black families, the socialization of children, and how black socioeconomic stratification affected residential, consumptive, and social patterns in the American North.

Near the end of his scholarly life, he had begun to think of black elite culture essentially as false consciousness. As blacks still lived and worked within a legally segregated system, black class stratification operated as a facsimile of the larger class

structure (since blacks labored mostly outside the capitalist mainstream) and poorly mimicked the structure of white society. These elites utilized cultural markers in order to neutralize the social deficit of their bodily race. Yet Frazier argues that the material disadvantage undercuts fantasies of interracial equality; without a reliable economic base, the mimicry never evolves into a material reality, and the “activities of Negro ‘society’ are an extreme expression of the world of make-believe” (Frazier 1957: 212). He particularly critiqued the black bourgeoisie practice of private clubbing as a largely ineffective psychological balm to the realization that there remains no parity with whites—symbolically or economically. “Likewise, [Black bourgeoisie] feelings of inferiority and insecurity [were] revealed in their pathological struggle for status within the isolated Negro world and their craving for recognition in the white world. Their escape into a world of make-believe with its sham ‘society’ leaves them with a feeling of emptiness and futility which causes them to constantly seek an escape in new delusions” (1957:213).

The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, made middle-class status attainable to black Americans in a way the community had not experienced before. The former act prohibited discrimination in public sector jobs, protecting qualified professionals from the racist whims of managerial staff; the latter act facilitated neighborhood integration in places where individual neighbors, banks, and legislation had worked in tandem to maintain hard white boundaries around the most desirable housing communities. These political progressions interacted with economic opportunities, and black Americans enjoyed opportunities for career advancement, conspicuous consumption, and wealth inheritance that had previously been unattainable. William Julius Wilson argued that the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras (what he calls the “racial oppression” and “modern

industrial” eras (Wilson 1978; Wilson 2015)) were made racially unequal via economic mechanisms. That is to say, the state solidified patterns of racial segregation and domination through separate and unequal raced-labor. In the post-Civil Rights era (what Wilson calls the “modern industrial” period) the federal legislation that forced public entities to socially integrate had the simultaneous effect of divorcing one’s racial status from a predetermined economic status. Black Americans, as a group, now have the “opportunity” (as conceptualized within a neoliberal framework) to be as class-diverse as white Americans. In this view, one’s upbringing in an impoverished neighborhood, or in bad educational circumstances, or in a dearth of environmental resources, are attributable to class stratification, rather than racist disadvantage (Wilson 1978). This argument both undergirds the title of Wilson’s monograph, *The Declining Significance of Race*, and supports Frazier’s 1953 opus, suggesting that the meanings around racial groups are shifted, and theoretically minimized, with increased economic equity.

While Wilson claimed that Civil Rights laws have effectively minimized racist inequality and illuminated the magnitude of class stratification as the main mechanism for inequality in America, Feagin argues that class stratification only changes the qualitative nature of discrimination, not the sheer amount of discrimination experienced by blacks. For him, Blackness still “means” disadvantage. While the qualitative substance of that disadvantage is dependent on one’s class position, blacks at every stratum experience the persistent stigma of their bodily race (Feagin 1991). Working class and poor black Americans experience institutional racism—residential discrimination, infrastructural inequalities, police hyper-surveillance—phenomena which are all linked to both a history of systemic discrimination based on race, and contemporary experiences of poverty. Middle- and upper-class blacks, Feagin argues, experience patterns of

interpersonal racism—avoidance behaviors, rejection actions, verbal and physical attacks by whites (Feagin 1991). The difference in economic realities between lower- and upper-class blacks means that lower class blacks are exposed to the same environmental-infrastructural disadvantages that lower-class whites endure, with the added symbolic ignominy of racial blackness. Poor black spaces tend to be overwhelmingly black, and though citizens in those spaces undoubtedly interact with whites, whatever disadvantage or insult blooms from their interactions might well be attributed to class status, rather than racial animus, alone. Upper class blacks on the other hand, have the material capital to avoid structural inequalities, and facilitate access to privileged neighborhoods, occupations, and spaces. Nevertheless, their peers in these spaces are overwhelmingly white, and they maintain the symbolic ignominy of their bodily blackness, thus exposing them to intrapersonal discrimination. These upper-class blacks are equal to their white neighbors in class status, so the experiences of social marginalization are far more likely to be attributed to a symbolic disgrace attributed to their bodily race—a racial stigma.

Forming Race, Socially Constructing Stigma

Omi and Winant's Racial Formation theory defines race as a "concept [that] signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of bodies" (Omi and Winant 1994). They rely on Gramscian frameworks of power dynamics to explain how groups seek and maintain social power through processes of hegemony: the ideological process wherein powerful institutions (including the state) dictate notions of morality, normality, and saliency within a society. While there are a myriad of ideological "projects" within a society, coming from all corners of the polity and struggling for recognition, these projects are fundamentally subjugated by the norms, ideologies, and practices that constitute the mainstream project. These projects constantly

compete against each other for a position of dominance in the hegemonic center, and may even be “inserted, [into the hegemonic center] after suitable modification,” reflecting the duality of racial struggle (1994:29). Hegemony rules so completely that oppositional projects never displace structural authority. At best, these projects are co-opted and absorbed into a ‘reformed’ racial landscape, and the more ‘critical content’ is silenced in the process” (1994). Therefore, racial hegemony represents the contemporary relationship between social institutions that seek to maintain domination over racial minorities, and the social bodies that seek to disrupt it. Omi and Winant argue that race, rather than being a static biological essentialism or a fleeting illusion, is a driver and function of socio-historical processes of group-making, resource inequality, and political power (1994). They present racial formation as a theory of “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (1994: 55). That is to say, that racial formation is not only concerned with the ways that groups compete over material and symbolic resources in the social world, but also with the processes that create, destroy, and mold those groups. Other authors with a focus on the experiences of women of color, have written about the ways that race, gender, and sexuality categorization are not only similarly hegemonic processes, dictated by the contextual political aims of the ruling elite, but also how such macro categories are fundamentally co-constituted. The boundaries and substance of categorical race is inextricably connected to the boundaries and substances of categories of gender and class, and vice versa (Glenn 2002; Kandaswamy 2012; Curington 2016). While overall, this project seeks to illuminate how the members of an intersectional community reproduce the boundaries and substance of this community over time, it also contributes to Kandaswamy’s assertion that categories apparent in racial formation are fundamentally

gendered, classed, and sexualized processes. This chapter focuses on the racial project of Jack and Jill, and the ways that gender and class intersections particularly matter in the articulation and imagination around race, in this community.

In that bodies are assigned meaning according to material and symbolic inequalities in our social world, we can consider minority bodies stigmatized in comparison to the white hegemonic center. Goffman's work on stigma guides my inquiry into the meanings of race, in this particular arena. He recognizes the power of hegemonic cultural norms, and that in America "there is only one complete unblushing male [or social actor] in America: A young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of the college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight and height, and a recent record in sports" (Goffman 1963, pp. 128). This standard, of the legitimate American citizen, renders anyone who is outside its gender, socioeconomic, racial, sexual, or religious boundaries subject to denigration or social marginalization. As with all hegemonic norms, this American Man is little more than a totem, a nearly unattainable standard which maintains its power by being a useful tool to illuminate adherence and deviance to social norms, rather than a practical representation of the identities and behaviors of real social actors. Nevertheless, hegemonic norms are so powerful that failing to reach one of those standards puts social actors at risk of being "reduced in our minds from a whole person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman 1963, pp 3).

Goffman claims that there are three main categories of social stigma. The first is physical "deformities": including bodily abnormalities, physical handicaps, or other visible flaws. The second includes character flaws or behavioral shortcomings, including substance addictions, mental disorders, social-political radicalism, sexual deviance, or other moralistic failings. The final category is the "tribal stigma of race, nation, and

religion” (Goffman 1963, pp.4), a category that is unique because this stigma is heritable across generations, marking a whole social group, rather than a singular, individual trait. These three groups could be rearticulated into “visible” and “invisible” stigma. For stigmas that are visible—revealed by bodily difference, or the presence of some necessary aid-object like a wheelchair—the process of discrediting a stranger from full social integration is nearly instant. For invisible stigma—illiteracy, kleptomania, or the early stages of Parkinson’s Disease—discrediting occurs after a stigma is revealed, either freely or involuntarily. These differences encourage social actors to strategize different ways to facilitate destigmatization and social inclusion. Since those who have an invisible stigma can choose to conceal the nature of their abnormality (at least temporarily), their strategic interests are likely centered around the disclosure and exhibition of stigma. Those who have a visible stigma, have far less agency to conceal their mark, and therefore must focus their efforts on managing the reactions of “normals.”

When facing a lifetime of discreditation, Goffman argues that the stigmatized individual can take two paths to ease the experience of social disadvantage. The first is to purposefully integrate into mainstream society with an “out-group alignment” (1963). Individuals with a “spoiled identity” are rarely socialized in isolation; by living in the larger world they internalize the norms and values of society of “normal” individuals. They clearly see the accepted standards of “normal society,” and further, “perceive, usually quite correctly what whatever others profess they do not really ‘accept’ [them], and are not ready to make contact with [them] on ‘equal ground’” (1963: 7). A stigmatized person with outgroup alignment approaches this disrespect with a concerted effort to cultivate the material and symbolic markers of “normal” social citizenship. They might have surgery to correct a physical shortcoming, engage in self-conscious

impression management in order to behaviorally integrate, or, like the rising trend of black athletes in golf, swimming, and tennis, a stigmatized person might devote “much private effort to the mastery of an area of activity ordinarily felt to be closed” to them (1963:10). Stigmatized individuals who are out-group aligned (or “passing” in the most extreme case) often use discourses that reinforce their position as psychologically mature, while “he who does not follow the [mainstream] line is said to be an impaired person, rigid defensive, with inadequate inner resources” (115). One’s alignment illuminates how one frames a slight by a normal. If one is out-group aligned, then it follows logic that “normals really mean no harm; when they do it is because they don’t know better. They should therefore be tactfully helped to act nicely. Slight, snubs and untactful remarks should not be answered in kind” (116). Those who are out-group aligned perceive themselves as well adjusted, but here Goffman, along with DuBois and Frazier, recognize some underlying anxiety in the out-group’s determination.

The other strategy of disadvantage management is to engage “in-group alignment,” where stigmatized individuals seek out “sympathetic others” as a place of safety, socialization, and resource collaboration (Goffman 1963). These groups can be as informal as a bar full of unemployed regulars, and as formal as Gallaudet University (which restricts admission to deaf and hard of hearing students). Goffman argues that both formal and informal groups are valuable mechanisms for folks who hold a social stigma. Even when these groups are informal, social groups for the stigmatized represent a place where similarly stigmatized social actors can provide each other “with instruction in the tricks of the trade and with a circle of lament to which he can withdraw for moral support and for the comfort of feeling at home, at ease, accepted as a person who is really like any other normal person” (Goffman 1963 pp. 20). When these groups are formalized

into organizations, they may include “an office or lobby to push their case with the Press of Government” or may even be lucky enough to “have a man of their own kind, a ‘native’ of their own kind who really knows, as do the deaf, the blind, the alcoholic, and Jews” (23). These ‘men of their own kind’ act as a sort of representative for the whole stigmatized group but is someone who has demonstrated some expertise in assimilation and can therefore advocate on the group’s behalf to the larger social world.

Goffman also argues that in the presentation of one’s self, to an audience of strangers or out-group members, social actors are incentivized to manage their behaviors between a compartmentalized front region (or frontstage) performance and a back region (or backstage) one (Goffman 1959). A backstage space can be both physical and symbolic; sectioned areas where the public are not permitted or metaphorical arenas where social actors feel protected from scrutiny. For Goffman, the backstage is a place of comfort; in such spaces, social actors are encouraged to engage with one another with intimacy and “slouch” their performance. It is a place of preparation; costumes are made, people rehearse and “run through their performances,” and “poor members of the team can be schooled” in the ways of acceptable behaviors (1959; 112).

Omi and Winant give broader theoretical shape to Goffman’s explanation of stigmatized group behavior. They argue that social actors—particularly in organized groups—are constantly collectively defining, negotiating, and promoting racial meanings and relationships through whatever available ideological, discursive, and behavioral tools they possess. These (re)articulations of the boundaries and meanings of racial categories constitute racial projects, and are, “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (Omi and Winant 1994:56). Racial projects are located

everywhere within society, and the power to engage, affect, and manipulate racial meanings is held by both whites and people of color (Omi and Winant 2013: 963). These projects vary in size, popularity, and effectiveness: “competing racial projects are developed by elites, popular movements, state agencies, cultural and religious organizations, and intellectuals” as well as individual practices (Alumkal 2004:197). Some of these racial projects seek to disrupt existing patterns of racial groups and resource inequalities, other projects reinforce such dynamics.

Organizations and institutions engage racial projects in two main ways: on one hand “our ongoing interpretation of our experience in racial terms shapes our relations to the institutions and organizations through which we are imbedded in social structure” (1994:60). As Lareau’s work on socializing children found, the codes in which we are embedded, affect our relationships with organizations and institutions in the larger social world. Ideally, these public institutions are codeless—providing equal access and equal reward to everyone who engages them—but in reality, they support and reward a particular set of racialized ideological, discursive, and behavioral codes, to the benefit of some groups and the detriment of others. On the other hand, institutions and organizations themselves may “attribute merits, allocate values or resources to, and/or represent individuals or groups on the basis of racial identity” (Omi and Winant 1994:71). In this way, organizations that focus upon racial identity—through membership, programming, or service—are best understood as a collective racial project. Racial projects of different strengths, at different social levels, aggregate to create the racialized social world; these projects are dynamic through time, space, and through social levels. Racial projects “can ‘jump’ scale in their impact and significance. Projects framed at the local level, for example, can end up influencing national policies and

initiatives. Correspondingly, projects at the national or even global level can be creatively and strategically recast at regional and local levels” (Omi and Winant 2014:125).

The majority of sociological work around this topic has focused on discrimination and its effects, rather than the processes of stigmatization and the strategies of marginalized social actors within those realms. *Discrimination* occurs in incidents where people are “deprived or prevented from getting access to opportunities and resources (e.g., lines of credit, jobs, housing). It also includes instances of racial profiling, being excluded from public places, and the like” (Lamont et. al 2016; 6). It is an action with some material consequence—a demonstrable, actionable disparity in treatment or resource access or allocation.

Lamont and Silva et al (2016) refine Goffman’s definition of stigma to be an “assault on [one’s] worth” (7); the casual assessment of one person that another person is not their social equal and therefore not a legitimate member of the social and cultural citizenry. This devaluation not only includes microaggressions and stereotypes, but also covers processes of over-scrutinization, under-attention (being ignored or overlooked), and careless misunderstanding; all experiences highlighted in the work of Feagin (1991), Landry (1987), Lacy (2007), and others exploring the experience of the black middle class in America. Stigma, as an assault on worth, is as much about social neglect as it is behavior policing. Social actors are continuously managing their stigma, in ways that seek to either *avoid* the negative consequences associated with a marginalized identity, or in ways that seek to *engage* the social norm, and *demarginalize* (destigmatize) the identity.

Goffman argues that those with a stigma engage in a variety of strategies to facilitate integration or self-preservation. For example, following Goffman, Feagin’s work on

discrimination experiences amongst middle- and upper-class blacks, reveals that when they are in public accommodations, like stores or restaurants, black elite middle-class folks are likeliest to experience stigmatization through social rejection and poor service. When on the sidewalk, they are most likely to experience it via verbal epithets and police harassment. Respondents experience avoidance and “other” threats at comparatively low rates. These discriminatory phenomena occur strictly at the interpersonal level, between a black person and a white stranger. This (white) stranger is making a judgement, Feagin and Goffman would argue, based upon racial stigma.

One’s capacities to conceptualize behavior as stigmatizing and/or discriminatory, and then to react in a socially acceptable way, are rooted in one’s historical, ideological, and material experiences. More recent work on discrimination illuminates how national and ethnic variation in stigmatization is rooted in historical and socioeconomic elements, “cultural repertoires” (ideologies, national myths), and levels of in-group cohesion (“groupness”) (Lamont et al. 2016: 21). Their project finds that for black Americans in particular, macro-level historical narrative of racial hypodescent and a race-based caste system, dictate a mezzo-level trend of strong racial groupness, and the micro-level strategies available for conceptualizing and responding to social stigma. The passage of Civil Rights legislation has certainly aided integration in the public sphere and affected the American ideology around race, yet black Americans still have varying experiences around resource equity, practical integration, and social marginalization (Lamont 2016). Lamont et al.’s project on destigmatization illuminates the tenets of Racial Formation as a dynamic, multi-strata project to (re)define racial meanings. In particular, it demonstrates how symbolic meanings around bodily phenotype are renegotiated through ideological processes of power stratification and boundary-negotiation, language development and

norm-making, and interlocking realms of science, culture, and politics. Such macro-level changes both affect, and are affected by, the strategies and habits of actors at even social strata. Individual projects are successful when they cohere with, and are absorbed by, macro institutions.

Shared narratives around racial marginalization means that black Americans often own common cultural repertoires—micro-level narratives which Lamont defines as “a set of tools available to individuals to make sense of the reality they experience” (2018: 21), which include national narratives like meritocracy and the melting pot, mezzo-level frameworks of value systems, local racial experiences, or any other explanatory framework that social actors use to locate themselves in their social world. Shared material histories and cultural repertoires means that black Americans experience a high level of groupness, in comparison to other minority groups around the world. Racial identity is particularly strong for black Americans; persistent spatial segregation away from whites fosters social segregation, and while the people in this sample employ a discourse of openness and multiculturalism (likely based on a cultural repertoire of neoliberalism), racial acceptance is found only in discourse about coworkers and friends. Intimate networks (partners, family members) were far more racially homogenous; this is true across class-status. The overwhelming majority (81%) of the black Americans in this study experienced discrimination (an “assault on worth”) by being disrespected, their behaviors misrecognized, or being denied opportunities. Lamont et al. argue that part of the reason that Black Americans report so much stigmatization and discrimination is because the available cultural repertoires available to Black Americans make them aware of discriminatory or stigmatizing behavior. They are primed to notice discrimination (as a legal matter), and stigmatization (particularly insults, in the form of slurs) because of the

Civil Rights Movement frameworks that illuminate these behaviors as violations of the American social contract of meritocracy.

When experiencing a perceived slight, Feagin's subjects articulate the obligation to take time to assess the occurrence before acting. They feel like they must take time "and try to determine whether or not [they] are seeing what [they] think [they're] seeing" (Feagin 1991: 109). They are evaluating a single occurrence of perceived discrimination in context to previous personal and collective experience. Furthermore, as a distinct minority in a white space, many middle-class blacks may have internalized cultural narratives of racism-as-intent (Bonilla Silva 2010; Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). Before accusing someone of racism, integrated blacks must take "a long look" at the situation and then decide how to respond; these black social actors feel compelled to both look at an occurrence of discrimination through a "second eye," in the DuBoisian mold of double consciousness (Du Bois 1906). Black Americans must have fluency in the mainstream's perspective, and therefore see occurrences of discrimination or alienation through their own eyes, as well as through the eyes of a white audience. For Feagin, this means "that some middle-class blacks are so sensitive to white charges of hypersensitivity and paranoia that they err in the opposite direction and fail to see discrimination when it occurs" (Feagin 1991: 109). For an out-group aligned social actor to operate in the world, they must "cheerfully and unselfconsciously accept himself as essentially the same as normal, while at the same time he voluntarily withholds himself from those situations in which normal would find it difficult to give lip service to their similar acceptance of him" (Goffman 1963). This fluency in both in-group, and out-group, epistemology is analogous to Du Bois's double consciousness; suggesting that the stigmatized social actor sees themselves as equal to normals. In fact, they *must* believe

such a thing, in order to remain engaged in the work of social inclusion and social mobility (Goffman 1959). Yet at the same time, they do the work to manage their language, behaviors, and access to spaces, knowing that “normals” do not see them as equal and integration-worthy. “A *phantom acceptance* is thus allowed to provide the base for a *phantom normalcy*” (Goffman 1963:121). No matter how accomplished, how integrated, or how indispensable a stigmatized person is, amongst normals, they must retain some notion that they are not fully integrated, or fully accepted. They must be alert to tacit signals of hostility in order to negotiate them and regain their good standing, even if the good standing is nothing more than a thin mirage.

If social actors do decide to act, class status is meaningful in the strategy that one employs. In comparison to lower-class blacks, middle class blacks are more likely to use confrontation as a strategy (86% of the middle-class sample in Lamont’s study, in comparison to 71% of the working-class sample), particularly when it comes to immediately, and explicitly addressing a stigmatizing situation. Furthermore, 12% of middle-class Blacks also espouse a “work harder” mentality (colloquially called the “Black tax”), where individuals perceive that they must perform extraordinarily to be rewarded equally to white mediocrity (working class Blacks only mentioned such a strategy 5% of the time). These two differences are small compared to the scope of possible variation, but I think that they are two interesting cases that speak to the different material conditions of each group. Overall, middle-class Blacks live in integrated spaces, but only in that their presence means that these spaces are not completely white. Therefore, these folks have more opportunities to be presented with stigma, and have more opportunities to choose to confront it (Feagin 1991, Lacy 2007). A main example is the phenomena of “sounding white” on the phone. Both Feagin and Goffman highlight

this as a strategy to attain fair treatment before your “spoiled” bodily identity becomes visible (Goffman 1963; Feagin 1991). Threats to expose bad behavior on the media, organizing boycotts or talk-backs, or even bringing legal action against businesses are all strategies that highlights a person’s social capital; lower-class blacks do not have access to such symbolic resources, but middle-class blacks regularly employ them.

(Re)Producing Race:

My data reveals that Jack and Jill communities engage stigma reduction both via in-group strategies and out-group strategies. The processes in which parents implicitly socialize children into substantive class capital, as a destigmatization and integration strategy, is interrogated in the class chapter. This chapter explores the ways that the Jack and Jill community engages stigma reduction via explicitly racially conscious in-group alignment. The community participates in a multifaceted and intersectional racial project to redefine blackness away from a social deficit and towards a symbol of strength, value, and normalcy. They engage in strategies to reframe bodily blackness into a symbol of beauty and pride, they socialize racial-cultural cohesion, and they facilitate racialized affective ties that have the dual purpose of protection and production. In all, they activate a racial project meant to both strategically destigmatize, and symbolically elevate phenotypic and cultural blackness, while maintaining a symbolically marginalized position to justify race-based, socially rich, network ties.

Understanding Stigma, and the Changing (?) Meaning of Blackness:

“Race is a social construct. It's a real life that it exists and to never forget where you come from. Treat people face, to face, on a situational basis, but understand that racism does exist, and don't be surprised when something happens, you know how to respond when a certain situation happens.”

Sociologists have thoroughly researched racial discrimination; we recognize how the contemporary cultural repertoires around racial equality both influence, and are influenced, by the material and legal conditions of the post-Civil Rights Era. As both Lamont and Feagin's work suggests, black elite families have the material and social resources to avoid traditional arenas of structural discrimination. Emerging academic work has focused on the articulation of social stigma in marginalized community's social reproduction. On one hand, several moms in my sample were eager to talk about the significant advancements that black Americans have made since the Civil Rights movement. When these moms were children in the 1960s and 1970s, they were likely surrounded with the aspirational narratives of the Civil Rights Movement and colorblind frameworks that were coming to be accepted as mainstream discourse around racial-cultural difference. While this was a time of hope and anticipated equality for young black kids at the time, empirical evidence of egalitarianism was not yet available. When reflecting on her experience watching Barack Obama take his place in the White House, Mrs. Vance remarked that when she was growing up, "my parents said that we could be anybody, we could do anything, and I'm not so sure that I really believed it. I'm not so sure that they really believed it. But my kids do. I mean we've been saying that to them, and my kids do. So, the difference for them, versus us when we grew up, is that for a significant portion of their lives, they had a black president. So yeah, that that's been very significant, I think it has helped us to deliver our message to our children, that they can do anything." This "belief" that black children have the capacity to achieve whatever they desire is rooted by the ideological achievements of the Civil Rights movement, and the election of Barack Obama provides a special kind empirical evidence to this parental platitude. Despite optimism for racial equity, both the moms and the children in my study

talked about phenotypic race as a variable in success, a hurdle that one would have to overcome, even in a time marked as “post-racial” (Bonilla-Silva 2010). These narratives represent both the aspirational and protectionist instincts that these elite black families have. Parents insist that their children should be able to feel normal at school and succeed in the larger social world, but they’re also trying to prepare children for the risk that they may interact with an out-group person who may treat them unkindly. For many of these moms, examples of racial unfairness were explicitly acknowledged, and privately internalized. For their children, who grow up in whiter, and wealthier than average neighborhoods, they may be protected from structural inequalities, but not from intrapersonal inequalities.

The black Americans in Lamont’s *Gaining Respect* study largely focus on passing on two paradoxical strategies to their children. Overall, parents want to “[encourage] children to assert their identity and authenticity and reject victimization” (about 21% of respondents); but also “to be pragmatic and use deterrents” (about 25% of respondents) (110). Lamont argues that these twin strategies illuminates the “desire to both protect and enable their kids” (111). Many of the mothers in my sample rely on the narratives around meritocracy, fairness, and race that were available in their own childhoods, but also articulate the persistent effect of stigma, right beneath the surface of any social interaction. Mrs. Coby, for example, illuminated the generational change in meritocratic narratives, when talking about what she wanted her kids to know about life. She argued that when she was young, a Jim Crow system meant that blacks had a sense of a systemic racial hierarchy. Blacks learned not to expect fair treatment from whites, even as they were encouraged to strive for educational and occupational equity. Now, she claims “the lines are a bit more blurred,” in that the explicit narrative of white superiority is no longer

polite and socially acceptable, but we do not yet live in a meritocratic society. The mainstream cultural repertoires that Mrs. Coby's children are exposed to leave them unprepared for handling racist experiences. Her children have internalized a meritocratic frame too overzealously that they prioritize "liking" or being "nice" to others as a main mechanism of social integration:

Ms. Coby: I remember wanting to be everybody's friend, and wanting everybody to like me, but I also think we had some harsher realities. I think sometimes, our kids of color, their realities are a little bit more blurred.

Interviewer: what do you mean by that?

Ms. Coby: I think when we were younger, there was an understanding of: yes, we are of color, and we knew what that meant. It didn't necessarily hinder us. But there was an understanding that you were of color. And I think sometimes, for some of our kids, they have been given this message of "we're all equal," which we are, in the eyes of the law...supposedly, on paper. And in the eyes of God; that's true. But in practice, not necessarily. And I find that my kids are *absolutely shocked* [emphasis in audio] by certain events. And there's a part of me that's happy, because I don't want them to carry my burden; that I grew up thinking I had to be twice as good to get the same. So, I'm kind of happy that they don't have that.

It is telling that Mrs. Coby articulates her resignation to seeing perpetual racism as a "burden," as if her perception of racial inequality reflected an individual, intellectual failure rather than an empirical trend. This illuminates the pull of out-group alignment; one facet of Goffman's description of the stigmatized experience. This logic dictates that now, in the "post-racial era," it is black insecurity that facilitates behavior that prevents full social inclusion, rather than material conditions, or other persistent social gaps. Parents want their children to be confident, but not naïve. They simultaneously cite empirical examples of the meritocratic promise of the American cultural repertoire, but maintain the importance of racial stigma within it.

The ability to pass down strategic frameworks about stigma and its management is a critical part of generational racial knowledge and represents a major component of

social reproduction in marginalized communities. Most of the respondents in Lamont's 2018 project (about 60%) assert that their parents taught them something about managing stigma, and they then pass those lessons onto their own children. Yet, the rate of importance in passing on race-lessons is different when it comes to class status. There is a noticeable gap between working- and middle-class parents, "where only 46 percent of [working-class] respondents said they had received lessons about racism from their parents, compared with 72 percent of middle-class respondents" (2018: 111). Lamont argues that this is reflective of the parenting style differences shown in Lareau's 2003 work on child-rearing; this may be true because "middle-class parents are particularly concerned with class reproduction and mobility, which shapes the effort they put on protecting their children and structuring and overseeing their experiences" (2018: 111). Many kids picked up on the notion that their parents were giving them two narratives simultaneously: to disregard notions that their race was a disadvantage, but to simultaneously be vigilant for situations where their race would make them vulnerable. When asked how parents talked to her about race growing up, Margorie provided this example of their modern double consciousness.

Margorie: Two things. One, I would say they never taught me to think of myself as different as I was growing up. [Interviewer: Okay. Different than whom?] Different than anyone else, my white peers, my Asian peers, whoever. At the same time, they wanted me to make sure that I knew that other people saw me as different, so that I could be prepared to handle that, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah. How do you think they got that into your brain? How do you think that they tried to teach you those lessons?

Margorie: When I was in high school, and socializing, and things, my parents would prepare me for parties by saying, "Make sure that you don't ever get photographed with a red Solo cup, or anything." It's the whole notion of ... Do you watch Scandal? Yeah. Just having to be twice as good, twice as

perfect as everyone else who is seen as half as intelligent, respectful, whatever. They said, "Just be flawless. Don't engage in things." Especially as I got older, if the cops come...we had many talks about if the cops come, like "Just know that you'll be treated differently than your white peers." I had a lot of friends whose parents were lawyers, and judges in the area, and would just throw parties for them in the basement with alcohol, and no one would care, and the parents would just go to sleep. My parents were not those parents at all, and they said, "Recognize that you're the only black person who is in that space whose parents aren't just gonna call the judge and say, 'Hey, can you fix this real quick?'" Then, there was my big black brother, who is really tall. They had talks with him about that, and I heard.

Interviewer: You got the sense that they were having separate talks with him? Do you think those talks were substantially different than the talks that they were having with you?

Margorie: Yes, and no. I think they had appointed talks with him, more frequently, and more casually, but also with more fear in their voices, because of what was happening in the news. They were so afraid. (Marjorie)

Marjorie's story illuminates several intersecting concerns that parents in this intersectional community have. First, that Marjorie see herself as equal, or "not different" than her other-raced peers. She highlights school as a particular site for disrespect, by peers and teachers alike. Yet, the second lesson comes swiftly: that Marjorie and her bother *are* in fact qualitatively different from others, and cannot be careless, or care-free, for fear of retribution, particularly by the state. This lesson is so widespread in black communities, that Marjorie is able to point to a television episode that illustrates her meaning. She cites *Scandal*, a TV drama about a professional black woman who manages public relations for politicians. In the episode (Season 3, Episode 1) that Marjorie cites, Eli Pope, the father of the main character Olivia Pope, scolds his daughter over an ill-advised affair. He is obviously frustrated about his daughter's decision and reminds her of the persistent stigma that her racialized body elicits.

Eli: Did I not raise you for better? How many times have I told you that you have to be what? You have to be what?

Olivia: Twice as good.

Eli: Twice as good as them, to get half of what they [whites] have!

The final lesson, about gender patterns, is more subtle in Marjorie's story, but meaningfully explored in later chapters. The fears that parents have are distributed inequitably, in alignment with social tropes about black male criminality and empirical trends of murders of unarmed black men and boys by police. Immediately after Mrs. Coby articulated her relief that her children have not inherited her "burden" of worrying about racism, she makes a sharp turn and re-establishes the importance of race for her son, despite having socioeconomic parity with others in the community.

Mrs. Coby: But I need my son as he gets older, especially my 12-year-old, to understand if you should *ever* be stopped by a police officer, you are not equal. Like, you're not equal, don't get it twisted. Be vigilant, get his name on his ID badge. You "yes sir," you keep your eyes where they're supposed to be, you keep your hands where they're supposed to be, 'cause you *will not* get the benefit of the doubt that your blonde-haired, blue-eyed friend will probably get. And that's just the reality. He's not allowed to wear hoodies to school. He doesn't wear hoodies and sneakers to school every day, and I said, "it's not going to happen in this community, no way, no how. Doesn't happen. You wear your sneakers when you have gym. "He needs to know that he does not get the same benefit of the doubt as many of his peers are going to get. And I think when it happens, he's shocked. But he's handled himself well, I have to say.

Coby's narrative here similarly shows the strategy of parents; this time drawing distinct racial boundaries between black children, and their "blonde-haired, blue-eyed friends." This narrative goes further in socializing strategic protection mechanisms. Acquiescent behaviors with police and restriction on clothing mark strategies to dilute the stigma of her son's racialized body. Finally, she recognizes her son's confusion with these dissonant lessons about the meaning of blackness. These twin narratives of aspiration and stigmatic oppression are themes in many works about black middle-class experiences [Feagin, Landry, Frazier]. Just as a conversation about black aspiration had new vigor in an era of a

twice-elected black president, conversations about racial stereotypes, impression management, and racialized fears, are imbued with new urgency in the post-2012 “Black Lives Matter” era of police killing black boys and men. Unlike the next conversations about pride, these lessons are about safety, protection, and minimizing accusations of threat. In many ways these are racial articulations consistent with hegemonic racial formations around black danger. In recognizing racist stereotypes around black male stigma, Coby articulates a strategy meant to disassociate her son with such an idea, but she does not disrupt the framework as it is, nor does she suggest a strategy meant to confront unfair treatment by police. Such strategies are echoed by Jack and Jill communities. While individual children relayed their own participation in Black Lives Matter demonstrations, none of them illuminated any participation of the formal Jack and Jill organization in those efforts. Instead, club organized “Talk Back” and “Driving While Black” events to instruct children on best practices when dealing with the police. Hegemony shapes both social disadvantage and social actor’s capacity to respond to such disadvantages.

Socializing Blackness, Facilitating Esteem:

“My parents always told me it's real life. My mom sat me down and had me watch Roots at five years old. I knew what was good, I knew it existed. It didn't really hit me until I had my own little personal experiences.”

Next, I consider how black, elite-middle-class parents socialize their children into what blackness “is,” substantively. Is it about physical bodies, or about culture, or something else? All of the mothers that I talked to were adamant that the racial boundaries of this community were meaningful, and that it was important that the formal organization remain black into the future. Here, it is important to think about race as an organizing principle in the ways that my respondents conceptualize themselves, their families, and the larger intersectional community. I argue that Jack and Jill communities

seek to educate their children an explicit racial identity; they socialize their children into a blackness that is embedded with bodily pride and cultural appreciation. In particular, they use cultural materials and strategic role-modeling to pass on messages around racial pride and solidarity from which they develop meaningful, and valuable, relationships.

This intersectional community, knowing that their body represents a medium for stigma, engages micro-level projects that are meant to imbue children with pride around their racialized body. This is particularly true for girls, for whom messages about their bodies being unattractive, non-valuable, or even subhuman, have their roots in American racial stereotypes since the 1700s. Ideas about black people's physical bodies, and their perceived connections to ideas about black personality or intellect, coalesce into stereotypes that Patricia Hill Collins famously described as controlling images (1991). As "images," such stereotypes are activated by the ways that people look, and Collins outlines the numerous ways that women, in particular, are exposed to examination and critique about the aesthetic, and therefore the value, of their bodies. Many parents in my study, particularly parents of daughters, described intensive self-esteem campaigns to disrupt the messages that children were getting about their bodies at school or in the media. They want their kids to be "proud of [their] blackness" (Mrs. Bennett). While none of my participants indicated that non-black peers had ever said anything directly insolent about their bodies (though one child was called a nigger at school), parents and children did report angst about their bodies, while living, working, and attending school in largely white communities. A great example of this appears during the interviews of Mrs. Tucker, and her daughter, Jasmine. These respondents were interviewed separately, with approximately two weeks separating our meetings. But when I asked about what they learned about race, in their family, they both reached for the same example:

Ms. Tucker: Ugh! You fight so hard to make it in this world, and being black. And then you're in this group, where you're kind of glad that everybody is black, and you're glad to have something in common. Not only being black, but you're college or you're grad, or whatever. And [a white] person doesn't share that. It's like, when the woman was discovered being black for the Urban League.

Interviewer: Yeah, Rachael Dolezal.

Ms. Tucker: Right, and one of the comments I read somewhere, it was not a harsh comment, but it basically said, you know, you might be supportive, but you haven't experienced it. You decided to become black at a certain point in your life. You didn't experience (to make it easy) walking into a store and having someone follow you. You didn't experience your daughter coming home and saying, 'I want my hair like Molly O'Connor and you know it will never happen *even if you straighten your hair*. What do you do? How do you explain that?"

Jasmine: So, I went to this elementary school that's mostly white and I came home one day and I said "Mom, I wish I could have my hair like Molly O'Connor." She was a little Irish girl and my mom was like "Well, shit. We can't do that." And her strategy in dealing with that was that the next weekend, we enrolled in Harlem School for the Arts, and every Saturday I would go there for Mommy and Me West African dance class. So, after a couple weeks of that, I came home saying "Mom, I want my hair in corn rows like Desiree's." She was very conscious in terms of things like that in terms of my self-image. So, talking about that, constantly affirming our blackness, ideas of beauty, intelligence. But it was more so in offhand comments rather than direct discussions.

Both Mrs. Tucker and Jasmine's narrative about racialized bodies reference the psychological disadvantage that many middle- and upper-class black children experience when growing up in majority white places. As a child, Jasmine was raised in a suburb of New York and attended an overwhelmingly white school. Concern over the fact that their children are "one of the only ones," in schools with overwhelmingly white student bodies, was rampant among my sample. Mrs. Tucker's remarks epitomize this trend. With her daughter, and her son in majority white schools, Tucker is highly attuned for patterns of racialization and discrimination in their social and educational experience (Lareau 2003). Early racialization experiences often come in the form of noticing and

categorizing bodily difference, particularly around skin and hair. While Jasmine's fascination with Molly O'Connor's hair does not, in itself, signal internalization of stigma, Mrs. Tucker saw it as an opportunity to engage more purposeful exposure with social actors with similar bodies to Jasmine's. An African dance class in Harlem, is a prime location to get socialization with other black bodies, and it was not long after they joined this class that Jasmine became enamored with cornrows, a "blacker" hair style. Ms. Tucker not only got her daughter involved in race-affirming activities locally, she also took Jasmine and her little brother to regular summers in Barbados, a small island in the West Indies, where they had a robust, nearly all-black, social life. She recounted a time when she and her children were in Barbados, attending Carnival celebrations, "We get down there, and the guys are like 'ooh, look at you!' She didn't get that at home, she didn't get that at [her school] ...and it's Carnival so they're saying it out loud, or I would say 'Jasmine, this guy was looking at you!' You're in junior high, your body is, like, doing all kinds of things. Oh my god, they *came back* different" (Ms. Tucker). Such representational strategies were meant to bolster Jasmine and her brother's self-esteem, and particularly to normalize their bodies. At a time when children are going through puberty, the different-ness of racially-stigmatized bodies in white spaces can be uncomfortable, and limit opportunities for positive self-image. Tucker seeks to not only normalize her daughter's body, by exposing her to a majority black nation like Barbados, but also highlight instances wherein her daughter's body is desirable in order to socialize that knowledge into her, perhaps as a ward against negative experiences once back in New York. Tucker joked that she sent her children back most summers to "get another dose" in preparation for the school year ahead. The strategy to use in-group contacts to

bolster bodily pride, and fortify self-esteem, is one way to socialize a destigmatized image of blackness.

The work that these moms do around bodily pride is not simply an opposition to categorical whiteness. Rather, this project is about normalizing a diversity of racialized bodies, and undermining intra-racial colorism as a meaningful stratification mechanism in this local community. For example, Mrs. Coby discusses her daughter's self-esteem, and the comfort, pride, and affirmative agency that she wants her daughter to have with her body:

Mrs. Coby: I have to honestly say. It was one of the reasons I stopped relaxing my hair, because I was like, how am I going to teach her to love herself, and everything about herself, when I'm altering my body. And not even in a judgmental way, but just, when she got older and she chose to straighten it, it wouldn't be because she thought there was something wrong with her hair. It would just be a choice, and not, you know, something is actually wrong with what I've been given naturally.

Mrs. Coby is petite and brown skinned, who currently wears her hair without a perm. These phenotypic markers of blackness, natural curly hair, and dark skin are things that Coby wants her daughter to value, and is reflective of a general resistance against skin privilege, or colorism, that has become more robust in the recent decade. Coby's sentiment had me reflecting on an interview that Colin Powell did with Henry Louis Gates in the mid 1990s, on his status in the political elite. Powell offered up a few reasons he had been such a successful assimilator in the Bush administration. One, he "doesn't shove his racial identity" into the faces of his colleagues, but also "[he] ain't that black" (Gates 1996). While he goes on to reference behaviors that are not hegemonically linked to racial blackness (speaking standard English, for example), I also think he illuminates the unspoken value of his phenotype. While Powell clarifies that "my features are clearly black, and I've never denied what I am," he is certainly fair skinned, at least in comparison to Condoleezza Rice, the other high-profile black person in the Bush

administration. To have a discussion about colorism, and think about the ways that phenotype is meaningful even within communities of color, is complicated. What is clear, is that phenotypic lightness is correlated to socioeconomic advantage. When Zwigenhaft and Domhoff were researching demographic changes in the professional elite, they asked research subjects to rate the skin darkness of black professionals in Ebony Magazine's list of 100 Most Influential Black Americans. They found that not only were elite blacks lighter skinned than the "control group" of American blacks, but, "the differences were powerful: the blacks in the power elite were rated as lighter skinned than the blacks in the control groups, and this was especially true of the black women in the power elite, who were rated as lighter than any of the other groups (Zwigenhaft and Domhoff 1998).

Historical work has attributed the roots of colorism (in this case, the intra-racial attribution of light complexion and European phenotype with social value) to the behaviors of slaveholders, for whom phenotype was often an indicator of biological relationship to a white master; such a relationship might come with advantages in education, artisan skill development, and social freedom (Bodenhorn and Ruebeck 2007). While folk-knowledge about intra-racial colorism has long connected light-skin, as an embodied capital, to social status in America, there is also strong empirical evidence that phenotypic advantage (as particularly marked by skin color) has real effects in everything from wealth (Bodenhorn and Ruebeck 2007), to educational attainment (Hunter 2002), marriage rates and partner choice (Reece 2019), ideological and political association (Hoschchild and Weaver 2007), as well as psychological and cultural effects of beauty and desirability, particularly for women (Wilder and Cain 2011). Some of these advantages are attributable to inherited status, small advantages during Slavery and Jim Crow have meaningful effects generations later, but other differences in life outcomes

indicate a persistent social preference for light-skin, even in those who are not categorically white. Members of this community not only engage narratives about white-bodily superiority, they also must engage light-skin symbolic privilege within black communities. Folk engagement with light skin privilege is something that many mothers in my sample had comfort talking about. Six of the mothers cited the status inequalities that spring from colorism, unprompted, including the past colorism practices of private organizations; Jack and Jill most notably among them. For example, Mrs. Adams, who was a Jack and Jill participant as a child, and now has three children of her own in a chapter, told me a story about her parent's experience navigating colorism and its visible link to prestige, social power, and access to privileged communities. From Mrs. Adams's retelling, when her father was a young man in Philadelphia:

Mrs. Adams: He went to a Jack and Jill party, and there was a paper bag at the door. And he was not able to get in, because he was darker than the paper bag. And he told my mom that "I will never be a part of that group." You know, I think with any group where there is nomination, when you've gotta be voted upon, there's all this exclusivity around it that people get caught up in that. So, I do think that there are a couple bad apples that have tainted the goodness of the organization. Because I think the good far outweighs the bad. But I do think that people latch on to that. Like "oh, you know, they used to have the paper bag test," and "my girlfriend couldn't get in" or "this group requires you to have this amount of money to be a part of it." You know what I'm saying?

The paper bag test, when someone's skin must be lighter than a paper bag for consideration into a formal organization. It is one of the most popular examples of colorism, and three of the respondents cited the paper-bag test, and its connection to membership, specifically. This largely uncontested history opens the community to accusations of elitism, so much so that Adams feels "like I'm constantly defending Jack and Jill and what it does," because of that racialized history. Some of the children in my sample talked freely about the persistent value of phenotypic privilege, both in the larger

world and in its visibility in the formal organization. Lawrence, whose story kicked off this chapter, discusses how phenotype remains a meaningful symbolic marker in the larger world, and even in a community seeking to distance itself from what they see as a discriminatory history.

Lawrence: But this is the thing, you notice that it's a certain type of black people in it. Jack and Jill is very light skinned. There's some dark skinned people in there but very predominantly light skinned type of thing. And it's just like with the Divine Nine, they go hand in hand. When they were formed, a lot of them were in Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority; it's the same way. In Greek life, you just couldn't get into any fraternity; especially back then. You got to pass the brown paper tag test to be on AKA. You had to be light skinned. Why do you have to be light skinned? Because light skinned was the closest thing to white. Where white was the standard of superiority and power and all that stuff. Same thing with slavery: light skins were in the house; the dark skins were outside. You had more opportunities and those people got a head start in being more financially stable and make a living compared to dark skinned people. And it just carries on, this tradition. You don't even realize it because we're all black at the end of the night. We all face the same challenges. But, my mama's dark skinned, so obviously there's dark skinned people in Jack and Jill.

Though many of the respondents in my sample recognize this phenotypically discriminatory past of the organization, most people see it as just that: it's the country's and the organization's past, with limited bearing on their community now. Faced with the empirical evidence of light-skin homogeneity (photographs of early members and their children show them all to be fair-skinned), there has been a concerted effort to dispel notions of community skin-preference in official and individual narratives, alike. *Jack and Jill, Incorporated: Into the New Millennium*, one of two official organizational histories found in the archive, described Dr. Eva Wanton, the organization's 13th National President, this way:

"Light, bright and almost white" had stigmatized the history of the organization, and had heretofore been perceived as the prerequisite for admission. The election of this dynamic lady sent a message that "fleecy locks and dark complexion" were unquestionably not a hindrance to the rank at the "top of the hill." The inference of the 'brown paper bag test,'

which claimed that a person whose skin was darker than a brown paper bag was barred from the ranks of Jack and Jill had long been challenged in the chapters and regions. The election of Dr. Wanton sent the message that there was unmistakably no 'code of color' marring Jack and Jill's ascension toward the new millennium. As was true of all the executive boards that preceded the Wanton administration, the mark of distinction was the best and the brightest, not the best and the lightest. (Baker et al. 2000)

They go on to note that the "black race was admittedly conscious of color," though they argue that by 1986 the mentality of the "old guard" was over, and the organization had stepped into a new racial era. On the other hand, the authors wait until describing Dr. Wanton's national election (50 years after Jack and Jill's founding, and nearly halfway through monograph) to grapple with the organization's history of colorism, and do so with significant dismissal of their agency in engaging color discrimination. Instead of talking about color-consciousness in the organization, the authors assert that "the Black race" as a whole engaged in this intra-racial discrimination. Instead of grappling with the socio-political resources gained by being a fair-skinned minority in a racially segregated economy, and how or why a community might be invested in maintaining such resources, the authors simply pass off the organizational discrimination as part of the "old guard." If mothers discussed the continued stratification of phenotype in the organization, they argued that that phenomenon was geographically and culturally linked, not widespread. Some "other chapters" might engage in colorism, but that is a function of their traditional culture, not a trend of the organization as a whole (Mrs. Tucker, Mrs. Vance). When it comes to understanding the change from light-skin exclusivity to black phenotypic inclusivity, Mrs. Mitchell argues that the declining significance of phenotype in this community is part of larger patterns of generational cultural change. In her view, American cultural norms around marriage, class, and race have changed since the first

chapter in 1938, so it is logical that the community requirements around membership are similarly adapted.

Mrs. Mitchell: The founders would have never imagined a single parent in Jack and Jill. And they are, there are divorced parents in Jack and Jill. They would have never imagined having a dark-skinned baby in Jack and Jill, it was only for the upper elite, they would have never have imagined having middle class people, blue collar workers. They were all like the 1% of the black elite, now it's not the 1%, it's maybe the 10 or 15%. It's not *just* upper middle class, but it's middle class you know, however it's broadened and redefined. How open and inclusive it is. And the organization has shed some of the elitism in terms of the paper bag test, and all those historical things obviously exist in many places. I'm sure subtly it may exist in some places but I think Jack and Jill has shed some of that baggage.

In their desire to socialize pride and comfort into their children's conception of their bodies, these moms seek to disrupt the social narrative of light-skin social and economic privilege. I argue that community narrative of past phenotypic exclusivity does the work of highlighting the racial projects of the current generation, while simultaneously obscuring the ways that the community continues to engage in boundary making processes to maintain its status. Before the civil rights era, one's status was fundamentally linked to phenotype, after the legislation of the mid 1960s, such a causal relationship was no longer legislatively supported. In the past, these moms argue, phenotype was indicative of elite status, and respectively, seeking entrance to elite fields required the phenotypic capital to match. Now that phenotypic restrictions are out of vogue, the community, and the formal organization, is meant to seem democratic. Contemporary discursive frameworks allow social actors to reject past formations of explicit, de jure inequality as "racist," and our own as fair, colorblind, or "post-racial," despite ways that racially marginalized people maintain a dominated position (Bonilla-Silva 2010; Lamont 1992). What is special about this discursive era is our ability to obscure processes of inequality by invoking cultural or moral narratives. Such frames

allow social actors to reproduce patterns of inequality (community or organizational membership access, for example), while claiming that such divisions are rooted in cultural difference or values dissimilarity, which allow them to highlight their own openness and inclusivity. I will return to both Mrs. Mitchell's interview, and a larger discussion about class and cultural boundary-maintenance, in the next chapter.

Part of socializing pride into their children was not only about disrupting white supremacy in categorical race, but also an intra-racial light-skin supremacy. Moms wanted their children to be "comfortable in their own brown skin" (Mrs. Whittier), and therefore sought to socialize a bodily pride that is phenotypically inclusive, particularly around previously stigmatized hair styles and dark skin. Most other mothers described strategic interventions when their children started noticing their bodily difference from their peers. They describe their specific attention to socializing blackness when their children start asking questions about why their hair "doesn't grow down" or "can't be yellow" (Mrs. Coby), or why their skin is "darkest in the class" (Mrs. Mitchell), or even sometimes as directly as, "mommy, am I White?" (Mrs. Bennett). Having racial in-group peers is a main way that parents begin the task of normalizing phenotypic blackness. Mrs. Dixon's discussion of her 8-year-old daughter's racial intelligence helps illuminate this strategy. When I asked her about what she wants her children to know about race, she was clear that she wants them to be able to "see past people's skin," but when Dixon's daughter was in daycare, she was "one of the onlys," and behaved in ways that Dixon definitely noticed:

Mrs. Dixon: And they never saw color, or race, or anything like that. And literally when they drew pictures of themselves, they drew pictures of themselves as like yellow. And when they started going to St. Gabriel [their current school], I noticed for the first time that they started coloring themselves brown. Browner than they are. Which I thought was really, really, interesting.

In her retelling, her daughter didn't "[see] color or race or anything like that" despite the fact that she drew her own body yellow. Perhaps she meant that her daughter didn't see her own body as different than her peers. Yet, Mrs. Dixon also illuminates the power of peers; now that her daughter is at St. Gabriel, a more racially diverse school, she is drawing herself brown. Dixon doubles down on this lesson with the race-affirming toys and books.

This strategy of race-affirming play materials appeared often, particularly when it came to dolls. "All of my Barbies [were] black," Jasmine, Mrs. Tucker's daughter, remembers, "all of the books that I read and she read were black." Mrs. Dixon's 8-year-old daughter, too, seems savvy to her mother's strategy. When the Dixon family goes to the toy store "my daughter is like 'mommy I want a doll', 'ok, what kind of doll do you want', 'I know mommy, I know, the one who looks like me, the brown baby'. Which is interesting since I said I want them to see past race, and at the same time, she knows that mommy wants her to buy brown dolls" (Mrs. Dixon). When it comes to socializing blackness, community members are trying to negotiate an appreciation for racial (and therefore bodily) diversity, with the ability to have racial (bodily, in particular) pride. Jasmine's ability to recall this story indicates the success of this particular socialization strategy. Not only did she remember changing the locus of her attention, she recognizes the explicit message that her mother sought to transmit, even if the mechanism was implicit. Dixon's daughter similarly indicates her recognition of this education, even if her internal racial identity is unaffected, she is clear on her mother's intent.

In this community, strategies for racial self-acceptance and pride often start in the representational sphere, with real social contacts, as indicated by Tucker and Dixon, and expanded to include a cultural education of blackness. In particular, interviewees point to

the use of art to develop a particular racial-cultural capital. The academic lineage of studying structural differences in culture has its roots in Bourdieu's work on social reproduction, wherein he argues that capital accumulation (both material and symbolic), is stratified amongst categories. That is to say, both the quantitative measure of how much capital is accumulated and traded, and the qualitative diversity of taste, prestige, and diversity of capitals, work to maintain social boundaries between groups, and insulate elites. More contemporary research argues that cultural mechanisms are not engaged in a simple hierarchy of low-brow to high-brow taste, but rather racial and class groups engage equally with overlapping cultural arenas, although the substance of that cultural materials that they engage are different. DiMaggio and Ostrower called this phenomenon *differentiation without segmentation*, in that there is insufficient evidence of black elites fully converging with the cultural tastes of their white counterparts. All else being equal, when it comes to taste and consumption, they find that while black elites engage mainstream culture equitably to white elites, but they also engage black cultural materials (jazz concerts, black art exhibitions, or other "historically black art forms" (1990: 773). This "dual engagement" is a cultural frame of double consciousness, and is both a reflection of, and purposeful participation with, racial in-group affinity (DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990; Lamont and Molnar 2001). Black elite-middle-class social actors engage taste patterns, cultural-meaning toolkits, and material consumption in ways that are qualitatively unique from both middle-class whites and lower-class blacks (Banks 2010; Lacy 2007). Yet like work broadly suggests, minorities utilize culture in ways that are nearly identical to white elites: consumption marks class-status (a defense against stigma), while taste for, and ease with, racial-cultural materials delineates racial in-group affinity (Lacy 2007; Moore 2008; Banks 2012). The participants in my study highlighted

engagement with cultural forms as a mechanism through which they mark in-group orientation. While some moms are particular about the *kind* of black culture they want their children exposed to (these moms make a distinction between black low-brow and black high-brow culture, in alignment with Bourdieu's frames), more moms point to engagement and ease with all black culture as a signal of racial solidarity across class stratification.

Some moms articulate differences between "positive" cultural materials, which would reflect a racial identity, and cultural toolkit that the moms found acceptable and respectable, and materials that were not "positive." Mrs. Bennett articulated how she helped her son, Nathan, develop a "strong and healthy perception of what it means to be black." Along with regularly celebrating Kwanzaa, they read books, and watched movies, that focused on middle-class black experiences:

Mrs. Bennett: "We were very intentional. The Cosby reruns were on a lot back in the day, we used to watch those a lot. And my son, even now, old Black sitcoms. He likes the Jefferson's because he likes to see black life. And just the, how black life is, how black life could be. And just seeing it on TV is interesting, you know? We watched, the Cosby Show, we watched A Different World, sometimes we used to watch Girlfriends, when he was a little."

Black films and sitcoms represent a mechanism for communicating group narrative and aspiration. *The Cosby Show*, for example, represented one of the first elite black families on prime time television, and regularly tackled topics like gender inequality at home, dilemmas around college choice, and what it felt like to be a minority in one's occupation, all topics that were at the forefront of experience for this intersectional community. *The Cosby Show* in particular, even as it acted as a cultural narrator, regularly featured the work or ideas from black artists, musicians, and writers with historical or cultural importance. Such media illuminates the dynamic cultural landscape

within which this community is embedded. Bennett was also very plugged in to how “the media has a way of subconsciously entering your home,” and so worked to ensure that “the majority of images of, or messages about, being black were positive or neutral. But the news, when you see that figure come up on who was murdered, or who’s been arrested, all those things,” it has the capacity to do damage to a stigmatized individual’s sense of self- and group-esteem.

Cultural materials are not simply observed, the capacity to engage with cultural materials with ease signals strong in-group affect, and indicates a sort of racial-cultural capital. When children are reared in majority-white communities, their exposure to black cultural forms is going to be largely absent without concerted cultivation strategies.

Tucker sees that many parents in these intersectional communities have misappropriated their efforts and attention towards class-based destigmatization strategies. While she is sympathetic to the desire of good schools, she feels like parents underestimate the way that their children’s (white) peers will develop proficiency and ease with the cultural materials that are privileged in those spaces, and not with those that necessarily signal cultural blackness.

Mrs. Tucker: I had friends who had kids who didn't dance. I was like, “did you dance with them?” They’d say “Well, you know...”, “What do you mean ‘you know?’” You turn on the music at night and you dance!. My kid was 2 years old, [Jasmine], one-year-old, dancing to Calypso music; Rub Belly. She'd be in her diaper dancing. That's what you do!

Ease with music and dancing is a way to signal in-group orientation, and is a visible way that middle-class blacks perform affinity with co-ethnics who are not middle-class. But such ease is only developed after robust engagement with the culture; it’s “a learning,” from Mrs. Tucker’s perspective. If these cultural materials aren’t in the social atmosphere, parents have to concertedly cultivate them. Failure to facilitate cultural

capital means that they cannot be surprised when cultural knowledge and ease points their children towards close affective bonds (and later, mate choices) with out-group whites. A longer discussion of mate choice is explored in the Gender chapter, chapter 5. Kids recognize the use that black cultural capital holds. In an extension of Goffman's analogy of a stigma being a "spoiled" normal identity, one's mastery of racial-cultural capital authenticates their racial identity. Eli describes how, particularly for boys in this intersectional community, knowledge and mastery of black cultural materials, constituted a sort of code-switching. But instead of translating speech or behavior *out* of blackness, this kind of successful code-switching demanded a switch from mainstream culture *into* a performance of blackness. Fluency with black-cultural capital was a skill prized within this Jack and Jill community. Eli illuminates intersectional considerations of race, gender, and class, when it comes to the ways that children internalize and articulate ease in capital performance. He argues that even in the all-black environment of Jack and Jill events, fluency in racial capital could increase prestige amongst your peers:

Eli: So, public school experience gave us the capital of knowing the current dances, so you know, you go to these teen conferences and at that time, if you could do the Soulja Boy well, if you could do all of the dances, everybody was just very impressed, right? So, at events, we were the fun people, we were the cool people. And this is not the same for women. For the women, it was opposite. For the women, if you were able to do those things, it was kind of looked down upon by other women. But for the guys, it was awesome. I think, for us, we were able to provide the blackness in the sense where we were able to provide the fun, knew all the songs, knew the dances, we knew [them all], so I think that was our capital.

Particularly for boys, this kind of cultural code-switching made them more popular amongst white and black peers alike. Girls were not socially rewarded for knowing popular culture.

Finally, Jack and Jill itself is a marker of a particular intersectional cultural capital. Because of its selective membership practices, the capacity for bright racial and class boundaries ensure that the organization is largely, demographically homogeneous over time. As members make up the qualitative demographics of Jack and Jill, membership in the organization, itself, becomes a marker of authentic membership in the larger intersectional community (Omi and Winant 1994). When I asked Mrs. Mitchell about why she thinks other people join Jack and Jill, she replied:

Mrs. Mitchell: I thought, first thing, that everybody wanted it for the same reasons, but now, everybody is totally different. Some people want it because it's another check-mark on their list, I've gotta have Jack and Jill, I've gotta have AKA, I've gotta have Links, I've gotta have, you know, white picket fence. You know, for some people it's just a social marker. Um, I think most people want it because they want a sense of community, you know, even though we're in this post-racial society, we want to...we really do value family, and family's togetherness.

While class membership can be signaled with physical structures, like a white picket fence, it seems that community membership that is class-race-gender intersectional is better signaled by one's social capital. Both formal and informal networks alike are critical mechanisms for the exchange, and reproduction of capital between individuals, but formal organizations have the added benefit of having hard boundaries. Therefore, membership in organizations like Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, The Links, and Jack and Jill, are signals to others, that one's social capital (and as such, their material and cultural capital, too) is abundant. In fact, more than half of the moms likened Jack and Jill to a sorority or other black elite women's groups; certainly, the association is made clear by the way Mrs. Mitchell articulates the symbolic value of these formal associations, but then reframes this desire for social homogeneity as wanting a sense of community, highlighting the "value [of] family's togetherness."

Mitchell's discourse intersects with Mrs. Tucker's previous narrative around social exposure to racialized bodies and culture, in an interesting way; that this intersectional community is one that coheres around a particular race, class affinity, and a gendered experience. The experience of having a child, often a daughter, see a white peer's body as better, is one that many moms of my sample see as a phenomenon that is particular to black, affluent girls. The explicit strategizing of bodily pride is not something that white mothers, and non-affluent black mothers, have to engage. From the perspective of my respondents, this experience is meaningfully indicative of the unique position of black elite-middle-class people, so much so, that these communities articulate a need for social boundaries and tightknit communities, as spaces for psychological safety and network building.

Affective Networks, Productive Networks:

"I got this internship through Jack and Jill, a Jack and Jill mother. Like I said, the Jack and Jill mothers are like your second mothers. They want the best for you just like they want for their own child."

Finally, in thinking about Goffman's argument about in-group socialization, and the value of solidarity between stigmatized social actors, Jack and Jill presents a unique phenomenon of network (re)production. As a race-class-gendered intersectional network, these communities utilize narrative and practical strategies that ensure both a tight-knit community and a resource-saturated one. Goffman argues that those with a stigma might prioritize a community of "sympathetic others" as a place of safety, socialization, and socially valuable connection. These can come in the form of formal institutions (Gallaudet University for the deaf and hard of hearing, for example), but even informal groups are valuable mechanisms where stigmatized social actors can provide each other "with instruction in the tricks of the trade, and with a circle of lament to which [they] can

withdraw for moral support and for the comfort of feeling at home, at ease, accepted as a person who is really like any other normal person (Goffman 1963:20). The tight-knit bond, born of the empathy in shared stigma, led all of the mothers to praise the racial homogeneity of the organization. All but 2 respondents (Mrs. Coleman and Jasmine) both wanted and expected the organization to remain racially homogenous into the future. Many members of this community describe their relationships with others as so tight-knit that they are like a family.

Work on black American families have long focused on women-centered networks and “matriarchal” family structures. In her seminal work, *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins outlines how a history of chattel slavery and the violent and routine separation of biological families led to the de-facto centrality of women in many black communities, mothering and motherhood identities have therefore been central phenomena in black women’s personal lives, political activism, and public scholarship (Collins 2000). These intimate, familial, relationships between women and children are extended beyond biological ties into what Collins describes as “other-mothering,” where women do care-work, at the micro-level, and political advocacy, at the macro-level, for young people who are not biologically connected to them. In black working-class communities, other-mothering can be observed as a material necessity, to consolidate child-care responsibilities, while other adults go to work. Yet, Collins argues that for middle-class black mothers, these affective-caring networks can also represent resistance to racial-isolation, and market exploitation in the larger realm of capitalism. Interviewees often talk about Jack and Jill as a family, citing particularly strong relationships between moms and children—fathers are largely peripheral in Jack and Jill as they can’t have membership. The mothers are particularly attentive to their children and their peers when

they become teenagers; moms keep up with accomplishments, chide them when they misbehave, and give them all sorts of advice. Kelley recalls that that focused interest transcended many of the major areas of his life; moms guided his academic, extracurricular, and personal life. In telling me the ways that the Jack and Jill community guided his path, he remembered:

Kelley: They can hear a lot of high school gossip about me and are like, "Oh, Kelley, I heard you did this. You know what, maybe you should take a different approach to this, with girls or something like that. Kelley, I hear you're talking to so and so. Why don't you take her to the movies or something like that?" They would give us dating advice, educational advice, advice just for life. I think that was the best part about it because they knew us so well. Because we were really one big family. So, there were mothers in Jack and Jill that knew me, I'm not going to say as well my mother, but they knew me enough so that they could be my mother. So, they know I move, how my emotions work. I think that that was the best part. When, let's say my mother wasn't at the event and another mother was, and they see that I'm in the corner not talking to them. That's out of my character, they must know something's wrong. So, at least two of them always coming up to me, talking to see what's going on. That's what made it so good, that's what made it so comfortable and so great to be part of the organization as well.

This pseudo-familial bond was frequently repeated in the narratives of my subjects.

Moms would sometimes refer to their Jack and Jill "sisters" in the way that sorority members often do. Such discourse highlights the bonds of this community as one of emotional affect, trust, intimacy, and empathy. It is to this emotional end that Jack and Jill chapters evaluate "like-mindedness" in membership applications as part of the four categories of evaluation (Financial, Interest, Time, and Like-Mindedness, FIT+L) for new members. While all of these categories can certainly be evaluated subjectively (there is no available data that shows an organization- or chapter-wide standard of income, or time-commitment), the like-minded standard is both particularly subjective, and apparently, very important. Jack and Jill therefore operates as a mechanism for similarly situated and "like-minded" children to meet and socialize with one another, and foster

bonds that at this stage of life are purely emotional. Until children become fourteen years old, and enter into a sort of junior organizational structure most of the gatherings are simply about playtime and cultural enrichment. Children as young as two-years-old gather for playdates, or story-time and crafts. Older children might take day trips to museums, or to meet prominent black people in a local community. But in those early years, they are building strong emotional connections with one another. It is not until the Teen years that they have their own executive boards, and carry out enrichment and community service projects over the course of a year. When asked whether the organization itself has a purpose, Mrs. Vance described it as “to create relationships with people that are supposed to last a lifetime”:

Mrs. Vance: My kids are not, they're still in high school, and the benefit usually comes later. [Interviewer: What do you mean?] Well, developing this network of people is extending your family so that you can be supportive of each other, throughout a lifetime. And relationships have to be nurtured, as well.

A number of interviewees claim that the value in Jack and Jill chapters is that it is both a place of safety, and a place for the concerted cultivation of habits (Lareau 2003). One of the values of Jack and Jill for these moms is its capacity to be a safe space, where “sympathetic others” gather to commiserate about the trials of being a black person in a white space, to support each other through difficult trials. Mothers often give each other advice about navigating challenges, or they observe other children as a reflection of their own child’s experience. Respondents are drawn to Jack and Jill, partially because of their positional similarity to other Jack and Jill moms; these gatherings allow members to both relax their performances, as well as sympathize and strategize with each other:

Mrs. Edwards: The other moms are all going through the same things that you are, or have been, or will be. And so, that's helpful. Sometimes you're going through things, and you're like "I can't imagine anybody else is going through this," you

know they have, but you're like "it's not the same, it's not me." And when you speak to somebody about it, and they're literally reciting your thoughts and things you've thought, they're actually saying the words, and you're like "wow you're in my head," No! You're the same people! You're just the same people, but you don't think anyone is like you because you think you're special and fantastic, which you are, but there are other special and fantastic people just like you, who have gone through the same things as you! So why don't you learn from them and understand that?

Mothers regularly reported taking opportunities, both at formal meetings and during their free time, to talk to one another about casual, non-organizational topics. Unsurprisingly, these conversations often included catching up about family matters, one's own professional triumphs and frustrations, and, particularly, their children's successes and struggles at school. While the details of individual biographical experiences are diverse, many of the people in my sample experience similar trends of discrimination, token-integration, and success in their professional and educational lives, simply because of their demographic similarity. Jack and Jill communities, largely organized around such intersectional similarity, are therefore particularly productive sites for Goffman's in-orientation destigmatization strategies. These parents are strategizing for a child who is uniquely raced and classed; when they trade stories and strategies, they draw upon their resources as occupational elites, while strategizing destigmatization strategies as racial minorities. The intimacy and empathy aren't just for the children, these moms describe a support network for their personal lives, in particular. Several talked about how important their Jack and Jill network was during a divorce, death in the family, or other traumatic experiences. While most participants were eager to highlight the emotional intimacy and affective bonding of this community, a few outlined the latent value of such collective relationships: tight networks of well-resourced individuals reproduce such resources within the network via an economy of explicit and implicit favors.

Moms in the sample often recognize these relationships as being an investment; the relationships these children have with one another (and with one another's family) can become fruitful once children are applying for college, internships, or occupational opportunities later down the road. On one hand, these investments are for affective networks of support that children can take into their adult lives. Once in Jack and Jill, says Mrs. Whittier, "you'll always have this network of mothers who will support you. When you grow up and go off to college, you'll find new friends who were members...who will be your new friends. And who will help guide you through having this similar experience. So it teaches our children, that other children, who are like them, can be having the same or similar experiences and that they should support one another" (Whittier). Mrs. Mitchell shows how well members of this community blend personal connection with productive network values. When I asked Mrs. Mitchell why this community exists, the importance of sympathetic others was clear. Jack and Jill communities were meant to be places "where moms who choose similar values, wanted their children to grow together, to have a sense of community." Those whose values included "hard work" and "family life and who enjoyed a lot of the same things."

Mrs. Mitchell: I still think that, for me, I mean that's what all moms are searching for; connection. We want our children to be connected and to have connections. Be connected to each other, be connected to people who ultimately share a common experience of being black, but also have connections in the sense of resources and access to people. Because you understand that ultimately, it's not what you know, but it's who you know. And the information sharing, and all of that support.

As much as these communities highlight the need for protected spaces in order to have respite from stigma, reframe the meaning of black bodies, and socialize behavioral habits into their kids, these networks also become productive sites for opportunities and resource reproduction. "Being connected," is different than "having connections." One is

about emotional and psychological resources, it's about joy and safety, and feeling intimacy with a group that you feel is empathetic to your experience. The other is about engaging "investment in social relations with expected returns"; it is not simply about a network of sympathetic others, but rather the resources accessible through those networks (Lin 2001). The subjects in my sample were cognizant of both phenomena, and while most prioritize their discourse around the former phenomenon, "being connected," others were less shy about leaning into the latter goal of "having connections." For example, Mrs. Baker, is a corporate executive with two college-aged daughters. When asked about the racial boundaries of this community she fluently describes how this community is not only an opportunity for emotional safety in strong, close-knit networks, but also having dispersed chapters, making up a national membership, makes it a network of weak ties primed for contact and favors. She recounted a story about a legal conundrum that she was faced with at her job, and when chatting with a fellow Jack and Jill mom about it, the other mother directed her to yet another Jack and Jill mom, who was a lawyer, and Baker called her up:

Mrs. Baker: I didn't even know her! I just knew that she was an attorney, and I'm like "hey, I need somebody's advice, who can help on this?" And she was like, "talk to me and we'll figure it out!" She didn't know me! And she spent two hours on the phone. She gave me feedback, she gave me some guidelines, gave me somebody else's name, and so I was able to work with that person, but you need that! If I didn't have Jack and Jill, I don't know what I would have done. And the fact that the person didn't know me, and I was like "hey" and she just took my call, took my text, and we started talking. And the same way with me. Where I work, if I can get a kid in for an internship, I will do that. Because we need to do that for each other. And you're not going to do it without the organization of Jack and Jill, unless you have a really big network. But it's not the same, because in Jack and Jill, you meet every month, you go and have different outings where you're able to build real relationships, and you're able to build trust. And you're able to say "listen, this kid is good, they need a little push." And every kid gets pushed. We don't know that in our community. And we too know better and we need to do it.

Baker argues that the importance of this intersectional, in-group oriented, community is rooted in their social capital, and the ways that they utilize this resource. The literature on social capital shows how weak network ties are particularly productive in gaining information, opportunities, and resources that one may not have access to on one's own (Granovetter 1983; Lin 2001). While social actors of all strata have the capacity to develop ties of varying strengths, the network ties of the social elite are more likely to be resource-rich than the ties of the working class and poor. Furthermore, because elites experience more resource-security than the average working-class person, their articulation of these network ties is likely to be notably casual agentic. Elites don't rely on network ties to fulfill their survival needs, like some working-class and poor people do, and therefore approach these ties as opportunistic assets, but not lifelines. Here, Baker's narrative illuminates Granovetter's work on the strength of weak ties: not only does she feel empowered to call up someone who she "didn't know," but she recognizes that the network itself has an internal logic and a veneer of trust. Because of her investment in the network, she eagerly awaits opportunities to utilize her resources to the benefit of others in the network. Such behaviors are tied to the networks being both explicitly affective and implicitly productive; just as this intersectional community is explicitly about the salience of its racial boundaries, but implicit in the ways that class shapes the community.

Lastly, I wish to elevate the importance of racial identity in the ways that my respondents talk about their affinity and dedication to this community. As stated previously, all of the mothers in my sample believed that it was important that Jack and Jill, as a formal organization, had a racial identity, and that its racial identity continued in the future. But a common, and unexpected theme, was the way that some moms talked

about the ways that other racialized groups engage in similar boundary-making and social reproductive processes as this intersectional community. In particular, moms and one child articulated the homophilic social practices of Jewish communities, as similar to the behaviors that Jack and Jill communities engage. Often, these comparisons occurred when I asked respondents whether Jack and Jill was unique, in any way. To this question, many moms agreed that the organization was unique, often citing its demographic membership of black women, and its focus on children's enrichment. A significant minority pointed to their experiences with Jewish acquaintances or their knowledge of Jewish social life to answer this. For example, when asked whether Jack and Jill is unique, Mrs. Bennett argued that "other groups have something like this, other marginalized groups. I think Jewish people likely have something like this. They have school on Saturdays, you know. And that may turn into a social activity as well. So, I don't think it's unique in that sense. I think that people who are marginalized have to create their own, you have to do that" (Bennett). Moms could readily point to formal organizations (Hebrew school or summer camps), as locations for social interactions that are exclusive to an ethnic group, while others highlighted an intra-ethnic "support system in their community, [where] everything is one with the families...from the trips, the events, everything is done with their families. They have their family and other families together. So, I would say their [the Jewish community's] mission is probably a little bit the same as Jack and Jill" (Baker). While Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Baker highlight the affective connection between those in Jewish social communities, Mrs. Vance discusses the implicit (re)productive value that such identity salience facilitates. She contributes to the above discussion (and more deeply discussed in the Gender chapter) about mate

choice, saying that she has taught her two daughters to, “accept others, and we raised them to love everybody, but”

Mrs. Vance: When it comes to marriage? So, I always understood the Jews, how they wanted to perpetuate their race, you know, keep the bloodline going. And I used to hear about that for years. Again, I grew up in a predominantly Jewish community, and they'd be like, "no offense, but my kid's marrying a Jew." And I'm like, I'm not offended. I agree with you. But that can be a long conversation.

Conclusion

This chapter details the ways that Jack and Jill, as an intersectional community, engages race as a primary organizing principle in both the communal identity norms, and the socialization processes through which this community disciplines young people into such norms. Drawing on Omi and Winant’s racial formation theory, this chapter illuminates how members engage with hegemonic frameworks of race and blackness. Omi and Winant argue that our knowledge about racial categories, and the resources distributed amongst them, are the collective consequence of a myriad of ideological projects; each battling for recognition, and the power to reframe the meanings around phenotypic bodies, cultural performance, and racialized materials. The broad theoretical framework comes to bear more narrowly in Goffman’s work on stigma, where he argues that stigmatized actors engage strategies for impression management so that they won’t experience social marginalization at the hands of others. Goffman posits that stigmatized individuals take two main approaches to destigmatization: they might adopt an out-group orientation, focusing their efforts on proving to “normals” that their stigma is not disqualifying from full social participation. Or, they might adopt an in-group orientation, where they collaborate with other stigmatized others, pool resources, and train one another on the best strategies for destigmatization. Both of these strategies can be thought

of as racial projects. For the out-group oriented, their micro-level project is about reshaping the meaning of race in the eyes of non-black strangers. Using classed cultural capital has been a main strategy of the black middle class, an attempt to disrupt ideas about what “blackness” can and cannot contain. For the in-group oriented, this racial project is about solidarity, about disrupting the notion that their bodies and cultural practices are marks of negative stigma at all.

The respondents in this chapter highlight the processes of both the in-group and out-group orientation. Mothers certainly have understood and internalized the hegemonic framing of blackness as stigma. Despite advancements in professional, residential, and social integration, these moms maintain their vigilance for racist discrimination. They similarly seek to socialize their children into a subjectivity that only partially absorbs the promise of American meritocracy. Their fear is that if their children whole-heartedly begin to think that they are equal to their non-black peers, free to make mistakes or be careless, they leave themselves particularly vulnerable to discipline by authority. In many ways, this is not resistance to a mainstream racial project that perceives black people as villainous and dangerous, but rather an, at least partial, absorption of that stereotype. While this example does not fully articulate the strategies of an out-group orientation, it does illuminate how parents think about materials, clothing in particular, as strategic markers of destigmatization (Lacy 2007; 2020). The majority of my data in this chapter illuminates how racialized bodies, cultural practices, and identities help to facilitate an in-group orientation for this intersectional community. Instead of absorbing hegemonic messages about black odiousness or dysfunctional social relationships, this community effectively reframes these racial knowledges in order to socialize racial pride and positive emotion into the children of this community. Parents purposefully teach their children

about their racialized selves, leaning heavily on representational art, and co-ethnic role models as tools for teaching love for blackness. Secondly, there is an emphasis on cultural knowledge as a mark of racial authenticity, or at least emotional closeness with black peers across class strata. Fluency in this racial-cultural capital is perceived to be a signal to blacks, outside of their intersectional community, of group cohesion. Finally, this intersectional community prioritizes the substance and boundaries of their network. As stigmatized social actors they articulate a need for dense and intimate social networks as spaces for intimacy and sharing, but this affective network also has the latent function of being incredibly productive. Jack and Jill members gain a social capital boost in ways that other black elites outside of this formal community are excluded from. In order to maintain the bright racial boundaries (and the implicit class boundaries) of this community, members highlight the importance of demographic “likeness”; similar experiences mean that community members can commiserate, empathize, and strategize together, in preparation to face the world of “normals.” But in the next chapter, I explore how likeness (in taste, values, manners) is also a facilitator of class distinction. If in-group orientation is meant to pull blacks towards their racial peers, signaling affective intimacy with a stigmatized group, then the out-group orientation of the cultural omnivore frame, is meant to push blacks towards their class-peers. The out-group orientation, as shown by the accumulation of classed-cultural capital draw distinctions between the black elites within this intersectional community, and the poor blacks whose lack of refinement calcifies their stigmatization.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUALIZING CLASS: ABSORBING AND ADAPTING AMERICAN DISTINCTION

I met Mrs. Mitchell for coffee on a frigid January morning. She is tall, bright-eyed, and assertive; a lawyer by trade who has ambitious plans for her 10-year-old son, Rashaad. As we settle in, we chat about Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Americanah*, and its fluency in articulating intersectional experiences of black immigrant families coming to America in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite the comprehensive Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s, meant to open up opportunities to minorities, black immigrants arriving to America in the 1970s and 1980s entered into an American racial project where their skin would relegate them to a stigmatized position. *Americanah* is about both the racial-cultural shock and about how first and second-generation black immigrants negotiate narratives of class in relation to race. Adichie's narrative hit close to home for Mrs. Mitchell. Her parents emigrated from the Caribbean and raised her in Queens—she was driven to be academically successful, to be the “person who was straight A's, was, the first person in an Ivy League. I just *did what I was supposed to do* [original emphasis].” These personal accomplishments were illuminated within a context of structural barriers to elite advancement; barriers that she worked hard to break, for her own son. She attended public school, though she very badly wanted an opportunity to go to a boarding school, but her parents were not interested: “they said, ‘nope, shove that down, that's not going to happen.’ So, for me I knew that was one thing I wanted to make sure my child had: a private school education. I guess when I think back to my desires to do that and not getting to do that, in many ways we do through our children what we didn't get to do for ourselves” (Mrs. Mitchell).

It is this notion, that parents want to facilitate “opportunities” for their children that they, themselves, could not have, that powers the mechanism of cultural acquisition. Mrs. Mitchell’s experience can help us frame these moms’ strategies of class-socialization, and its co-constructive relationships to other aspects of identity. We talk extensively about Rashaad, and his experiences at school:

Interviewer: What kind of lessons do you want Rashaad to learn about class or about status?

Mitchell: Well, I think that comes from our Christian upbringing. I mean it's hard for me to say that, because I'm giving one message, but yet the things that I'm exposing to him to make him very aware of class. I mean he's around people who are extremely privileged, and he's beginning to act very privileged.

Interviewer: What do you mean, by acting privileged?

Mitchell: So, a few years ago, he was like, "oh my God, for my birthday, mom, I want you to rent a limo for all the kids in my class." He's talking about renting a limo for all the kids in his class and there's like 30 kids that have to be there, and I'm like, no, no, no, that's not the kind of party you're having. Or like "well, why don't we have a summer home in such and such, because my friend has a summer home." We go to The Vineyard, "but that's not our home." What he's been exposed to lets him see a life of limitless class. And he's upset that he didn't get invited to a party where one of the parents is a celebrity. So, the kids that went came back and said, "oh my God, such and such lives in a mansion" and Rashaad was all upset like, "I didn't get to the mansion party!" And I was like, “what?! As a kid, I didn't even know people had mansions, what are you talking about, you're upset that you didn't get to go to the mansion party?” So, I want him to understand that class does not define you, I don't want him to think that class is defining, even though I know it's very important. I just don't want him to be bound to it or to be the kind of person who looks down on others because of it. I want him to appreciate different classes. And it's a hard lesson; it's way harder because I'm saying one thing, yet exposing him to different things. You know, he gets a lot, he gets to do a lot, he's exposed to a lot, and so he just thinks that this is just the way it is. And my husband and I we try to talk to him to say, you know we work really hard, we try to instill a work ethic, so he understands that things are not given to you, but I think it's going to be a harder lesson for him to get.

Interviewer: Does Jack and Jill play a role here?

Mitchell: Well, I don't think it's doing anything more than his school is doing. I think that for him, it's just normal. So, I don't think he's learning any significant lessons about class, even though for example, when I'm in my activity, I want all of my activities to be activities where the children are exposed to all aspects of class. So, we had the 5- and 7-year olds go to a mansion, we wanted them to visit a mansion, we wanted them to see what it's like. And we had another activity coming up where we have them going to a castle, and we want to them to learn about black queens and kings and also play chess there. So, for me, I want to make sure that the activities I plan for the children give them exposure to all levels of class. So that they will know how to feel comfortable. I want our children to feel comfortable wherever they go. I want them to be able to sit with the President or not, and be able to feel comfortable and feel like I have a place here. That and culture, that whenever I plan an activity it's always going to be come cultural aspect, so the children know how this connects to who they are.

I use this chapter to think about class, and its use as a mechanism of cohesion for the formal organization, and an implicit destigmatization strategy for the larger intersectional community. Just as in the other chapters, the ways subjects articulate class is not absent from their subjectivity around race and gender. Mrs. Mitchell's narrative illuminates some of the local strategies around class articulations. She highlights the value of class distinction one moment, and blurs the next. She seeks to socialize refinement but wards off accusations of exclusion. She complains that Rashaad wants badly to go to a "mansion party" but organizes field trips to mansions, so 5- and 6-year-olds can "see what it's like." Mrs. Mitchell's narrative illuminates a local strategy of obscuring the way that class engaged in these communities. Unlike discourses around race, which were often explicit and meaningful, the social actors in my study sought to downplay the role of class in their lives, while still engaging mechanisms of status reproduction. Mothers and children alike tend to minimize discourse about wealth or income inequality, choosing instead to focus on the articulation of morals and skills as classless goods, enhancing one's capacity for cultural omnivorousness. At the same time, social actors articulate flexible symbolic boundaries to indicate similarity with elites, and dissimilarity

with the working class, all without explicitly invoking class. It is through these three trends that mothers, in particular, sought to brighten class distinctions or blur them into obscurity depending on their goals. Mothers and children alternately brighten and blur class boundaries in order to articulate who is “like them” and who is not. If persistent racial stigma is one of the anchors of this community, then class-based homogeneity is certainly the other. The social actors in my sample utilize classed norms externally, as a racial destigmatizer, and internally, as a mechanism of the social reproduction of a classed-race identity.

Reproducing Class

In order to understand the ways that discourses, social networks, and consumptive materials work to strategically mark marginal actors, this chapter roots its analysis in Pierre Bourdieu’s work on the malleability and reproduction of capital within, and across, generations. Resources (capital) appear in all sorts of forms; economic capital is the most commonly understood form, most directly indicated by actual financial resources, but also in other material resources that signal wealth (expensive houses, cars, or clothing). Cultural capital occurs in the objectified form (material goods like art, or rare collectible goods, that indicate both the capacity to purchase high-value objects and the capacity to appreciate them), the institutionalized form (connections to high status educational institutions, in particular), and the embodied form (performances that indicate the internalized ideological, educational, behavioral, and taste norms of a class strata) (Bourdieu 1986). Elites mark themselves with the consumption of high-brow culture, and a displayed competency in elite cultural spaces. Low-brow culture is meant to be the realm of the working class, and unsavory to authentic elites. Finally, social capital is

described as the “aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network” of both formal, and informal, relationships between social actors (Bourdieu 1986:21). Elites foster in tight, homophilic networks, which have the effect of consolidating power over generations. The three of these forms of capital are indicative of individual and collective power; for Bourdieu, power lies not only in one’s individual capacity to leverage capital for personal gain, but it is the ability to define both the social value of cultural materials, and the boundaries around the communities interacting with such materials (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont and Molnar 2002).

Bourdieu’s work on the forms of capital contribute two major concepts to this project. First is the importance of both material capital (economic capital, and the objectified form of cultural capital), and symbolic capital (the intangible relationships, behaviors, and consumptive tastes that mark social actors as legitimate members of a community). Such symbolic boundary markers are foundational to the maintenance of cohesive social groups, and are particularly crucial to elite communities that exist within an American context of meritocratic egalitarianism (Lamont 1992). His second foundational contribution is in the tradability and transferability of capital; while economic capital may be “at the root of all the other types of capital,” social actors’ ability to convert economic capital into cultural and social capital illuminates the interconnectedness of seemingly discrete social realms (Bourdieu 1986). Social actors trade economic capital for access into university or other institutional spaces where they develop social networks that they might rely upon for job opportunities. Similarly, ease with high-class cultural forms can facilitate access to social networks connected to elite habits and hobbies (Ostrander 1984; 1993). Realms of capital are not distinct, rather, social actors adeptly trade capital in one realm for resources in another; capital is not only “converted” within one individual’s

lifetime, but also has significant, though limited, capacities to be “transferred” between individuals, via a process of social reproduction. Such transferability perpetuates patterns of class stratification, despite American norms of social openness, cultural omnivorousness, and meritocratic ideology.

While interrogating the persistence of stratified groups over time, Bourdieu recognized that elite communities were not simply inheriting economic resources, but rather were being taught by both explicit and implicit mechanisms, the norms of talking, behaving, and consuming, in the community. While social actors can directly inherit economic capital of an ancestor, one’s cultural and social capital are largely embodied; that is to say, one’s knowledge and networks die with the bearer, absent some concerted effort to impart such resources to another. This education has two purposes, on one hand, these behaviors act as markers of in-group status and lay the foundations for boundaries around the social community. On the other hand, these behaviors also are developed with elite institutions in mind. The behavioral patterns of the elite are replicated and validated by institutions that society deems meritocratic and legitimate. Social reproduction is the mechanism to make personal affect into utilizable capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Schools (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Willis 1977; 1981) are particularly dense fields of social learning as well as academic learning; students are disciplined into ways of speech, behavior, and epistemology, that reflect hegemonic demands of the society. Success in school suggests not only a proficiency in academic material, but perhaps more directly, indicates mastery in the implicit education of educational institutions. Because of the concerted cultivation of their home lives (Lareau 2003) elite children already practiced in talking, behaving, and consuming in ways that are in alignment with hegemonic norms. So, for elite children, the home-institutional feedback loop cements the norms of these

communities into behavioral reflex; a habitus. Elites experience moments of social “inclusion” when their personal codes and demands made by institutions demands match up; middle-class families are more likely to have the “key” that best fits many schools’ “locks.” (Lareau 1987; Lareau and Horvat 1999). Furthermore, elites leverage the institutional legitimacy of universities to obscure the ways that social groups maintain boundaries; funneling a new generation of elites through institutions that are publicly viewed as rigorous, meritocratic, and socially open, allows these communities to utilize the language of social openness, cultural omnivorousness, and anti-elitism despite persistent stratifications. Children from marginalized social groups have had long-observed struggles in school, not simply academically, but they experience disproportionate amounts of discipline, social alienation, underrepresentation in academic material, and a lack of diversity in instructor demographics (Tatum 1997; Tyson 2003, 2011; Carter 2003).

While educational institutions are particularly valuable reproductive mechanisms because of their social legitimacy, institutions without public oversight can be even more effective and efficient reproducers. If official mechanisms for the transmission of capital become restricted, “the effects of the clandestine circulations of capital in the form of cultural capital become determinant in the reproduction of the social structure” (Bourdieu 1986: 26). That is to say, while public institutions are at least ideologically bound to give everyone equality of opportunity, private and voluntary social organizations continue to be critical mechanisms for the transmission and conversion of material and symbolic capital, while also having the internal imperative to bring the maximum profits possible to its membership. These private organizations, what Bourdieu calls “select clubs,” are “deliberately organized in order to concentrate social capital and so to derive full benefit

from the multiplier effect implied in concentration” (Bourdieu 1986:22). A prestigious group creates resources above and beyond the additive accumulated resources of its members; the collective material and symbolic capital of a select club is increased exponentially as new members bring in resources. Similarly, members of private organizations have an incentive to be wary of new members; by “[introducing] new members into...a club, its fines, its boundaries, and its identity, is put at stake, exposed to redefinition, alteration, adulteration” (1986:22). In thinking about the reproduction of status in the American context, where social actors are suspicious of oligarchical nepotism in favor of meritocratic egalitarianism, theorists of social reproduction illuminate some ways contemporary American elites are ideologically distinct from Bourdieu’s French sample, and others where social processes and outcomes of social reproduction are persistent.

*Complicating Bourdieu: How American Contexts Challenge and Extend
Capital and Reproduction*

Research done on American elites since the 1990s represents a complication of the conclusions of Bourdieu’s work. Given the meritocratic epistemology of American society, where social actors are encouraged to embrace openness and egalitarianism, theorists outline the ways in which symbolic capital is often seen as a more authentic and defensible marker of class status in comparison to economic capital alone. Some academics have argued that Bourdieu’s work is inapplicable to the American context; that his French perspective is incompatible with the ideological values of meritocracy and class egalitarianism that are the bedrock of mainstream American culture (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007). Others argue that such cultural-epistemological differences may be meaningful in the symbolic mechanisms that social actors engage while navigating

stratification, but the structural inequality present in contemporary America is not wholly distinct from the context from which Bourdieu wrote his main theoretical works (2007; Lamont et al 1996). American elites certainly engage in social reproduction to facilitate the maintenance of individual and collective status over time, it's just that Americans tend to utilize different symbolic articulations to describe the substance within, and boundaries around, stratified communities. Sociological work on social reproduction in the American context illuminate ways that elite practices have adapted to the cultural demands of American culture; namely that American elites have moved from a cultural epistemology of bright class boundaries towards an ideological lens that is ostensibly class neutral and democratic. Such meritocratic epistemologies then shape both the behaviors, and discursive justifications (or "accountings"), for such elite behaviors (Sherwood 2010). Symbolic boundaries are activated to maintain and explain social distance, but such boundaries rely on "soft values" of moral, emotional, and social ethics, rather than cultural competency. Secondly, such a frame demands engagement with cultural materials on a "meritocratic" basis, rather than privilege, "snobbery." Finally, American researchers have maintained Bourdieu's assertion that institutions are particular nodes of social reproduction, and act as the most efficient socialization mechanisms for the absorption of cultural and social norms outside of families.

While Bourdieu traces his main stratifying forces (cultural capital, habitus, social closure) to mezzo-level and micro-level socialization processes, tastes that are locally defined and then hegemonically exercised, Michelle Lamont argues that the local tastes and practices of elites are constructed via "macrostructural determinants and cultural repertoires" (1992:181). The pastiche of cultural objects that are considered high- or low-brow, gain that designation because of the symbolic boundary negotiations of the elites

that separate some cultural objects from others. The symbolic boundaries that are salient in the American context are not the same ones that are salient within a French context; the shape and utility of boundaries in each are linked to whatever national cultural toolkits are available (Swidler 1986). She argues that the national culture of French elites drives them to erect symbolic boundaries around cultural capital, with the assumption that cultural refinement is wedded to socioeconomic resources (Lamont 1992). Americans, on the other hand, are socialized to draw symbolic boundaries using moral considerations; how honest, or hardworking, or empathetic one is, with socioeconomic resources and cultural knowledge having secondary salience. Not only are these moral symbolic boundaries indicative of an American ethos of individual merit, or the importance of character, but such symbolic boundaries also work to obscure the shape of stratification in the United States. Using morality, manners, and judgements of “goodness,” as meaningful symbolic boundaries in a society allows for multimodal use of this boundary in order to retain status and dignity, even if a social actor has little material capital. Working class people use such moral boundaries to bestow status upon themselves against the lazy poor, and the unethical rich (Lamont 2000). Minority groups emphasize patterns of caring, empathy, and fictive kinship, to strengthen bonds across their racialized “imagined community,” to position themselves against ethnic blacks without this moral capital, and distinguish themselves against white, indifferent individualism (Lamont 2000).

Meritocratic rule assumes systemic fairness, individual self-cultivation, and reward of hard work. This epistemological framework exists at all levels of American strata, but are particularly visible in the “discursive repertoires” of elites (Frankenberg 2003; Khan 2011; Khan and Jerolmack 2013; Stuber 2006). Work on discursive repertoires has

revealed a particular usefulness in a social actor's habits of avoiding, silencing, or minimizing the salience of race, class, or gender in their speech (Frankenberg 2003; Bonilla-Silva 2014; Stuber 2006; Muller 2017; Nenga 2011). In particular, social actors who hold privileged positions often talk about the behaviors, trends, and opportunities of marginalized groups by dismissing, avoiding, or declaring ignorance of those group's experiences. Discursive repertoires around class illuminate ways that upper-class people engage in evasive, minimizing, obfuscating linguistic strategies that lead to an epistemological "blind spot" around their own class status (Stuber 2006). In comparison to working-class youth, upper-class young people display a high amount of ambivalence, ambiguity, and apprehension in explaining and analyzing class dynamics. Stuber finds that upper-class people perform uncertainty when asked to self-identify their class status ("equivocation"), lean on meritocratic discourses of "choice" to explain class inequality, and point to social homophily and socioeconomic homogeneity as the reason for their "class-blind" habitus. When elites talk about stratification, and their place in the class system, the macro-cultural frame of American meritocracy shapes the discursive repertoires available to social actors, and leads them to an overwhelming adherence to a meritocratic framework of inequality (Lamont 1992, Kahn 2012). While recognizing macro-level inequality in American schools or neighborhoods, elite students often still see their success as the result of their own hard work and self-development (Kahn 2012; Sherwood 2010). They had achieved their social position because of their own merit, those who were outside of the walls of elite institutions simply do not have the right academic and cultural qualifications to gain admittance. Kahn argues that part of the adherence to meritocracy, despite persistent inequality, is the diversity of the elite since the 1970s (Domhoff 2006). The presence of racial diversity, in particular, undergirds the

notion that the American system is fundamentally fair, and furthermore, that group based mechanisms for advantage (Affirmative Action, in particular) undermine the meritocratic promise of America. This “dominant stratification ideology” naturalizes and legitimates inequality by framing it as meritocratic, and a function of individual efforts to adhere to the demands of hegemonic markets (Khan 2012; Sherwood 2010). For Khan, American elites not only see their place in the world as a result of their own hard work, but also apply a frame of meritocratic democracy to their cultural consumption.

Work on cultural consumption has outlined the evolution of elite taste from high-brow and refined culture, to a more comprehensive palate. Bourdieu argues that taste marks social distinction because of its intimate connection with capital; material availability, cultural value, and social recognition work together to socialize the aesthetic and consumptive preferences of social actors (Bourdieu 1984). Elites, then, work to develop distinguished palates with the ability to identify and appreciate “highbrow” culture and eschew “lowbrow” culture, both flexing their hegemonic power of cultural definition, and reasserting social legitimacy of the social actors that engage them. For Bourdieu, taste is about distinction, and discrimination, but American elites mark their status with cultural omnivorousness, discourses of openness and choice, and an emphasis on experience and skill rather than material symbolism (Kahn 2012a; Peterson and Kern 1996; Jarness 2017). Work on taste diversity in upper class communities is foundational for challenging Bourdieu’s notion of exclusive high-brow taste. American elites are marked by the culturally omnivorous taste—that is to say, they consume “legitimate” high-brow, “mainstream,” and low-brow cultural items with little class-linked judgement. Working-class or poor people are characterized by mainly or exclusively consuming “illegitimate,” low-brow culture (Peterson 1997; Peterson and Kern 1996; Ferrant 2018).

This trend toward consumptive diversity is justified by leaning on the existing meritocratic framework. Elites can consume everything from “Beowulf to Jaws” (Kahn 2012). They may not necessarily have a “taste” for everything, but they are open to trying everything; the cultural items that they ultimately prefer can be justified as simply a matter of democratic choice. Elites resist being labelled “snobs” by performing openness to high-brow and low-brow cultural items; and in turn they can use this openness as a moral cudgel against working-class people, who remain “closeminded” without the material resources to engage diverse experiences. If performing “snobbishness” is the cultural mode of the French elite, then performing “openness” and “meritocracy” is both a cultural and moral imperative for the American elite (Kahn 2012; Lizardo and Skiles 2012).

While American national cultures have illuminated the ways that symbolic boundaries and discursive toolkits are contextual, and therefore illuminate how elites in American contexts articulate and enforce cultural boundaries distinctly from French contexts, scholars have found evidence of the persistent value of institutions in socializing norms, and facilitating networks. Schools remain a critically efficient mechanism for capital accumulation and legitimation (Khan 2012; Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Calarco 2014), but non-educational institutions represent similarly fruitful sites of cultural and social reproduction. Social institutions, private clubs, and philanthropic organizations are dense sites of social reproduction, and the “accumulation of social advantage” because of the multiple forms of capital, which are both used as boundary-markers around such organizations, and which are then socialized into young people in such organizations (Kendall 2002; 2008; Sherwood 2010; DeLuca and Andrews 2016). Economic capital is the norm most obviously engaged in social clubs,

many have membership fees, or philanthropic standards that act as barriers for admission. Even philanthropic or volunteer organizations, that rely on the intense work of the membership, assumes the privilege of having plenty of free time in order to commit to the demands of the organization, and not be committed to waged labor (Ostrander 1980).

Secondly, social actors generally tend to gain access to elite social organizations through their existing social capital; one's existing network connections to organizational insiders acts as a kind of "credential" towards one's own membership (DeLuca and Andrews 2016; Bourdieu 1986). Social actors within elite organizations actively cultivate dense internal networks, and express great value in such relationships; simultaneously they maintain fairly rigid social mechanisms of distinction and exclusion around their communities (Sherwood 2010). Social clubs are access points to a larger elite community, and elites and non-elites alike recognize their power; upwardly mobile social actors are therefore incentivized to seek access to these privileged spaces, and elites are incentivized to protect the resource density of the network (Ostrander 1980; Kendall 2002). On one hand, this pseudo closure is utilitarian; exclusive networks provide Bourdieu's "multiplier effect" (Bourdieu 1986). On the other hand, social relationships feel like the realm of affect, and not strategic production. Social actors in exclusive organizations use a discourse that emphasizes social life or friendship to effectively blur the reproductive value of social exclusion, and the consequences of such private and "free" associations (Sherwood 2010). By emphasizing the social and friendship aspect of the relationships between elites, these social actors render these meaningful mechanisms invisible from social and academic scrutiny. Theorists argue that women use social capital particularly well, as mechanisms for organizational access and membership of the larger community (Ostrander 1980; Kendall 2008; Sherwood 2010). While Sherwood's

work on elite country clubs outlines the ways that such organizations reproduce conservative, sexist relationships between men and women (in that women are both segregated from, and subordinate to, men in the country club), she also finds that women are key reproducers and legitimators of class inequality. Other work finds that women, and women's organizations, act as screening mechanisms for elite newcomers; an ability to "fit in" via cultural habitus or social likability works to inculcate you into the social network at large. Newcomers not only have to be "'sponsored' into eventual [organizational] membership," but their overall social mobility is similarly sponsored, and relies upon the cohesion of their social networks to facilitate this process (Ostrander 1980; Kendall 2008).

Finally, elite clubs are locations for the accumulation of cultural capital, whether that be through implicit role-modeling, embodied habitus, or concerted cultural education (DeLuca 2013; DeLuca and Andrews 2016). As "incubators" of cultural capital, private clubs socialize children into the norms of the community; mastery of these norms is foundational for maintaining community social cohesion. Capitals are "individually significant and speak to distinct competencies" but are also "mutually constitutive and reinforcing, and acquired in dialectic fashion as they are both constrained and produced in and through forms and levels of one and another" (DeLuca and Andrews 2016:319). Therefore, clubs operate as spaces of capital transformation, economic capital facilitates access to a space wherein cultural capital is developed and reproduced, such cultural similarity strengthens the network bonds through which one activates their social capital for the goal of accessing opportunities, to make more economic capital, and so on. Private organizations therefore act as sites (or, "fields") for the social reproduction of both material and symbolic capital. It is with the American elite, and the private clubs

that they inhabit, in mind, that we turn to the case of Jack and Jill, and its intersectional membership.

Engaging Class Privilege via Stigma

Goffman argues that social actors have two broad strategies to negotiate dignity and get respect in a world where some physical stigma precludes them from full social citizenship: they might foster an in-group orientation, where they develop meaningful network ties with other similarly stigmatized individuals. In an in-group orientation, they gain the comfort of commiseration and a training space in which to practice destigmatizing behaviors. Other stigmatized individuals might develop an out-group orientation, focused on minimizing the perceived differences between themselves and “normals.” One’s group alignment certainly influences how a social actor is going to behave, and out-group orientations demand mastery of “disidentifiers,” or symbol of prestige that “break up an otherwise coherent picture...not so much establishing a new claim as throwing severe doubt on the validity of the virtual ones” (Goffman 1968:44). If a stigmatized identity assumes immediate expulsion from normal life, hegemonic symbols can complicate that social reflex; at the very least, mastery of dis-identifying strategies might buy one some time, and open an opportunity to negotiate social incorporation. One example is the ‘good English’ of an educated and Northern Negro visiting the south.” (Goffman 1968 pp.44). If the virtual status of race is disqualifying from complete social integration, then a Negro’s vocabulary, accent, or speech patterns can cast doubt on an immediate racist dismissal. Perhaps one person’s use of disidentifiers does not affect the whole stigmatized group, but for a stigmatized individual seeking entrance into a “normal” institution or social group, the use of symbols—cultural capital in the form of narrative, behavioral, and material strategies—

can act as a signal that this stigmatized person is normal enough for integration. “Similarly,” Goffman asserts, “black skinned Negroes who have never passed publicly may nonetheless find themselves in writing letters or making telephone calls, projecting an image of self that is subject to later discrediting” (74). It seems that since stigma—both bearing and negotiating it as a stigmatized person and interpreting and punishing it as a normal person—is a fundamentally social process, its affects are contextual rather than absolute. If we take Goffman’s two examples on race, a Negro can ease the negative effects of their racial stigma if they can effectively deploy “disidentifiers” to signal to normals (whites) that they share some kind of class, religion, or culturally based likeness with them.

Conceptualizing Class: Discursive Denial Alongside Concerted Cultivation

Work on the black middle class has illuminated the ways that these intersectional social actors utilize symbolic capital to challenge patterns of marginalization in all-white spaces. Black elites utilize cultural materials, and embodied capital in order to strategically assimilate in professional settings (Lacy 2007). This chapter outlines the ways that my research subjects adhere to the discursive and behavioral trends of (white) American elites, yet operationalize such norms as mechanisms of destigmatization. It outlines the ways that members of this intersectional community engage class as an important reproductive identity. I find that subjects seek to socialize a particular kind of fluency around race into their children; one that largely adheres to the norms of the American hegemonic elite, but emphasizes boundaries around morals and values, particularly because of their racial positionality. While parents seek to develop ideologies of class insignificance, they simultaneously seek to facilitate opportunities for capital

accumulation. They “account for” differences in capital accumulation by relying on individualist notions of resource egalitarianism and cultural omnivorous, and account for class homophily in their social lives as a likeness in values or morals, rather than strategic engagement. The formal organization of Jack and Jill works as a site for socializing these class identities; socializing cultural capital while simultaneously reframing such concerted cultivation as value-driven, class neutral, choice. Building on the literature around race, cultural capital, and social integration (Lacy 2007, Feagin and Sikes 1994, Banks 2012), I argue that the reproduction of these class norms not only works as a signal of similarity and legitimacy in the overwhelmingly white neighborhoods and occupational spaces of my subjects, but indicate a marker of belonging for this intersectional community. Just as persistent racism draws these social actors together in a protectionary stance, the strategic reproduction and accumulation of capitals similarly incentivizes these communities to engage in boundary-making around a classed community, bisecting the existing racial one.

Class Silence: “Well, I don't think it's doing anything more than his school is doing. I think that for him, it's just normal”

Obscuring the meaning and value of class distinction was one of them main formation strategies of this sample. Most participants balked when I asked about what children learned about class at home and in the organization. For the majority of the moms in my study (15/16 mothers), a class identity is not central to the way they articulate their own experience, and they similarly rejected the notion that lessons about class were part of their socialization strategies as parents. Similar to Stuber’s findings, mothers talked about the class homogeneity of neighborhoods and schools, and the ways that that experience rendered class an unimportant marker. Families were able to avoid

having class “define” them, because they were often surrounded by class peers in their neighborhoods, at work, and at school. “I never really harped on it,” says Mrs. Hill, a mother of two adult children in Philadelphia, “You know, it was what it was, they were in the situation they were in. It wasn't really a conversation that we've ever had to have.” She goes on to say, that though she didn't talk to her kids about class, she believes that they “inherently” picked up on it; her children attended a prestigious private school in the area and regularly went to events with friends who's “houses would have like, 15 bedrooms, and they're like ‘ok.’ So, my kids got used to that because that was the environment that they were in.” So many people in the Hill family's social network were both black and wealthy, rendering both statuses to be seen as normal, so the most obvious messages about class were the ones that her children received from white peers and the media, “which was ‘oh black people are in the inner city, and we, white people are wealthier’ and both of my kids, I can recall on numerous occasions saying ‘well I can point to cases where I know black people who will run circles around white folk.’ So, I think that was interesting.”

The socioeconomic homophily of these social actors' lives are conceptualized as normal, and therefore amoral. Similar to the ways that moms talk about the value of racial homogeneity in Jack and Jill (rendering it a space of safety), moms talk about the benefit of class homogeneity as well, making it a safe space for their children, who would not have to “explain” themselves to co-ethnic, but working class, contacts:

Mrs. Stewart: The choice I made about Jack and Jill again is because I was very clear in my head, at the time, that I did not want my children to feel that they had to apologize to anybody for any experience and opportunity that they had because their father and I work very hard to do the things that we've done for them, or to give them the advantages or benefits, opportunities, privileges, whatever, however you want to say it, so they have nothing to apologize for, and really truly, they don't have anything. We've had it or we're working at it, and the only reason we got it is because our

parents worked very hard to put us in a position to do this. And whatever I can pass down to them in that regard and give them some pride in knowing that their grandfather worked hard and saved savings bonds, war savings bonds, so I could go to college, so I could go to law school, so that they could have certain opportunities. I wanted them to know that, take pride in that, and use that and make the most of it.

Mrs. Richard's narrative illuminates the ways that parents seek to neutralize or obscure the ways that class organizes their lives, and avoid what they might see as uncomfortable situations between their children and their children's peers. She quickly shifts to framing socioeconomic privilege (or benefits, opportunities, whatever) as about hard work, a symbolic boundary strategy meant to reassert adherence to American ideologies around meritocracy. We will return to a discussion on this frame in the next section.

To the degree that mothers would talk about class, they emphasized its unimportance. Class, for moms, is often conceptualized as a boundary to be "transcended." Moms talk about the meaninglessness of class when it comes to familial relationships. Because so many of my respondents have extended family members in lower-class strata, the ability to interact with such family without class distinctions impeding group cohesiveness is a priority for moms. In talking about how she raised her college-aged son, Nathan, Mrs. Bennett underlined that although she taught her son that class "existed" and "served a purpose, good, bad, or indifferent" she wanted to focus his growth on being able to "transcend class when necessary. With other family members, or when we're out, or whenever necessary."

Interviewer: What does that mean to you, the ability to "transcend" class?

Mrs. Bennett: Well it means that you were able to see the value of the individual, or individuals you are engaged with at that time. Whether it's academic, whether it's social, whether it's business, or anything and view them as an equal. Versus either inferior or superior. That's it.

Mothers seem to see these intra-familial contacts as edifying in two ways. On one hand, parents point to the financial situations of family members in order to break up the class-homogeneity of their child's social world; it is an educational opportunity to help develop sympathy for classed-others. On the other hand, the affective link between family members is meant to supersede any social barriers that might be present in other inter-class relationships; it teaches children that class doesn't matter because they have family members of different class statuses and they love them.

While growing up in overwhelmingly white, overwhelmingly upper-middle class, and elite neighborhoods, the children in my sample reported that interactions with working-class family members represented most of the substantive interactions that they had with class-others. Some described visiting family members in neighborhoods with audible gun violence, others read a geographic difference as class difference (many children would visit family in the "country"). As intended by moms, these interactions were saturated with simultaneous implicit lessons about class difference, and about the meaninglessness of those differences. Samara, a sophomore at an elite university in the Northeast, has memories of noticing class distinctions and then dismissing them, particularly when it came to familial relationships. For her, "Status didn't matter that much, I guess, with my mom's family is an example. At family reunions most of our family on my mom's side lives in Durham. A lot different than Philadelphia where I live. I would say this: they weren't as well off. They knew that as well as we knew that. Their status didn't determine what type of people they were. Despite the fact that they weren't doing so well economically sometimes, I guess asking my family for money, stuff like that. I didn't see it. They were always offering me love, reaching out to me on my birthdays and stuff like that. I didn't feel like there was any real separation. We were still

family.” To emphasize the importance of family cohesiveness, and minimize intra-family class distinction, reveals something important in the ways that the members of this community understand class-talk. The “goodness” of an individual is really what one should value.

To talk about privilege or one’s place in class stratification is impolite—13 of the 30 interviewees responded to questions about class by talking about elitism, and how non-elitist they are. Undoubtedly, the inarticulacy that my sample displays when talking about class is part of the meritocratic, individualist epistemology native to Americans (Gorman 2003; Stuber 2006). If the hegemonic narrative frame is one of meritocracy, stigmatized social actors tend to adhere to such norms when seeking social incorporation. When asked about class, my sample often reframed talk about material capital into a conversation about manners, “values,” and general “positivity” as the real signals of status.

Morals and Skill:

“I think that our understanding of class comes from our Christian upbringing. I want him to understand that. I mean he’s around people who are extremely privileged, and he’s beginning to act very privileged”

In examining the ways that working- and middle-class men think and talk about class stratification, Lamont’s (2000) work on symbolic boundaries illuminates the ways that social actors make sense of structural differences between social groups. Social groups engage boundary-making processes to help them determine which people are “like them” and which are “not like them”; this is true even for those that are socially disadvantaged. Social boundary literature outlines the ways that social actors utilize flexible qualifications to distinguish themselves from social groups they see as “below” them, yet also retain dignity with distinction from social groups seen as “above” them.

For marginalized in particular, moral boundaries are foundational to distinctions between themselves and immoral elites who they see as “snobby, high-maintenance, materialistic, and elitist” (Stuber 2006; Lamont 2000). While working class people may not have the material capital to be financially “superior” to social elites, they have the capacity to maintain their own moral dignity in the face of social marginality. The ability to create moral boundaries between oneself and those “above” is not limited to working class people; the upper-class people in Stuber’s discursive frames work displayed high levels of fluency in moral boundary-making, marking people who were even more elite than themselves as immoral or socially problematic. Both Lamont and Stuber note these moral boundary-making processes as socially reproductive, socializing newcomers into a shared habitus of virtue, and marking those who are boastful, spoiled, or “privileged” as outsiders. The subjects in my sample draw boundaries around themselves in ways that mark themselves as both morally superior to those “above” them, and culturally superior to those “below.” Being appropriately classed, is primarily about one’s manners, and morals; to be elitist, snobby, and rude undermines one’s veneer of legitimacy. “In Jack and Jill” Mrs. Coleman argues, “you certainly have some black families that are in powerful positions who don't get it because, like Clarence Thomas, who think they pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps. They've never been around positive black people, maybe, and they think the only HNIC [Head Negro in Charge] is them; that there aren't other people around.” The narratives of this community mark their own performance of class as positive and acceptable, in contrast to the performance of other class-actors, which they see elitist, immoral, and subordinate to themselves.

The way Mrs. Mitchell framed class as fundamentally rooted in a moral disposition, was incredibly common amongst both moms and children. Rather than

answer questions about class, respondents often reframed the discussion to center “classiness” as an amalgamation of manners and cultural competence. Mrs. Edwards is the daughter of Caribbean immigrants, and the mother of 3 young children, who works as a lawyer in New York. When asked about what she teaches her children about class she replied:

Mrs. Edwards: [Deep sigh] Don’t embarrass me. Don’t embarrass me, don’t embarrass yourself. So, class and status, do not necessarily have to do with financial net worth. And no matter what you’re doing, and how much money you have, I would want my kids to always maintain their values, maintain their dignity, and stay as cultured as possible. Because you can obviously be classy no matter class you’re in.

Interviewer: And by “classy,” what you mean by that?

Mrs. Edwards: Cultured and educated. I mean if you have to tell people you have class, you probably don’t. My kids should work hard to represent themselves in a manner that’s befitting for them. Just because of how they were raised, who their parents are, who their grandparents are. And what their values are. And it really doesn’t matter.

This summary of “classiness” seamlessly blends a moral and emotional standard (do not act in a way that is embarrassing to me, display your values) with cultural capital (cultural knowledge and “education”). She intentionally separates the notion of classiness from possession of material capital, and then dismisses the notion that class is a meaningful category at all. She brightens boundaries around moral capital while seeking to blur boundaries around material capital. Mothers in the sample express similar anxiety about how their children’s class experience may have facilitated a decline in their manners, and they are particularly sensitive to accusations of elitism. Though I, as an interviewer, never utilized “elitist” as a descriptor, 13 individual subjects (both mothers and children) utilized “elite” or “elitist” unprompted, particularly to talk about how much their experience was not reflective of elitism. Moms and children alike, recognize that the formal organization engages a degree of selectivity, but there is not much agreement on

what selectivity means for the moral legitimacy (the snobbishness or elitism) of the organization. Mrs. Coby talks about the perception of elitism as little more than a public relations problem:

Mrs. Coby: I think we could do better, in the sense that even for myself, when I was first learning about Jack and Jill, I think there is this notion of this elitist component to the organization. Which I don't think I'm elitist at all! But I've heard other people call the organization elitist, and I'm like "well what makes you say that?"

Interviewer: What do you think they mean by that?

Mrs. Coby: Well I've asked, and people say, "oh well, you only want to be with people who are just like you, or you have to have a certain amount of money." And I'm like, that isn't necessarily true. I mean there is a financial component to it, that is true. But like everything else, it's how you decide you spend your money. Because I'm not independently wealthy, so therefore, for me, Jack and Jill does demand, on occasion, it does demand sacrifice, but it's a sacrifice I'm willing to make.

This illuminates the collective anxiety around a negative moral perception, and mothers are diligent in their boundary-maintenance against people who are "spoiled" or "entitled." Despite acknowledging the inherent selectivity of the organization, Coby does not see herself as elitist, and therefore does not envision her participation in Jack and Jill as elitist. Instead, she reframes the membership fee requirements as part of a larger framework of financial agency, strategic investment, and ultimately, personal values. Nevertheless, outside accusations of the elitism within Jack and Jill are so common, respondents seemed primed to tell me stories about how their experience undermined that assumption. Several moms pointed to men and fathers as particularly suspicious of the elitism of the organization. Ms. Edwards, Ms. Wadia, Ms. Coleman, and Ms. Vance produced narratives of talking to a prospective mother, whose husband had deep reservations about the club. Despite such resistance, the women in my sample were enthusiastic about membership, and eager to dispel accusations of self-serving social

exclusivity. Just as in Sherwood's work on how elites account for racially reproductive habits, many of the mothers emphasized the positive aspects of the organization: scholarship drives for students in need, community service projects for the less fortunate, and the plethora of resources, experiences, and connections that their own kids enjoy. While there are certainly "bad apples" in the organization, "the benefits far outweigh the negatives" for Mrs. Adams. "I think people who aren't in Jack and Jill totally dog it, all the time. I feel like I'm constantly defending Jack and Jill and what it does. And you know, that bothers me a little bit, because I'm like, it's a good thing. It's been really beneficial for my kids and for me as a mom. My kid goes to a big Jack and Jill party at Martha's Vineyard every year, it's just like the hottest thing. My son is flying up early so he can go to the teen party, and making all of these friendships."

Mrs. Bennett, who we heard from earlier, grew up in Jack and Jill as a girl. When we discussed her ambivalence in putting her son, Nathan, into Jack and Jill when he was young, she explained that she did not want him to be caught up in the "negatives" of an upper-class identity, because, "within the black bourgeoisie, growing up in that can give our children a false sense of privilege, that translates into a sense of entitlement. That can be, in my opinion, a barrier when it comes to transcending class, as we talked about earlier. So, I didn't put Nathan in Jack and Jill in the early years because I didn't want him to have that superiority complex, or that entitlement complex" (Mrs. Bennett). A strong class identity puts one on the path towards a "superiority complex," perhaps this is uniquely frustrating for moms because it complicates the narrative of class meaninglessness. An explicit acknowledgement of class advantage undermines morals and virtue as the true meaning of classiness. As a strategy, in response to this fear, Mrs. Bennett decided to only place Nathan in the local chapter when he was getting ready to

transition out of a majority-black school and into an elite majority-white school. As outlined in the chapter on local racial formations, moms highlight Jack and Jill as an oasis of racial acceptance, familiarity, and comfort in a desert of white educational, neighborhood, and occupational spaces. During that time of racial isolation at school, the benefit of having black peers outweighed any apprehension that she had about his class socialization.

Children similarly articulated messages around appropriate affective displays as a major component of class identity. Nearly half of the children's sample talked about manners as a major aspect of their socialization; they had parents who wanted them to be "good people," and not see themselves as "different" from others. They marked themselves as distinct from young people "above" them, who might "crash a BMW and have a new one the next week" both because my sample did not see themselves not poorly behaved enough to crash such an expensive car, and because they had parents who would do the moral work of "putting their foot down" and creating reasonable material boundaries for them (Bianca). Lawrence, who grew up in a chapter on Long Island, illuminated the negotiation between inheriting material privilege, and performing appropriate moral norms so that in-group members would see you as "positive":

Lawrence: I mean, I guess I do live a good life, but I was never spoiled. I went to school, and especially here in Long Island, here is a different lifestyle. High school, they're coming to school in the newest Jeep, white Jeep, their parents were millionaires, and stuff. It's crazy, I go to a house, it's crazy, they have maids and all that stuff; spoiled. My parents instilled the rules since I was like elementary school. Chores, you know. I'd want certain things, they'd be like, "No, we don't got it like that," or, "You gotta understand, you don't need everything that you want." Explaining manners and being a gentleman, being humble, not being an asshole.

Interviewer: So how would you know if somebody is spoiled, or being an asshole? Like, what evidence would you use to notice that?

Lawrence: Someone who's bratty, like they don't get something that they want, and they freak out, they don't know how to react.

Like Mrs. Mitchell, Lawrence highlights the perceived tension between the unearned, but likely inevitable, access to material capital which happens when children have access to parents' resources. Parents give children "a lot," but also seek to develop an emotional habitus that is humble, grateful, and not spoiled. One way this is accomplished, in Lawrence's case, is to create a system of work and reward—he frames his parent's chore requirements as part of the 'rules', and marks their boundaries around "wants" and "needs" as implicitly guiding him towards a local affective habitus.

As much as respondents in my sample sought to brighten moral boundaries between themselves and the spoiled, privileged, people "above" them, several respondents also outlined cultural boundaries between themselves and people "below" them. To build these boundaries, they similarly leaned on narratives about behavioral and cultural "values," arguing that people like them would perform these values to mark their insider status (Goffman 1951; Lamont 1992). Highlighting "values" was a main strategy to talk about class distinction without the worry that you were being rude; "community members simply want to be around people who value the same things they value," is the message. When I ask, what it is that this community values, respondents often cite hard work, education, dedication to family cohesion. Other times, respondents talk about values as behavioral codes that straddle the boundary between affect/attitude and an embodied habitus that points to local behavioral codes. This is particularly true when moms talk about marriage or partner choice for their children. I talk at length about the ways gender intersects with race and class standards for the community, in the next chapter, but Mrs. Hill's description of a potential son-in-law illuminates the ways that symbolic boundaries

are engaged to emphasize value similarity, and effectively divert accusations of unsavory class consciousness.

Mrs. Hill: I personally would be concerned that she's dating someone who comes from family value system that is similar to ours. I'm not saying that he has to come from a certain amount of wealth, but he's got to know how to navigate. Have the manners, know that when you sit down to dinner you're not wearing your baseball cap. Maybe he has a father in his life that taught him some things, or a man, I don't care it doesn't have to be a father, that taught him to hold the door for her, and treat her right. And she cares about those things, she's mentioned them to me.

Other moms mentioned that they wanted their daughters to marry college-educated men; not because a college diploma is necessary for any high-income, high-prestige occupation, but simply because it would be a signal that the husband, and his family, share the same "values" as the existing community. To frame this choice as personal, and not communal, obscures the role that class community plays in the development of such an attitude. Mrs. Wadia's conversation about class socialization is helpful to think about how education is utilized as a polite evasion of class. She is an Ivy-League educated physician, with a daughter in high school, and a son in middle school. When I ask her about her thoughts concerning social status and her kids, she leans on education as a "value," arguing that "you know, I can only speak in terms of education, and education certainly does not absolutely mean class" (Mrs. Wadia).

Interviewer: What kind of lessons do you want your children to know about class or status?

Mrs. Wadia: I don't know. I don't talk to them in terms of class. In terms of education, I talk to them. I would love for both of them to be physicians and we are gearing towards that. And everything that we do, we say "you know, it's not a big deal to be a doctor. You know, if you're a doctor you can still sell pizza. Or, you can still be a teacher if you're a doctor" Everything I do, I try to talk to them in terms of, you know "You could still do that if you were a doctor. You could be a singing doctor! You can be a journalist doctor!" But you're going to get your MD first.

Discursively, Mrs. Wadia seeks to disentangle education and occupation from class, yet does recognize that there is a difference between being a pizza deliveryman, a singer, or a teacher, and being a physician. Part of this is certainly her own parental bias; as a doctor, she wants her children to follow a path that has given her so much occupational satisfaction. But I believe that this narrative speaks to the ability to implicitly teach her children about prestige and status without the accusation that she is being classist or elitist. This is further illuminated in a conversation that we have about her niece's college choices. Mrs. Wadia's niece, by her telling, is incredibly smart and talented, and we discuss how her niece is debating whether to attend an Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), particularly an Ivy League college. In our conversation, Wadia suggests that her niece's desire to go to a majority-black university is understandable given her racial isolation in her neighborhood and at school. This niece was not in Jack and Jill, and therefore could not use that racialized space as an outlet, safe space, or peer network, so Wadia can understand why she is craving an experience of racial centrality; but ultimately, she sees that decision as a mistake. Like many black parents, she draws from her own experiences of discrimination, and professional disrespect, as a warning for her kids' future. She wants to facilitate the mechanisms that might help her kids resist stigmatization, and she feels as if educational choices will set up additional options for them. She recognizes the power of institutionalized cultural capital and its particular salience given racial marginalization.

Mrs. Wadia: I just don't want my kids to feel discriminated against, even though I know they're going to feel that, and it's unfortunate because once I think my niece goes to college, then she's going to want to go to the next level, and it's a bit more difficult when you don't start with Harvard.

Interviewer: So, you're saying that going to an HBCU might be a bit of a disadvantage when she wants to go to grad-school?

Mrs. Wadia: I think yeah. I'll be honest. Do I want my kids to go to an HBCU? I don't. Because where you go to school it matters. It really does. It *really does*. And I don't want my kids to have to experience that disadvantage. I want them to have options, and I want them to have more options than I've ever had. And I know the things that I've strived for; I've strived for Ivy League my husband went to the same school, so that was one of my ending points. But you can just write your ticket, wherever you choose to go. My thing is, just, the more options, the better you are in life.

I will return to a discussion of “options” and “choice” in the next section, but Mrs. Wadia’s discursive strategy here challenges many subjects’ statements that it is simply “education” that they value. When my subjects say they value education, it does not broadly include community college or trade school. Moms “value” university education, and the more prestigious, the better. It is in alignment with the American expectation of education as the meritocratic mechanism for social advancement. To say that one values education is meant to seem class neutral; mothers, in particular, position themselves as having good (or “positive”) values by indicating that they prize education, and draw bright boundaries between those who “don’t value it as much as [they’d] like.” Yet, “valuing” education is not enough; children must have the right kind of education, given a choice between a top-tier HBCU and an Ivy League school like Harvard, moms calculate that the institutional capital from a PWI is more valuable than a diploma from an HBCU. While the notion that HBCUs are not prestigious was not a universal opinion, it was a common one in my sample. (HBCUs have a recognized internal stratification, which is not productive to get into, here). Mrs. Wadia is sympathetic to her niece wanting a black experience, and HCBUs are certainly a mechanism for racial affirmation, but they are not efficient mechanisms of “capital accumulation” and elite network socialization. To this point, some of the children had stories about their family’s discussion of college

options. Marjorie ended up in an Ivy League university, but before making her final decision, she described being pulled two ways by her parent's preference. Her mother went to an Ivy League, and her father was a proud alumnus of an HBCU, both felt strongly that Marjorie should follow in their footsteps:

Marjorie: My parents just raised me saying, "Either you go to an HBC, or you go to an Ivy League, nothing in between." I don't know why. It's unique, but that was how they felt about things. They said, "An HBC gives you a sense of self that no other PWI could give you. People care about you there, people will nourish you there. At an Ivy League, you got a superb education, and rigorous thinking skills." I don't know. I feel like that they shouldn't be mutually exclusive, but that was their reasoning.

Marjorie's parents illuminate a choice between the affective relationships of an HBCU, and the intellectual rigor of an Ivy League; her retelling does not include an argument for a land-grant university with in-state tuition. Like Mrs. Wadia, who ultimately returns to the American discursive standard of meritocratic stratification, cultural openness and the notion of egalitarian "choice," many parents have mastered discourses of omnivorosity. Yet such discursive frames serve to obscure practices of cultural distinction, meant as destigmatizing strategies and boundary processes.

Performing Omnivorosity, Practicing Strategic Distinction:

"So, I don't think he's learning any significant lessons about class, even though for example, when I'm in my activity, I want all of my activities to be activities where the children are exposed to all aspects of class. So, for me, I want to make sure that the activities I plan for the children give them exposure to all levels of class. So that they will know how to feel comfortable. I want our children to feel comfortable wherever they go."

Bourdieu argues that, just as behaviors, education, and habits are stratified by class, taste is not distributed randomly. Part of the bodily habitus of each class is a prevalence towards some materials and an aversion to others (1984). Elites engage in dual processes to make this happen: social closure and exclusive high-brow consumption. Theorists on the modern American context have thoroughly complicated this framework. While a French socio-historical context means that French people are comfortable with

an oligarchical, socially reproductive, semi-permanent elite caste, the individualist ideology of Americans rely on a notion of cultural meritocracy, and therefore a democracy of choice (and finally a democratic inequality).

Elite parents are therefore encouraged to provide a number of activities to their children. On one hand, multiple and diverse activities are meant to cultivate appreciation for a breadth of activities. Children develop the ability to rank activities based on individual choice. On the other hand, exposure to activities are also building valuable symbolic competencies that are tradable in a child's future (Lareau 2003). Nearly all of the moms in my sample talk about the importance of "exposing" their children to lots of different "opportunities" or "experiences." In fact, most of them use discourses of "exposure," "options," "opportunities," and "choice" to explain the main function of Jack and Jill clubs. Some moms pack their children's schedules full of swimming, music lessons, tutoring, religious attendance, and Jack and Jill. Other moms, often moms of young children, may only have one or two additional extracurriculars outside of school. Yet, all of them emphasize the importance of exposing their children to a multiplicity of activities. These exposures, they argue, are important so that children can make their own choices in adulthood. Mrs. Baker, a corporate lawyer, with two teenaged daughters exemplifies the choice narrative. We talked at length about how black people in her experiences suffer distinct disadvantages when it comes to racial discrimination in the workforce and the larger social world. Part of that disadvantage, in her view, is that socially mobile blacks have fewer elite social ties, and therefore cannot rely on rich social networks (rich in social connections, and rich in cultural or institutional knowledge) to avoid structural traps of inequality. For example, when Mr. Baker was young and applying for college, her high school advisor encouraged her to apply to a local school,

rather than to branch out to a top-tier university. She took that advice, but now believes that she could have been competitive at an elite institution, if only someone had pointed that out as an “option” for her.

Mrs. Baker: So that's what I mean by "options." So, while I had the grades, I didn't even have the knowledge at the time to say, "let me try for a couple more, to see what else I can do." Like I'm relatively successful, so I can travel any time I want, that's because I work hard! I worked hard, I went to school part time to get my master's degree. I have options to travel when I want! Other people don't have that, that's the difference. I can choose to put my kids in private school; that's my choice! I can choose to either buy a bigger house, buy a bigger car, or send my kids to private school, that's my option! So that's what I mean by options. You want to be more in control, as much as you can. I say, if you are poor, you don't have options. Well you can, but you do ten times as much as we work to get out of those environments to get those options. You literally have to be plucked out, or your parent has to stay on top of you, to give you those options.

Perhaps to have “options” is to say, without explicitly referencing class inequality, that one can afford to buy themselves out of structural inequality. Now that Mrs. Baker has an incredibly prestigious job, with an accompanying salary, she can “choose” material markers of class (a bigger house or car) or she can “choose” a cultural capital investment (sending her girls to good schools). She acknowledges that without material capital, such “choices” are not available to her, yet does not connect her choice discourse to class dynamics. This does not mean that children, having heard the discourse around choice and opportunity, are unable to make a connection between class and its potential mediating factor upon race. When I asked Lorraine what she thought Jack and Jill taught her about class she suggested that it's role was to help black elite kids “to understand their privilege. Understand that there's certain things that your class, they will protect you from, as a black person.” Yet, when I asked her if she had an example of the ways class can protect you, she seemed to give me a story that supported the opposite point: that class status didn't fundamentally protect you from stigma and disrespect.

Lorraine: Class isn't discussed super often, but it was if there was a story about someone being racially profiled in the news. Especially a prominent person, like when that Harvard professor was arrested in front of his house.

Interviewer: Henry Louis Gates, right?

Lorraine: Yeah. Everyone was talking about it, because listen: he's a Harvard professor. He was arrested outside of his own house. He was arrested because police didn't think that, didn't believe that it was his house. It's kind of like, don't think that you, just because you live in a suburb, that you're not also subject to racial profiling."

While the discourses of Mrs. Baker, and Lorraine seem incongruous, it illuminates one of the major findings on the relationship between race and class in the post-civil rights era. Working-class and poor blacks, because of economic disadvantage are particularly subject to structural mechanisms of racial inequality (lack of resources which have effects in education, health, work, policing, wealth, etc.). Yet many poor, black neighborhoods tend to persistently be class- and race-homogenous over time. Middle-class and elite blacks have relatively more resources, and therefore experience superior baseline public goods. They similarly tend to be in generally race- and class-homogenous neighborhoods and workplaces, but these are white and affluent, rather than poor and black. Because of this constant proximity to (potentially racist) whites, they experience individual discrimination and disrespect by their neighbors, colleagues, or strangers on a more regular basis (Landry 1987; Feagin and Sikes 1994). Mrs. Baker, if you remember, elucidated the value of dense elite networks on access to opportunities in the Race chapter. She recognized that while elites were well versed in activating their social capital; she felt no reservations activating her own social capital for black youth. She echoes Lorraine's ambivalence around class being a fully efficient destigmatizer for minorities; for Mrs. Baker, the ability to have the upper- class freedom to engage "choice" is still constrained by the racial realities of stigma within white spaces.

Mrs. Baker: My daughters need to understand, unfortunately, that that's life. My daughter is going to a Disney senior trip. And I told her, "listen, you're going on a plane, you've gotta look nice." She's like "what do you mean," I said, "You don't have to wear a suit or anything, but your sneakers have to be clean. You have to look nice. Like, people can't even think twice about who you are, or wonder do you belong there." Not that she doesn't dress nice, but you just have to portray a certain decorum for yourself. Pride, that's what's different. White girls can just roll out of bed and have whatever on and they're fine.

Interviewer: So, when you tell your daughter, "when you go on a plane you have to look nice," is that the way that they learn that lesson?

Mrs. Baker: No, it's not just by me, they go by their friends too. Their black friends are pretty together, so I think that's one element of it. But they know I travel a lot, and I can tell them that when I go travel on business, there's an automatic assumption, no matter how I'm dressed, that I go to economy. I always have my ticket in front of me that shows business class or first class, and then it's like "oh." But the automatic assumption is that I don't belong there. And people are never going to assume that you do. You have to prove to them, you have to prove that you do belong there. So, as a black person, you have to dress a certain way, you have to act a certain way. To protect yourself, I think.

Owning expensive clothes is not enough. Again, social actors have to embody appropriate behavioral norms while utilizing those physical symbols, or risk exposing themselves as elite posers. For Kelley, Jack and Jill socializes such behavioral ease, which acts as a mark of elite authenticity. Not only that, such behavioral norms were so foundational to the socialization of Jack and Jill children, that deviance from those norms can be perceived as inauthenticity, or posing.

Kelley: When you're in Jack Jill, that you're held accountable differently, but it's basically what it is actually. You're held to a different standard. People know that you're in Jack and Jill, they put you in a higher social class. Just out of the of simple fact you're from Jack and Jill. Let's say I just so happen to walk past a kid, and he's wearing, let's say designer jeans, and sagging his pants, and some Jordan's on, because that's what today's society considers the more hood or ghetto mentality. If I see somebody like that, and another friend comes up to me and says, "Hey, that person was at Jack and Jill in my chapter, then I'm saying that, "Why are they dressed like that? Because people in Jack and Jill don't usually carry themselves in that type of way." When you think of people with Jack and Jill, or for me specifically,

when you see them, they carry themselves the way any other person should carry themselves; their pants shouldn't be sagging, they shouldn't be trying to have this urban or ghetto look upon them. With Jack and Jill, you want to always look very presentable, very neat. When you see that they're trying to be something that you might not know that they're not, it's almost like, "Why are you dressed like this, or why do you act a certain way?"

It's not simply what you wear (designer jeans) but how you wear it (sagging or not). Kelley's expectations of the norms of Jack and Jill lead him to read a supposed in-group member, as fabricating a cool pose (having a "hood or ghetto" mentality) and rejects that pose as unacceptable. Elite young people have as much disdain for posers, as they do for snobs; social actors are meant to perform the norms with ease (Kahn 2012).

The moms in my sample concerted cultivation while reframing the class dynamics at play in such a strategy. For some, the ability to expose their children to a wide range of extracurricular activities was not simply a capital accumulation strategy—few moms had done competitive sports, or went to camp, or played obscure instruments as children—but these moms saw a moral demand for exposure to high-brow fields as part of a racial destigmatization process. They did not want their children to be pigeonholed into a hobby, school, or identity simply because of their race. As Mrs. Coby explains:

Mrs. Coby: You know, my vision about my children's future, honestly, is about exposure. I just feel that, particularly children of color, I feel sometimes we're put in a box, right? By other people in our society. But I also feel sometimes we put ourselves in similar boxes. So, for example, my oldest is a boy, and I'm like, ok as a Black boy there is other things out there besides basketball and football! I just wanted to make sure that there is a clear understanding that yes, you can do those things, but there's archery, there's fencing, there's martial arts, there are other things! There's tennis, golf! So, I always try to make sure that I give them an opportunity to explore something that, maybe on the day to day, wouldn't be part of the conversation with their friends and such. And that was important to me. And so, we try different things, and if they don't like it? Ok, then we move on to the next thing. But it is important to decide that you don't like something, based on your experience with it, as opposed to, when giving them their vegetables "well, I don't like carrots" "how do you know, you

haven't tasted them." You have to try it first, and if then you don't like it?
Fair enough.

Coby wants to steer her children away from cultural forms that are ideologically framed as black and lower-class. Archery, fencing, and golf in particular assume an amalgamation of capital (access to clubs, investment in materials, ease within fields) (Deluca and Andrews 2016). Part of this narrative is likely informed by representational diversity in sport (Tiger Woods, and the Williams sisters come to mind as mainstream sport integrators). Others recognize the utility of competency in "elite" sport as a tradable capital for other institutions; parents express interest in fencing, rowing, skiing as sports where bodily race might give their child an advantage for scholarships to prestigious schools (Mrs. Tucker). In comparison to minority children in basketball or football, sports saturated with minorities, and with ideological connections to working-class strata, skiing, fencing, and rowing crew assume collaboration of capitals; minorities will be rarer there, and opportunities for their own child to "stand out" are more likely. Children, similarly saw value in the particular exposure and skills garnered by their participation in Jack and Jill. When I asked Destiny what she learned in Jack and Jill, she immediately reached for the events, skills, and habits that parents sought to develop in their kids:

Destiny: Chapters tend to have different experiences. Because the parents, when you're under high school age, when you're under 13, they plan the events. So, you go to the museum, you go to Alvin Ailey. We would even do entrepreneurship workshops where we would learn about banking, we would learn about investing. I think we did like an investment opportunity. We each bought a little stock in McDonald's. We ran our own silent auction at like 10, 11, whatever, and learned how to set that up.

The hobbies and habits developed within a framework of play become important taste-making and capital-accumulating mechanisms. Children in my sample discussed socialization in cultural capital via mainstream art museums and particularly raced forms (black art exhibits, Alvin Ailey performances), being paired with socialization around

material capital (visiting banks, or participating in investment clubs, events that engaged high levels of father participation). Once children are older, they engage more of the cultural capital practices outlined by Lareau (2003); taking charge of projects, running club events independently, practicing elocution and other management skills within Jack and Jill, with the expectation that such skills will be productive later. Exposure and encouragement with elite consumption, habits, and skills at a young age means that when Jack and Jillers are adults, they are primed to activate these capitals at will, and feel comfortable engaging these competencies with ease.

Finally, American researchers build upon Bourdieu's notion of *embodied capital*—the notion that much of one's cultural capital is held inside your mind (knowledge) and your body (behavioral habitus) rather than in materials (diplomas, houses, art)—by noting that the real value of diverse experiences is the ability to have comfort, or *ease*, in diverse situations. Elite children are marked by their fluency and comfort in engaging with adults or superiors from a young age. The time that they spend with adults, engaging with them like peers, begins to show its effect when young people get their earliest opportunities to be in charge (Lareau 2003; Kahn 2012). It is not simply the ability to perform upper-classness, in order to be convincing, social actors need to be able to do it with a sense of ease. True elites notice when someone feels out of their depth; displaying discomfort in high-brow situations is a sure way to inadvertently project to a community that you are not in the in-group (Kahn 2012). Mitchell certainly exemplifies this, she argues that she wants her son, Rashaad, to be exposed to “all levels” of class, and feel comfortable “wherever he goes” but only gives sitting with the President as an example. There is no discussion on how Rashaad might feel when sitting down at a trailer park; might Mrs. Mitchell want him to be comfortable there too?

Part of the goal of exposure in these communities is to not only feel comfortable in upper-class spaces, but to feel comfortable in majority black spaces. Some of that is achieved by the raced-class identity of Jack and Jill, where families are with others “like” them. But the measure of success of these strategies is in the ways that young people negotiate these identities in the social world. Children often say that the thing that their parents wanted to implicitly teach them about class is code-switching. They talk about their ability to code-switch as a skill needed to engage both “professional” (white) situations and casual (black) ones. When I asked Adrienne about what her family wanted her to learn about the world, she started her story with the fact that her mother went to an exclusive, nearly all-white boarding school as a teen, one very similar to the one that Adrienne, herself, attended. In preparation to attend this school, Adrienne’s mother kept a close eye on her application materials, practiced interviewing skills with her, and even bought her a new wardrobe so that Adrienne could “fit in.” “Like, whatever she thought would be the right move for me. And then, you know, I got in. So yeah, she just taught me how to conduct myself.”

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you mean by that? Conduct yourself?

Adrienne: Oh, she taught me how to code switch. So, in the beginning I guess it would be how to straighten my hair for interviews, how to put on J. Crew and shake hands correctly, and speak correctly and eloquently, which I think you should do anyways. And then, how to be comfortable, just you know, how to sort of take that off when I was at home. And then when I won fencing nationals with my natural hair, she was like, "Okay, just make it neat." So, then I made it neat, and it's still working for me.

This concerted cultivation of skill is an explicit socialization of class norms, and one of the rare times that children could articulate particular instances of class socialization.

Most of the time the meritocratic discursive frameworks that parents articulate are absorbed by their children, and children are at a loss to point out the meaning and value

of class in their lives. The utility of classed behaviors are particularly clear for racial minorities seeking incorporation into white spaces and Adrienne's narrative about code-switching is typical of other children in the sample; they see the mastery of (white) classed-behavioral norms as strategic performance, rather than authentic selfhood (Goffman 1959). Kelley echoes this sentiment after explaining his mother's heightened concern with his clothing choices after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012. In his memory, she closely monitored his clothing soon after that incident, until he started making strategic clothing choices for himself:

Kelley: That skill is definitely taught to me by both of my parents. Whereas, we can go into Queens or Brooklyn, somewhere in the city and it's like, "Don't wear your hat a certain way." That is what you learn. My parents always taught me how to carry myself in certain situations. I'm going to carry myself differently if I'm around a bunch of white people that I don't know, compared to the way I am with a bunch of black people that I do know. You're going to have to carry yourself a certain way depending on who's around and what kind of environment you're part of."

Both Adrienne and Kelley illuminate how the "strategic assimilation" of behavioral code-switching spaces, serves both as a protectionary measure from racism, and a medium of integration into (white) elite spaces (Lacy 2007). They seem to understand this skill as something that is cultivated and calculated, and therefore fundamentally inauthentic to their natural selves. To perform elite identity too well, without manners and authenticity, opens oneself to accusations of snobbishness, though, as we saw in Kelley's quote earlier in the chapter, accusations of fakeness are similarly lobbed at Jack and Jillers putting on more "ghetto" performances, that are inauthentic to their class position. In order to signal one's "positivity," one must be able to activate elite capital without explicitly articulating neither processes of its accumulation, nor its ultimate value. Failing to master the

ideological and behavioral norms of the community will ultimately limit one's full incorporation into the group, no matter the amount of ethnic or socioeconomic similarity.

Conclusion

Jack and Jill participants largely adhere to American-elite ideological and discursive standards around class. They engage discursive strategies to insist that class does not matter, and can reframe their consumptive and cultural behaviors as matter of exposure, comfort, and individual preference, rather than snobbish distinction. Finally, they engage symbolic boundaries of "values," which is so flexible that it can explain someone's rudeness when first meeting a stranger, or one's educational or occupational decisions. These discursive moves do double duty to obscure the ways that concerted cultivation is actually happening in these spaces, and signal emotional and moral solidarity with blacks who are not within the intersectional community. I argue that this display of ideological and discursive adherence to the norms of the hegemonic elite, is a destigmatization strategy, and an attempt to signal in-groupness based upon class. Yet a deeper reading of the narratives shows the internal insecurity that these social actors feel when using these frameworks.

The social actors in my sample are certainly dedicated to the idea that class-linked symbols are one of the only mechanisms to protect themselves from racial disrespect. They then socialize behavioral strategies meant to signal their own prestige amongst white elites (Lacy 2012). But they ultimately express ambivalence for the utility of such a strategy. Nevertheless, given their overwhelmingly white social lives, they may feel compelled to engage these strategies, glean whatever social benefit is possible, and retreat to their protectionary social groups to complain when they don't. The adherence to hegemonic discourses about class, stratification, and social mobility (namely that class

stratification is subordinate to narratives about morals, meritocracy, and meaningful relationships), is reasonable given that it is the discursive frame favored by white elites, who remain somewhat hostile to alternate explanations of inequality (Kahn 2012). It is furthermore sensible given the increased diversity of the American elite; minority elites serve as evidence that the world, as it stands, will meritocratically reward blacks who work within the system (Anderson 1990). In some ways this behavior is not fundamentally different from the behavior of white American elites, obscuring the meaning of class while implicitly, though concerted, socializing distinctive behaviors into the next generation (DeLuca 2013, Sherwood 2010). If my sample of black elites is distinctive from Sherwood or DeLucas, it is in the ways that my sample emphasized racial cohesion as part of the symbolic moral boundaries drawn between the legitimate, elite middle-class club member, and a bougie, spoiled, elitist. The narratives of my subjects illuminate the fine line that minority elites must tread, and the how the mastery of this particular balance is fundamental for full inclusion in this intersectional community. Parents' focus on socializing ideologies and cultural capital into children is meant to shrink the cultural difference between black kids and white peers. Simultaneously, there is particular investment in manners and class blindness because of the class diversity of many familial networks. Cultural capital is productive and necessary to facilitate destigmatization in white spaces. Moral, class-blind attitudes are necessary to prevent alienation of racial in-group members.

CHAPTER 5

JACKS AND JILLS: STRATEGIC NARRATIVE IN MAKING RESPECTABLY GENDERED COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Interviewer: Your kids are quite young; they are certainly not out in the world by themselves, yet. Is Black Lives Matter, as a phenomenon, is that concerning to you? Are you concerned about those kinds of phenomena of potential police brutality, is that something you think about?

Mrs. Dixon: I do, I have a boy. I have a husband who's African American, and I have a son who's African American. So, I'm very cognizant of it. When I think about that, as my son gets a little bit older this is worrying me. And I get concerned even in school, like, how he carries himself; I don't want a teacher looking at him like "oh he's just some other boy who's not going to amount to anything" or anything like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, you haven't mentioned your daughter at all, are you worried about your daughter and policing?

Mrs. Dixon: I am concerned about her; I am more concerned about my son. I just think that it's the way that this country looks at black boys versus black girls. I mean I've seen black girls get brutalized, even in some cases you saw the young woman who was pulled over by the cop went to jail and committed suicide. So, I see that happens as well. The vast majority of events are happening to African American boys. But I'm not in any ignorant bliss. I mean, I have concerns for both of my children, I just think my concerns are just different. I want her to be well loved; I don't want her to be so vulnerable that she succumbs to maybe influences of others. And similarly, for my son, but I want her to respect her body, and I don't want her to see images that are around us, and assume that's her reality, and then, she misuses or misuses her body in any way. So, that's some of my real concerns, and I want my husband, and my son to really respect women.

Mrs. Dixon and I met for lunch and an interview at a fast-casual restaurant while her children attended a gymnastics class a few buildings away. She has charming and energetic children, an 8-year old daughter and 6-year old son, and we talked at length about the strategies that she employs to keep them busy on the weekends and during school breaks. Like many mothers of young children, she observes their personality development with a close eye, nudging them to say hello when they meet someone new,

and praising them when they use their best please-and-thank-yous. She and I talk at length about her young children's experiences in elementary school, and the power of having racial in-group peers. One story was of particular interest: Mrs. Dixon's children had within the past two years transferred to a private parochial school from a different private institution. Their former school was primarily white, and Mrs. Dixon's daughter, [Brianna], would often bring home drawings from school where she drew herself with yellow or peach crayon, indicating her skin. Now, at the new, majority black school, Brianna brought home crayon drawings of herself as brown. Mrs. Dixon told this story with great interest and amusement; it highlighted the value of racial peers, and was an indicator of her daughter's internalization of her racial identity. The celebration of her daughter's bodily pride, however, is tempered when Mrs. Dixon thinks about the future; there her daughter's body is something to be minded, defended, and restricted. The worries that Mrs. Dixon has for her son (and her husband, because they are of the same gender), is similarly linked to racial identity, but is rooted in fears of violence, particularly violence perpetrated by the state.

Intersectionality encourages us to think about how demographic facets of identity are mutually articulated by cultural narratives, institutional practices, and individual discourses. Not only are hegemonic framings of gender fundamentally linked to frames of race, class, sexuality, and a myriad of other demographic identities (Omi and Winant 2014), but such interactive identities both shape a social actor's interpretation of an experience, and further ground their response to experienced inequalities. The mothers of Jack and Jill, as intersectional social actors, interpret the social world and the inequalities therein as black elite middle-class women. Their positionality as raced-classed-gendered subjects facilitates their response to the social world, and roots a framework for local

projects of self-definition and resource acquisition. Respectability politics, a set of behavioral standards framed in moralistic discourse, is one such raced-classed-gendered project; one that outlines ideal behavioral and consumptive patterns for black social actors, patterns that primarily fall along gender lines. Just as the previous chapter on class illuminates the ways that social actors socialize the cultural capital of the elites into their children, as a strategy against racial stigma, my data shows that this intersectional community uses the gendered tenets of respectability as a guide for destigmatization practices.

Respectability politics represents an intersectional project, in that its practitioners interpret hegemonic narratives about black womanhood (and black manhood to a lesser degree), and articulate an alternative narrative meant to disrupt such oppressive ideological norms. It uses a constellation of gendered and sexual imperatives that direct black women and men's behavior against stereotypical frameworks of gender deviance and sexual impropriety. In particular, intersectional social actors advance respectability as a strategic gender project by emphasizing the importance of gendered socialization, the association of acceptable marital partners, and the normative performance of sexual behavior. This chapter illuminates how the subjects in this intersectional community utilize respectable gender norms as an externally destigmatizing strategy (for white middle-class neighbors), and simultaneously as an internal disciplinary mechanism (within black stratified communities).

The Politics of Respectability have their roots in Racial Uplift—a concept that encapsulates the ideological era between the late 1800s and the early 20th century. While some of the major thinkers of the time argued for macro-level changes in symbolic resource allocation (Dubois 1903), or labor solidarity to upend the material inequality in

the south (Washington 1919), others were thinking about how meso- and micro-level interactional behaviors might similarly effect changes in the racial hierarchy. Some charged that the linguistic, behavioral, and cultural differences between blacks and whites were consequences of racial-social segregation in America. I argue that not only is Respectability an intersectional project—one that engages race, class, and gender simultaneously—but in that it frames gender and gendered behavior in racial communities. Respectability illuminates the ways that gendered behaviors are a particular pathway towards destigmatization for this intersectional community. This chapter outlines the ways that these subjects utilize respectability politics, as both a destigmatizing strategy for the larger social world, and disciplinary strategy for the internal community. Although my subjects never explicitly say the words “respectability,” I find that their narratives reflect the discourse of the early Racial Uplift advocates and churchwomen that framed Respectability as a behavioral and cultural demand for the black masses. In particular, my subjects reveal that respectability, while requiring refined, Victorian standards for all black elite-middle-class actors, has particular gendered expectations around behavioral norms, sexual comportment, and marital goals. The ways that my subjects articulate the anxieties and expectations for boys and girls in this intersectional community illuminates how their particular raced-classed subjectivity matter in how they understand gender. The subjects in my sample then lean into respectability, both as a historically held strategy for destigmatization, and as a marker of authentic in-group membership. I next outline the theoretical foundations of this chapter, how respectability politics is an ideological project that engaged race and class to talk about gender. Following that, I will turn to the ways my subjects articulate bimodal expectations that are based on gender, but are still saturated in understandings of

raced and classed subjectivity. I explore the ways that such intersectional gender discourse structures my subjects' attention on violence, sexuality, culture, and family structure.

Intersectional Projects

Omi and Winant's racial formation theory (1994) argues that racial categories are constructed in relation to each other; by that I mean, whiteness, as a category, is constructed in reference to other racial groups. Ideological centers in society (religion, science, culture, and particularly the political state) organize categories and resources to the benefit of that racial hegemonic center. Feminist theorists interested in the intersectional experience of multiply-marginalized social actors have critiqued the racial formation theory as being largely silent on gender construction. They argue that race is necessarily articulated and categorized *in tandem* with other identities, and that this is done through cultural narratives, and public policies, just like the formation of race in society (Glenn 2002; Kandaswamy 2012). Racial projects are fundamentally "a gendered and sexualized process"; the ideological work done by hegemonic actors upon colonized minority groups includes imported frameworks about gender and sexuality (White 2001; Kandaswamy 2012). Furthermore, actors in highlighting one intersectional identity over others, draw on their capacities to narrate identities that bound other intersectionally marginalized identities. For example, black communities "have gained certain forms of recognition and inclusion in U.S. political structures by marginalizing gays and lesbians" (Cohen 1999). Relying on the persistent "secondary marginalization" for LGBT communities, primarily marginalized racial minorities might gain relative status. Thus, ideological projects simultaneously operate as (re)articulations of boundaries and

resource distribution for gendered-racialized social actors. These intersectional theorists recognize the complicated relationships among intersectional categories, and illuminate the necessity to engage multiple frames of experience in order to see how intersections work in real lives.

Higginbotham's work around racial meanings expands Omi and Winant's theory of the ideological construction of race to frame race as both a metalanguage (a collection of narratives that work to either stigmatize or normalize experiential phenomena), and a metonym (the specific ability to use race as a direct stand-in for some other concept) (Higginbotham 1992). Her historical work on black women as intersectional-social actors is grounded in the notion that race, gender, and class identities are entangled in their articulation, lived-experience, and social movements. In her view, race operates as a metonymic device—it is such a powerful social marker that it stands in for larger phenomena of poverty, crime, cultural deviance (Higginbotham 1992). The symbolic linkages between racial categories and racialized phenomena are persistent even in the face of counterevidence. For example, contemporary research on tells us that illegal drug use is essentially equitable amongst racial groups, if anything, the data suggests that American blacks use drugs slightly less often than American whites (ALCU 2013), yet the metonymic connection of drugs with blackness (subsuming also poverty and crime-ridden neighborhoods) shaped a War on Drugs. This war, both a cultural narrative and domestic policy, did little to curb actual drug use across racial categories, but was successful in imprisoning massive numbers of black men while white men with similar drug usage, or selling behaviors, escaped the system (Alexander 2012; ALCU 2013). Race, for Higginbotham operates as a “metalanguage” since it lends meaning to a myriad of social experiences that would otherwise fall outside the referential domain of race. It

permeates even simple concepts, valuing bodies ‘good’ or ‘bad’, and labelling speech patterns ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’” (1992: 255). Race acts as a marker, that works in tandem with other intersectional identities to specify which behaviors, bodies, phenomena are in the in-group and which are in the out-group. Even when “race is textually omitted, or textually privileged, its totalizing effect in obscuring class and gender remains” (Higginbotham 1992: 255). Material and symbolic inequalities are reified with discursive patterns that articulated a symbolic hierarchy of races, class, and genders.

Since Sojourner Truth’s *Ain’t I a Woman* (1851) speech, women of color have been grappling with the ways that race has shaped (obscured) their gender identity and gender relationships in American society. During slavery, black (slave) females were not legally defined as women, but rather a female subset of a racial population. Their bodies were like white women’s bodies, but their racial status undermined their gender status. While they were female, hegemonic standards of womanhood (purity, frailty, refraining from labor), were not available to them. Black women were conceptualized via their reproductive and physical labor capacity; neither their sexual behaviors, nor their economic behaviors, were private. After emancipation, these established relationships persisted: “the interplay of the race-class conflation with gender evoked very different social perceptions of black and white women’s work roles. This is exhibited by the concerns about ‘female loaferism,’ which arose in the years immediately following Emancipation” (Higginbotham 1988:259). While white women were nearly absent in the labor force, Emancipated women who resisted joining the public workforce (in order to care for their own households) were met with derision and sometimes hostility: “In contrast to the domestic ideal for white women of all classes, the larger society deemed it

‘unnatural,’ in fact an ‘evil’ for black married women ‘to play the lady’ while their husbands supported them” (1988).

While hegemonic narratives around white women’s sexuality were diverse, and often contradictory (swinging between moral sanctity and inherent sexual iniquity), hegemonic narratives around black women’s sexuality were consistently centered around bestial stereotypes, which served to both reify the labor relationship between masters and slaves, and also the social segregation of labor-class whites and emancipated blacks. Such frameworks certainly bolstered a dichotomy of sexual behavior and identity of either savagery or civility; promiscuity or purity; deviance or normality; black or white. They further legitimized how representations of black sexuality in news and cultural media, “reinforced violence, rhetorical and real, against black women and men” (263).

Allegations of rape from black women were habitually ignored; when men were lynched, they were often castrated as part of the process. Again, here, the macro-narrative norm that black women were inherently sexual, violent, and lazy, reified the micro-level experiential conditions of black women. Furthermore, narratives about sexuality justified narrative-trends and lived-experiences of economic exploitations, gender marginalization, social segregation, and violence. The rhetorical and practical threat of rape in particular, inspired a counter-rhetorical strategy from black women, one that became a pillar of Racial Uplift politics.

A shift in intra-community narratives around black women’s sexuality is linked to the Great Migration, where black women traded southern economic-occupational homogeneity (in domestic labor), for northern occupational variety (factory work, semi-skilled trades); they traded southern sexual oppression, for northern (relative) sexual agency; southern cultural marginalization or northern cultural articulation (Hine 1989).

The experiences of gendered and sexual marginalization in the South went far in developing a collective narrative of what Darlene Hine calls a “culture of dissemblance [in order to] protect the sanctity of inner aspects of their lives” (Hine 1989). This strategic move meant that “black women, especially those in the middle-class, reconstructed and represented their sexuality through its absence—through silence, secrecy, and invisibility” (Higginbotham 1988: 266). The collective culture of dissemblance, embraced by emancipated women in the early 1900s, the way it created patterns of silence, obscurity, and evasion in matters of gender and sexuality has lasting effects in the narratives of black elite communities today. My subjects utilize these patterns as part of a larger respectability politic that frames gendered-racialized-classed behaviors as markers of in-group status, or out-group marginality. In particular, these politics act as signals (both intra-communally and towards class-matched whites) of self-respect, cultural citizenship, and morality.

Respectability politics is a classed-gendered racial project with roots in the Reconstruction, and fresh articulations in the contemporary narratives of the subjects of this study. It emerges from the intersectional experience of being a black woman in America, and is a (re)articulation of what it means to be a raced-gender social actor. To the degree that respectability politics has been absorbed into the hegemonic ideology of “good” black-female social actors, it has been absorbed because it supports classed, raced, and sexualized norms of what it means to be “good.” Nevertheless, to dismiss it as simply a middle-class cudgel against poor blacks is insufficient to explain how black social actors of all class strata engage these narratives and use them for strategic positioning in relation to other raced or classed actors.

Respectability:

Respectability Politics are a set of interlocking behavioral demands, which together are meant to outline acceptable behaviors for Black Americans. Social actors at a number of social strata have articulated these demands since the Racial Uplift Era, but one of the most notable contemporary examples of this articulation comes from a speech that Bill Cosby gave in 2004. In what was named the Pound Cake Speech, Cosby (whose career had not yet been overwhelmed by rape allegations) excoriated the behaviors of working-class and poor blacks at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. This speech's main themes highlighted the demands of respectability by denigrating those who had failed to live up to them (I organize Cosby's assertions into 5 categories below):

Parents should be prioritizing the domestic realm to socialize children into good behavior: *"And these people are not parenting. They're buying things for the kid. \$500 sneakers, for what? They won't buy or spend \$250 on Hooked on Phonics."*

Aesthetic markers of respectable status: *"Are you not paying attention, people with their hat on backwards, pants down around the crack...Isn't it a sign of something when she's got her dress all the way up to the crack...and got all kinds of needles and things going through her body. What part of Africa did this come from?"*

Non-normative names prevent upward mobility: *"Those people are not Africans, they don't know a dammed thing about Africa. With names like Shaniqua, Shaligua, Mohammed and all that crap and all of them are in jail."*

Normative Speech: *"Just forget telling your child to go to the Peace Corps. It's right around the corner. It's standing on the corner. It can't speak English. It doesn't want to speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk. 'Why you ain't where you is going,' I don't know who these people are. And I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. Then I hear the father talk. You used to talk a certain way on the corner and you got into the house and switched to English. Everybody knows it's important to speak English except these knuckleheads. You can't land a plane with 'why you ain't...' You can't be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth."*

Sexual monogamy and piety: *"No longer is a person embarrassed because they're pregnant without a husband. No longer is a boy considered an embarrassment if he tries to run away from being the father of the unmarried child."; "Five or six different children, same woman, eight ten different husbands or whatever, pretty soon you're going to have DNA cards so you can tell who you're making love to. You don't [know] who this is. It might be your grandmother. I'm telling you, they're young enough."*

Heteronormative family units: *“Grandmother, mother, and great grandmother in the same room, raising children, and the child knows nothing about love or respect of any one of the three of them”*; *“I’m talking about these people who cry when their son is standing there in an orange suit. Where were you when he was two? Where were you when he was twelve? Where were you when he was eighteen, and how come you don’t know he had a pistol? And where is his father, and why don’t you know where he is? And why doesn’t the father show up to talk to this boy?”*; *“You got to tell me that if there was parenting, help me, if there was parenting he wouldn’t have picked up the Coca Cola bottle and walked out with it to get shot in the back of the head...not if he loved his parents. And not if they were parenting! Not if the father would come home. Not if the boy hadn’t dropped the sperm cell inside of the girl and the girl had said, ‘no you have to come back here and be the father of this child’.”* (Cosby 2004)

While Cosby outlines several maladaptive behaviors of the black poor, they all share a common assumption. Namely, they posit that the root of social marginality is in the domestic sphere, where matriarchal families socialize unsuitable cultural norms into children, who go on to behave in ways that are antithetical to individual and collective success. This frame of respectability argues that sexual behavior, family structure, educational achievement, cultural aesthetic, and criminality are all fundamentally linked (Wolcott 2001; Cohen 2009). Furthermore, the argument made by Cosby and others suggests that the behaviors of working-class and poor blacks were both antithetical to collective progress, and the direct causes for poor treatment by the hands of the state.

The respectability framework, used by Cosby and others looking for cultural explanations for black working-class stagnation (Cohen 2009), has its roots in the racial uplift discourse of the late 1800s. In the post-emancipation era, as Black people left southern rural areas for promises of economic security and racial harmony in the north, black communities who had already been living in cosmopolitan destinations like Chicago, Detroit, and New York, felt compelled to facilitate the social integration of these newcomers. These migrants brought with them cultural norms reminiscent of their lives in the rural south, and such norms were widely perceived to be unsuitable for the

new context of the urban, uplifted, communities in which they landed. In response to this influx, schools, churches, media institutions, and myriad of other social organizations developed a set of ideological and behavioral guidelines that, together, described acceptable behavior for urban Blacks (Wolcott 2001; Higginbotham 1993).

These guidelines reflect two linked, but distinct gender scripts: separate norms for womanhood and manhood, which are fundamentally entwined with racial and class intersectionality. Seminal work on respectability, and the role of women in developing such a framework, argues that it “demanded that every individual in the black community assume responsibility of self-regulation and self-improvement along moral, education, and economic lines; the goal was to distance oneself as far as possible from images perpetuated by racist stereotypes” (Higginbotham 1993:196). Therefore, as a normative framework, respectability has three persistent components. First, it is a collective demand for individual action: it explains persistent inequalities in educational, occupational, and social attainment by looking to the faulty cultural behaviors performed by individuals, rather than structural inequalities (Small et al 2010). Secondly, the substance of respectability prioritizes “self-regulation and self-improvement” along moral lines, in particular. Third, respectability politics are both an interpretation of, and response against hegemonic norms: it partially absorbs Victorian models of gender division and behavioral expectations, and simultaneously engages hegemonic racial frameworks in order to refute the most racist charges. Overall, respectability operates as a set of gendered norms, articulated through racial and classed lenses.

Substantively, respectability frameworks outlined bodily and behavioral standards, developed in reference to Victorian Era cultural expectations of highbrow consumption, aesthetic choices, and public comportment (Wolcott 2001; Rhodes 2016).

Such demands are meant to promote an “imagined best black self,” and adhering to these demands is interpreted as a signal of socioeconomic advancement and, more importantly, a signal of moral righteousness (Gray 2016). By framing dirtiness, emotional expression, perceived sexual deviance, and gender nonconformity as moral primitivity rather than the results of structural inequality in the rural south, proponents of respectability shifted attention away from matters of economic inequality and structural racism to assertions of individual responsibility (Wolcott 2001; Rhodes 2016). An NAACP interview, in the Black newspaper *The Chicago Defender*, outlined the problem of the Black migrant masses complaining that they had “rough manners,” “dirty clothes and careless dress,” “ill smelling body and clothing” and “unkempt hair”; there were further complaints about the “loud-talking, boisterous and uncivilized” behaviors of poorer blacks in theaters, and other public places (Baldwin 2007; Rhodes 2016). These standards were not explicitly gendered. Rather, they illuminate the class tension between the migrants and “native” northern Blacks. In the northern view, Black folks were meant to keep both their bodies and their behaviors in check, and even emotive displays of anger or frustration were signals that a social actor was not respectable (Smith 2014).

Beyond the demands of hygiene, manners, and cultural adherence to northern norms, the demands of respectability are heavily gendered, and inequitably so. Men’s demands were rooted in managing expressions of violence. Early framers admonished against “aggressive demeanor, drinking and cursing in public, and provoking fights,” but men were also encouraged to “defend [their] home and the women in it” (Rhodes 2016; Wolcott 2001). One’s ability to keep one’s home, family, and larger community safe might have run against Victorian emotional demands for consistent calm and emotional restraint, but this selective violence is aligned with American hegemonic expectations of

masculinity, self-determination, and familial protection. Men's ability to keep respectable, waged, work was a secondary, but not unimportant concern.

There were far more demands on women (or, at least there is far more scholarship analyzing the respectability demands on women), for both their gendered and sexual performances. Victoria Wolcott's work on Black women in pre-WWI Detroit emphasizes the power of domesticity in shaping respectability politics (2001). Emancipated Blacks were leaving an economic and cultural arena where they were structurally alienated from power in their own domestic sphere. Power over their own reproduction, domesticity, and labor was fundamentally prohibited by a structure of racial domination; the behaviors that sprung forth from this domination were adaptations for survival and dignity in that context.

Many aspects of Victorian frames of domesticity—women's chastity, mothering identities, gendered divisions of labor—put forth by social actors in the north, were antithetical to the experiences of many migrants. Despite the gap between expectations and experiences, black women of the time largely absorbed narratives of hegemonic motherhood and sexual purity. A mother not only met the Victorian requirements of women to be private-sphere actors, but also did the invaluable work of acculturating the next generation into the social world. Women are seen as potential "leaders, teachers, and mothers of the race" (Wolcott 1997). Leading narratives at the time imbued the private sphere with the power to shape behavior and morality. Participation in the domestic sphere, purposeful parenting by mothers, is therefore serious and valuable work because it forms the foundation of respectable behaviors for future epochs. Respectability also meant normative expressions of aesthetic and behavioral sexuality. Women were to avoid slovenliness, but also avoid "gaudily decorated silks" and "coarse vulgar ornaments" and

instead seek out “simple, becoming gowns” (Wolcott 2001). Simple dress was an indication of modesty and purity, and being either too unkempt or too gaudy signals sexual impropriety. Finally, early framers of respectability sought to curb (perceived) sexual promiscuity by women. Fears around urban prostitution, southern sexual licentiousness, and rape, helped develop a demand for displays of purity and monogamy by women. Respectable sexuality wasn’t only about mitigating heterosexual promiscuity, but minimizing homosexual behaviors. A student letter, confiscated at Nannie Burroughs’s National Training School, once confessed, “As I lay here in bed writing you I have been thinking of the few hours of happiness we first tasted together. You need not worry—the time will soon come again when I will have you as I desire.” The letter writer, Edith Sims, had “expressed considerable concern about being ‘found out’ and suggested that her love, Alma, hide all their correspondence and sign another name. The secretive intent evidenced in that letter highlights how an objective of respectability was the “continuing stress on heterosexual marriage as a primary goal for women.” (Wolcott 1997). Respectability frameworks differed from traditional Victorian frameworks in one major way: the acceptance of women working for wages outside the home. This is likely because of the economic realities faced by Black migrants, but is also linked to the Racial Uplift framework, which utilized the tenants of the Protestant work ethic as part of a collective advancement. Black women were allowed to enter the public economy as waged-laborers, but were summarily pushed in to domestic occupations (Wolcott 1997; 2001). Domestic work blended the Protestant Ethic, with the “primary importance of the home,” both important markers in the struggle for respectability.

Like other racial projects, respectability is articulated at multiple social levels, and operates as a mechanism for rearticulating hegemonic racial meanings. The tenets of

respectability were transmitted via church pulpits, city newspapers, service organizations, and even in film production companies. (Rhodes 2016; Wolcott 1997). The narrative field was diverse, but the ubiquity of respectability as a concept in the early 20th century shows its hegemonic dominance within Black communities. Some actors, like Robert Abbot, owner of the *Chicago Defender*, leaned into their roles as leaders of the black community. Abbot and “his staff saw themselves as arbiters of the limits of respectable public behavior and members of an unofficial policing mechanism for the black community” (Nance 2002: 638). Mezzo-level institutions like the *Defender* represented the collective conscience of black northerners, and the re-articulation of a respectability framework in religious, media, and civic spaces meant that most black folks of the era would have engaged with these demands at some point.

Educational institutions, premised on the goals of Racial Uplift, wove respectability demands into the very structure of their organizations. Institutions like the National Training School in Washington D.C., or Wheatly House in Minneapolis operated as a site of articulation for the gendered respectability project, and the ways in which respectability in itself is an intersectional identity, that subsumes sexual, occupational, and cultural concerns. There, girls were housed and received constant academic and moral instruction; all facets geared to guide them away from the dangers of either voluntary or forced sexual promiscuity (Hine et al 1989; Wolcott 1997). To ensure the upright development of the girls at Burroughs’ schools, she developed stringent rules of dress: girls were required to be “neatly and becomingly dressed. There are no extravagant displays or extremes of contrast.” The National Training School particularly sought to manage the girls’ social lives, they were not allowed to write letters anyone

who both the school and parents did not expressly approve of, and their correspondences were regularly monitored.

Patricia Hill Collins argues that respectability projects have been an integral component of the controlling images that seek to marginalize and restrict black women's personal expression and social advancement. Controlling images, or stereotypes, are frameworks of understanding black women's subjectivities, used to justify and naturalize the social injustices of racism, heterosexism, and socioeconomic inequity (Collins 2000). Of course, controlling images are tenacious and indelicate; even as black women are more culturally, professionally, and socially diverse than ever before, the stereotypes of the mammy, the welfare queen, and the jezebel reappear as specters in our collective imagination, and maintain their power to discredit individual social actors who might otherwise be seen as multifaceted, agentic individuals. Respectability discourse shows up in the controlling image of the black lady, a woman who is college-educated, with a professional occupation, and by external standards a successful middle-class social climber. But Collins outlines how controlling images of the black lady rely on earlier stereotypes of aggressive, overbearing, and psychologically masculine matriarchs. The black lady is too ambitious and emasculates potential suitors to the degree that she is without a spouse or children, a failed woman in that respect. While hegemonic social actors often rely on controlling images to undermine personal success (the black lady got her job because of affirmative action), or naturalize some persistent inequality (the black lady must be married to her job), controlling images also serve as social control mechanisms for the subjects under their observation.

Both the substance of respectability and the social process of narrative dissemination point to this strategy as a sort of "indigenous moral panic" (Cohen 2009).

Typically, moral panics are initiated as a reaction to cultural newcomers, and are meant to brighten boundaries between newcomers and natives. Instead, ideological leaders in the respectability framework were part of the racial community under scrutiny, and these messages were often absorbed and reified by the working-class migrants whom the framework was particularly meant to discipline. Cohen argues that in the case of respectability, “indigenous moral entrepreneurs take on the responsibility of policing the public behaviors of group members, especially those behaviors thought to diminish the respectability of the community.” (Cohen 2006:116). This is not to say that respectability was simply an institutional disciplinary tactic meant to punish the working poor, on the contrary, many poor families raised concerns about the moral and cultural behavior of their teens and young adults. Many working-class moms enthusiastically sent their daughters away to schools in order to be educated in the ways of the Bible, Bath, and Broom (Wolcott 1997). Wolcott’s work on training schools illuminates the ways that respectability was a project built on “community consensus and inter-class cooperation... Notions of morality, respectability, cleanliness, and religiosity were not ideological gifts of the middle class handed down to the poor, but rather part of a pre-existing working-class culture” (89).

The respectability project works not only as an intra-community disciplinary tactic, but also operates to counter racist stereotypes, and rearticulate the meaning of blackness from the bottom up. Early articulators of the discourse (overwhelmingly black women’s church groups), saw respectability as a “bridge discourse,” a way to signal to whites (particularly white church women) who had moral misgivings about violence against black Americans, but were resistant to social assimilation because of perceived cultural difference (Higginbotham 1991). Higginbotham argues that Respectability

“provided a discursive common ground,” between white and black, religious women’s groups. It sought to lay a foundation for further integration based upon the argument that despite spatial, economic, and cultural segregation, ethics and desires of these disparate communities were truly in alignment. It partially relies on macro notions that black people are socially marginalized because of bad cultural behaviors (Small 2010), and that if black folks would simply behave more like mainstream whites, they would be integrated into the mass majority without a problem. Yet, an articulation of blackness that is tied to “good” behaviors is a disruption of the racist tropes that have plagued black women since slavery. It rejects a framing of black womanhood that is hypersexual, carnal, and fatuous. It offers a counter-narrative wherein black women are hegemonically feminine, but also integral participants in public life as leaders of a collective uplift effort. An identity of “motherhood” was prized, even in comparison to the entrepreneurial goals of the Training Schools. Respectability articulators linked sexual agency and protection with other concerns: political participation, economic agency, and ultimately racial uplift (Hine 1989: 918). Under racial hegemony, black women are multiply marginalized through persistent controlling images; under respectability politics, black women are elevated as competent cultural leaders.

Respectability echoes in the narratives of my subjects today and articulates the distinct appropriate behaviors for black women. It operates as a local racial-gendered project; one both relies on, and seeks to disrupt hegemonic narratives around race, class, and gender. It is a narrative by black women, largely for black women, and it constitutes a racial project that engages macro-level social knowledge about race, seeks to dispute such stereotypical knowledges with destigmatization strategies at the individual and community level. These micro and community strategies have found relative success

through absorption at the macro-level again; aspects of respectability discourse have been articulated recently by Barack Obama at his political pulpit (Bosman 2008), Geraldo Rivera while anchoring newsrooms (Kreps 2017), by Charles Barkley as a guest on syndicated radio (Coates 2014), and a plethora of others. The subjects in my study utilize these long-standing frameworks to socialize their daughters and sons into respectable habits. Their focus on gender-essentialist behavioral differences, appropriate mate-choice, and respectable sexual behaviors illuminate the ways that this classic framework represents a malleable yet persistent norm that marks group membership, disciplines young people and resists racist ideological projects.

Respectable Children and Respectable Families

Like the media institutions, community uplift organizations, and training schools of the Jim Crow era, Jack and Jill operates as a site for the articulation and dissemination of notions of black, elite middle-class respectability. Individual moms, and the club chapters they belong to, engage iterative processes of gendered-sexual norm making for their children, within the context of middle-class American life. The moms and kids interviewed for this project articulate a flexible gender-essentialist narrative frame, in which parents think of the opportunities, dangers, and futures of their children differently depending on their gender. While early articulations of respectability had a more fulsome range of monitored and disciplined behaviors for women, in comparison to men, many of the mothers in my study place more intensive focus on boys' concerted socialization in comparison to girls. From their point of view, boys need more attentive socialization, with the goals of developing embedded and valuable networks, disciplining aesthetic and behavioral choices, and fostering interest in appropriate (raced) marital partners. Moms have different concerns about their daughters, namely that they will maintain sexual

purity, bodily decorum, and pursue class-matched men as marital partners. For all children, heteronormativity is ubiquitous and implicit at the micro and mezzo levels; and deviations from that norm are often obscured or silent.

Jacks and Jills: Bimodal concerns and protection for gendered children

Previous research on child rearing has highlighted the outsized role that mothers play in cultivating children's activities and peer groups. Black elite middle-class mothers in particular, pay close attention to patterns of reward and discipline in organized activities, and to the demographics and behaviors of children's playmates (Lareau 2011). Moms are vigilant for opportunities for esteem building, and protection from discrimination, and one way that is done is by managing peer networks. The mothers in my study, those with sons in particular, talk a fair amount about boys' social connection to other men, their sons' perception in the social world, and who their sons will marry. It is likely that moms' heightened attention to black boys is linked to memories of the War on Drugs, and more acutely, the recent string of black civilian shootings by police. These moms regularly worry about their sons being treated differently from other boys their age at school, or in other public places. Their (accurate) perception that black children are hyper-surveilled at school and in public (Ouer 2016; Young et al 2018) leads moms to be particularly alert when their sons are disciplined, and to prioritize cultivating safe, networked, spaces for their boys in Jack and Jill.

My data show that moms articulate distinct concerns for their children, based upon gender. Mothers' individual worries and strategies (around state and sexual violence) represent engagement with macro-level discourses about black men and women. "Boys can be very different," Mrs. Coleman claims when I ask her about her children's school experience (she has two daughters and a son):

Mrs. Coleman: Black boys get treated very different. But black boys get treated differently for doing the same things that white boys do. And if you get called on the carpet too many times it's almost as if there's some kind of scarlet letter on you; you're the bad kid. There's something wrong with you, you're not doing things as well. He could be in the group with the same group of boys, but [my son], the black boy, who will always stand out because he's a black guy, gets called on the carpet for it. The other guys will kind of disappear into the crowd. And it's really something that, if you talk to any mother of black boys, especially in the East Coast, they're all experiencing the same thing.

She goes on to complain that this unfair treatment even occurs at a school that her children have attended their entire educational lives. As boys begin to hit puberty, stereotypes that rely on race-gender intersections of black-boyhood or black-manhood, are placed onto students that teachers may have known for years, yet unconscious biases become activated even in the face of previous familiarity.

Mrs. Coleman: So, one educator described it this way, she said when she hears the white teachers talking about the black and Hispanic boys, she says "you're not talking about Peter, or Pedro that you've known since they were five years old." She says, "I'm not going to let them intimidate me." And now that they're 12, 13, 14, they're now six feet tall, they're strapping and looking like, she said, "thugs on the subway at 3:00 in the morning." It's scary to them.

Mrs. Coleman's interaction with this educator illuminates the ideological marginalization that black children, and particularly black boys face. Individual experiences of unequal discipline and teacher bias are linked to macro-level stereotypes of blackness as dangerous, subordinate, and primitive. These particular clichés about blackness have their roots in the economic and social oppression of slavery; where the social and economic experiences of Black children are identical to the experiences of black adults, when viewed through a white perspective (Dumas and Nelson 2016).

While normative American ideologies about childhood rest upon perceptions of innocence, and defenselessness, black children are framed as "young men" and "young women." The murder of Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, and other unarmed black boys by

white adults highlights this trend—their shooters described these minors as adult men posing a direct threat to their safety. This is not to say that the sons of the mothers in my study are at risk of being shot by their teachers, but it is critical to illuminate how the marginalizing experiences of boys in public institutions are linked to ideologies about blackness, how hegemonic ideologies about race and gender renders black boyhood “unimaginable,” and how caretakers of these boys perceive and navigate those ideologies. The perceived attitudes of teachers and other adults reveal to these moms how “black boys and girls are imagined not as real children but as suspect Black bodies for whom the broader public need have little compassion or connection” (Dumas and Nelson 2016). Recognizing this ideological inequality, Jack and Jill moms often prioritize cultivating safe embedded spaces for their sons to be connected to other boys: “The moms, we actually did more to create [more of] a relationship with these boys when they were young than we did with the girls because we felt that these boys needed to get to know each other. They're all in different schools, and we would go out of our way to make sure that they had playdates, to make sure that they went to different events together, and even when [my son] was taken to a game, we'd say, ‘we're inviting so-and-so’ and he would be like, ‘why?’ But now he and the guys we'd always invite are friends, and they always hang out together. So, I think that really helped too, that he really had some strong relationships. The girls seemed to be just getting along fine, so we didn't really focus on creating relationships for them.” (Mrs. Coleman)

It is possible that the increased attention on black boys' socialization is because there are fewer boys in Jack and Jill chapters than girls (I have no organizational data to test this hypothesis, though I interviewed more female “children” than male “children”). Perhaps, even with gender equity, social fears around the physical dangers of black-

boyhood would spur mothers to focus attention on their sons anyway. Conjecture aside, moms talked about seeking male playmates and role models for their sons, even pursuing more intimate relationships within the Jack and Jill communities; they never talked about such strategies for their daughters.

Similarly, when thinking about gendered engagement in Jack and Jill chapters, moms identify both the paucity of male participation, and the social value of having black-male role models for boys. While fathers often participate in club activities, leading workshops on investing and tying bowties, or chaperoning club retreats, they are not part of the organizational structure at all (Mrs. Tucker). This gender segregation is by organizational design; only mothers can be members and wield all organizational power. Yet, this does not stop some mothers from yearning for “positive” male role models for their children. “I think Jack and Jill has to be part of the shift” says Mrs. Baker. “Especially in helping build the black men. And maybe there's an opportunity for the fathers to kind of mentor more kids that are not part of the Jack and Jill organization, more Black boys. Because I see the difference, when you mentor a young black man, and you give them a chance to look at the world in a much bigger light, that they realize that they have options. They have options that they didn't even realize they had.” Just like Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Coby put lots of stock in the power of role modeling for young people. Jack and Jill provides the aspirational models that are not only black, but align with the classed-gendered interests of the community as well.

Mrs. Coby: The primary thing for me was having interactions with people who look like them, and being surrounded by people of color who were about something and doing something, meaning moving forward, regardless of whatever that career was. There are some people in the chapter who are stay-at-home moms and that's fine. You know, because they've done all of the things they needed to do to have that be a real option for them, and not "I can't get a job" and that kind of thing. And seeing black men who are career-

minded, and again, those careers vary, but they're career minded. Seeing black women who are beautiful and attractive, and also intelligent, and doing something, was very important. And again, things are shifting over time, but there weren't many images of us, on TV to look at. I mean, Claire Huxtable? Flo? Like, I'm really trying to think back, and there weren't these prominent, positive imagery of black families.

These statements represent many moms' yearning for representational visibility of an intersectional subject that is not black-male-poor (Prudie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008).

Such an identity is hyper-visible in the media representations of Black men, yet it does not reflect the lived experiences of the families in Jack and Jill communities.

Highlighting both *The Cosby Show* (where Claire Huxtable worked as a lawyer) and *Good Times* (where Florida Evans was employed as a domestic housekeeper), these moms articulate the desire for representations of family, gender, and work that reflect their current experiences. Moms are looking for men to be role models that are intersectionally akin to the existing group, and represent aspirational examples for their children. Both of the above quotes illuminate the persistent gender distinctions in mom's aspirations; respectable men are meant to be "career minded," while women are to be beautiful, attractive, "and also" intelligent. Certainly, Mrs. Coby's statement is not meant to imply that women do not prioritize their career—the class makeup of her local black community refutes that very idea—but it also illuminates black women's alienation from hegemonic beauty standards, a larger exclusion from normative frameworks of gender, and their desire to reclaim such social capital for themselves, again (Higginbotham 1992).

Children often notice the gendered socialization efforts enacted by moms. While no one had value judgements about such segregations being "good" or "bad," children who grew up in a mixed-gender family (women who had brothers, for example), had no hesitation in their claim that gender mattered in one's experience in these communities.

When I asked Danielle about what her chapter was like, she was quick to tell me that she “had a mixed experience. My brother had a much better one than I did:”

Interviewer: Why do you think your brother had a different experience?

Danielle: He had a lot of contemporaries. I only had three other kids in my grade. A lot of them left in the early years. By the time we were getting older, there were only three of us in our grade. A year or two after me, there was a really nice, robust group, which just makes everything more fun. He had that. I also think him being a guy had a little bit to do with it. It seemed like the way the boys tended to bond was a little more open. There were just more casual chances for them to hang out. He would often go over to someone's house to "chill." A bunch of the guys would go over to one of their houses to chill after a meeting. A lot of them went to school in the same area. They would hang out after school and get food. Just little opportunities, that didn't really happen when I was there. Often with the girls, they would go out at night and stuff. There are things that were more that you would do with close friends. It wasn't as much of an open invitation to just come hang out.

Danielle doesn't specify the role (or absence) of parents in her brother's decision to seek out more intimate relationships with male peers. Yet, both the literature and the empirical data from moms, illuminate the ways that parents facilitate these kinds of social bonds. Eli, who now is in medical school, believes that parental focus on sons is a reaction to persistent social inequalities that sons are experiencing at school, and in the media, in particular:

Eli: I think there's group of people that benefit most from Jack and Jill. I think, for the most part, black males benefit from Jack and Jill. Most of the black women in my high school, did very well and did well in school. And I would say the black guys, you hear them [have a larger range] of scope. Hip-hop became very popular and I think the aspirations for the guys is very different than the aspirations for the women. Very few of my friends from high school wanted to go to college, wanted to be doctors, wanted to be lawyers. These weren't the people we were glorifying, right? I think what Jack and Jill gave to black men who were in it these strong black male role models who were CEOs of different companies, Fortune 500 companies, Wall Street-ers, great surgeons, great doctors. I think for the guys more than anything, it was a contrast to what we were seeing in the media and how black men were defined in the media.

From his perspective, the concerted cultivation efforts of mothers acted as response to real representational inequalities in the media. Moreover, he recognized the power of those representations in the lives of young boys (in comparison to young girls). Eli frames his female peers at that time as good students, and less preoccupied with the pervasive media representations of stereotypical Black womanhood. Exposure to a local counter-narrative shaped the aspirations of Eli and his male peers. If part of respectability is to challenge hegemonic notions of race-gender intersections, then these data illuminate the capacity of this community to rearticulate the meaning of black manhood. As this group binds itself together by class and race “likeness,” (status and value homophily) boys in these communities are exposed to social actors who are not archetypes of hegemonic black men. This disruption (even if it is a few examples of “successful” black men), widens the concept of race, for these individuals; they have a competing articulation of what race means.

Moms also articulate differing concerns for their children, based upon their gender. Namely, moms are worried about their sons’ vulnerability to state-initiated violence, and worried about their daughter’s vulnerability to sexual denigration. When talking to Mrs. Torres about her concerns for her kid’s futures she exclaims:

Mrs. Torres: I am worried about the whole can-you-not-get-shot! My child he be looking like Colin Powell, and still going to get knocked out, or arrested. I think it’s impacted what we say, like, “Okay, no, I’ll drive you. It doesn’t matter, you don’t got to go find a ride, nuh-uh I’ll take you.” I’m like, I don’t know if I want you in a car with a whole bunch of little black boys, unfortunately, because I don’t know what’s going to happen. That’s scary for me, and I feel bad that I’ve had to feel that way, or I’ve been made to feel that way. I think when all the Trayvon Martin, all of those things just kept came up, I think I changed my Facebook moniker like, “I can’t stay calm, I have a black son.” I haven’t changed it. I’m like, there’s still so much happening. That concerns me. The trafficking piece for the young ladies, being snatched up. I drive so far because, I don’t feel comfortable with my child having traveled from Largo to College Park. I’m just saying, like,

nope. She gets dropped and picked up. Her daddy looking like he's on Sasha, secret service duty. He pulls up. He's waiting in a black new car waiting for her.

Mrs. Torres's response is useful for a few reasons: certainly, she illuminates the bimodal pattern of concerns for her children, but she also highlights her classed position in her strategy to keep her children safe. Her husband picks up her daughter "like he's on Sasha [Obama], secret service duty." The experiential difference between Trayvon Martin and Sasha Obama, perhaps the amount of protection that we believe each deserves, is both class and gender contextual. Mrs. Torres will not let her son, who's "looking like Colin Powell," "in a car with a whole bunch of little Black boys," who, in her mind, might be analogous to Martin. Her expressed conceptualization of her children in the public world is fundamentally intersectional, and her strategy for keeping them safe is linked to both their racial identities and their class position.

Like racial concepts (and unlike classed frameworks), parents communicate messages about police vulnerability directly to their children, often via dinner-table conversation and organizational activities. Children, similarly, absorb those messages based on their perceptions of existing social injustices.

Kelley: My mother was the one that really enforced it. Like, "You have to understand that you're a black man in America." I have to carry myself a certain way. There's certain things that she doesn't want me to do. Whereas, I might not look at it harmful to wear a do-rag outside, my mother would throw a fit saying, "You have to realize people are going to look at you like you're a thug. Like you're out to hurt people because that's the narrative that we're getting from today's society." So, I'm sitting here thinking it's not a big deal. But now, I understand where she's coming from, especially given all the situations that have happened more recently. It's almost like, as a mother, you're sitting there like, "Oh, I have a boy who is around the same age as the kid who just died and is black and built the same." You would never want your son to get hurt. So, my mother sat down and said, "Kelley, you can't wear your hoodies in public, you can't wear your hats a certain way, you have to wear your shoes a certain way." Because she doesn't want me to feel like a threat to anyone else.

It is notable that even for a topic that is conceptually gendered (state-initiated violence), it is not his father's instruction that Kelley recalls, but his mother's worry and her active participation in his life choices. He imagines his mom's internal monologue, as he rearticulates the tenets to avoid police interest, absorbing her perception that his clothing choices are meaningful in his public persona. Of course, instances of hyper-discipline at school, or state-initiated violence against unarmed citizens is not simply a boy's issue. Recent events have illuminated how black girls are also punished more frequently than their classmates and are also potential victims of police violence (Hines and Wilmot 2018; Evans-Winters and Espisito; Blake et al 2011). Furthermore, there are fewer intervention programs to tackle discrimination and marginalization of black girls (Dumas and Nelson 2016).

Interviewer: Tell me about your concerns about law enforcement, is that a concern that you share for both your son and your daughter, or do you think about one of them more?

Mrs. Vallencourt: Both. I mean we take this posture that it affects the male son more, but it could affect the female. I mean it was funny, I was driving and I was listening to a piece on public radio and they were talking about how even black females are treated differently by the court system because jurors tend to view black females as aggressive. So, if you take that posture, then it impacts both males and females. And they gave this example of this African American woman who had been in an abusive marriage and got all these restraining orders against her husband. And her husband came to try to hurt her, and she shot off a gun [I: Yeah, the Marissa Alexander case. And she didn't even shoot him, right?]. Right, she just shot off the gun, but she was found guilty of, like deadly force? So, you hear stories like that, and what it says to me is, ok I've got to prepare my daughter and my son equally, for these dynamics that are at play.

In her summary of the Marissa Alexander case, Mrs. Vallencourt argues that under the large umbrella of criminal justice, there is little evidence that black women experience more protection in comparison to black men. High profile cases of unarmed women being shot by police underscore the notion that victimization of state violence is skewed heavily

towards men, but it is not completely absent from the lives of women; the murder of Sandra Bland in 2015 has helped amend the narrative about who is at risk for state violence. Yet, in this regard, Mrs. Vaillancourt's recognition of women's lack of protection via the state is an outlier. These gendered patterns (of concerted socialization of boys, attention to violence vs. sex), are part of a larger pattern of intersectionally-gendered subjectivity. It is not simply that moms are internalizing hegemonic messages about black-gendered stigma—it is not evident that moms believe these stereotypes—but regardless of their individual subscription to these labels, they must engage these racial and gendered hegemonic frameworks in order to socialize protective measures into their children. The discourse and stated strategies of my subjects hearken directly back to the ways that early framers of respectability saw the dangers and strategies for black men in the late 1800s. Unlike young women, for whom respectability pioneers developed trade and finishing schools, wrote pamphlets on codes of feminine dress, comportment, and speech, young men had few instructions on how to be masculine. Essentially all of the directions for men were about how to avoid violent confrontation with one another and the state. A respectable man is one who is emotionally mild, and not seen as dangerous; the moms in my study strategize ways to distinguish their sons from a dangerous-black-man stereotype, though few discuss monitoring their sons' emotional performance. Nevertheless, the data shows that moms of sons (and sons themselves) articulate concerns that are qualitatively distinct from the concerns that moms of daughters reference.

Sexual Purity and Disciplining Deviance

Early framers of Respectability developed their symbolic boundaries in reference to their religious epistemologies. For churchwomen of the late 1800s, one way to maintain respectable order was to illuminate boundaries and give them moral value.

Spaces that were public, populated by men, and linked to earthly pleasures (secular dance halls, the “street”) were considered profane. Private spaces, populated by women and focused on domestic and virtuous goals, were considered sacred (women’s bodies, in particular) and therefore meant to be protected, and women’s bodies in public (masculine) spaces, or dressed in immodest clothing, were read as sexually impure (Higginbotham 1993). These early articulations of Respectability foreshadow the ways that my subject pool use this strategy of behavioral boundary-making in service to symbolic power. Overall, this section outlines how mothers see sexual morality as a particular concern for their daughters, just as they see police violence as a particular problem for their sons. Though, outside of the disproportionate attention that moms bestow on girls’ sexual behaviors, there is very little that these community members have to say about sexuality at all. I argue that respondent silence around considering sexuality as a component of personal expression and family-making, allows for the continued gender- and sexual-conservatism of the formal organization. This pattern furthermore facilitates the reproduction of heteronormativity, and by extension queer marginality, as an implicit but meaningful standard of full inclusion in the larger intersectional community.

In the opening story, Mrs. Dixon’s worries about her son and daughter illuminate how for boys, these moms are largely focused on formal and informal violence, and for girls, the attention is on bodily-sexual vulnerability. In comparison to her son being the victim of state violence, she gives more attention to her daughter being “well loved” and respecting her body. Mrs. Dixon doesn’t want her daughter “to be so vulnerable that she succumbs to the influences of others. I want her to respect her body, and I don’t want her to see images that are around us, and assume that’s her reality, and then she misuses her

body in any way.” Moments later, she says that she wants “my husband, and my son to really respect women.” Concerns about purity are of particular concern in the narratives of my subjects. While there was much attention given to girls’ behaviors, there were nearly no instances of mothers or children focusing their sexual interrogations on boys.

Scholarship on the sexuality frameworks of respectability suggest that attention over black women’s sexual selves was twofold: certainly, the intersectional (classed and religiosity) positionality of the early framers aided in describing themselves as sexually restrained, and therefore respectable. The avoidance of spaces and behaviors coded as socially immoral and sexually deviant went far to reinforce a local moral stratification overall, and the ability to position themselves at the top. However, the emphasis on sexual behaviors also reflected fears about sexual violence and trends of rape for black women (Higginbotham 1992). The demand for sexual purity—facilitated by brightened boundaries around spaces, behaviors, and materials—were part of a protectionary strategy to keep black women laborers safe from victimization. Such protectionary instincts around sexuality persist today. Mrs. Vance highlights this tension between gender, class, and sexual morality with this story. She had been organizing a holiday party for families in need at a local Martin Luther King center:

Mrs. Vance: And we came there and we brought presents, and our kids did not gel well with the kids at the MLK center. It wasn't necessarily because of our kids, I think it was because of our mothers. Our mothers turned their nose up at some of the other mothers who were there at the MLK center. Not sure why, exactly, but I remember the conversations afterwards, "well they this and they that," and "they looked at us a certain way" or "did you see the way their kids were dancing?" And, we had an incident where a couple of girls had gotten into a kind of tight situation. It wasn't a fight or anything, and I said I thought that we should bring the kids together, with the adults, and let's have a discussion about it. Why did those girls at MLK feel uncomfortable at our girls coming in? It was probably just a natural reaction, here **our girls** were dancing to this music, and **their boys** were looking at **our girls**, you know, ‘fresh meat.’ That might have been part of it, I don't know. But through conversations with our moms it just felt like

the theme was, "they're ghetto, and our kids are not, and that's why our kids couldn't relate" and it was a ghetto issue. I thought it would be a good idea for us to get the kids together, and kind of discuss this. We were the haves, they were the have-nots, why were we not able to come together, and have a celebration? Our mothers were like, "no, no. We don't think that's a good idea." I was a little bit disappointed, I thought it was a really unique opportunity to have a conversation. Maybe we would have made more out of it if we had the discussion, because the issue just went away. We never went back (emphasis in the original audio).

Participants of Jack and Jill regularly do community service projects, and sometimes these projects put moms and children in contact with local poor Black folks. The moms in Mrs. Vance's group were frustrated about the ways that "their kids" were dancing, and such frustration illuminated class tensions between "our girls" and "those girls." Vance does not explicitly state that the dance moves of the "have-nots" were sexual, but she implies that the moves were perceived as inappropriate for the other moms present. What is more revealing, is the attending moms' discomfort with "their boys looking at our girls," with perceived sexual intention. In Vance's recounting, the moms perceive the tension to be between the children, and largely based on class; but I think (and I believe Vance would agree), that tension was largely experienced by the moms, and that it contained class, gender, and sexuality anxieties simultaneously. Like in Higginbotham's work, performances of sexuality work together with other intersectional performances (class and race) that together evidence morality, in-group status, and respectability. Drawing hard boundaries around these performances helps to reinforce social status among the elite. For the moms in Vance's story, a display (or even a suggestion of a display) of sexual interest by poor (black) men is sufficient reason to draw up protective boundaries around their daughters. The poor black girls at the center behave in a way that frames them as sexually impure, and there were no movements to protect "those girls." The sexual worlds of these moms and children are shaped both by macro-level scripts

about purity and licentiousness, and doubly reinforced by mothers taking charge of their children's sexual trajectories. At the community level, developing a sexual morality is similarly something that parents need to prioritize, and a failure to adequately socialize children into the correct moral frame means that they will fall prey to the depravity of the world of social others. As stigmatized actors, an individual's failure to embrace sexual standards is just one more strike against their social integration. Mrs. Deloache, who was the national president of Jack and Jill from 1966 to 1970, describes the denigration of sexual morals as part of the general trend of racial, cultural, and political upheaval in the 1960s. In one breath she questions whether America can "survive Black Activists, Black Militants, [and] Black Student Rebellion," and in the next:

An additional political and social issue throughout America is the "New Morality" the "New Freedom" the "Sexual Revolution." Parents, ministers, teachers and others view our youngsters' generation as being engaged in one "vast all-pervading, all permissive sexological spree."-- As parents are we just sitting on the side lines looking on? Or are you among those citizens pressing for a return to censorship, curfew and other restraints. Do you say this issue does not affect my family? How do you and your chapter members perceive the "new morality" issue? Has pornography material hit your community? Such as books, magazines, pictures, slides, and films. Figures show that the sale of pornography material is a 9 million dollar business in some states. What can you do to dethrone the "Smut King?" Through proper legislation we can make meaningful laws to outlaw all of these political issues. (De Loache, Up the Hill Magazine 1969)

Mrs. Deloache elevates issues of sex from the individual to the organizational level. The sexual behavior of the nation, in general, and the community's youth, in particular, is so important and alarming that she recommends legislative intervention, so that a "new morality" will not degrade the standards that the community seeks to enforce.

Finally, while gender difference and sexual behaviors are articulated by a wide range of respondents in my work, opinions and narratives about heterosexuality and homosexuality are largely absent. From Jack and Jill's earliest years, heteronormativity

has been a pervasive and assumed norm. The logo iconography, which goes on all official documents, shows stick figures, representing a four-person family. There is a father and son, which look like traditional unadorned stick figures, but also a mother and a daughter, drawn with skirts to highlight their gender difference. The iconography stuck out to Mrs. Adams in particular, who noted “every picture that Jack and Jill has, there’s always a husband and a wife.” This emphasis on gender distinction is illuminated earlier in the chapter, but this iconography, along with other organizational norms, also illuminates the heteronormativity in the organization as a whole. Remember that Jack and Jill is a private, invitation-only, organization; to be a member you have to submit an application, receive sponsorships of members in good standing, and be voted in by the current members. Early iterations of the application process, while short, asked for the mother’s and father’s name; later iterations asked about occupational status. While this doesn’t necessitate that there were no single mothers in Jack and Jill, the expectation that members would be married is codified in many of the archival materials.

Contemporarily, with divorce being statistically common, there is reduced stigma around being a single mother in the organization; three of the mothers that I interviewed are divorced, and spoke freely about how their social networks in the organization supported them during that experience. What is rendered silent is the idea that same-gender parents are, and should be, allowed in the organization. When I asked Mrs. Coleman, who previously discussed cultivating embedded same-gender networks for her son, about any instance of same-sex couples in Jack and Jill, she was the only participant who unequivocally affirmed that notion. The important factor is that both partners were women, “Because it’s a mother’s organization. We’ve had men who wanted to join, and we were like ‘no, sorry. Until you change your gender’.” For her and other women who

were open (or at least not antagonistic) to having same-gender-loving members (6 out of 15), it seems like gender overrode any concerns about sexuality. Those who were open to it premised their opinions on the reality that there were no codified rules against homosexuality in the organization:

Mrs. Hill: I don't think we have a position that you can't be a same sex couple. But I believe the policy is that one can join. Decide which one, and that one can join. But I know that the policy has been discussed, so there probably was something that happened for the policy to be discussed. I don't see it as a problem. I just, you know, the way the membership is set up, you have to have one person. You can't tag-team. That would be nice though.

Interviewer: I bet most moms would love that.

Mrs. Hill: Yeah, half of my meetings, half of my activities to somebody else? Great!

Any objections to allowing homosexual members into the organization were often rooted in moralistic terms, rather than institutional regulation.

Mrs. Mitchell: I have not thought about same-sex couples joining, in the future, I think that's going to be challenging. There's no judgement on anybody, I'm just saying. I guess I am hoping that Jack and Jill would still be a place for families that are traditional. But it's not, we have couples that are not together. But I guess, to me, that's not unacceptable. I guess I would say, traditional Christian families. But when I think about it, it has moved, it has already changed so much from what it was, traditionally. I'm sure the founders didn't expect it to be the way it is now. So, the more we talk, the more I think, 20 years from now, the way things are going, that's probably what's going to happen.

Just looking at how it is with my students, their view, their world view doesn't seem to be the worldview that I have. Their view is like "oh this is cool, no problem. This is just normal." It was not normal for me, and it seems like its normal for them. They're just going to look at us, and poo-poo us as racist or homophobic, or we're going to be the bad guys, and it's going to be like "what's the big thing? Love is love." So, I would not be surprised, would that be my hope and prayer? Absolutely not, I see the generation going in a very different direction. And I know that, 25 years ago they were saying the same thing. They would have never imagined a single parent in Jack and Jill. And they are, there are divorced parents in Jack and Jill. They would have never imagined having a dark-skinned baby in Jack and Jill, it was only for the upper elite, they would have never have imagined having middle class

people, blue collar workers. Yet it happens. So, change is change. Would that be hard for me? It would be.

Overall, this quote speaks to the (purposeful, on her part) invisibility of LGBT folks in this community. She considers acceptance of LGBT folks as part of a larger social change (similar to other demographic changes in the organization), but is morally resistant to it, overall. It is striking that Mrs. Mitchell seems to accept (or, at least she is not resistant to) Jack and Jill's softening of colorism and divorcee membership as positive overall, but feels firm about erecting boundaries around sexuality. A potential factor of it is about the organization's Christian bend—it is not strictly a religious organization, but chapters often open and close meetings with a prayer.

Unlike the attention and absorption of parental narratives about gender and marriage, the children did not seem to internalize familial or organizational narratives about sexuality. They expressed no reticence for LGBT participation, yet did not articulate a promotional stance towards queer identities. This apathy around homosexuality is foreshadowed in Mitchell's belief that generational change will dilute what boundaries exist around family make-up in the formal organization. The mothers in my sample had well-developed frameworks for the boundaries around sexual performance, as evidenced by public behaviors and mate choice, in this community. Again, this attention is highly gendered, as moms are particularly concerned about their respectable daughters in ways they do not articulate about their sons.

Children, however, do not have a robust respectability framework through which they evaluate sexual behaviors. In fact, one of the children, Laura, described the demand for respectability politics with exasperation and derision. When describing a small conflict, again at a Jack and Jill dance and the dancing behaviors engaged by the young people, she remembered that “when that conversation, for example, about dancing was

had, it was always about really weird respectability things. They had a Jack and Jill alum come in and say, ‘Well, when my friends and I used to dance we used to make sure if your hands are in the air, then it's okay.’ Weird things about what it means to be a lady and a man, you know?” I find that messages around sexual respectability are not particularly internalized by the children, in general. However, as we will see in the next section there is far more discussion by moms and absorption by kids about marriage, and appropriate partners. In particular, moms articulate bimodal expectations for their future sons- and daughters-in-law; such expectations are partially absorbed by children, in patterns that reflect the larger ideological and narrative habits of the community.

Marrying Black, Marrying Rich

While marriage is rarely made explicit in the organizational archives, there is plenty of mention of racial and class homophily (or *like-mindedness*) between children, and the social value of those networks over time. Homophily is the persistent phenomena where social contact (and by extension, marriage and mating) occurs often between people with many demographic similarities, and occurs only rarely between demographic groups (McPherson et al 2001). Demographic distance facilitates social distance, and current sociological literature posits that social homophily has a few interlocking intentions and effects (Sherwood 2004): the articulation of bright social boundaries (Keller 1991; Sherwood 2004), the deep but invisible socialization of rituals, culture, and ideology that make up the qualitative substance of the community (McPherson et al 2001; Kahn 2011), and endogamous matching (Lawrence 1991). The mothers in my sample displayed an explicit knowledge of the emotional advantages of having exclusive spaces for their racially stigmatized children, but also displayed an implicit mastery of the productive value of such network ties when it came to the advancement of social capital

(Granovetter 1995; Lin 2000). This section illuminates the ways that members of this community talk about demographic similarity, and its role in intimate relationships. When it comes to their children's potential future spouse, moms emphasize interests based on their child's gender. Depending on whether interviewees had sons or daughters, their articulated goal for their children had different demographic qualities; racial restrictions for their sons, and status desires for their daughters.

While some moms used gender-neutral language, and spoke about personal qualities like kindness, or supportiveness, strong wills and outgoing personalities, (Mrs. Hill), 8 out of the 16 moms had some explicit desires for their future son- or daughter-in-law. Moms are often highly attuned to the racial identities of their son's romantic partners, in ways that they are not focused on the racial identity for their daughters. They want their sons to marry Black women, yet understand that romantic attraction is partially about exposure. Just as Mrs. Coby wants her children to be exposed to "beautiful and attractive" Black women, moms consider how their sons are exposed to, and ultimately appreciate and love, Black and White women. Mrs. Tucker has a particularly firm grasp on how the racially isolated structure of many of these families is a major factor in finding a partner. Families engage in concerted cultivation, urge their children into elite educational and enrichment organizations, and often live and work in majority-white environments. Such contexts means that their Black children grow up and earn positions in prestigious colleges, and go on to elite careers; all places that have a paucity of potential partners of color:

Mrs. Tucker: And we've fostered that as parents. You find that that they didn't always follow through when they hit college; quite a few people were dating white, or joined white frats. Parents were kind of looking around, alarmed, but hey, that's a choice, and you make those decisions. It's happened to friends of ours, that someone was dating a white girl, they graduated, it's been 6 months, the father was like "ok, you've had your

fun.” The son was like “what?” “Well, you know there might be some other things going on, but they ain't talking about no marriage! You can party and do all you want, you can screw around as much as you like.”

Interviewer: Like, it's ok in college, but once you're done....

Mrs. Tucker: And it may not be as blunt as that, but it may happen; not everybody is all open and receptive.

In Mrs. Tucker's telling, interracial dating and sex are fine for the excitement of youth, but inappropriate for family-building. Yet she seems empathetic to the contradictory forces at play; on one hand, exposure to white peers seems like a natural precursor to an interracial marriage, on the other hand, she illuminates that ways that parental desires (previously unspoken) compel children to match up with “appropriate” partners. Other mothers are not as interested in the structural components of matching and marriage. Much of the popular discourse about interracial marriage is steeped in the accusation that black men “marry white” because of persistent stereotypes about black women. In this framework, having a white wife can be a signal of socioeconomic success.

Mrs. Vance: I guess I'd be fine if my girls found someone who loved them, that wasn't black. But I have a lot of baggage when it comes to black men marrying women who are not black. Mostly because over the years, I still hear stories of black men saying they are not choosing a black woman because. I mean it's one thing if people fall in love, but does your not wanting to be with a black woman have to be a part of it? Does it have to be about black women being loud, or (I've heard this before) black women being rigid, or black women being angry? Does it have to be about that? Can't you just love this white woman, because you just love her, and she's an incredible woman? But there have been so many men, through stories I've heard, who say that kind of thing. And just from growing up in Long Island, where a lot of the black guys dated white women, I've got a little bit of an issue with interracial dating as it relates to Black men and white women. It spills over a little bit into the black woman-white man. Although, it's funny, I know that I've already tainted my daughters, because they know that when I see black women with white men I'm always like "you go girl." I have my preference that black women would be with a black man. Not because, well hopefully you love him, and he loves you, that's the important element, but we have to build our community. We have a very weak community, it's almost like we're sick, diseased and we need medicine, and

we need to become healthy. You know, there's so much distrust amongst us, and if we continue to go outside our race, we're not going to focus on what's going on in our community. It's not going to be of paramount importance, you're not working with another black woman, you're working on your relationship with a white woman.

Mrs. Vance's emphasis on the greater Black community hearkens back to the respectability framework by highlighting the expectation that Black women have an outsized responsibility and power to socialize the future generation of Black community members. In this view, women are the bearers and educators of culture, and children learn the building blocks of culture from their mothers. When asked why she "would love" her sons to marry Black women, Mrs. Adams argues "I'm really big on culture. And I want my grandkids to go to a black church and grow up Baptist, not that they couldn't if they have a white mom. Or go to Martha's Vineyard, and talk about black issues. My father, our family, our Thanksgiving dinner, we're talking about race. We're talking about Barack Obama, and Trump, and race, and racism." Yet, moments later, she concedes, "and if someone is comfortable in that, that's not black, then I'm cool." For Adams, the markers of culture (church membership, fluency in racial topics, vacation locations) are facilitated by mothers, despite the fact that her sons are Black, grew up participating in these cultural traditions, and could encourage their own families to continue such customs. It is very likely, that these moms' interest in Black daughters-in-law is as much about racial boundary-keeping as it is about cultural conventions. Mrs. Edwards explains her desire this way:

Mrs. Edwards: Let me put it this way, say every man who graduates from Jack and Jill this year, I mean teenage graduate, who graduates for the next 12 years, whatever 4 years, they make a pact "we are marrying white women. We are all marrying white women." We could, in theory, have 20 white women come and be members of Jack and Jill. As legacies! Through their husbands! Which is fine! No, it's not! And this could happen—not that anyone would make a pact to only marry white women, that's your business, do what you want.

Mrs. Edwards ends on a note of ambivalence, but articulates a meaningful explanation for the gendered desire for black partners. As addressed in the chapter on racial formation, these mothers draw bright boundaries around the substance of racial identity, and similarly draw racial boundaries around Jack and Jill. The fundamental Blackness of Jack and Jill could be disrupted with the influx of white mothers, something that several of my participants expressed anxiety about. The desire for Black daughters-in-law is likely as much about the racial integrity of the community as it is about socializing the next generation into a shared racial culture. Respectability is about the concerted cultivation of destigmatizing norms at the mezzo and micro levels, and many of the early framers saw families as a prime socialization mechanism, and women as efficient social educators. Having a white daughter-in-law might afford one's grandchildren the appropriate class capital but there is serious doubt that she would have the cultural capital to engage the racial norms of the community; having black daughters-in-law, would mean that the generational transmission of respectability (as a raced-classed intersectional project) is likely in good hands.

The sons in my study seem to have absorbed, or at least heard and understood, the desires of their mothers. Some, like Eli, were able to articulate the dating scene via a structural lens. Unlike Mrs. Tucker's macro-level view (where racial-spatial inequality directly shapes patterns of affect), Eli takes a more mezzo, institutional level view. Most of his Jack and Jill peers attended predominantly white High Schools, and it was there (and not in Jack and Jill chapters) where young men were pursuing romantic relationships. "A lot of the guys in my group who were in the senior teens group, they had girlfriends at their high school," he says, "they had dates for the prom. A lot of the women in our chapters had not had a boyfriend, and these were very attractive women."

The lack of romantic options for girls in majority-white High Schools often compelled them to prioritize HBCUs for college, where they expected they would have a wider dating pool. However, Eli makes it clear that he thinks that the dating-gap between black girls and black boys was not because girls were fussy and rejecting mates (of any race), but rather the boys at school were simply not pursuing them.

Eli: Most of the guys in our chapter were athletic, were tall, we played sports, so they were popular at their respective majority-white schools because they were like the smart athlete, the smart jock, you know. And I think guys in general are a little bit more accepting. Where, I think the women, they were not sought-after as far as dating goes, for whatever reasons. And they had friends but they would always tell you stories of how all their [white] friends got asked to go to prom, they didn't. All their friends in middle school got asked to go to [the dances] but they were excluded."

Some mothers sought to bridge this dating gap by explicitly pointing their children to their Jack and Jill peers. In Paul's case, he received instructions on who to date, from multiple women of authority in his life. He describes how Jack and Jill community operates as a desirable and convenient mate-pool; one that children were socialized to have a collective emotional investment in.

Paul: I think she was afraid for prom that I was not going to have any date, kind of thing like that. I was like, "What are you talking about?" She's like, "Yeah, you need some dates so you're going to go with some Jack and Jill girls. That was her thing, she was like, "You're going to need a girlfriend," or, "You're going to get married to a Jack and Jill girl." I didn't understand that then, but now I see where she was going with that.

For example, I went to get my sports physical and it was a new doctor and she was black. And then she started talking to me and she's like, "Oh, you're really smart," and stuff like that. And she found out where I went to school and she's like, "Do you have a girlfriend?" I was like, "No." She was like, "You know, you need to date a sister." I was like, "Wait, what do you mean?" She's like, "When you get older, you need to date a black woman." I'm like, "Why does it matter? Race doesn't really matter to me." And the doctor's like, "Because a lot of black men who are successful usually go the other route and marry a white girl and push the sisters on the side. And they're the one that had their backs all the time until they became successful."

I get it now but, at first, I wasn't looking at race, but I feel like it's very important because black women go through a lot and the whole intersectionalism thing, because they're fighting with race, and they're also fighting because they're a woman. And they don't have enough support from both sides, because the Black Lives Matter is supporting, basically, the black man's life. So, it's not black women. And the whole feminist movement, it's white feminists, it's white women. So black women are stuck in the middle and it's like everything's hard for them. They need our support, especially the successful black man's support. They need our help, that's what I feel.

Moms' interest may not only be in defense of the racial integrity of the formal organization. Using a different lens, we can see that this interest in highlighting black girls as desirable partners is also these moms' defense and reaffirmation of themselves. Again, most of the moms in my sample were married, but they certainly recognize the power of the black lady stereotype: the middle-class professional woman who repelled male suitors, due to her personality, her socioeconomic success, or some other obscure reason. Recognizing the ways that stereotypes work to naturalize social inequities—black women are least likely to marry a man from any race, the black lady stereotype personalizes this statistic—these moms work to disrupt that pattern. I believe they do so, both for moral and collective reasons, but also for personal reasons. There is some evidence that this reproduction strategy is effective. Not only does Paul concede that he'll pursue black women in the future, he uses the community-building framework of respectability. Women do the work of socialization, and as a man, he should “help” them; marrying a non-black person would be indicative to his divestment from the community.

When talking to moms of daughters, the ideal partner is framed primarily based on class identity, not racial identity. Mothers are focused on their daughters marrying men who are at their class level, though, as discussed in the class chapter, moms employ narrative frameworks of skill, morality, and education, to obscure the boundaries and

importance of class in their lives. When I asked Mrs. Wadia if she had thought about what kind of partner would be good for her young daughter, she displayed her skill at such a narrative strategy. Her Christian faith, she says teaches her that “you love everyone, and you should not feel like you are different than anyone else, but it’s very important for you to be around people that can help you *to think* a certain way” [emphasis in the original]. She goes on:

Mrs. Wadia: So that is one of the lessons that I want my kids to know. That when I want my daughter to marry I am telling her, even as she's dating now, I am telling her ‘listen, you want a young man who has a book in his hand. You like to sing, make sure he has activities at the school where he is going to the choir, or something like, that. Or he's in honors, hello! You want a young man who wants something out of life, because it's going to make your life more difficult when you have to pull someone along and fix and make them want something. You want someone who wants something for themselves.’ One of the biggest things that I saw, says: what is the rule for success? Well, marry the right person, think about who you're going to marry. It's not just for love! I guess that's the biggest thing. Marrying the right person helps them along; you don't have to struggle so much.

Like Mrs. Wadia above, Mrs. Baker explicitly states, that having their daughter marry a Black partner is not a priority for them, yet she goes on to specify that she wants her daughter’s partner to have a college degree. The better to “communicate” with, I suppose. Mrs. Baker similarly uses meritocratic language (“disciplined,” “want to grow”) as values that are meant to be read as class-neutral; but for her, those values are developed via a secondary education.

Interviewer: Do you have any concerns about your daughters, I mean, going out into the world?

Mrs. Baker: Yeah. And I would say it's funny because I watched the documentary 13th, again, and I'm like "damn" are they going to find black men to marry? I mean, I don't know. I just heard that Howard University is 70% women; that's crazy! So, it’s not as easy to get into Howard anymore, if you’re a girl, because the criteria is a lot stronger. Because they can be, they can be selective, right? That's telling. And Morehouse is not a big

school, and I suspect that the statistics are probably the same for other HBCUs.

Interviewer: You've mentioned both Howard and Morehouse, does having a black partner, is that something that you're concerned about?

Mrs. Baker: No, no, no, it's not. It's not concerning at all. It's who you meet! And if the pool isn't as large, and you want a black man, then that's not going to happen as easily as it could have happened a couple of years ago.

Interviewer: Do you want them to marry someone who has gone to college?

Mrs. Baker: I do. I think that educational level is important, communication is important, and I find that people that have gone to college and have studied and want to grow, there's a different mindset. Maybe a bit more disciplined. And I have to say, the girls that I know, the women that I know that go out with men that haven't, it's almost like a competition.

It is less obvious to me, that daughters have absorbed the lessons of class-based marriage. In comparison to the clear articulations of raced-partners that come from the sons in my sample, daughters did not articulate a cohesive framework that mimicked the mothers'. In fact, only one daughter in the sample even got close to explaining the community's marital expectations. When asked what she thought about the goal of Jack and Jill chapters, she stated plainly:

Lorraine: It's finding someone for you to relate to. I also think a lot of people join because they want their kids to marry someone of the same status, blah blah blah.

Interviewer: Okay. Does that work?

Lorraine: I don't know.

It is possible that Lorraine is similarly obfuscating the importance of class distinctions. It is also possible that the narrative strategies that mothers engage in, are effective in this case, and children truly do not receive messages about the importance of class in marriage. This finding is certainly in alignment with the ways that community members

talk about race and class more generally: race is an explicitly meaningful category of social identity, and therefore this intersectional community goes far in organizing solidarity around what they perceive to be a stigmatizing phenomenon. Class, meanwhile, is an implicitly meaningful category of social identity; members of this community prefer to talk about personal values, omnivorous taste, and the porosity of class strata in order to dismiss its authority in their lives. Though, as we notice above, silence around class issues does not indicate an absence of knowledge or interest in such issues. It may be that because of the implicit association of women with culture, it is a priority that men marry women that are culturally similar. Women, however, are directed towards partners with status, something that their gender can bar them from.

Conclusion

The social (re)production of meritorious gender and sexual social actors is an important facet in a larger destigmatization strategy. Considering the historical trends of gendered violence experienced by black men and women, middle-class and elite blacks have leaned into the individualist framework of resistance found in Respectability Politics. Such ideological structures seek to disrupt hegemonic frameworks of black people as culturally primitive and sexually disreputable by putting forth a set of behavioral norms that demand Victorian standards of gendered-heteronormativity, cultural and aesthetic regulation, and sexual austerity (Wolcott 1997; Rhodes 2016). Yet, simultaneously, the standards of respectability are useful in disciplining in-group members into conformity, and drawing boundaries against the black poor, conceptualizing them as culturally and sexually debauched. The subjects in my study engage with both the substance of respectability, and its boundary mechanisms, to

cultivate gendered identities into young people. Respectability demands distinctly gendered behavioral norms, marital strategies, and sexual comportment, and facilitates both the discipline of in-group members, and the stigmatization of out-group members. Like the framers of Respectability, members of Jack and Jill communities articulate their norms at the micro and mezzo level. As process, individual mothers express their desires for their children both implicitly and explicitly and lean on the programming and structure of local chapters to guide their children into normative behaviors. Children, similarly, engage the messages given to them by their mothers and the organization, alternately internalizing their demands (when it comes to marriage) or rejecting them (when it comes to sexual behaviors). As substance, members of this community give boys and girls different normative scripts in order to socialize them into respectable gendered adults. Boys are socialized to negotiate their bodily and aesthetic stance, in order to project strength but also “safeness”; whereas girls are socialized to negotiate their stance to project sexual purity. Girls are hyper-visible in the bid to manage sexuality; boys’ behaviors are hardly ever scrutinized. Boys are encouraged to marry someone of their racial group, while girls are compelled to seek out class-matched partners.

The bimodal attention that moms give to their gendered children illuminates their adherence to respectability, and also draws our attention to the ways adherence to respectability is seen as an efficient strategy for destigmatization. The particular demands for black women and men reflect historical patterns of the black middle class to minimize social stigma between themselves and white neighbors, and the black middle classes self-perception as role models for the black poor. Certainly, the subjects in my study see their gendered performances as distinguishing them from the black underclass, but their

narratives also echo the aspirations of the earliest respectability framers; that individual behaviors might be sufficient to disrupt stereotypes about black primitivity, and facilitate meaningful incorporation into privileged spaces. The demands of respectability, as they are practiced in this intersectional community, are fundamental to battling persistent stereotypes potentially held by white peers, but also work to brighten boundaries between class groups. They mark themselves as normative and use such positionality to avoid stigmatization and promote racial pride.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has two overarching concerns: first, how do black elite middle-class communities, social actors that are socioeconomically privileged and racially marginalized, at once, think about these stereotypically disparate demographic experiences? To that end, I wanted to understand how black elites talk about race, class, and gender, how they understand their positionality within those demographic categories. Secondly, given that we know that social reproduction occurs via the education of ideological frameworks and bodily habits and its efficacy to illuminate the ways that recipients (children) absorb and reproduce such norms, how do social actors at particular intersections of race, class, and gender reproduce their shared norms? To this end, I turned to members of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. to interrogate individual discursive frames, as well as the role individual and organizational strategies in the formation and transmission of such frames, and the absorption patterns of the second generation. Before reviewing the answers given to us by the empirical data, I want to return again to the concept of intersectional social actors and intersectional communities.

Intersectionality does not simply belong to people who are oppressed on multiple demographic axes; it is not a short-hand for a cynical framework where “identity politics” becomes the “oppression Olympics.” Intersectionality simply claims that social actors are complex, and that an analysis that seeks to examine one facet of demographic experience, while assuming that all others can be held constant, will fall short of a nuanced comprehension of the ways that categorical identities work together in the real world. Social actors are not only raced, or classed; they are not only marginalized or privileged. Intersectionality allows us to think about the ways different categories of identity are co-

created, how one's race identity is fundamentally shaped by gender and class identities, gender identity is imbued with racial and classed meanings. Furthermore, intersectionality claims that the way that social actors interpret and behave in the world, and are in turn interpreted by strangers, is a function of the multiple identities they hold. I believe that Jack and Jill, and the black elite community that populates it, represent an intersectional community. Not only are there intersectional boundaries to official club membership, but my social actors articulate race, class, and gender in ways that reveal an ideological homophily borne of intersectional experiences.

Racial Formation broadly argues that contemporary boundaries between, and substance within, racial categories represent the fruits of hegemonic ideological processes that serve to direct resources (both symbolic and material) to a privileged few, and then justify such inequality through stereotypes of biological or cultural inferiority. Social actors resist (or recreate) such injustices through racial projects that seek to articulate race and its effects in ways that benefit their own group (Omi and Winant 1994). Successful racial projects are absorbed into hegemonic frameworks and might indicate a level of successful integration into hegemonic power. Chapter 3 tackles how the mothers and children in this intersectional community understand the meanings that their phenotypic bodies have in the social world, considering (or despite) their socioeconomic position as middle-class. Given that physical bodies are assigned social value, according to the interest of white racial hegemony, and given that my sample tend to live and work in environments that are overwhelmingly white, these particular social actors seek to cultivate a sense of safety, normalcy, and respect in a context where their physical body is fundamentally stigmatized. To do this, my sample displays both an absorption, or acknowledgement of stigma, while simultaneously displaying a reframing strategy to

socialize racial pride, affection, and solidarity into the next generation. Mothers work to explicitly socialize racial identity and pride into their children, both socializing them to recognize stranger's assessment of their bodies as particularly dangerous, yet also seeking activities and cultural representations that show black bodies and culture as valuable and beautiful. In particular, these mothers are invested in cultural representations that show black professional families, like their own (*The Cosby Show*, comes to mind). Mothers seek to socialize a view of blackness that is linked to a classed identity; they see these cultural forms as "positive" forms of blackness for their children to emulate.

The role of Jack and Jill here is similarly one of racial socialization and racial comfort. Moms look to it as a site for co-ethnic role models, as well as a place for historical and cultural enrichment. At the same time, these moms see Jack and Jill in a Goffmanian way: a place for protection from discriminatory whites, a place of emotional comfort and commiseration, and a place to develop dense social networks, networks that are bound together by empathy but are also extremely productive, given the socioeconomic standing of its members. The collaboration between mothers and their local clubs is an effective one. The children in my sample have absorbed the dual messages of racial disadvantage and ethnic-solidary well. They recognize the value mastering racial culture; it is not a skill that will necessarily help them at their job, but it signals to other minorities that they share a cultural vocabulary, it signals ethnic solidarity across socioeconomic strata.

Social Reproduction literature tells us that American elites perpetuate behavioral patterns to reproduce inequality over time, but also do a lot of discursive work to obscure those trends. While they engage concerted cultivation of elite norms at home, and utilize institutions (schools, primarily, but also private clubs) to legitimate and develop cultural

and social capital, American elites have rejected patterns of proud snobbishness for discursive frames of meritocratic choice, consumptive omnivorousness, and democratic inequality. It is through these “class neutral” frames that American elites deny that class is a meaningful organizing principle in our social world, while still finding themselves at the top (Kahn 2011). Chapter 4 finds that mothers generally work to obscure the role of class in their lives, while simultaneously socializing apparently class-neutral “values” into their children. Mothers talk about socializing children away from classed identities because they don’t want them to be spoiled, yet demand that their children seek out good education and develop behavioral ease in elite cultural spaces. Such narrative flexibility is expected by work on symbolic boundary making; social actors use morals and norms to indicate in-group positions. Such norms are often imbued with racial and cultural strategies to mark one’s self as “good” no matter one’s empirical social position (Lamont 2000). I argue that these moms frame education or skills as if they are class-neutral phenomena and avoid class-talk both to blend in with the discursive trends of the American white elite, and also to not be seen as elitist by co-ethnics. Nevertheless, they recognize and lean into the power that classed-materials has to destigmatize their racial bodies, and take every opportunity to use class to articulate legitimacy and belonging in white spaces.

The role of Jack and Jill, when it comes to class, is primarily as a skill developer and capital nursery. Opportunities that individual families might not enjoy on their own (organizing museum trips, or teaching young people how to invest in stocks), are possible when they are organized by the organization. Cultural enrichment and skill-building are some of the main goals of individual chapters, and they take every opportunity to develop and cultivate capitals (skills) into children. As stated above, just as Jack and Jill operates

as a co-ethnic network, it is simultaneously a co-elite network. Mothers and children alike recognize the power of their associations within Jack and Jill; and because the structure of the clubs encourage deep and durable intimacy between families, mothers see their participation in the club as a long-term investment. The parent of a playmate is simultaneously a future internship advisor, reference letter writer, or alumni connection between you, and a desirable law school. When it came to asking children about class, a minority of them had developed robust class analyses of their childhood. On one hand, their inability to articulate the ways that elite status shapes their lives might indicate that it is a message that was not well-transferred to that generation. On the other hand, I argue that the class-incoherence of most of the child-participants is not a failure of transmission, it represents a successful transmission. Mothers do not want their children to be class-conscious; most children, in turn, did not have the vocabulary to talk about the ways class was an organizing principle in their lives. Instead they displayed fluency around discourses of skill and value (symbolic boundaries that their mothers utilized in their own interviews), effectively rendering the connection between “values” and social stratification invisible.

Respectability politics is often invoked in black feminist circles to critique the ways that gender performance is used as a social control mechanism to privilege black elite communities and shame and stigmatize poor black communities. I argue in chapter 5, that respectability is a raced-classed-gendered project, that seeks to reshape understandings of black womanhood and manhood and disrupt controlling images of violence, gender deviance, and sexual delinquency. The framers of respectability, black churchwomen of the early 1900s, sought to participate in a movement of Racial Uplift, where professionals, intellectuals, and religious leaders worked together to assimilate

newly emancipated Negroes into northern urban life. While the larger project of Racial Uplift sought to explain the discriminatory treatment of blacks as manageable via cultural alignment, the women who helped to develop respectability norms articulated bimodal demands for respectable behavioral performances based on gender. While men were simply to refrain from fighting in the street, women were obligated to both emulate Victorian standards of womanhood (domesticity, chastity, virtuosity), and do the work of racial uplift (entrepreneurship, educating the masses, advocacy for political gain) (Higginbotham 1993). I argue that the early frames of respectability, developed by black middle-class, women are echoed in the ways that the mothers in this intersectional community talk about gender today. This chapter finds that moms have bimodal concerns, and bimodal demands, for their gendered children, in alignment with respectability. For their sons, mothers double down on their narrative about recognizing their stigmatized bodies and developing strategies to protect sons from accusations of, or victimization through violence. Mothers spend a lot of time talking to their sons about external danger, and available destigmatization strategies, hoping to keep them safe from state violence. On the other hand, mothers are particularly attentive to the sexual behaviors of their daughters, and seek to discipline performances that are not in alignment with respectable (Victorian) standards. Just as moms seek to protect sons from violations from the state, moms seek to protect daughters from accusations of licentiousness (though often they teach these lessons by disparaging overtly sexual behavior from “other girls,” rather than defending “our girls”). Lastly, mothers articulate bimodal interests in their children’s future marriage partners. Mothers of boys were adamant that their sons seek out and marry black women, with less attention to class; mothers of girls were more focused on their daughters seeking out, and marrying, elite-

class men, seemingly regardless of race. While this pattern seems odd, I argue that it is simply an extension of the expectations and demands of respectability. Mothers often see women as socializers of the family, and therefore the unofficial cultural educators of the race; for these moms, white wives cannot do the all-important racial work of raising culturally black children. Mothers of daughters are not concerned with the cultural education of their grandchildren (they already have a black mother), and therefore focus on their daughters finding eligible, educated, professional men.

What is Jack and Jill's role here? While none of the people in my sample argued that Jack and Jill was a meaningful socialization mechanism for their gender identity, it would be a mistake to suggest that gender is not present here. Remember that Jack and Jill membership is restricted to mothers only. This is true even if you are a man with legacy status; your wife ultimately holds membership, not you. Jack and Jill is formally about mothers and children, and many participants reveled in the joy of having so many black mothers in one community. While there are few formal documents that reference gender socialization, there are implicit messages about respectable family formation everywhere. Official iconography always shows a mother and father with a son and a daughter, all in stick-figure form. Applications for membership have historically had a space for "mother's name" and "father's name." When I asked about gay or lesbian participation in the organization, I was met with moral ambiguity around lesbian mothers, and flat out rejection for the notion of gay fathers. The rate of absorption by children in this chapter was mixed. Discourses that surrounded gender and race (that black boys must be particularly careful around violence, and also seek out black wives) seemed to be wholly incorporated into children's narrative frames. But discourses that surrounded

gender and class (black daughters should marry well), or gender and sexuality (black girls should perform sexual restraint) were less obvious in the children's narratives.

While the data show how this community engages intersectional articulations of race, class, and gender, I think that this data is also telling a larger story about social navigation in the face of racial stigma. I argue that as this community understands their body to be a social marker of marginality, especially since they live and work in majority-white spaces, the ideological frames and behavioral strategies indicated in this data show black elite communities are engaged in a destigmatization strategy. In alignment with Goffman's theorization of stigma (1963), these social actors utilize in-group orientation strategies (protecting themselves from race-linked violence, cultivating networks based upon that shared strategy, and reframing the local meanings of race) as well as out-group orientation strategies (socializing refined behaviors and democratic discourse). While I believe that all of the behaviors outlined in this project work together to facilitate a destigmatized identity, I do not mean to suggest that I believe that this community's goal is racial minimization, or color-blind assimilation into the white elite. At heart, I argue that these social actors are articulating and managing boundaries of their intersectional community, one that is glued together by both bodily and cultural expressions of race, and also standards of behavioral distinction and expressed symbolic "values." If Jack and Jill is the anchor for this community, the boundaries around both formal (organizational) and informal (community) membership are articulated via raced, classed, and gendered axes. When it comes to this community's inherent interest in replicating its norms over time, I argue that such ideological and behavioral reproduction has been successful. Utilizing both parents (as micro-actors) and Jack and Jill (as a mezzo-level, institutional actor) this community instills its norms around race-, class-,

and gender-identity quite well into their children. The children in this sample absorb the explicit racial lessons of the community, and they similarly internalize the demand for class “blindness.” Such strategies around identity, work to signal group membership within the intersectional community, where one might feel that they are performing their authentic self. But these strategies also work to project disparate signals to two very different audiences; I argue that the strategies around raced-classed-gendered identities are meant to signal emotional solidarity with working-class blacks, and ideological homophily with white elites.

This goal of this project is to add a small contribution to the literature around identity-making, stigma, and social reproduction. I believe that it adds to the research on the black elite by considering how formal organizations act as ideological reproductive spaces to develop discourse around race, class, and gender. Similarly, it contributes to work on American elites, by investigating how race remains not only a persistent mechanism of inequality despite socioeconomic gain, but also how social clubs can be socializers of a minority racial identity. The contributions made to the literature are not without significant limitations. My methodological decision to utilize a case study framework, and rely on a snowball sample, allows for a close investigation of a particular context, but my work is limited to a small sample of Jack and Jill participants from the Northeastern Region of the organization. I have no doubt that the discursive strategies exhibited here are a factor of region and culture, as much as they are a factor of demographic intersectionality. Snowball samples, while a worthy strategy for populations that seek privacy and protection, fundamentally direct my access to knowledge. Finally, I have decided to rely on narrative (both documented and discursive) for this project; I have collected stories about, arguments around, and accountings for behavior (Sherwood

2010). Had I pursued an ethnographic methodology, the data around identity-articulation and social reproduction would have been very different.

The logical next step would be a second case study in another region of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. Whereas the Northeast Region holds the oldest chapters, the Far-West Region (which includes California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona and Alaska) contains many of the youngest chapters. Additionally, the frameworks around race, class, and gender evident in this project are undoubtedly contextual given geographic culture. A new geographic context is likely to enable new articulation across these axes. This work is already being pursued by other sociologists who are well versed in the analysis of intersectional identities. Future research on organizations could improve on the generalizability of “intersectional community” or “intersectional organization” as a concept by comparing Jack and Jill to other organizations and clubs that are also engaged in intersectional community building, like the Boys and Girls Club of America (to consider black, working class organizations), the Links or Carousel Club, or even the Boulé (arguably the oldest, and most secretive black elite club in contemporary existence). As the professional, political, and cultural elite continues to grow more diverse, it remains an open question whether America will see more color-blind assimilative patterns, or if we will observe the persistence of meaningful racial identities, even at the top of our socioeconomic pyramid. If patterns of racial social segregation continue, I anticipate that minority-elites will continue populate Jack and Jill of America, Inc., and other clubs like it. For these communities, the social and emotional benefits feel more salient than any outsider critique, and their participation is a long-term investment they find meaningful, protective, and profitable overall.

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