“Resilience” in Barbados: Bein’ uh Work in progress

by

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ABSTRACT

“RESILIENCE” IN BARBADOS: BEIN’ UH WORK IN PROGRESS

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“Resilience” has become a key term in conceptualising people’s resourcefulness in the face of hardship. Rooted in Euro-American assumptions of normal development and the conditions of daily life, prevailing notions of “resilience” individualize the phenomenon and disqualify local, culturally and contextually appropriate practices which shape the phenomenon. Nowhere is this more potentially harmful than in indigenous communities or developing societies subject to neocolonial and neoliberal conditions of existence. Evidence suggests that the historical, social, political and economic context within which the lives of middle class Black Barbadians unfold, and how they live culturally may not be accounted for in the dominant conceptualization of “resilience” or by the prevailing methodologies used to study the phenomenon.

Using a Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology, the objective of this study was to develop a locally relevant theory of Black Barbadian “resilience”. I interviewed 20 middle class Black Barbadians who saw themselves as effectively dealing with difficulties in their daily lives; 10 persons who had supported them in doing so; and 5 individuals who were considered experts across the Caribbean region on themes which emerged as central to how participants were successfully navigating difficulties. I also reviewed policies, legislation, international and local status reports and other documents which reflected these themes. I engaged a number of strategies from the outset to insure that my analysis was credible and transferable.

Bein’ uh work in progress captures the ongoing, non-linear process of how middle class Black Barbadian participants effectively deal with significant difficulties in their everyday lives. The theory consists of three constructs: de ting dat get me, wha yuh’s do, and work in progress.
This theory helps to expand our understanding of the nature of “normal development”, “adversity”, effective responses to “adversity”, and the overall process of “resilience” as shaped by local conditions and the ways in which people live culturally. The theory can also help us to conceptualize “resilience” as an ongoing process, with a collective dimension. Finally, the theory provides some considerations for designing policies and programs towards improving the lives of middle class Black Barbadians.
DEDICATION

To my mother, Erdene Goddard, and my maternal grandmother, Leila Browne, who let me know at the age of eight that I was not who others said I was but who God did.

And to my maternal grandfather, Chesterfield Browne, who never let me forget that I had a voice I should never hesitate to use.

Though only with me now in spirit, their loving, wise interpretations of childhood incidents continuously enable me to navigate through many a difficulty successfully!
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“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”

Roman 8:31, NRSV.

There were many people who God placed throughout my life’s journey that contributed to all that I have poured into conceptualizing and executing this dissertation research project. Regardless of the situation over my lifetime, my own vast and ever growing community in Barbados, the Caribbean and North America has rallied around me in ways that still leave me amazed, touched and grateful. I have the best tribe ever! So many names, caan call all! Therefore, forgive me in my attempt to be concise. Although your name may not be here, I hope you can look and see yourselves represented on this page.

First, I must single out My Daddy, John Goddard, who never doubted that I could achieve this milestone, and my cousin Esther Layne who chose to mother me. Their support has been vital to all I have ever accomplished. Also, my life partner Davian Durant, with whom I have been learning new things about what unconditional love involves- no letting go, no holding back.

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Most of all, I wish to thank my participants, who volunteered to let me share their stories with the world, and offered me the benefit of their lived experience and expertise in the name of enacting our shared understanding of community, and resisting the hegemonic neoliberal and neocolonial forces which have historically sought to construct people of African and Caribbean descent as deficient and dysfunctional, and marginalize our experiences and contributions.

Dr. Browne, Fertur Lux!
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1 Introduction
1.1 Problem Statement
Throughout the years, scholars have used various theoretical paradigms to highlight and guide how they address social justice issues in the way their colleagues study the social psychological phenomenon they conceptualized as “resilience”, in relation to persons in the Global South. Originating in the U.S in the 1970’s, “resilience” in psychological and other mental health literature is a term commonly used by researchers to conceptualize the phenomenon of how individuals’ manage their thoughts, emotions and behaviors in order to avoid, overcome or recover from problems. Specifically, researchers generally agree that the concept “resilience” refers to the dynamic process through which individuals are able to adapt how they think, feel and behave in order to exhibit good outcomes in the context of serious threats to their development (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001). Persons from both the Global North and South who were trained in American Psychology, disseminated this concept of resilience across the Global South (see Cadogan-McClean, 2009; Currie et al., 2013; Daining & DePanfilis, 2007; Garmezy, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992); this was reflective of how American Psychological conceptualizations of phenomena were internationalized (Staeuble, 2006; Danziger, 2006). From the outset of empirical study of the phenomenon, researchers have asserted that a central aim of the research is to use findings to create policies and programs aimed at improving people’s lives across the globe (Garmezy, 1976; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Rutter, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1989; Wright, Masten & Narayan, 2013). Resilience research represented a shift from focusing on individual abnormality and pathology to understanding how persons successfully deal with challenges over the course of their lives, and so focused on their strengths (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2001). Drawing on resilience research to design intervention and policies shifts the focus to enabling positive outcomes for persons (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2001). Research which is conducted in a socially just manner affords those in the Global South the same opportunity as those in the Global North to benefit from interventions and policies which are designed to improve life. But just what this socially just approach involves has been contested.

Resilience researchers have used three broad theoretical paradigms to inform their empirical studies with persons from the Global South; each framework has had implications for what the social justice issues are understood to be, and how the phenomenon is conceptualized and
researched. The first, and most predominant, is the post-positivist framework utilizing a cross-cultural, quantitative methodology. Historically those in the Global South have been subjected to varying levels of marginalization and discrimination within society, represented in psychological research as only deficient, and assumed to have the same cultural frameworks for understanding and maintaining health and dealing with adversities as their counterparts in the Global North (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010; Richard et al., 1999; Sue, 1977). From the closing decades of the twentieth century onwards, resilience research-practitioners such as Alim and colleagues (2008), Brown and Tylka (2011), Lee, Shen and Tran (2009), and Wang and colleagues (2013) have sought to address these social justice issues in resilience research with those from the Global South by using the cross-cultural quantitative approach in which culture is equated to racial, ethnic, or national group membership (Segall, Lonner & Berry, 1998). According to these researchers, the cross cultural approach enables researchers to: 1) represent the experiences of various non-White/non-American cultural groups in resilience research by, for example, including them in research samples, and using data collection tools validated for these cultural groups; and 2) arrive at conclusions about the universality of resilience by comparing results between and within various non-White/non-American cultural groups (see Brown, 2008; Mendenhall et al., 2018; Segall et al., 1998; Utsey et al., 2007).

Scholars working from an interpretivist framework also view people from the Global South as non-White/non-American cultural groups who have different cultural beliefs and practices from White Americans and live in different socioeconomic contexts which must be accounted for in resilience research. However, they argue that a cross-cultural quantitative methodology does not address some of these social justice issues because the approach marginalizes the perspectives and experiences of those from non-White/non American racial and ethnic groups by: 1) upholding a mechanistic, reductionist view of social psychological phenomena; 2) still maintaining the idea that findings are universal to all racial/ethnic groups; and 3) centering the perspectives of White American researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schawandt, 1994). These scholars have argued that using various interpretivist-qualitative methodologies to study the phenomenon avoid these problems by attending to people’s cultural frameworks, in their own terms, and giving due consideration of their social context (Akinsulure-Smith, 2016; Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Barry et al, 2019; Brodsky, 1999; Chung et al., 2014; & Dale & Safren, 2019).
However, critical scholars challenge that neither a cross cultural nor interpretivist approach facilitates researchers’ recognizing and attending to: 1) the full range of power imbalances, structural inequalities and marginalizing and discriminatory practices which shape peoples’ everyday lives as well as shape how research is designed and implemented; and 2) the links between historical, social, political and economic contexts and how research is conducted. They argue for use of a critical-constructivist framework which a) treats knowledge as socially constructed, contextually situated, culturally shaped; and b) assumes that what counts as knowledge is mediated by the amount of power and nature of the interests held by those in the interaction (see Atallah, 2017; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Reid, 2018). Consequently, these scholars explicitly call for examining how the phenomenon occurs for and is conceptualized by so-called non-White/non-American cultural groups from the perspective of their geo-political positioning as members of the Global South instead. Therefore, these critical scholars assert that until researchers use frameworks and methodologies which facilitate representations of the phenomenon which account for these features of peoples’ daily lived experience and experience of research, they will continue to conduct research in a marginalizing and discriminatory manner, and generate findings and make recommendations for interventions which continue to harm those in the Global South.

1.2 Research Justification

Critical scholars’ claims and associated findings have not yet produced a shift in how resilience research is conducted with some in the Global South. Specifically, resilience scholars still predominantly use a cross-cultural quantitative approach to conduct empirical studies with Caribbean adults of African heritage (see Burnett & Helm, 2013; Cadogan-McClean, 2009; Hendriks et al, 2019). Indeed, the Organization of American States (OAS, 2014) notes that, …despite comprising one third of the region’s population, Afro-descendants are one of the most vulnerable minority groups in the hemisphere. It should be noted that in the Declaration of Santiago and the Declaration of Durban, the American states recognized that people of African descent have to confront obstacles as a result of the social discrimination and prejudice that prevail in public and private institutions and also recognized that this is due to centuries of racism, racial discrimination and enslavement and of the denial by history of many of their
rights. This situation also results in a lack of recognition for the contribution of this group to the cultural heritage of the Americas.

There is still a paucity of resilience research which considers how cultural meaning making and practices; and the historical, social, political and economic context shape how the phenomenon is conceptualized by and occurs for Black Caribbean persons (see Lacet, 2016).

Yet, when we consider the historical, social, political and economic context within which educated, middle class Black Barbadians live their lives, and their cultural meaning-making and practices, we see that these features are not represented in the conceptualization of “resilience” which is largely maintained by researchers subscribing to both the cross-cultural quantitative and interpretivist-qualitative approaches. Barbados, unlike many of the other former colonies in the Caribbean had a large, resident White plantocracy during colonialism; they have successfully maintained ownership and control over the capital in the country since slavery (Barrow, 1983; Beckles, 2006). In the post-independence period, similar to other countries in the Global South, Barbados has been continuously subjected to neocolonial and neoliberal economic and social policies emerging from the Global North (BGA, n.d.; Hinds & Stephen, 2017; Killick, 2008; MEYC, 2001; SALISES, 2012). There is some evidence that like other countries in the Global South, these policies have adversely shaped the living conditions of Black Barbadians (MEHD & ML, 2010; SALISES, 2012). In addition, the African Creoles who were used as slave labor on the island successfully assimilated European derived cultural practices such as language while disguising many of their cultural beliefs and practices such as religion and philosophy in the face of oppressive practices by the White planters (Beckles, 2006). Present day Black Barbadians’ language and religious beliefs still reflect many of these African derived beliefs and practices (Barrow, 1976; Beckles, 2006; Roberts, 1998). Furthermore, as highlighted via the works of critical scholars, researchers using either a cross-cultural quantitative or interpretivist-qualitative approach will be unable to attend to some key outstanding social justice issues in their efforts to understand the phenomenon for educated, middle class Black Barbadians given the assumptions upon which these approaches are based. Therefore, development of a culturally and contextually grounded understanding of how the phenomenon is conceptualized by middle class Black Barbadians and how the phenomenon occurs in their lives is warranted, using a critical constructivist framework.
1.3 Research Framework & Purpose

1.3.1 Framework

The approach I used to study the phenomenon conceptualized as resilience is based on some related ideas which are key to a critical constructivist perspective of what counts as knowledge and how we come to know. One central idea is that our experience is not a direct reflection of environmental conditions but rather our reading or interpretation of those conditions (Burr, 2003; Charmaz, 2014). This interpretation of the world, our account of a given phenomenon, depends on where and when we live—他们 are specific to history and place and are products of history and place, shaped by the social structures and policies in that context (Burr, 2003; Charmaz, 1990; Charmaz, 2017; Gergen, 1985). These interpretations are captured in the language system we use to communicate about our experiences; we draw on existing categories and conceptual frameworks to describe and explain our daily lives (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 2001). However, individuals are agentic; we do not blindly draw on ideas, definitions, emotions, ideas and knowledge; we can interpret the situation-specific intentions and actions of others and act, as well as interpret the outcomes and implications of past actions and adjust our future course of actions accordingly (Charmaz, 1990). Hence, descriptions and explanations of events, actions and interaction are suggested, embraced and discarded, rejected and/or abandoned by persons within their social relationships in a given context, over time (Burr; 2003; Gergen, 1985). Moreover, our descriptions and explanations of the world are intertwined with other human activities; descriptions and explanations invite certain actions and exclude others (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985). Consequently, I assumed that individuals are actively involved in interpreting and responding to challenges in their daily lives. Therefore, I focused on illuminating the ways in which my participants describe, explain or otherwise account for the world in which they live, and act in accordance with their interpretations (Charmaz, 2014; Gergen, 1985).

1.3.2 Research purpose

Reflective of a critical constructivist perspective I approached my research by conceptualizing “resilience” as a process through which people: 1) interpret circumstances in their daily lives as adversities; 2) determine the implications of those actions, associated with these interpretations, which are available to them to respond to these adversities, and consequently; 3) intentionally take action to respond to these adversities. I sought to replace
deterministic conceptualizations of “resilience” and the core associated concepts adversity, normal development, and positive adaptation with consideration of the process of meaning making that middle class Black Barbadians engage in to identify what constitutes significant difficulties in their daily lives, assess the implications for their capacity to effectively deal with these significant difficulties, and based on this assessment, determine and implement effective responsive actions. I used a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) methodology to a) elucidate the process of how educated, middle class Black Barbadians successfully navigate significant difficulties in daily life in Barbados, and b) present their conceptualization of the phenomenon.

1.3.3 Research objectives

Through this process of developing this grounded theory of “resilience”, I aim to achieve three objectives with this dissertation project. In the first place, I hope to bolster ongoing efforts to a) establish the importance of researching the phenomenon without uncritically imposing the predominant, socially unjust conceptualization; and b) demonstrate the value of local methodologies and methods in understanding the experiences, strengths and needs of those in the Global South with regard to effectively dealing with difficulties in life.

Secondly, I also hope that my analysis a) illustrates that the middle class Black Barbadians who participated in my study hold a culturally and contextually shaped conceptualization of the phenomenon; b) demonstrates that effective culturally and contextually shaped ways of effectively dealing with difficulties exist in Barbados; and consequently c) helps to substantiate that the existing conceptualization of the phenomenon needs to be broadened.

Third and finally, I hope to contribute to the Black Barbadian community having documented knowledge about our experiences. Such information can help to strengthen a) our formal and informal mechanisms for identifying individuals similar to those in my study who are experiencing significant difficulties; and b) our efforts to advocate for and/or enact changes to policies and healing practices to best prevent difficulties or facilitate “resilience” for similar middle class Black Barbadians living in Barbados.

1.4 A Note on Structure

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into seven chapters. In chapter two, I present a broad overview of a) the historical, social, and economic context within which middle class
Black Barbadians live in Barbados, and b) what is known about how they live culturally; this overview establishes justification of the need to create a culturally and contextually grounded understanding of “resilience” for them. In chapter three, I present a critical review of the resilience literature. In keeping with the way in which grounded theory literature reviews are conducted, I reviewed this literature with the objectives of: 1) becoming attuned to the contributions and limitations of existing research; 2) finding a starting point to orient to the topic of “resilience”, and broadly guiding my research process as I moved into field and built theory; 3) and bringing my assumptions to the fore.

In chapter four, I describe the research design which emerged from my reflection on what is known about the lives of middle class Black Barbadians and my critical review of the literature on “resilience”. I then present my analysis in three parts: chapter five provides an overview of the grounded theory, bein’ uh work ‘n progress, and the three significant, contextually situated and culturally shaped difficulties which participants shared; chapter six illustrates the three frameworks of knowledge they draw on to make meaning about and respond to these significant difficulties; and chapter seven offers an account of the five features of their lives as persons successfully dealing with significant difficulties.

In the final chapter, chapter eight, I bring my findings into conversation with the existing research on how the phenomenon is conceptualized and how the phenomenon occurs; provide some considerations for assessing my analysis and resulting grounded theory, offer some implications for future research as well as policies and programs in Barbados aimed at supporting middle class Black Barbadians who are similar to my participants in living improved lives.

The remainder of the document contains my references, and appendices constituted of the materials I used to gather data.

It is my hope that this document provides a clear and comprehensive understanding of how I arrived at the construction that for the middle class Black Barbadians in my study, “resilience” is about bein uh work ‘n progress, and therefore, provides support for my argument that the existing conceptualization of the phenomenon needs to be broadened towards improving their lives.
2 The Barbadian Context

It is my contention that the existing conceptualization of the phenomenon referred to as “resilience” does not reflect middle class Black Barbadians’ conditions of living and how they live culturally. Use of this conceptualization would result in a socially unjust understanding of how the phenomenon occurs for them or how they conceptualize it, and perpetuate use of interventions and policies which fail to improve their lives, as intended. Hence, my first task is to provide an understanding of those historical forces which have shaped the lives of middle class Black Barbadians in contemporary Barbadian society as a back drop to my critique of resilience research, and as justification for constructing a grounded theory of “resilience” for that group. In order to understand the current social, political and economic context of life for present day middle class Black Barbadians and how they live culturally, it is crucial to trace how colonialism, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism have played out in the creation and development of the country known as Barbados. I draw on historical accounts about events in the country and across the globe, as well as the most recent national and international reports on the economy, living conditions, education, health and gender to construct this depiction of the cultural practices and ways of making meaning used by middle class Black Barbadians, and the context within which their lives unfold.

2.1. Barbados’ identity in a global context: from colonization to post-independence

2.1.1 Barbados: colony in the British empire

Barbados is an island in the Caribbean where 92.4% of the current population are descendants of enslaved Africans and smaller segments of the population are of Mixed (3.1%), European (2.7%), and East Indian (1.3%) ancestries (CIA, 2017). Barbados and its people are considered members of the Global South. The Global South is a term originating in the 1970s’s and refers to people whose ancestors were colonized. These included indigenous people of South America, North America, New Zealand, Australia, South Asia and Africa; and descendants of Africans who were enslaved and transplanted to places like the Caribbean, the U.S, Canada and the U.K, referred to as the African diaspora (Chilisa, 2012; Dirlik, 2007). Ancestors of those in the Global South were colonized as a result of violent military, political and economic expansion by Western European countries between the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries (Lewellen, 1995). This
expansion was initially in service of increasing the wealth and prestige of these countries and later was for the purpose of increasing the wealth of individuals from these countries who owned industries, known as capitalists (Lewellen, 1995).

As a part of these expansionist activities, Barbados was colonized in 1625 by the British who deemed it suitable for an agricultural settlement given that it was seemingly uninhabited, ideally located, and possessed rich open land (Beckles, 2006). Around 1636, the governor explicitly declared that all Africans brought to the island would be enslaved and they became the main source of labor in the island’s sugar-based plantation economy (Beckles, 2006). The colonizers did not use any of the money they generated to improve the inhumane living conditions of the slaves (Beckles, 2006). Instead, as was the case in other colonies, they established operations in the colonies to: 1) provide the raw materials for industries in the U.S, and European countries like Britain, Spain, France and Portugal, and 2) act as markets for the manufactured goods of those countries. Thus, the colonizers used the colonies to develop their home countries into rich industrialized democracies (Beckles, 2006; Lewellen, 1995). These industrialized countries, among others, have come to be known as the Global North (Chilisa, 2012; Dirlik, 2007). As happened in other colonies within the British Empire, slavery was abolished in Barbados in 1838 (Beckles, 2006). However, this did not automatically lead to the British leadership making improvements in the quality of life for the emancipated Africans (Beckles, 2006). Such improvements came gradually during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and rapidly during the latter half of the 20th century. These improvements facilitated the creation of a Black Barbadian middle class and were partially due to the actions of the descendants of the emancipated slaves: emigrants to Panama, the U.K, U.S.A and Canada providing remittances; workers starting financial self-help organizations; and individuals organizing workers into unions and ultimately securing political leadership (Beckles, 2006; Conway, 1997; Welch, 2015).

2.1.2 Barbados: independent nation in a post-World War II world

Barbados ultimately gained independence in 1966 as part of Europe’s acquiescence to the wave of decolonization efforts by those in territories within its global empire from post-World War II until the 1960s (Beckles, 2006; Dirlik, 2007; Potter, 1983). With decolonization, the Global North needed to formulate policies toward those in the Global South, and those in the Global South such as Barbados needed to figure out how to best alleviate poverty, stimulate
economic growth, and foster social change that benefitted their new citizens (Cooper & Packard, 1997; Lewellen, 1995). The Second World War caused widespread devastation in Europe, and the U.S emerged as the superpower in the Western hemisphere (Cooper & Packard, 1997; Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Theorists subscribing to a modernization approach to development offered an attractive perspective which U.S policy makers could promote about the new nature of their relationship to the decolonized countries (Cooper & Packard, 1997; Lewellen, 1995).

2.1.2.1 Theories, strategies and vehicles of development

Broadly, the modernization paradigm theorizes that underdevelopment is a primary condition that all countries start out at and must evolve from (Lewellen, 1995). According to the modernization paradigm, underdevelopment is indicated by low technology, inefficiency, lack of openness to new ideas, and unscientific attitudes about the physical world (Lewellen, 1995). On the other hand, development is thought to be characterized by the presence of advanced technology, investment capital, entrepreneurial proficiency and high levels of education (Lewellen, 1995). By this definition, therefore, Global North countries were developed and Global South countries were underdeveloped. This definition of development only reflected what was valued and present in the Global North. Moreover, modernization theories conceptualize the barriers to development as intrinsic to the decolonized countries themselves, and assert that these countries could only achieve development by importing technology and knowledge from the Global North, using the latter’s money to finance their progress (Lewellen, 1995). Those in the Global North felt an additional urgency to institute policies to guide the new relationship between them and the Global South. The countries in the Global North felt that the Soviet Union was trying to continue their attack on them indirectly by influencing the newly independent countries to follow a Socialist path to development instead of the capitalist one they were promoting (Lewellen, 1995). Consequently, the U.S policy makers, backed by their rich industrialized allies in Europe, established a relationship between themselves and the decolonized countries which reflected a modernization approach to development. In the subsequent paragraphs of this subsection, I specify what this relationship entailed and highlight how it served to maintain and expand the influence of the U.S and its European allies over countries in the Global South, generally.
To facilitate a modernization agenda, the U.S and her allies created multilateral institutions in the 1940s. Specifically, as articulated by U.S president Truman, multilateral institutions were structured to help the Global South become prosperous and resemble the Global North via a transfer and transfusion of modern scientific and expert knowledge (Boas, 2008; Cooper & Packard, 1997). Consequently, for example, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) functioned to establish international disciplinary organizations and research centers that facilitated dissemination of American social sciences in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean (Hickling, Matthies, Morgan & Gibson, 2013; Staeuble, 2006).

These multilateral institutions also included development banks such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (Boas, 2008; Cooper & Packard, 1997). In the multilateral financial institutions, the number of votes each country has is based on the combined amount of capital it has paid in to the institution and the amount of capital the country can guarantee (Boas, 2008). As Boas (2008) points out, the set up of the multilateral financial institutions, in effect, has meant that those with the greatest financial resources have the greatest decision making power, and consequently, have their worldviews and beliefs advanced.

The power of the Global North to have the decisions of these multilateral development banks reflect their world views can be seen in the use of conditional aid to support development in the Global South (Jenkins, 2008; Killick, 2008). By the early 1970’s, it was clear that this path to development, as conceptualized by modernization theorists, was not yielding the expected indicators of development even in countries where there was a rise in the Gross National Product, the measure of economic growth (Lewellen, 1995). It also became clear that the problems in these newly formed countries had to do with the way in which the society and economy were organized; that is, the problems were structural (Lewellen, 1995). However, since proponents of the modernization approach saw development barriers as intrinsic to the country, the solutions which they and by extension the multilateral financial institutions proffered reflected the thinking that the countries needed to change how they operated culturally, socially, and psychologically, so that they could be better positioned to embrace technology and structural forms consistent with modernization (Lewellen, 1995).

Consequently, beginning in the 1980’s, these multilateral financial institutions have increasingly been empowered by some countries in the Global North to require recipient Global
South countries to undertake various internal actions in exchange for assistance. In short, they have placed conditions on the aid (Killick, 2008). According to Killick (2008), these conditions are those which would not normally be taken by the recipient or completed in the same time frame set by the lender/donor. Over the 50 years since their establishment, multilateral institutions have required governments to make changes to their national policies, and the structures through which these policies are enacted and applied, in order to open up their economies to the global market (Jenkins, 2008).

Boas (2008) asserts that this power of some of the Global North societies to control the world views guiding the actions of the multilateral banking organizations came to also mean that when these societies embraced neoliberalism in the 1980s, neoliberal views shaped the policy and structural changes which they required as conditions of aid. According to Thorsen and Lie (2006) neoliberalism is a set of political beliefs, seen as a method of achieving development. The most prominent belief is that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual liberty (especially commercial) and strong private property rights (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). A related belief is that the optimal way for organizing all exchanges of goods and services should be via freely adopted market mechanisms, and intervention by the state should be minimal (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). Free trade and free markets in turn are thought to release an entrepreneurial spirit which is believed to be built into human society, and consequently leads to individual liberty and wellbeing, and efficient allocation of resources (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). These beliefs apply to the way in which the international market should function as well (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). Neoliberalism also includes the belief that individuals who are good and virtuous are those who are able to access the markets and function competently in them. That means that they are able to accept the associated risks of participating in a free market, able to adapt to rapid changes associated with this participation, and accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they freely make (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). In this way, it is thought that injustice and inequality are the result of freely made choices, and so, are morally acceptable (Thorsen & Lie, 2006).

These decisions occurring in the international arena about the new world order dictated the living conditions and economies all countries worldwide had to strive to achieve and the path they were to take to achieve them. These decisions had implications for the newly independent Barbados’ development strategy from the mid-twentieth century onwards. I describe this strategy
next, highlighting implications for Black Barbadians generally and where relevant, emphasizing implications which were specific to the nature of the emergent Black Barbadian middle class.

2.1.2.2 Barbados’ development strategy

In the period since independence, Barbados has embarked on a development strategy which has resulted in Barbados scoring consistently well on the so called indicators of development which were created by various multinational entities concerned with development. For example, Barbados is considered to have a very high human development status as measured by the United Nations Development Program’s Human Development Index Score that combines indicators of health, education status and livelihood (SALISES, 2012). Barbados has also been deemed as making good progress on the Millennium Development Goals; as of 2007, Barbados had achieved four of the eight goals including universal primary education, and gender equality and empowerment of women (SALISES, 2012). In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2009) in its most recent country status report, deemed that Barbados’ mental health system is on par with many developed countries, although there are some important outstanding areas to be addressed. In this second section, I provide a brief overview of what this strategy has entailed in some key areas which are pertinent to contextualizing the experiences of the middle class Black Barbadians in my study.

2.1.2.2.1 Economic development strategy

Barbados, under the advice of international development agencies, opted to develop the private sector in production of goods and services (mainly tourism, international business, and local small and medium sized enterprises), and to a lesser extent agriculture (mainly sugar and its by-products, but also vegetables, cotton, livestock and fisheries) and manufacturing (such as garments/textiles, paint, food processing, furniture, beverages) (SALISES, 2012; MFEA, 2014). Barbados imports goods which are needed to sustain the social and economic life of the country such as fuel and electrical components, consumer goods, food stuff, machinery and construction materials (Commonwealth of Nations, n.d; Hinds & Stephens, 2017; SALISES, 2012). Barbados’ main trading partners are the U.S, U.K, Canada and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member countries (SALISES, 2012).
Barbados’ national development strategy since the early 1990s has been based on a social partnership between the state, and representatives of employers and workers (SALISES, 2012). Successive Barbadian governments have sought to provide the regulatory framework for economic as well as social development. Therefore, Barbados has implemented policies and practices to be competitive in attracting foreign investors and buyers for its goods and services (SALISES, 2012). Barbados has also implemented policies to anchor the fixed exchange rate between the U.S dollar and Barbados dollar and maintain equilibrium in the Balance of Payments (SALISES, 2012). As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Barbados’ policies have been supportive of gradual trade liberalization via the use of tariffs and general reduction of tariffs (SALISES, 2012). In terms of social policy measures, government funds a range of institutional and program initiatives relating to housing, entrepreneurship, poverty alleviation, health and education (SALISES, 2012; MFEA, 2014). Via the social partnership, a series of protocols guide wage and/or salary increases and other related conditions of work such as dismissal (Employee Rights Act 2012; SALISES, 2012; The Barbados Shops Act 2015). Finally, Barbados has relied more heavily on domestic financing than on foreign direct investment, unlike other countries in the Global South (Hinds & Stephens, 2017).

2.1.2.2.2 Education as a vehicle for development

Education has historically played a crucial role in the development of Barbadian society, and in particular the creation of the Black middle class. Barbadians of African heritage have used education to achieve socioeconomic mobility as a way to improve their living conditions following slavery (Beckles, 2006; Welch, 2015). It was only after emancipation that the British government allowed the vast majority of Black children to be educated in Barbados. Those considered White and Mixed race were educated up to secondary school level to be trained for management roles while the Black children were only educated up to primary school level, for roles as artisans and laborers (Welch, 2015). Transition to a more egalitarian education system began in the 1940’s when the British abolished all property qualifications for voting in order to avoid further social unrest in the colony (Welch, 2015). This resulted in a large Black Barbadian leadership who invested heavily in increasing access to education for the Black Barbadian population (Welch, 2015). Post-independence governments, formed out of this same first Black
majority government, have continued these efforts (Welch, 2015). However, according to the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture (MEYC, 2000) and Welsh (2015), as part of the thinking that “modernization” was the route to improve peoples’ living conditions, post-independence governments in Barbados from the outset accepted funding in part or in whole for a number of educational initiatives from multilateral development banking entities such as the IDB and the World Bank (MEYC, 2000; Welch, 2015). Barbadian governments also accepted funding from international organizations such as the UNESCO, and the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) which are concerned with facilitating development by virtue of their membership being largely Global South countries (MEYC, 2000; van Dijck & Faber, 2008; Welch, 2015). Indeed, in 1977, officials from UNESCO visited Barbados to identify educational initiatives suitable for World Bank funding (MEYC, 2000); this reflects Staebuele’s (2006) claim that UNESCO functioned to disseminate U.S social science knowledge. Indeed, we see the claim by Jenkins (2008) and Killick (2008) that the multilateral development institutions’ conditions of aid reflected the values of the Global North countries borne out here. Specifically, in exchange for these loans, the government had to enact policies and programs which reflected the values espoused by these various multilateral organizations such as the importance of every child having access to educational opportunities that enable them to maximize on their abilities and contribute to the social and economic growth of the country (MEYC, 2000). Consequently, between 1967 and 1994 the Barbadian government implemented initiatives such as universal free primary and secondary education for students regardless of academic ability, a free hot meals program at all primary schools, and the establishment of a local university, college and vocational institute (MEYC, 2000). Students were prepared to take up jobs as lawyers, accountants, managers and technicians; these jobs were particularly suited to the requirements of the emerging tourism sector and the other sectors created to increase citizens’ access to housing and other social amenities (Welch, 2015). These educational and social initiatives significantly contributed to the rapid creation of a large Black middle class (Welch, 2015); nevertheless, the terms under which Barbados had to access improved living conditions for its people were neoliberal and neocolonial.

This rapid development of a large Black Barbadian middle class was sustained by various major educational reform policies during 1995-2000; these policies continue to shape education to the present day (MEHD & ML, 2010; MEYC, 2001). It is important to note that multilateral
institutions such as the IDB, UNESCO, the European Union, and private donors remained the main funders for educational initiatives during this era (MEYC, 2001). It is, therefore, unsurprising that these educational initiatives reflect what these various multilateral institutions deemed to be the best practices and values to transform Barbados into a “modern” society. Specifically, these are that human resource development is key to Barbados’ economic, social and political growth; the country needs to prepare its citizens for successful adaptation to globalization, able to meet the increasing demand of Barbados’s position as an open economy that is increasingly impacted by dynamic external forces; and the importance of building a cohesive society (MEHD & ML, 2010; MEYC, 2001; UNESCO, 2006). Therefore, among other qualities, the curriculum sought to enable students to: be creative thinkers, innovators, problem solvers, committed to ongoing learning and easily re-trainable; be exemplars of good citizenship, conscious of their responsibilities to self, family, society and country and operate collaboratively; learn best what interests them and is meaningful to them and be self-confident in planning their future; and be aware of their Barbadian, Caribbean and African heritage (MEYC, 2001; UNESCO, 2006). Students have been exposed to the importance of sports, culture and the arts, and technology, and the intention was that they would occupy high level positions within the service sector and work as entrepreneurs and innovators in all sectors (MEYC, 2001).

2.1.2.2.3 Gender and development

Barbados has also done considerable work in relation to gender as part of the country’s efforts to follow the development strategy laid out by various multilateral institutions, in the name of improving the living conditions of Black Barbadians. For example, in 1975, the United Nations declared 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women, focused on highlighting the issues women faced in their roles as workers inside and outside of the home and the inequality they encountered in healthcare, education and work (U.N., n.d). This sparked several responses in Barbados that both comprehensively documented and shaped what the gender roles here were, how they were communicated to society, and what was communicated about these gender roles to society. The first response was that, in 1976, a National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW, 1976) was established which provided a historical account of the various gender roles in Barbadian society up to that time and how they had played out. Based on these findings, the NCSW (1976) made recommendations for how gender roles in Barbados should be addressed in
keeping with the ideology of gender equality set out by the U.N in 1975. The other response in Barbados to the U.N mandate was the establishment of a government run entity, the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA, n.d) to act on these recommendations. Since the NCSW (1976) report, consecutive governments have enacted policies and programs designed to promote gender equity and equality, and eliminate discrimination and violence against women as conceptualized and required by international entities (BGA, n.d). It must be noted that funding for and monitoring of Barbados’ progress on implementing these international recommendations is provided by international agencies such as UNWOMEN and ECLAC (CDB, 2016; MFEA, 2014; ECLAC, 2015), and the UN Women Caribbean office is headquartered in Barbados. Moreover, the importance of this response to national development has been reinforced over the years by the World Bank and IMF who declared that “gender equality was smart economics” (CDB, 2016, p. 9). While these changes to gender relations might very well be for the better for individuals, Barbados’ experience of enacting these gender policies, nevertheless, can be seen as yet another example of how the multilateral entities have served to disseminate neoliberal and neocolonial values esteemed in the Global North in the country.

I mention here Barbados’ position and status on some key policies which seek to facilitate gender equity and equality as they are pertinent to readers understanding my participants’ experience of difficulties which I detail later in this dissertation. For example, the courts have been given greater power in requiring parents to provide child maintenance with the passage of the Family Law Act 1981 and the Maintenance Act (2014). However, according to SALISES (2012) female headed households still carry the burden of care for children and other relatives. In addition, women have been enabled to enter many non-traditional fields of employment in present day Barbados such as technical and managerial professions (BGA, 2009). Nevertheless, the CDB (2016) reports that more men than women still work in these areas, and females are still concentrated in the lower grade service professions.

With regard to relevant policies concerning gender-based violence and discrimination, Barbados signed the U.N Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women since 1980 and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women since 1994. Training on domestic violence was incorporated into training of all police officers following the BGA’s (2009) report that the police response to domestic violence reports is poor, and there is a public perception that the police ridicule and dismiss male
survivors of intimate partner violence (BGA, n.d). Dedicated police intervention in the form of a Family Conflict Unit of the Royal Barbados Police Force was established in 2013 in response to public outcry to do more to eradicate domestic violence following a series of murders of women by their intimate partners that year (ECLAC, 2015). According to the BGA (n.d), Barbados is also signatory to the Beijing Declaration of Women regarding the creation of a safe work environment for women, and the Sexual Harassment Prevention Act has been implemented locally. However, the Sexual Harassment Act has been drafted since 1995 and only implemented at the end of 2017 following admonishment from various international agencies such as the Organization of American States (OAS, 2017), the UN, and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB, 2016) about the length of time implementation was taking. In addition, there is a lack of gender training and awareness of staff responsible for the economic and financial management of agencies in the public, private and non-governmental sectors, and these positions are 2-3 times more likely to be held by men (CDB, 2016; ECLAC, 2015).

Forty years after the NCSW report, the BGA (2009) observed that in spite of their work, rearing and caring roles are still assigned to women; local norms support male control over female bodies, entitlement to sexual pleasure, and women “knowing their place” that is, remaining in the private, domestic sphere. Collectively these reports suggest that there has been some uptake by the average Barbadian of external ideas about gender roles but many of the ideas born out of the historical socioeconomic context remain intact to some degree. As I detail later, my findings provide some insight into how these local gender roles and the work to reshape them have played out in the lives of middle class Black Barbadians.

2.1.2.2.4 Development and mental health

According to the U.N (n.d), the Millennium Development Goals “form a blueprint agreed on by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions” to “meet the needs of the world’s poorest” (UN, n.d). In its efforts to achieve these MDGs as dictated by these multilateral development institutions, Barbados has also embraced support for understanding and addressing the notion of mental health. Since the post-World War II period, the U.S., in keeping with their thinking that they needed to help bring countries in the Global South into modernity, has systematically exported American Psychological concepts and methods across the globe (Danziger, 2006; Cooper & Packard, 1997; Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Due to the stipulation
by the WHO (2010) that countries should only use what WHO deems to be evidence-based psychosocial interventions to facilitate mental health. Psychosocial interventions in the Global South are now based and assessed only on notions of health and illness originating in the Global North. Like many countries in the Global South, Barbados has also enabled its citizens to be trained in mental health related concepts and psychosocial interventions; initially most went to North America and the U.K to study but the establishment of Psychiatry (1960s) and more recently Psychology (1990s) as disciplines of study at the three campuses of the University of the West Indies, has meant that increasingly recent generations have been trained within the Caribbean region (Hickling et al., 2013). One concept which has been prominently discussed in academia during this time period is stress, the harm it can do to us, and what we can do to manage and fight its effects, such as seeking the help of a mental health professional (Becker, 2013). Finally, the WHO (2009) declared that mental health contributed significantly to the global disease burden. In the Caribbean, unsurprisingly agencies such as the WHO and PAHO assumed responsibility for assessing countries’ progress on addressing mental health issues (WHO, 2009). Furthermore, and again not surprisingly, in Barbados, these assessments have been funded by countries in the Global North; for example, the most recent assessment was funded by the U.S., Italy, Belgium and Canada (WHO, 2009).

Since the post-World War II period, some significant mental health policies and programs have been implemented in Barbados (Barbados Psychiatric Hospital, n.d) which will prove key in subsequently understanding my participants’ experiences of difficulties. Examples include the use of psychotropic drugs becoming accepted around 1952; the local nursing association approving the hospital as a training school for Mental Health Nurses in 1960; introduction of an out-patients’ department and rehabilitation unit in 1968 and 1969 respectively; assignment of nurses to various communities across the island from the 1970s; and updating the Mental Health Act in 1985 (Barbados Psychiatric Hospital, n.d). Although there is no nationally coordinated public education effort, information is disseminated in schools, as requested, on components of mental health such as positive attitudes, and conflict resolution, and the Ministry of Health annually organizes events for the general population to mark World Mental Health Day (WHO, 2009). Therefore, Black Barbadians, and particularly those middle class Barbadians who would have pursued tertiary education, have been extensively and intentionally exposed to notions of mental health as a “modern” way to conceptualize the events and interactions in their lives.
However, despite this exposure to mental health concepts in Barbados, and observations that the public has become more open to seeking mental health treatment, Dr. George Mahy (UWI Tv, 2018) asserts that there is still great stigma attached to mental health treatment. Dr. Mahy (UWI Tv, 2018), one of the first psychiatrists trained in the Caribbean in the 1960’s, notes that those behaviors now referred to as indications of poor mental health historically have been stigmatized by Barbadians. According to Dr. Mahy (UWI Tv, 2018), the enslaved Africans adopted the stigma held by their British colonizers that God was punishing you, or you had an illness that would lead you to harm others, or you were possessed with a spirit that could come into those near you (UWI Tv, 2018). Therefore, when Barbados first started to house and treat those exhibiting these behaviors deemed indicative of mental illness in the 1880s, they used facilities such as prisons and almshouses built away from society and designed to prevent persons from leaving voluntarily. According to Dr. Mahy (UWI Tv, 2018), Black Barbadians continue to hold this stigma against mental health treatment to date partially because practitioners in the UK and the U.S in particular used culturally-inappropriate conceptualizations of mental health, and inaccurately diagnosed and inappropriately medicated and institutionalized many Black Barbadian immigrants. As I substantiate later, for the participants in my study, a tension exists between this long standing stigma and the encouragement and desire to embrace notions of mental health that has implications for how they respond to difficulties in daily life.

What has this history of colonization and neoliberal and neocolonial development strategy meant for daily life in Barbados? From a financial perspective, economists out of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) from the outset charged that the Global Norths’ practice of international capitalism was the source of underdevelopment in the former colonies (Lewellen, 1995). According to them, Global South countries had been historically set up to be providers of raw materials to the Global North in sectors owned and controlled by those in the Global North; and as buyers of their manufactured goods and services; consequently, their people were never able to own the wealth generating mechanisms in their countries and benefit from the profits of their labor (Lewellen, 1995). These economists asserted that in order for the Global South to develop, the one way transfer of technology and knowledge from the Global North into the Global South had be stopped; the Global North countries were never underdeveloped by this definition and so were not models that those in the Global South should strive to emulate (Lewellen, 1995). My findings lend some insight into the extent to
which their concerns were borne out for middle class Black Barbadians. From a social psychological perspective, Fanon (1963) charged that a part of the wretched legacy of colonialism is that the more socially mobile emancipated Blacks and their descendants, defined by their European-based education and cultural practices and beliefs, strive at all costs to identify with and take over the power, wealth and status held by their former colonizers. He warned that their pursuit and embrace of this identity would be to their detriment and those of other Blacks (Fanon, 1963). As I will show in my analysis, there are some ways in which Fanon’s speculations are evident in the ways in which present day middle Black Barbadians live culturally and the difficulties which they reportedly face.

In the two remaining sections of this chapter, I present some of what is known about how the living conditions and cultural practices and ways of making meaning in Barbados have been shaped. I highlight observations which influenced my thinking that the phenomenon conceptualized as resilience would need to be studied using a paradigm which attended to social justice issues affecting the daily lives of middle class Black Barbadians and how they are studied more comprehensively than either the cross-cultural quantitative and interpretivist-qualitative frameworks are capable of doing.

2.2 Social, political and economic context of daily living in Barbados

2.2.1 External influences on the economy

Scholars agree that this history of colonization, and neocolonial and neoliberal path to development has impacted the context of daily life in Barbados in many ways. In the first place, the economic structure has resulted in Barbados producing mainly raw materials for industrialized countries to use and consuming products manufactured in these countries. This economic strategy has also resulted in foreign investors, mainly from the U. S and Britain, predominantly owning and controlling the wealth generating mechanisms in Barbados such as the hotels and related services, real estate, and manufacturing industries, and not Barbadians (Barrow, 1983, Potter, 1983). This is similar to the structure of the economic relationship during colonialism (Lewellen, 1995; Farrell, 1980). Some scholars have termed this relationship neocolonialism, such that formerly colonized countries largely remained under the control of the Global North and remained producers of raw materials for their goods and consumers of their
products (Lewellen, 1995; Farrell, 1980). Opening economies to foreign investment is also in keeping with neoliberal economic programs (Thorsen & Lie, 2006), promoted by the multilateral development institutions (Boas, 2008).

The Barbadian economy has been adversely affected by international economic downturns and declines in availability of international private financing between 1990-1992 with the 1990-1991 Gulf War, in 2001 (associated with the events of September 11), and again during the global recession in 2008-2009; and increases in oil prices during 1995-2010 (Craigwell et al., 2003; Hinds & Stephen, 2017; SALISES, 2012). Hinds and Stephen (2017) assert that the most significant recession the country experienced between independence and the end of the twentieth century occurred in the early 1990s, resulting in Barbados entering into an IMF structural adjustment program. Barbados received a loan from the IDB as part of this structural adjustment program; as a condition of this loan, the IMF recommended that “government spending needed to be decreased by lessening involvement in the economy, lowering the public sector wage bill and generating export oriented, private sector led growth” (Hinds & Stephen, 2017, p.3). These measures were in keeping with the neoliberal approach to development and use of conditional aid outlined above. They temporarily reduced the demand for imports and led to recovery of exports (Craigwell et al., 2003). However, the IMF program also maintained the economic structure with the focus being on developing the international business and tourism sectors; locally manufactured products were still mainly consumed locally and not exported while resources needed to run the country were imported (Hinds & Stephens, 2017; SALISES, 2012). This meant that Barbados’ capacity to earn foreign exchange to trade and borrow on the international market remained constrained by external forces.

The second major blow to the Barbadian economy came between 2008 and 2014. The crisis in 2008 which originated in the U.S, negatively affected Barbados’ major source markets for tourism (U.S, Canada, U.K, and the Caribbean), and trade partners which Barbados had relied on to earn foreign exchange (Hinds & Stephen, 2017; MFEA, 2014). During this time as well, Barbados’ foreign exchange income from exports was affected by decisions of multilateral agencies. For example, the WTO 2004 ruling to eliminate export subsidy programs of 19 developing countries ended the preferential access to guaranteed European markets which Barbados enjoyed for its sugar (SALISES, 2012; WTO, 2004). Due to decisions by international
organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) decision to curtail Barbados’ capacity to offer tax concessions to those in the international and business sector, foreign exchange earnings from this sector steadily declined in the period 1995-2010 (SALISES, 2012). In all of this, Barbados has tried to maintain its commitment to the social partnership to finance state-provided services (Hinds & Stephens, 2017; SALISES, 2012; MFEA, 2014). In addition, consumption of imported goods and services has remained high (Hinds & Stephens, 2017; MFEA, 2014; SALISES, 2012).

2.2.1.1 Associated living conditions

According to the Ministry of Education and Human Development and the Ministry of Labour (MEHD & ML, 2010), in 2010, a national human resource development strategy was designed by representatives from various sectors to 1) understand and chart a response to concerns about the economy over the period 2011-2016; and 2) minimize longer term impacts of economic instability. Stakeholders thought that increasing unemployment rates, recession and inflation in the country were associated with the global recession (MEHD & ML, 2010). In 2008, 10% of unemployed persons had technical qualifications and 13% had university/college qualifications; and youth unemployment was high- the unemployment rate for persons aged 20-24 years was 26% and those aged 25-29 years was 24% (MEHD & ML, 2010). The youth unemployment problem was found to be compounded by the local perception of vocational and technical skills as low status in comparison to academic qualifications (MEHD & ML, 2010). According to the MEHD & ML (2010) report, persons in the small business sector had poor management and entrepreneurial skills, and lacked the resources to invest in additional training. Indeed, a CDB (2016) report notes that there was a lack of business expertise which acted as a barrier to the economic development for poorer children and girls in particular, and called for the government to support entrepreneurship and business education in schools. The MEHD & ML (2010) report also recorded concern that more persons were becoming trained at tertiary level, not in response to the needs of employers, but due to the government’s policy of universal education access (MEHD & ML, 2010). Crafters of the strategy expressed that there was a need to collect data on employers’ skill needs and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in terms of the match between the areas students are trained to work in and the employment needs in the
country (MEHD & ML, 2010). There is evidence from the SALISES (2012) qualitative study that many working class Barbadians have identified, amongst other things, the high cost of living, especially the cost of food and of high utility bills, as some of the difficulties they experience in their daily lives which constrained their ability to meet their basic needs and sustain their livelihoods during 2010 (SALISES, 2012). My analysis provides some insight into how this economic situation played out in the daily lives of middle class Black Barbadians, and how they have responded.

2.2.2 Internal influences on the economy: White Barbadians

Although a case can be made that following a neoliberal, neocolonial path to development worked to the benefit of powerful Global North countries, Dirlik (2007) asserts that such a path is maintained in part because it also works for some of those living in the Global South. Indeed, middle class Black Barbadians’ power to shape the economic and social conditions of their everyday lives post-independence has also been constrained by local forces. The post-independence Black Barbadian governments facilitated social transformation of citizens using national initiatives such as free universal education; protected, improved conditions of work; and opportunities to own land (Barrow, 1983; Welch, 2015). The emergent Black middle class has been able to achieve social mobility through professions such as medicine, law, and teaching, or positions as civil servants and politicians (Barrow, 1983; Welch, 2015). However, while ownership and control of capital in Barbados and associated implications for living conditions has not been widely researched in the last 50 years, the few existing studies (see Barrow 1983; Beckles, 1989) suggest that Black Barbadians own or control limited capital in Barbados and so have been unable to attain social mobility by that route.

For example, Barrow (1983) illustrates that, at least up until the 1980s, the small group she refers to as the “White agro-commercial bourgeoisie elite” has been able to maintain their ancestors’ control over the economic assets in Barbadian society at the expense of the labour and living conditions of Black Barbadians. This maintenance of control was initially possible due to overpopulation; unavailability of land that emancipated slaves and their descendants could use to sustain themselves independent of the plantation system; and the presence of a resident, relatively large plantocracy who used their total political control to enact favourable legislation
and formed financial, political, marital and other social alliances with the merchant class to maintain economic control (Barrow, 1983). Consequently, the local White agro-commercial bourgeoisie elite’s position of economic power remained intact through emancipation, the sugar crisis of the late 19th and early 20th century, and the country’s economic structure remained tied directly and indirectly to the sugar industry (Barrow, 1983).

Barrow (1983) further asserts that White Barbadians’ control of the capital in the country was maintained post-independence because the early Black leaders of an independent Barbados did not make any attempts to erode the economic dominance of the White elite, or diversify the economy towards redistributing resources to Black Barbadians. Instead, Barrow (1983) charges, “having acquired political leadership, they made their peace with the plantocracy via a political strategy of accommodation and co-existence, assuring them of a place within the new democracy.” (p. 99). Indeed, more recent research on education illustrates that education of persons to be professionals and to lesser extent tradesmen has been the explicit goal of the education system since independence (Welch, 2015); there were no major efforts to develop persons into being business owners until the human resource development strategy of 2010.

In addition, to increase the concentration of local ownership and control over business and land, from post-independence onwards, the White elite has formed corporations, led only by directors from within that racial group; maintained marriages only to other Whites locally and abroad; and sat on various key committees and statutory boards relevant to crucial sectors of the economy (Barrow, 1983, Beckles, 1989). Barbadian governments adjusted the economy in the 1960s to include tourism and manufacturing and the local White elite are known to have maintained investments in these sectors until at least the 1980s (Barrow, 1983).

The cumulative result is that the White elite in Barbados continued to wield significant influence over employment, wage levels, price fixing, economic diversification and growth (Barrow, 1983) and hence the daily living conditions of Black Barbadians well into the 1980s. My analysis suggests how living within the context of this unequal playing field has unfolded in the difficulties my middle class Black Barbadian participants currently face, and their access to resources to eliminate or mitigate those difficulties.
2.2.3 External influences on NGO sector

The neoliberal influence on the structures and policies required as a condition of aid has also been seen in the functioning of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Global South (Fowler, 2008; Mercer, 2002). According to Desai (2008), the term NGO refers to a broad spectrum of organizations, from large Northern-based charities to local self-help organizations in the Global South, aimed at improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people. In the 1960s and 1970s NGOs in the Global North embraced the idea that they needed to partner with NGOs in the Global South in order to adequately respond to poverty rooted in structural problems instead of merely transferring resources in the form of tools and funds (Desai, 2008). Correspondingly, the NGOs set up research departments and policy units and the humanitarian function of NGOs was expanded to include poverty reduction, gender equality and democracy (Desai, 2008).

In the 1980’s as a condition of aid, many countries in the Global South including some in the Caribbean had to make widespread structural adjustments; one associated adjustment was that governments withdraw their involvement in providing psychosocial services as governments were seen by the multilateral institutions such as the IMF as lacking the organizational capacity and money to do so (Desai, 2008; Fowler, 2008; Hinds & Stephens, 2017; Killick, 2008). Consequently, these multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, sometimes directly and sometimes by route of giving Global South governments the money to sponsor local social initiatives, extensively funded NGOs to fill this gap of providing psychosocial services (Desai, 2008; Mercer, 2002). Desai (2008) and Mercer (2002) contend that such a move was to ensure these decolonized governments did not get any political backlash from the harsh structural adjustment regimes. UN agencies also fund NGO work mitigating the impact of structural adjustment programs that exacerbated the debt burden in the Global South (Whitman, 2008).

According to Killick (2008), another condition of this aid has been that aid agencies increasingly required governments to consult with local and international NGOs as a way to include civil society in formulation and implementation of development policies; multilateral institutions held up such participatory practices as a way to expand democracy in the Global South (Desai, 2008; Mercer, 2002). According to Mercer (2002), this understanding of democracy is specifically reflective of a modernization approach to development, that is the
liberal view that “democracy within capitalist society requires a vibrant and autonomous civil society and an effective state capable of balancing the demands of different interest groups (p. 7). However, scholars such as Fowler (2008) and Mercer (2002) contend that NGOs’ effectiveness in even promoting this type of democracy has been undermined in reality by virtue of being largely funded by these multilateral agencies. According to Fowler (2008), these multilateral organizations have been requiring that NGOs attend to various internationally set agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals as opposed to local agendas emerging from the masses. Multilateral institutions have also made operational requirements of NGOs, for example that they must adopt an outcomes-based approach to their management (Fowler, 2008). At face value, these requirements may not appear problematic. However, many NGO’s in developing countries have been found to be run not by marginalized sectors of society but by those in the society, such as the Black Barbadian middle class, who have been educated in tertiary level social science programs in the Global North or in Global North-influenced programs in the Global South (Mercer, 2002; Cooper & Packard, 1997; Staeuble, 2006). Such educational programs often construct those in the Global South as deficient and in need of civilizing through exposure to programs and policies reflective, for example, of the health and illness values and experiences of those in the Global North (Cooper & Packard, 1997). Furthermore, research demonstrates that, the psychosocial interventions in the Global South which are based on notions of health and illness in the Global North: 1) impose standardized outcomes that often exclude those outcomes that may be more relevant in the local context; 2) ignore structural inequalities that may be affecting the lived experiences of people in the local setting; 3) dismiss local ways of knowing, thus further marginalizing the target group, and losing out on valuable information needed to alleviate challenges; and 4) can end up harming rather than helping individuals (Christopher et al., 2014; Fine, 2012; Summerfield, 2008).

Unlike many of its Caribbean neighbours, Barbados maintained state provision of key psychosocial services in the face of IMF programs in the early 1980s and 1990s but has struggled to do so at times due to vulnerabilities including its small size and limited resources, heavy reliance on imports, and the economic fortunes of industrialized countries (Hinds & Stephen, 2017; SALISES, 2012). However, local and international NGOs currently provide the following services in Barbados deemed crucial to development: gender, health issues, disabilities, and the environment (Commonwealth Network, 2019). The MFEA (2014) indicates that much of this
work has been funded by PAHO/WHO, UNWOMEN, UNICEF, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). These support services have arguably facilitated improved living conditions for many Black Barbadians (Beckles, 2006; Welsh, 2015). These improvements however, do not preclude the possibility that if the above described situation that is plaguing other NGOs in the Global South applies to those in Barbados, this could mean that knowledge of difficulties people face in the society, and solutions for how to assist them might also only problematically reflect what is known about the difficulties persons face and how they deal with them in the Global North. It could also mean that the approach to developing and assessing the effectiveness of programs to support persons reflect, harmfully, the ways of knowing and demonstrating that change has occurred coming out of the Global North. In the absence of local “resilience” research reflecting the ways in which middle class Black Barbadians live culturally, and the context of their lives, this situation is even more likely to shape the kinds of support services NGOs and the government deliver to them, even if, ironically, it is members of this same Black Barbadian middle class who are leading these NGOs and the government.

2.2.4 Influence of locally derived policies

My discussion of how external policies have shaped the developmental journey of Barbados over the last 50 years since independence is by no means suggesting that there were not local national policies and practices which were problematic for the economic and social development of Barbados and hence the daily living conditions which middle class Black Barbadians have been faced with. For example, according to Hinds and Stephen (2017), the government’s use of domestic financing, namely having the Central Bank print money for prolonged periods of time and relying on the National Insurance Scheme for 24% of its domestic financing needs, together with commercial banks increasing unwillingness to provide domestic financing to the government (declined from 70% in 1997 to 7% in 2011), all combined to exaggerate the impact of the 2008 global recession on Barbados’ capacity to maintain needed foreign reserves and service its debts. In addition, the government’s commitment to state-provided subventions, concessions, investment and employment all drove the economy and resulted in the high standard of living Barbadians have enjoyed (Hinds & Stephen, 2017). At the same time,
government and individuals have been consuming most of the goods and services which are produced locally; for various reasons, potentially exportable products and services have not been produced on a scale large enough to be exported to earn significant foreign exchange or reduce reliance on importation (Hinds & Stephen, 2017; MFEA, 2014); hence the high cost of living. Furthermore, Barbados has a high tax burden, inefficient red tape, and does not do a good job of registering property, enforcing contracts and protecting minority investors; these have all been cited as contributors to challenges to doing business in the country (Giles, Schmid & Waithe, 2018; Hinds & Stephen, 2017). As my analysis will illustrate, these locally driven decisions have unfolded in problematic ways in the lives of my participants.

2.3 Local cultural meaning making & practices

This history of colonialism and development has also had implications for how present day Black Barbadians live culturally. Present day Black Barbadians are descendants of African Creoles. African Creoles were “created” as it were as a result of the Barbados plantation owners’ practice of using Blacks born into slavery in favor of importing new Africans (Beckles, 2006). According to Beckles (2006), the planters found that the newly imported Africans continually caused disturbances while African Creoles were more malleable. This malleability was due to the planters’ practice of rewarding the African Creoles in various ways for showing less of the behaviors from their various West African cultural groups of origin and more White British cultural patterns (Beckles, 2006). Plantation owners continuously attempted to degrade the slaves’ various African cultural beliefs and practices, and forced them to accept the White British culture (Beckles, 2006). According to Beckles (2006), African Creoles responded to these attempts by openly assimilating European-derived cultural elements such as language, and took underground those elements derived from their African cultural beliefs and practices which could survive without display such as religion and philosophical views (Beckles, 2006). However, in the 1960s and 1970s, some within the Black middle class, influenced by the Pan-American and Pan-African Black consciousness movements, began efforts to redeem and validate Afro Barbadian traditions and reject aspects of their European cultural heritage, and challenge neocolonialism, neoliberalism and capitalism (Beckles, 2006; Worrell, 2005). From the 1970s onwards these movements were endorsed by various governments; in the 1990s, the government
run Commission on Pan African Affairs was created, many Afro Barbadian traditions were
enshrined in national development policies that facilitated education of all Barbadian children on
their African heritage, finance of various festivals celebrating Afro Barbadian culture, and
training in various art forms (Beckles, 2006; Worrell, 2005).

2.3.1 Influences on language

With regard to language, the present day Barbadians speak Standard English and a creole
referred to as Bajan. This creole was originally formed out of two unique features of the island:
Barbados was only ever under British colonial rule, and there has been a predominance of people
of West African origin on the island throughout its history, although their exact origins were
never recorded (Beckles, 2006). The structure and elements of the Bajan lexicon, proverbs, folk
tales and songs, and sayings reflect West African spiritual and cultural meaning making and
associated practices (Roberts, 1998). Via the educational system, Barbadians are taught to use
Standard English in formal spaces and Bajan in informal interactions; the extent to which one
uses the appropriate context both indicates the speaker’s respect for their audience as well as
garners the speaker respect from their audience (Barrow, 1976). Language in the Post-
independence period has been influenced by the media, visits of Barbadians to the U. K. and the
U.S.A.; emigration mainly to the U.S., Canada and the U.K for work and studies and return to
Barbados at various points after these experiences; and interaction with tourists from the U.S.,
U.K. and Canada to a lesser extent (Conway, 1997). The language in Barbados, and hence the
meanings Black Barbadians make of situations in their lives, is a unique combination of these
influences and, consequently, different from what pioneering researchers in the U.S. would have
drawn on to conceptualize and study “resilience”.

2.3.2 Influences on religion

There is a creolized version of Christianity still present in Barbados as well. Approximately
76% of Barbadians identify as Christian (BSS, 2013). Anglicanism was the most prominent
religion which the British introduced to the island during slavery (Beckles, 2006). However, it
was initially only used to minister to the English community, since both clergymen and
plantation owners deemed Black persons intellectually incapable of understanding Christianity
(Beckles, 2006). Consequently, unlike the other Caribbean colonies, the enslaved Black persons
in Barbados were not exposed to religious instruction until the late 18th century (Beckles, 2006). When the Barbadian plantocracy finally acquiesced to educating Blacks after emancipation in the mid-1800s, in Barbados in particular, the church was made responsible for the majority of the original educational efforts on the island; they were either funded to build the schools or allowed their buildings to be used for schooling (Beckles, 2006; Welch, 2015). Thus, evangelization and education were intertwined. Since the local authorities controlled the church, this evangelized education was used by the state in service of making the Blacks good agricultural laborers and free of the various cultural beliefs and practices inherited from their West African ancestors (Beckles, 2006; Smith, 1988; Welch, 2015). Nevertheless, Davis (2011) observes that the Blacks transformed Christianity such that they saw God as a present help in all circumstances of their lives instead of as the distant deity who preferred Whites, as was presented to them. Murray (2009) further illustrated how these enslaved Blacks in Barbados then utilized Christian-based beliefs and practices to disguise and continue their African-based religious beliefs and practices (Obeah), such as in preparing for revolts against their colonial masters. According to Thompson (1983), the result has been that Christianity in Barbados as recently as in the 20th century reflected the value placed by many peoples in Africa on oral tradition, communal living, and religion as attending to body in addition to spirit. In addition, the Barbados Christian Council represents many of the larger Christian denominations on the island including several who were founded explicitly on cultural beliefs and practices originating in Africa such as the Spiritual Baptists, and African Methodist Episcopalians. (Burke, 2016). The Council is represented on numerous government boards, civic boards and committees and speaks and acts on moral and social issues such that a Christian perspective is invited or provided on all aspects of the daily lives of Barbadians (Burke, 2016). Therefore, the process within which the creolized version of Christian beliefs and practices developed in Barbados by Blacks, as well as the version of Christianity produced, are unique to Barbados in several ways.

### 2.3.3 Influence on the value of community

Finally, family and community are an integral feature of the daily lives of Black Caribbean people. Studies report that in the Caribbean, notions of family and community include any blood relatives, neighbors as well as those persons with whom individuals have informal social relationships- those they encounter at shops and other businesses, community centers, and
churches (Barrow, 1976; Chamberlain, 2004). Specifically, studies suggest that community provides access to resources and support for Black Caribbean people. Barrow (1986), notes how, for the Black Barbadian women in her study, there is the social pressure to have interactions characterized by generosity and mutual reciprocity; and help is offered since asking for help directly is considered rude. Studies have also illustrated how family and community provide interpretations about situations in daily life. For example, Chamberlain (2004) illustrates that kinship and community provided a sense of belonging, identity, expectations and behaviors among Black Caribbean persons whose families had migrated to the U.K. Barrow (1976) notes the idea expressed among participants in her ethnographic study of a Barbadian village that your behavior could bring shame to family and friends, or conversely your family background impacted the level of respect you are accorded in social interactions. Engaging in collective action in response to difficulties is another feature of how community operates in Barbados. For example, as I detail later, the IMF structural adjustment solutions to the financial crisis Barbados in 1991 resulted in significant reduction in state run provision of protections to the public and private sector, contrary to the government’s stated national development plan of 1960-1985 (Hinds & Stephen, 2017). In response, Barbadians mobilized in a show of social activism in the form of town hall meetings (Craigwell et al., 2003; Hinds & Stephen, 2017). In these meetings, agitators sought to share information, canvass public sentiment, and influence government negotiations with the IMF to implement plans, in part, which emphasized the necessity of elevating national interests above the wellbeing of individual interest groups (Craigwell et al., 2003; Hinds & Stephen, 2017). These findings suggest that collective meaning making and social action might be an important component in how middle class Black Barbadians deal with difficulties in their daily lives, in a way not accounted for in the way the phenomenon referred to as resilience is currently conceptualized and thought to occur, as I illustrate in the next chapter.

2.4 Chapter summary

As with other peoples across the globe, the ways in which middle class Black Barbadians live culturally as well as the conditions within which their lives unfold, have been and continue to be shaped largely by external colonial, neocolonial and neoliberal forces. These forces have been embraced, subverted and/or reframed to varying degrees locally, and for a variety of reasons. In some cases, these external influences have resulted in changes in living conditions
which middle class Black Barbadians value, and there is some evidence to suggest that these changes have been arguably to their benefit.

However, as I will illustrate in the next chapter, the lived experiences of a few persons in the U.S served as the sole reference for conceptualizing and investigating the social psychological phenomenon know as resilience. To date, there is no information on: 1) how the adversities which middle class Black Barbadians face; 2) how they deal with them effectively; or 3) how they conceptualize the phenomenon, have been shaped by their context and how they live culturally. There is no understanding of how elements of the context and culture that have been shaped by these external forces have played out in how middle class Black Barbadians effectively deal with what they deem to be significant difficulties in their lives, and how this phenomenon is conceptualized by them.

In the next chapter, I review the work of scholars who, despite their different philosophical assumptions, all agree that using research designs which do not account for the context of the lives of peoples in the Global South, and how they live culturally is a socially unjust practice in and of itself. These scholars also agree that such research designs overlook and hence preserve many of the social injustices which impact the way the phenomenon occurs for and is conceptualized by those in the Global South. Through this review, I make a case for my agreement with the methodological approach advanced by one of these groups of scholars as a way to understand how the phenomenon know as resilience occurs for and is conceptualized by middle class Black Barbadians.
3 Sensitizing Review of the Research Context

Resilience researchers attempt to conduct studies in a socially just way with persons from the Global South. However, many researchers uncritically pattern their studies on paradigms only reflective of and capable of capturing the experiences and values of those in the Global North. This still leads to marginalizing and discriminatory research designs and understandings of how the phenomenon occurs for those in the Global South and how they conceptualize the phenomenon. Researchers’ background philosophical assumptions and experiences often shape how they conceptualize and study phenomena (Charmaz, 2014; Ellis & Stam, 2015). It is with this assumption that I now present my review of the literature on how the social psychological phenomenon referred to as resilience is conceptualized and thought to occur for persons in the Global South, towards supporting my approach to my dissertation research project.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section, I present my argument that, as Danziger (1997) and Richards (2010) have illustrated with other psychological phenomena and concepts, the way in which the empirical study of the social psychological phenomenon conceptualized as resilience came about shaped the pioneering researchers’ claims about how the phenomenon should be conceptualized and studied. I further argue that researchers’ use of a cross-cultural quantitative methodology to include persons in the Global South, whom they saw as non-White/non-American cultural groups, in this body of literature was an important but limited step to attending to concerns about how they are represented in research and treated by those in the Global North. In the second section, I describe the contribution of researchers drawing on an interpretivist-qualitative methodology. Similar to those using a cross-cultural quantitative approach, these group of researchers saw persons in the Global South as non-White/non-American cultural groups and made attempts to gather their perspectives about how the phenomenon occurs for them in an effort to address what they saw as social justice issues with a cross-cultural quantitative approach.

In the third section, I present the arguments and findings of critical-constructivist researchers who have demonstrated that researchers who use cross-cultural quantitative and interpretivist-qualitative approaches still preserve social injustices in resilience research as they: 1) fail to capture how the phenomenon unfolds for and is conceptualized by those in the Global South; and 2) in effect dismiss as deficient and abnormal the ways of knowing of those in the Global South and their perspectives about how life should unfold. I conclude that I need to premise my
research on the philosophical assumptions drawn on by critical-constructivist scholars if I am to arrive at a socially just understanding of: 1) how Black Barbadian adults conceptualize the social psychological phenomenon known as resilience; and 2) how the phenomenon occurs for them. Through this literature review, I demonstrate the ways in which the ideas presented in the literature shaped my thinking to generate a culturally and contextually Grounded Theory of “resilience” for middle class Black Barbadians, using a critical-constructivist approach.

### 3.1 Influence of zeitgest in Psychology on the development and study of the phenomenon using adults in the Global South

The term “resilience” was coined by Child Development scholars in the U.S during the 1970s to label the social psychological phenomenon of how individuals’ managed their thoughts, emotions and behaviors in order to avoid, overcome or recover from problems (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). This first section of the chapter is concerned with illustrating how trends in mainstream Psychology in the Global North post-World War II shaped these Child Development scholars’ conceptualization and study of the phenomenon they termed resilience, and how this in turn influenced research on the phenomenon with adults in the Global South. To this end, I have divided this first section into four main parts (3.1.1-3.1.4). In part 3.1.1, I present what I see to be three key trends in the broader discipline of Psychology post-World War II, and in part 3.1.2, I illustrate how these trends are generally reflected in resilience researchers’ conceptualization and study of the phenomenon. In part 3.1.3, I present an additional trend in Psychology around the study of culture which shaped the way that people in the Global South were included in resilience studies as a way to address what some researchers see as the social injustices in resilience research. Finally, in part 3.1.4 of this section, I use examples to demonstrate how these trends are collectively reflected in how researchers define and study the phenomenon with adults in the Global South.

Throughout this first section, I place these four trends in Psychology within the sociocultural, political and economic context of the U.S to support my assertion that the context within which the empirical study of the phenomenon came about shaped scholars’ claims about how to conceptualize and study it. In this way, I use section one to set up my own critique later in the chapter of the social injustices in resilience research with adults from the Global South. Ultimately, the juxtaposition of this contextualization of empirical study of the phenomenon, and
my critique of the social injustices in resilience research with my presentation in the preceding chapter about how middle class Black Barbadians live culturally and the context within which their lives unfold, serves to support my contention that uncritically using this conceptualization would lead to a socially unjust understanding of how the phenomenon occurs for and is conceptualized by middle class Black Barbadians

3.1.1 Relevant trends in mainstream Psychology post-World War II

Teo (2009) describes mainstream Psychology as "an academic field of study as taught and researched in North American and European institutions such as universities" (p.38). In the first part of this section, I present what I see to be three key trends in mainstream Psychology post-World War II that Child Development researchers drew on to conceptualize and study the phenomenon.

3.1.1.1 Validation that Psychology can be used to civilize and modernize society

The first trend relates to the fact that the discipline of Psychology was founded by scholars who thought that their study of psychology, that is individual functioning, could help them to solve industrial problems like fatigue and attention, and social problems such as deviancy and madness. (Richards, 2010). Their thinking was that in so doing they could facilitate society’s progress towards optimum development and functioning, that is that they could serve to “civilize” and “modernize” society (Richards, 2010). In particular, Psychology’s self-identity as a discipline which could solve social issues, by way of fixing problems with individuals, had been endorsed by post-World War II American society by the time Psychologists began resilience research. Psychologists were instrumental in designing and executing programs beneficial to the U.S in World War II; specifically, Clinical Psychologists helped Psychiatrists meet the demands of treating the veterans being diagnosed with psychopathology so they could be redeployed. Psychopathology has been defined by Psychiatrists and Clinical Psychologists as mental abnormality deemed to be inherent to individuals, and triggered at some point during their development (Wright et al., 2013). The end of the war later meant veterans were returning in large numbers to society, and so the U.S government readily turned to Clinical Psychologists to support veterans in resolving mental dysfunction towards their reintegration into society (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010; Wright et al., 2013). Clinical Psychologists received massive
amounts of funding from the U.S government for mental health research in the service of maintaining social order there (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). This funding helped to cement the influence of the ideas and practices of Clinical Psychology on the wider discipline of Psychology. Consequently, empirical study of the phenomenon emerged in a social context where Psychologists’ self-identity as experts on “civilizing” and “modernizing” society by understanding and solving individual and ultimately social problems was sanctioned and enabled by the most powerful persons and entities in U.S. society.

3.1.1.2 Social Psychological phenomena can only be understood using natural scientific methodologies

The second relevant feature of mainstream Psychology in the U.S by the time researchers began to study “resilience” was that the discipline was held up as a natural science. As part of their efforts to be respected as an academic discipline in the nineteenth-century, Psychologists began using statistics that they thought enabled them to quantify the extent and nature of variation in their data on social psychological phenomena, and measure difference in hereditary traits within populations under experimental lab conditions (Ellis & Stam, 2015; Richards, 2010, Teo, 2009). However, professional Psychology in the U.S was only legitimized as a science in the 1950s through the actions of the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) whose leadership subscribed to a scientific framework (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Specifically, these U.S policy makers and funders became the largest, single funder of mental health research and training in an effort to assist World War II veterans; this resulted in transformative expansion of Clinical Psychology and increased its influence on the wider discipline (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). In addition, the VA sanctioned the desire of those scientists leading the American Psychological Association (APA) at that time for Clinical Psychology to be conducted using solely scientific methods. Psychology subsequently became established as a science-based profession in large part due to the influence of a science-based Clinical Psychology on Psychology (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010).

This natural science-based approach to studying psychology meant that Psychology was adhering to a mechanistic, reductionist view of phenomena. This approach to psychology disregards the individual’s capacity to reflect, choose and act and instead promotes the idea that like machines, individuals react to stimuli (Teo, 2009). According to this approach as well, any
given psychological phenomenon is constituted of several smaller parts, which can be isolated and studied separately as a way of understanding how they fit together in a meaningful way as a whole (Ellis & Stam, 2015; Teo, 2009). The emphasis on a natural science Psychology also meant that an objective of the discipline was to find models or universal laws explaining psychological phenomena, using standardized, mainly quantitative tools of investigation (Danziger, 2006; Ellis & Stam, 2015). These tools were made up of question items describing specific behaviors which researchers determined had been “proven” through statistical analysis to be indicative of a given psychological concept, and could be used to observe and measure how individuals react to stimulus (Danziger, 2006; Ellis & Stam, 2015). As I illustrate later in this section, psychologists drew on this specific natural-scientific approach to understanding social psychological phenomena to commence empirical investigation of the phenomenon in the 1970s.

3.1.1.3. Creation of theories of normal and abnormal human development

The third feature of Psychology in the U.S in the late twentieth century relevant to how researchers studied the phenomenon they conceptualized as resilience was the practice of creating theories on how indicators of normal and abnormal human development occur. There are two types of formal theories which are reflected in the conceptualization of the phenomenon: those based on Stage theories, and Ecological Systems Theory (EST). Generally, Stage theorists, around since the late 19th century, advance the notion that the course of the human lifespan can be understood according to various fixed developmental stages (Lerner, 2002; Pelaez, Gewirtz & Wong, 2008). Each stage was associated with individuals becoming competent in what they saw as various domains of their functioning-physical, psychosocial, cognitive or moral (Lerner, 2002; Pelaez et al, 2008). The extent to which the individual developed competence in their functioning in each domain was the extent to which they would become competent in those associated domains of functioning in subsequent life stages (Lerner, 2002; Pelaez et al., 2008). While researchers do not reference specific stage theories in their resilience research on adults, they draw on these general principles which characterize stage theories to shape their conceptualization of the phenomenon, as I will demonstrate later (see Garmezy, 1993, Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1989).

Ecological Systems Theory (EST), based on the work of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1974), emerged in the late twentieth century out of the work of Child Development Psychologists. They
were a subgroup of those Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists whose research and practice in the area of psychopathology discussed earlier focused on observing the consequences for children living under conditions they considered to give rise to psychopathology, and tracking how risk for psychopathology developed (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). EST posits that three discrete factors are involved in human development: the child, aspects of the child’s family, and features of the child’s wider community. According to EST the child, possesses innate coping strategies and personality characteristics; (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). EST considers the nature of the child’s relationship with their family; and community resources, cultural worldviews and practices to be features of the child’s environment that are external to and separate from who the child is biologically at the core, but which impact their developmental process (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). Researchers drawing on EST further hypothesized that the relationship between these three factors was dynamic, interactional, reciprocal, multi-causal and multi-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). As I discuss later, the developmental systems approach which resilience researchers drew on from the 1980s onwards is grounded in EST (Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013).

Finally, although not a formal Psychological theory, resilience researchers began empirical study of the concept at a time when Americans subscribed to the notion of a good life. Psychologists’ commenced empirical study of the “resilience” concept within the context of post-World War II prosperity and population growth in the U.S. This prosperity gave rise to many persons living in a home they owned, containing household aids that made for a comfortable and convenient lifestyle, and having opportunities for family togetherness (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Americans deemed these living conditions as indicative of what a good life for an adult should look like (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Psychologists who became involved in resilience research drew on these formal theories of human development and ideas of optimum living conditions, as I illustrate later.

3.1.2 Influence of zeitgeist on conceptualization and study of the phenomenon

By the time researchers in the U.S came up with the concept “resilience” in the 1970s, Psychology had been established as a scientific way to use theories of individual human development to solve social problems towards “civilizing” and “modernizing” U.S society by those with decision making power there. In this second part of section one, I illustrate how these
trends in Psychology were reflected in how the phenomenon was conceptualized, why the concept of resilience was developed, and how researchers studied the phenomenon.

### 3.1.2.1 Conceptualization of the phenomenon

The first way in which these trends showed up in resilience research was in the way researchers conceptualized the phenomenon and the constructs they thought constituted the concept. It was during the course of studies on psychopathology in the 1960s and 70s that Child/Development researchers observed the phenomenon they came to term “resilience” (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990). Prolific resilience scholars such as Luthar and colleagues (2000) and Masten and colleagues (1990) specifically attribute the founding base for empirical studies of “resilience” to research on schizophrenia. These researchers had observed, for example, that persons with less severe presentations of schizophrenia were functional at some point pre-diagnosis, and that many children of schizophrenics still thrived. Consequently, Child/Development scholars shifted their focus to also consider how individuals’ thoughts, emotions and behaviors enabled them to avoid, overcome or recover from problems; the term “resilience” was eventually used during the 1970s to label this phenomenon (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). According to Luthar and colleagues (2000), Masten (2001), and Wright and colleagues (2013), Child/Development Psychologists had come to think that focusing on this phenomenon, rather than psychopathology, would better enable them to create interventions aimed at improving the chances of normal human development.

These early researchers determined the two primary conceptualizations of “resilience”, which scholars in Psychology, as well as in other fields such as Social Work and Nursing, still use to date (Aburn, Gott & Hoare, 2015; Earvalino-Ramirez, 2007; Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). The first definition is that “resilience” is how people bounce back from adversity that threatens their normal human development, such that there is some disruption to their normal functioning for a time period or disruption in some domains of functioning, but then they are able to adapt their thoughts, feelings and behaviors and resume developing in the expected manner in all domains of functioning (Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). The second definition, commonly used by resilience researchers, is that “resilience” is how persons thrive in spite of adversity that threatens their normal development; this implies that these persons adapt their actions, thoughts and emotions so that they continue to develop as expected during or
following the adverse event without disruptions in any domains of functioning, including the psychosocial domain where dysfunction could be classified as psychopathology (Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). A third definition which resilience researchers later added is that “resilience” is how individuals adapt to deal with the traumatic impact of adverse events on their psychosocial functioning only, that is how they adapt to deal with psychopathology. (Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). The original conceptualization of the term then was heavily reflective of the pioneers’ focus on facilitating normal development, treating psychopathology via prevention.

Across these conceptualizations, resilience researchers agree on two claims about what “resilience” refers to, although some disagreement remains, and there have been changes in emphasis over the years (Aburn et al., 2015; Masten, 2011). Firstly, researchers claim that there are two core constructs of the concept; both of which must be present for “resilience” to be demonstrated (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). The first construct is referred to as adversity, defined as statistically significant threats to normal human development, that is events and interactions which, based on statistical testing, are thought to be strongly associated with disruptions in any given domain of functioning (Garmezy, 1993; Rutter, 1983). The second core construct is positive adaptation (Garmezy, 1993; Rutter, 1983). Researchers in the field of development define positive adaptation as individuals, in the context of adversity, adjusting their actions, thoughts and feelings in some way in order to competently meet stage-specific milestones associated with the various domains of functioning over the life course (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). However, those in the field of prevention of psychopathology tend to define positive adaptation as absence or low levels of symptoms of psychopathology only, and do not consider the other domains of functioning such as physical (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1985).

Secondly, with regard to how the phenomenon occurs, researchers assert that vulnerability and/or risk and protective factors, that is, factors they think exacerbate or mitigate the negative effects of adversity respectively, are two main related constructs (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 1985; Wright, Masten & Narayan, 2013). According to Aburn and colleagues (2015), Earvalino-Ramirez (2007), and Wright, and colleagues (2013), early researchers created the “resilience” lexicon by using constructs from development and developmental psychopathology studies which were characterizing Psychological research at the time (adversity, risk, vulnerability), and
adding or emphasizing others to reflect the positive focus of the concept (protective factors, normal development). Normal human development is conceptualized as an individual’s linear, uneventful, peaceful progression through various life stages, mastering the requisite skills associated with the various domains of functioning (Masten et al. 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992; Wright et al., 2013). Adversity is considered to be a discrete, isolated event that threatens their successful progression in some way (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al. 1990; Wright et al., 2013). Most contemporary resilience researchers preserve this lexicon, as I illustrate later.

3.1.2.2 Methodology used to study how the phenomenon occurs

Basing their studies on these constructs, resilience researchers from the outset embraced the positivist quantitative methodology which was dominating how researchers studied psychological concepts and phenomena at that time. Specifically, they treated their conceptualization as a tangible, observable entity; studied the various constructs as discrete variables, and hypothesized distinctive, discernable relationships between these variables; and used statistical analyses to verify their predictions about the nature of these relationships (see Quinton & Rutter, 1988; Werner & Smith 1992). I illustrate these claims in the following few paragraphs as background for my later critique of this approach.

Researchers selected the variables to be considered in their studies based on their interests and values. Garmezy (1993) noted that he and his colleagues defined competence as “success and achievement in meeting major adaptational expectations or requirements for people of the age of the subject in society” (p.130). However, recall that mental health professionals saw values as universal across societies, and saw themselves as knowing and epitomizing the standard of how people should function (Danziger, 2009; Richards, 2010). Consequently, notions that 1) ideal living conditions in the post-World War II U.S society included home ownership and finances to purchase commodities that facilitated everyday convenience and technological mastery; and 2) threats to this good life such as women becoming anxious about reverting to conforming to White middle class gender roles including motherhood (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010) are reflected in researchers’ choices of circumstances to study as adversities. For example, for their study of individuals on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, Werner and Smith (1989) considered exposure to perinatal stress, poverty, parental psychopathology, chronic discord, and disruptions in the family unit as adversities. Research also reflects the perspective that fixing
individual dysfunction was one effective solution to social problems. As part of their work to address the socioeconomic impacts of child abuse in the Isle of Wright society, Collishaw and colleagues (2007) conducted a study of the personality development of adults who had experienced childhood abuse. Resilience studies also reflect the thinking that overt behavior was indicative of an individual’s thoughts and feelings. Moreover, these researchers use their colleagues’ and their own criteria of which of an individual’s behaviors are indicative of positive adaptation. For example, in their study of young adult White women who had been reared in children’s homes in London as compared to those from the general population, Rutter and Quinton (1984) used standardized, close-ended interview tools aimed at measuring positive adaptation by the women in terms of the women’s interactions with their children, their level of psychiatric disturbance, and their use of social relationships for emotional and physical support. In addition, in keeping with the mechanistic model of human behavior, childhood abuse was deemed the adversity and considered the stimulus which the women were reacting to, observed via the extent to which they positively adapted their behaviors. You can also see how the choice of indicators of positive adaptation reflect stage theories, that is, that at the adulthood life stage, one must have competency in parenting behavior. According to resilience researchers such as Wright and colleagues (2013) and Luthar and colleagues (2000), the methodology used by these pioneers set the tone for how all subsequent resilience research has been conducted since.

From the outset, resilience researchers have studied the phenomenon as an interplay of risk and protective processes, occurring over time, and involving transactions between the individual and discrete, external factors such as aspects of their families and wider social environments such as their peers and school. Early researchers focused on identifying the innate qualities of these individuals they deemed to be meeting the requisite developmental milestones despite significant difficulties (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 1993). Wright and colleagues (2013) attribute this conceptualization and associated methodology as indicative of the cultural ethos in the U.S which promoted the idea that they were individuals who could succeed on their own accord. This approach of studying the individual’s characteristics was quickly expanded on, however, as a result of developments in the field. Studies by pioneers such as Werner and Smith (1982) and Rutter (1985) reported that family and larger sociocultural forces were associated with a child positively adapting in the context of adversity (Luthar et al., 2000; Wright et al., 2013). In addition, Cicchetti and Curtis (2007), Masten (2011), Wright and colleagues (2013) assert that
Child/Development scholars’ use of a developmental systems approach and corresponding focus on the transactional nature of development further contributed to resilience researchers’ consideration that factors external to the child impacted on the child positively adapting.

Pioneers’ use of a positivist quantitative methodology had several implications for research designs from there on. One implication was that resilience researchers used techniques and designs that they felt allowed them to answer research questions about the processes thought to underlie the hypothesized bidirectional, discrete relationship between individuals and their context (Wright et al., 2013). A second implication of this methodology was that early resilience researchers thought about the phenomenon as a process (Masten, 2011). Early research mainly focused on identifying examples of adversity, positive adaptation and protective and risk factors which might be involved in this “resilience” process, but called for subsequent research to go further to elucidate how these elements were connected in order to inform intervention design (Garmezy, 1993; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1989). This direction of resilience research took off as subsequent researchers, influenced by the developmental systems approach, began to: 1) test their hypotheses about which combination of protective and risk factors are correlated with specific outcomes they see as indicative of “resilience” occurring; and 2) identify the mechanisms or processes occurring for individuals which they felt might explain the effects of these protective and risk factors on positive adaptation (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). This focus in turn gave rise to a third implication of a transactional ecological approach. Researchers were then able to take up the call of pioneers to apply findings to develop interventions and policies targeting individuals as a way to enable these individuals to positively adapt to adversity (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Wright et al., 2013). Other researchers began to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at bolstering individual efforts to positively adapt to adversity based on their hypotheses of the processes underlying “resilience” (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2011). The idea of individuals located within ecologies with which they have a transactional relationship has been extremely influential on how the phenomenon has been historically studied. Note that despite this, however, resilience researchers’ focus remained on equipping the individual to positively adapt, but did not expand to also focus on addressing adversity in the individual’s context. This reflects the pervasive thinking in the discipline that fixing the individual could effectively fix the social problem.
3.1.3 Intentional inclusion of adults from the Global South in resilience research

Luthar (2006) and Masten and Wright (2010) demonstrate that despite the thinking that an individual’s culture was associated with “resilience”, researchers did not begin to investigate the nature of this relationship until the turn of the 21st century. By this time, Cross-cultural Psychology had gained traction in Psychology as a useful way of considering how psychological phenomena and concepts varied by culture (Segall, Lonner & Berry, 1998). This approach to Psychology is reflected in how resilience studies with adults from the Global South have been conducted. I discuss this trend and the context within which it emerged briefly in this third part of section one as background to my critique of the approach later in the chapter.

3.1.3.1 Rise of Cross Cultural Psychology

Cross-cultural Psychology is generally based on the argument that human behavior can only be meaningfully understood when examined within its sociocultural context (Segall et al., 1998). Proponents of this approach value the notion of a universal psychology but argue that universality cannot be assumed, it must emerge from empirical study (Segall et al., 1998). Cross cultural psychologists typically hypothesize that both biological and cultural factors influence human behavior. They assume that everyone is the same at the core biologically but culture, as external to the individuals, produces variation in behavior within and across groups (Segall et al., 1998; Teo, 2009). Culture is an external variable which can be isolated from the individual (Segall et al., 1998; Teo, 2009). For them, “culture is used as a label for a group within a set of groups.” (Segall et al., 1998, p. 1105). These groups are defined according to “nationalities resident in different parts of the world, or ethnic groups, often of varying national origins, living within a multicultural society.” (Segall et al., 1998, p.1105). Original cross cultural psychologists equate non-White/non-American ethnicity and nationality to culture. They also do not classify people of non-White/non-American ethnicity and nationality according to their geo-political positioning in the Global South as I and other critical scholars do. According to Segall and colleagues (1998), the term culture is used by Cross-cultural Psychologists as an overarching label for a set of contextual variables- political, social, historical and ecological- which the researcher thinks has an effect on the development and manifestation of a given psychological phenomenon or concept. Cross-cultural studies then are concerned with comparing how a given
psychological phenomenon or concept manifests in similar or different ways in different cultural
groups towards identifying those which are universal.

This Cross-cultural approach to studying psychological phenomena and concepts developed
in the 1960s as a corrective response to ethnocentrism in American Psychology (Ellis & Stam,
2015; Segall et al., 1998). This ethnocentrism emerged within the context of American
Psychology being internationalized. Recall from the previous chapter that U.S social scientists
systematically exported their technical knowledge to nations in the Global South after World
War II to help bring those countries into “modernity” (Cooper & Packard, 1997; Pickren &
Rutherford, 2010). As I discussed earlier, the U.S government was able to facilitate large-scale
funding of psychological research. However, countries in the Global South did not have access to
resources to produce and disseminate psychological research at the same volume and pace as
American Psychologists were enabled to in the 1950s and 1960s (Danziger, 2006; Pickren &
Rutherford, 2010). Consequently, American Psychology was exported, unimpeded, to these
countries in the Global South in a one-way direction during the latter half of the twentieth
century (Danziger, 2006). American Psychology became synonymous with Psychology, the “one
true center” of Psychological thought and practice; these other countries became the periphery
(Danziger, 2006, p.212).

Governments of nations in the Global South such as India welcomed American
Psychologists’ efforts to help them become “modernized” and solve an array of social problems
(Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Countries in the Global South such as those in parts of Asia, Latin
America and the British Commonwealth also sent students to the U.S to be trained in Psychology
since they felt that science and education were the way to become “modern” (Danziger, 2006;
Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). These students returned to the Global South to teach and practice
according to those psychological concepts and methodological requirements they had learnt in
the U.S. In addition, funds for research in these countries were often only available from
American agencies, and American standards of what constitutes good scientific psychological
research and practice provided the examples of what this research in the Global South should
look like (Danziger, 2006; Cooper & Packard,1997; Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). The
cumulative result was what Danziger (2006) refers to as an “international homogenization in
what counted as scientific psychological knowledge” (p. 212). Many of these U.S trained
scholars from the Global South as well as those U.S scholars who went to work in the Global
South in the latter half of the 20th century used a cross-cultural approach to study psychological concepts in efforts to re-introduce culture into psychological research, and under the assumption that they would reveal the universality of the various psychological concepts (Danziger, 2006; Ellis & Stam, 2015; Segall et al., 1998). As I outline in the final part of this section, “resilience” was one such psychological concept which researchers studied using a cross-cultural approach.

This sense that it was important to consider culture in studying psychological concepts also occurred within the context of growing anti-racism and civil rights movements and changes in immigration policy in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s. The good life which was being enjoyed by White Americans at this time was not as available to many Black Americans due to racial segregation laws and practices. Leaders of these movements were agitating for the end of racial segregation in the U.S and drew on cross-cultural psychological research to assist in these efforts. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund had Black Psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark join their team to produce evidence of the psychological damage of racial segregation for African Americans as compared to White Americans to help build their cases against racial segregation. Their efforts contributed significantly to the Supreme Court’s ruling that segregation by race in public schools was unconstitutional. This decision in turn was a landmark decision for the growing civil rights movement across the U.S. (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010).

In the U.S in the 1960’s as well, immigration laws were changed to attract highly qualified, technically trained professionals to meet labor needs there (Sharpe, 1995). Sharpe (1995) argues than an unintended consequence was that the new immigrants were primarily persons from Asia, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. Researchers began reporting that mental health practices and research claims were potentially damaging to these various ethnic groups in the U.S. Agitating research-practitioners reported that mental health practitioners’ diagnoses of psychopathology and their treatment decisions reflected significant discrimination against African-Americans, and to a lesser extent Native Americans, Chicanos, and Asian American, as compared to Euro-Americans (Sue, 1977). Agitators also expressed concern that mental health research, if it did in fact include adults from the Global South in the U.S, painted an image of them as dysfunctional (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010; Richard et al., 1999; Sue, 1977). As I outline below, researchers then asserted that including these non-White/non-American adults in the U.S in resilience studies was necessary to counteract the images of them as dysfunctional,
and understand how some of them were positively adapting to discrimination. For these researchers, the use of a cross-cultural approach to studying the concept for non-White/non-American adults provided a way to use their power to devise a socially-just solution to how these adults were being represented in psychological research, and treated within U.S society.

3.1.4 Resulting Cross-cultural approach to studying the phenomenon

To study the phenomenon in a way that they felt addressed what they saw as the social justice issues with existing resilience research, many researchers misguidedly drew on cross-cultural quantitative methodology. Hence they preserved all the other features of existing resilience research designs, but used strategies such as including samples made up of non-White/non-American so called cultural groups in their studies, examining their cultural practices as variables, and using tools deemed to be culturally valid to measure behaviors, so as to account for culture as an influential variable in the study. In this final part of section one of this chapter, I illustrate that many resilience studies on adults in the Global South reflect this.

3.1.4.1 Methodology used to study how the phenomenon occurs

These trends show up in resilience research with adults from the Global South in the way researchers use the same post-positivist quantitative methodology which has dominated the study of “resilience” in the Global North. Researchers sometimes create their own tools to measure the presence of the behaviors, thoughts and emotions they deem indicative of protective factors or positive adaptation/normal development. Daining & DePanfilis (2007) chose six outcome domains (education participation, employment history, avoidance of early parenthood, homelessness, drug use and criminal activity) which they deemed indicative of normal/healthy development to generate a composite score of “resilience” in their study. Similarly, Lee, Shen and Tran (2009) measured the existence of “resilience” for African Americans in their study who had survived hurricane Katrina by asking a closed ended question- if participants felt they could recover from Hurricane Katrina or not. Most researchers, however, keen on accounting for culture in what they deem to be a socially just way, in keeping with the cross-cultural approach, use standardized scales and/or tools which have been deemed by other researchers as good measures of the variable under study for different cultural groups. Currie and colleagues (2012, p.3) report that they used the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale which “is considered a reliable and
valid tool across disparate cultural groups” to measure levels of psychological wellbeing for the Aboriginal adults in their study. Researchers who have included adults from the Global South in resilience studies then, also treat the phenomenon as tangible and mechanistic, and consider culture to be an additional variable to be isolated out and studied for its association with how persons positively adapt to adversity.

Given that cross-cultural quantitative resilience researchers believe that the only changes required to effectively address social justice issues in resilience research is to account for culture as a variable, it is unsurprising that they maintain the analysis methods used in resilience studies generally in their own studies with non-White/non-American “cultural groups”. Many make predictions about the strength of the impact of protective factors of interest in comparison to others on an individual’s scores on tools deemed to be measuring “resilience”. For example, Utsey, Bolden, Lanier and Williams (2007) used Structural Equation Modelling to confirm that culture-specific coping (spiritual and collective coping strategies) were more statistically-significant predictors of outcomes deemed indicative of “resilience” (quality of life) than non-culture-specific ones for African Americans from high risk urban communities. The study by Walker and Longmire-Avital offers another example; they conducted a hierarchical linear regression test to confirm whether religious faith significantly predicted “resilience” above other characteristics of the individual such as education, sexual orientation and gender, and risk factors such as levels of anxiety and internalized homonegativity for the LGB Black Americans in their study. In keeping with the way in which “resilience” has been historically researched with adults from the Global North then, resilience researchers with adults in the Global South also use statistical tests to make claims about the existence and nature of the relationship between demographic variables, protective factors, and behaviors and thoughts deemed indicative of positive adaptation for persons exposed to some specific adversity.

3.1.4.2 Conceptualization of the phenomenon

These trends also show up in how researchers conceptualize the phenomenon, and the constructs they claim constitute the concept. These efforts by resilience researchers to establish that the phenomenon occurs in the same way for non-White/non-American “cultural groups” is reflective of a cross-cultural quantitative methodology, specifically that culture is a variable and
universality must be established not assumed. The majority of studies with adults in the Global South base their research on one of the three conceptualizations of the phenomenon noted above. Alim and colleagues (2008); Bailey, Sharma and Jubin (2013); Currie and colleagues (2013); and Lee, Shen and Tran (2009) all based their study on the assumed definition that “resilience” is about low to no symptoms of traumatic stress or other psychopathology following adverse events. Daining & DePanfilis (2007); Hyman and Williams (2001); and Mendenhall, Bowman and Zhang (2012) based their study on the conceptualization that “resilience” is normal development in spite of adversity.

In addition, as in research in the Global North, researchers assume that positive adaptation, normal development and adversity are the only key constructs making up the concept “resilience” in studies with adults from the Global South, and maintain the definitions and individual behaviors, thoughts and feelings deemed indicative of these constructs.

3.1.4.2.1 Positive adaptation

With regard to positive adaptation by the individual, cross-cultural studies with adults in the Global South typically use a wide range of those same indicators used in resilience studies with adults from the Global North. To date, researchers have used indicators inclusive of: absence of symptoms of mental dysfunction such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, drug use and suicidal behavior; and/or the presence of what they deem to be positive behaviors and thoughts such as personal competence, personal efficacy, perceived life quality, positive acceptance of change, secure relationships, economic wellbeing, good cognitive functioning, and family cohesion (see Alim et al., 2008; Bailey et al., 2013; Brown & Tylka, 2011; Hyman & Williams, 2001; Mendenhall et al., 2012; Radan, 2007; Utsey et al., 2007; Walker & Longmire-avital, 2013; and Wang, Lightsey, Tran & Bonaprate, 2013).

3.1.4.2.2 Adversity

With regard to adversity, researchers have focused on researching “resilience” for adversities reported elsewhere to be associated only with symptoms of mental health dysfunction and disruptions in normal development for the specific peoples being studied from the Global South. As a result, some studies have focused on reporting that “resilience” also occurred for so called non-White/non-American “cultural groups” exposed to adversities such as childhood
maltreatment, parental mental illness, poor support in transitioning out of the child welfare system; issues related to migration, and community violence (see Alim et al., 2008; Brown & Tylka, 2011; Currie et al., 2013; Daining & DePanfilis, 2007; Hyman & Williams 2001).

Other researchers have focused on researching “resilience” related to adversities which they argue a given non-White/non-American “cultural group” experiences more than White Americans or other “cultural groups” as a result of the discriminatory socioeconomic context which members of that “cultural group” lived. For example, Mendenhall and colleagues (2012) report that joblessness, underemployment and low income for Black single mothers, reported elsewhere to be higher than other “cultural groups” during the same time period in the U.S, negatively impacted their psychological wellbeing. Similarly, Daining & DePanfilis (2007) argued that African Americans are overrepresented in the child welfare system and experience racial disparity in service provision and permanency planning; consequently, they sought to investigate what contributed to positive outcomes related to this as an adversity.

Scholars researching “resilience” for those in the Global South have also examined adversities which were a feature of the participant’s physical context in keeping with the ecological approach to development. For example, Radan (2007) sought to establish the various types of adversity which Guatemalan and El Salvadoran women had faced as a result of war in their countries. The study by Lee and colleagues (2009) serves as another example; they sought to establish human and property loss as adversity which African Americans faced as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Researchers’ maintenance of the concept and its constructs in studies with those from the Global South is unsurprising given their expectation that they will establish universality of the concept, and their perception of culture as a variable external to and separate from individuals.

3.1.4.2.3 Protective factors

Cross-cultural quantitative studies with adults in the Global South have also focused considerable attention on identifying protective factors and processes similar to research with those in the Global North. These scholars report that they have confirmed that protective factors previously confirmed only for White Americans were also protective factors for other “cultural groups”. Bailey and colleagues (2013) identified that social support and cognitive appraisal were protective factors of “resilience” for Black women who experienced traumatic stress as a result.
of losing a child to gun violence similar to other non-Black cultural groups who had been studied. Similarly, Alim and colleagues (2008) reported that purpose of life, use of social support, emotional expression, and an optimistic outlook on life acted as protective factors for the African American adults in their study who had been exposed to adverse events, similar to reports on studies with other “cultural groups”. Hyman and Williams (2001) have also claimed that similar to other “cultural groups”, growing up in a stable family, not experiencing incest, not experiencing force as part of the abuse, not being arrested as a juvenile, graduating from high school, and not being victimized as an adult act as protective factors for African American women who experience sexual abuse as children.

In keeping with their thinking that culture is a variable in how the phenomenon occurs, scholars who subscribe to a cross-cultural approach have also drawn on research on beliefs and practices of those in the Global South to examine how these act as protective factors. Results have been varied. Researchers have given considerable attention to levels of religious orientation and engagement in religious practices as cultural protective factors. For example, Alim and colleagues (2008) reported that religious attendance was also a protective factor for those in their study along with lower negative religious coping. Wang and colleagues (2013) reported that religious awareness only protected Black College students from suicidal thoughts and behavior when their reasons for living were high. Conversely, Walker & Longmire-Avital (2013) reported that religious faith moderated the likelihood of “resilience” occurring for Black Lesbian and Gay young adults when they had high levels of internalized homonegativity. Similarly, Mendenhall and colleagues (2012) claimed that strong religious beliefs work as protective factors for Black single mothers reporting family economic-provider role-strain. Researchers have also considered if and how the cultural practice of social support from extended family, the community, churches, and those unrelated individuals who play a role in raising children acts as a protective factor for persons of African descent. For example, Mendenhall and colleagues (2012) report that emotional support from extended family promoted “resilience” occurring for their participants. According to Utsey and colleagues (2007) using the culture-specific coping strategy collective coping to deal with adversity was also a significant protective factor for their African American participants from high risk urban communities.

Finally, researchers have examined how exposure to culture acts as a protective factor for adults from non-White/non-American “cultural groups”. Currie and colleagues (2013) reported
that enculturation, which they defined as the extent to which an individual engages in the values and practices of their heritage culture, helped protect Aboriginal men in Canada from illicit and prescription drug problems. Similarly, Brown (2008) and Brown and Tylka (2011) investigated receiving racial socialization messages (as conceptualized by Stevenson et al, 2002) as a protective factor. Brown (2008) reported that racial socialization messages about culturally coping with antagonism and those messages designed to reinforce cultural pride were strongly associated with “resilience” and accounted for “resilience” levels more so than demographic variables such as gender and age. However, Brown and Tylka (2011) report that although racial socialization messages moderated the relationship between racial discrimination and “resilience”, specific messages such as developing cultural pride, and using spirituality and religion did not help their African American college students. Resilience researchers believe that culturally-based protective processes are important to how the phenomenon occurs for those in the Global South but are concerned that there has been little systematic research on them (Wright et al., 2013).

3.1.5 Section 1 summary

In this first section of the chapter, I demonstrated that resilience research on adults in the Global South reflects four key trends in Psychology which emerged within a specific historical, social, economic and political context in the U.S. The conceptualization of the phenomenon as “resilience” and ways of knowing associated with studying the phenomenon in the U.S, have been transported in a unidirectional fashion to the Global South and upheld as natural, normal and neutral. I illustrated that, to this day, researchers treat the original conceptualizations and related constructs as providing socially just explanations of how the phenomenon occurs for those adults in the Global South, confident that they have addressed any social justice issues by using various methods to examine culture as a variable. There are, however, a few other researchers who challenge some of the ideological assumptions guiding this cross-cultural quantitative study of the phenomenon with those from the Global South. I detail their concerns, how they have sought to address them, and the findings emerging from their studies in the second section of this chapter.
3.2 Review of Interpretivist approaches to researching the phenomenon

Based on the studies reviewed, resilience scholars drawing from an interpretivist-qualitative methodology agree with those drawing from a cross-cultural quantitative methodology that persons in the Global South are members of various “cultural groups”, who have different cultural beliefs and practices from White/American adults, and these need to be represented in the resilience literature (see Akinsulure-Smith, 2016; Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Dale & Safren, 2019). They also agree that 1) these so-called cultural groups encounter social discrimination which poses unique adversities or exaggerates the effects of other universal adversities in their lives; 2) White/American individuals do not have to contend with the same circumstances; 3) this social discrimination shapes the ways in which members of non-White/non-American so-called cultural groups positively adapt; and 4) these must also be represented in the resilience literature (Banyard et al., 2002; Barry et al., 2012; Brodsky, 1999; Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Chung et al., 2014). However, their use of an interpretivist-qualitative methodology signals an ideological disagreement with what they see the social justice issues to be in resilience research, and hence how these cultural beliefs and practices, and adverse circumstances should be accounted for.

3.2.1 Ideological concerns about concepts as universal, objective and mechanistic

There are some key ideological ways in which those researchers who are informed by an interpretivist-qualitative approach differ from those informed by a cross-cultural quantitative approach. In the first place, they argue against assuming or striving to establish universality of concepts. They draw on the view that reality is subjective and multiple, instead of single and objective as is assumed in a cross-cultural quantitative approach (Creswell, 2013). For them, therefore, researchers who strive to establish concepts as universal are still researchers who impose their values about the conceptualization of the phenomenon on those from non-White/non-American “cultural groups”, and this is discriminatory. Moreover, they assert that knowledge is co-constructed between the researcher and participants, and participants and those in their social context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schawandt, 1994). Scholars drawing on this framework further assert that using findings based on research using a very specific sample about select variables and individuals’ reaction to isolated stimuli does not aid in understanding the complexity of the daily lives of individuals. From their perspective, this reductionist, mechanistic view of knowledge marginalizes peoples’ experiences. Consequently, researchers drawing on an
interpretivist-qualitative approach argue that the interpretations of these “cultural groups” about events and interactions in their lives should be re-centered in research (Schwandt, 1994), and their experiences treated as specific to their social context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Next, I outline the methods used by researchers who draw on an interpretivist-qualitative approach to conduct studies about the phenomenon known as resilience with adults in the Global South.

3.2.2 Interpretivist-qualitative methods used to study the phenomenon

In most of the studies which I reviewed, researchers maintain the original conceptualization of the phenomenon and the constructs thought to constitute it. However, they use data collection methods which are thought to allow participants to direct what they share about how these constructs manifest in the specific social context of their daily lives instead. One common method is to use open-ended individual and focus group interviews and surveys (see Akinsulure-Smith, 2016; Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Brodsky, 1999; Dale & Safren, 2019). For example, to find out how women of minority status become successful within what the researchers define as a patriarchal American society, Bachay and Cingel (1999) had their participants complete an open-ended survey about their daily lives. Another common method is to include members of the target population’s communities in the study in various ways to increase the extent to which the researcher’s voice is decentered (see Akinsulure-Smith, 2016; Brodsky, 1999; Dale & Safren, 2019). For example, for their study about Black women living with HIV, experiences of trauma, racism, HIV-stigma and gender related stressors, and the adaptive coping strategies they used, Dale and Safren (2019) also interviewed community stakeholders who provided supportive services to this population about the healthy and unhealthy ways they have seen the Black women they serve coping with the various adversities they faced. However, Chung and colleagues (2014) conducted a community-partnered research project to understand the sources of stress and sources of strength which aided coping and survival for African American men. This meant that academic researchers and community stakeholders collaborated from the outset to determine a research project which would be beneficial to the community, conceptualize and implement the research design, and disseminate results in an equitable fashion (Chung et al., 2014).

With regard to data analysis, researchers use inductive strategies intended to preserve the details of participants’ responses as a way to ultimately develop final themes. Bachay and Cingel
(1999) analyzed the words in their participants’ responses for frequency and thematic pattern to arrive at the categories relevant to the factors and process which protected the women in their academic studies in the face of racial and ethnic and gender discrimination. On the other hand, as part of their analysis to identify how “resilience” processes were displayed and fostered among Black gay men, Barry and colleagues (2019) coded participants’ posts (such as conversations and pictures) in an online forum using a “resilience” framework developed by another researcher with a similar population but then expanded/refined these categories based on what emerged in the content and nature of the online data.

By basing their studies on the meanings their participants attributed to the events in their lives and the actions they used to respond to these events, these scholars attempt to ensure that the research on the phenomenon is representative of participants’ experiences, and hence attends to their concerns about social justice issues in cross-cultural, quantitative research designs.

3.2.3 Claims about how the phenomenon occurs from an interpretivist-qualitative perspective

Using this methodology, researchers have made key claims about what is involved in how “cultural groups” from specific social contexts positively adapt to adversity.

3.2.3.1 Protective factors

These researchers have identified protective factors which their participants have used to deal with those adversities that, they argue, other “cultural groups” also deal with but which may pose additional challenges for their participants due to their experiences of social discrimination (see Barry et al, 2019; Chung et al., 2014). Bachay and Cingel (1999) illustrated that for the women from various non-White/non-American “cultural groups” living in the U.S in their study, having a well-defined faith, ability to reframe barriers and obstacles as opportunities for growth and change, and having close maternal relationships were among some of the factors and processes which they felt protected them from being negatively affected by the discrimination they faced as women and exaggerated by their status in the U.S as ethnic minorities. Dale and Safren (2019) demonstrated that according to the Black women who were living with HIV in their study, social support from friends, family, peers, and community organizations provided a way for them to cope in a healthy manner with HIV-stigma and gender discrimination that is
exaggerated by the discrimination they face due to their ethnicity/race in the U.S. Involvement with their church and relationships with God as well as enlisting and accepting help from friends and family were consistent protective factors which participants identified in the studies which I reviewed (Akinsulure-Smith, 2016; Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Barry et al., 2019; Brodsky, 1999; Chung et al., 2014; Dale & Safren, 2019).

3.2.3.2 Adversity

Other studies have also identified sources of threats which are specific to participants from the Global South, and deemed that they demonstrated “resilience” (see Bachay & Cingel, 1999; Chung et al., 2014). According to Akinsulure-Smith, (2016), her participants who were West African immigrants to the U.S. experienced a number of stressors specific to life in their new home country. These sources of distress included intimate partner violence associated with conflicts about maintaining gender roles from at home versus embracing those from the U.S that gave women more independence; racial and cultural discrimination associated with being Black and Muslim; parenting challenges due to guilt of leaving children behind, not being able to provide children with the material things their American peers received, and adjusting to the criminalization of their typical ways of disciplining children; the demands of their extended family back home to provide financial support since they were perceived to have a better life in the U.S; and uncertain immigration status. Brodsky (1999) notes that the African American single mothers in her study who lived in a neighborhood characterized by poverty, gang violence and drug abuse shared that their friends and family were sources of challenge in their lives, contrary to other research on social support.

3.2.4 Conceptualizations of the phenomenon

To a much lesser extent, researchers have also presented alternative context-specific conceptualizations of the phenomenon. For example, the women in Brodsky’s (1999) study reported that they saw “resilience” as an ongoing process of “making it”, where they were achieving or approaching success out of unlikely or risky environmental circumstances which were outside of their control to remove or minimize. For these women, this ongoing process was punctuated by attainment of personally defined goals along the way, and involved continuously
balancing those stressors which arise in various aspects of their lives with the resources available to them to respond (Brodsky, 1999).

For these researchers who drew on an interpretivist-qualitative framework, their findings presented socially just representations of how their participants shared the phenomenon occurred in their lives. They felt that these representations were socially just because they used methods to 1) privilege participants’ accounts about their daily lived experiences as members of non-White/non-American “cultural groups”; and 2) capture details of the specific socioeconomic context within which their participants’ lives unfolded.

3.2.5 Section 2 summary

In this section, I outlined how scholars who utilize an interpretive-qualitative methodology seek to address what they see to be the outstanding social justice concerns with a cross cultural, quantitative approach to studying how the phenomenon occurs for those in the Global South. Creswell (2013) asserts that qualitative approaches attend to social justice in research to varying degrees. With this in mind, it is worth noting that few of the reviewed studies which draw on an interpretive-qualitative approach seem to explicitly examine adversities as related to structural inequalities (see Chung et al., 2014) although they cite that their participants are disproportionately affected by stressors due to institutionalized racial discrimination (see Brodsky, 1999; Dale & Safren, 2019). In addition, despite the focus on privileging the voices of the participants and attending to having data collection methods reflect how they live culturally, the resilience studies maintain the frameworks and associated methodologies emerging from the Global North. Conversely, there are a few scholars who have raised concern that resilience researchers must go even further to attend to how the ideological assumptions guiding the dominant conceptualization of the phenomenon and methodologies used to study the phenomenon pose problems for persons specifically because they are a part of the Global South. I outline their arguments and findings in the next, third section of the chapter.

3.3 Critical Constructivist approaches to conceptualizing & studying the phenomenon with adults in the Global South

In the third part of this chapter, I present the work of this small group of resilience researchers whose work reflects a critical-constructivist approach to research. Researchers whose
work is informed by a critical framework seek to 1) highlight power imbalances, structural inequalities and marginalizing and discriminatory practices in both research designs and implementation, and in participants’ daily lives; 2) highlight the links between historical, social, political and economic contexts and how research is conducted; 3) conduct research which addresses these issues; and 4) advocate for reform and action (Adams et al., 2015; Danziger, 2006; Teo, 2009). They argue for use of a critical-constructivist framework which a) treats knowledge as socially constructed, contextually situated, and culturally shaped; and b) assumes that what counts as knowledge is mediated by the amount of power and nature of the interests held by those in the interaction (see Atallah, 2017; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Reid, 2018). Specifically, these resilience researchers explicitly refer to participants according to their geopolitical position (that is, members of the Global North or Global South) and challenge that: 1) the lives of those in the Global South have historically unfolded in a different way from that of the researchers from the Global North whose conceptualizations of the phenomenon have been preserved; and 2) those in the Global South have different ways of knowing and making meaning about circumstances in their lives which must be valued and used to investigate how they conceptualize the phenomenon, and how it occurs in their lives; and 3) the lives of those in the Global South, and the way they have been researched regarding the phenomenon have both been negatively shaped by the oppressive practices and policies of those from the Global North. As I will illustrate in this section of the chapter, by attending to these concerns, these scholars have demonstrated that the existing conceptualizations of the phenomenon, and claims about how it occurs for adults in the Global South, are socially unjust.

### 3.3.1 Dangers of ideological assumptions underlying conceptualization of the phenomenon

Scholars who critically examine the phenomenon typically provide two criticisms: 1) the dangers of the presumption of universalism, and 2) the harmful focus on individualism. Specifically, scholars are concerned with highlighting and addressing how adhering to these two assumptions in the conceptualization of the phenomenon and the methodologies used to study the phenomenon reflect and serve to maintain the dominance of the Global North which started with colonization and has been continued via neocolonial and neoliberal practices and policies. I draw on work about the phenomenon from psychology, sociology, and social work to present the ideological concerns raised by critical scholars in the first part of this section.
3.3.1.1 Dangers of presumptions of the phenomenon as universal

With regard to universalism, critical scholars extend the concern of those influenced by an interpretivist-qualitative approach beyond the perspective that different “cultural groups” have different cultural beliefs and practices. Instead, these critical scholars argue that by presuming or expecting phenomena and concepts to be universal, psychologists from both the Global North and Global South maintain the Global North’s historical practice of positioning their phenomena and concepts as natural, neutral and normal and conversely positioning the phenomena and concepts of those from the Global South as abnormal, backward and deficient in comparison (Adams et al., 2015; Danziger, 2006). Moreover, critical scholars charge that psychologists, by holding up a cross-cultural quantitative methodology as the natural standard of research to understand psychological phenomena with those from the Global South, also preserve the colonial practice of devaluing the Global South’s ways of knowing as deficient and inadequate (Adams et al., 2015; Danziger, 2006; Huygens, 2009). Finally, Martin-Baro (1994) articulates that the Global North’s account of events presents reality as natural and ahistorical, and consequently limits the possibility for oppressed people in the Global South to learn from their experiences, and find the roots of their identity needed to not only interpret their sense of the present but also see possible alternatives. Consequently, resilience scholars whose work reflect this critical-constuctivist approach argue that: 1) the use of the prevailing conceptualization of the phenomenon, associated constructs and theories of human development underlying them; and 2) the cross-cultural quantitative and to a lesser extent interpretivist-qualitative approaches used to study the phenomenon with people in Global South serves to maintain the Global North’s dominance over those in the Global South, and substantiate their claims that those from the Global South are inferior based on their race and culture (Atallah, 2016; Ungar 2004, Ungar, 2010).

Critical scholars also argue that a cross-cultural understanding of culture which informs the majority of research with those in the Global South, perpetuates this presumption of universality of the conceptualization of the phenomenon (Adams et al., 2015; Ungar, 2010). These scholars argue instead for researchers to use a constructivist understanding of culture such as that used in Cultural Psychology (Adams et al., 2015; Ungar, 2010). According to this understanding of culture, culture and psychological phenomena are mutually constitutive; individuals have mental
representations of phenomena-concepts, judgements, goals- which we inherit via social institutions, practices, modes of discourse, text et cetera, and our actions are responsive to and directed at these mental representations (Ellis & Stam, 2015; Geertz, 1973; Shweder, 1991). As Ellis and Stam (2015) explain it, “the sociocultural world constitutes the possibilities for selfhood…” (p. 302). In drawing on this conceptualization of culture, resilience scholar Ungar (2004) notes, therefore, that in examining the phenomenon with those in the Global South we must consider that this construction of our social realities through interaction is highly dependent on the language available to explain our experiences, and this language is often controlled by those with power in the society. Those in the Global South may not always have the power to influence how they define health and illness, particularly when researchers from the Global North perpetuate control of these definitions by imposing their conceptualization of the phenomena as universal (Adams et al., 2015; Ladner, 1971; Ungar, 2004). However, the Cultural Psychology approach to understanding culture also assumes that the individual has the agency to interpret and take up cultural meanings and practices in distinctive ways to create a life that is uniquely meaningful for them (Ellis & Stam, 2015; Shweder, 1991). As such, all knowledge is not just seen as situated, but also seen as based on someone’s perspective (Ellis & Stam, 2015). This approach allows for a plurality of conceptualizations across geographical contexts as well as within the same geographical context (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993; Ungar, 2004). Researchers drawing on these assumptions of culture can, therefore, seek “adequate, historical understandings of how psychological phenomena unfold in context.” (Ellis & Stam, 2015, p. 302) such that they acknowledge their own perspectives and guard against imposing them, and make room for local conceptualizations of the phenomena to emerge (Adams et al., 2015; Ungar, 2004; Ungar 2010). Consequently, these scholars call for researchers who are studying the phenomenon in the Global South to consider the extent to which their research inadvertently serves colonialist ends by adhering to assumptions of universalism of their conceptualization of the phenomenon.

3.3.1.2 Risks of assuming an individualistic conceptualization of the phenomenon

Secondly, scholars critique the assumption of individualism in the conceptualization of the phenomenon and application of related findings. Some argue that the conceptualization which focuses on the individual disguise how use of power by the Global North created difficulty for those in the Global South from colonial times until now through historical colonization policies
and practices, and/or removes or limits their access to resources they need to use to deal with difficulties in the present day (Atallah, 2016; Huygens, 2009; Ladner, 1971; Ungar, 2004, 2010).

Some scholars have further asserted that when examining the lives of people in the Global South, researchers must consider how the current neoliberal ideology is at work in their lives in terms of the way researchers have conceptualized and researched the phenomenon (Adams et al, 2015; Reid, 2018; Schwarz, 2018). Critical scholars argue that neoliberal ideas of a “free market” of “free agents” makes it seem as if individuals are at liberty to engage in social relations or not based on some rational calculation of costs and benefits, instead of that power imbalances and structural inequalities negatively impact what resources they have access to or what difficulties emerge in their lives (Adams et al, 2015). Those presenting a neoliberal critique of “resilience”, therefore, contend that researchers’ use of the current conceptualization of the phenomenon with the focus on the individual as the locus of the problem and solution are at risk of serving a neoliberal purpose of making the responsibility to successfully deal with difficulty only the responsibility of the individual (Reid, 2018; Schwarz, 2018). Instead, as Reid (2018) and Schwarz (2018) contend, this conceptualization of the phenomenon abstracts the development of difficulty in the Global South and the capacity of those from the Global South to access resources to maintain health or successfully deal with difficulties, from a sociohistorical context characterized by power imbalances and structural inequalities, created by colonial relations, and maintained by globalization and trade liberalization.

In addition, scholars such as Schwarz (2018) also raise concerns that the prevailing individualistic approach to conceptualizing the phenomenon enables commodification of states of emotional and behavioral difference as vulnerability, dysfunction and disorder in contrast to mental health and resilience, as has been the case with other mental health concepts (White, 2017; Timimi, 2017). This commodification of those states in a neoliberal market positions the individual as needing to consume products and services such as interventions designed by mental health professionals in order to become equipped with and/or maintain the skills deemed to be indicative of positive adaptation, and consequently demonstrate “resilience” (Schwarz, 2018). A risk is that commodification of concepts like resilience and mental health can disconnect people from the resources and capacities they already have to effectively deal with difficulties, particularly local ones, in favor of those based on the values and experiences of psychologists from the U.S and other parts of the Global North, and delivered by mental health professionals.
who are the expert (Schwarz, 2018; Timimi, 2017). Critical scholars, consequently, call on their colleagues who are researching the phenomenon with persons in the Global South to ensure that they do not uncritically add to research which can serve colonialist and neoliberalist agendas by adhering to an individualist conceptualization.

These scholars assert that, by attending to assumptions of universalism and individualism, those researching the phenomenon with those from the Global South can produce knowledge which resonates with local realities and inform the creation of interventions which better serve local communities. Some researchers have sought to conduct empirical study of the phenomenon which attends to these concerns. I outline the methodologies they use in this second part of section three of the chapter.

3.3.2 Critical-constructivist methodologies

3.3.2.1 Attending to researcher influence on knowledge production

Similar to scholars whose work on the phenomenon reflects an interpretivist-qualitative approach, critical scholars researching “resilience” have sought to guard against 1) assuming universalism of how the phenomenon occurs, and 2) blindly imposing their values and meaning-making about how life should unfold and what constitutes health on their participants in the Global South, including that this process of attaining and maintaining health is individualistic. One method which they have used is to engage in reflexivity throughout the research process. A researcher who is being reflexive consciously and continuously examines and acknowledges how their standpoint bias, that is, their experiences and ways of knowing, shape how their account is constructed, including how they theorize and examine research problems, and influence the research process and outcomes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Parker, 2002). Hatala, Desjardins, and Bombay (2015) conducted a study on how Cree elders in Saskatoon navigate health and well-being in the context of social suffering or interpersonal distress. They indicate that during their literature review to conceptualize their study, they realized that images of suffering, passivity, and stigma are prevalent in the discourses of Aboriginal health, healing, identity, and history (Hatala et al., 2015). Hatala and colleagues (2015) note their efforts to be cognizant of not dwelling on these same themes during their analysis of the narratives of the Cree elders in their study. In so doing, Hatala and colleagues (2015) opened themselves to other possible images that might emerge in Cree elders’ stories about their lives. Ultimately, these researchers found that
the Cree elders described themselves as experiencing not only “historical and contemporary moments of distress” but also utilizing “strategies for resilience.” (Hatal et al., 2015, p.6). Had they uncritically used researchers’ typical ways of perceiving this population’s experiences, they would have missed how these participants saw these events and situations in their lives. Singh and colleagues (2012) share that for their study exploring how African American women describe their resilience strategies for healing from child sexual abuse, they documented their assumptions and biases about the daily lived experiences of their African American participants. They note that in so doing, they then sought to account for how the assumptions and biases might shape the research process (Singh et al., 2012). By intentionally interrogating how values and experiences and biases can impact the research process from the outset, these resilience researchers were open to the value of local, cultural meaning-making about adversity and development that give rise to varying conceptualizations of the phenomenon. This is crucial if researchers are to not conduct and reproduce research that perpetuates a neocolonial agenda.

### 3.3.2.2 Centering the participant’s standpoint

Critical researchers have also used methods which enable them to privilege the decolonized participants’ ways of knowing and making meaning, and their views of how and why life unfolds in a particular way (Adams et al., 2015; Grandbois & Sanders, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Lacet, 2016; Scarpino, 2007). One method is to build a collaborative relationship with their participants’ communities as a way to privilege that community’s relational ontology and epistemology (see Atallah, 2017; Hatala et al, 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Lacet, 2016). For example, in her study of how culture fosters “resilience” for Alaskan Natives, Wexler (2014) cultivated a collaborative relationship with her tribal partners. Tribal organizations reviewed the research protocols; a young Inupiaq woman acted as research assistant, modifying procedures and instruments to make them more culturally relevant and participated in data collection; and tribal collaborators had the opportunity to comment on the content of publications and the researcher incorporated their feedback (Wexler, 2014).

Another common method is to use narratives to reflect the centrality of storytelling in participants’ lives (see Lacet, 2016; Kirmayer et al., 2011). Isaak and colleagues (2015) note that their Canadian Cree participants used storytelling to share knowledge. As a result, they used the narrative method to gather information about what the word “resilience” meant to their
participants, and what resources they had available to help them cope and regain a sense of well-being after serious negative life experiences.

A third and final example of methods which researchers have used to privilege their participant’s standpoint comes from Scarpino (2007). Scarpino (2007) asserts that her Aboriginal participants operate according to the worldview captured in the Medicine Wheel that the individual, family, community, Nations, the natural world and the Creator are all interconnected and interdependent. Scarpino (2007), therefore, used content analysis to identify themes in the interview data of her urban Aboriginal women participants, and then used the Medicine Wheel to show how the emergent themes from this analysis about how the women navigated difficultly effectively were related. By using methods to intentionally try to understand the phenomenon from the ontological and epistemological position of the participants, researchers limit the likelihood that they will presume the concept is universal and operates in an individualistic way.

3.3.2.3 Highlighting and interrupting patterns of social injustice

Many critical scholars conducting research in the Global South have explicitly drawn on the notion of social suffering to combat the dangerous presumption of individualization underlying the conceptualization of the phenomenon (Atallah, 2017; Hatala et al, 2015; Isaak et al., 2015; Kirmayer et al, 2011; Wexler, 2014). Social suffering “results from what political, economic and institutional power does to people, and reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems.” (Kleinman, Das & Lock, 1997, p xi). According to Farmer (2009), researchers who are sensitive to the notion of social suffering “study both individual experience and the larger social matrix in which it is embedded in order to see how various large scale forces come to be translated into personal distress and disease” (p. 11). The study of Palestinian refugee families by Atallah (2017) provides an example. Atallah (2017) sought to understand the context of his participants’ stories about life under Israeli occupation and how the family unit had survived. Consequently, he used Clarke’s (2005) situational analysis method where he laid out ideas about major human, non-human, discursive and other contextual elements from interview data, field notes and memos onto maps, poster boards, diagrams, tables and figures. He used these maps, figures, diagrams, poster boards and tables to analyze relations among key contextual elements as one way to situate families’ statements and various emergent themes. He then used a decolonial analysis to help interpret those situational elements related to
participants reported experiences with colonialism. Other researchers explicitly ask participants to talk about how various policies have shaped their daily lives (see Kirmayer et al., 2011). For example, Hatala and colleagues (2015) had their Cree elder participants include details about their connections to residential schools in sharing their life stories. Consequently, resilience researchers who use methods to understand the mechanisms by which social suffering operates in the Global South move away from individualizing people’s suffering and capacity to access resources that promote their health.

### 3.3.2.4 Identifying and developing theories of the phenomenon

Many studies have sought to identify or develop situated theories or conceptualizations of the phenomenon. One popular method for achieving this is using a grounded theory method. For example, Teti and colleagues (2012) used the open and selective analysis stages outlined by Charmaz (2014) in which researchers first code all the lines, paragraphs and incidents in the transcripts, using the language of the participants to label the codes, and then in the second stage specifically analyze the data for those codes which seem to be emerging as most significant. In this way, the categories and conceptualization which they come up with in the end were grounded in the actions of their participants and associated meanings of those actions, and the context within which they apply such as “keep goin’, keep goin’, I keep goin’” which participants used to speak of persevering despite challenges, and the strategies they used to persevere (Teti et al., 2012, p. 526).

Another strategy which researchers use is to conduct the study in the participants’ language or explicitly examine the language in some other way (see Atallah, 2017; Lacet, 2016). For example, Kirmayer and colleagues (2011) were sensitive to how the concept “resilience” resonated with their Inuit participants in the Artic. Kirmayer and colleagues (2011) specifically note that they were similarities with how the Inuit used concepts such as “niriunniq”, which loosely translates to “hope”; participants would speak of hope and wait for it to reveal itself when faced with difficulties. According to Kirmayer and colleagues (2011), the concept “resilience” was also similar to how their Inuit participants used the concept “ajurnamat” which translates to “cannot be helped”; participants accepted that the world is shaped by powerful forces in the universe coming together and these forces were outside of human control and seeking health was about achieving the best balance among the forces in the world around you.
Researchers, therefore, seek to combat assuming individualism and universalism by using methods which enable them to recognize how those in the Global South conceptualize the phenomenon.

By using these methods, as Adams and colleagues (2015) advocate, resilience researchers are able to decenter their perspectives towards normalizing how life unfolds in the context in the Global South where the research is occurring, and denaturalizing U.S patterns of life as natural standards everyone across the globe must aspire towards. Moreover, these critical scholars are able to recover what Martin-Baro (1994) refers to as buried “historical memory” of how the colonizers plundered former colonies. In so doing, according to Adams and colleagues (2015, p.217), resilience researchers help to challenge the dominant narrative that the colonizers were the “vanguards of human development” who helped other countries to reach their level rather than “accomplices to ongoing plunder” which now comes in the form of neoliberalism. In the next and final part of section three, I detail examples of these types of findings.

3.3.3 Critical findings
3.3.3.1 The conceptualization of the phenomenon is contextually and culturally situated

A major finding of these studies is that the conceptualization of the phenomenon is not universal (see Isaak et al., 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Scarpino, 2007). Lacet (2016) investigated Haitian women who had survived the 2010 earthquake there and relocated to the U.S. Noting that there is no Haitian word for resilience, Lacet (2016) found that her participants’ conceptualization of the phenomenon is reflected in a Haitian saying: Fanm vayan goumen ak lavi a!. This saying means “strong women fight with life! Strong women accept life’s challenges” and refers to a culturally-specific expectation that women are persevering and strong in the face of difficulties. This definition does not reflect the constructs such as positive adaptation assumed to be a key component of the resilience concept. Instead, in this conceptualization of the phenomenon, being persevering and strong is not an adaptation of behavior, but a normal way of living daily life. Similarly, Grandbois and Sanders (2009) found that their Native American elders conceptualized the phenomenon as being collective such that the existence of their culture despite colonial oppression over the last one hundred years was an indicator of their people’s “resilience”. They also saw the phenomenon as relational in that individuals’ close interpersonal relationships, sense of connection, loyalties to family and tribal
group, ties to the land, nature and the creator, and stories of survival passed down through
generations were sources of strength and coping. This understanding of the phenomenon
challenges the emphasis on individual perception and response in the conceptualization emerging
from the U.S. These critical scholars, therefore, have illustrated that there are varying
conceptualizations of the phenomenon, and the prevailing conceptualization does not adequately
account for how those in the Global South think life unfolds or how they successfully deal with
difficulties in their daily lives.

3.3.3.2 Difficulties are chronic and ongoing

Several studies have also illustrated that adversity is not only a one-off, abnormal event as
assumed in the prevailing conceptualization emerging from the U.S (see Atallah, 2017; Hatala et
al., 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Wexler, 2014). For example, according to Radan (2007), in her
study of El Salvadoran and Guatemalan women who took refuge in the U.S following war in
their countries, an unanticipated finding was that the adversities the women faced were complex
and sustained. Radan (2007) concluded by concurring with Matin-Baro’s (1994) concept of
normal abnormality, that is, that difficulty can be an ordinary part of daily life, and so does not
present as isolated events with distinct effects. Similarly, Teti and colleagues (2012) asked the
African-American men in their study to describe what life is like for them as Black men. Teti and
colleagues (2011) found that “participants’ challenges were significant because of their chronic
and ubiquitous nature” and not necessarily their extreme “severity” and “one-time nature”, as
adversity is typically defined and researched (p. 530). These findings call into question the
assumption of universality of the constructs thought to constitute the concept “resilience”.

3.3.3.3 Social forces can negatively shape experiences of difficulty and health

Another important finding is that people’s experience of difficulties and health are shaped
by social forces in their context, and these forces are often neocolonial and neoliberal in nature
(see Atallah, 2017; Grandbois & Sanders, 2009; Hatala et al., 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011). For
example, Wexler (2014) researched three generations of Alaskan Native (Inupiaq) families who
explained how their lives had been shaped by oppressive government policies in response to her
request to describe “problems in the community” (p.78). Wexler’s (2014) research demonstrated
how policies around residential schools, the handling of tuberculosis infections, and the use of
Inupiaq language in schools directly created difficult daily lives characterized by ostracism, alienation, and cultural suppression for Alaskan elders.

These studies also demonstrated how the consequences of these social, political and economic decisions become embodied in individual experiences of distress and illness. For example, Wexler (2014) demonstrated that Inupiaq adults struggled with alcohol use and ignorance of their cultural beliefs and practices because of how their elder parents had been impacted by colonialist policies and in turn parented them. Similarly, the African American women who had been sexually abused as children in the study by Singh and colleagues (2012) shared how they had to push past their internalized expectation that African American women should not report crimes committed against them by African American men as they would be contributing to reasons which the criminal justice system in the US could use to disproportionately incarcerate African American men. These studies demonstrate how the actions of those in the Global North ultimately created adverse living conditions and individual experiences of health for those in the Global South, thereby challenging the idea that adversity is based on an individual’s perception and response to an event.

3.3.3.4 Effectively dealing with adversity can be a collective effort

Conversely, some critical studies have demonstrated how those in the Global South have improved their lives by recognizing and marshalling their collective power in various ways. Some studies showed that this mobilization of collective power comes in the form of communities engaging in political activism and agitating for policy changes (see Wexler, 2014). For example, Kirmayer and colleagues (2011) report that the Mohawk community in Kahnawake mobilized politically in response to the Oka crisis in 1990 which would have resulted in appropriation of their sacred lands. Kirmayer and colleagues (2011) note that this mobilization gave rise to subsequent responses by Canada to historical injustice against Aboriginal peoples including the creation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the official apology of the Canadian government for the residential school system, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Other studies illustrated that participants’ marshalling collective power came in the form of passing on survival strategies across generations (see Grandbois and Sanders, 2009). Atallah (2017) demonstrates that the Palestinian refugee families living in camps in his study
intentionally passed on knowledge and skills across generations via story telling by elders, encouraging questions from the youth, and communal teaching to support resistance against Israeli military occupation, siege and dehumanization. The Palestinian refugee families also continually fostered what he refers to as cultures of care within the family and wider community in the camps as a way to face accumulating hardships and residual effects of past violence by maintaining and participating in cultural celebrations, family events, rituals and routines, and providing tangible and emotional support to each other when facing challenges.

This evidence of a collective dimension to how the phenomenon occurs for some in the Global South challenges the prevailing individualized understanding of how the phenomenon occurs. Such studies also challenge the definition of positive adaptation and the idea that positive adaptation is about individual action.

3.3.3.5 Culturally and contextually specific ways exist to effectively respond to difficulty

Another significant finding of these resilience studies is that communities in the Global South have their own ways of effectively dealing with difficulties in their lives (see Atallah, 2017; Grandbois & Sanders, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Wexler, 2014). Some studies illustrated how those in the Global South have cultural practices which are effective. For example, Lacet (2016) shares that her Haitian participants indicated that they engaged in their various spiritual practices such as prayer for God’s intervention and putting things in God’s hands to help them deal effectively with the impact of the earthquake on their lives. Similarly, Hatala and colleagues (2015) report that their Cree elder participants emphasized the importance of transmitting stories across generations for effectively dealing with difficulties; these stories were filled with ways to make meanings about the distressing historical and contemporary experiences of discrimination and marginalization. Other studies highlighted that the act of engaging in the cultural practice was in and of itself the vehicle for resisting efforts to eradicate their cultural practices and hence resisting the manifestation of difficulty (see Hatala et al., 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011). For example, the participants in Isaak and colleagues (2015) study noted that connecting or reconnecting to their traditional teachings about using non-violent responses, and spiritual practices such as meditation and going to sweat lodges was central to their healing. These findings uphold the value of the ways in which those in the Global South interpret and respond to situations in their lives. In so doing, they present an alternative to those in the Global
South thinking that the only way to successfully deal with difficulties is to consume mental health interventions and other products created and delivered by those in the Global North.

**3.3.4 Section 3 summary**

This body of critical-constructivist resilience research provided findings which demonstrate that the existing frameworks used to conceptualize the phenomenon and understand how it occurs fail to provide information about how some in the Global South interpret and correspondingly respond to situations and interactions in their daily lives. These findings also illustrate that the prevailing cross-cultural quantitative approach does not consider how these perspectives may be different from the researcher’s. This body of research also illustrates that cross-cultural and interpretivist-qualitative methodologies used to study the concept resilience fail to capture the ordinariness and interconnectivity of adversity in people’s daily lives and how discriminatory and marginalizing use of power, particularly by some in the Global North, results in interactions and situations becoming difficulties for some in the Global South, and shapes how persons interpret and respond to difficulties in their daily lives. These studies clearly demonstrate, therefore, that use of the existing conceptualization of the phenomenon yields socially unjust findings, and the prevailing methodology and methods used to study the phenomenon result in an oppressive research process.

**3.4 Research gap, project contribution and purpose**

**3.4.1. Research gap**

Despite the findings by scholars using a critical-constructivist approach, there seems to be a paucity of resilience research for Caribbean adults in general and Black Barbadians specifically that considers their cultural meaning-making and practices; the connectedness of adversities in their lives; and the historical, social, and economic forces which shape how their lives unfold. It must be noted that scholars in the Global South to this day struggle to have their studies disseminated to the same extent as those from the Global North (Danziger, 2006). Based on the available research, it appears that, with the exception of the study by Lacet (2016) on Haitian immigrant women living in the U.S post the 2010 earthquake, the existing resilience research with Caribbean people use the prevailing original conceptualization of the phenomenon. For example, in her study with accountants in Barbados Cadogan-McClean, (2009) maintained the
definition of the constructs of positive adaptation and adversity. Cadogan-McClean, (2009) defined positive adaptation as personal competence and acceptance of self and life, and adversity as working in stressful job conditions. Similarly, Burnett and Helm (2013) in their study of Haitian university students who had lived through the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, defined positive adaptation as absence of PTSD symptoms, while Hendriks and colleagues (2019) measured positive adaptation according to absence of mental dysfunction such as anxiety and depression in their evaluation of an intervention geared to foster “resilience” in Surinamese employees following the economic crisis in Suriname. As is the case with studies in other parts of the Global South, researchers in the Caribbean have also sought to establish cultural practices and beliefs associated with the racial/ethnic group as protective factors. For example, Burnett and Helm (2013) reported that church attendance and attending church social events operated as protective factors for females in their study.

With regard to methodology, these researchers also used a cross-cultural quantitative approach typically used to study the phenomenon with others in the Global South. Specifically, researchers use standardized tools which were based on the experiences of researchers and individuals in the U.S and deemed valid via statistical tests for other cultural groups. For example, Cadogan McLean (2009) used the Resilience Scale developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) to measure “resilience” factors demonstrated by accountants in Barbados as it had been deemed valid for use with various ethnic samples. Resilience researchers in the Caribbean also use correlational tests to analyze the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. The study by Hendriks and colleagues (2019) is an exemplar. Hendriks and colleagues (2019) investigated if their Surinamese participants who were employees during the height of economic recession in Suriname between 2015-2017 reported increased “resilience” scores after participation in their culturally adapted Strong Minds program and concluded that the association between program participation and “resilience” scores was strong. Other researchers seek to make predictions about the strength of the impact of a protective factor in comparison to others on an individual’s scores on measures of “resilience”. For example, Burnett and Helm (2013) investigated the existence, direction and strength of relationships between indicators of “resilience”, PTSD and religious orientation and religious practices. Burnett and Helm (2013) reported that “resilience” was statistically significantly related to attending church services; for females, higher levels of “resilience” were more associated with attending church and church
social events. Consequently, there is still much which is unknown about how Caribbean people conceptualize the phenomenon and how it occurs for them.

3.4.2 Project contribution to the resilience literature

Based on the ideological concerns and findings outlined in this chapter, it was important to base my research design on critical-constructivist assumptions. Consequently, drawing on the work by these scholars helped me to choose a methodology which would reduce the likelihood of uncritically imposing my own interpretations of how the phenomenon 1) is conceptualized by, and 2) occurs for those in my study. By doing this, I created a project which supports the need for attending to these methodological issues in studying “resilience” for middle class Black Barbadians, and persons in the wider Global South. This project also contributes additional strategies which researchers can draw on to attend to these methodological issues in their studies of resilience. Finally, this project documents considerations which can be made in designing policies and interventions to improve the lives of middle class Black Barbadians.

3.4.3 Project purpose

The project was, therefore, intended to develop a grounded theory of how the social psychological phenomenon referred to as “resilience” occurs for middle class Black Barbadians and how they conceptualize it. In the next chapter, I detail my use of Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology to conduct my study, explicating why and how I found it helped me to attend to these concerns I had with how the phenomenon is currently conceptualized and researched.
4 The Research Design

Given that those ideological concerns and findings outlined in the previous chapter might be applicable to the middle class Black Barbadian experience, I decided to take a decolonizing approach to my research design. Consequently, I sought to develop a design which allowed space for: 1) any local conceptualization of the phenomenon to emerge; and 2) use of local ways of knowing where feasible to produce knowledge. I also wanted to 3) use a methodology which could illuminate how any local conceptualization is socially constructed—specifically how neocolonial and neoliberal practices and policies in the Barbadian context play out: a) as significant difficulties for my participants; b) in the bodies of knowledge/social discourse available to them to interpret the circumstances in their daily lives and respond; and c) in how they draw on these bodies of knowledge to make sense of and respond to difficulties. I used a Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology (CGTM) as described by Charmaz (2014) to answer my research questions. In this chapter, I describe CGTM and outline how I applied its principles and practices to my research design—recruitment, data collection, and data analysis.

4.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology

4.1.1 Description of grounded theory

Grounded theory is both a research methodology and a research product (Charmaz, 2017). Through use of the flexible principles and practices constituting GTM, the researcher aims to generate new theories about a social process (Charmaz, 2014). The end product is a model, known as the grounded theory, depicting constructs and how and why they are related to each other (Charmaz, 2014). To create this grounded theory, the researcher iteratively uses comparative, open-ended techniques to simultaneously gather and analyze qualitative data (Charmaz, 2017). These techniques allow the researcher to obtain participants’ perspectives about the particular phenomena in their daily lives as well as tacit information about the context within which this occurs (Charmaz, 2014). Through this data gathering and analysis process, the researcher identifies concepts and categories about the events constituting the social process and how they are connected (Charmaz, 2014). The concepts and categories which the researcher identifies from initial data are used to determine what subsequent data needs to be collected and from what source, and to refine the existing categories and concepts (Charmaz, 2017). This iterative process continues until no new information emerges about these concepts and categories.
and the relationships between them, and they ultimately form an explanation of the social process being studied (Charmaz, 2014).

4.1.2 Description of a constructivist approach to grounded theory

I hold to a constructivist approach to GTM (Charmaz, 2014) instead of the objectivist version originally outlined by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s. CGTM is different in three key, connected ways intended to bring context and subjectivity to the fore of the theory building process and so was ideal as one way to help achieve my goal of decolonizing my research design. The first is that CGTM assumes a relativist epistemology—the grounded theory is seen to hold true under a given framework of assessment. CGTM acknowledges that the social processes being studied occur under particular historical, social and situational conditions (Charmaz, 2014). The second key departure is that the researcher is seen as actively constructing a particular understanding of the phenomenon under investigation via interaction with participants. This means that the researcher is not seen to be, as Glaser and Strauss asserted, discovering a theory which emerged from data that is separate from them as the scientific observer (Charmaz, 2014). Research questions and decisions are, therefore, treated as always structured by personal and political interests which the researcher needs to explore in order to understand how they influence their steps during the research process, and in so doing avoid marginalizing, stereotyping or otherwise damaging participants (Adams et al., 2015; Charmaz, 2017). Thirdly, the CGTM acknowledges that there are multiple standpoints, roles and realities; therefore, the researcher is less concerned with “discovering what actually or exactly happened” and more with re-presenting a shared account of participants’ interpretations of their experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Holding this perspective allowed me to consider how: 1) middle class Black Barbadians’ cultural practices and ways of making meaning, and 2) the complex historical and ongoing social, political and economic circumstances in their daily lives together give rise to significant difficulties, shape the meaning they make about these situations, and inform how they respond. At the same time however, by attending so closely to my data collection and analysis processes, I was still able to generate generic statements which can be qualified according to specific temporal, social and situational conditions. Finally, this approach to GTM helped me to continually interrogate my research decisions, interpretation of data, and presentation of my analysis as well as ensure that my participants’ interpretations guided my data collection and
analysis. This Constructivist approach to GTM ultimately enabled me to achieve my objective of using a decolonizing approach so that I did not replicate the concerns I have with how the phenomenon is currently researched with those in the Global South in my own study. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I outline how I used CGTM to design my research and achieve my research purpose. Note that while I lay out my research process in a linear fashion, the process was iterative and linearity is to facilitate clarity for the reader.

4.1.2.1 Acknowledging and developing theoretical sensitivity

Charmaz (2014) contends that an important part of constructing grounded theory is theoretical sensitivity. This approach acknowledges that the researcher brings their own prior knowledge of the area under study (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) uses the term theoretical sensitivity to refer to researcher’s orienting to the extant empirical and theoretical literature prior to data collection and throughout the iterative process of data collection and analysis. Theoretical sensitivity also comes through researchers’ reflecting on their experiences. I used a number of sources of theoretical sensitivity through the course of this research project. As demonstrated in the last chapter, I conducted an extensive literature review of published empirical and theoretical research on the phenomenon conceptualized as resilience relating to those in the Global South. In addition, my doctoral qualifying examination in 2017 explored the social justice issues associated with culturally-adapted evidence-based interventions. Consequently, I was oriented to emerging research on the dangers created and maintained for those in the Global South by research-practitioners who do not recognize that psychological concepts are culturally and contextually located. Finally, I was trained as a Clinical Mental Health Counsellor in New York and have worked since then with persons of Black Caribbean heritage. Often, I found that the existing conceptualizations of “resilience” and associated interventions for facilitating healing provided by the Global North were irrelevant to or inadequate for supporting my clients, or worse further marginalized and re-victimized them. This sensitivity served to shape my research questions, which I outline next.

4.2 Research questions

Given the problematic assumptions embedded in the existing conceptualization of the phenomenon, the possible social justice concerns if I use this conceptualization in research with
middle class Black Barbadians, and the aims of a Constructivist approach to GTM, I opted to temporarily suspend the term resilience. I sought instead to invoke only its generic meaning to conduct my study. Therefore, through my research, I aimed to understand:

1. How middle class Black Barbadians successfully navigate significant difficulties in their daily lives:
   a. What circumstances in their view give rise to significant difficulties? What is the context within which significant difficulties occur?
   b. How do they make sense of significant difficulties? What bodies of knowledge do they draw on to make sense of these significant difficulties? How are these sources of knowledge developed?
   c. What actions are associated with the various sources of sense making? How do they come to know what actions accompany various interpretations? How do they come to know the implications of various actions?
   d. What is going on in the daily life of someone who is effectively dealing with significant difficulties?

2. What can help middle class Black Barbadians to successfully navigate significant difficulties in their daily lives?

I outline the methods I used to ultimately answer these questions below.

**4.3 Research methods**

**4.3.1 Recruitment strategies**

To answer my research questions, I needed to speak to Black Barbadians who had effectively dealt with substantial difficulties in their every day lives as well as persons who could provide insight on the context within which this happens. Consequently, I had three types of participants in my study: primary, secondary, and field participants. I obtained ethics approval from the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board and the University of the West Indies-Cave Hill/Barbados Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board (Appendix A&B). Upon receiving ethics approval, I leveraged my position in and knowledge of Barbadian society to recruit participants. I am a middle class Black Barbadian and have lived and worked in Barbados my entire life with the exception of short time periods I left to study and/or work. Barbados is a small close-knit society and often people are connected through a mutual
familial, platonic, romantic, or collegial relationships (Barrow, 1976; Chamberlain, 2004). Therefore, I initially recruited primary participants via electronic flyers (see Appendix C) posted on my social media, and the social media of organizations in my personal and professional network. These organizations included tertiary academic and vocational training facilities, school alumni associations, psychosocial and health services, and major religious organizations. Via these electronic flyers, I asked persons to recommend participation to someone they know who fit the criteria and/or express their own interest in participating. I sent out the flyer bi-weekly, four times. I used this recruitment strategy to facilitate maximum variation sampling; it allowed me to access persons across different generations, genders and neighbourhoods (Creswell, 2013). I spent eight weeks on-site in Barbados and after my return to Canada, collected additional data using online platforms. During this time in Barbados, participants as well as persons in my networks would ask if I still needed primary participants and what their characteristics would be and I would update them accordingly.

I recruited secondary participants by asking each primary participant to recommend one person who was involved in their experiences of effectively dealing with significant difficulties to share about their supportive role. Finally, I used two main strategies to recruit field participants. I contacted organizations known for working within the Caribbean on the particular topic and asked permission to interview a representative. I also asked members of my network with knowledge of the particular topic to connect me to someone peers deemed an expert in the area in the Caribbean, or asked them to connect me to persons whom I had identified as experts in an area from reviewing academic and grey literature and the media.

4.3.2 Sampling technique

I used purposive sampling to access primary participants. This method allows researchers to capture typical cases, a range of different cases, and determine if the theory that they are building covers or omits the experiences of various participants (Maxwell, 1996). I used snowball sampling to access secondary participants; in this way, subsequent data collection was determined by what primary participants shared (Maxwell, 1996). Finally, I used convenience sampling to connect to field participants.
4.3.3 Inclusion criteria

All participants needed to be 18 years or over.

4.3.3.1 Primary participants

Primary participants all had to self-identify as Black Barbadian, consider themselves to have successfully gotten through what they deemed to be significant difficulties during the course of their everyday lives, and be interested in sharing how this happened. As per University of Guelph’s REB requirements, I could not recruit primary participants from populations at risk for social stigma or economic harm if their status was to be revealed to the public via breach of confidentiality (for example transactional sex workers, LGBTQ persons, persons living with HIV/AIDS).

4.3.3.2 Secondary participants

In order for me to include a secondary participant in the study, primary participants had to provide ongoing consent for this person to share about his/her role in helping them to effectively deal with significant difficulties, and the secondary participant had to consent to the primary participant reviewing his/her transcript if the primary participant wished to. Both primary and secondary participants were persons who believed they would not become distressed or be unable to manage any distress resulting from talking about their experiences.

4.3.3.3 Field participants

Field participants (organizations) had to be members of organizations that gave general consent for a representative to volunteer to participate in the study; however, participants did not need to be recommended by their organization. For field participants (local experts), I defined their expert status according to their 1) leadership in developing relevant policies or management of relevant organizations in the Caribbean; or 2) publication of empirical research or position papers on themes emerging from my findings.

4.3.4 Sample size

Morse (2000) recommends 20-30 participants for a grounded theory based on factors such as the scope of the research question, the nature of the topic, the quality of the data, and the study design. My committee and I decided that to start, I should aim to have 20 primary participants,
10 secondary participants, and 5 field participants in total to determine if I met theoretical saturation in the limited time period I had in the field, with the intention to recruit further if needed. The term theoretical saturation refers to the point at which no new themes are coming up in data collection about the phenomenon under study (Charmaz, 2014; Nelson, 2017). After each interview, I completed a memo identifying emergent categories; I used these to determine what I should collect more data about with future participants. I also had potential participants give me a synopsis of their experiences during phone screenings; persons often spoke of a variety of experiences that they felt they could share. I would comment about which ones I was interested in learning more about based on what had come up in interviews thus far.

I found that by the 22nd potential participant, no significantly new categories were emerging. In addition, the rate of inquiries about participating had slowed considerably by the 17th participant. I met with Dr. Kyriakakis and Dr. Yen after I had conducted initial interviews with 20 primary participants, 9 secondary participants (5 of whom were accompanied by primary participants), and screened 22 primary participants. Based on this, we decided that I could use my second interviews with primary participants to further elucidate my categories and based on this analysis, recruit for additional primary participants if needed. I then completed 6 individual second interviews with primary participants, 5 field interviews, and reviewed local policies and reports related to the various significant difficulties and ways of meaning-making that had emerged in my data. Based on my analysis of this data, Dr. Kyriakakis, Dr. Yen and I determined that no new categories or sub categories were emerging and I did not need to recruit further.

4.3.5 Sample characteristics

Based on my lived experience as a Black Barbadian and studies on communication in Barbados (Barrow, 1976), I know that we typically use demographic information to make sense of new information. However, this demographic information is integral to understanding participants’ experiences and so I opted not to be too extreme in disguising this content in the quotes I used to present my analysis. I did not collect demographic information about field interviewees as their experiences were not central to the grounded theory. Moreover, they were already a small pool as experts in their field in the Caribbean and could risk repercussions to their livelihood if their participation was known. Therefore, to ensure that I preserved confidentiality, I opted not to provide detailed individual profiles of participants, only
summarized demographic information (Ellis, 2007). I provide these summaries according to the three types of study participants below.

4.3.5.1 Primary participants

There were twenty primary participants who all self-identified as Black Barbadians. Seven identified as male and 13 as female. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 71 years of age, with a mean age of 40 years. I classify my sample as middle class. 18 participants self-identified as middle class. 2 participants identified as working class; yet their education level and job type would place them as middle class. When I probed this, they shared that in light of the constraints on their budget as a result of the country’s economic situation, they did not feel they met the criteria. All primary participants had tertiary level education. 16 lived in suburban parts of the country while 4 lived in urban areas. All participants identified as practising Christianity or Christian-based spirituality. Persons were employed, most recently employed or seeking employment generally in areas of Business and Finance, Information Technology and Communications, Education, Tourism, Art and Culture, and Health and Social Support Services. 8 participants were employed or most recently employed in the private sector, 8 in the public service, and 4 were entrepreneurs.

4.3.5.2 Secondary participants

Of the 10 secondary participants, 4 identified as male and 6 as female. Participants raged in ages from 23-63, with a mean age of 47.2 years. 3 participants identified as working class while the remaining 7 identified as middle class. All but two participants lived in suburban Barbados; these 2 lived in the urban part of the country.

4.3.5.3 Field participants

I conducted interviews with 5 experts of Black Caribbean heritage on each of the following areas: gender roles, relations and policies; the Barbadian economy; our education system; our mental health system; and how Christianity is practised on the island. These individuals have experience working in these areas in decision making capacities and/or have disseminated empirical studies and/or theories on the various areas via reports, publications, and academic and vocational training of others.
4.3.6 Data collection

4.3.6.1 Interviews

4.3.6.1.1 Primary participant phone screenings, and interviews with drawings

I wanted my primary participants to freely provide in-depth details about daily encounters, and events, over their lifetime- their interpretation of these as significant difficulties, their responses, and what their lives looked like as a consequence. I was also conscious that they have the agency to take up cultural practices and interpretations in ways which are uniquely meaningful for them (Ellis & Stam, 2015; Shweder, 1991). Open-ended, semi-structured interviews are an effective means to enable participants to provide this type of data (Burman, 2002; Charmaz, 2014). Using interviews gave me more flexibility to explore information the participant shared that 1) seemed important to their interpretation of or response to significant difficulties in their daily lives; or 2) I may not have anticipated (Burman, 2002; Charmaz, 2014).

Drawings represent a perspective of the world created by the drawer; the drawer’s social position and context, and current relationship to the subject of the drawing all shape the image they create (Leavy, 2009). Using drawings can enable participants to shape and direct the interviews (Leavy, 2009; Liebenberg, 2009) and ensure that researchers learn about things that the participants might have taken for granted (Charmaz, 2014; Liebenberg, 2009). I was conscious that my participants, as adults from the Global South, have been marginalized in the way research on the concept resilience has historically been conducted. I was also conscious that I would be asking them to talk about difficult experiences, and that these experiences may be an ongoing part of their daily lives which they might not have control over. Therefore, offering my participants the option to use drawings to guide their sharing was one way to ensure that they had as much control as they wanted or needed over what they shared in interviews, what was meaningful or important for them to share, and/or what felt safe for them (Charmaz, 2014; Liebenberg, 2009).

I first conducted a phone screening via a confidential telephone line set up for the study with all persons who contacted me about participating in the study. Screenings typically lasted 15 minutes. During these interactions, I provided information about my background- why I was doing study; and what my social positioning was including who my familial, academic, and work networks were, key in relationship building in Barbados. This information is used in social interactions in Barbados to determine an individual’s identity and hence the nature of your greeting to them-it is disrespectful to not acknowledge an acquaintance (Barrow, 1976). Such
information also provides one way to determine the level of respect each individual in the interaction should be accorded (Barrow, 1976). I also provided a description of the study, what participation (including consent) entailed and how the information would be used; queried why they wanted to participate in this type of study; and asked a series of questions to determine eligibility (see Appendix D). Once persons met the eligibility criteria and were still interested in participating, I set up an interview time and location. I also emailed information letters and consent forms ahead of interviews to give participants the opportunity to have any questions or concerns addressed before we met (see Appendix E). For those participants who did not return signed consent forms, I provided hardcopies when we met for interviews and emailed the scanned forms to them. I only retained electronic copies of consent forms.

I conducted audio recorded, in person, individual, semi-structured, open ended, intensive initial interviews based on participants’ drawings with these primary participants. Interviews occurred at private residences and public recreational spaces where the primary participants and I felt their confidentiality and privacy could be maintained. I first completed a brief demographic questionnaire with participants (see Appendix F); based on the information I gathered from doing the first few interviews, I also explicitly asked about religious orientation. Once I had gathered the demographic information, I asked participants to create a drawing that they felt depicted their experiences of the phenomenon. The drawing was not mandatory; 6 of the 20 primary participants opted to do drawings, and they described and interpreted their drawings as the vehicle to providing details of their experiences. For all interviews, I referred to an interview guide to help me ensure we covered the areas of inquiry needed to answer my research questions (see Appendix G). In this way I drew on sensitizing concepts but made room for interviews to be tailored to participants’ unique stories (Adams et al., 2015; Charmaz, 2014). I piloted this interview to gather feedback about my interview style, the clarity of the questions, and the setting for having the interview. I incorporated this feedback into my approach to the subsequent interviews but did not include this interview as data to be analyzed in the study.

As anticipated, these initial individual primary participant interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. Participants all shared about multiple significant difficulties. At the end of each interview, I sought and received each primary participant’s permission to interview them a second time to elucidate codes which might emerge during analysis. In total, I conducted follow up interviews with 10 primary participants. I determined if to conduct follow-up interviews with
participants based on five different criteria: 1) the extent to which the interview data satisfied the aims of the study; 2) if the secondary participant introduced new information in an interview where the primary participant was absent; 3) if I felt I needed more information about or needed to clarify something specific that the participant had shared; if they were emergent themes that I felt I needed more information to adequately understand (that is, for the purpose of theoretical sampling and saturation); and 5) if I wanted to ask participants about on an emergent theme mentioned by other participants, that is engage in member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since I wanted to have access to the meanings, images and emotions which might be embedded in Bajan in a way not possible in Standard English, I signaled to my participants that our conversation was an informal one by conducting the interviews in Bajan.

4.6.3.1.2 Secondary participant interviews

I wanted to gather as many details as possible about the circumstances under which the phenomenon unfolded (Charmaz, 2014). I also knew from my literature review and my personal and professional experience that community is integral to our daily lives. Therefore, I asked each primary participant to connect me, if they so desired, to secondary participants. Primary participants also had the option to participate in these interviews if they so desired; five participants opted to do this. As with primary participant interviews, once persons contacted me, I conducted a phone screening and made provision for them to receive the information letter and return the informed consent form prior to the start of the scheduled interview (see Appendix H & I respectively). I used an open ended, semi-structured, intensive individual interview format and asked each secondary participant to speak specifically to their role in the primary participants’ successful navigation of difficulties (see Appendix J). I used the information from these interviews to flesh out the details provided by primary participants in initial interviews, and during quick, preliminary analysis of these interviews in the field, I identified new areas to 1) raise with primary participants in second interviews and b) seek further information about from other data sources. I also conducted these interviews in Bajan.

4.3.6.1.3 Field participant interviews

During analysis, patterns emerged in primary participants’ data sets about types of social policies and structures, and cultural practices which have shaped what major difficulties they
experienced and how they responded to them successfully (Charmaz, 2014). I, therefore, only started to interview field participants once I had conducted analysis of all primary and secondary participant interviews. I conducted these types of interviews until no new information was emerging about the influential social structures, policies and practices mentioned in the data set (Charmaz, 2014). I prioritized field interviews that directly answered my aims and provided insight on the connections between local policies and practices and neoliberal and colonial ideology in particular. Similar to primary participants, I emailed field interviewees the information letter and informed consent form prior to interviews (see Appendix K, L & M). I also tailored a semi-structured, open-ended individual interview guide to ensure I collected specific contextual details about experiences primary participants had identified (see Appendix N & O). Ultimately, I conducted audio taped interviews with 5 persons who agreed to be interviewed; one in person and four via a voice over internet protocol platform. Given that my field interviewees were considered experts in their field and accorded a level of respect in Barbados and the Caribbean as a consequence, I conducted interviews with experts in Standard English, in keeping with the local communication practices.

4.3.6.2 Field notes of extant texts

In order to understand how neoliberalist and neocolonialist policies possibly shape how my middle class Black Barbadian participants effectively deal with significant difficulties in everyday life, I also took a closer look at extant texts such as local laws, policies, local and international status reports on various issues in Barbados, and religious creeds that seemed to be recurring in primary participants’ accounts as shaping what they interpreted as difficulties or what actions they took in response (Charmaz, 2014). I asked for these texts directly from field participants as well as independently sourced those which the public could readily access. I examined these texts myself and spoke to field participants to determine the authors’ purpose and objectives, the social, cultural, political and historical context within which they were created, and how they shaped peoples’ lives. I also maintained field notes about what field participants shared and what I inferred (instead of making verbatim transcriptions), and used this information to identify details that fleshed out primary participants’ accounts.
4.3.7 Data analysis & methodological decisions

During analysis, I identified patterns in primary participants’ oral accounts which described and explained how they successfully navigate significant difficulties. I used the secondary and field participant interviews to illuminate the conditions under which primary participants interpret events and situations as difficulties and act in accordance with their interpretations. I detail this analytic process next.

4.3.7.1 Transcription

As part of my decolonizing approach, I used four students at the University of the West Indies in Barbados who spoke Bajan to transcribe the audio recordings of the primary and secondary interviews verbatim. This allowed me to preserve the meanings and images embedded in this language and centre participants’ standpoints. We approached transcription as a part of data analysis, that is acknowledged that the transcriber makes decisions about how to represent the content of the interviews, and chooses what about the interview to preserve in print (Bailey, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Sandelowski, 1994; Wilkes, Cummings & Haigh, 2014). I engaged in reflexive exercises with the transcribers to raise awareness about how 1) their race, class and other cultural similarities or differences; and 2) connections between the interviewees stories and their own could impact transcription (Bailey, 2008; MacClean et al., 2004). We discussed their experiences on an ongoing basis. We also sought to achieve some level of standardization of interpretation by collaboratively generating rules to be used to capture the emotional content in the interviews once every transcriber had had the opportunity to transcribe one primary participant interview (Bailey, 2008; MacClean et al., 2004). We started transcription shortly after completing the first primary participant interview. I imported the transcripts into NVivo, which I used to manage the analysis process.

4.3.7.2 Memoing

Within NVivo, I also generated a number of different types of memos to track the various aspects of my decision making process throughout analysis (Charmaz, 2014). While in the field, I created the first type of memo which had two objectives: 1) facilitate my reflection on my standpoint and how I had impacted or had been impacted by the interview process; and 2) track theoretical saturation. I completed one of these memos after each interview. After I left the field
and was focused primarily on data analysis, I created five other types of memos. I created a memo containing my project objectives, epistemological and methodological orientation, and contextual historical, political, social and economic information on Barbados; I referred to this continually to keep my analysis focused and make connections between my analysis and the local context. I also created a memo containing a master list of the names and descriptions and parameters of all codes, the date each code was created, my reasoning behind the code and transcripts which informed the code, as well as notes about if a given code should be explored further or developed into categories. The third type of memo which I created contained notes on participants such as anything I was unclear about or wanted to follow up with them further on. The fourth type of memo documented the steps I took to define or adjust codes; the transcripts which informed my adjustments and why; what the code was adjusted to; and areas to revisit or pursue in more depth. The fifth memo in some ways emerged out of each of these other memos and formed the basis of the final version of my analysis. This memo contained the categories and descriptions where the descriptions now also contained content from the relevant expert interviews and extant texts on Barbados that helped me understand how context and culture shaped the processes and actions participants were describing; and specific details on how a category operated for various types of participants, and to what end.

4.3.7.3 Initial coding: creating concepts

I conducted preliminary, cursory coding of each transcript as part of my memoing in the field. During interviews, I also invited primary participants to discuss their drawing with me. I explored aspects such as imagery, positioning, and use of colour, words and symbols so that we co-constructed an account of what the drawings captured about their experiences. This was a part of my strategy of doing research with participants and not on them, not imposing interpretations but instead centering their meaning-making about what they had created and their relationship to it (Leavy, 2009; Liebenberg, 2009). These accounts formed part of their transcripts. I have not included reproductions of their drawings in this analysis, as some of them proved to be impossible to anonymise. However, the main analysis began once I left Barbados. Known as Initial Coding, this phase required that I study words, lines, segments, and incidents captured in all interview transcripts for actions and processes to generate labels and descriptions of the properties of the code that summarize, categorize and account for each piece of data (Charmaz,
To ensure that my main codes were generated from primary participants, I conducted initial coding on their transcripts first. I then did initial coding of the secondary participant interviews, using them to flesh out or refine existing codes which came up from primary interviews and my description of the properties of these codes (Charmaz, 2014). In order to create a code, I considered what processes and actions were being represented, how they changed, what were their consequences, and what participants said they felt or thought while involved in the process or action (Charmaz, 2014). Where possible, I tried primarily to use participants’ terms to label codes (in vivo codes) to preserve their interpretations, and selected terms that reflected and invoked action as labels (Charmaz, 2014). Where I could not use in vivo codes, I constructed the label for the code using terms that participants had used and turned them into a process or action by adding “ing”. Moreover, I treated all data as problematic from the time I was doing interviews and continued to do so in analysis. Therefore, I looked for what meaning was being implied or assumed to be explicit, and looked to see if I had data that supported that meaning, or if I needed to explore further with participants. This helped me to question especially my own insider perspective as a middle class Black Barbadian. Finally, I used comparative methods to flesh out the properties of the codes, by comparing data that led to one code with other data, or by comparing codes I came up with in later transcripts to data from earlier transcripts, or by noting a code I came up with that offered a different perspective from what my participants shared (Charmaz, 2014).

4.3.7.4 Focused coding: creating categories & making linkages

My objective at this phase was to begin to collapse all codes which I identified in the initial coding phase into broader categories, and begin to identify some sense of how they might fit together. These would be the building blocks of my final theory. In the first part of this analysis phase, as Charmaz (2014) suggests, I used the most significant and/or frequent of these initial codes and accompanying descriptions to see if they could adequately summarize and explain the actions and meanings found in larger sets of data. To achieve this, I compared codes and data with each other to begin to identify and develop broader, most salient categories which interpret the objective or actions or relationship between them, and hence the processes involved in effectively dealing with significant difficulties (Charmaz, 2014). Here, I used my research questions and the theoretical assumptions underpinning them about how reality is socially
constructed as a reference point regarding the broad, basic way to organize my data into the components and structure of my emerging representation of the process. However, I discarded these categories once I saw specifically how the final theory fit together, as I explain later. I also engaged in negative case analysis where I examined the data to see what cases did not fit these broader categories and why, and the implications for the categories I was creating (Charmaz, 2014). Ultimately, I deleted some codes altogether or renamed them or revised the description of their properties as I fit together codes into categories and categories into theory. I refined the names of categories and relationships between them based on how they answered my research questions.

4.3.7.5 Theoretical sampling & saturation and sorting (making linkages)

The other analysis phase involved examining my categories to determine if I had a deep understanding about the properties and dimensions of my categories (saturation), and hence which of the categories making up my emerging theory required that I collect more data to flesh them out. (Charmaz, 2014). As mentioned earlier, I had been using theoretical sampling to track for theoretical saturation from the outset of data collection to shape my decisions during primary, secondary and field participant interviews, and review of extant texts. I then used this data to help guide the way I refined codes, and connected and described properties of categories all throughout the analytic process. However, I did not introduce the information from the field interviews and extant texts into my analysis until I had completed focused coding of all primary and secondary participant interviews. In this way, I ensured that any given category emerged from primary and to a lesser extent the secondary participant data. I used the data from field interviewees and texts to provide detailed context to help describe and explain those categories. Based on how this information shaped my understanding of these categories, I also utilized negative case analysis to further refine categories and their properties. Consequently, I was able to create some new broad categories and identify associated dimensions. I also omitted some significant difficulties and ways of responding which no longer fit these emergent categories.

During this phase of analysis, I also focused on how the data answered the various research questions for each participant. I examined participants’ accounts, looking at commonalities and exceptions. In so doing, I got a clear idea of significant difficulties for each individual participant, how they responded and what their lives looked like as a consequence. To determine
if to keep or create a code or category, or how to describe properties of codes and categories, I considered how that code or category related back to the difficulties the participant experienced, how they made meaning of it or how they acted in response. This helped me to clarify relationships between emerging categories, saturate the properties of these categories and distinguish which properties belonged to which code or category.

As a result, I was able to determine which categories and subcategories I needed more data on. To obtain this data I conducted second interviews with participants who had not yet had second interviews but who had provided data relating to these categories. Since no new categories emerged during this set of data collection, I stopped collecting data. The final outcome of this process of seeking theoretical saturation was that I developed more generalizable, abstract categories and tentative explanations of analytic links between categories (Charmaz, 2014).

4.3.7.6 Creating the theory

The final stage of analysis was diagramming my theory, focusing on how the various major categories were connected. I sorted my memos and categories to create a visual representation of how the categories were linked together to help form one account of how the Black Barbadians in my study effectively navigated significant difficulties in their daily lives (Charmaz, 2014). Since I was sorting from the time I began to create categories, by this final analysis phase I was refining and reorganizing relationships that were already evident to me. In addition, I noticed early in my focused coding that although the experiences were disparate, all participants shared one overarching fundamental perspective of their experience within which there was a range of tacit meanings (Charmaz, 2008). Some participants explicitly articulated this and I interpreted the same perspective based on the similarities to how other’ described their experiences. Consequently, I was able to see how the various categories fit together. I moved back and forth between the emerging theory and participants’ accounts to ensure that the theory adequately reflected their experiences.

4.3.8 Ensuring transferability, credibility, trustworthiness and dependability

Lincoln & Guba, (1985) recommend a number of strategies that I utilized in order to 1) understand the context in which the theory of resilience I co-constructed with participants
occurred; 2) help others to trace the steps I used to arrive at this account of the phenomenon; and
3) account for my own positionality in the generation of this representation of the concept
“resilience”. In this section, I describe how I used these strategies, and what they each allowed
me to accomplish towards answering my research questions and generating the grounded theory.

4.3.8.1 Triangulation of sources

I sought to gather data that would illuminate how participants invoke ideas, practices and
accounts from the local and wider cultures they are a part of (Charmaz, 2014). However, I do not
believe that we merely take up these ideas, practices and accounts in totality; I expected that
participants would adapt them to suit various conditions and according to their varying purposes
(Charmaz, 2014; Ellis & Stam, 2015). Hence, I was conscious that there would be no guarantee
that my participants’ views were typical and representative of Black Barbadians on a whole
(Maxwell, 1996). I was also conscious that I needed to gather enough details to give me as
adequate a picture as possible about the phenomenon in order to create a complete explanation of
it (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, to enable me to make credible claims about how the phenomenon
occurs and enhance the transferability of my conceptualization, I triangulated data collection
sources (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As I outlined in the previous section on data
collection, I primarily used interviews incorporating drawings with primary participants;
interviews only with secondary and field participants, and field notes about my examination of
extant texts.

4.3.8.2 Reflexivity

I attended to reflexivity in a number of ways (including using decolonizing strategies), at
various points in the research process. First, I sought to acknowledge and address how my
preconceptions might influence the data I collected prior to entering the field (Adams et al.,
2015). Acting on the guidance of my committee member Dr. Sylvain, I started a reflexive journal
of how I defined key concepts in my research questions such as “successful” and “significant
difficulties” and came up with two definitions of how I thought Black Barbadians successfully
get through challenges in life. I acknowledged that these definitions were grounded in my own
life experiences, graduate and post-graduate training in mental health which I had received from
academic and funding agencies in the Global North (the U.S specifically), and my work with persons of predominantly Black Caribbean heritage.

I utilized a number of reflexive strategies to recognize and account for my preconceptions once I started data collection. In my reflexive memos after each interview, I identified and challenged my preconceptions as well as considered how participant’s perceptions of me and my perceptions of them shaped the content and direction of our conversations and my analysis in the field (Charmaz, 2014). In particular, I reflected on how our shared status as middle class Black Barbadians shaped our interactions. For example, it was only after my 7th participant spoke of her decision to not use social support services that I began asking participants explicitly about their use of support services to deal with difficulties; I had taken it for granted that middle class Barbados do not utilize social support services. During my analysis, I compared my definitions of “success” and “significant difficulties” frequently to my coding to ensure that I was not imposing definitions that were not being used by participants (Charmaz, 2014). In addition, because Barbados is a closely knit society, I was aware of bits of some participants’ stories. I had identified ways to address this from reading articles on conducting research in similar settings (Ellis, 2007), and discussions with my committee member Dr. Kyriakakis with whom I had previously conducted research in Barbados. To counter the influence of this outside knowledge, whenever I encountered such participants, I made a concerted effort to only ask these participants about information they had raised in the interview or which I was asking everyone else, even when I already knew the answer, like their occupation.

I also attended to how to ethically utilize my skills as a U.S-trained psychotherapist during interviews. I had begun this reflection in previous research projects and drew on the recommendations of those few authors who have written about how psychotherapists can manage ethical decision making when collecting data. Haverkamp (2005) notes that participants have expectations that counsellors come with skills and the intention to use their knowledge in emotion, adjustment and relationship to protect them. Conversely, Haverkamp (2005) argues, because of our training to 1) gain trust and facilitate disclosure; 2) recognize signs of distress and discomfort; and 3) anticipate vulnerability that might accompany highly emotional experiences, psychotherapists in particular need to be aware of power, influence, coercion and manipulation, and crossing the boundary from pursuing inquiry to providing therapy. I have found that Black Caribbean persons expect that I will use these professional skills in our personal interactions.
With this in mind, I undertook my ethical decision-making on a case by case basis in the field; I went in aware of certain risks and put plans in place. My main strategy was to treat consent as an ongoing, mutually negotiated process rather than a single event; this was already a part of my decolonial approach. I tried to reflect this in the wording of my informed consent document. I used the phone screenings to flag instances where persons misunderstood my role. I also addressed potential confusion about my role in the field by offering all persons a resource sheet which included contact information for psychosocial services.

4.3.8.3 Trustworthiness checks

In the spirit of decolonizing my methodology, it was important that the local Barbadian community had the power to determine that my representation of the phenomenon was adequate and accurate. I used two types of member checking to assess the trustworthiness of my analysis.

4.3.8.3.1 Member checking with participants

I conducted these checks at various points throughout the research process. I had all interested primary, secondary and field interviewees review their transcripts to ensure that they found them to be accurate representations of what they shared and thus credible, and that they were comfortable with what was being shared (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also asked all primary participants to comment on a summary of findings. I used the second interviews as member checking with those fourteen participants who had not yet had one. For those six who had already completed second interviews, I asked them to comment on the adequacy and accuracy of a summary of the findings via email. Finally, I asked the local experts to comment on the extent to which the findings seemed applicable within their area of expertise.

4.3.8.3.2 Member checking with my research team

I also conducted member checking with one of my Barbadian research assistants, Dominique Harris, who had transcribed half of the interviews. I provided her with my memos and structured her feedback to establish credibility, neutrality, applicability and consistency in a number of ways at each phase of the data analysis process. Through our discussion at the initial phase I sought to determine the extent to which I could justify the codes I had/was keeping/was deleting. This helped me to think about the data in new ways as well as increased my confidence
of my codes and descriptions. I used her feedback at the end of the focused phase to assist with theoretical sampling and saturation. I was able to identify where I might need to compare codes to better understand what process was being described, what type of contextual information I needed to include and what categories I might need to follow up on with participants. Prior to building the theory, I again had Dominique review my summary of findings. For constructs that she questioned, I returned to my data and reviewed how they needed to be revised. Finally, I had her use the theory to see if she could see it as applicable to all participants in the study whose transcripts she had created.

4.3.8.3.3 Audit trail

The final strategy I used was to create an audit trail so that others can check the appropriateness of my interpretations, and the process through which I arrived at them to establish that the inquiry was dependable and the findings confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). My physical audit trail consists of products such as audio recorded interviews, semi-structured interview schedules, field notes, transcripts and memos. As part of the audit trail, I had ongoing meetings with Dr. Kyriakakis and Dr. Yen to discuss my methodological decisions and review the products of my analysis. These meetings helped me to fully think through my decisions, and determine which were justifiable or needed revision.

Consequently, I was able to create a theory of how the middle class Black Barbadians in my study successfully get through significant difficulties in their everyday lives. I outline the final categories constituting the theory and the relationships between them in my next chapter.
5 Analysis Part I
5.1 A Note on Organization of the Analysis

My analysis is divided into three chapters, aligning with the three broad constructs constituting the theory *bein’ uh work in progress*. The constructs are presented in the order in which the process of *Bein’ uh work in progress* would flow. Therefore, in the first part (Chapter five), I provide a brief overview of the theory and then I detail the first construct, *de ting dat get me*, which speaks to the three significant difficulties which participants raised. In the second part (Chapter six), I illustrate the second construct, *wha’ yuh’s do?* which is about how participants respond to these difficulties. In the third and final part of the analysis (Chapter seven), I present the third construct, *work in progress*, which captures what participants’ lives look like as a result of how they are dealing with these difficulties.

In labelling the constructs, themes and subthemes, as much as was possible, I preserved phrases and terms which a participant used to describe or explain his/her experiences and which similarly captured what other participants had shared. In this way, I sought to preserve the meanings, images, and emotions within Bajan which might not be represented in Standard English. This also helped me to avoid constructing a theory which reflected my imposed interpretation of what participants were sharing. The label for the three main constructs in particular are common expressions used by Barbadians and were used by participants in the study. I construct my analysis by using quotes mainly from interviews with primary participants; I intertwine quotes from secondary and field interviews as well as data from reports on Barbados in relevant areas to support my interpretation of primary participants’ accounts of their experiences of *bein’ uh work in progress*.

5.2 Overview of Theory Bein’ uh Work in progress

Through my constructivist GTM analysis, I identified a) what participants consider to be significant difficulties in their daily lives; b) what knowledge they draw on to make meaning of their circumstances and respond to them; c) and what they understood successful navigation of difficulties to entail. One underlying notion threaded these all together: participants predominantly explained that for them, resilience was an ongoing, non-linear process in which they saw their experiences of effectively dealing with the significant difficulties in their daily lives as *Bein’ uh work in progress* (See Fig 1.).
THEORY OF MIDDLE CLASS BLACK BARBADIAN RESILIENCE: Bein’ uh work in progress

**De Ting Dat Really Get Me**
- Tryin tuh mel a livin:
  - Gettin an education
  - Pursuing interests/talents
  - Encountering roadblocks in emigrating
  - Encountering unfair working conditions
- Dealing with harmful gender roles:
  - Stigma in: Home and family life
  - Intimate partner disrespect & violence
  - Sexual objectification in workplace
- Encountering challenges to understanding/experience of community:
  - Feeling betrayed & abandoned
  - Crab n bucket mentality
  - Losing sense of who you are due to loss

**Wha’ Yuh’s Do?**
- Using spirituality:
  - Prayin for help
  - Puttin tings in God’s hands
  - Pushin cross barriers
- Drawing on Mental health concepts/practices:
  - Using mental health terms
  - Remoaning self from situation
  - Goin tuh counsellin
  - Using mental health practices in conjunction with a spiritual response

**Work ‘n Progress**
- Feeling negative emotions less intensely
- Seeing God at work
- Changing the dynamics of difficult situations
- Responding in an inconsistent manner
- Continuously facing difficult contextual dynamics

**Figure 1 Theory of Middle Class Black Barbadian Resilience: Bein’ uh work in progress**

*Bein’ uh work in progress* is an overarching process grounded in the Barbadian context and contingent on specific individual, historic, economic, and social conditions. The theory *Bein’ uh work in progress* consists of three main, interrelated constructs: *de ting dat really get me, wha yuh’s do?*, and *work in progress*. I describe these briefly here. While I present the model in a linear fashion, it is by no means an indication that the process being outlined is in itself linear. This linear presentation is merely to facilitate clarity for the reader.

The first construct, *de ting dat really get me* reflects participants’ sense of reaching a breaking point with three main difficulties: *tryin tuh mel uh livin*; dealing with harmful gender roles, and encountering challenges to understanding and experience of community. These difficulties appear to be shaped by Barbados’ position as a post-colonial society shaped by neocolonial, and neoliberal forces, and the hybrid way of living culturally created as a result of Africans being unwillingly transplanted to a small island by persons from British society.

The second construct, *wha’ yuh’s do?* speaks to participants’ sense of being overwhelmed by the various difficulties and the hybridized approach they take to 1) understand the dynamics...
of the situation and the implications for them; and 2) determine their course of action in response. For all participants, the process of responding to these challenges seem to be constituted of drawing on and acting in accordance with Christian-based spiritual beliefs and practices; mental health concepts and practices; and perspectives of their community, albeit to varying degrees. Specifically, they pray, put things in God’s hands, push across barriers, see a counsellor, remove themselves from the situation, co-construct the situation they were going through as difficult but not insurmountable with their communities, and use tangible resources offered by their communities.

The final construct in the theory, *work in progress*, was the most common way participants summarized what their lives look like as a result of the actions they have been taking. Through their use of the above actions over time, all participants to some degree, report that they have begun to see five key changes in their daily lives. These changes reflect what the various approaches convey about how life should unfold and so they view these changes as indicative of them successfully navigating difficulties. These changes are:

1. their emotional response is less intense and pervasive although
2. their efforts to manage their emotions are not as consistent as they could be;
3. they are seeing God at work in their lives;
4. they are able to act to change some dynamics of difficulty for the benefit of others, although
5. they have not been able to eliminate the difficulty for themselves or others since the circumstances giving rise to difficulties were a complex feature of their context.

Participants, therefore, see this combination of features in their daily lives as them successfully dealing with these difficulties.

*Bein’ uh work in progress* is an ongoing process which allows participants to simultaneously acknowledge their growth thus far, recognize what is in their control and what is not in their control, and commit to making all possible improvements in how they deal with the difficulties over time. Understanding their lived experiences as *Bein’ uh work in progress* allows them to simultaneously live with: 1) a sense of acceptance of those circumstances in their daily lives giving rise to difficulties that are out of their control; and 2) hope that time and their actions will eventually yield greater success for themselves and others in dealing with these circumstances.

This conceptualization allows participants to have the awareness that they can only do what they
can, and they should do what they can consistently, but not beat up themselves about what they cannot. This understanding enables them to look at time as on a continuum, and hence successfully dealing with difficulties on a continuum, to value where they are now without being fixated on the end point. By conceptualizing their experiences of successfully dealing with difficulties as an ongoing process of bein’ uh work in progress, participants enable themselves to remember that they should not stop problematizing these circumstances as giving rise to difficulties for themselves and others, but instead continue to work within their sphere of power to make the changes to those circumstances they have the capacity to, and use their strategies more consistently. Seeing their experiences as Bein’ uh work in progress helps participants to enact their belief that God is ultimately the one to resolve all issues and will do so in time-their task is to not despair and be ready to act, in the appointed way, at the appointed time to change the dynamics of difficulties for the benefit of their community and hence themselves. Persons successfully navigated difficulties, therefore, by locating their lived experiences within their understanding and experience of spirituality and community. Therefore, the theory of Bein’ uh work in progress is a contextually and culturally situated conceptualization of the phenomenon.

5.3 De Ting dat Really get Me: 3 Difficulties in Daily Life

Participants interpreted three broad types of circumstances which were characteristic of their everyday lives as playing out as difficulties for them. In this first section, I detail these circumstances, incorporating participants’ emotional reactions that they used as signals that they were experiencing the situation as a difficulty, and perceptions of how these circumstances hindered their lives, and provide the context within which these experiences of difficulty emerged.

5.3.1 Difficulty 1: Tryin’ Tuh Mek uh Livin

Tryin’ tuh mek uh livin is a term commonly used by Barbadians to refer to struggles to provide financially for ourselves and/or our families. According to participants, as members/aspiring members of the middle class, they had certain expectations of themselves and/or the society had certain expectations of them with regard to what constituted mekkin uh livin’. Participants in their 20’s, 30’s and 40’s were expected to enter the work force around age 21 positioned to acquire assets like a house, land and vehicle, assist their parents financially, and
care for their own children. The older participants were expected to enter the work force as early as age 13 and no later than age 18 to contribute financially to care of family members such as younger siblings and/or parents. However, participants expressed that, in trying to meet these expectations, they experienced challenges, specifically in the post-independence period (1966-)

and again during the last 2 decades. This was by far the most prominent difficulty participants reported and illustrates how neocolonialism and neoliberalism are playing out in participants’ lived experience. Not only has mekkin uh livin’’ by routes of gettin’ an education, pursuing interest/talents as careers, and migrating been ineffective, persons have also been encountering poor working conditions. I describe these four challenges to mekkin uh livin’’ below.

5.3.1.1 Gettin’ an education

Many participants indicated that the phrase gettin’ an education has historically been used by Black Barbadians explicitly to refer to obtaining academic qualifications that enable them to have professions in teaching, policing, the civil service, law, medicine and finance, and which in turn enabled them to mek uh livin’. These were all sectors which the post-independence economy had been built upon or facilitated (see Welch, 2015). Despite having the opportunity for social mobilization via gettin’ an education, however, older participants indicated that the process was nevertheless difficult for them. These specific participants entered the school system before universal access to primary and secondary school, regardless of academic ability, was fully implemented (MEYC, 2000). White Barbadians still made up the bulk of the student body and teaching staff at this time and so it makes sense that participants described the school system at this time as segregated by race and class. Emily explains how poor Black Barbadians at this time found ways to raise the fees required to educate their children at the primary level but then encountered challenges in educating them past this because their poverty was used against them in a different way:

Emily: I was sent to take exams at those [secondary] schools but there were not like a general entrance exam as we have today. They were umm, (.) so if you were (.) I would think in the poverty line or below the poverty line you could not afford to pay the fee although the fee was very small. And many people would raise am-m, (.) stock what we call stock like sheep and goats and that sort of thing and then use the money say to send their children to school. But um-m. I did take exams for those schools but it was for the bursary (.) and the bursary (.) at the time, I’m not sure exactly what happened, you had an interview after the exam. So if you passed you went to the interview and you could
fail the interview. You could fail the interview because there were questions that were asked (.) that would put you in a certain bracket.

I: Yeah. Economic bracket you mean?
Emily: Economic bracket. So if you couldn’t say well you had am-m, say bacon and eggs for breakfast and you said you had bakes-s-s. You would not have been (.)

I: Yeah. Considered?

Emily: Considered… And they were others who were not as bright as I was who got in. Who passed, I don’t know, but there again (.) they, am-m, (..) there, (..) I would think it was um-m a background thing because at that time it was persons whose father was a policeman and their mother was a nurse and things like that and those children had benefit of that. Or-r-r (high pitch voice) they might have known like what an exam would be like, who knows, I don’t know. At the time I was just brought, taken up and thrown into this situation and I couldn’t really make head nor tail of what was going on.

This interview referenced by Emily was abolished in 1959 and children gained entrance to these secondary schools based on scores in a standardized exam alone (MEYC, 2000). However, even then, White Baradians still mainly made up the majority of principals, teaching staff and students at the older secondary schools (Welch, 2015). Jacko explains that he was able to continue his education until age 16 because his exam scores gained him entrance to one of these secondary schools. However, according to him, he and other Black Baradians were treated differently from White Baradians by their primarily White teachers at secondary school:

Jacko: It it might not be that conscious but I but I know I recognised that. And and because again as I said, you know growing up in Barbados in the 70s and you saw the background that I came from, the village life I came from. There there’s not a lot that when you (-) when I walked into [a prestigious secondary school] that makes that good. There was a lot of people like me (-) that like me. And (-) but we saw the differences at school. The [whites and upper class] and the (-) ya know they got treated differently. Ya know and and in what ways were the teachers responding to them.

According to participants, this segregation in the school system pervaded right through to their ability to leave school and enter the workforce in some sectors of the economy still, namely businesses and banking institutions. These sectors were the sectors still owned and controlled by the White upper class in Barbados (see Barrow, 1983; Beckles, 1989). Jacko explains that although gaining entrance to a prestigious secondary school ultimately positioned him for a better paying job, his chances for mekkin uh livin’ in banking and the private sector were still jeopardized without the right socioeconomic connections:
Jacko: Right, because you had to to know people to get in (-) but then banks were were gunna hire the brightest and the best of them. Uh I ended up playing cricket when I left high school for a bank. Again social economics is is is something else...a lot of it in Barbadian society and it still is to a certain degree even though it’s levelled out was who you know.

As the post-independence national educational and social polices started to have an impact (see MEYC, 2000; Welsh, 2015), battling racism and classism in an effort to get an education was not a difficulty participants educated in the last 3-4 decades reported having to contend with. However, a new set of difficulties emerged for these middle class Black Barbadian participants; obtaining and maintaining jobs in the sectors upon which the post-independence economy had been built on the advice of multilateral financial institutions and other development agencies is no longer a guarantee after gettin’ an education. These participants were experiencing difficulties around the time that the Barbados’ economy was entering recession due to the combined impact of the 2008 global economic crisis originating in the U.S; decisions by the WTO 2004 to end Barbados’ preferential access to European markets for its sugar; and the OECD’s decision to prevent Barbados from offering tax concessions to those in the international business sector (Hinds & Stephen, 2017; MFEA, 2014; SALISES, 2012). Participants describe experiences which reflect how these neoliberal and neocolonial policies were playing out in their lives. For example, Aria spoke of easily getting a job in business and finance after completing the requisite tertiary education 20 years ago. However, Josh shares how difficult it was for his peers a decade later to secure a job in that same field:

Josh: I guess in Barbados everyone gets caught up in terms of being successful you have to be a doctor, a lawyer, a accountant like the standard things...So I would never forget, there was I time I was, we were doing shopping for Christmas, me and my friends, and we pass a girl who got upper seconds and she was working at Hallmark wrapping gifts. So we was like, cuz she’s like a really smart girl like wuh happen, she’s like ‘she cain get a job’.

Participants shared that difficulty finding a job in your field of study was the experience across the board for all recent university graduates. Terri describes how the fallout of following this established path of gettin’ an education played out, in a very demotivating manner, on a daily basis in her life. She shared that this experience was common among her peers at the time:

Terri: yeah and I mean I think I had the experience that almost every recent university graduate had right where you open up the phonebook and look for companies where you send CV’s to them right. Of course I had that. So literally for months you’re coming home
from wherever you go and like ever week you come home like there is a certain amount of rejection letters (humorless laugh) that's not like good for the ego (humorless laugh) rite.

However, even some persons who had already started out in careers in these sectors were not exempt from employment difficulties. Michelle is an example of the dire challenges felt recently to mek uh livin from these traditional careers:

I: How long had you been in private practice?

Michelle: Umm I was in private practice from around say [early 2000s]?

I: Right. And so it was failing all that time or something shifted?

Michelle: No it was actually doing, well and growing to a point um until whichever year it was that somebody dropped de word recession in the atmosphere and once that was dropped then people started to um be more conservative in how they spent their money and um

I: (-) Including going to the doctor?

Michelle: Including going to the doctor.

Michelle goes on to describe how this loss of her path in life eroded her self-confidence:

Michelle: And with that came all of the, um failure everybody else was getting it done while you couldn’t get it done and. () That was the emotional aspect of it but there was the financial aspect of it too because all of the use of the funds to keep it going and then there was the emotional aspect to being broke there as well. Um so between all of that it was, kind of crushing. (...) There was-I didn’t feel capable yeah capable (speaking quietly) of going on, of just being what I had spent a whole lot of time of my life um training training to do and to be essentially so that was a, I think that was also at the point when I guess I I think the whole suicidal aspect that would have contributed significantly to that from the I guess the monetary and de failure aspect of it all. So yeah that was it.

5.3.1.2 Pursuing interest/talents as careers

The second challenge to mekin uh livin ’’ for several participants relates to them pursuing interest/talents as careers which they felt enabled them to contribute to the development of the country but which seemed to be incongruent with local employers needs or required infrastructure which was not provided. This notion of pursuing interests and talents as careers echo the values expressed in the UNESCO-informed policies guiding education between 1995-2000 when these participants would have been students- being innovative, learning what
interests you, being a life long learner, and being conscious of your responsibility to your country (MEYC, 2001; UNESCO, 2006). Some of these participants, like Janice, earned degrees in the traditional economic sectors but then decided to pursue their talents later. Here Janice explains how her initial career choice was shaped by the neocolonial influences on the education system and economy and how her thinking evolved with exposure to more neoliberal values:

Janice: Then I was in this career part that I was not happy with and I was just really feeling like I was not smart enough or (stupse) I dunno I whatever it was I I switched it in my head to I don’t care anyway. Right?

I: Why had you gotten into (-) why had you chosen that [profession]?

Janice: It was a process of elimination coming out of a f-failed school system I think. It’s a long set of story um that I rationalise about how you get shunted into one thing and one thing and one thing from an early age that you-u-u need to almost get off the wheel to say wait this is what I want to do or this is not what I want to do…. And of course post-colonial us means um doctor, lawyer, bank manager...Yeah, right, well, so exactly so nobody’s going to say well you have a clear gift or talent for (. art so you should be an artist.

However, participants who spoke of pursuing interests/talents as their career noted that this choice brought its own challenges. In line with the values of the IDB, EU and UNESCO, the Barbadian government during this time expanded gettin’ an education to allow for government-funded tertiary level academic training in areas such as psychology, the arts, sports, communications and information technology (MEYC, 2001). Yet, one concern which the MEHD & ML (2010) shared upon analysis of this time period was that there was a disconnect between what employers’ indicated were their skill needs and what jobs the education system was preparing students to take up. Indeed, participants seeking jobs following this time period reported that they struggled to find work upon graduation in these new fields because employers were not hiring for those particular skills sets. As Natalie shares, those organizations which would most benefit from her expertise were unwilling to employ her to provide these services:

Natalie: It could be because it’s a communications area, it's a media related area. Barbados is a bit slow realizing that every single entity needs some sort of media. People are realizing it slowly now because of de importance of having ah website. Having social media platforms and stuff like that but you still need relations as well. So people always ask where would you find work but de truth is that every single entity needs that. Need some kind of (. brand awareness, needs some kind of communication. If you are not on the web you don't exist practically and you need content creators, you need people like that
right. So I do get asked that question a lot but de truth is it's like there is a need for it but people don’t want to pay.

Neoliberal and neocolonial forces also played out in the lives of participants who were entrepreneurs. Recall that the MEHD & ML (2010) noted that small business owners lacked the skills needed to manage a small business and the finances needed to acquire those skills. Recall also that the IMF, as a condition of the 1990-1991 structural adjustment program had required the Barbadian government to reduce its involvement in the economy including practices such as regulating commercial banks, and securing funding for programs such as those supporting small and medium sized business (Hinds & Stephen, 2017). In this same post-1990-time period, the commercial banks had drastically reduced the funding they made available domestically (Hinds & Stephen, 2017). These conditions of aid, shaped by neoliberal policies, seemed to adversely shape participants’ capacity to *mek uh livin*’. Andre describes realizing that more experienced artists did not have a local model he could follow to become an entrepreneur in his area:

Andre: Am and then there is the there was the (...) there were a lot of artists here not many of them very very few of them even now approach the business as a business so they were not trying to run it as a business so when I try to explain this to like some of the older artists to try to get some input because I assume they know what to do they were like uhh ‘no [create the product]an hope for the best’. WHAT?! (laughter) nah (laughs) I can’t, I can’t do tha dey ya I can’t handle tha!

**5.3.1.3 Encountering unfair working conditions**

A third challenge to *mekkin uh livin’*’ related to *encountering unfair working conditions*. Some participants in sectors such as retail and tourism shared experiences where they felt that this treatment was due to their race or social class. These sectors were controlled by local White Barbadian elites and White investors from the Global North respectively (Barrow, 1983; Beckles, 1989). Jacko outlines how, at his first job in retail during the 1970’s, his White coworkers were advanced ahead of him even though he was more academically qualified and experienced.

Jacko: And I was working for [this major retail store]. The system there was I (-) you stayed at the bottom level, you would be working (-) I had a supervisor who work there (-) he was (-) he had about 30 something years in (-) by the time I worked there. He’s still only a supervisor. Then the directors and and these people’s sons go off, come back from college with no experience and then they’re the manager.
I: (-) And they’re (-) the owners were what? In terms of race or class?

Jacko: (-) White. White...ya know I used to be so angry at work because I saw all a that happening, the dynamics of the whites and the social (-) well there weren’t a lot of social class there. Because they were whites that were at the lower economic end but they got treated better. And the ones that were higher-

I: (-) There were whites at the lower end of the socioeconomic class but they got treated (-) what we call the Bajan red legs or what have you.

Jacko: (-) Yup ecky-beckys. Yup, a lot of them in St. John were working at (-) ya know they got taken care of anyway. And there were supervisory positions. I mean that that was a microcosm of Barbados, [that retail store in Bridgetown]. But it opened my eyes,

According to participants like Ann, while not so blatant, racist practices were still a feature of her workplace in the tourism sector in the last decade:

Ann: I wasn’t comfortable in the environment um there was a lot of shouting and I came across racism, the owners were white owners, and everybody else employed it was mostly black people but (-) the rules that they had laid out and the way that they treated staff okay example they would say ‘okay this is your schedule’ so I come to work at these times every day from 6 or whatever till it closes fine. Um ya know they have a contract ya sign it ya know but it’s not in the contract there’s nothing in the contract that states if they call you to work um if you’re supposed to come in to work and it’s like the night is slow or they realise they’re not a lot of guests on that night they tell you oh don’t worry to come. So I start work at 6 and they call you at 5:30 and I’m already on the premises

I: (-)En route.

Ann: No I was actually on the premises and they’re calling my cell phone even though I’ve punched in and said ‘oh no we don’t need you to come in today it’s not it’s not busy’ or sometimes I’d be on the bus coming down and they do that so I had to like enquire about it and it seems like it’s a normal thing but it’s not in my contract so I know you’re breaching the contract.

Other participants spoke of working in organizations owned or managed by Black Barbadians where they felt they were being overworked, and/or treated as expendable in some way. Fanon (1963) famously observes that some of those whose ancestors were formerly colonized seek to get the same oppressive power over their compatriots as the European colonizers had over them. Jo Jo’s discussion of how she felt that her role in the organization was devalued by an incompetent but oppressive boss to the point that she ended up being required to perform other jobs in lieu of what she was hired to do seems to bear out Fanon’s observation:
Jo Jo: What happens is the bosses in my field here in Barbados believe that they are everything, they are in charge of the (-) their kingdom. And what happens is anything that happens in their kingdom they’re responsible for. They don’t know all the answers but they are they head of the kingdom so automatically they’re omnipotent. And they’ll tell you things that (.) they did not learn the way you have learnt it. So they have wrong information on how to proceed. So what happens is a lot of times you have this um professional disqualification of you skills. And when you have been in the profession for as long as I have been, it is extremely disheartening to go to work every day to have to justify why you are there, to tell people who have hired you what you’re supposed to be doing. And then to swat the ignorance that they expect you to do.

Regardless of the ownership, participants did not feel empowered to advocate against this unfair treatment although they knew it was their legal right to do so. For example, Ann-Marie shares an instance where she felt trusting her gut about how her employer might penalize her for acting on her rights worked out to her benefit:

Anne-Marie: Even even (-) I got this promotion last year September. In August I had the interview and I remember leading up to the interview um my back started to hurt, like back and ribs. It got so bad I had to go get an x-ray. I didn’t not even tell my manager what I was going for cause I’m thinking what if they think ya know this girl is gunna get sick, if we promote her now we’re gunna have to replace her or she won’t be (-) ya know a lot of sick days and stuff out. I know by law they can’t not give it to (-) give me a promotion because of x y z. But (.) they could. (laugh) They could they could find a way. And and later on like my manager was talking to me about another supervisor, my equivalent in one of the other offices. And she was there long before me. She almost did not get her promotion because of (-) they said she’s out sick too often.

I: Wow. So so it’s not just (-) it’s not just you being paranoid.

Ann-Marie: It’s not. There is there is some sorta, there is some sorta

I: (-) There is a history, a precedence with them.

Ann-Marie: There is some sort of merit to it.

Others like Natalie felt that their colleagues’ responses to unfair treatment undermined any bargaining power they might have had:

Natalie: What made it bad fuh me to is that there was also another assistant who used ta never stand up for herself. So it would make me look bad.
According to participants this acceptance of unfair work conditions in the tourism sector specifically was underpinned by persons’ experience that the White, foreign hotel owners and patrons wielded greater power than local Black employees:

Ann: I think they knew what they were doing was not right but a lot of the a lot of the employees would not complain they would complain among themselves but I don’t think anyone ever went in because (.) I’m not sure if the mentality was because they were white and we were black and like it’s like ya know you’re going to the labor department and you know you will not win. I think it was that mentality.

I: Right. Because they were white they would who would win out at the end. They felt the employees felt that because their employers were white, they would come out the winners at the end.

Ann: Yeah. So nobody. Correct. So nobody ever like decided to go and like complain or or call anybody for them so you either (-) most people just ended up leaving ’cause I was working and every week somebody just left just left left left left left. And so after 6 months I decided this is not for me and I left, and back to square 1 again making no money.

5.3.1.4 Encountering roadblocks in emigrating tuh mek a livin

This is the final challenge to mekkih a h livin which several participants spoke. Global North countries such as the U.S, U.K and Canada, and countries in the Caribbean whose economies were booming due to large capital investments by persons in the Global North were unreceptive to participants immigrating for work. The perception underlying neocolonial policies that life in Barbados was so backward played out in how citizens from host countries interacted with participants seeking to immigrate. Janice recounts being encouraged to engage in unethical practices to circumvent these immigration laws in the U.K:

Janice: but am when I left when the programme was over and I left I remember (.) really thinking how can I say and what would I do to stay. And the director of the school was like well you could (-) the easiest thing is probably just to get married to somebody like one of your gay friends or something and just stay because it’s so much easier than waiting for the roll and then having the company work through the papers because there’s always somebody in the wings that’s easier to do dah. So I was what? Get married? Are you crazy? So I thought about all the other things. Agents then said the same thing to me, said I would like to sign you but you should probably try and find a way to be a permeant resident. And I was like okay. And then after thinking about it for a long time I said I’m going to go home guys.

In this area as well, Blacks seemed to have also taken up the oppressive attitudes of their colonizers. Jacko shares how he was constantly met with a barrage of racist slurs whenever he
encountered Black persons in another Caribbean country; this country had a booming economy due to capital investments from the U.K and U.S, and is in fact still colonized by the U.K to date:

Jacko: But the funny thing is I walked into racism tripled [over there], triple, quadripple. You went to (-) from a 10% white with a lot of control to 60 40, 55 45, whatever you want to call it. Uh one as a black person and one as West Indians we got treated really badly. Ya know in in the 80s when I went we got treated really badly. We were cursed left right and centre by Black persons from this country. We got (-) I got (-) well not me specifically but us as they used to call us “jump ups” which was a derogatory name for West Indies… ‘you’s jump ups, go back on your banana boat’. Ya know ‘where ya come from, go back to your huts’. Black [people from this country] are very affluent. They had this anti-West Indian thing.

Other participants shared experiences within the context of receiving countries like the U.K with whom Barbados experienced a neocolonial relationship. For example, Rhea shares being clearly made to understand that while she could spend money to study in the U.K, she would not be afforded the opportunity to seek employment there:

I: I mean did you (-) why (-) so I guess my question is why did you come back to Barbados then after your degree as opposed to looking for employment in in in in the UK.

Rhea: Well, because I had to get out of de peoples’ country. But I did

I: (-) Right yeah. They are not immigrant friendly.

Rhea: Well no because the thing is with dese countries when you are an international applying into their country am if they want to hire you they have to send this letter to some governing body I not too sure which one or just the state government I don’t know saying that there is no viable am local candidate available. That’s what you have to hire out and most of de most of de time dat’s not de case ya know so I think a lot of them stray away from dealing with that. So I did- when I finished my degree- I finished in like September? and I stayed till December like I let my visa run out. Well I came back obviously before but I let- de time I stayed there and I applied and applied and applied but just nothing. So then I had to leave or not I would violate my visa and that’s unnecessary. So it wasn’t that I wanted to leave cause now I did not want to but I had to.

5.3.1.5 Summary of difficulty 1

Tryin tuh mek ah livin, particularly via routes persons typically used to achieve or maintain middle class status, is the major set of difficulties which participants faced. Not only have these types of difficulties been long standing but the conditions giving rise to them have been all contextual and interconnected. My middle class Black Barbadian participants’ capacity to mek
Ah livin has been shaped to some degree or another by external neocolonial, and neoliberal forces. Collectively, it seems, the neocolonial and neoliberal policies which were supposed to facilitate the country’s “development” and hence facilitate social mobility and improved living conditions for Black Barbadians from post-emancipation onwards, more often than not unfolded as difficulties in mekkin uh livin’ for these middle class participants who by definition were to be the exemplars of the benefits of these policies.

5.3.2 Difficulty 2: Dealing with Harmful Local Gender Roles

As illustrated in chapter two, Black Barbadians have been exposed to and their daily lives shaped by external ideas about gender roles enshrined in policies and programs dictated by multilateral agencies and banking institutions from the post independence era to today (BGA, n.d.; CBD, 2016; ECLAC, 2015; MFEA, 2014; OAS, 2017). A number of participants explicitly attributed difficulty to their perception and that of others of specific ways of interacting for men and women; what they saw as acceptable roles for themselves or not; what others saw as acceptable treatment of them, and how these perceptions created difficulties for them. Participants explained the harm they have experienced as a consequence of both internalizing and rejecting these gender roles. They described interactions with others which they defined as gender-based violence, harassment and disrespect in most spheres of their daily lives—intimate relationships and home life, at work, and while seeking help from social support agencies. I detail these in the following paragraphs.

5.3.2.1 Dealing with stigma regarding gender roles about home and family life

Participants who internalized these specific local gender roles experienced what they described as negative emotional reactions when their lives, often through no fault of their own, did not unfold according to these expectations about what the ideal family life entailed. Onika’s description of how she struggled to reconcile to herself and the wider society that she did not have the ideal two parents and children home and family life provides an illustration of this:

Onika: It was-s-s-s hard and hard fuh ah strange reason (.) because I was so-o-o bought in ta knowing what I was doing or knowing where my life was heading. I didn’t see any other options…I’m married and here I am now having ah broken marriage, you know. What would people say? What would people think? The societal (.) pressures-s that were there fuh me, you know. I looked around and I thought of all the people who been married fuh
donkey’s years and who were still married and, you know, what would people think. I was so heavily involved in the PTA at school and going to meetings and you know what have you. Still going to meetings even with the troubles I was having with him and people would be ‘oh ya’ll get on so well with each other’, and in myself I know well daz just ah front, you know. So I had to deal with that inner turmoil. How am I going to face-e-e-e things when to all in sundry everything look so good?

Participants also described how they internalized stigma from their community and stigmatized themselves when they could not fulfill what is seen as their role as a man and woman in shaping this ideal family life. Ann-Marie explains how she has devalued what she has to offer a potential husband as a result of health challenges which are genetic:

*Ann Marie:* So that kinda changes things, cause ya know you’re you’re 35 and you’re at work and people at work are going ‘you need to have those 2 sons ya know.’ I’m like eh. Yeah cause cause you know it’s it’s Barbadian society. They figure (-) even at church it’s like ‘when are you getting married?’ I I’m like why am I gunna get married? Any guy I marry is gunna want (-) unless he has kids already, he’s gunna wanna have kids. And I’m like I don’t really (-) I I kinda wanna have kids. But I don’t wanna have a kid to put them through that. So there’s this kinda fear. I don’t really date. I I throw myself into my work. that’s (-) which I know is very unhealthy

Some persons rejected these expectations about home and family life, were punished and this punishment is what posed difficulties for them. For example, Sharon describes the stigma she had to deal with getting pregnant out of wedlock and being a single mother:

*Sharon:* But I have been; I have started going to other churches as well trying to feel comfortable but I found that ...as single mother too they always look at you a certain way.

*I:* What do you mean a certain way?

*Sharon:* As in ya know ya should be married, why ya not married and I always believed that I don’t have to be married, I won’t mind being married but it hasn’t happened, I have my daughter so there’s nothing much I could do about it, so yea. But I found ya know them old; I can’t say old time churches, but Baptist churches, they look different at single mothers and yea... So, ya know I find that alota people in Barbados are quite judgmental or whatever, you understand me?! so even when I did get pregnant everybody was saying yea you should be married or you should get married and I say to myself well I cannot get married (.) to my child father at that point in time and I think it’s a good thing I dint get married ’cause it wouldn’t make any sense. At that point in time well yes we loved each other to some extent or whatever but I couldn’t see that much of a future there and then as it worked out he wasn’t ready yet so. Yea.
On the contrary, although women were expected to operate so as to build and maintain this home and family life, men were expected to exhibit sexual prowess and not necessarily have one partner. According to participants, men were stigmatized if they rejected this role. Here Jon discusses the difficulties he has encountered in intimate partner relationships throughout his life by trying to pretend that he fit these expectations of men in relationships:

Jon: *But the truth is this, [*] I’ve not been on the receiving end, the good receiving end or the receiving end of anything good within the majority of my relationship life, right. Amm, I’m a person I dress in a façade. I, I was very popular. I’ve been out there. There’s a façade you gotta adopt, the real Jon, I mean right now at this stage now in life where I can afford to do certain things, I don’t party, I don’t, I don’t go out there and, and socialize, that’s really who I am now anyway. Amm, when I was younger man I had a love a poetry, art, I did A level Art, amm, very creative person, that’s not the façade that would get de girls, that was basically my teenage kinda thing, so, getting out there now I had to be somebody else, I did.*

I: *Yeah, what was that façade that needed to be in place to get the girls?*

Jon: *So you observe certain things again, without it. it is uh something that everybody says the good boys finish last but quite early I kinda, I kinda appreciated that too you know. You don’t, there ain’t no action when you in the corner all quiet and being reserved*

Moreover, participants who did not live up to these roles also encountered stigma from institutions supposedly designed to support them in accordance with Barbados’ agreement with international understandings of equity in home and family life. Sharon’s account reflects that the child maintenance system still operated such that the burden of care of children fell on to mothers with little to no accountability for fathers:

Sharon: *So we went to court and they stipulated BDS$ 75 a week or BDS 50 dollars a week, something like that and (.) ya supposed to go to the court and collect and all of that then sometimes he would call and tell me come for the money so sometimes I had to go to him and get the money then carry it to the court let it go through the system, then wait a couple of days for it to go through the system (.) right.*

I: *What did 75 dollars a week get you for her?*

Sharon: *Not much, I’m trying to figure out what it used to get honestly, but as you said that type of- I think I had asked for BDS$75 and then they had said 50 dollars so it was like 200 dollars a month...if both parties are working rather than as I said a standard ya know-like if they could work out how much it really cost to raise a child- but they just say well if the father says he can only afford x amount due to any other commitments that he would have they would take all that into consideration...Because I’m trying to remember how old she was at the time but that is just general upkeep, ya know lunch, well not lunch money cause I think she was at primary school at the time, so it wouldn’t be lunch money*
but it would be food in general, house, upkeep, whatever but before I’m sure he used to give me maybe 300 dollars a month before we actually broke up or whatever kind of like they keep him in that vein so. Right so it would’ve been right, to try and maintain that standard of living that you would have had from the beginning...So certain things ya know, so they said well this BDS$50 dollars a week(.) should do and then it would’ve; **should have** been additional like if doctor visits or anything like that that should have been additional but anyway he stuck to the BDS$50 dollars a week and that was it. So I just said look my child is not gonna suffer whatever I can do for her I would do.

Sharon continues to explain how being middle class versus working class attracted stigma:

*Sharon:* As I said, most middle class people do not go to the court because it is looked upon you know it’s only the poor people or the ya know, I was like no I was not accepting that

*I:* (-) So class wise as well it was not just; so it was; class wise as well that it was seen as that is not how I operate.

*Sharon:* Yea that’s not how we would operate and because too I’m working cause most girls that do go don’t be working so they really, really you know they really, really need it not that I dint really, really need it either it’s just that I felt the principle

However, not only were women stigmatized for pursuing maintenance, participants also reported that they were treated disrespectfully by persons administering the maintenance process. Onika’s explains that her desire to avoid this stigma prevented her from pursuing child maintenance despite being forced into poverty by her husband after fleeing his abuse:

*Onika:* I never contemplated taking him ta court fuh child support. Although many people said you know the judge said he should pay and you should tak him ta court. I neva. I thought I doan wanna be one of those mothers who have ta show up at the court once ah month or whateva ta try and see if da man bring the money... I just know from what I heard people say ta be honest with you. Sometimes they would go ta court and the husband, boyfriend, father, in short should have paid in x amount of money and it wasn’t there because they had excuses... or you go ta court and you have ta be there waiting fuh this time fuh de money ta be given ta you. In terms of the number of people waiting in front of you or that the people who did the processing of that were not particularly the bes-s-t. How should I put it? You know they din have the right spirit ta deal with ladies who were having ta come ta court ta receive monies. It was not ah experience ta look forward ta because of how you were treated as ah person coming ta the court ta collect money.

*I:* Right. They were nasty? They were (-).

*Onika:* They were not sympathetic put it dah way.
The local notion, therefore, that women are solely or largely responsible for caring and rearing of children is apparently reinforced by the delivery of the child maintenance system despite updates to the law governing the system, in keeping with the requirements of multinational agencies. Participants felt as if the set up of the system in effect at best did not support them in requiring their child’s father to be an equal financial partner in caring for their children and at worst punished them for attempting to pursue this.

5.3.2.2 Being wounded by, and ignored or ridiculed about intimate partner disrespect and aggression

Participants described that another feature of home and family life was infidelity; and emotional, physical and financial abuse. Participants explained the negative impact being treated in these ways had on their health. For example, Onika describes fearing her husband and fainting spells as a consequence of this:

Onika: I was married at the point in time but thought it better fuh my health ta get out of de relationship and de only way I could see that was ta leave my, the home I was in with my husband… I started ta like almost steal is ah bad word but I say steal, but like ta ferret away things from home in ta de apartment. I din say well, lemme pack up all my things and go one time. I started moving things bit by bit and obviously I was under alla stress. I was under so much stress not only from de decision to move but prior and das what, one de things that made me decide that I had ta go. One of the things I would remember all de time is that some mornings I would be in the house, in the kitchen, preparing breakfast and lunch fuh de children and I would just get like these fainting spells. I lean up against ah wall but I would just feel myself slowly sinking down ta the ground. And I went to. I had to get CAT scan and everything done and there was nothing wrong with me as far as these scans show. I’s just the stress.

Their stories also highlighted that society expected women to accept this behavior from men but not vice versa. For example, Janice shares about her partner’s infidelity which she said was normalized behavior in Barbadian society for men but unacceptable for women:

Janice: And there were um and then I was in this relationship with this guy... And he was a total dick he was so not good for me... And I think one of the things that one of the ya know I had so many sad moments with him and having these other relationships with people with women that ya know were his friends or whatev (-) I couldn’t figure out where I was in his life...I would (.) I would go to his house, and wait for him and he would keep me waiting meanwhile he was with some other woman... But am this guy (-) I mean maybe that’s another reason why nobody said anything because his behavior was completely normal too. And if I were behaving in the way that he was this kind of way in which I
Indeed, male participants reported that they were ridiculed if they were on the receiving end of this behavior from women. Jon recalls an instance where his casual intimate partner was physically aggressive towards him and he became the butt of jokes made by witnesses:

Jon: I remember being in [a fete] one night and being assaulted in there twice by one girl. But this somebody, over the years, subsequent from that scene to present, we’ve had countless lil affairs and whatnot. And I remember that night with clarity, and the next day it was hilarious for all of Barbados. It was hilarious you know, I didn’t respond or I should say not that I didn’t respond, I didn’t respond with violence and luckily maybe that night I had friends there who you know, were like “Jon man let we leave”, you know, that kinda thing. Who kinda keep me in check and whatnot, but it was funny for people to see me getting slapped in my face. It was down-right, dead funny then for me to get the second slap in my face. This is not, I’m not approaching you, you know, I’m not invading your personal space, you see me and and you know you wanna talk, I don’t wanna talk and whacks it’s a slap.

Participants also shared how their internalized expectations about home and family life posed further difficulties in rejecting intimate partner disrespect and violence. For example, Onika describes battling between the sense that she had to leave the marriage with her children, and the sense that her children should not have to lose their home and paternal relationship:

Onika: There was no question of leaving on my own; obviously I had ta take the three children with me. They were my new responsibility. They were mine! So the decision was ta take them. What that meant then is that I had ta look fuh ah home and even the decision ta leave brought its burden because, one of the things that I (.) agonized over was how do I take these children away from the house that they were born in, that they were growing up in, that the only house that they were accustom to. Their only home. Away from their father who they had ah good relationship with and I mean they were still pretty young...

Finally, yet again, a few participants also referenced how institutions tasked by the Barbados government with addressing intimate partner violence in line with international expectations act instead in accordance with what they experienced as harmful local norms. Sharon felt there was no sense of urgency on the part of the police when she reported that her intimate partner had assaulted her with a weapon:

Sharon: As for the abuse that particular time I was very upset by well the reaction by the police actually.
I: So you had reported it.

Sharon: Yes. The actual night that it actually happen I had called them and two three hours later nobody came as yet.
I: And they knew that he had assaulted you, and with a weapon.

Sharon: Right and I told them that, what had happen and nobody came and then somebody musse call bout 2 o clock or 3 o clock in the morning and I’m told them well don’t bother, I said well he’s not in the house anymore, he’s gone wherever, at that point in time I was just so tired, frustrated or whatever so I just tell them well don’t bother.

I: ‘Cause you had already kept yourself safe, well gotten yourself to safety.

Sharon: Correct So I tell them well don’t bother, if you understand? I just- and that was that…

Jon’s account of how the police responded to his report about his intimate partner demonstrates that reports from men are ridiculed even by those required by law to offer recourse:

Jon: but like I said, me, myself, you’ve had hands laid on me several times. The mother of my child, it was, was the same thing, you know. I remember her getting in an argument and she would just walk up to me and take her fingernails, scratched up the side of my face. I, one time went to the police for her and when the police went and got her, the sergeant at the station was like, “This, this really who you bringing in here to complain for. You is twice this girl size” and it was a laughing matter for the police station and after that I decided “Well, well fuck that.” you know, that would never happen to me again. The scratch was […] less painful than having big men laughing at me kinda thing.

5.3.2.3 Being sexually objectified, made to barter sexuality or dismissed by men at work

Participants spoke of a third set of difficulties relating to gender roles. These participants, all women, spoke of trying to mek a livin and encountering male colleagues who treated them in what they saw as derogatory, discriminatory and disrespectful ways. These participants described their work environments as male-dominated and reported interactions which they labelled according to international conceptualizations of gender equity and violence. Although women have entered many non-traditional fields of employment in present day Barbados, many fields which were historically dominated remain this way, many managers and employers are men who are often not exposed to gender training, and the Sexual Harassment Bill was only implemented two years ago (BGA, 2009; CDB 2016; ECLAC, 2015). In this climate, it is not difficult to see how my female participants would have been educated about how male oppression plays out in
their lives and reported discrimination and harassment in their daily work lives while male participants did not report the same.

In this exchange below, Natalie describes ways in which she felt men dismissed and devalued her as a professional in the communications sector and how the employer upheld this.

*Natalie:* ...*there’s one particular time that I felt really (..) unappreciated. And that was when, there were certain times ah de year that the Big Shot People did not want to [work]So I would come in I would do like de 9-1 shift or whatever then come back do de night shift if they somebody just didn’t feel like doing it. So then one day they had a meeting and they said ok we realized that de female listeners are responding better to the man so we’re going to let them come back. (.). Ok. So you mean to say I was here busting my ass fulling in fuh all these people who just didn’t wanna give ah fuck about anything an-n-n-nd now you’re telling me doan come back. I was mm-m ok. So I was just back on doing weekends only, right.

*I:* And so were the Big Shot people are male?

*Natalie:* YES!. All male. So I have seen a luh sexism in my time too that’s why I am also a lil bit of a feminist because the whole concept of (..) I still do not think, I felt that, that environment was (pause)- if you were ah young female- difficult for you ta navigate.

*I:* What do you mean?

*Natalie:* First of all, what would’ve been considered then as all fun and games would be considered now (.) not sexual harassment but it would be considered gender inappropriate I suppose. Because like I felt like sometimes as ah young female, you know men used ta like ta mek a luh sport about what you wearing and things like that and not necessarily take you seriously as a professional. ‘Oh this lil sweetie here’ that kind ah thing. And you know I know I mean at the time personally, I mean I got along with everybody and everything with most people but looking back at it I was saying ta myself you know what like it seem as though (.) it took so much more to prove yourself as a young female professional than these older hardback men did, right.

Others spoke of being sexually objectified. Terri recounts being made aware by a stranger while doing community work that her male work colleagues have discussed her sexual appeal, and with other men who were unknown to her:

*Terri:* And he said to me ‘I remembered where I had heard your name before; you worked for [Horizon]’ and I was like ‘yeah’. And he said he went to a meeting and somebody from my company was there and the meeting was (-) there were all guys in the meeting and the conversation turned to the most attractive women in the field (-)and my name come (-) came up and my co-worker pulled out his phone and started to show the other people in the meeting pictures of me. People who had never seen me before. Yeah. And I was like (,) (-) cause obviously in de situation like that you can’t react how you want to react because in
my head I'm like W T F? (laugh) Right? That is hella inappropriate, it is (-) it makes you feel- Its creepy! Right? And cause remember that the person that is doing this works with me, this a person that smiles at me and tells me good morning every day and then objectifying me when you go to a meeting on company business. (slight laugh) And this is what y’all are doing on de company’s time. There’s 100 things wrong with this. Right? And (. ..) I think that that’s part of the frustration of when you see people in certain positions (.) fighting against sexual harassment legislation for instance in in Barbados, staying that we don’t need it. I mean come on, this (-) these things are so commonplace that a complete stranger felt comfortable telling me that dat is how he first heard my name. It is so commonplace; it is so normalized in our culture. Right? This is not okay!

Others described being disturbed by the expectation that they barter their sexuality to progress at work in the arts sector. Below, Ann, talks about being faced with this expectation:

Ann: And I found I asked a lot of prominent musicians in Barbados ya know how do you go about? how did get you get where you are today? And the answers were like (-) okay let’s break it down from a male perspective I found the males (.) were very reluctant to give any information and was always pushing this sense of like ya guh gimme some ya guh gimme sex, in order for you to like if you wanna do a song or if you ya know

5.3.2.4 Summary of difficulty 2

Difficulties from gender roles, therefore, emerged in two key, and related ways. The first is that participants found that living life according to the local gender roles in and of themselves was difficult for them. Living according to the role placed them at risk for or actually caused them physical and emotional harm. They were stigmatized when they could not live up to the gender role expectations through no fault of their own. Difficulties were further compounded or came about when participants encountered persons and institutions that held a contradictory gender role to their own. According to participants, members of the society often uphold a double standard of the behavior for men versus women, and the gender for which the behavior is not deemed normal or acceptable could be punished through ridicule and castigation. Moreover, some of the language participants used to describe their experiences reflects ideas about gender equality and equity from the international community. Participants’ definitions of what constitutes harmful gender roles and their reports of how they played out as difficulties in their daily lives also reflect these external notions. This certainly seems in keeping with Fanon’s (1963) observation that the Black middle class often readily embraces their former colonizers’ values in their misguided quest to become “modern”, although in this case, embracing such values is beneficial to improving their and their compatriots lives instead of being to their
collective detriment as Fanon warned. However, based on participants’ accounts, these values about gender roles which are espoused by international agencies were not reflected in how they were treated by those they encountered in the Barbadians society; this difference in values is reflected not only in interpersonal interactions but also in persons’ experiences of national intimate partner and child maintenance systems. It appears that these gender roles are culturally-shaped, and pose difficulties in various spheres of participants’ lives, partially as a result of the general systemic response to reports of harm emerging from these gender roles.

5.3.3 Difficulty 3: Encountering challenges to understanding/experience of community

This is the third and final category of difficulties participants shared. Family and community have been demonstrated as historically important in facilitating a sense of identity, a way of making meaning about situations, and a way of accessing resources needed to respond to situations for Black Barbadians (Barrow, 1976; Barrow, 1986; Chamberlain, 2004; Craigwell et al., 2003; Hinds & Stephen, 2017). In addition, individual responsibility to family and community have been incorporated into the local educational curriculum under the influence of UNESCO (MEYC, 2001; UNESCO, 2006), and reflected in the version of Christianity African Creoles developed during slavery and which their ancestors practise to this day (Burke, 2016; Thompson, 1983). Consequently, participants would have gotten a sense of themselves as being part of, in the care of and responsible for their community, from various sources that had considerable influence over their way of making meaning and acting in their daily lives. Encountering challenges to this understanding and experience of community in some way, therefore, was difficult for participants. Below, I outline the three keys types of challenges to this understanding and experience of community which participants identified.

5.3.3.1 Feeling betrayed and abandoned by community

Several participants shared their perception that persons deliberately did not live up to a) the way community members are expected to interact; or b) the way they had become accustomed to enacting community with them. In this first scenario, participants felt that others consciously acted callously or out of self interest instead of in accordance with key tenets of community-helping and reciprocity. The feeling of abandonment and betrayal occurred in cases where participants had a history of helping the other party. For example, Jon shares how hurt he feels
by his family’s lack of support while dealing with a broken relationship considering that he is typically a sanctuary for everyone else in their time of need:

Jon: I build this house in 2008, ten years and they had ‘bout twelve people living here at different points in time who needed to be here. I mean just as a, just as an aside, you know, I still the person, whenever crisis hit the fan, whoever it is out there, they pick up the phone and call [me], be it financial, be it romantic, ya, whatever the case is. So...

I: So, so your house provided, you pro, your home provided a place for persons to… a sanctuary, yeah.

Jon: A sanctuary for a lot a people. And like I said, now I dealing with this situation here with madam recently gone and stuff. It’s amazing this is the emptiest the house has been generally, you know, the cars pull up and people don’t even bother to call, you know. I’m very tight with my mum nowadays. Ummm, same here with my sister but this thing here is maybe six weeks in and when I made the decision everybody vowed to be there for me and I’ve seen my mum once. Now she’s not forsaking me because she’s a bad mum. She has work and stuff like that and blah blah blah. But I’ve been in this house everyday by myself since that event and my mum passed here one day and picked up the broom and started sweeping and stuff and much appreciated but by way of comradery and stuff I haven’t seen my sister, I haven’t seen my brother, I haven’t really seen my mother. Everybody does say them coming and spend a day with you ‘cause you must by down. Everybody talk about it, right but nobody does come.

In the same way, Andre and Kevin share how betrayed they felt by how Andre was abandoned by their team management following a serious injury while competing:

Ryan: …fuh such a serious incident ta happen and it ta happen then in ah foreign country outside of Barbados, and whatever the case may be. So we had to lift him to the room, the injury was serious. Alright fine that happen (.) then but the follow-up was nil. So no one from the Barbados management called, no one checked after we got back to Barbados ta see how we doing, how serious the injury was, um-m, if he needs help in terms of recommendations, financials or whatever the case for rehab or recovery... So-o-o, after coming off of such, lemme use the word betrayal-

I: Is that how you see it, as betrayal?

Andre: Because [clears throat] in particular because we both know what we have given it, right. We both, the team, myself and the others, we have competed through serious injuries and we never pull out, right, we don ever pull out. Now (. ) and this is for years, we been [with them] for years so for the fact that I had to withdraw and we were the finals fuh everything, ear mark ta win everything as per usual, right. Fuh me ta pull out ah dah competition, pull outta everything, it had ta be serious, anybody kno, it had ta be serious. So fuh them to come and, when I saw them after the fact like honestly about a year after fuh them tell me ‘man we din know it was dah serious’. It was like, I was like are you fuh real in my head, you cain be serious, you cannot be serious. So that only add to it so it
was a serious, serious betrayal from dem...So its dah, dedication and alla dat fuh dem to turn around and say ‘oh we din kno it did dah serious’, you din even check man.

Participants also spoke of feeling betrayed and abandoned in another type of situation, where community withdrew support they were accustomed to providing. This occurred mainly in cases where participants had chosen to pursue their interests/talents as careers; they encountered significant opposition from family and society. All participants spoke of being told by their families and communities that their level of intellect precluded what were seen as their non-academic interests and talents as job options for them; they were instead hobbies or side jobs. For participants’ communities then, the value of pursuing talent/interests as careers did not line up with or supersede the value of gettin’ an education so they withdrew their support. It seems that the possibility of becoming, maintaining or being elevated from middle class status was prioritized and the sure route to achieving this social mobility was protected. Andre explains persons conveyed to him that a career in the arts was for those who had no other options unlike him, and they have been attempting to prevent him mekin’ ah livin’ in this way:

Andre: I for instance may represent at a time (.) the educated artist that people feel... he come out to start to dominate and say alright you had enuff a dis hey cause you could go and do something else. Right, so it is I think because I am in the arts because I want to not because I have to alright that has a part to play because they say “ya this is the job but this doesn’t have to be the job”. It different now cause people wuh say “wha wha else [an uneducated artist] gine do?” And this is wha people told me. It is very frustrating.

Although participants spoke of experiencing difficulties relating to pursuing interests and talents as careers then, the sense that their community had withdrawn customary support was in and of itself an additional difficulty or an exacerbating component. Based on participants’ accounts, however well intentioned, causing difficulties was the community’s explicit intention to force them to make a decision which was in line with one the community valued.

Finally, this sense of betrayal and abandonment when help was not forthcoming also occurred in cases where participants had no such history of helping or being helped by the other parties involved. For example, Natalie talks of feeling like her colleagues at her new job refrained from even commiserating with her about her boss’s unfair treatment, and instead focused on preserving their own progress in the organization and industry:
Natalie: there wasn’t anybody else that I felt I could confide in but, years later looking back at it I realized that these people knew that she wasn’t sweet...But I ain wanna say that they were kissing behind but practically that’s what they were doing. And years down de road people come to me and tell me she was something else though and I say to myself (speaking quietly) well ya’ll acted as though she was so adorable, she was so sweet.

Participants expressed the sense that when it came down to it the other person did not extend himself or herself in order to help them out in the situation and this was contradictory to the expectation that community helps regardless of whether a history of helping existed or not. This resulted in participants feeling betrayed and abandoned.

5.3.3.2 Interacting with people who have crab in de bucket mentality

Participants used this term to refer to three distinct types of interactions relating to socioeconomic progress which I describe in this subsection. Participants described this *crab in de bucket mentality* as playing out with Black Barbadians at all levels of community- family, neighbours, intimate partners, colleagues. Moreover, whether there was a history of community or an expectation of shared understanding of community did not matter. The defining feature of interaction with persons with this mentality was their focus on retarding or underhandedly benefitting from the other person’s socioeconomic progress. It would appear that even as achieving, maintaining or building on middle class status is a longstanding value held by the Black Barbadian community, supporting and celebrating this social mobility was not a value held by all within the community. This *crab in the bucket mentality* seemed to be a new experience up to that point in participants’ lives that completely contradicted their fundamental understanding and experience of community and this is what made it difficult. Again, Fanon’s (1983) observation about the destructive impact of colonization on the Black person’s psychology, such that those some operate to destroy the other in their quest to become like their former colonizers, might be relevant here.

The first type of interaction was one where participants felt others took steps to avoid assisting them and/or explicitly refused to assist them as a way of preventing them from progressing to their socioeconomic level or beyond. Again, this behavior came from Black Barbadians in line with Fanon’s (1963) observation. This mentality among Black Barbadians was manifested in the form of persons withholding access to resources they were positioned to offer; a contradiction to the common practice of *goin thru de back door*. Pinky, one of the
secondary participants, recounts how someone she considered a friend refused to assist her
daughter Rhea in her attempts to enter the same profession. She expressed a sense that this friend
felt threatened by her daughter financially but was puzzled and disappointed by their response:

Pinky: Yes, because I remember I have ah friend who is ah psychologist, right. And I remember
when she first came back I said ta them well she’s back, she has her degree and all that and
if he could, a know, maybe let her sit in. I mean I understand that if I come ta you as ah
professional I don necessarily want somebody else ta hear my problem. But if you- like
doctors in de hospital. If ah young psychologist is sitting there you say well this is a young
psychologist, righ?. And I remember saying ta them- and they have ah practice and they
work at ah company- and I said ta them she’s back she has her Masters, and they have ah
PhD. I mean which is ah higher qualification than what she has anyway (speaking quickly).
And I remember I said ta them can you help her, ya know find space, ya know and ya know.
“Oh am-m”, they said ta me, am-m, no they don’t, something ta de effect that they don
practice that kind of psychology. Something like that. Something they said and all I really
wanted was for, I wasn’t asking them ta pay her. I was just saying, ya know, could you just
sit down, ya know. It was just like-

I: -Exposure.

Pinky: Yes! And they were just saying oh well, tell her ta call this place, tell her to call that
place, ya know that kinda thing.

Participants also used this term in a second type of way; to describe interactions where other
Black Barbadians tried to take advantage of them for the benefit of their own socioeconomic
progress. Persons described how this occurred in their work. For example, Anne explains how
DJs employed at radio stations made new artistes pay for their music to be played:

Anne: yuz goh like pass either money-for example DJs, some DJs like to be paid, sometimes they
have to pay a DJ in order to have your song played on the radio...

Others shared how this mentality also came into play with relatives. For example, Jo Jo shared
that she and her sister are estranged as result of this. Jo Jo’s husband Fox recalls one instance
where they were wiring her sister money from overseas to pay for their upcoming wedding in
Barbados but ultimately found out that her sister was using the money for her own benefit:

Fox:Well (-) okay. Hm. When we got married for instance or we were getting married, um Jo Jo
sent some money to secure the um the (-) ’cause we were sharing the expenses so she
sent some money to secure the hotel. And ya know as we were going along spending money,
spending money. And then somewhere along the line we discovered that the money that we
had sent back originally had not been paid in. And uh, Jo Jo was com (-) Jo Jo was livid.
Right? And I think she was a little bit embarrassed as well because the guy that she’d been
dealing with he’s a nice (-) he’s a really nice guy and um so we got it straightened out but her sister was like, like it never happened.

Finally, the third way in which participants used this term was to describe when they felt that others operated to sabotage their socioeconomic progress so they would not surpass them financially and hence in class status. For example, Jon describes discovering that his friend’s family was intentionally keeping his financial progress dependent on them:

Jon: So my relationship with this guy [Justin], kinda, we met when we were teens, and I gotta say we started getting reeeally close when we were about […] eighteen or nineteen…And I became very close with his family… And he came from […] upper middle class to rich, he never treated me as if I were poor… his stepfather said to me one day – come and work – it’s not that I wasn’t working, I had a bit part job, amm, where I was very much taken advantage of… I didn’t have any education per say besides A Levels… [Justin’s] stepfather said, “Right, I gine give you a job see, on one condition, ya gine go back to UWI.” So I did go back to UWI and…he gave me a job… so now I am finished I have no more distractions with UWI and I expected at least a raise; nah, nothing. It was then I started to realize what was going on. So [Justin] and I, basically the same age, he has a degree, I have one and he was making three or four times my salary because his family owns the business. And I remember [...] I was now getting a lil frustrated, like I was getting enough money to just do the basics, but I feel like it was a built dependency, like a very […] deliberate attempt for his family to keep me dependent on them. And World Cup cricket was coming around and I, this is, this is a lil further behind, and I remember applying for a job with them and going to [Justin’s] mum to, you know, I waan apply. I was so fussy to do this, and I got short listed basically for a senior position there. And I come to find out after the fact that it was her and her intervention that stopped me from getting the job. She’s a person very well connected, bearing in mind by this time I had now gone on to do my masters uh?

Participants explicitly felt that in spite of the strong value of helping and reciprocity, this mentality was characteristic of how Black Barbadians interact with each other with regard to social mobility. Josh, in talking about the difficulties he has had in advancing in his field, observed that it was reflective of this mentality, which he saw as the crux of the problem:

Josh: I would just say like in terms of Black people and Barbadians I think that we have a long ways ta go ta be better. It’s unfortunate to say like White people support each other. Like even let’s stick to White Barbadians, White Barbadians support each other’s businesses. If you go on the west coast like anywhere White people support their own regardless, in terms of White Barbadians. Always support their own, always like keep da money circulating within their circle. (.) Black Barbadians try ta cut each other’s throat and daz so-o-o sad ta see like we don’t try to help out each other, we try to outdo each other and try ta shut down a business. Daz sad (sounding sympathetic). Like then we’re always behind and then we always wanna know why White Barbadians are getting through in life- because we’re at war with ourselves.
5.3.3.3 Losing sense of who you are

Participants also spoke of a third way in which their experience of community was challenged- having to shift who they saw themselves as due to the physical loss of a specific relationship to their community. Participants physically lost persons who were integral to their lives through circumstance, and not due to any choice they made. For example, Jacko lost his grandparents through their emigration, while Taz lost his close knit group of friends as a result of a car accident and Jo Jo lost hers through emigration. Janice and Jon lost their mothers in the home due to parental separation while Cory, Jason and Aria lost their mothers/mother figures through death. The loss impacted participants’ experience of community and sense of who they were in relation to community in a variety of ways. For some, the loss heralded a change in social status. For example, Jacko describes how his social status dropped drastically when his paternal grandparents emigrated and he had to live with his maternal grandmother:

Jacko: And as I said I left I left their house, they had a nice ya know wood (-)n wall structured house. We had ya know we had running water whatever, my granddad had cars, we (-) so that you know that was a lifestyle that I had. And then I had to go live with my grandmother, which-with my maternal grandmother. We we lived at that time, it was probably two bedrooms I think, yeah cause I remember that my brother and I used to sleep with my grandmother and then my two uncles used to share the other bedroom. No running water, nothing. Ya know so it’s like culture shock.

For others, the loss meant a change in what they saw as their role in their community. Taz’s description of how painful and destabilizing it has been to realize that he could no longer play a role he valued in his friends’ lives is one example of this:

Taz: the accident was the opposite of my identity; something bad happened and im at the centre of it. So now im at the centre of this bad thing that happened to my friends and so I have had to work on that. Im still readjusting. I’m not sure I want to be that person like before. I need time to still deal with myself. I don’t want to be that person right now. It’s been three or four years and I still trying to figure out who I am. I have not gotten back there. I was this person for years and years so I’m not gonna adjust to losing that quickly. I’ve not back there physically or mentally. I’m still trying to find purpose and find the new me.

For other participants, the person whom they lost was their main source of meaning-making and their outlook on life changed drastically as a result. Jason describes that his approach to a life without his mother, who was his confidante and advisor, was careless, characterized by a pervasive sense of emptiness:
Jason: Cause I guess like (...) when she had pass (...) de house was just just (-) like I remember the Sun (-) she had pass a Saturday and the Sunday was just the three of us and it was just so quiet man. I just remember that it was like so so quiet. And actually the house has been like that since. It’s never been the same. It’s never. It’s just that life and that energy and like I just feel like (sigh) (...) what (-) like that’s the person that I would talk to (-) that I could talk to about stuff. Ya know and um (...) she just like a support man, a comfort like that sorta comforting nurturing sorta thing. You know what I mean and like just used to make me feel good...(-) But I I can tell you when she pass away I I didn’t really care about anything after that. That’s (-) that change me a lot, in that not don’t care as in I was lawless or I was thing but I was just like (.r) literally my approach was that one of the worst things that could ever happen (-) actually did.

Finally, for others, there was the loss of their role of reciprocating support to those who had been instrumental in shaping their lives. For example, Cory describes the challenge of adjusting to not caring for his grandmother anymore given how significant caring for her was for him:

I: You mentioned how intertwined you and your granny’s life were-what led you to be so involved with her as an adult?

Cory: It definitely was not being forced. Giving back. This is a person I loved, cared for and she asked me to do something so if I could I would. It was important to do these things for her. I didn’t like the tactics she used so I would have to say that just because she wanted me to assist I did. When you take in the costs of going to town, you might as well have stopped at the supermarket closest to you. So she liked it so I did it. So out of respect, love, her efforts towards me, so I didn’t even think about it.

As Cory describes, he now had to consider who he was without her in his life:

Cory: yea I I was thinking ta myself that I guess I was a bit juvenile in like rela, in relation ta the whole concept of death because I didn’t think of anything so I didn’t start ta prepare myself with anyone in terms of their their leaving, wid their dying so that was-So that hit me fuh six or seven even.

5.3.3.4 Summary of difficulty 3

It appears that participants’ understanding and experience of community was an integral part of who they considered themselves to be, how they expected others to interact with them, and vice versa. Participants were taught to expect community to be a positive feature of all aspects of daily life. Such interactions were a significant part of their lived experience. Therefore, when they encountered interactions and conditions which contradicted or challenged these fundamental expectations and past experiences in some way, this created great difficulties for them. There were also challenges to this understanding and experience of community which were specific to achieving, maintaining or building on middle class status.
5.4 Chapter Summary

Collectively, these circumstances which participants shared provided insight into how participants understood daily life should unfold in terms of how one works and lives with others, and hence why challenges to these expectations and values created difficulties for them. In the first set of circumstances, difficulties were shaped by external and local neoliberal, and neocolonial forces having control over participants’ capacities _tuh mek a livin_, mainly in the ways they were accustomed to as middle class Black Barbadians. In the second set of circumstances, difficulties were shaped by participants internalizing harmful locally held gender roles, and exacerbated when participants rejected these gender roles as a consequence of the difficulties they were experiencing. Difficulties also came about or were compounded when participants enacted notions of gender equity which were defined by international entities and endorsed by Barbados but which clashed with gender roles held locally by individuals or institutions supposedly designed to facility gender equity. In the third and final set of circumstances, difficulties played out as participants having everyday interactions with other Black Barbadians that challenged their local culturally-shaped understanding and experience of community. In many cases, these challenges were related to their experiences of achieving, maintaining or building on middle class status. Difficulties related to community were also a natural outcome of losing community when an individual’s sense of who they are is constructed within their relationship to their community.

What is abundantly clear is that these circumstances were all shaped by the Barbadian context, and the ways in which Black Barbadians are known to live culturally; they are not characteristics which are inherent or peculiar to individual participants. Moreover, these circumstances characterized all aspects of the daily lives of participants: their work, their home lives and their relationships with their communities. These difficulties were interconnected for most participants; but difficulties were not interconnected in any predictable way. Circumstances playing out as major difficulties for these participants, therefore, were not abnormal, discrete events. Moreover, these circumstances support that there are social and relational dynamics of difficulties in addition to individual ones.
Having constructed these circumstances as significant difficulties, how did participants make sense of them? What actions did they take? I illustrate these next, in the second part of my analysis.
6: Analysis Part II
6.1 Wha Yuh’s do? Participants’ Hybrid Process of Responding to Difficulties

Participants’ way of making meaning about these difficulties and responding to them was constituted of three main, interconnected frameworks: Christian-based spiritual beliefs and practices; mental health concepts and practices; and perspectives and resources provided by their community. In this section, I detail how these frameworks became a part of how they made meaning about their daily lives as well as how they actually draw on each of them in a hybrid manner to make sense of difficulties and respond.

6.1.1 Framework 1. Spirituality

The majority of participants described themselves as “spiritual” which they explained meant that they draw on beliefs about the existence of God, how God operates in relation to them and others, and how they are expected to live their lives. These beliefs were based predominantly on Christianity. All participants shared that they relied heavily on their Christian-based spiritual beliefs to make meaning of life—what perspective to take about difficulties, and hence how to respond.

6.1.1.1 Developing spirituality

Participants credited members of their family of origin for their spiritual development. Many of them, as Andre explains below, were introduced to Christianity as children via their parents and those involved in raising them such as grandparents and aunts.

I: Where did this faith in God or this spirituality come from?
Andre: Fro-m-m I was always into church and tha sorta stuff when I was younger am-m.
I: On your own volition, or parents, grandparents, friends?
Andre: Parents, parents (....) my parents and my grandparents initially...

They were taken to church, expected to participate in various church activities, and taught to follow the rules for living laid out in the bible/Christian religion, as exemplified in this response from Anne about the origin of her values:

Anne: My values came I guess from my from my mum, my ex (-) I have a very big family extended family um my uncle he’s a pastor um and we’re brought up in the church we’re brought up in the Anglican church so ya know ya had to go (laugh) Sunday school every Sunday and then my mum she’d read the bible to us an she ya know every day my mum
was al- or my aunts were always saying ya know “this is the right way you should live your life, try not to don’t ever sell yuh body um for anything, don’t sell yourself short, go to school, learn, ya know things in life are not easy but if you do it the right way you will get through”.

Most participants spoke of how their spirituality evolved throughout their adolescence and adulthood into a way of life and making meaning that they embraced and nurtured independent of their childhood caregivers. Several participants spoke of intentionally continuing to engage in Christian practices such as consistent Bible study and prayer in a way that worked for them. Josh shares how he incorporates Bible study in his daily routine:

Josh: *So like I read the bible everyday on my time. So even if it’s like a verse a day its better than nothing, so like, I also understand like you have to make time for that and that sorta thing and we get caught up sometimes in terms of like our life and ta sorta thing. But like we also forget to that He’s the main part of our lives because without Him nothing’s possible. So like on mornings I would just... play it on loud on my phone cuz the bible is audio now these days.*

Michelle switched denominations after staying away from church for many years; she prefers her current denomination’s emphasis on the relationship with Jesus:

Michelle: *It was my first introduction to the Pentecostal faith um but it was essentially my first introduction to actually a relationship with Jesus a personal relationship. I would call myself religious before am I went to church for many years am as a child, as a young person, as a young adult. I stopped going to church for maybe a third of the number of the years I actually went. Um so this was a new experience it wasn’t the same as as before but now now this one this relationship this relationship more so than the, denomination um made a big change in my life as as I saw me...Cause that that denomination ...um which is why I don’t really do denominations um but that was a more what you had to do. You had to go to church on Saturday you had to make sure and it was a lot of pressure and part of the reason why like you can’t wear this ya cah wear that you can’t eat this-

*I: (-) A lot of rules.

Michelle: Mmm. A lot of rules to kill yah. Um but this one now this was um (...) ya know Jesus Jesus died for to get rid of all of that. He - someone loved me so much that He would have given his life for me. If it was as (-) so I was reading the bible more and understanding the Bible more.*
However, others shared that for one reason or another they found themselves questioning certain tenets of Christianity that led them to identify as spiritual instead of religious. Some, like Shanice, stopped attending church altogether as a consequence:

I: What religion were you raised in?

Shanice: Christian, I was Pentecostal, am-m-m, I-I, my grandmother is a pastor she was from de time I was, from as long as I could remember... I know people like ta say that de longer you go ta school de further away you [laughs] get from religion and I don know if it’s true but, I [laughs] that de more that I’m able ta think about things and the more I’m able ta analyze things. De more questions I ask and de more questions that I asked de more kind of resistance you get within de church. Like my grandmother ain trying ta hear me questioning why this happened or how could this be real?

I: In terms of de teachings or practices?

Shanice: Yes, yes. Teachings, teachings (speaking quickly). Um-m, practices slightly as well like...like she asking “you don think its time fuh you ta get baptized?” I don think you get to think when its time -my time to be baptized like how do you have a say in when I decide that this is what I want fuh me and stuff like that? So then it just became (speaking quickly) more of ah hassle so I guess I kind of slowly drifted cause I ain really trying ta have you have a conversation with me when everybody else sitting down at church listening. So like I just slowly kinda, am-m-m, became less and less interested and, um-m-m, I guess witnessing, um-m-m, I don know. I feel like it’s over reliance but I don know if-f, I don get to say that, I don get to put that on somebody ese. They get to choose how much they rely on blessings and I don know, situations working themselves out. I don get to say it’s over-reliant but I think that people kinda, put a bit too much weight on it when it comes ta decision making or action taking and stuff like that. So it just kinda made me feel like some ah dis doesn’t make sense so-o-o lemme just (speaking slowly) [step back].

These participants were clear, however, that despite this disagreement with some fundamental principles or practices, they recognized that their way of making meaning was still largely shaped by Christian beliefs. Terri’s explanation of her spiritual development illustrates this:

Terri: Um so I’m not Christian. I’m I’m pretty much Agnostic. Um and I I might consider myself to be a spiritual person but definitely not a religious person. Chief and (-) first and foremost because organised religion seem to be always bad news for women. So yeah, not for me. (giggle) Not for the card carrying feminist. Right? Um (...) but (...) I dunno, I feel like (...) we associate (...) spirituality and morality especially with religion. And I am pretty sure that those two things ain’t got nothing to do with one another. Pretty certain about that...I was raised Christian like most people in the Caribbean like I I know de bible, I know de stories, I know de hymns, all those things. Um and I had those teachings and they’re (-) I’m sure they’re part of my of my personality, a part of who I am now as
an adult. Um and it’s not it’s not the lessons that I’m rejecting, it’s not even the faith that I'm rejecting.

Although participants did not practice Christianity in the exact way in which they were raised therefore, actively engaging in Christian-based spiritual practices was still an integral part of their daily life.

In addition, Christian based views are incorporated into all policies, and laws guiding the daily lives of Barbadians (Burke, 2016). Representatives of various Christian denominations are invited to sit on every national policy/program board-health, education, law, culture, and economy (Burke, 2016). These representatives also seek meetings with government to ensure that a Christian lens is invited or provided on all issues affecting Barbadians (Burke, 2016).

Given the various ways in which participants were exposed to the practices and beliefs of Christian-based spirituality in their daily lives, it is unsurprising that participants maintained these beliefs and practices and drew on them heavily to understand and respond to the various circumstances they faced daily. Next, I present the ways in which they did so specific to those circumstances they indicated were posing difficulties for them.

6.1.1.2 Drawing on spiritual practices and beliefs

Participants responded to struggles by praying and recalling bible verses, psalms and songs which provide guidance on how they should respond to difficulties. I illustrate the ways in which they did so next.

6.1.1.2.1 Praying for help

Some participants spoke of praying to God, with whom they had a personal, direct relationship. For example, Anne recalls how she saw her prayers for assistance being manifested as she encountered difficulty _tryin tuh mek a livin_ as an artist; this encouraged her to keep pursuing this career:

_Anne:_ I’ve realised when I prayed and certain things happen like before I knew about God or really knew because I was going church since I was a kid but ya know ya just going I didn’t have a mind of my own to know if this is something for me or not and I realise every time (-) every time it’s like this this is true story like every time I prayed for exactly what I wanted I got it. So I prayed exactly for I want to be an artist by this time and it happen. I want (-) I pray for I want to find, the right people that I can work with when
something wasn’t working out it happened. It’s like every single thing I prayed for it happened as it pertains to [my art.]

6.1.1.2.2 Recalling teachings to put things in God’s hands

Many participants also spoke of a conscious enactment of their belief that God will work out the situation for their good. Some did so based on past experiences. For example, Jacko describes how enacting his faith in this way, a practice passed on from his grandmother, gave him great peace in dealing with racism at work:

I: Where did that attitude come from do you feel like?

Jacko: I think my grandmother. “Everything happens for a reason Jacko, God has a plan, it if it (-) ya know it it it (-) if it happens it meant to to to teach you something good”. Ya know and that get drilled into you and drilled into you and (-) funny thing is cause I I watched it happen. So she would say it and she just didn’t say it, it would happen.

I: Yeah you would see life unfold in that way.

Jacko: (-) Yeah, unfold. Yeah yeah. Even in the worst of circumstances ya know it (-) I always saw it happen. So it led me to believe that (-) and I think ya know, I dunno how much of it is true but I I as I went through processes like at work, promotions, I had that don’t care attitude. And I think when you sit back, somehow, it is connected. Because I went through every promotion board, never failed any, I always came out in the top, people (-) but I always had that energy, ya know whatever happens happens. Guys would be biting nails. Ya know ya know you could see the tension. I never had any of that. I mean maybe initially it happens. I never had any of that. But ya know what, I always came through with success. And I always (-) I’d go back to her. And she’d say “Jacko”, even (-) cause I always condition myself, “even if you don’t get it this time, it’s meant to teach you something and something will happen”.

Other participants enacted this belief only based on the promise of the teachings that things would work out. For example, Aria recalls that after much back and forth with her family and others telling her to fight her family for her mother’s property, she drew on one particular bible text about God righting wrongs to decide once and for all to walk away:

I: So you never tried to fight them, your family, your mum’s family?

Aria: No

I: Would it have been even a thing? Like would it have been a possibility? Because
Aria: (-) Yeah. Now that you said that, people who (.) would have because she was very popular so people who would have known her but would have not had a relationship with me would see me and they would be like 'I hope you plan to fight dis (mimicking a raw Bajan accent)' and I’m like to the point that someone saw me somewhere, and they came up to me and said “here” and give me this business card and I’m like what is this for? “That’s a really good lawyer that I know I told him about your situation and you need to call him.” Me and this person have no relationship. This person is not even in my family or friends circle. We don’t even know each other from Adam I just know this person by seeing them around in the same circle as Christians and I know I would see my mum talk to them now and then but that was about it. So I was like okay (...) well, as a Christian myself I keep coming back to a text, where God will say ‘look stand still and see the salvation of the Lord’ and I’m like you know what God I’m not doing this, I am not putting myself in a position for nobody’s money and nobody’s assets I’m not doing that, I don’t think it’s something that she would have wanted, so I literally said ‘you know what, you don’t have to worry cause I’m not going to fight it you can have it all’ and I walked away. And that was it.

Participants then used this teaching to remind themselves that they should not worry about the outcome of the situation or question the potential solution they felt God provided.

6.1.1.2.3 Recalling teachings to draw on God-given strength to push across de barrier

Finally, participants drew on teachings that they should enact an overarching attitude to keep going in spite of challenges. Participants shared that they would encourage themselves to draw on God’s help to push across de barriers they were facing by recalling relevant teachings. As Jo Jo asserts, “from very early it was ingrained in me that you could do all things through Christ that strengthens you” She goes on to explain how drawing on this helped her to deal with people having a crab in bucket mentality:

Jo Jo: So I’ve gone through a lot of experiences. Um but through it all one thing that I always hold onto is that I can go through all things, right? Okay. Um if I remain calm it’s because a grace has come over me to get me calm. I’m not calm on my own, I am very high strung (.) and I’m prone to violence (slight chuckle) so it’s cause a grace that I haven’t been able to really exercise that quality.

6.1.1.3 Summary of framework 1

As illustrated above, participants used their spirituality to make sense of and respond to the full range of difficulties raised in this study. Participants constructed all these difficulties as ones which they could successfully get through because of God. To construct this interpretation, they drew on how they felt He had helped them work through previous difficulties as well as on promises made in bible verses and songs about how God works in their lives to rectify issues.
Enacting these practices gave them a sense of solace, strength and reassurance. Ultimately, they saw the difficulty as one they could get through because of God’s power and promise to work out the situation in due course. Knowing how this success would unfold seemed less important than trusting that it would happen.

6.1.2 Framework 2. Mental health knowledge

The second component of participants’ response to dealing with challenges in their lives was using mental health concepts and practices.

6.1.2.1 Developing knowledge of mental health concepts and practices

Participants shared that they were exposed to mental health concepts and practices through their education, the media, their jobs or through someone in their community who was either trained in or otherwise had knowledge of mental health. As noted previously, Barbadians, in particular middle class Black Barbadians, were widely exposed to knowledge about mental health concepts and practices over the last few decades. The WHO (2009) notes that ongoing public education campaigns about how persons can manage their mental health occur in Barbados, particularly in the schools. In addition, persons trained as Community Mental Health Nurses and Psychiatric Social Workers are posted at various locations across the island; part of their jobs include facilitating public awareness (The Barbados Psychiatric Hospital, n.d.). Finally, enrollment in the undergraduate degree in Psychology saw a 200% increase in enrollment between the year 2000 when it was introduced as a discipline of study at the Barbados campus of the University of the West Indies, and 2008 and there are now three post graduate programs in Psychology (Bradsaw-Maynard, 2013). The Christian church in Barbados has also done considerable work to endorse a mental health framework to their congregations and wider society (Burke, 2013). Dr. Mahy (2018), one of the first trained Psychiatrists from the Caribbean, asserts that although the public has become more open to seeking mental health treatment, there is still great stigma attached, in part due to Black Barbadians’ awareness that their relatives who had emigrated to the U.K and the U.S had been inaccurately diagnosed and inappropriately medicated and institutionalized.
6.1.2.2 Drawing on mental health terms

Most participants incorporated mental health concepts associated with stress as part of their way of interpreting how the various difficulties affected them. Participants used these terms to capture their reactions which they felt were extreme. For example, Taz describes what he thinks was a panic attack following the car accident in which he felt he suffered a complete loss of who he was:

*Taz:* So I walked up there, I went and watched a movie. And like this thing happened to me where like something in the movie triggered me because in the movie it was a lot of like fighting and violence and gun shooting. I can’t remember what it was I was watching. And something happened and it triggered me and like at this point (-) a certain point was just like in de chair, like I couldn’t move, I was just like, my heart rate was like increased, I was breathing (-) not breathing heavy but breathing like really slow and I felt lightheaded. I don’t know if it was a panic attack or what. And when I eventually like I dunno caught caught myself or came to I just got up and walked out of de cinema. And I just I just went home and just let my (-) well by my cousin and just lie down and let my mind do 90.

Natalie’s description of how she felt years after losing her first job illustrates the intense emotional reactions which participants interpreted as depression:

*Natalie:* So I felt alone in my situation. And I was very depressed, for some time. I spent four years looking for another job (speaking quietly), I was freelancing somewhere else but it wasn’t ah lot of money. It was like and it was ah difficult place to work because sometimes you would to get two shifts ah week, one shift a week. Sometimes you would have two shifts in ah day. So-o de routine would vary and you don’t know if you getting ah little bit uh money or if you getting a lot and even when you got two shifts a day it’s still not a lot of money but it’s ah luh work mentally and you’re drained. And I used to miss my other job. I used ta cry. When I saw anything that reminded me of my other job I used to feel so horrible.

Yet, while all participants commonly used mental health concepts to describe their reactions to difficulty, only a fraction of them used mental health practices as a part of their response. I look next at when and why they drew on mental health practices to respond.

6.1.2.3 Using mental health practices

Those few participants using mental health practices, used them only in what they deemed to be dire situations. Of the variety of mental health practices participants would have been
aware of and able to access, there were mainly two that they utilized: removing themselves from the situation, and *goin tuh counselling*.

### 6.1.2.3.1 Removing yourself from the situation

Participants spoke of leaving the stressful situation, but only upon recognizing that 1) their actions were futile in changing the situation or the other actors involved; and 2) the impact on them was reaching crisis levels. For participants, the impact on them was a mental health issue and required a mental health response. It is in this light the *removing yourself from the situation* was perceived as a mental health practice. Some interpreted the stressful situation as responsible for what they deemed to be extreme emotional health challenges. For example, Terri believed that her mental health was being affected from trying to persevere in a stressful work environment and this shaped her decision to return home to Barbados to try again to find employment here:

*Terri*: You can’t be on all the time, you can’t be struggling all the time and you can’t be in crisis mode all the time, you have to come down and I think that that’s part of the reason why I had to [return home] as well. I was working in ah trying (deep beep breath of relief) environment... I’ve felt like it was affecting my mental health. I was sure I had some level of anxiety and possibly depression that was coming out of it...

Other participants perceived stress to be the cause of a dangerous, abnormal impact on their physical health. Here, Shanice explains that after several unsuccessful attempts to get her employers to decrease her job stress as well as using various relaxation strategies herself, she decided her remaining option was to quit because of increasingly serious health concerns:

*Shanice*: I actually left my job, exactly ah week ago, um- m-m, cuz-z-z, (.) I was pretty much beyond stress-s with de job. I was there for over two years, I was at ah hotel...I never had ah issues wid it (speech quickens). In May of last year de hotel changed owners and everything kind of changed up and it just became really overwhelming... I had health issues as well. I had my thyroid removed so I generally have health issues but it kinda made it worse and in January I actually went to de doctor and he told me that my blood pressure was in hypertensive ranges [at age 25]. So-o-o-o then like I approached them multiple times about it and stuff and I din get any satisfaction so-o-o-o, I pretty much called it quits at that point [laugh]. Yeah, and I feel a lot better now and not like I tried all along ta stick it out. Whether it was, like I literally used ta just stop wuh I was doing, leave work, guh ta de beach fuh like 20 minutes, guh back to work an-n-d like I tried ta do stuff on days. As I told you I just cut out de 6 day thing I
It must be noted that removing yourself from a stressful situation might very well be a luxury for persons with less financial security, whether that be in the form of savings, marketable education and skills, or access to a social support system who can cushion the financial fallout of such a decision. At the same time, it must be noted that despite having more financial security than someone of working class status, participants did not often have the option to remove themselves from the stressful situation since the difficulties were imbedded in their daily lives. In these instances, some of them sought the help of a professional counsellor, as I outline next.

6.1.2.3.2 Going tuh counsellin’

Participants shared that they used mental health professionals when they felt like they had no choice, like they had reached the limits of what they could do otherwise to get through the difficulties they were facing. This is illustrated in Michelle’s account of her decision to go to a therapist:

I: You mentioned you went to counselling to deal with your mental health. When and where do you first remember hearing the language of mental health like stress, anxiety, depressed, coping?

Michelle: In school but I learnt about it as pathology, not health. I came to think that I could go to a therapist because I had no choice, it was urgent. I realize, yuh know what you are going to kill yourself, you need tuh go tuh somebody who will actually see, somebody who will ask you twice.

Indeed, some participants explicitly alluded to Barbadians having a stigma towards mental health treatment, and talked about battling their own stigma to access counselling. Jason’s account below is an example. He indicated that he initially refused counselling when his mother passed but sought it out later when he realized how he still had difficulty dealing with loss in relationships. In this account we see how even in talking about going tuh counsellin’, he is quick to highlight that he did not have a mental illness or require medication.

Jason: I was offered counselling but I didn’t think I needed it so I said no... I just felt I was alright... Uh, only thing I have a problem with that I find (..) um is the attitude towards I I don’t want to say (-) I wanna say mental illness but not because ya know I feel that mental illness was a great factor in this situation. But I mean in terms of getting help.
Talking to somebody. It’s not something that’s encouraged enough...I remember when I am (-) because I had to go back to university and um, I realised um in dealing with um a a a romantic relationship and some some drama that ensued. And then the the stress of my father’s illness and working and then school I um had to see the (-) not had to but I chose to see the um the counsellor there who is the psychiatrist. Well I mean there’s psychologists there as well but I went to see the psychiatrist...Um but I mean I was a lil concerned because of where it was and [ ] so people do see you go in. And but I mean it was literally just counselling. It wasn’t like ya know I am I I want hurt myself or I want to hurt somebody and I need these pills and. No it’s literally I go in there and I talk with somebody and he (-) based on his experience (-)I was able to benefit from his expertise. So that’s that’s why sometimes it’s good to go somebody who knows better than you.

It must also be noted that none of these participants mentioned that finances constrained their access to counselling, although all services they accessed were privately provided.

However, a few of the participants, like Shanice, spoke of knowing that finances were a constraint for working class Barbadians’ capacity to access counselling:

Shanice: So like I didn’t think that there were much options fuh me, am-m-m (..), as I said cause I felt really isolated in de situation so like I din think there was much I cudda done or much places ta turn. So-o, it’s (.) just what we have available ta us is lacking in my opinion and were it exists people either don know about it or its costly. So (.) daz jus-s-s-t my take on it ta be honest.

I: And then you said within de wider society then there not many options available and when they are its costly....So de average, working class Barbadian can’t afford to.

Shanice: Can’t afford or don’t know about de free services and then were free services exist it’s like literally one person fuh de entire island, that kinda thing, so [laughter].

It appears then, that going tuh counselling facilitated privately was accessible by my middle class Barbadian participants but still carried a stigma for them. They seemed to see it as the least stigmatized of the treatment options which could be delivered by a mental health professional. Even then, they still only went when they felt their situation was critical.

6.1.2.3.3 Using mental health practices in conjunction with a spiritual response.

Finally, all of the participants who spoke of using mental health practices also spoke of drawing on their spiritual beliefs and practices although the opposite did not pertain. Some of these participants felt that God provided them with access to mental health resources to deal with
situations that were proving to be beyond them or members of their community. Cory’s explanation of how he saw the connection between the two provides a good illustration. Cory explained that he felt that, as part of God’s solution to address your life challenges, God provided guidance on various tools one could use, of which counselling was one:

*Cory: the way that I see it as being linked is at he beginning God gave you free thought and power to make decisions and strength of mind to deal with situations but prayer and meditation will not cause you to get out of the situation. If you are faced with a door locked, sitting and praying about it will not cause the door to be opened. You have to take action nd use your intuition which I believe is guided by God and you do what you have to do to get out of the room. It’s not that you sit and do nothing and hope that when you open your eyes something will be done. Similarly, with mental health you can’t sit and pray all day and hope that when the week starts next Sunday that you are okay. You need to know what works for you and do exactly that. You will be supported by your beliefs and the strengths that God has already given to you. Part of that guidance from God is to seek help from a counsellor

Consequently, these participants explicitly said that mental health and spiritual practices worked synergistically. For example, when asked about what has been helping him to get through his difficulties, Andre replied, “through faith, through my faith and crying and talking and therapy”. This conceptualization of the relationship between the two also seemed to work to allow them to push through the stigma and use mental health practices as part of their response to difficulty.

6.1.2.4 Summary of framework 2

Participants seemed to have had extensive exposure to a mental health approach, by virtue of their class, which they embraced to an extent. They readily utilized mental health concepts to describe what they deemed to be extreme reactions to difficulties. However, this meaning-making did not automatically lead to them using mental health practices to address these reactions although their financial capacity as members of the middle class largely enabled them to have the option to do so. They seemed to only engage in mental health practices for what they deemed to be crisis level experiences and/or when they reconciled it as a spiritually directed tool. Invoking these stress-related concepts and utilizing the corresponding mental health practices in these ways seemed to serve to help them validate to themselves that their emotional and physical reactions were cause for great concern but not yet pathologic, which for them meant requiring medication or institutionalization. In this case, embracing a mental health framework seems to support Fanon’s (1963) observation that the Black middle class strives to be like their former
colonizers in how they live culturally. Yet, my middle class Black Barbadian participants, apparently under the guidance of their spiritual leaders, have clearly transformed the mental health framework into a version that minimizes the harm they know it has historically brought to them, and meshes with frameworks they know to be a source of support.

6.1.3 Framework 3. Community Perspectives

The final component of participants’ response to the challenges imbedded in their daily lives was drawing on their community’s interpretation of difficulties and resources to deal with same.

6.1.3.1 Developing an understanding of community

Participants understanding of themselves as members of community and what that membership involved came from their experiences growing up. In terms of experiences, participants shared that they saw community enacted in how members provided material support to others. This came in the form of caregiving by relatives who at times moved from being a part of a network of people who raised children to being primary caregivers in support of parents who migrated or could not afford to parent independently. For example, Cory explains how a combination of finances and migration resulted in him identifying with his grandmother as his “second mother”:

\[\text{Cory: she was the primary caregiver when my mother was overseas doing her studies. I believe that would have been at a time where a child would have been identifying with the caregiver or a person that is there so...}\]

I: right. How old were you?

\[\text{Cory: I was seven to eleven or so... I came up in the house with my mother, grandmother, aunt, uncle (hits desk a few times while making this point). Sometime in between there it would have been just [living] with my mother as we would’ve moved out, amm then back to that household with my grandmother as my mother went overseas to study and then back again to work, where as I said my grandmother would have been the primary caregiver [during those times].}\]

However, it was also common for those who were not relatives to also step in to parent, mainly in cases where they were financially better off than the child’s biological family, as was the case with Aria:
I: Yeah, yeah. What um (...) you mentioned that you were adopted. How old were you when you were adopted?

Aria: I was two years old.

I: Two years old so you don’t but you said you have a but you know of a biological sister so you’re connected to your biological family.

Aria: I’m connected to my biological family.

I: Right. Yeah yeah. What lead to you um like cause they’re aware of each other so it was a formal adoption? Or it was like within the community and like what what was it?

Aria: (-) It was like one of those things like back in the days where you can have so many children and you can’t raise all of the and you say to this body like ‘yah know what you have this one’...you can provide better for her than I can cause I have 3 or 4 others to think about. So it was more of the case like that. So I wouldn’t spend summers by my biological mother or things like that probably just a week or two but I spend most of my life or all my life with this particular individual.

This material support also sometimes came in the form of persons circumventing formal channels to enable others access to resources, which participants referred to as going through the back door. Participants talked about this as a normal feature of daily life in Barbadian society. For example, Emily describes how this facilitated her attending secondary school and as such improved her chances of getting an education.

Emily: Okay. Well as you know the primary schools, the government primary school and then am-m, I went to, in those days they had something called a Feeder School and that dealt with, um-m (...), I believe the government at the time had (...) chosen areas, where they would am-m (...), have place a secondary school and then they would draw students from different, am-m communities into that and they call that a Feeder school. So-o-o, [the school I attended] at the time, it was called that at the time, that was a Feeder school...but, am-m, there’s something called (...) I think this is a localized term they called, umm (...), “going through the back door” An-n-d, I did not live in a Feeder- I did not live in one of those communities. So-o-o (...) my mother, in fact my sister before me, um, her godmother, um, was a teacher at [this school]. As well as another lady that my mother knew at the time a-n- n-n-d, uh, (...) my sister went to school there because she used to live at her godmother...So she went to [this Feeder school] and then after my mother (...), umm, decided that she would (...) uh-h, seek admittance for me at the same school an-n-d so she got a transfer, they used to call it a transfer. You go and ask the Head Teacher at the time, that was the name called, Principal was not involved then. [Laughs]. And she went to the Head Teacher and asked and got a letter of transfer and so the head teacher would just write the letter and then she would take it to the school (...) and present it to the Principal and so that is how I got into [that school].

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According to participants, they also developed an understanding of community from how others expressed interest in how their life was going, and volunteered ways of making meaning about life. Terri’s description of who she saw as her community and why highlights this:

Terri: the people who are around are- they are close ta you, they are your support system, they are your peers so when I talk about family being supportive I don’t even just mean the people who are literally my blood relatives umm I mean neighbours and people who when you are home, you live overseas and you come home for Christmas they are so happy ta see you and people that when you talk ta your Mum on the phone she is always saying “X” person ask for you “Y” person ask for you, yuh know...

In addition, participants’ understanding of community came about within the context of concerted efforts by the government to inculcate this value within the educational system (MEYC, 2001; UNESCO, 2006), and the leadership provided by the various Christian denominations on the island that Christians see everyone as members of God’s community, strive to understand and cooperate with one another for the benefit of society, and advocate on others’ behalf (Burke, 2016).

6.1.3.2 Drawing on community perspectives

Participants looked to their community for understanding their circumstances and accessing the requisite emotional and tangible resources. Participants also shared that being offered and accepting community support was central to their ways of dealing with the difficult circumstances they identified. All participants spoke of receiving and acting according to perspectives of members of their community, and utilizing tangible resources offered by community. I focus on how they did so next.

6.1.3.2.1 Receiving and accepting meaning making about difficulty

Participants all shared that their ways of interpreting their circumstances were partly shaped by their community. Recall that helping others out of a concern for their wellbeing and the sense that we are all connected was seen as a primary function of community. There were several trends in the interpretations they were given or which shaped the solutions they were given or supported in using. In this section, I draw mainly on secondary participant’ quotes to illustrate the nature of the perspectives they offered primary participants.
The first was that the community perspectives reflected a mental health approach which participants’ themselves embraced. Note that, like the participants, the common thread when community members drew on mental health concepts was that they saw the participant’s experience of the situation to be a dire one, at crisis point and mental health related solutions were offered in these cases. For example, Sandra, a secondary participant, voiced her concern that her daughter Terri might develop a mental health issue due to the conditions of her job and encouraged her to remove herself from the situation:

Sandra: and then she tell, she just tell me one day, amm I think she try to ta hold out as long as she possibly can but then one day she call and tell me the the (...) the boss he was a tyrant, you know so she just call me one day and tell me “a can’t tek it nuh more, I just can’t take it anymore” ...So when she tell me that she cann take anymore I just understood. I I I said taa myself wha I won like my daughta guh steering mad down there, cuh dea, these things cuh send mad people so I tell her come home you have somewhere ta live, you know.

Cory’s wife, Joy was also a secondary participant. She went one step further and encouraged him to seek help from a mental health practitioner after observing a drastic change in his behavior following his grandmother’s death:

Joy: Well he was at a low. That would’ve been the lowest point that I would have ever seen him at... because he is, I use ta tell him that he is the counsellor. He had a lot a friends (...) female friends and males too that would call him fuh advice... He would always be the help, but this side of him that I never saw before this (...) yuh know, sulky, cryie kind a thing. He even went, leff and went ta a graveyard in the middle uh the night...I don’t know the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist ta tell the truth but I but I know that there’s one that he saw. And I also knew of another guy that [who worked at a counselling agency] that I always tell him if you wanna go ta these people let me know, let me drop you, something, ‘cause they are better train ta help you than the little that I know...fuh sure yea I encourage him ta go, ta go ta that well I think (...) the whole counseling thing was my idea.

It appears, therefore, as if community members used a mental health lens to interpret circumstances as difficulties when they felt that the individual was more affected by the circumstances than that individual could manage or which was considered normal of similar persons in similar situations. Participants who agreed with a mental health approach accepted and acted on their community’s recommendations to seek mental health intervention.

Secondly, the meaning-making offered by community members reflected Christian beliefs and practices. Given that all participants embraced a Christian-based spirituality, they readily accepted this type of guidance. For example, Andre shares how his mentor called him when his
preparation for a competition was falling apart and offered him a spiritual perspective on the problems he was experiencing; their perspective transformed his own perspective on the situation:

Andre: The days before the competition Murphy’s law was in full effect everything that could went wrong went wrong... I go church before and (.) when I was at church my phone gine off and I say these people know not to call me when I at church so I know something real wrong. So when church done I call them the men say “buddy” and start to rattle off everything. I went home and just lie down and cry put the covers over my head and cry. My girlfriend come and she say she ain know wha to do (...) and some of the rest came-so everybody was just up there quiet ain know wha to do and (. ) I start to pray cause I ain know wha is you angle [God] but just give me the strength to get through it, just give me the strength to get through it. As soon as that done I get a phone call (.) from this lady, I believe this lady is a God send generally... and she call me and she say man my spirit tell me something else tell me to call you wha happen? And I explain and when this woman done talk to me it did open my eye I did outta the bed jumping up ready the men was outside the men say ‘wha we gine do?’ and I say no matter what happens no matter there will be a way to operate with or without it and we ginemek it happen regardless and that energy bring up the whole team fa that whole day (laughs) and to be honest that is when I started to believe in the power of positive energy cause it was a complete transformation.

Indeed, participants also solicited this kind of support. Jon’s mother, Ruth, a secondary participant, shared that he would call her to pray for him:

Ruth: Um well even now with his work situation its always “mummy pray, pray about this”. Um whatever with his daughter’s mother, “pray about that”; or about his daughter, “pray about that”. Ya know, whatever.

Participants both solicited and were offered a spiritual approach to responding to their difficulties. Having access to persons who shared their spiritual beliefs provided participants with a valuable reminder of how they should approach difficulties when they struggled to easily remember this on their own.

Thirdly, participants drew on community knowledge about the context; this served to validate their perceptions, or decisions and shaped the situation as something participants could get through. For example, when asked how she lent support, Josh’s girlfriend Jane, a secondary participant, revealed that she shared Josh’s perception that his family had abandoned him in his decision to pursue a career in the area he was interested in; consequently, she sought to supplement that via reassuring him that he could be successful:
Jane: But I could see he that he was starting ta doubt himself which ta me if this is what he wanted ta do and he knew it. he could do it and that was it. So I would just try ta like reassure him and that was it because ta me it was hard, its hard when you have parents and like they're suppose tuh be the ones supporting you, you know wuh I mean... So it was just like just having ta listen ta him and reassuring him he could do it and if he wanted help I would try…

Participants also actively drew on community knowledge that constructed the difficulty as an experience they could successfully get through and provided solutions on how to do so. Emily shares that her mother first exposed her to the idea that she could and should get through the barriers to socioeconomic progress and she has repeatedly embraced this to her benefit:

Emily: I always had a feeling deep down because [] my mother used to read and I guess, she liked telling a lot of stories and somehow all of these-e-e-e-e influences, these thoughts and so would...kind of give you or make you (.) see yourself say in a different position. So (.) I remember there was, you know the influences of other people, I know your surroundings and the usual well there’re better surroundings than you are in and that you can aspire to. Even like say those same girls who would’ve gone off to [more prestigious secondary schools], I knew that they couldn’t beat me in the classroom...and seeing them and the way they operate and what not, I want to get out of that situation but, so I used these (.) as ah motivating force.

In other cases, participants drew on community knowledge that corroborated that their responses to the situation could be successful in light of the context. Aria’s friend Kevin, a secondary participant, describes how he encouraged her to embrace her sister’s offer to live with her overseas following her mother’s death and her family’s betrayal:

Kevin: I would have encouraged her to go and do that studying as well. And to explore. To (...) enjoy the experience as much as possible. To go forward with life. And I really was encouraging her to (. ) not just go and beat some books but ya know go and enjoy de experience, go and see a different culture, a different group a people, a different even climate... I also encouraged her to build relationships whether it would have been casual friendships or something stronger, something, more intimacy (-) something more intimate. I encouraged her to get out. Um (..) I didn’t want her to go into a shell... Because I felt it woulda be good for her. I felt it woulda be good to not have to hear these things from her extended family about her. I felt it woulda be good to not be in the same house that she grew up with with the mother that had just passed. Um to have something else to focus on, to have something else to to to pour some effort in. I felt that was good.

Thus, participants sought and received information from their community about the context that yielded a co-constructed interpretation of the situation and how to get through it. This helped
participants to feel more confident in their assessments and not feel alone in their efforts or doubt the direction they were taking to get through the difficulty.

6.1.3.2 Receiving and accepting tangible support

Participants also spoke of being enabled by their community to use a wide variety of material resources. Reflective of the Barbadian value that one must not ask for help directly but wait to be offered it instead (Barrow, 1986), members of participants’ communities mainly volunteered access to these resources. For example, Pinky talks about drawing on her own work experience and professional training to provide her daughter, Rhea, pointers for interviewing for jobs:

Pinky: So-o-o even like certain things like, am-m, ya know ya doing interviews and so on. When you going ta interviews ya know ya try ta tell her certain things she should do-o-o-o-o and ya know. Cause body language says a lot, ya know. Sometimes ya don know if ta open your mouth and you could ya know. So-o, am-m.

I: You draw on your HR training.
Pinky: Yes-s and give her a lot ah pointers and so on and so on. So I think that she is probably getting better. Because it’s very easy fuh you ta have ah degree in ah certain discipline and you go fuh a job and you notice it’s not really what I want and ya going through de process.

In some cases, however, participants solicited assistance. For example, Janice shares that once her parents realized she was intent on pursuing her career in the arts, they agreed to her request for financial assistance:

Janice: So I just always put my head down and did it...I kind of told them afterwards that I just got into like four schools and I’m going to go in September and I need to raise 10,000 dollars after having raised my own 10,000 but I was like can you help me with that? And they were like (sigh) what is happening? (quietly) So yeah, and so my father was like you could write this letter to this Ministry of Culture and la la la and see what happens there and my mother like did a insurance policy and all of this

Regardless of if these resources were offered or requested, participants emphasized that this type of support left them with a sense that they were not alone in the situation and could get through it. These were all resources that the participant would not have had access to on their own; and by virtue of level of education and financial security, working class Black Barbadians might not have access to the same types of tangible resources.
6.1.3.3 Summary of framework 3

Overall then, participants’ received and accepted perspectives and resources from their community which helped reinforce their individual efforts to get through difficulties in some way. Communities served to 1) remind participants of strategies they could use, 2) validate or underscore participants’ perceptions of the situation, and 3) provided needed material support. In this way, there was a collective dimension to the way in which participants’ successfully dealt with the difficulties in their lives. The result was that participants felt a deep gratitude for what they saw as unconditional support.

6.2 Chapter Summary

The participants in my study report drawing on three main frameworks to successfully deal with difficulties in their lives. These frameworks were all contextually situated and culturally shaped. Participants were exposed to these three meaning-making systems as interconnected and they used them in this same way. No one participant drew on any one of these frameworks exclusively. Drawing on these frameworks in conjunction with each other served to help participants 1) validate the situation as difficult, to a particular degree and hence warranting a particular response; 2) construct the various circumstances giving rise to difficulties as ones they would get through; and 3) access existential, emotional, and tangible resources that facilitated them getting through these challenges effectively. In addition, participants were able to draw on some of the actions associated with these frameworks by virtue of the level of education and financial security which they had or had access to as members of the Black Barbadian middle class.

In the next and final part of my analysis, I present participants’ account of what their lives look like as a result of using this hybrid response to respond to the difficulties which they are facing.
7: Analysis Part III

7.1 Work in progress… Resulting Features of Daily Life

Participants all spoke of difficulties in their lives as constant and described their use of a hybridized response to effectively deal with them as an ongoing process. They described five key ways of going about their daily lives which they saw as a consequence of their efforts. They deemed these five features of how they were living their lives as indicative that they were successfully getting through these everyday problems. In this chapter, I present these indicators.

7.1.1 Feature 1. Feeling Negative Emotions Less Intensely

Participants recount recognizing that they eventually began to perceive the situation differently and correspondingly having a different and/or less intense emotional response to the situation than they initially did. They all shared a range of feelings in relation to the difficulties: disappointment, isolation, loneliness, feeling overwhelmed, fear, frustration, stress, anger, and feeling unfairly treated. As illustrated previously, in some cases, the intensity of the emotion, indicated by the impact on their behavior or impact on their physical health, signalled to participants and/or those around them that they needed to change their response to the situation. Participants then used a decrease in intensity of these emotions or a return of others as one way of gauging their success in dealing with the difficulties they were facing. Below, Janice describes changes she saw in her breathing and interactions with others which let her know she was getting through her difficulties successfully:

Janice: ...I think when I just started to feel better. And so now I think when I started to feel better I knew that was a depression. I did know when I was depressed that I was depressed. And when I kinda found myself back so I kinda liken it to being able to breathe so I kinda like feel like (slowly breathe in and out) and I think oh my god I haven’t been breathing in 4 years oh my god. So ya know I can’t tell you (.) what were the markers of things ya know but maybe if you started to laugh and you were like shit I haven’t laughed in forever or I was like this for a whole week. Ya know stuff like that… I started to breathe again and was like oh (.) right that’s what that was oh my god that was terrible. And talked to better (-) and talk to people better. Have better relationships. Yeah engage. (..) And um and feel less sorry for myself that’s the thing. And stop beating myself up as much ‘cause there was a lot of harsh criticism. So ya know that thing I talk about with being inside and outside myself where like-that just went away.
People in participants’ communities also used similar gauges. For example, secondary participant Bobbie, notes the ways in which his cousin Onika began to behave like herself again that let him know she was now dealing with the situation with her husband better:

I: You said you noticed she was beginning to be okay again. What would you say let you know that she was beginning to be ok again.

Bobbie: She was more relaxed, she used to be so tense that you walk into a room with her and she would be like “Hi B how ya doing” only, I mean literally but then well she would make eye contact wid me cause we always had that special bond between us but for the average person she would be a lil withdrawn and she got much more friendly- start laughing more, being able to make a joke and ya could slowly see her old self coming back where ya could say ok, we passed the worse.

Participants and those in their community demonstrate that they valued emotions as a source of information regarding how well an individual was dealing with difficulties. They interpreted how these emotions accounted for changes in behavior. In this way, they conveyed the notion that there were specific emotions an individual did not intensely feel or which were not manifested in behavior when they were effectively dealing with difficulties.

7.1.2 Feature 2. Changing the Dynamics of Difficult Situations

Participants also spoke of successfully getting through difficulties as becoming able to intentionally act to change the dynamics of difficult situations for others. As Natalie asserted, “Tuhday fuh me, tuhmor fuh you.”. Some participants spoke of changing the dynamics explicitly as engaging in some action to help others in similar situations. For example, Taz consciously connects to people who have been in car accidents to share his insights because of his awareness of how this had helped him:

Taz: Um I remember like one of my friends, he went through ah accident. Me and him were never really close but when I went through the accident then he came forward and he was like really there for me cause obviously he could have relate to my situation. And similar with me now too like anybody that goes through a accident or anything else I kinda step forward a lil bit more. Um as opposed to before like I had friends that went through car accidents that I was close with and I guess I was there but not on the level that I would be there now. Because I could not wrap my head around what they were going through before. So I wasn’t really that much hands on. Some of dem I would probably visit even probably once when dey in a good mood, cheering them up wuher. But now like if somebody goes through something I grasp a lil bit more what they’re going through.
Others used their own experiences to provide the guidance they felt they would have needed but did not receive in the same situation. For example, Natalie consciously tries to give constructive feedback to help persons in her industry improve because she was not provided with this type of mentorship when she was starting out in her field:

*Natalie:* Like I think that sometimes people who are in managerial positions sometimes they have no sense on how to interact with people. I think the good thing that came out of that is that well I had a sense of compassion but one the good things that came out of that is that I know how I don’t want people how ta speak to me. So I in turn now I don’t speak to people in that. I don do it. I know how it makes me feel

*I:* No shouting or no criticism.

*Natalie:* Exactly, you know and if you have something ta say to somebody that you think they could do it better- I do this method where if I have to tell you something that I think you should improve on. I tell you something about you that I like. Then I tell you about the thing that you should improve on. Then I tell you something else about you that I like.

Others still saw changing the dynamics of difficult situations as acting to help others in the same way that made the circumstances less of a difficulty for them, even when the other persons’ circumstances are different. For example, Onika shares that she benefitted from having friends to talk through life with or who made her life easier financially; and so she tries to do the same for others:

*Onika:* I do as well (.) what I can ta make other peoples life easier because lots of people have done that ta make my life easier. And I know that it’s something ta pay forward. So I try ta do that when I can and it’s not only in terms of financial. Lots ah people who I talk to may be going through ah particular experience and sometimes all they need is somebody ta listen ta them.

Moreover, some participants saw changing the dynamics of the difficult situation as an enactment of their spiritual beliefs. Michelle explains that she felt she is to offer to reciprocate to others the help which God had made available to her:

*Michelle:* sometimes you just have to help people through, sometimes you just have to help carry them through the thing so God provided persons to carry me through when I couldn’t do it myself. And so I’ve come to a point now where I’m able to stand on my own and when we get to that point sometimes we have to help to carry other people.
While for other participants, helping was rooted in their understanding and experience of community. Jason describes that the way his community stepped up to support him after his mother’s death was invaluable and he wanted others to know that someone was there to help, that they do not have to go through situations alone:

Jason: And (..) you (..) if you (-) ya know sometimes people some ya feel oh well I gon just resign into myself and stuff. But you you got help out there ya know. There’s help out there. Like you got people you could talk to, friends you could hang out with. And that’s why I do try to make time too when my friends say they’re sad or depressed or whatever. Or going through a rough time... But I try to um (..) just ya know if somebody want to go out don’t worry about if you ain’t got no money, no problem, come. Because when you going through dem tings you need people. I feel worse, when I alone for too long.

Participants, therefore, expressed successful navigation of difficulties as getting to a place where they could offer 1) guidance, and 2) access to tangible resources or emotional support to others in that person’s time of difficulty. Participants’ commitment to help was grounded in their own spiritual beliefs and understanding of community, and reinforced by their experiences of having or not having support during their own difficulties.

7.1.3 Feature 3. Seeing God at Work

According to participants, when you are effectively dealing with challenges in your everyday life you can see God working in your life to help address those difficulties in some way. Participants identified two types of occurrences as indicators of God at work. The first was getting access to opportunities and/or resources to help them, especially where there seemed to be none. Shanice’s description of how she was able to complete her education before conditions at her job became unbearable illustrates this sense that God ordains daily life:

Shanice: I definitely say perfect timing (speech quickens). I just feel like things would all kind of fallen in ta place when they were supposed ta fuh me. Am-m, and I may not see it in de moment but in hindsight I definitely because,(. ) fuh instance, I tried ta quit when my internship was starting because I din think that I could handle everything. And my, de old General Manager at de time he was like no we gine work round you schedule, we gine figure this out, I don’t want you to go and things and that. Like my car started to give trouble half through my internship and I don wuh I wudda do if I din have a job. Not that I don know wuh I wudda do but it wudda been a lot tougher if I din have a job and then like de take over, de change ah ownership happened in May and my internship finished in May. And I know that there was no way that they would’ve allowed me ta do my internship cuz my internship was full time. So I was at [internship]during de day and
Participants also attributed the actions of those in their lives to God at work. While they gave credit to members of their community who provided them with tangible and emotional help, they ultimately credited those actions to God. Emily’s explanation of how she was able to get through the racial and class discrimination to make a living provides an illustration of how participants saw this connection:

Emily: Yeah, I would, in that way but at least as I said it didn’t stop me because (..). I mean I always say to myself God had a purpose for me (.). I don’t feel that I did everything on my own I don’t think that because if not I might have succumb to those types of things (.) but there was somebody there all the time say to guide me along. (.)

Jon provides a similar reasoning, explaining that he saw support show up whenever he communicated to God that he was at his limit in dealing with his difficulties:

Jon: Cause I think God put them people, I think that there are always, and that’s the thing, to this very day, to the lowest points when I think oh my God somebody does just pop on my door… If we got to find that one thing that has led me where I am here, present day, it has to be God, it has to be God, and as I said, they were people and there were events but it was all just so strategic, you know, it can’t be happenstance, so.

Recall that participants’ perspective of difficulties is that God will resolve all issues in life to their benefit. When they began to be better equipped to address the circumstances that were creating difficulties for them, they saw this as indicative of God at work in their lives and hence that they were getting through the situation. Some of them realized what was happening in the moment while others indicated that they realized this in retrospect. For other participants, having put their trust in their God, they anticipated that the eventual outcome would be one of success.

7.1.4 Feature 4. Responding in an Inconsistent Manner

Participants all expressed that experiencing negative emotions less intensely; acting to change the dynamics of difficult situations for others; and seeing God at work does not mean that there are not instances where their emotions are still intense. According to participants, this is because they still do not consistently or immediately use the requisite responses to deal with challenging situations for one reason or another. Sharon’s explanation of why she does not
consistently place her trust in God although she has seen how He worked out things in her life is one example of this:

_Sharon:_ I do believe there is God out there that has assisted me in getting through, just giving me ya know lil not- I can’t say direct’ but I think he has helped me and kinda given me strength to get through many tests.

_I:_ I’ve heard some people talk about a personal relationship with God in terms of like ya know I was having a conversation with God and this is what we said is that something?

_Sharon:_ I would have to say no. I (.) I still think I need to get to that stage I’ve heard people talk of it to that thing but to me, my trust is my worst enemy.

_I:_ Even with God.

_Sharon:_ So even with God although He supposed to; there’s so much that I still don’t give to Him or expose my whole self, right and I think that might be what stopping me from feeling this thing that everybody else, well those persons that really believe, right? I need to see where I’m going. That is something yea because well the way that I saw it before, as I said I had faith that everything would have thing and it ain work out if you understand what I mean?! So I still between two minds as in what did I do wrong or was I not trusting of God enough or whatever so.

Participants shared that there are also still aspects of the difficulties that they are grappling with and/or avoiding dealing with. For example, Jason describes how losing his sense of self through his mother’s loss has impacted his capacity to consistently have healthy attachments in all types of relationships:

_Jason:_ Relationships. I didn’t really want to, I didn’t wanna get in them, like girlfriend. I didn’t want nuh girlfriend. Cause I didn’t want to love nobody like that... So I was really (-) cause I used be friendly with people then all the time I used to worry about that. When I started thinking about like if dis body died how it gonna be... where I am now, what’s come out of it is that I I understand that you have to appreciate people now. While they’re there. And um, and right and you just try to do the best you can by ya friends, ya family, even strangers and that sorta thing. So instead of being afraid of somebody passing away you understand ya know it make it makes you appreciate life more... but sometimes ya know it still gets to ya. Cause like as I said like in terms of death, when I was working um I had at a point in time we had many colleagues pass in a very short period of time. Two that I was very close to. And um ya know sometimes it it it it affects you how you look at life sometimes. Ya know but because of what I went through I handled (-) I can handle it better. Ya know I don’t I don’t go into what I would think is um self-destructive behavior ...Um but ya just realise that when (-) that these things will happen in life... I went from one extreme, in terms of not wanting to get close to people, to being very I ain’t want to say I just kinda clingy in a way. To in into a person I had
known um formed an attachment to. Um not being able to cut off relationships that are toxic and stuff like that. Romantic or otherwise. Um that was something that I (-) I mean I don’t really let go people just like that. Which is bad. Um (...) I get very attached. Yeah that’s something. Which ya know I deal with up to now- I try to.

As a result, participants asserted that their ongoing process of effectively navigating difficulties was not about consistently responding to their situations such that they were no longer emotionally affected. Rather, for them, it was about recognizing that they had improved in how they responded but acknowledging that there was still room to grow.

7.1.5 Feature 5. Continuously Facing Difficult Contextual Dynamics

Finally, participants shared that although they saw themselves as better dealing with their problems, these were circumstances which were outside of their control, a part of the socioeconomic/political/historic context or culture in Barbados that they still had to deal with on an ongoing basis. For example, Jo Jo explains that despite feeling as if her work conditions are unfair and wanting to leave, the problem was systemic and the economy was bad so she would have to settle for venting:

Jo Jo: So being a working poor you know you have to have money to pay the the bills that you incur. And there times when I really would truly like to go to [work] and go F YOU. Right, it’s like I ain’t know. I imagine how, the house slaves would feel cooking for the master, taking the food for the master, being disrespected by the master and still smiling going yes sir I love you master. Yeah because you know yuh got to keep the lil pick. Right? Um so when that happens and I get in the car or we get home I unleash fury. Everything that I had before bottled up for them, he’ll get it. Right?

Similarly, Terri articulates that gender inequality is a function of Barbadian culture that she can only learn how to navigate; she would always be faced with it:

Terri: ... and you can privately resent the fact that your colleague can get away with it and you can’t but you do what you have ta do and when you understand that, then it’s a little easier ta navigate because then also it becomes like second nature as well which is why I’m not sure amm, I know that you’re your project is about how overcoming the challenges but for me I’m not sure this is something that we are going ta overcome without it really being a society that is that is where we have equality, that where we have equality, where we have gender equality, I’m not sure that you learn ta deal with it but its not necessarily something that can be overcome because its beyond your control rite, it's beyond the control of your circumstances as well...the challenges that that we have as women in the workplace are a function of the society that we live in, its not necessarily a function of the workplace rite, so even if one day the board of directors came in and said “we are having
gender equality from tomorrow, women would be paid the same as men and everything would be equal across the board” impossible, because you’re dealing with human beings who have been brought up in a specific way

Consequently, participants explicitly articulated that effectively getting through these difficulties in their everyday lives was not a matter of overcoming or resolving difficulty. For them, the situations that posed difficulties for them were contextual and ongoing; successfully navigating them meant learning how to deal with the systemic and culturally shaped circumstances better.

7.2 Chapter Summary

Participants agreed on a number of ways of living daily life that they interpreted as indicative of them effectively getting through difficulties. These characteristics of their daily lives were not tied to specific difficulties. As expected however, the main frameworks constituting their response were clearly reflected in their sense of what outcomes would ensue. In addition, there was a strong sense that successfully getting through difficulties did not mean that the difficulties had disappeared or that they were consistently using those strategies which reduced their emotional reaction to the difficulties. In fact, on the contrary, they seemed to hold a position that although some elements of the difficulties were beyond their control to address or they did not consistently respond as they felt they should, progress had been made and should be acknowledged as indicative of success. In this sense, they saw successfully navigating these difficulties in their daily lives as an ongoing process and not an accomplished outcome.

Some questions remain. How do these findings compare to existing resilience research on Black Barbadians and others in the Global South? What might these findings mean for the efforts to support Black Barbadians in dealing with difficulties in their daily lives. This is the focus of my next chapter.
8: Discussion & Conclusions

8.1 A Note on Structure

I began this dissertation report by providing a description of the social, political and economic context in Barbados and how middle class Black Barbadians are known to live culturally as a backdrop for my argument that uncritically using the prevailing conceptualization of the phenomenon to understand their experiences would be socially unjust. I then provided a critical review of the existing literature on the concept “resilience”, the context within which the concept came about, the various approaches used to study the phenomenon, and the findings of researchers seeking to define and understand how the phenomenon occurs and is conceptualized by those in the Global South. I followed this review by outlining the methodology I would use instead to understand how the phenomenon occurred for middle class Black Barbadians and how they conceptualize it. In the last three chapters, I presented an alternative conceptualization of the phenomenon and an explanation of how it occurs, grounded in the experiences of middle class Black Barbadians living in Barbados. Charmaz (2014) suggests that researchers evaluate a substantive grounded theory using three criteria: originality, resonance, and usefulness. How does this theory of Bein’ uh work in progress and my associated constructs line up with existing conceptualizations of the phenomenon? What does it contribute to our understanding of how the phenomenon occurs? What do these findings mean for how subsequent research might be conducted with others from the Global South? How can the findings be used by policy makers, program designers and researchers to support similar middle class Black Barbadians in effectively dealing with difficulties characterizing their daily lives? I discuss these questions in this final chapter, and provide some considerations for interpreting my analysis.

8.2 A Case for Broadening the Prevailing Conceptualization of “Resilience”

The theory Bein’ uh work in progress (See Figure 1 below) explains the ongoing, non-linear process which middle class Black Barbadians engage in to respond to contextually situated and culturally shaped difficulties so as to live in a way that they acknowledge their growth through the journey, recognize what is and is not within their control, and commit to making all possible improvements in how they deal with the difficulties, over time. The theory consists of three interrelated constructs: de ting dat really get me, wha yuh’s do?, and work in progress. The first
construct, *de ting dat really get me* reflects participants’ sense of reaching a breaking point with three main difficulties: *tryin tuh mek uh livin*; dealing with harmful gender roles, and encountering challenges to understanding and experience of community. These difficulties seem to be shaped by Barbados’ position as a post colonial society subject to neocolonial and neoliberal forces, and the hybrid culture created as a result of British enslavement of Africans on a small island. The second construct, *wha’ yuh’s do?* speaks to participants’ hybridized process of responding to these challenges, constituted of drawing on and acting in accordance with Christian-based spiritual beliefs and practices; mental health concepts and practices; and perspectives of their community, albeit to varying degrees. The final construct in the theory, *work n progress*, captures 5 key changes that all participants begin to see in their daily lives as a result of the actions they have been taking: 1) their emotional response is less intense and pervasive although; 2) their efforts to manage their emotions are not as consistent as they could be; 3) they are seeing God at work in their lives; 4) they are able to act to change some dynamics of difficulty for the benefit of others, although; 5) they have not been able to eliminate the difficulty for themselves or others since the circumstances giving rise to difficulties were a complex feature of their context. Participants see this combination of features in their daily lives as indicative of them successfully dealing with these difficulties.

**THEORY OF MIDDLE CLASS BLACK BARBADIAN RESILIENCE: BEIN’ UH WORK IN PROGRESS**

**DE TING DAT REALLY GET ME**
- *Tryin tuh mek uh livin*:
  - Gettin on education
  - Pursuing interests/talents
  - Encountering roadblocks in emigrating
  - Encountering unfair working conditions
- *Dealing with harmful gender roles*:
  - Stigma re: Home and family life
  - Intimate partner disrespect & violence
  - Sexual objectification in workplace
- *Encountering challenges to understanding/experience of community*:
  - Feeling betrayed & abandoned
  - Crab n bucket mentality
  - Losing sense of who you are due to loss

**WHY'S YUH’S DO?**
- *Using spirituality*:
  - Prayin for help
  - Pettin’ thes in God’s hands
  - Pushin across barriers
- *Drawing on Mental health concepts/practices*:
  - Using mental health terms
  - Remonstrin self from situation
  - Gettin in counselin
  - Using mental health practices in conjunction with a spiritual response
- *Using community perspectives & resources*:
  - Receiving & acceptin meaning-making about difficulty
  - Receiving & acceptin tangible supports

**WORK ‘N PROGRESS**
- Feeling negative emotions less intensely
- Seeing God at work
- Changing the dynamics of difficult situations
- Responding in an inconsistent manner
- Continuously facing difficult contextual dynamics

*Figure 2 Theory of Middle Class Black Barbadian Resilience: Bein’ uh work in Progress*
The conceptualization of “resilience” which dominates research with adults from the Global South is that, through a dynamic process, individuals adapt how they think, feel and behave in order to exhibit good outcomes in the context of serious, one-off threats to their development (see Alim et al., 2008; Burnett & Helm, 2013; Hendriks et al 2019; Sun et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). However, as I will argue below, and similar to the work of other critical scholars, my conceptualization of “resilience” as Bein’ uh work in progress shows that this prevailing conceptualization is limited and marginalizing (Atallah, 2017; Grandbois & Sanders, 2009; Hatala et al., 2015; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Lacet, 2016). Moreover, my theory challenges the boundaries of the main constructs constituting “resilience”: adversity and normal development. In addition, my account of how Bein’ uh work in progress occurs challenges the prevailing notion of how the phenomenon unfolds. Indeed, the theory of Bein’ uh work in progress reinforces the notion that how life unfolds, and what is valued as normal and desirable about how life should unfold is not in fact universal, but rather, is locally situated and culturally shaped. Moreover, that participants describe their process of successfully dealing with difficulties as ongoing and non-linear is by no means indicative of their deficiency in relation to “resilience”; instead it speaks to the chronicity of difficulty in their daily lives as well as their Christian-based perspective on how God works in their lives. In this way, therefore, this theory is in and of itself an act of resistance to this hegemonic conceptualization of resilience and the associated constructs and must be received as such. In this first section, I bring my analysis into conversation with extant research on “resilience”, illustrating how my findings build on a growing body of research calling for the concept to be broadened to be more socially just.

8.2.1 The nature of “normal development” and “adversity”

My analysis extends research on “normal development” by illustrating that daily life does not unfold in the same way for everyone as implied by resilience researchers’ conceptualization of “normal development”. For example, in a large portion of resilience research “normal development” is in part defined by achieving or acquiring the tools to achieve financial independence from families of origin, starting families of your own, and acquisition of key material possessions as an adult, all in keeping with the American conceptualization of the good life. However, my participants add that normal and healthy living is also about supporting and encouraging each other. This is contradictory to neoliberalist values and similar to findings by
scholars such as Kirmayer et al. (2011) that Mi’kmaq people see being a true human being as living in peace and friendship with others, and findings from Lacet (2016) that Haitian women believe that they are to live their lives to be the source of strength for their families and communities. My participants still did not have the material things they felt they should in making a living as members of the Barbadian middle class and also did not feel their conditions would improve in the immediate future. Nevertheless, they still felt they were successfully dealing with these challenges associated with making a living. This is partially because they could see how they were living according to their understandings of themselves as members of a community and as God called them to deal with difficulties. The findings highlight that what constitutes “normal development” is culturally shaped and can vary; an individualistic experience of human development is not universal. This must be considered in assessing how people in the Global South successfully deal with significant difficulties and hence how they can be best supported according to the various ways in which they experience life.

The analysis also supports research that adversities originate and are maintained outside of the individual sphere of control; the individual is not the sole source of the problem and/or only site of the solution as most resilience research claims. What emerged from my analysis is that policies and institutions created by those in the U.S., U.K, Europe and Canada, whether intentionally or incidentally, unfold as difficulties in the daily lives of the Black Barbadians in my study. This parallels findings from Atallah (2017), Chung and colleagues (2014), Isaak and colleagues (2015), Kirmayer and colleagues (2011), Reid (2018), Teti and colleagues (2012) and Wexler (2014) that forces in the individual’s historical, economic and social context shape adversity; these should be highlighted alongside of that individual’s perception and emotional reaction in resilience studies. This suggests that some adversities are located in the context for some peoples in the Global South, and hence solutions for addressing them must also include changes to the policies and structures in the context and not only changes to the individual’s response. In this way, my research also lends credence to concerns that a decontextualized conceptualization of the phenomenon is not just inadequate but dangerous for understanding how those people in the Global South, whose lives are shaped by neocolonial and neoliberal practices and policies, deal with difficulties successfully.
Thirdly, the analysis also supports research that the ordinary experience of living for some is about continuously dealing with circumstances which are giving rise to difficulties. Moreover, the difficulties my participants encounter are interconnected but not in any predictable way. This parallels research by Brodsky (1999), Chung and colleagues (2014), Radan (2007) and Teti and colleagues (2012), that adversities are not always or only one-off, abnormal, discrete events. It also supports findings by Brodsky (1999), Scarpino (2007) and Isaak and colleagues (2015) that the same difficulties can be intertwined and ongoing throughout an individual’s life and this is what makes resilience an ongoing process throughout one’s life, rather than an accomplished outcome. It is not only that new types of difficulties occur late in life for those who have successfully dealt with other kinds of difficulties before. Therefore, the understanding of “adversity” and “resilience” must be broadened in this way also.

Finally, some studies have examined how events and interactions associated with an individual’s community can be a source of difficulties. Lee, Shen & Tran (2009) report that human loss during Hurricane Katrina was a significant predictor of psychological distress and hence adversity for African Americans. However, thus far, no resilience studies with people of African descent seem to be available which explicitly demonstrate that loss of community members is an adversity because an individual’s sense of who they are is grounded in who they are in relation to others. My analysis also reveals findings similar to Akinsulure-Smith, (2016) that because an individuals’ sense of who they are is co-constructed with their community, not meeting family expectations regarding who they should be can play out difficulties for individuals. My findings introduce a new area of research for resilience scholars with adults who might understand themselves as members of a community in similar ways.

8.2.2 Nature of effective responses to adversity

Another key way in which my analysis challenges existing resilience research is by highlighting that ways of effectively dealing with adversity for some is hybrid and not a mechanistic, predictable combination of discrete protective and risk factors. My analysis demonstrated that some persons draw on a variety of ways of making meaning and use accompanying actions simultaneously, in an interconnected way, and the way in which this occurs is different from person to person. This is similar to findings from Brodsky (1999) that the process of effectively dealing with difficulties for her African American women living in
high risk neighbourhoods involved continuously balancing those stressors which arise in various aspects of their lives with the resources available to them at a given time to respond.

Moreover, my specific findings that this hybrid response is made up of drawing on spiritual and mental health frameworks, and perspectives from community aligns with those of other scholars that the phenomenon can have relational and collective dimensions in addition to an individual one (see Atallah, 2017; Grandbois & Sander, 2009; Hatala et al., 2015; Lacet, 2016). My research demonstrates that communities actively offer knowledge, tangible resources and skills to individuals to draw on to interpret circumstances in their lives and respond to them. Conversely, in the bulk of resilience literature reviewed, individuals receiving help from members of their community is labelled as social support and understood only as the individual reaching out for tangible and emotional help (Mendenhall et al., 2012; Utsey et al., 2007). Furthermore, family and community provision of interpretations and sense of self has not yet been accounted for in resilience studies with Black Barbadians or Black Caribbean people (see Burnett & Helm, 2013; Cadogan-McClean, 2009), although that practice is documented in other bodies of literature about Black Caribbean people. These findings expand this understanding of the role which an individual’s community and relationships play in how they successfully deal with adversity in their lives. I was only able to uncover this collective and relational dimension of “resilience” by using the relational ontology and epistemology which guides how my Black Barbadian participants and some others in the Global South live their lives.

My analysis also supports several studies with persons from the Global South in general and persons of African descent in particular which have claimed that strong religious beliefs, and engagement in religious practices promote “resilience” (Alim et al., 2008; Burnett & Helm, 2013; Mendenhall et al., 2012; and Walker & Longmire-Avital, 2013). While these studies merely stated that these strong beliefs were present or what these beliefs were, my research, like Akinsulure-Smith, (2016), Bachay & Cingel (1999), Isaak and colleagues (2015), Lacet (2016), and Wexler (2014) extends this by illustrating how these beliefs and practices serve to help persons make meaning of situations and hence successfully deal with adversities.

My findings that members of my participants’ community acted as a source of support in the form of providing interpretation of situations and validating participants’ perceptions and responses build on reports by Mendenhall and colleagues (2012) that emotional support from
extended family promoted “resilience” occurring for their participants. This finding also builds on Utsey and colleagues (2007) claim that collective coping (that is a group of family and friends coming together to assist in some way) strongly predicts “resilience” occurring among their African American adult participants from high risk urban communities.

My interpretation that the Black Barbadians in my study drew on their spirituality and community to deal with difficulties also support the call coming from scholars (Adams et al., 2015; Schwarz, 2018) who present a critique of the neocolonial and neoliberal assumptions underlying the use of the existing conceptualization of “resilience” to design interventions in the Global South. These scholars call for researchers to look for what local ways of dealing with adversity might exist that 1) are not reflected in values and experiences underpinning the existing interventions based on resilience research; and 2) provide possibilities for dealing with adversity which do not involve people in the Global South continuously paying for the services of an expert, specifically one operating according to imposed and/or irrelevant understandings of their lives. These findings add to those by Grandbois and Sanders (2009), Hatala and colleagues (2015), Isaak and colleagues (2015), Kirmayer and colleagues (2011), Lacet (2016), and Wexler (2014) that communities have their own, existing ways of effectively dealing with difficulties which merely need to be identified, documented and brought to the communities’ awareness.

8.2.3 Nature of the “resilience” process

In the first place, as mentioned at the outset of the dissertation, there is a paucity of documentation of the phenomenon conceptualized as “resilience” for Black Barbadians and other Black Caribbean people. By providing this substantive theory, this dissertation offers a starting point for conceptualizing this process of how similar middle class Black Barbadians get through significant difficulties successfully, and advances our empirical understanding of adversities and what effectively dealing with them looks like. This study provides a foundation for other resilience scholars in the Caribbean and its diaspora to build on. Moreover, the theory of Bein’ uh work in progress aligns with research by Lacet (2016) that conceptualizations of “resilience” are culturally shaped. The theory of Bein’ uh work in progress points to how adversities and successfully dealing with them occur simultaneously, instead of adversities coming to an end and normal life being resumed as implied by the “bounce back” or “recover from” conceptualizations
of the phenomenon, or difficulties not impacting normal living as assumed by the “in spite of” conceptualization. My findings support research by Brodsky (1999) who argued that for the African American single mothers in her study, “resilience” is an ongoing process of “making it”, balancing stressors and resources that arise; and punctuated by attainment of goals along the way. In so doing, these findings add to the mounting evidence which challenge the prevailing notion in resilience research that the process of “resilience” occurs in the same way for everyone.

8.3 Considerations for Interpreting the Analysis

For several reasons, my analysis can be considered credible and facilitative of others making transferability judgements. The first reason lies in my use of reflexive measures. I attended to my influence on the research, particularly as someone from the context and same class as my participants, via keeping a reflexive journal and engaging in reflexive discussions with my committee. In so doing, I was able to leverage my tacit knowledge but remain curious. This improved my capacity to interrogate participants’ accounts and understand the connection to the Barbadian context. This also improved the thickness of my description which in turn enables others to better determine if they should consider trying to see if the findings would hold with middle class Black Barbadians in another context or the same context at another time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A second reason lies in my efforts to centre participants’ interpretations of their experiences. By centring participants’ meaning making, I was able to obtain perspectives of participants’ support system as well as local experts on the various difficulties and ways of making meaning which emerged. This served to fill in some gaps in participants’ accounts which I was unaware existed in some cases as well as helped me to clarify participants’ accounts and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. I also had participants use their pictures to tell their stories instead of trying to interpret them myself and risk blindly imposing my own experiences, values and biases. In addition, I solicited from participants their solutions to deal with the various difficulties they raised (see Kirmayer et al, 2011; Wexler, 2014). Via their recommendations and provision of details of how they developed their responses to difficulties and their indicators of successfully dealing with difficulties, the dissertation offers a solid starting point for designing and evaluating policies and social change programs in Barbados with similar middle class Black
Barbadians. By attending to and preserving participants’ language of communication (Kirmayer et al. (2011), I was able to understand how spiritual beliefs, mental health concepts, and understandings of community shaped the ways they made meaning of their circumstances. This use of member checking in this research project with the various categories of participants and my research assistant increased the credibility of my analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Use of member checking also increased the thickness of my description and hence better enables others to make judgements about the transferability of my findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, my analysis must be considered within the context of a few conditions. The context within which this analysis was developed is an important consideration. This study utilized a small middle class group of Black Barbadians. By virtue of education and finances, my participants have access to resources to deal with difficulties which working class Black Barbadian do not. Because of finances and race, my participants will encounter circumstances which pose difficulties for them which will not pose problems for upper-class, or non-Black Barbadians. Although Barbados has a large middle class, it can be argued that these participants share unique characteristics which do not apply to some other Black Barbadians in and outside of Barbados or other non-Black Barbadians.

Secondly, like other interpretive research, another researcher may arrive at varied conclusions with the same data because of their own sensitizing conceptualizations. Despite my extensive use of member checking prior to this first public presentation of the findings, my education, class, religious orientation, personal and professional networks, training as a psychotherapist within North American institutions, experience working as a Psychotherapist in North America and the Caribbean, and current location as a student in a Canadian University as well as participants’ perception of me all shaped the data I looked to collect, the participants who volunteered for the study, the data participants provided to me, and my interpretation of it.

Finally, scholars in the Global South are challenged to disseminate their work due to the cost of accessing more prominent journals and their own indigenous journals not being widely accessible (Danziger, 2006). Therefore, the possibility exists that there may be research done in the Caribbean on “resilience” which I was not able to compare and/or connect my analysis to.
8.3 Implications for Conducting Future Resilience Research

This study highlights some ways in which researchers can build on the present findings and methodologies which they might use to do so.

8.3.1 Areas to explore

There are a number of important areas which this research suggests could benefit from further exploration. Perhaps the most important area for future study which the dissertation highlights is the need for studies which critically broaden the conceptualization of “resilience” to include the experiences and perspectives of those in the Global South. For example, this research project has substantiated that there is a collective dimension to “resilience” for the middle class Black Barbadian participants. In addition, there is evidence in other bodies of literature that working and middle class Black Barbadians have historically engaged in social activism in response to oppressive policies and decisions from the local government and the Global North. Therefore, future consideration might also be given in resilience literature to the ways in which social activism has been a dimension of how the phenomenon has historically played out for Black Barbadians from slavery until the present. Moreover, this dissertation explicated how neoliberal and neocolonial forces operating in Barbadian society played out for a segment of formerly colonized persons such that they experienced great distress. By examining existing policies and laws, and the content of and methods for disseminating information reaching middle class Black Barbadians, the dissertation made a case for future resilience researchers considering how these forces shape “adversity” and “resilience” for decolonized peoples. Finally, given the proliferation of training opportunities in mental health currently existing in Barbados, further research might also consider how mental health concepts might be being commodified here (Schwarz, 2018; Timimi, 2017), and the implications of this for middle class Black Barbadians, particularly the extent to which it contributes to the dismissal of what this research has demonstrated are their local ways of responding to difficulties.

On a broader level, my analysis accounts for the experiences of other middle class Black Barbadians-in many ways, the difficulties they experienced and the resources they have access to are related to their membership to the Black Barbadian middle class. Researchers might wish to examine how the phenomenon plays out for other segments of the population such as working class Barbadians.
8.3.2 Methodologies and methods

This dissertation project adds to a body of evidence substantiating the need to use critical, constructivist methodologies when looking at how persons in the Global South define and experience the phenomenon conceptualized as “resilience”. In particular, it lends credence to the use of the relational ontology and epistemology used by some in the Global South. It also expands the repertoire of potential methodologies and methods which researchers can use and enables them to assess fit to their objectives and context.

8.4 Implications for Designing & Evaluating Social Change Policies & Programs in Barbados

In this final section, I draw on a) difficulties participants identified; and b) what participants said helped or would have helped them to construct key suggestions of what can help middle class Black Barbadians in Barbados to effectively deal with these specific difficulties in their daily lives. Broadly, the suggestions relate to systemically addressing the contextual circumstances giving rise to problems in participants’ daily lives, and developing or bolstering those approaches which collectively operated to remind them that they could get through the difficulties, and enabled them to do so.

8.4.1 Addressing neocolonial and neoliberal forces

My data showed how some key contextual circumstances played out as difficulties in my participants’ daily lives. These must be further explored and addressed at a structural level since participants indicated they were an ongoing feature of daily life and required more than their individual efforts to eliminate or minimize. Building on research from Barbados (MEHD & ML, 2010; SALISES, 2012), my analysis suggests how the structure of the economy and education system might be manifesting as constraints to persons’ capacities to make a living. That participants in this study reported experiencing oppressive working conditions at the hands of White employers and Black employers and managers also cannot be ignored. Indeed, consideration of ways to address this must be central to any policies and programs aimed at improving the lives of middle class Black Barbadians who might be having similar experiences. Specific solutions to these contextually and structurally shaped challenges are beyond the scope of this study; my contribution highlights how specific policies and practices might shape adverse
circumstances for middle class Black Barbadians, which their individual efforts cannot eliminate or minimize. At the very least, this study begs consideration that interventions cannot be focused only on targeting individuals as the locus of change, whether directly or indirectly.

8.4.2 Addressing culturally-shaped difficulties

The findings also demonstrate that there are locally held gender roles that in and of themselves pose problems for individuals, particularly women. Moreover, based on participants’ accounts and existing reports on gender equity and violence in Barbados, men do not appear to have taken up alternate conceptualizations of gender roles to the same extent despite exposure to this information. In addition, these findings support others such as the Bureau of Gender Affairs report (2009) that participants report re-victimization when they, rightly so, seek assistance from organizations developed to provide systemic support to those harmed or disadvantaged by local gender roles. These findings raise the following two questions: 1) are Barbadian men rejecting these alternate conceptualizations of gender, and if so, how come; and 2) secondly, what alterations must be made to the alternate conceptualizations of gender or the existing mechanisms for re-socializing persons in order to increase middle class Black Barbadian men’s acceptance of conceptualizations of gender which are less harmful to middle class Black Barbadian women? Information about the uptake of gender equity and equality in Barbados does not appear to be documented to date although, given the challenges those within the Global South have in disseminating their research, the information may exist but be difficult to access. There is research, however, from the neighboring island of St. Vincent which suggests that, to construct their accounts of their intimate partner relationships - which had been deemed by the state to be abusive - Vincentian women drew on discourses of oppression, imprisonment and entrapment and personal autonomy while in contrast, men drew on discourses aimed at justifying or denying attempts to govern and police women’s actions (DeShong, 2013). My findings about this seeming difference in uptake by Barbadian men and women at the very least suggests that a similar exploration might be warranted here if it has not already been done. My findings also, at the very least offer avenues to be explored or strengthened in ongoing efforts by those concerned with shaping gender relations in Barbados.
Participants communicated a sense of Black Barbadians acting in ways to oppress fellow Black Barbadians and using each other for socioeconomic progress. It would be beneficial to explore the genesis of this and identify ways to improve the sense of community they value.

8.4.3 Bolstering culturally-shaped responses to adversity

Participants described struggling to use their strategies consistently; those informal sources of support which they identified as crucial in encouraging and enabling them to successfully deal with these difficulties should be maintained and strengthened. This research suggests that middle class Black Barbadians have our own local ways of responding: turning to community, and drawing on spirituality and our local understanding of mental health. Given the current economic climate in Barbados, we might find it more efficient to better understand and boost this local hybrid approach to responding to difficulties instead of subjecting Barbadians to the economic and human cost of importing solutions in ways that do not reflect these responses or worse not providing adequate support because of the costs involved (Schwarz, 2018; Timimi, 2017).

In addition, all of the participants spoke of how they benefitted greatly from community support. Communities provided participants with the sense that they could get through the circumstances not only through how they constructed the experience but also by directly providing access to tangible resources to alleviate the difficult circumstances or strengthening the participants’ capacity to deal with them in some way. Notably, all of the participants spoke of the value of accessing unconditional support from community. Moreover, it appears as if conceptualizations of community grounded in the enslaved West African ways of living culturally are central to how participants see themselves and their relationship to others. They draw on this understanding of community to address a variety of problems. This must be more explicitly formally utilized. Exposure to Caribbean and African heritage is a part of the most recent curriculum and mandate of the Commission for Pan African Affairs (MEYAC, 2001; Worrell, 2002). In light of this, consideration might be given to designing and evaluating supports reflecting Caribbean and West African cultural practices and beliefs around community in terms of both the process used to develop interventions and the content of interventions. Generally, policy makers, practitioners and community activists/advocates/leaders, particularly those affiliated with the local Pan African movement, might explore ways of authentically,
equally and equitably collaborating to identify and design needed supports. They might also highlight the value of community in dealing with challenges of daily living and continue to encourage the practice via policies and programs that thoughtfully incorporate communities and community/collective action.

Several participants spoke of how drawing on mental health concepts and practices were also helpful in terms of signalling to them and their community that they were not dealing with the situation as effectively as they should or could be. Some participants raised the need to improve these services via making them more financially accessible to working class Black Barbadians and better integrating spirituality in treatment. It would be helpful if mental health providers were aware of how middle class Black Barbadians come to use this hybridized approach and explore ways to build on this to create an indigenous model of mental health support. Closer collaboration with representatives of the Christian community seems indicated. Finally, in undertaking this venture, it would be crucial to seek to respectfully understand the source and nature of the stigma persons associate with mental health interventions namely medication and institutionalization, and use this information to create a system of intervention.

My participants relied heavily on a sense that there was an omnipotent God who would help them through their difficulties. This seems to have served them well in feeling hopeful about the situation; they see God as providing them access to those emotional and tangible resources they needed and were ultimately able to access to deal with their challenges. Participants’ communities also reinforced this perception, particularly when they struggled to operate in faith. This response seems to date back to how slaves on the island transformed Christianity with their African values and worldviews (Thompson, 1983). Christian leaders should be made widely aware of how their teachings and practices help persons to remain optimistic and maintain use of those strategies that help them to deal with problems in everyday life more consistently. Most importantly, mental health providers, community leaders and leaders of the Christian faith should be educated about how middle class Black Barbadians like those in my study seem to collectively use their various approaches to effectively navigate problems in their daily lives, and explore ways to continue to intentionally collaborate.
8.4.4 Facilitating culturally and contextually valued outcomes

Finally, this study also provides some sense of the characteristics of daily life which middle class Black Barbadians similar to those in my study might be hoping to experience when they respond to difficult situations in their daily lives. Social programs should reflect and accordingly measure for locally-valued outcomes, particularly when they are different from what is being articulated by interventions based on experiences in the Global North. In this way, the kind of life which middle class Black Barbadians similar to those in this study value is validated and supported, instead of denigrated and dismissed.

The preceding recommendations reflect those culturally-shaped resources which are currently available to middle class Black Barbadians similar to those in my study to effectively deal with difficulties in their daily lives. These contextualized recommendations also provide a solid basis for further investigation into how policies and practices manifest as difficulties in the everyday life of Black Barbadians like those in my study.

8.5 Conclusions

Through this dissertation project, I have joined other critical scholars in making a case for broadening the current conceptualization of the phenomenon referred to as “resilience”. I have demonstrated that my participants hold a culturally and contextually shaped conceptualization of the phenomenon. I have also demonstrated that my participants have contextually and culturally-shaped ways of dealing with difficulties in their lives successfully. My analysis also highlights that neocolonial and neoliberal forces emerging from the Global North manifest as chronic and ongoing difficulties in their lives. Finally, my research demonstrates that local ways of knowing in Barbados, that is strategies grounded in their relational ontology and epistemology, provide insight into how my participants experience difficulties.

Broadening the current conceptualization of “resilience” is an important next step for scholars seeking to stop marginalizing the perspectives and experiences of those in the Global South in resilience research. By broadening the conceptualization, we begin to allow for more to be done about the neocolonial and neoliberal forces which are oppressively shaping the daily lives of those in the Global South. In addition, we allow for those in the Global South to benefit from resilience research in the same way that those in the Global North have been able to.
REFERENCES


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https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.146


https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2019.1590624


https://doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2017.1408425

http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/08861090122094226?journalCode=affa

http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0020764015584648


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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval Certificate University of Guelph

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARDS
Certification of Ethical Acceptability of Research
Involving Human Participants

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<tr>
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<td>Yen, Jeffery (<a href="mailto:jyen@uoguelph.ca">jyen@uoguelph.ca</a>)</td>
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The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human participants in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd Edition.

The REB requires that researchers:

- Adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB.
- Receive approval from the REB for any modifications before they can be implemented.
- Report any change in the source of funding.
- Report unexpected events or incidental findings to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.
- Are responsible for ascertaining and complying with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements with respect to consent and the protection of privacy of participants in the jurisdiction of the research project.

The Principal Investigator must:

- Ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of facilities or institutions involved in the research are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.
- Submit an Annual Renewal to the REB upon completion of the project. If the research is a multi-year project, a status report must be submitted annually prior to the expiry date. Failure to submit an annual status report will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.

The approval for this protocol terminates on the EXPIRY DATE, or the term of your appointment or employment at the University of Guelph whichever comes first.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: February 7, 2018

Stephen P. Lewis
Chair, Research Ethics Board-
General
February 14, 2018

Ms. Sadie Goddard Durant
50 Stone Road East
4010 Mackinnon Ext. (Bldg. 154) Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1
Canada

Dear Ms. Goddard-Durant

Re: 171203-B Afro Barbadian Resilience Research Project

I write on behalf of the University of the West Indies-Cave Hill/Barbados Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board to thank you for the submitted changes and to convey approval of your study.

Please note that ethical approval does not imply endorsement of your research design. This approval is for one year from the date of this correspondence.

Please remember that you must also secure approval from any individual site or organization, i.e., the relevant ministry, agency, or company, if this is required. Please furnish a copy of this approval.

If you have not already done so, please forward your certificate of completion for ethics training at www.citiprogram.org to kristina.bryant@cavehill.uwi.edu.

All research data and forms must be kept for no less than five years after completion of the approved project. The standard process for data security is data encryption. When your research is complete (even if earlier than the approval period ends), please notify the Board in writing to officially close your protocol.

If you anticipate the duration of data collection to exceed one year, please send a letter to the Board at least one month prior to the expiration date. You should indicate why you want the research to remain open (e.g., additional accrual necessary for more robust results, funding from an outside source to continue). Continuation is contingent on Board approval.

Please remember that any changes to the protocol will require the submission of a revised protocol via a complete application to the IRB before implementation of the revision.
You must report any unanticipated adverse event experienced by a research subject within five days to the Chair of the IRB through this letterhead address or via e-mail kristina.bryant@cavehill.uwi.edu.

The Committee wishes you the best of luck in your research endeavors. Please feel free to contact us at any time should you have questions or concerns. I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Mike Campbell, Chair

CC:
Dr. Thea Scantlebury-Manning, Deputy Chair
Dr. Cheryl Cadogan-Mcclean, Supervisor
Graduate Studies
Ms. Kristina Bryant, Office of Research
IRB File
Navigating Life’s Difficulties

Are you interested in sharing your story...
about how you dealt with difficult times in your life?
Are you a Barbadian identifying as of African Descent?
Are you 18 years and over?
Are you willing to participate in 1-2 CONFIDENTIAL interviews
lasting approximately 60-90 minutes each?
Do you know someone else who might be?

Yes? Then please contact me for more information:
Sadie: 246 248-5417 OR goddards@uoguelph.ca
Greeting
Hello, thank you for calling. Before we start, is there a number where I can call you in case we get disconnected or would you prefer to call me back?

Can I tell you a little bit about myself and this research study?

I am Sadie Goddard-Durant, a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph. I grew up in St. Philip; this is also where my mother’s family originated but my father’s family is from St. John. I attended Queen’s College. What about you? I would like to a) learn about what Afro Barbadians consider difficulties in their lives, b) what actions they take to respond to these difficulties successfully, and c) what is needed to help Afro Barbadians to successfully respond to difficulties in their lives. I became interested in this research for two reasons. The first relates to my own work as a psychotherapist here in Barbados. I worked with persons who had experienced difficulties but I found that much of the information available about how to help people heal was irrelevant to us here in Barbados. Furthermore, most of the information available about Afro Caribbean people portrayed us as deficient and responding negatively to difficulties in our lives. I was concerned about this and decided to research how we successfully respond to difficulties in our lives.

Screening Questions
How did you find out about our study?

What made you decide to participate in this study?

Okay, I would like to make sure that I don’t put you out too much during this process, therefore I would like to ask you a few questions to make sure you qualify for the study. I would like for you to try to be as open and honest as you can, okay? Do you have any questions or concerns before we proceed?

1. How old are you?
2. This study involves Afro Barbadians; do you identify as Afro Barbadian?
3. Have you experienced any difficulties in your past that you have successfully gotten through?
4. Can you tell me a little bit about that? If difficulty related to any at risk populations, unfortunately you do not meet the criteria for eligibility in the study.
5. Are you still experiencing these difficulties? Are you still receiving help from anyone in your personal life to get through these difficulties? If yes, to one or both, then automatically ineligible. I am concerned that because you are currently experiencing difficulty/working through this difficulty participating in this study will place you at risk for harm. I have some support services that may be of help to you; do you want me to provide you with that information?

Unfortunately, you do not meet the criteria for eligibility in the study.

Or

Okay, you are eligible to participate in this study. Let me tell you some more about the study.

About the Study
Participation in the study includes one to two interviews. During the first interview, I will ask you about how you have successfully responded to difficulties in your life. The first interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. During the second interview I will ask you questions to insure I understand what you shared in the first interview as well as ask you questions about information that came up from other data I have collected which I had not initially thought to ask you about. The second interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. You can consent to participating in only the first interview or both interviews. The research team will not release your name in connection with this study. The only exception to this rule would be if you tell me that you may harm yourself or others or that children are/are at risk of being hurt or abused. If you tell me any of this, I must report it to the Royal Barbados Police Force/Child Care Board to get help. I will also have to tell The Research Ethics Board/Committee that a report has been made to authorities.

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

A summary of results from this study will be provided to policy makers and administrators of these support services to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians to lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully responding to difficulties. The information will also be disseminated in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

Do you have any questions for me so far?

Scheduling the Interview
During the first interview we will together complete a demographic questionnaire, and begin to talk about the difficulties you have previously experienced in your life, how you successfully responded them, and your ideas about what Afro Barbadians like you need to successfully respond to difficulties. I will ask you to draw a picture that you think depicts how you successfully responded to difficulties in your life and use this picture to learn more about your experiences. You do not need to know how to draw well, and you can choose not to do the
Would you be interested in participating?

Assessing Psychological/Emotional Vulnerability
During the interviews you will be asked to remember and talk about past experiences in your life that were difficult. We expect that some of our participants will feel some discomfort. But we worry that some people, because of all that they have been through, may have a much stronger reaction. Do you have any reason to expect that talking about these things might be too difficult or make you feel much worse?

*If yes, refer to counselling services on resource list and inform them that they are not eligible.*

I’m concerned that it might be too distressing for you to talk about these experiences, therefore I don’t think we should proceed with you participating. I have some resources that I can provide you with to get support if you are interested?

*If no, set up date and time and location that you both agree will maintain privacy and confidentiality.*

All this information about the study, what you will be asked to do, and your rights will be given to you in written form, in a document known as an information and informed consent letter. Can you provide me with an email address that I can email it to you ahead of our interview? This gives you time to read it over and ask questions. If you don’t have an email address where I can send these, I will make sure you have enough time to read through it before you agree to participate.

Do you have any additional questions?
APPENDIX E
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Information Letter Primary Participant Interview

REB Protocol Research Project #s: 171203-B & 17-12-002

Principal Investigator:
Jeffery Yen, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
jyen@uoguelph.ca

Co-Investigator:
Cheryl Cadogan-McClean,
Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies
246 417 4288, 246 417-4293 or cheryl.cadoganmcclean@cavehill.uwi.edu

Student Investigator:
Sadie Goddard-Durant, C.C.C, M.S.,
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
246 xxx-xxxx or goddards@uoguelph.ca

Research Purpose
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ph.D. candidate Sadie Goddard-Durant under the supervision of Jeffery Yen, Ph.D., and Cheryl Cadogan-McClean, Ph.D. This is a dissertation research project for Sadie Goddard-Durant and a requirement for her PhD studies. The overall purpose of this research is to learn more about how Afro Barbadians successfully respond to difficulty in their daily lives, over their lifetime.

Description of the Research
To achieve this purpose, I am interviewing individuals who have successfully responded to difficulties in their past, people in their personal lives who helped them, as well as members of organizations who these individuals identified as instrumental in their experiencing difficulties/successfully responding to them. I will also be observing what goes on in spaces that several participants indicate were involved in their experiences of difficulty and responding to those difficulties such as a social service agency that gives us permission to do so. During observation, I will be collecting information more generally about the activities and interactions of people who go to these organizations so that I can have a detailed understanding of what any person could experience.

I want to interview you about your experiences of successfully responding to past difficulties in your life. You will be asked to participate in approximately one to two individual interviews lasting 60-90 minutes each. You can decide if you wish to participate in one or both interviews. You can change your mind about participating in the second interview even if you initially consented to doing so. The interviews will be held in a location in Barbados where you feel your privacy and confidentiality
can be maintained and which we agree on. They could also occur via a voice over internet protocol platform with video conferencing enabled such as WhatsApp, Zoom or Skype from a private location such as an office at the University of Guelph or the researcher’s home. I, Sadie Goddard-Durant will be conducting the interviews alone. In the first interview I will ask you about difficult experiences and how you got through them. As part of the first interview, you will have the opportunity to draw a picture that you think depicts the difficulties you experienced in your life and how you successfully got through them. You do not have to draw the picture in order to participate. If you choose to participate in the second interview, during that interview, I will ask you questions aimed at clarifying my understanding of your experience as well as ask you questions that I thought of as a result of conducting interviews with others and which we had not initially covered.

I am also interested in learning more about how other people with whom you have personal relationships supported you in getting through these difficult experiences in your past. I will, therefore, ask your permission to interview someone whom you identified during the interview, whom you think would be suitable for me to talk to. You decide if to connect me to anyone, who this person is, and what I can ask them to share about your experiences. You can refuse to give me permission to speak to anyone about your experiences. You can also change your mind even after you have given permission; in this case I will not interview the person or use the information they provided if they have already spoken to me. If you agree to connect me to someone, you can choose if you wish to participate in their interview with me. I will not speak to this person if you wish to participate in their interview about you but they do not want you to be present. You can also choose to review their transcripts. If you wish to review their transcript and they do not give permission to review their transcript, then I will take one of two steps: 1) if I have not yet interviewed them, I will not interview them; or 2) if I had already interviewed them and they changed their mind about granting permission for you to review the transcript after the interview was completed, I will remove their data from the study.

The interviews with you and any persons you refer us to will be audio taped. Prof. Jeffery Yen, Sadie Goddard-Durant and transcribers will be the ones who have access to the audiotape. All transcribers will be required to sign a confidentiality contract requiring them to not divulge any information shared in these audio taped interviews. If you so choose, before releasing any findings to the public, I will re-contact you via email with a transcription of your interview, the interview of the person you permitted us to speak to, and a summary of the results of the study. You can then contact me within two weeks to discuss your feedback on the transcripts and the results, including if I accurately represented your experiences and determine if you still give us permission to use any information about you in the study.

Potential Risks
There may be a potential risk or discomfort associated with this research. You might feel discomfort when talking about your experiences or difficulties you have had in your life. However, I do not expect that this discomfort would be any more than what you experience in your day to day life when you remember such challenges. You can also contact any of the support services listed on the Resource list provided or one of your choosing to help you. If I determine that continuing with the interview is too distressing for you, then we will end the interview immediately and debrief. Debriefing involves helping you to use strategies/connect to resources that will help you to manage your distress. Should you withdraw from the study, I would remove all your information from the study and you would not be re-contacted.
Potential Benefits
There may be several benefits to participating in this study. Talking about your experiences in a non-judgmental situation could be validating and provide comfort. At the end of the interview, you will also receive information about local support services including spiritual, social, physical health, mental health, financial, legal and academic services. Additionally, I will provide a summary of findings from this study to policy makers and administrators of these support services to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully getting through difficulties. Furthermore, your decision to participate or not participate in this study will not affect the services that are currently available to you in any way. Finally, the information will be reported in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

Costs/Compensation
You would be participating in a maximum of 3 interviews if you decide to participate in a) a second individual interview as well as b) in the interview with the person you referred to me. The amount of time required for your participation in EACH interview will be approximately 60-90 minutes. You will not be compensated for your participation.

Privacy & Confidentiality
I will do everything I can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. I will be audio recording both the in person and internet based video conferencing interviews. You can choose a location to conduct the interviews that we agree protects your privacy and confidentiality. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. You can consent to participate with a pseudonym if you so desire. You decide on a pseudonym you would like me to refer to you by in the interviews and the transcript and on your drawings. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any report of study findings. We may use verbatim quotes and participants’ drawings in reporting the findings of this study. Should we use yours, your pseudonym will be attributed to the quote; we will not use your name and all other identifying data will be removed from that quote. If you choose to use your name, we will not attribute your name to your quotes or drawings and all other identifying data will be removed from your quotes and drawing. We will create a pseudonym to attribute to your quotes and drawing instead. I will NOT divulge your participation in this study to any members of organizations whom I interview. I will NOT ask any members of organizations whom I interview to divulge information specifically about you, other participants in the study, or anyone who has received services from them. No one outside of the research team will have access to your personal information.

The only exception to this rule of not using your name in relation to this study would be if you tell me that you may harm yourself or others or that children are/are at risk of being hurt or abused. If you tell me any of this, I must report it to the Royal Barbados Police Force/Child Care Board to get help. I will also have to tell The Research Ethics Board/Committee that a report has been made to authorities.

Furthermore, you may be concerned about what information the person you referred us to shares about you. You can be present during the interview with them if you choose to. We can also give you a copy of their transcribed interview before we use it so that you can decide what information can be used, if any at all.
Data security
The information obtained during this research (such as drawings, transcripts, audio recordings, informed consent tracking sheet, demographic data sheet, contact list etc.) will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. I will scan all hardcopies of study materials within 24 hours the relevant interview. Electronic copies of all study materials will be stored on full disk encrypted, password protected computers; the computers can only be accessed by members of the research team. Customs agents can copy the content on electronic devices. To manage this risk, while I am in transit from Barbados to Canada, all electronic data will be removed from my password protected, encrypted computer and stored ONLY on a password protected cloud drive belonging to and secured by the University of Guelph. Your transcripts will be maintained for up to 7 years and deleted, while the audio recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. The hard copy of your informed consent document will be shredded within 24 hours of your interview. Your contact details will be deleted after you have been given a summary of the results to review.

Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose to not participate or withdraw. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or any question you do not wish to answer, or end the interview altogether at any time. You may also refuse to allow us to speak to anyone else about your experiences or change your mind about us using any or all of the information they share with us about you. You can also agree to participate in a second interview and then change your mind. We ask that you indicate via email your wish to withdraw from the study at any point in time prior to release of the findings to the public. Any information you shared will be shredded/deleted at that time (drawings, audio recordings, transcripts, demographics, contact information) and excluded from any reports of findings of the study. Your email address will be removed from the study contacts list and you will not be contacted from that point on regarding any study related information.

Contact
If you have any questions, at any time, about this research, or want to discuss any issue about the study, please contact any of the members of the research team noted above.

Research Ethics Board
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Barbados for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#s: 171203-B & 17-12-002), please contact the Director, Research Ethics, University of Guelph at reb@uoguelph.ca or (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606) or the Office of Research, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados at (246) 417-4847 or researchethics@cavehill.uwi.edu
REB Protocol Research Project #s: 171203-B & 17-12-002
Primary Participant Interview Informed Consent Form

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| Participant Signature & Date |
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### APPENDIX F

**Afro Barbadian Resilience Research Project**

**All Interview Participant Demographic Questionnaire**

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Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study before we begin?

Drawing

Draw a picture depicting your how you successfully responded to difficulties in your life, including the details of settings of these experiences such as actors, relationship to other parts of your life, location, timing; and strategies and local resources you used to navigate them. You do not have to do this drawing; you can just verbally share your experiences instead.

Nature and Context of Participants’ Difficulties

- What are the difficulties you experienced in your daily life, over the course of your lifetime?
- Could you describe the events that led up to these? What was going on in your life then? What contributed to these difficult experiences? What made the experience difficult? Who/what played the biggest role in creating these difficulties? How so?

Meanings of and Responses to these Difficulties

- What was it like for you to be going through these difficulties? Tell me about your thoughts and feelings when you had these difficulties. What did it mean to you to be going through these difficulties? Why did you think you were going through these difficulties?
- Who/what helped you to make sense of what you were experiencing?
- How do people like you typically respond to difficulties like these? What were your options (laws, policies, individuals, institutions, local healing practices etc.) for responding to these difficulties? What options (laws, policies, individuals, institutions, local healing practices etc.) are typically available to you to respond to these difficulties?
- What options (laws, policies, individuals, institutions, local healing practices etc) do persons like you think are the most likely to help successfully respond to these types of difficulties. How so? What would lead you to choose one option over another?
- What actions were available to you to respond to these difficulties? How come; what about you or the circumstances made these actions available? How did you know these actions were available to you? Who are these options generally available to? When are these options generally available to Black Barbadians?
What actions were not available to you to respond to these difficulties? How come? What would have needed to be different in order for these actions to be available to you? Who are these actions available to? When are these actions available to Black Barbadians?

How did you ultimately respond to these difficulties? Which option did you use to get through these difficulties successfully? How did you come to respond in this way? What led you to respond in this way? How did your previous experiences affect how you handled subsequent difficulties?

Did you take the action you wanted? How come/How come you didn’t?

Who/what was helpful in your navigating these difficulties? How so?

Who/what made it difficult for you to navigate these difficulties? How so? How did you work around those challenges so that you could take the action you wanted?

Requirements to Successfully Navigate Difficulty

How, if at all, has your life changed since these difficulties? How have your views changed since them?

Tell me about the person you are now. What most contributed to this? Could you describe the most important lessons you learned through experiencing these difficulties? How did you grow as a person after these difficulties? Is there a local saying, song, scripture that captures how you see these difficult experiences? How, if at all, has the meaning you made of these difficulties changed since? What/who contributed to this change?

What was most helpful to you in getting through these difficulties?

What lets you know that you’ve been successful in getting through the difficulties?

What would you need now/have needed to help you get through difficulties in your life? What would be helpful to someone like you who went through similar experiences?

Have you thought about anything else that we didn’t cover that occurred to you during our discussion?

What else do you think I should know or understand?

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study? Thanks for participating!
Greeting
Hello, thank you for calling. Before we start, is there a number where I can call you in case we get disconnected or would you prefer to call me back?

How did you find out about our study? (Response: X referred me to share about how I supported them in the past. I quickly verify names from Appendix P Participant & Organization Contact Information Sheet)

Screening Questions
Thanks for agreeing to participate in this way! Can I tell you a bit about myself and the research study? I am a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph. I grew up in St. Philip; this is also where my mother’s family originated but my father’s family is from St. John. I attended Queen’s College. What about you? I would like to a) learn about what Afro Barbadians consider difficulties in their lives, b) what actions they take to respond to these difficulties successfully, and c) what is needed to help Afro Barbadians to successfully respond to difficulties in their lives. I became interested in this research for two reasons. The first relates to my own work as a psychotherapist here in Barbados. I worked with persons who had experienced difficulties but I found that much of the information available about how to help people heal was irrelevant to us here in Barbados. Furthermore, most of the information available about Afro Caribbean people portrayed us as deficient and responding negatively to difficulties in our lives. I was concerned about this and decided to research how we successfully responded to difficulties in our lives.

I would like to make sure that I don’t put you out too much during this process, therefore I would like to ask you a few questions to make sure you qualify for the study. Everything you tell me will remain confidential, so I would like for you to try to be as open and honest as you can, okay? Do you have any questions or concerns before we proceed?

1. How old are you?

2. Are you currently supporting X with an ongoing difficulty?

If yes, unfortunately, you do not meet the criteria for eligibility in the study.

3. X wishes to participate in your interview about them, do you consent to this happening?

4. X wishes to see a transcript of your interview, do you consent to this happening?
If no, Unfortunately, you do not meet the criteria for eligibility in the study.

Or

If yes, Okay, you are eligible to participate in this study. Can I tell you a little bit about myself and this research study?

About the Study
Let me give you some more information about the study. Participation in the study includes one interview during which I will ask you about your role in helping X successfully respond to difficulties in their life. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The research team will not release your name in connection with this study. The only exception to this would be if you tell me that you may harm yourself or others or that children are/are at risk of being hurt or abused. If you tell me any of this, I must report it to the Royal Barbados Police Force/Child Care Board to get help. I will also have to tell The Research Ethics Board/Committee that a report has been made to authorities.

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

A summary of results from this study will be provided to policy makers and administrators of these support services to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians to lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully responding to difficulties. The information will also be reported in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

Do you have any questions for me so far?

Scheduling the Interview
Participating will involve one face to face interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. During the interview we will together complete a demographic questionnaire, and begin the interview about how you helped X to respond to the difficulties they previously experienced in their life, and your ideas about what Afro Barbadians like X need to successfully respond to difficulties. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to. You will not be compensated for your participation in these interviews.

Would you be interested in participating? How come?

Assessing Psychological/Emotional Vulnerability
During the interview you may be asked to remember and talk about experiences in X’s life that you were aware of or involved in that were difficult. I expect that some of our participants will feel some discomfort. But I worry that some people, because of all that they have been through with the person, may have a much stronger reaction. Do you have any reason to expect that talking about these things might be too difficult or make you feel much worse?
If yes, refer to counselling services on resource list and inform them that they are not eligible. I’m concerned that it might be too distressing for you to talk about these experiences with X, therefore I don’t think we should proceed with you participating. I have some resources that I can provide you with to get support if you are interested?

If no, set up date and time and location that you both agree will maintain privacy and confidentiality.

All this information about the study, what you will be asked to do, and your rights will be given to you in written form, in a document known as an information and informed consent letter. Can you provide me with an email address that I can email it to you ahead of our interview? This gives you time to read it over and ask questions. If you don’t have an email address where I can send these, I will make sure you have enough time to read through it before you agree to participate.

Do you have any additional questions?
APPENDIX I

Secondary Participant Interview Information Letter

REB Protocol Research Project #: 171203-B & 17-12-002

Principal Investigator:
Jeffery Yen, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
jyen@uoguelph.ca

Co-Investigator:
Cheryl Cadogan-McClean,
Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies
246 417 4288, 246 417-4293 or cheryl.cadoganmcclean@cavehill.uwi.edu

Student Investigator:
Sadie Goddard-Durant, C.C.C, M.S.,
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
246 xxx-xxxx or goddards@uoguelph.ca

Research Purpose
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ph.D. candidate Sadie Goddard-Durant under the supervision of Jeffery Yen, Ph.D., and Cheryl Cadogan-McClean, Ph.D. This is a dissertation research project for Sadie Goddard-Durant and a requirement for her Ph.D. studies. The overall purpose of this research is to learn more about how Afro Barbadians successfully respond to difficulty in their daily lives, throughout their lifetime.

Description of the Research
To achieve this purpose, I am interviewing individuals who have successfully responded to past difficulties in their lives, people in their personal lives who helped them, as well as members of organizations who these individuals identified as instrumental in their experiencing difficulties/successfully responding to them. I will also be observing what goes on in spaces that several participants indicate were involved in their experiences of difficulty and responding to those difficulties such as a social service agency that gives us permission to do so. During observation, I will be collecting information more generally about the activities and interactions of people who go to these organizations so that I can have a detailed understanding of what any person could experience.

To get a clearer picture of what difficulties Afro-Barbadians experience and how they get through them successfully, it would be helpful to speak to you about your experiences of supporting someone in successfully responding to past difficulties in their life. This person has consented to you sharing this information about them. You will be asked to participate in approximately ONE
individual interview lasting 60 minutes. The interview will be held in a location in Barbados where you feel your privacy and confidentiality can be maintained and which we agree with. They can also occur via a voice over internet protocol platform with video conferencing enabled such as WhatsApp, Zoom or Skype from a private location such as an office at the University of Guelph or the researcher’s home. Sadie Goddard-Durant will be conducting the interviews alone.

The interview with you will be audio taped. Prof. Jeffery Yen and Sadie Goddard-Durant and transcribers will be the ones who have access to the audiotape. All transcribers will be required to sign a confidentiality contract requiring them to not divulge any information shared in the audio taped interviews. Before I release the findings to the public, I will re-contact you via email with a transcription of your interview, and later with a summary of the results of the study, if you so choose. In this way you can a) insure that we accurately represented your experiences and b) determine if you still give us permission to use any information you shared in the study. You can contact me within two weeks with your feedback. In addition, the person who referred us to you also has the right to be present during your interview, and review a transcript of your interview about them to determine what information they permit me to ultimately share about them. I will not interview you if the person who referred you wishes to participate in your interview about them but you do not wish them to be present. I will also not interview you if the person who referred you wishes to review the transcript of your interview and you do not give permission. If you initially give permission for the person who referred you to review your transcript and then change your mind after we have completed your interview, then I will not use your interview data in the study. The audio recording/transcript will be deleted and I will notify you and the person who referred you that I cannot use your interview in the study.

Potential Risks
There may be potential risks or discomforts associated with this research. You might feel discomfort when talking about your knowledge of or past involvement with others experiencing difficulties in their life. However, we do not expect that this discomfort would be more than the discomfort people experience in their day to day life when they recall challenges others experienced that they were aware of or involved in. Additionally, if any aspect of the interview causes you excessive emotional distress, you may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study altogether. You can also contact any of the support services listed on the Resource list provided or one of your choosing to help you. If I determine that continuing with the interview is too distressing for you, then we will end the interview immediately and debrief. Debriefing involves helping you to use strategies/connect to resources that will help you to manage your distress. Should you withdraw from the study for any reason, I would remove all your information from the study and you would not be re-contacted.

Potential Benefits
There may be several benefits to participating in this study. Talking about your experiences in a non-judgmental situation could be validating and provide comfort. At the end of the interview, you will also receive information about local support services including spiritual, social, physical health, mental health, financial, legal and academic services. Additionally, I will provide a summary of findings from this study to policy makers and administrators of these support services to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully getting through difficulties. Furthermore, your decision to participate or not participate in this study will not affect the services that are currently available to you in anyway. Finally, the information will be reported in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro
Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

**Costs/Compensation**
The amount of time required for your participation in this interview will be approximately 60 minutes. You will not be compensated for your participation in this interview.

**Privacy & Confidentiality**
I will do everything I can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. I will be audio recording both the in person and internet based video conferencing interviews. We will decide on a location to conduct the interviews that we agree protects your privacy and confidentiality. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. You can consent to participate with a pseudonym if you so desire. You decide on a pseudonym you would like me to refer to you by in the interviews and the transcript. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any report of study findings. We may use verbatim quotes in reporting the findings of this study. Should we use yours, your pseudonym will be attributed to the quote; we will not use your name and all other identifying data will be removed from that quote. If you choose to use your name, we will not attribute your name to your quotes and all other identifying data will be removed from your quotes. We will create a pseudonym to attribute to your quotes instead. I will NOT divulge your participation in this study to any members of organizations whom I interview. I will NOT ask any members of organizations whom I interview to divulge specific information about you, or other participants in the study, or anyone who has received services from them. No one outside of the research team will have access to your personal information.

The only exception to this rule of not using your name in relation to this study would be if you tell me that you may harm yourself or others or that children are at risk of being hurt or abused. If you tell me any of this, I must report it to the Royal Barbados Police Force/Child Care Board to get help. I will also have to tell The Research Ethics Board/Committee that a report has been made to authorities.

**Data Security**
The information obtained during this research (such as drawings, transcripts, audio recordings, informed consent tracking sheet, demographic data sheet, contact list etc.) will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. I will scan all hardcopies of study materials within 24 hours the relevant interview. Electronic copies of all study materials will be stored on full disk encrypted, password protected computers; the computers can only be accessed by members of the research team. Customs agents can copy the content on electronic devices. To manage this risk, while I am in transit from Barbados to Canada, all electronic data will be removed from my password protected, encrypted computer and stored ONLY on a password protected cloud drive belonging to and secured by the University of Guelph. Your transcripts will be maintained for up to 7 years and deleted, while the audio recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. The hard copy of your informed consent document will be shredded within 24 hours of your interview. Your contact details will be deleted after you have been given a summary of the results to review.

**Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal**
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your consent at any time. You can be emailed a scanned copy of your informed consent form if you so wish. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or
withdraw. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or any question you do not wish to answer, or end the interview altogether at any time. We ask that you indicate via email your wish to withdraw from the study at any point in time prior to release of study findings to the public. Any information you shared will be shredded/deleted at that time (audio recordings, transcripts, demographics, contact information) and excluded from any reports of findings of the study. Your email address will be removed from the study contacts list and you will not be contacted from that point on regarding any study related information.

Contact
If you have any questions, at any time, about this research, or want to discuss any issue about the study, please contact any of the members of the research team noted above.

Research Ethics Board
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Barbados for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#171203-B & 17-12-002), please contact the Director, Research Ethics, University of Guelph at reb@uoguelph.ca or (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606) or the Office of Research, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados at (246) 417-4847 or researchethics@cavehill.uwi.edu
**Secondary Participant Interview Informed Consent Form**

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<td>I consent to participate in one interview, as outlined in the information letter</td>
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<td>I consent to the person who referred me to participate in this interview, as outlined in the information letter</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>I give consent to be re-contacted to review my transcript, as outlined in the information letter</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>I give consent for the person who referred me to review my transcript, as outlined in the information letter</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>I consent to be re-contacted with a summary of the results of this study, as outlined in the information letter</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>I received the Information Letter</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>I received the Resource List</td>
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<td>I wish to receive a scanned copy of this consent form</td>
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<th>Name &amp; Signature of Research Staff</th>
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APPENDIX J
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Afro Barbadian Resilience Research Project
Secondary Participant Interview Guide.

X indicated that you helped him/her navigate some difficulties and we could talk to you about this…

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study before we begin?

Nature and Context of Participants’ Difficulties

- Could you describe how you were involved?
- Could you describe the events that led up to your involvement? What was going on in your life and X’s life then? What contributed to these difficult experiences for X? What made the experience difficult for X? Who/what played the biggest role in creating these difficulties for X? How so?

Meanings of and Responses to Difficulties

- X shared that their thoughts and feelings during this time were…Can you speak to what it was like for X to be going through these difficulties? Tell me about X’s thoughts and feelings during this time. What did it mean to X to be going through these difficulties? Why did X think they were going through these difficulties?
- How did you help X to make sense of what they were experiencing?
- How do people like X typically respond to difficulties like these? What are the typical options (laws, policies, individuals, institutions, local healing practices etc.) that people like X have for responding to these difficulties? Did you and X know about these at the time?
- What options (laws, policies, individuals, institutions, local healing practices etc) do people like X think are the most likely to help someone to successfully respond to these types of difficulties. How so? What would lead X to choose one option over another?
- X noted that … actions were available to them to respond to these difficulties. Can you tell me more about how come this was the case; what about X or the circumstances made these the actions that were available? How did you know these actions were available to X? Who are these options generally available to? When are these options generally available to someone like X? Did you share these options with X? How come?
- X noted that … actions were not available to them to respond to these difficulties? Can you tell me anything about how come this was the case? What would have needed to be different in order for these actions to be available to X? Who are these actions available to? When are these actions available to someone like X? Did you share these options with X? How come?
• X shared that they ultimately responded to these difficulties in … way. Can you tell me more about your role in X using this option to navigate these difficulties successfully? How did you help X come to respond in this way, if at all? How did X previous experiences affect how X handled subsequent difficulties? What was your role in this?
• Did X take the action you wanted? How come X did/How come X didn’t?
• X mentioned that …. was helpful in them navigating these difficulties? Can you tell me more about this?
• X mentioned that …made it difficult for X to navigate these difficulties. Can you tell me more about this? How did X work around those challenges so that X could take the action X wanted? What was your role in this?

What is Needed to Successfully Navigate Difficulty
• X noted that their life and views have changed in these ways… How were you involved in this shift?
• X noted that they are the type of person now who…Tell me about your involvement in how X changed as a person after these difficulties? How, if at all, did you help X shape the meaning they made of these difficulties since they occurred?
• What would X need now/have needed to help them navigate difficulties in their life? What would be helpful to someone like X who went through similar experiences?

• Have you thought about anything else that we didn’t cover that occurred to you during our discussion?
• What else do you think I should know or understand?

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study? Thanks for participating!
APPENDIX K
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
Organizational Participant Information Letter

Date

Attention:
Organization Name
Organization Address
Organization Address

Re: Invitation to provide Institutional Consent to participate in REB Protocol Research Project #s 171203-B & 17-12-002

Dear Sir/Madam:

I invite your organization to participate in a research study conducted by me, Ph.D. candidate Sadie Goddard-Durant under the supervision of Jeffery Yen, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Guelph, and Cheryl Cadogan-McClean, Ph.D. Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies. This is a dissertation research project for me and a requirement for my PhD studies. The overall purpose of this research is to learn more about Afro Barbadian experiences of successfully responding to difficulty in their lives, throughout their lifetime.

Description of the Research & Confidentiality
I will be primarily interviewing Afro Barbadians about their past experiences. However, to obtain a complete understanding of these experiences, it would be helpful to understand how your organization works and the conditions under which persons use your services.

I would be pleased if your organization could participate in the following two research procedures:

1. Permit me to speak to a designated representative of your organization and recruit members (staff or volunteers) of your organization to participate in ONE 60-minute individual field participant interview about their role in the organization, the purpose and history of the organization, and the activities and interactions which occur in your organization. Field participants will NOT be asked to divulge information about specific individuals who have used your organization's services. Field participants will be asked to avoid including such confidential details in their interviews and provide generalized information only. The final decision to participate will be the individual's. It will be their decision if they inform you of any details of their participation, including if they participated. I will NOT provide your organization with a copy of the transcript of the field participants in order to protect their confidentiality. Please find attached a letter containing detailed information about the study that we will give to your staff/volunteers who participate (Appendix I).

2. Permit me to conduct observation of activities and interactions at your organization that will enable us to get a better sense of how your organization operates and what people experience
when they come to your organization. You determine the time period, exact space at your location, and the kinds of activities and interactions that can be observed. You will NOT be provided with a copy of the observation notes. *Please find a notice that we can tailor together and post in a highly trafficked and visible area of your location ahead of time to make your users aware of the observation (Appendix II).*

I will use a pseudonym instead of your organization’s name in connection to any information about your organization that is included in dissemination of study findings.

**Potential Risks**
As outlined in the Non-Participant Observation Notice attached (Appendix II), there are no risks to any persons observed during non-participant observation. There are no risks to representatives who participate in field participant interviews, as outlined in Appendix I, Field Participant Information Letter and Informed Consent Form.

**Potential Benefits**
The benefits of this research to persons observed during non-participant observation and the field participant interviews are outlined in the attached Non-Participant Observation Notice (Appendix II), and Field Participant Information letter & Informed Consent Form (Appendix I). A summary of results from this study will be provided to your organization and policy makers and administrators of support services and organizations like yours to inform the response to helping Afro-Barbadians to lead healthy lives and respond to difficulties successfully.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your organization’s consent to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to consent to neither, one or both of the research procedures identified above. You can withdraw your consent for either or both of these procedures prior to them being conducted. You can review the summary of study findings if you so choose before they are disseminated. The summary will be an aggregate of the information collected from all interviews and observation done as part of this study. You should contact me within two weeks to communicate any concerns that information in the summary poses a harm to the organization or those it serves, and discuss adjustments before the findings are disseminated.

**Costs and Compensation**
There will be no costs to your organization for providing institutional consent for either of these procedures. There will be no compensation provided to your organization for providing institutional consent for these procedures.

**Contact**
If you have any questions, at any time, about this research, or want to discuss any issue about the study, please contact any of the members of the research team noted above.

**Principal Investigator:**
Jeffery Yen, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
iyen@uoguelph.ca

**Co-Investigator:**
Cheryl Cadogan-McClean,  
Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies  
246 417 4288, 246 417-4293 or cheryl.cadoganmcclean@cavehill.uwi.edu

Student Investigator:  
Sadie Goddard-Durant, C.C.C, M.S.,  
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph  
246 xxx-xxxx or goddards@uoguelph.ca.

Research Ethics Board  
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Barbados for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to facilitate recruitment of field participants or to be observed during this study. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#171203-B & 17-12-002.), please contact the Director, Research Ethics, University of Guelph at reb@uoguelph.ca or (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606) or the Office of Research, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados at (246) 417-4847 or researchethics@cavehill.uwi.edu

If you agree to participate in either or both of the above-outlined procedures in this research project, please complete, sign and return the Institutional Consent Form attached (Appendix III). I will email you the scanned signed copy of your institutional consent form. Hard copies of this electronic institutional consent form will be destroyed within 24 hours of completion of the last procedure your organization consents to.

I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Sadie Goddard-Durant, MS  
PhD Candidate  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, Ontario
Field Participant (Organizational Representative) Interview Information Letter

REB Protocol Research Project #s: 171203-B & 17-12-002

Principal Investigator:
Jeffery Yen, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
jyen@uoguelph.ca

Co-Investigator:
Cheryl Cadogan-McClean,
Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies
246 417 4288, 246 417-4293 or cheryl.cadoganmcclean@cavehill.uwi.edu

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Research Purpose
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ph.D. candidate Sadie Goddard-Durant under the supervision of Jeffery Yen, Ph.D., and Cheryl Cadogan-McClean, Ph.D. This is a dissertation research project for Sadie Goddard-Durant and a requirement for her PhD studies. The overall purpose of this research is to learn more about how Afro Barbadians successfully get through difficulty in their daily lives, throughout their lifetime.

Description of the Research
To achieve this purpose, I am interviewing individuals who have successfully responded to past difficulties in their lives, people in their personal lives who helped them, as well as members of organizations who these individuals identified as instrumental in their experiencing difficulties/successfully responding to them. I will also be observing what goes on in spaces that several participants indicate were involved in their experiences of difficulty and responding to those difficulties such as a social service agency that gives us permission to do so. During observation, I will be collecting information more generally about the activities and interactions of people who go to these organizations so that I can have a detailed understanding of what any person could experience.

To obtain a complete understanding of these difficult experiences and how Afro Barbadians successfully get through them, it would be helpful to understand how your organization works, the conditions under which persons use your services and your role in this. Therefore, I will ask you questions about your role in your organization and how the organization operates in general, including information on policies guiding your organization and documents your organization uses.
or has produced. You will NOT be asked to divulge information about any particular individual who has used the services of your organization. Please avoid including such confidential information about service users in your interview; provide generalized information only. You will be asked to participate in ONE individual interview lasting 60 minutes. The interview will be held in a location in Barbados where you feel your privacy and confidentiality can be maintained and which we agree with. They can also occur via a voice over internet protocol platform with video conferencing enabled such as WhatsApp, Zoom or Skype from a private location such as an office at the University of Guelph or the researcher’s home. Sadie Goddard-Durant will be conducting the interviews alone.

The interview will be audio taped. Prof. Jeffery Yen, Sadie Goddard-Durant and transcribers will be the ones who have access to the audio tape. All transcribers will be required to sign a confidentiality contract requiring them to not divulge any information shared on the audio tapes. You will be re-contacted via email with a transcription of your interview, and later with a summary of the results of the study. In this way you can a) insure that we accurately represented your experiences and b) determine if you still give us permission to use any information you shared in the study. You can contact me within two weeks with your feedback.

Potential Risks
In the unlikely event that there is a breach of privacy and confidentiality, there might be the risk of social stigma and/or economic harm should persons find out that you shared certain types of information about the organization or its staff, volunteers, service users etc. (e.g. negative or confidential information). However, it is not expected that this risk will be any greater than what you would experience if this information was divulged in your everyday life. You decide if you should participate in the study at all or withdraw at some point, what questions you answer, and what interview information can be used in reporting the study findings (see subsection Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal). In addition, we will take every measure to insure that your privacy and confidentiality is maintained (see subsection Privacy & Confidentiality).

Potential Benefits
There may be several benefits to participating in the study. Talking about your experiences in a non-judgmental situation could be validating and provide comfort. At the end of the interview, you will also receive information about local support services including spiritual, social, physical health, mental health, financial, legal and academic services. Additionally, I will provide a summary of findings from this study to policy makers and administrators of these support services such as the one you represent to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully getting through difficulties. Finally, the information will be reported in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

Costs/Compensation
The amount of time required for your participation in this interview will be approximately 60 minutes. You will not be compensated for your participation in the interview.

Privacy & Confidentiality
I will do everything I can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. I will be audio recording both the in person and internet based video conferencing interviews. We will decide on a location to
conduct the interviews that we agree protects your privacy and confidentiality. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. You can consent to participate with a pseudonym if you so desire. You decide on a pseudonym you would like me to refer to you by in the interviews and the transcript. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any report of study findings. We may use verbatim quotes at times in reporting the findings of this study. Should we use yours, your pseudonym will be attributed to the quote; we will not use your name and all other identifying data will be removed from that quote. If you choose to use your name, we will not attribute your name to your quotes and all other identifying data will be removed from your quotes. No one outside of the research team will have access to your personal information.

The organization you are a member of will NOT be told of your participation or allowed to see your transcript. They will however receive a general summary of the study findings. This summary will be an aggregate of data from a variety of sources; as such the organization will not be able to determine what information you specifically provided. Potentially anyone in your organization can review the summary of findings and the organization can ask for adjustments to be made to the content they are concerned poses a risk to the organization or its members or those it serves. You will have the opportunity to review your transcript and the summary of findings to determine what, if any, information you shared can be disseminated before the summary of findings is sent to your organization for review.

If you share with me intentionally or inadvertently that you intend to harm yourself or others or that children are/are at risk of being hurt or abused, I must report it to the Royal Barbados Police Force/Child Care Board to get help. I will also have to tell The Research Ethics Board/Committee that a report has been made to authorities.

Data Security
The information obtained during this research (such as drawings, transcripts, audio recordings, informed consent tracking sheet, demographic data sheet, contact list etc.) will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. I will scan all hardcopies of study materials within 24 hours of the relevant interview. Electronic copies of all study materials will be stored on full disk encrypted, password protected computers; the computers can only be accessed by members of the research team. Customs agents can copy the content on electronic devices. To manage this risk, while I am in transit from Barbados to Canada, all electronic data will be removed from my password protected, encrypted computer and stored ONLY on a password protected cloud drive belonging to and secured by the University of Guelph. Your transcripts will be maintained for up to 7 years and deleted, while the audio recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. The hard copy of your informed consent document will be shredded within 24 hours of your interview. Your contact details will be deleted after you have been given a summary of the results to review.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your consent at any time. You can decide if you wish to be emailed a scanned copy of your informed consent form. We will not tell your organization whether or not you participated or if you withdraw. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or any question you do not wish to answer, or end the interview altogether at any time. We ask that you indicate via email your wish to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Any information you shared will be destroyed at that
time (audio recordings, transcripts, contact information) and will not be included in reports of the findings of the study. Your email address will be removed from the study contacts list and you will not be contacted from that point on regarding any study related information.

Contact
If you have any questions, at any time, about this research, or want to discuss any issue about the study, please contact any of the members of the research team noted above.

Research Ethics Board
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Barbados for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#s: 171203-B & 17-12-002), please contact the Director, Research Ethics, University of Guelph at reb@uoguelph.ca or (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606) or the Office of Research, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados at (246) 417-4847 or researchethics@cavehill.uwi.edu
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APPENDIX M
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Field Participant Interview (Local Subject Expert) Information Letter

REB Protocol Research Project #s: 171203-B & 17-12-002

Principal Investigator:
Jeffery Yen, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
jyen@uoguelph.ca

Co-Investigator:
Cheryl Cadogan-McClean,
Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies
246 417 4288, 246 417-4293 or cheryl.cadoganmcclean@cavehill.uwi.edu

Student Investigator:
Sadie Goddard-Durant, C.C.C, M.S.,
Department of Psychology, University of Guelph
246 xxx-xxxx or goddards@uoguelph.ca.

Research Purpose
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ph.D. candidate Sadie Goddard-Durant under the supervision of Jeffery Yen, Ph.D., and Cheryl Cadogan-McClean, Ph.D. This is a dissertation research project for Sadie Goddard-Durant and a requirement for her PhD studies. The overall purpose of this research is to learn more about how Afro Barbadians successfully get through difficulty in their daily lives, throughout their lifetime.

Description of the Research
To achieve this purpose, I am interviewing individuals who have successfully responded to past difficulties in their lives, people in their personal lives who helped them, as well as members of organizations who these individuals identified as instrumental in their experiencing difficulties/successfully responding to them. I will also be observing what goes on in spaces that several participants indicate were involved in their experiences of difficulty and responding to those difficulties such as a social service agency that gives us permission to do so. During observation, I will be collecting information more generally about the activities and interactions of people who go to these organizations so that I can have a detailed understanding of what any person could experience.

To obtain a complete understanding of these difficult experiences and how Afro Barbadians successfully get through them, it would be helpful to learn more about some key contextual issues such as education, the economy and gender in Barbados. You are invited to participate in this research because of your expertise in one of these areas. I will be asking you questions based on your expert knowledge in the relevant area of key policies and practices, and any influential factors.
on and outcomes of those policies and practices. You will be asked to participate in ONE individual interview lasting 60 minutes. The interview will be held via a voice over internet protocol platform with video conferencing enabled such as WhatsApp, Zoom or Skype from a private location such as an office at the University of Guelph or the researcher’s home. Sadie Goddard-Durant will be conducting the interviews alone.

The interview will be audio taped. Prof. Jeffery Yen, Sadie Goddard-Durant and transcribers will be the ones who have access to the audio tape. All transcribers will be required to sign a confidentiality contract requiring them to not divulge any information shared on the audio tapes. You will be re-contacted via email with a transcription of your interview, and later with a summary of the results of the study. In this way you can a) insure that we accurately represented your experiences and b) determine if you still give us permission to use any information you shared in the study. You can contact me within two weeks with your feedback.

Potential Risks
There is no risk associated with your participation in this study. You decide if you should participate in the study at all or withdraw at some point, what questions you answer, and what interview information can be used in reporting the study findings (see subsection Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal). In addition, we will take every measure to insure that your privacy and confidentiality is maintained (see subsection Privacy & Confidentiality).

Potential Benefits
There may be some benefits to participating in the study. I will provide a summary of findings from this study to policy makers and administrators of support services to inform their response to helping Afro Barbadians lead healthy lives and supporting them in successfully getting through difficulties. Finally, the information will be reported in journals and at conferences and meetings aimed at sharing information about Afro Caribbean peoples, resilience and ways of conducting research, particularly with respect to working with similar populations.

Costs/Compensation
The amount of time required for your participation in this interview will be approximately 60 minutes. You will not be compensated for your participation in the interview.

Privacy & Confidentiality
I will do everything I can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. I will be audio recording both the in person and internet based video conferencing interviews. We will decide on a location to conduct the interviews that we agree protects your privacy and confidentiality. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. You can consent to participate with a pseudonym if you so desire. You decide on a pseudonym you would like me to refer to you by in the interviews and the transcript. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any report of study findings. We may use verbatim quotes at times in reporting the findings of this study. Should we use yours, your pseudonym will be attributed to the quote; we will not use your name and all other identifying data will be removed from that quote. If you choose to use your name, we will not attribute your name to your quotes and all other identifying data will be removed from your quotes. No one outside of the research team will have access to your personal information.
You will have the opportunity to review your transcript and the summary of findings to determine what, if any, information you shared can be disseminated before the summary of findings is made public.

**Data Security**

The information obtained during this research (such as drawings, transcripts, audio recordings, informed consent tracking sheet, demographic data sheet, contact list etc.) will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. I will scan all hardcopies of study materials within 24 hours of the relevant interview. Electronic copies of all study materials will be stored on full disk encrypted, password protected computers; the computers can only be accessed by members of the research team. Customs agents can copy the content on electronic devices. To manage this risk, while I am in transit from Barbados to Canada, all electronic data will be removed from my password protected, encrypted computer and stored ONLY on a password protected cloud drive belonging to and secured by the University of Guelph. Your transcripts will be maintained for up to 7 years and deleted, while the audio recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. The hard copy of your informed consent document will be shredded within 24 hours of your interview. Your contact details will be deleted after you have been given a summary of the results to review.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your consent at any time. You can decide if you wish to be emailed a scanned copy of your informed consent form. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or any question you do not wish to answer, or end the interview altogether at any time. We ask that you indicate via email your wish to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Any information you shared will be destroyed at that time (audio recordings, transcripts, contact information) and will not be included in reports of the findings of the study. Your email address will be removed from the study contacts list and you will not be contacted from that point on regarding any study related information.

**Contact**

If you have any questions, at any time, about this research, or want to discuss any issue about the study, please contact any of the members of the research team noted above.

**Research Ethics Board**

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Barbados for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#s: 171203-B & 17-12-002), please contact the Director, Research Ethics, University of Guelph at reb@uoguelph.ca or (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606) or the Office of Research, The University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados at (246) 417-4847 or researchethics@cavehill.uwi.edu
REB Protocol Research Project #s: 171203-B & 17-12-002  
Field Participant Interview (Local Subject Expert) Informed Consent Form

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APPENDIX N

Afro Barbadian Resilience Research Project

Field participant (Organizational Representative) Interview Guide

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study before we begin?

- How long has your organization been established?
- Why was your organization established? What are the events that led to your organization’s establishment?
- What role does your organization play in Barbadian society? In what ways is your organization involved with Black-Barbadians in Barbadian society? Who specifically is your organization involved with in Barbadian society?
- What infrastructure does your organization have in place to interact with Black-Barbadians?
- Do lots of people come to your organization? How come? For what reasons do people approach your organization? What accounts for any changes in persons’ involvement with your organization?
- What is your role in the organization? In what ways do you interact with people? Why do people come to someone in your role in the organization?
- Can you describe for me what people would experience when they come to a) your organization b) come to someone in your role in the organization?
- Does your organization collaborate with any other entities? Which ones? In what ways? For what purposes?
- What are the policies and laws governing how your organization works? In what ways are they manifested in the day to day functioning of the organization e.g. how you and service users interact, what service users can and cannot do etc.? What kind of information does your organization collect about service users? How is this information used? What are some of the tools that your organization uses to conduct its activities e.g. demographic data, intake form, attendance etc. What are some documents that your organization produces e.g. public education? For what purposes? What have been the outcomes? How has the public responded to these documents?
- What do people say about your organization? What do they approve of/are they satisfied with? How does your organization enable them to communicate this? How does your organization respond to what is shared?
- What are their concerns/dissatisfaction? What are their suggestions? How does your organization enable them to communicate this? How does your organization respond to what is shared?

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study? Thanks for participating!
Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study before we begin?

1. In your view, what have been the most important (economic/education/gender/mental health/community-related) policies that were enacted in the post-independence period? Why have these been important? How have they influenced people’s life circumstances and prospects in Barbados?

2. What about more recent (economic/education/gender/mental health/community-related) policies? Why have these been important? How have they influenced people’s life circumstances and prospects in Barbados?

3. What was going on in Barbados or in the Caribbean region or international arena during the times in question that gave rise to or influenced in some way the creation and implementation of these policies and practices? Who was involved in creating and enacting these policies? To what extent was the Barbadian public made aware of the need for the policies and the nature of the policies? To what extent/in what way was the Barbadian public involved in shaping the policies and how they were enacted?

4. What were the outcomes that a) policy makers/shaper and b) the Barbadian public expected/hoped for? Were the expectations the same? If so, what facilitated this? If not, what hindered this?

5. What were the outcomes that a) policy makers/shapers and b) the Barbadian public actually observed/experienced? What was the Barbadian public’s response to this? How did policy makers/shapers/practitioners respond?

6. What do you think I need to know about (economic/education/gender/mental health/community-related) policies and how they were enacted in Barbados that we haven’t spoken about thus far?

Do you have any questions for me about your participation in this study? Thanks for participating!