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Fitting In: Segregation, Social Class, and the Experiences of Black Students at Selective Colleges and Universities

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Abstract

We analyzed qualitative data gathered at a selective urban university with a large black student body. We found that black students from integrated backgrounds welcomed the chance to establish friendships with same-race peers even though they were at ease in white settings, whereas students from segregated backgrounds saw same-race peers as a source of comfort and refuge from a white world often perceived as hostile. These contrasting perceptions set up both groups for shock upon matriculation. Students from an integrated background were better prepared academically and socially, but were unfamiliar with urban black culture and uncomfortable interacting with students of lower class standing. Students from a segregated background were surprised to find they had little in common with more affluent students from integrated backgrounds. Although both groups were attracted to campus for the same reason—to interact with a critical mass of same-race peers—their contrasting expectations produced a letdown as the realities of intraracial diversity set in.

Keywords

Race; Class; Education; Segregation; College; Campus

Residential segregation continues to exert a powerful influence on the life chances of African Americans in the United States. Although levels of neighborhood segregation have moderated in recent years, most African Americans continue to be isolated in predominantly black neighborhoods. Indeed, in many ways, the seeming moderation of black–white segregation is more apparent than real, for the observed decline in *average* segregation actually stems from two very different trends: rapid declines in metropolitan areas with small black populations and stasis in the nation's largest urban black communities. As a result, the large majority of urban blacks continue to live under conditions of hypersegregation (Massey 2004; Wilkes and Iceland 2004).

Many studies have documented the negative effects of segregation on the well-being of African Americans (for reviews see Massey and Denton 1993; Sampson et al. 2002; Charles 2003). The detrimental effects of segregation have been confirmed in diverse domains ranging from health (Williams and Collins 2001) to economic status (Cutler and Glaeser 1997). The detrimental effects of segregation on educational outcomes are also well known, especially for students attending primary and secondary schools in the public sector (Orfield and Eaton 1996; Kozol 2005). More recently, research has documented the negative effects of segregation on academic achievement in higher education (Massey et al. 2003; Charles et

al. 2009). Given the prevailing spatial organization of American society, most black and Latino students grow up under segregated circumstances, and the vast majority have friends and relatives who live in segregated neighborhoods, even if they themselves have relocated to the privileged confines of an elite campus. Coming of age in a segregated school or neighborhood been shown to undermine later achievement in college (Charles et al. 2009).

According to Massey and Fischer (2006), four covariates of segregation account for its negative influence on college GPA: low parental education, weak academic preparation, a lack of socialization for college life, and excessive exposure to disorder and violence. Charles et al. (2004) have documented segregation's continuing consequences for educational achievement among students attending elite institutions. Because their family and peer networks extend back into segregated schools and neighborhoods, African American students routinely experience much higher levels of social stress than other students, yielding poorer mental health, greater time and effort devoted to family problems, and hence worse grade performance.

The foregoing results derive from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, a representative sample of freshmen entering 28 elite colleges and universities in the fall of 1999 (see Massey et al. 2003; Charles et al. 2009). Because the data were survey-based, the authors could not assess directly how black students from integrated versus segregated backgrounds anticipated and experienced life on campus. In their multi-method study of black students attending a predominately white university, however, Smith and Moore (2000) found that those from integrated backgrounds were considered by other black students to be "outsiders" who were unversed in black culture and ostracized for participating in mainstream campus activities and having white friends. At the same time, black students from lower class backgrounds expressed feelings of social distance and alienation from affluent blacks. Later work showed that expectations about campus racial climate differed by class and upbringing and strongly influenced the extent to which students felt a part of campus life (Smith and Moore 2002).

Here, we build on these earlier quantitative and qualitative studies by undertaking a qualitative analysis of data compiled from a series of in-depth interviews with black students attending an elite private university to consider how social class and segregation influence the choice of academic institutions, structure expectations about campus life, and ultimately determine the extent and nature of social integration on campus. We begin by describing our qualitative interview sample and comparing it with a representative sample of students from the same institution.

Source of Data

The current work was carried out in association with the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshman (NLSF). In order to design, test, and implement the NLSF survey instrument, surveys were conducted at a large elite private urban university during 1998 and 1999. Complete information about the questionnaires and the sampling strategy are available from Massey et al. (2003) and Charles et al. 2009), and all waves of the NLSF data plus documentation are available from the project website at: <http://nlsf.princeton.edu/>. Here, we focused on a sub-sample of 155 white students and 151 black students surveyed at the university and compare them with data gathered from a parallel sample of 24 black students who were recruited to the project for in-depth qualitative interviews. The latter sample is restricted to black students whose parents both self-identified as black or African American, thus excluding biracial students.

The university in question, call it "Urban Ivy," is a selective private institution located in a large city containing a large, well-established black community. Although it boasts an

average SAT score in the neighborhood of 1400 and an acceptance rate below 25 %, Urban Ivy also has a much publicized “commitment to diversity” and a wide array of campus organizations and resources tailored to various ethnic, racial, and religious groups. These resources include an African theme dorm where many black students reside as well as a well-developed program in African American studies. At any point in time, between 500 and 1,000 black students are enrolled as undergraduates, providing a critical mass for black community activities and events on campus.

As noted above, our data come from qualitative interviews done with 24 black undergraduate students at Urban Ivy between the fall of 2000 and spring of 2005. These interviews comprise part of a larger study of race and the college experience completed by the first author, which included interviews and focus groups with 75 black and white undergraduates. The larger study included a diverse grouping of monoracial black students (defined as having two black parents), multiracial black students (defined as having only one black parent), and white students. For the purposes of this study, we consider only the monoracial black students in order to study more definitively the consequences of segregation from a black perspective. At the time of the study, all respondents were full-time college students between the ages of 18 and 22. Although the sample is not necessarily representative of all black students at Urban Ivy, significant efforts were made to sample students from different class years, academic interests, as well as a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. A relative age peer at the time of the study, the first author lived in campus housing and regularly attended black-oriented activities and events on campus. She also frequently visited Africana House, a black-oriented theme dorm, to meet with students and discuss the research. Email was an important conduit for advertising the study and setting up interviews. Black men were oversampled as they were outnumbered by their female counterparts on campus by a two-to-one ratio (see Massey et al. 2003). To guarantee confidentiality, each respondent was given a pseudonym.

The first author completed all the interviews with 13 men and 11 women, using a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide. In designing the guide, the NLSF questionnaire was used as a template. Standard survey questions were adapted for the interview setting and focused on a variety of topics, including precollege academic preparation, neighborhood racial composition, school segregation, high school grades, advanced placement courses, motivations for attending Urban Ivy, racial and ethnic composition peer groups, social adjustment to college, and current academic performance, including GPA. Each student provided nuanced accounts of these topics as well as other issues of interest. Interviews often lasted several hours and sometimes took place over several sessions.

Although we did not provide monetary compensation, we did offer students a meal (lunch or dinner) as an incentive to participate. All the interviews took place on campus, mostly in student dorm rooms. On several occasions, the first author invited students to her office to sit and talk over dinner. In addition to the qualitative interviews, detailed demographic information was compiled for each student, including family composition, socioeconomic status, and homeownership. Without exception, the first author sustained rapport with students who provided rich, contextual accounts of their lives on campus. In contrast to traditional ethnographic studies, however, the first author undertook limited participant observation and did not live among respondents. Nonetheless, the fact that she was a graduate student at the university and a relative age peer aided her interviewing efforts.

To analyze the qualitative data, the first author coded students’ narrative accounts alongside the survey findings. Because the interview guide was open-ended, but captured similar themes to the NLSF survey, our analysis of the qualitative data followed a mixed inductive/deductive approach. Relying on techniques devised by grounded theorists Glaser and Strauss

(1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), we created a textual database that served as a repository for all the demographic data on interview respondents and a series of word processing files that comprised the coding schema. The interviews were then “open-coded,” to capture all the relevant themes pertinent to our study. With the survey findings, we were able to examine potential causal processes deductively as well as to analyze intervening factors affecting respondents’ academic and social acclimation to college as related to segregation. Massey et al. (2003) work served as an important guide as we analyzed our qualitative data and looked to the national survey for relevant comparisons and trends.

Table 1 presents background characteristics for black and white students included in the representative survey and in-depth interviews. The top panel shows the demographic, regional, and socioeconomic characteristics of students in the *survey sample* and the bottom panel shows the same information for members of the *interview sample*. In both cases, we break down black students by whether they lived in integrated versus segregated neighborhoods as high school seniors. Integrated neighborhoods were defined as those less than 30 % black and Latino, whereas segregated neighborhoods at least were 70 % black and Latino. Only one member of the interview sample lived in a racially mixed neighborhood (between 30 and 70 % black and Latino) so this category was excluded from the table.

With a few notable exceptions, blacks from integrated neighborhoods display background characteristics that are similar to whites. In the representative survey sample, for example, relatively few came from a single parent household (10 % of integrated blacks versus 11 % of whites), most come from northeastern states (71 vs. 63 % of whites), the vast majority had at least one college educated parent (81 vs. 86 %), around half had a parent with an advanced degree (47 vs. 50 %), around two-thirds of parents held a managerial or professional occupation (64 vs. 69 %) and were on financial aid (66 vs. 67 %), and the large majority of parents were home owners (76 vs. 95 %). The biggest difference between the two groups was the very high percentage of immigrant origin parents (58 %) among integrated blacks compared with whites (15 %).

In contrast, students originating in segregated neighborhoods were much more likely to come from a female-headed household (53 vs. 10 % among integrated blacks) and were less likely to have a parent with a college education (60 vs. 81 %) or an advanced degree (30 vs. 47 %) or a professional occupation (51 vs. 64 %), and they were more likely to be on financial aid (84 vs. 66 %). Although the percentage with immigrant parents among segregated black students was substantially greater than among whites (30 vs. 15 %), it was nonetheless well below the percentage observed among students from integrated neighborhoods (58 %). Thus, we observed clear socioeconomic differences between black students coming from integrated and segregated neighborhoods, with the former generally evincing a higher class background than the latter; although immigrant origins are over-represented among all black students at Urban Ivy generally, they are hugely over-represented among those coming from integrated neighborhoods.

As shown in the bottom panel of Table 1, our in-depth interview sample generally replicates these profiles, with one exception: single parent households are somewhat more prevalent among blacks from integrated than segregated neighborhoods (37 vs. 21 %). Apart from this one contrast, however, the integrated–segregated comparisons in the interview sample are quite similar to those prevailing in the survey sample, suggesting the former sample’s overall representativeness. As in the survey sample, we observed a higher share of parents with a college degree among integrated students than segregated students (100 vs. 60 %), a greater share with an advanced degree (88 vs. 27 %), a greater frequency of a professional-managerial occupations (53 vs. 33 %), a higher rate of home ownership (100 vs. 53 %), and

a lower share on financial aid (75 vs. 93 %). Once again, immigrant origins were hugely over-represented among black students from integrated neighborhoods, with 75 % reporting a foreign born parent, compared with 47 % among those from segregated neighborhoods.

School Quality in Black and White

Table 2 continues the comparison by considering the characteristics of the integrated and segregated high schools attended by African Americans versus those attended by whites. Comparing Tables 1 and 2, we quickly see that many more students attended integrated or mixed schools than lived in integrated neighborhoods. Whereas only 67 black students in the survey sample lived in an integrated neighborhood and just one lived in a mixed neighborhood, when we turn to educational institutions we see that 78 attended an integrated school and 20 went to a school that was racially mixed. Thus, aspiring black parents deliberately seem to choose to put their children into integrated schools even if they live in segregated neighborhoods. In addition, prior work indicates that the shift toward integrated schools accelerates as children get older (Massey et al. 2003).

We do not really see this shift in our interview sample, however, as nine students lived in integrated or mixed neighborhoods and the same number attended integrated or mixed schools. Nonetheless, the students we spoke to often brought up the importance that their parents placed on enrolling them in integrated schools so they could get the best education possible. This goal was accomplished either by moving the family to a less segregated neighborhood where the schools were perceived to be better or by enrolling the student in a school outside the immediate neighborhood, such as a magnet school or private academy. In our interview sample, it was mostly the latter, as only 25 % of African Americans who attended an integrated high school were at a public institution. In contrast, 85 % of those attending a segregated institution went to a public high school.

One of our respondents, Ashley, offers a good example of parental decision-making with respect to education. She attended an integrated elementary school outside of her public school district in New York City because her mother was concerned that she would not get a good education at the predominately black school nearby:

Interviewer: How did you get to go to school in [name of elite school district]?

Ashley: The address thing worked out. My mom planned this out quite well... Because she wanted us to go to the best school that we could go to.

Interviewer: The best school and environment?

Ashley: Ours was the best school in the city, but yes.

Interviewer: And [name of district] is mostly white?

Ashley: And Jewish.

Interviewer: Mostly white and Jewish. Is it upper class, middle class?

Ashley: I think mid to upper. But on my side it really was, you know, West Indians...

Ashley also attended a majority-white middle school where she was able to pass the rigorous placement exam for admittance to one of the top magnet high schools in the city. Her urban high school (which she attended for all 4 years) was nearly a 2-h subway commute from her working class West Indian neighborhood.

As this case illustrates, many black parents put a high priority on keeping their children away from disruptive influences and making sure that they are academically prepared for college, especially their sons. Devon's dad, for example, was concerned about him getting involved with the "wrong crowd" at the neighborhood middle school nearby and instead chose to send him to a private school several towns away. Even though he lived in a largely white suburban neighborhood outside of Boston, the school system was diverse and in transferring, Devon went from being one of "many" black students in his elementary school, to one of just a handful of students of color at the elite prep school he attended from 7th through 12th grade:

Interviewer: Tell me about your decision to go to [name of school], rather than public school?

Devon: Ummm...at first, I wasn't really up for it, it was more my dad's idea. But, then the more I thought about it and the more I think back on it now, it was definitely the right choice. Like, if I had ended up, like if I went to the public high school—which wasn't very good.

Interviewer: [Name of town] doesn't have a very good public high school?

Devon: No. Like, I don't think I would've gotten into [Urban Ivy]. I don't think I would've worked as hard...I wouldn't have had to... it made more sense to me, it was a lot better education-wise. I'm sure it was a lot better for going to college. I didn't want to leave my friends, is why I didn't want to go...That was the reason why it was difficult at first. But, when I was there, when I think about it, it was a lot better that I did it.

In the same vein, John's mother expressed similar concerns, deciding to send him to a private school from sixth grade onward to prepare him for selective higher education and keep him away from the "streetlife" in the city where he lived. As he told us:

...At a public school, I'm not sure that I would've been able to perform as well academically, just because maybe I would've fallen into a bad crowd of something like that...just the way I was headed. Private school probably saved me... It's easy to get caught up in a street-life, thug mentality, if that's all you know. You know, my friends, some of them weren't the greatest people. It was like all the white teachers at my [elementary] school told [my mother], that's where she should send me and pull me out of the school system.

Eugene's mother was likewise adamant that he should attend an elementary school outside his majority-black neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama. For several years, he took the bus to the "white part of town" until a local council resolution was passed that forced him to return to his neighborhood school. He then sat for and passed a citywide exam that admitted him into a competitive magnet school for the rest of his public education:

Interviewer: Did you start out in an elementary school that was predominantly black kids?

Eugene: For kindergarten—kindergarten and first grade.

Interviewer: And then you switched schools?

Eugene: Then in second grade, my mother sent me to... in second and third grade she sent to a predominantly, well, it was in the white part of town. So we just can assume it was a predominantly white school. Then my fourth grade year I think the city passed a resolution saying that you basically had to go to your school...in your neighborhood, yeah. And so, fourth and fifth grade I went to a predominantly black school. But then my middle school

was a magnet school and so I got into the magnet school and so that's how I went back to where I was.

In the end, only three of the 24 black interview respondents (13 %) attended segregated schools while living in segregated neighborhoods through their entire elementary, middle school, and high school careers. Everyone else experienced at least one residential or school relocation into a more integrated environment. During the last year of high school, five black students were enrolled at schools that were greater than 70 % minority, and these students tended to be the most socioeconomically disadvantaged interview sample. Those black parents with access to economic resources generally sought to place their children in integrated settings.

The top panel of Table 2 underscores why affluent black parents so often adopt this strategy: integrated schools generally offer a higher quality education than segregated schools. Among black students in the survey sample, those in integrated schools completed 2.5 advanced placement (AP) courses compared with 1.1 among those in segregated schools. When students were asked subjectively to rate the degree to which they were prepared to attend Urban Ivy on a 0–100 scale, the average rating was 73 both for whites and black students at integrated schools but only 56 among blacks from segregated schools and 63 for those in racially mixed institutions. In keeping with these perceptions, actual grades earned during the freshman year yielded a GPA of 3.4 for white students and 3.1 for black students from integrated schools, but only 2.7 among those who went to segregated schools, despite the fact that high school grades were roughly equal.

As seen in the bottom panel, we generally observe similar differentials among students in the interview sample. Moving from integrated to mixed to segregated schools, the number of AP credits drops from 2.3 to 1.3 to 0.8, self-rated preparation falls from 87 to 75 to 60, and freshman GPAs go from 3.1 to 3.2 to 2.7. In the in-depth interviews, we also asked about the size of the typical class and the number of graduating seniors. In general, integrated schools attended by African American students were smaller than mixed or segregated schools, and they were even smaller than the schools attended by whites. Thus, the average number of graduating seniors was 217 for blacks at integrated schools and the average class size was just 17, compared with respective figures of 253 and 22 for whites and 322 and 20 for blacks at segregated schools and 263 and 29 for racially mixed schools.

The Social Costs of a Quality Education

The foregoing results clearly show that black students who attended integrated schools gained greater access to key educational resources such as advanced placement courses and small class sizes, which together with other features of integrated schooling fostered a subjective perception of being well-prepared for a competitive college environment, an assessment that was borne out by actual grade achievement. The cost of gaining access to these educational resources, however, was less contact with same-race peers. As shown at the bottom of Table 2, when we asked black students to estimate the relative number of black students in the typical high school classroom, those attending integrated schools gave a number that implied an average percentage of 9 % black, compared with 32 % in racially mixed schools and 52 % in segregated schools.

The lack of exposure to other students of color was frequently mentioned by the black students who attended integrated schools. Oprah, for example, explained that she was the only black student in her honors classes and on her sports teams:

Interviewer: So you were usually the only person of color?

Oprah: The only one.

Interviewer: And this was throughout high school?

Oprah: And then I was the only black girl in my classes, and was usually the only black girl on my sports teams... Then as tracking went on, I just became the only black girl in my classes and those were the people I was around all the time. So then as a result of that, I was always around white people, even on my sports teams. Like I played tennis, I was the only black girl. I played volley ball, I was the only black girl.

Although Oprah lived in an affluent, largely white suburban neighborhood on Long Island, her home was close to a mostly black enclave. The majority of the other black students at her school lived in the “black part of town,” whereas she lived in the mostly white section. Oprah reported that although the racial and ethnic composition of her high school was about 20 % black and Latino, at graduation she did not have one black friend. Her entire academic peer group was white and Asian.

Malik’s high school experience was akin to Oprah’s. He, too, grew up in a wealthy area where he and his two brothers were accustomed to being the only black students in their neighborhood school. Throughout his years of education, Malik was the only black student in the Gifted and Talented Program and the only time he had contact with other black students was in gym or art class:

Malik: I would say probably like 12 white kids, two Asians and me, so I was the only black kid.

Interviewer: You were the only black kid in Gifted and Talented?

Malik: Yeah, yeah—which is really rare because I began to notice that every year there was only, like, one black kid in Gifted and Talented.

Interviewer: So, okay, so you were the only black kid in all your classes in high school?

Malik: Oh, yeah, and you know, in middle school and most of elementary school.

Interviewer: So that was an interesting experience for you, huh? What was that like?

Malik: I mean there was definitely times where I felt different. Like I remember specifically one time when I was in seventh grade there was this girl like who would sit behind me and she would like sharpen her pencil like in one of those, like, little sharpeners. And I had like longer hair and she would like dump the pencil shavings like in my hair... The only time I would see another African American would be when I was in like art class or in my gym class, you know. So it was weird because, like, I always felt more tension between myself and other African Americans than I felt with non-African Americans because I guess, you know, most African American students in majority white schools or situations kind of stick together.

Middle school was an especially painful time for Malik and he worked hard to suppress the most painful episodes, telling us that “it’s funny because I guess I’ve kind of blocked out most of it so I guess it was pretty bad, I don’t know. I just, I definitely had, like, the sixth, seventh and eighth grades were definitely tough years.” Malik estimated that his high school was about 7 % black at the time of his graduation.

Being black in a largely white environment proved to be quite alienating for many respondents. They often felt shunned or left out by other black students who were not in

their classes or on their sports teams. Moreover, several respondents spoke about the difficulties of having to sit in class day after day with people who did not understand them or want to get to know them as individuals. As Oprah put it, “in general everyone I was around was white, which was hard. It was a little rough.” In particular, she felt that she missed out on dating in high school because all her friends were white. The black men at her school did not find her attractive because she was not part of a black peer group and her white girlfriends could not empathize with her because they knew little about her struggles. Oprah described how surprised one of her best friends was to learn that her hair was straightened:

I remember my girlfriend from home didn't know until like our senior year in college, I mean in high school, that I permed my hair, and she was like, it's like I don't know you, and I'm like, of course, it's not my natural hair texture, black people don't have hair like this and she was amazed. So I think a lot of people think, so I don't know, I guess those kind of questions [are hard].

Although insistent that he liked high school and did not feel any social isolation because of his skin color, Devon reluctantly admitted that he wished there had been more racial diversity within the student body, especially because no other black students in his grade were enrolled in honors or advanced placement classes:

Interviewer: And were there students of color in your classes?

Devon: No.

Interviewer: No? None?

Devon: No.

Interviewer: Not even one?

Devon: No... it was they had like the honors classes and then they had all the rest. So, with honors, you had-it was more like they picked who was in it. And, then with the... lower, lesser levels, it was obviously everybody else.

Interviewer: How was that for you?

Devon: Fine. Because, I mean, because I mean, I got along with all the kids in my classes.

Interviewer: Really? It didn't feel strange, necessarily? That you were the only student of color in there?

Devon: I got used to it.

Devon was also the only black kid on the soccer team. All the other black males played basketball. He described his relationship with other black students at the school as “friendly” but “not close:”

Devon: I wouldn't say we weren't friendly...it just that they didn't really hang out with the white students at all.

Interviewer: They didn't? Why do you think so?

Devon: I don't know. It was just weird. Like, I was really the only one who ever associated with the white kids.

Interviewer: Really? So, they just always hung out together?

Devon: It was mostly the basketball team.

Interviewer: How about things that you didn't like about high school? Anything?

Devon: I kind of wish there was more diversity.

Interviewer: Diversity in what sense?

Devon: Kids from different backgrounds.

Interviewer: Racially?

Devon: Yeah.....it was also because in high school it was more who you played sports with and what classes you were in. So, a lot of your friends were who you played sports with. So, I played soccer and so most of my friends were from the soccer team. But, with them (the black students), they were on the basketball team.

Tia discussed her experiences at one of the top preparatory schools in the northeast. Her excellent academic record at her local public school helped earn her a partial scholarship there; but her going to private school was a bit of a "culture shock" for her because she went from being one of many black students at public school to joining a tiny handful of minority students at private school:

When I went to [name of school] I was the only black person in some of my classes, one of five in my grade. And I just felt like nobody could sympathize with me, or nobody could understand me as a black person, nobody could understand me as a - not poor, but a lower middle class person, you know what I mean, like nobody could understand that.

Compounding Tia's stress was the feeling that she had to work harder than her white peers because the academic standards of the private school were higher than what she was used to. According to her, "it was far more rigorous" at the private school and she spent much of eighth grade "catching up" with her new classmates. While Tia made a couple of friends at her new high school, she remained closest with friends from her old school and neighborhood, usually spending any free time she had with them. Her friends from home were all African American, like her, in contrast to her private school friends who were all white. Tia estimated that only half of her neighborhood friends ended up going to college, whereas all of her friends from the private school were college-bound:

Tia: ...I was in like two completely different environments because I lived in like a predominantly black neighborhood and I went to school in a predominantly white [area]... they went to the local high school. And out of them, I'd say maybe 50 percent went on to college.

Interviewer: What kinds of schools did they go to?

Tia: A lot of them went to HBCU's, some of them went to state schools like Rutgers—whereas at school, it was completely different. Like I said, 99 percent of the students went on to four year [college].

Interviewer: So your close friends from high school, like what schools do they go to?

Tia: My close friends went to Princeton, Syracuse...In my class, like my entire grade, everyone but one student [went].

Black respondents who went to predominately white high schools had, on average, only two close black friends throughout their entire 4 years of high school. In their interviews, students were asked about the racial and ethnic composition of their high school peer group. The top panel of Table 3 shows the self-reported racial and ethnic composition of respondents' high school peer groups by level of high school segregation. Students from schools with small black populations clearly had less than half as many same-race peers as those from mixed high schools. Moreover, students from predominately white high schools reported peer groups that were on average 41 percent white and 11 percent Asian.

In contrast, students who attended segregated high schools said that their peer networks were almost exclusively black with comparatively few white friends. Unlike respondents from predominately white high schools who struggled to meet and sustain relationships with blacks, segregated students had relatively few opportunities to engage with whites. What the table does not show, however, is the greater differentiation even within same-race peer groups. Segregated and mixed respondents readily revealed that their closest high school friends tended to be similar to them ethnically and socioeconomically. Thus, second generation West Indian and African students were closest to others with similar ethnicities and upbringings.

Although respondents from integrated backgrounds reported having difficulty fitting in socially in high school, nearly all agreed that they felt well-prepared for the tough academic standards they encountered when they got to Urban Ivy. They were not surprised by the intensity or amount of course work upon entering as freshmen and were quite used to being in demanding classes with other college-oriented peers. Denise told us she felt that the tough standards of her boarding school made for an easy academic transition:

...It taught me so much, just academically, like prepared me a lot. I came to [Urban Ivy] and got a 4.0 my first semester... Then it just, you know, it just challenged me to think. I met such great teachers that like just encouraged me so much.

One reason for her ease during her freshman year was that several core courses covered material she had already mastered at boarding school, where she was required to take classes 6 days week and there was a strong focus on developing good writing skills. She stated:

... When I came to [Urban Ivy], it was a joke I have with one of my professors now, the first thing I learned didn't come until second semester sophomore year. Everything else I had taken was stuff I already took... Just, like academically, it was great. That's why I loved it because it was just, it made me think.

Although Denise graduated high school with a 3.0 GPA, she now feels that she could have done better but "slacked off" in part because of her involvement in several extracurricular activities. At the time of her interview, she had a solid B average in college and was planning to apply to graduate school the following year.

James, too, felt that his private school education made for a smooth transition into his freshman year at college. He was particularly surprised by the fact he was able to achieve such high grades in Spanish, which had been his most difficult class in high school.

Interviewer: How about your high school? Do you think it prepared you well for Urban Ivy], academically?

James: Definitely.

Interviewer: Yeah. You feel like when you got here, it was like same old, same old?

James: Definitely ... A lot of stuff was easy. Spanish was definitely—I had a difficult—Spanish was my hardest class in high school, my hardest subject. And, you know, that was the one class where I could work my butt off and still get a B. Here I got As in all the Spanish class.

Despite the fact that Tia felt a bit socially isolated in high school because of her dark skin color and working class background, she admitted that she was more than prepared for the scholastic challenges of a competitive academic setting. She had been involved in several organizations at her private day school aimed at increasing racial awareness. She also had the chance to travel internationally on school trips to Mexico and Europe. All of which, she could not have done had she gone to the public school in her predominately black neighborhood.

Interviewer: How well do you think your high school prepared you for college?

Tia: Extremely well.

Interviewer: Yeah, why so?

Tia: Because I've been able to really take advantage of the fact that I had those opportunities to do all that stuff in addition to school, so I feel like I manage my time a lot better than a lot of other students here who get involved in stuff but aren't normally, you know, hadn't normally done it.

Interviewer: So time management?

Tia: Right, time management, and just in terms of academic preparation. Like I take a lot of English classes and whatnot for my major but for both though, for Af-Am and for English, it's a lot of writing. And I feel like they've developed me really well as a writer... And it exposed me to a lot of things I don't think I would have been able to take advantage of in high school if I went in my public school, like photography. And I went on several trips that I would not probably have ever been able to afford because I did it all on scholarship... I felt like after going on to an Ivy League institution afterwards, like they prepared me 100 percent.

At the time of her interview, Tia had a 3.5 grade point average and was double majoring in English and Africana Studies.

The high school experiences of segregated students were markedly different from their same-race counterparts who attended majority-white high schools. Four of the five students who attended segregated high schools were men and all came from segregated urban neighborhoods nearby. They had plenty of black peers and classmates and did not express any sense of social isolation at home or school. Compared to the black students who attended integrated schools, however, they felt significantly less academically prepared for college, often complaining that they had not taken enough honors or advanced placement classes and that they were surprised by the huge workload in their freshman year.

KJ, for example, came from a large urban school district just outside New York City and grew up in the same neighborhood and lived in the same house for his entire childhood. His parents were both Jamaican immigrants who came to the United States in the 1970s and he estimated his high school to be about 90 % black and Latino and about three percent white. His high school had even fewer whites than did his elementary or middle school. The few

white families who remained in the area generally sent their children to private high schools because they were worried about safety and quality of the education. KJ's parents also thought about sending him to private school, but the high cost of tuition prevented them from doing so. He explained:

KJ: ...There's 3 % White people living in [name of town], I think most of the kids, of the White families, went to, private school...and they started taking them out, like, in elementary.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

KJ: I guess they like, thought they would be - kids would be safer in private school...Like I, I'm, my, I mean, my mom thought about sending me to private school...' - Cause I was, guess I was acting up in like, 8th grade...but, it [was] gonna cost too much.

Although KJ saw himself as a good student, he did not feel that his high school prepared him well enough for a competitive academic environment, even though he took all honors and four advanced placement classes in his senior year, including biology, calculus, US history, and government:

Interviewer: So you were, so you were a really good student?

KJ: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you study a lot?

KJ: No, not really...Like I mean I put in, I put in the study time, but not, not like, not like what you would have to do for like college now, when we have to go like, you have to put in like, six hours to get like a B. ...

KJ graduated high school with a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 and was ranked 14th in his class of 270, but when he took the proficiency exams for AP credits he did not earn a passing score on any.

Interviewer: Do you think your high school prepared you well for [Urban Ivy]?

KJ: [pause] No...[pause] Because, [pause] especially like the AP courses...they really weren't, they really weren't that hard on me, like if it, it was supposed to be like if—I look at it now, if it was supposed to be hard on me, like a college class, they should've probably, gave us more work, stayed on us more often and like, I wish I'd, I wish I'd stopped being like, procrast—procrastinating, I wish I had stopped it then...'cause I did the work, like how I did in high school, and, do the work how you did in high school, you come here, and you get a D...

KJ admitted that he has struggled a lot academically since coming to Urban Ivy. He found the workload overwhelming and the standards much higher than he was used to and by his third year he had accumulated a grade point average of only 1.8 and was on academic probation.

Mikal also attended a predominately black and Latino high school close to his home on the outskirts of New York City. A senior engineering major at the time of his interview, Mikal's parents only recently moved out of his old neighborhood and into a more mixed (though still largely black) area a few miles away. Mikal described his high school as being overcrowded, with fights between students being a regular occurrence:

Classes were always packed. The students - put it like this, our high school had metal detectors, so like there were a lot of fights. In my experiences, I was always in the upper level classes so the teachers were pretty good.

Although he had a solid B average at college, Mikal felt that his high school education was no match to that of his private school classmates:

I mean, you know, when I came here I realized that a lot of things, that a lot of students learned - like it's not even the material so much, it's just the culture. Like a lot of students come from private schools, they have like discipline just planted into, like...well, that's the impression I got. They're just more driven than I was coming out of high school. I think that has a lot to do with just the culture and how people around me weren't driven, so I wasn't motivated to always do my best.

At his high school, Mikal had earned a perfect 4.0 in all his honors classes, but he was nonetheless surprised by the intensity of the coursework and Urban Ivy's stringent grading standards.

Interviewer: Did you have any difficulties adjusting to college life?

Mikal: Probably just the amount of competition I saw in classes.

Interviewer: What do you mean by that?

Mikal: I mean, like I did very well in my standardized test scores. Obviously, I did very well in high school. And so I was quite confident coming in, to say the least, and while I was very confident, I still had a lot of bad habits coming from high school...Like procrastination and things like that.

Interviewer: So what happened when you came here?

Mikal: So I came here and I guess I tried to apply myself in much the same way I applied myself in high school. What I wasn't expecting was the level of application from the other students as far as courses went.

Interviewer: So did that stress you out at all?

Mikal: Yeah, I mean it was certainly kind of a, I guess kind of a shock. Like it was good for me to experience that early on because it forced me to step up I guess and adjust...I wasn't used to not seeing a 3 in front of my GPA, so I wasn't happy at all.

For Troy, writing a term paper was his biggest hurdle after arriving on campus from his predominately black and Latino parochial school. Troy's family lived in a tough inner-city neighborhood where they struggled to make ends meet. Troy's father insisted that Troy and his brother attend school outside the neighborhood to ensure them a better future:

Troy: ...My father had, we actually started out in public school but because my brother started detouring, I don't know, my father said...

Interviewer: Getting in trouble?

Troy: Yeah, my father decided to sacrifice so I could get out of there so they sent us to Catholic school and from there I stayed through for high school.

Troy, however, admits that his Catholic high school did not ready him well enough for success at Urban Ivy, telling us that:

I couldn't write a paper when I got here...I could not write a paper. And we had it in high school but I guess - I probably could but I couldn't write it with ease as other students here could write it. Like my first time writing a five-page paper I was like, I was stressing over five pages and everybody else was like it was nothing. Like the students here that went to private schools like [names of private schools] high school was harder than college.

Nina ended up attending a majority-black high school just for senior year. She had previously attended a predominately white private school but because of the relocation of mother's job and parents' divorce, Nina finished high school at the public school in the predominately black town that she moved to with her sister and mother. Her grade point average at her old school had been around 3.4 but shot up to 4.0 in her senior year. In her commentary, Nina compared her earlier private and public school experiences:

Interviewer: Do you think that that high school prepared you well for [name of school]?

Nina: Not really...I think my preparation came before that.

Interviewer: Really? What was so different about it?

Nina: I had a problem with the teachers there. It was a majority black school...but a lot of the teachers I found did not really sincerely care about the students and their future. It was especially indicative of, like, well, say like my senior honors class, my English class, the professor was like, oh, you guys are at the top of this school, you can get into [names several state universities], and I'm like, are you kidding me? That's what he's telling the students. Nobody, the only reason they heard of [Urban Ivy] is because it's in the same town. No other Ivy League, they didn't know anything about it, like the teachers wouldn't even push them to strive for that. So it was really, like everything was mediocre, even the honors... one other student from my honors class came to [Urban Ivy] and we were the only two people to go to an Ivy League out of the whole class.

Expectations About Campus Life

There was a strong consensus among interviewees that Urban Ivy's top academic reputation and attractive financial aid package ultimately lured them to accept its offer over the others they received. However, interview data also indicate that segregation affected the decision to enroll there over other elite schools to which they were admitted. As already noted, a majority of black students we interviewed attended integrated schools in which they were a small numerical minority. They were used to being in classes and having friends that did not look like them and who could not understand what they went through as a black person on a daily basis. They reported instances of routine discrimination and felt ostracized by both their white and black peers. As one of a handful of black students in honors or advanced placement classes, they were isolated from the majority of their same-race peers who took lower-level classes. In college, they hoped to integrate and socialize within a larger black community.

To gauge the extent of intraracial contact in college, we asked respondents to tell us about the racial-ethnic composition of their college friendships as well as the composition and focus of their extracurricular activities. The bottom panel of Table 3 details the increasing 'blackness' of students' peer networks at Urban Ivy. As expected, we observed a particularly dramatic increase in the percentage of same-race peers for respondents coming from integrated high schools: from 31 % in high school to 66 % in college. Across all levels of high school segregation, however, there is a significant 'blackening' of peer networks after entering Urban Ivy. Many students reported that they desired fewer non-black friends and

embraced new forms of blackness by including multiracial friends in their social networks (denoted in Table 3 as “Other”). When asked about extracurricular activities most black students reported participating in organizations that were black-oriented. Half said they had lived in Africana House, a residential space devoted to the celebration and study of issues pertaining to African Americans and the black diaspora.

In sum, coming to Urban Ivy for most black students meant expanding their black peer network relative to what they knew in high school. The prevailing expectation was that shared skin color would be a unifying factor among all black students. Indeed, many respondents said they chose Urban Ivy as an attractive option for its widely touted reputation of being “Black Ivy” or “Ghetto Ivy” and its location near a large, well-established urban black community. Though Urban Ivy was overwhelmingly white, its black population was substantially larger in absolute terms than was true at their high schools. Students saw it as a “black-friendly” place where they would have many black peers to choose from as well as a plethora of university-sponsored, black-oriented clubs and organizations. The fact that the university sponsored a residence hall designed to celebrate black heritage and culture also struck a chord with many respondents.

A large share of the interviewees grew up in white suburban schools or neighborhoods where they were one of a select few people of color on their class or block. They felt estranged from a black peer group and desperately wanted to make same-race friends. Many of the students from integrated backgrounds also said that their black high school peers at times questioned their racial authenticity because they came from a higher class background and were not always proficient in certain “black” cultural styles and behaviors common in lower class circles. More affluent students from integrated backgrounds saw Urban Ivy as offering a fresh start where they could meet other high-achieving blacks from a similar class, residential, and educational background. Fitting in and being accepted by a black peer group at college was one of the top priorities for black students who came from predominately white neighborhoods and went to integrated schools.

Interviewees who came from segregated backgrounds expressed similar reasons for attending Urban Ivy, but their expectations of college life were quite different. Like their integrated same-race peers, they were attracted by the university’s top academic ranking and generous financial aid, and although they looked forward to interacting with same-race peers, their reasons were very different from their integrated counterparts. Black students from segregated backgrounds had a compelling desire to keep their immediate social circle exclusively black because this was most familiar and safe. For the same reason, they also perceived the university’s urban location and well-established black presence as important. They assumed that other blacks on campus would think and act just like them and would have the same cultural repertoires and racial understandings given their shared skin color.

The top panel of Table 4 quantifies the primary factors that students mentioned in explaining their decision to enroll at Urban Ivy. All respondents, regardless of background, agreed that the primary motivation was the university’s academic prestige. The share of students mentioning academic reputation as a reason for attending ranged from 82 % among those from integrated high schools to 100 % among those from segregated schools. Nearly everyone believed it was important to go to a top-tier institution because as one student put it, “my degree will mean something [after graduation].” Of course, financial aid was also important, especially for poorer students from mixed and segregated high schools, 75 and 60 % of whom mentioned it as reason for selecting Urban Ivy, compared with only 37 % of students from integrated high schools. Students from lower class backgrounds, especially, emphasized the need for generous fellowships to fund their educations, and the fact that Urban Ivy offered need-blind admissions was not lost on them.

Interviewees also cited recruitment efforts by black admissions staff and faculty on campus and at their high schools as a reason for applying and attending Urban Ivy. Recruitment was a big factor especially for students from mixed and segregated high schools. Whereas only 27 % of students from integrated school settings mentioned recruitment as a reason they chose to attend, among students from mixed and segregated settings, the respective figures were 50 and 60 %. Several respondents mentioned college fairs held at their high schools, at which Urban Ivy staff were present. Many said they forged personal relationships with recruiters through email and campus visits and that these people ultimately played a key role in getting them to apply to the university. One recruiting ploy that was influential in getting many students to apply was Minority Scholar's Weekend, a multicultural admissions event designed to highlight the diversity of campus life at Urban Ivy and showcase its many black-oriented activities and organizations as well as Africana House. Respondents from segregated and mixed backgrounds participated in Minority Scholar's Weekend in greater numbers than integrated students, who were not always familiar with the event.

Although academic prestige, financial aid, and recruitment efforts loomed large in the decision to attend Urban Ivy, many students also mentioned its urban location in a city containing a large and well-established black community as key factor. This feature was mentioned by 64 % of those from integrated high schools compared with 76 and 80 % of those from mixed and segregated schools. The significant presence of other black students stood out especially for students from integrated backgrounds, being mentioned by 37 % of students who attended an integrated high school compared with just 13 % of students from mixed school settings and 25 % of those from segregated institutions.

The one-two-three ordering of reputation, aid, and black presence is well-illustrated by Nia in discussing her reasons for attending Urban Ivy:

I had heard a lot about [it] being very diverse...[That] definitely played a big factor...So, I would say academics, prestige, or whatever you want to call it, just how well I thought it was gonna benefit me academically, that would be number one, economics would be number two, in terms of how much money I was going to get and racial diversity would be number three...

Growing up in a wealthy suburb outside Washington, DC, Nia had attended the same private all-girls day school from the 5th through 12th grades. High school had been difficult for her because the few black girls she was friendly with did not consider her to be "black enough" because she was not comfortable in Black English Vernacular and came from an affluent household. She recalled "like, when I was in middle school, people used to tell me that I spoke like a white girl, like just because I went to a predominantly white school my entire life, and my parents aren't poor." She was excited to come to Urban Ivy because of the possibility of making black friends, telling us explicitly that "I really wanted to make black friends...I was excited to find out I had a black roommate freshman year."

Sandra likewise chose Urban Ivy over other schools in part because she liked its urban location:

Interviewer: So what are the primary factors that actually, do you think, if you could sum it up, convinced you to apply here?

Sandra: To apply? Really like probably because it was an inner-city school. That's probably it.

Interviewer: Why, why would it be so important that it's an inner-city school?

Sandra: Just to have like, like it's an inner-city school so you can be involved with the community and stuff like that.

Sandra grew up in a suburban area of Los Angeles and attended one of the most elite private schools in the country. Several top colleges competed for her because of her strong academic record and swimming abilities. She had felt quite lonely in high school because she had few friends and felt that she had had little in common with her "very wealthy white" peers:

Like, I had maybe one friend and then most of the people on the swim team were people who I knew from my club swimming. So that's how I knew them. And they were the people I generally hung out with but we weren't really friends, we just hung out, you know. So I really didn't have very, like good friends at that school.

The bottom panel of Table 4 presents data on respondents' expectations for intraracial contact at Urban Ivy, as indicated by their desire to live with other black students, participate in black-oriented activities, and cultivate black peer networks. Nearly three-quarters of all students from integrated high schools said they wanted to live with other black students and 82 % stressed the importance of having black friends. Although high, these percentages were even higher for students from mixed and segregated backgrounds. Indeed, 100 % of segregated students wanted to live exclusively with other blacks and 86 % of students from mixed high schools wanted to reside in Africana House, the black theme dorm. Although not shown in the table, black students from integrated backgrounds tended to know considerably less about multicultural happenings on campus prior to matriculation, including the diversity of housing options and the range of black-oriented activities.

Students often discussed their excitement about being in a big city with a large black population and a campus with a wide variety of black-oriented academic and social resources. Many remarked that they had felt comfortable on their first visit to the university because they had met with black professors and current students to learn first-hand about the black experience at Urban Ivy. Oprah, for example, was determined to take full advantage of all that Urban Ivy had to offer, especially the prospect of finally having a black-oriented social life, telling us that "I really felt that as a black female if I had an opportunity to go to a selective school I had to go. So I was kind of hoping on Urban Ivy." Oprah was accepted to other selective schools but decided on Urban Ivy because she did not like the environment at the other schools. She felt that the black students were "uppity" and did not think she would fit in with them:

I got into [name of other university] first and I went to visit and it was really, I didn't have a good time, it rained all weekend. And then I don't think I really liked the people I was around, I felt really shy. I was going through like this strange stage where like I didn't want to talk. People always tell me I sound white or acted white, so I was around all these black people, I was afraid to be out there for fear that people would say that. So I had a very quiet weekend, I was really quiet. But I was like, well, if I don't get into Urban Ivy, I have to go here.

Oprah did not want a repeat of her high school experience, where she was the only black person in her friendship circle, explaining that:

I made a very conscious choice I did not want to be the only black girl amongst white people anymore. And more importantly, I didn't want to feel isolated or ostracized from the black community. I had done it for so long.

As already mentioned, in the spring before the freshman year, Urban Ivy hosts a special Minority Scholars Weekend for accepted students. It also sponsors a Summer Institute for minority students, which consists of an intensive weeklong session of classes offered by the

university's African American Studies program, and both events were central in shaping students' initial expectations about Urban Ivy and what life as a black person would be like there. Although not specifically asked, more than half of the interviewees spontaneously revealed that they had attended the Minority Scholars Weekend and that this had been a fun time to meet other incoming black students and learn about the variety of black-oriented scholastic resources and social outlets, especially the African-oriented residential hall where they could live with a critical mass of black students.

Minority Scholars Weekend is designed to entice students from under-represented groups (especially blacks and Latinos) to matriculate at Urban Ivy over other schools. Prospective students stay with other minority students during the weekend, meet with professors and other university personnel, and attend social and cultural events tailored especially to them. This initial campus visit provided many black students with a good first impression of the university. They reported having a lot of fun partying and socializing with their same-race peers, often for the first time in their lives.

James, for example, attended Minority Scholars Weekend and really enjoyed himself. He met several of his campus friends there and told us that he immediately felt "comfortable:"

James: I came here, they have Minority Scholars Weekend...So, when we came here, I instantly clicked with a lot of people...One of them became my roommate the first two years-who is now a housemate of mine along with two other people.

Interviewer: And as far as enrolling here, what turned the cards for you?

James: It was the Minority Scholars Weekend, definitely.

Besides making friends, James explained that the parties during Scholar's Weekend were really fun and gave him the impression that Black students had a vibrant social life:

The parties at Scholar's Weekend-I mean, it's a common thing. They suck you in at the parties at Scholar's Weekend. And you get here and you think it's gonna be like that every weekend. You think it's Florida State and you're just gonna be able to go out and hang out. And, there's going to be tons of [black] people.

James did not feel the same way when he visited his other top choice. He thought the black students there were not as fun to be with and were "weird."

Nina also felt that Minority Scholars Weekend was the deciding factor for her when she had to make the choice between the Urban Ivy and another selective urban university:

Interviewer: So, what were the primary factors that actually convinced you to apply here then?

Nina: I came here for Minority Scholars Weekend and I just had the best time. I met the most interesting people. I went out, hung out, went to a party, and then went to sitting in on some classes and then loved the campus too, just everything was telling me to [come]. Everyone knows that Urban Ivy is like the diverse Ivy League.

Whether the university really represents "Black Ivy" is open to debate, but it is clearly evident that there was a widespread perception among black students that it would be a welcoming place for them and would present more social opportunities for them than other institutions.

Upon their acceptance of admission, students reported that there were two primary channels by which they met black friends and became enmeshed in a black social world during their freshman year: the Summer Institute organized by African American Studies and Africana House, the Afrocentric dorm. Both were frequently mentioned as crucial to shaping initial expectations of what college would be like for black students. The primary objective of the Summer Institute is to help black students become acquainted with college life by taking classes and meeting other black students before the school year officially begins. Classes are generally taught by black professors and focus on issues of race and the African American experience. Although it is open to all accepted students, invitation letters to the Summer Institute are sent to those identified as black or African American on their admissions forms. During the Summer Institute, students live in Africana House and get to know one another, becoming versed in the goings-on of the black student population through graduate and undergraduate advisors who serve as tutors and resident advisors. In their interviews, students continually discussed how attending the Summer Institute and living in the African theme dorm were crucial to how they initially felt about Urban Ivy. Pilar, for example, revealed that she had enjoyed her experience at the Summer Institute, and when asked about her first impressions of campus life, she talked exclusively about her interactions with other black students.

Interviewer: What were your first impressions of campus life, the student body, and your social experiences?

Pilar: Oh, I loved it...when I first got here, because I did Af-Ams. The Af-Ams is the African American Studies Institute thing. And, they have like, the black kids who are coming here in the fall, they come in the summer-time...there's grad students here, there's like black faculty and they teach like a week, like intensive, like research kind of..."

Interviewer: So, you choose to be in it?

Pilar: Right...it's usually like all the black kids come. So, you're there and like...you notice by the end of the week, you're like...you're up like these crazy hours and you're up writing papers and so, by the end of the week, you're really close with all these people.

Pilar grew up in a predominately black working class area just outside of New York City and had an exclusively black peer group prior to college and the Summer Institute made her excited to think she could make a place for herself at the university.

Sandra also enjoyed the Summer Institute. She had previously visited the university on a recruiting trip for the swim team but had not been able to attend the Minority Scholars Weekend. Until the Summer Institute, she did not have much exposure to African American studies:

Interviewer: So, what was [the Summer Institute] like?

Sandra: Af-Am's we like, well, my experience here previously was a predominately white experience...So, it was a totally different experience...And, also we were studying black issues...It was just like the flip side of a coin, it was really interesting. I learned a lot. I had like a whole other way of thinking because I had never studied black issues before—like you never talked about social inequality. All my friends that first year came out of Af-Am's...because I spent the majority of my time with them in Af-Am's.

Before coming to Urban Ivy, Denise had attended a small liberal arts college in California but left after one semester because she did not like the campus or the student body. When she got the invitation to the Summer Institute, she was thrilled to get to know other black

students and “get into the swing of things.” Her previous college held a similar program but she did not participate in it. In response to a question about her first impressions of Urban Ivy, she said:

Denise: Oh, it was wonderful. I did the Af-Am Institute...it’s all black, oh yeah...We come and you know, it’s a week of these intense classes, they give you three different classes, you know, mini courses that you take and you get to meet other people. And, I thought that this was really big for me because I’m like, okay, when I come back to school I’ll know some people, you know, while I’m getting in the swing of things. And, I hadn’t realized that happened in my other college too, like, there were [black] kids who had some sort of program and they all knew each other and it was real comfortable for them...And, I came here and I loved it. I thought it was great. I was like the dorms are great. I was like the food is great. I was really excited. I was like it’s in a black city, I just thought it was all wonderful. And, then when I started here, you know, I was like, okay, this is great.

Africana House was equally important as an attraction for black students from integrated and segregated backgrounds alike. It sits on the outer edge of campus away from the goings-on of more centrally located residences such as the residential hall where the majority of freshmen live. Students were excited about the fact that there was a place reserved for them and their interests and Africana House was especially tantalizing for students from integrated schools and neighborhoods who foresaw a new opportunity to socialize and live with same-race peers who would share similar interests. As Tia commented:

...a lot of minorities come from schools where they were of the minority and then when they get here, because the school larger than the high schools that we were in, we wouldn’t find people to hang out with, so for the first time in our life, they’re the same race as us.

Those from segregated backgrounds, too, expressed the belief that they would have a better social life at the university if they lived there because it would ease their transition into the predominately white campus culture. They wanted to stay within the social confines of the black student community where they felt most comfortable. African House contains approximately 200 students, most but not all of whom are black. Oprah was originally assigned to another residence hall but asked to be reassigned to Africana House after attending the Summer Institute, telling us that she wanted to ensure that she would have ample opportunity to develop a black peer group:

I came here for Af-Am’s weekend and I had already been assigned a room in [name of residence hall]. And, I came to Af-Am’s and everyone was like: “I’m living in Africana House. You’re not living in Africana House?” And, I was like: “No.” And people were like: “Girlfriend, come live in Africana House!” Everyone was like: “That’s where I’m living!” I was like: “Oh, my God, I want to live there!”

At the time of her interview, Oprah had several close friends, all of whom were black, and she has been active in several black campus organizations, including the Caribbean Students Organization and the Gospel Choir.

Unlike Oprah, Aloicious was from a predominately black area in one of the outer boroughs of New York. His friendship group in high school had been all black and he had been one of many black students in his honors classes:

Interviewer: Did you want to live with students of your own racial and cultural background?

Aloicious: Yeah...It was just a matter of me having something in common with people...I wanted to meet some intelligent, focused, motivated black people when I came here, get to know them well and hopefully foster a good relationship with them.

Aloicious lived in Africana House for all four years of college and was very much involved in black student life at the university.

Troy referred to African House as his comfort zone. Coming from an inner-city neighborhood in New York, he appreciated the fact that he could come home to a place where black people were in the majority after spending his entire day amidst whites:

Interviewer: What made you decide to live in Africana House?

Troy: Hands down, I wanted to make sure I knew the other black students that were here. Since there weren't a lot, I wanted to know the ones that are here. It's my comfort zone, my comfort zone.

Troy was a resident advisor in Africana House and organized many social activities for black freshman to help ease their transition to the University.

Certainly not all black students wanted to live in African House, for a variety of different reasons. In their interviews, several students explained that it was not an attractive housing option for them because they did not want an exclusively black peer group nor did they want to feel cut off from mainstream campus life. Students who chose to live outside of African House and had fewer black friends were often considered by other black students to be "not black enough" and risked being shunned and ostracized by their same-race peers.

Life on Campus: Expectations and Realities

As scholars such as Goffman (1967, 1969) and Jones (1990) have noted, people always bring expectations to interactions with social others, and when these expectations are not met, disappointment and disillusionment may follow. Although black interviewees were generally excited to attend Urban Ivy, they quickly learned that not everything was as rosy as they initially imagined. Students from both integrated and segregated backgrounds were surprised by the fact that making black friends was not as easy as they thought and that finding a comfortable social niche could be quite difficult. As noted above, the university's racial context was critical in most of their decisions to enroll. For students from predominately white backgrounds, the prospect of attending a prestigious private university where they could finally socialize with a critical mass of same-race peers was tantalizing. For students from predominantly black environments, the presence of other students who they believed shared their cultural styles and sensibilities and could understand their insecurities was attractive. When the two groups of black students encountered one another, however, both were disappointed.

After settling into campus, students from both backgrounds were dismayed to find out that skin color did not always put them on common ground with other black students. Being black did not automatically ensure that they would be accepted or that they would fit in among other African Americans. They quickly learned that their lived experiences did not necessarily gain them favor with black students from other residential settings areas who did not have a comparable class background or similar outlook on life. Because many black students had limited exposure to same-race peers before arriving on campus, they were taken aback to learn that race could still be a salient and problematic issue at Urban Ivy. Those from integrated schools and neighborhoods were surprised at the diversity of black students on campus and the myriad of ways they enacted their racial identities. For those

from predominately segregated settings, arrival on campus often resulted in a different sort of “culture shock.” They were surprised by the relative affluence of their same-race peers and their extensive pre-college interracial contact. They felt alienated from integrated students who were well-versed in white culture and seemed to carry a different social standing.

Although most white Americans view race as a “master status” in which African origins trump and render invisible other social differences, in reality black student populations at selective schools such as Urban Ivy are highly diverse with respect to factors such as class, immigrant status, and biracial origins, and this diversity is at the heart of the identity politics that occur on campus, a politics that is further complicated by skewed sex ratios in which black females outnumber black males by ratios of 2:1 or more. In our interviews, we asked black students whether they were surprised by anything when they first came to college. Besides telling us about the academic challenges they faced, students most frequently told us how their perceptions of other black students on campus differed from the lived reality they had known to that point. Blacks from all backgrounds were taken back by the many differences and gulfs between themselves and their same-race counterparts.

Nia, the junior who had been so happy to find out that she had a black roommate her freshman year, was disappointed to find out that they did not get along. Although she herself was from a solid middle class background and had attended a private high school in suburban Maryland, her roommate’s extreme wealth was uncomfortable for her:

...My freshman year roommate was black and I thought we were gonna get along really well because she was another black person, but it made me realize that you don’t get along with every single black person you meet...She was just too different. I think there were, there were a lot of issues between me and her. I think she’s probably upper middle class, upper class - she’s from Atlanta and there were certain things that she had. Like I was used to hanging out with everyday normal people, like Express and Gap and Abercrombie & Fitch were expensive stores to me...But a lot of her clothes were like Kenneth Cole shoes and Prada bags and just stuff that I would not be able to afford...

Nia was disappointed by the fact that she did not live in Africana House during her freshman year. She felt that living elsewhere had made it harder for her to make black friends:

Interviewer: So your first impressions of this place weren’t that positive?

Nia: No. I was a little bit upset or depressed because I wasn’t getting to know as many black students, which I really wanted to make an effort to do because I had come from a school where it was such a small population...I actually didn’t really know what African House was because I hadn’t really—there were some people who went, but nobody from my school had gone here who was black.

Nia felt that she had more in common with her white girlfriends from high school than the black people she met during freshman year, telling us that:

I thought the black population was going to be a lot more unified than it was. Like I said before, there’s a lot of different types of black people...There are just so many different types of people and I just didn’t realize and I kind of thought it was gonna be like a group - first of all because my [white] friends back at home are a lot like me, so they’re much more similar to me than...In the sense of we tend to like the same things, like we tend to agree on the same ideas.

Nonetheless, she did eventually come to make several close black friends and became active in several campus organizations including a black sorority.

Jason grew up in Trinidad and Toronto and had never been to the United States until he came to college. He was not sure what to expect but realized that some of his black college peers were quite different from him in the way they interacted with each other and the slang they spoke. Jason spoke with a thick Caribbean accent and was friends with several other first generation Caribbean students.

Jason: Because as I said black students here are different than black students from Canada, the people that are my friends here are different than my friends in Canada.

Interviewer: What is so different, like a couple of key differences?

Jason: A couple of key differences is, as I said, the blacks in Canada are different. So the way that we talk and the way that we interact and the way that we everything is just different.

Jason had gone to what he described as an “upper-class mostly Jewish” high school in Toronto. He was used to dressing conservatively in khakis and polo shirts, unlike many of the black males he met at Urban Ivy who liked to “dress down” in baggy urban styles, which caused him some consternation:

...Well I have seen most of the black men on campus where baggy clothing. And it is not uncommon to see [them] in [their] sweats or wearing some jeans, black women on the other hand are the opposite, they dress up and I think among the whites on this campus I think that black men dress down but in a different range of that... The brands are I don't know.

Sandra was shocked by the fact that she did not automatically make black friends. Like Nia, she did not live in Africana House her freshman year but chose to live in the dorm that was most popular with white freshmen, where she was the only black student on her hall. Sandra caught flack from an older black peer who thought that she was being disloyal to other blacks by choosing a majority-white dorm over Africana House. Sandra explained:

I remember being at one party and this one older, like upper class girl asked me: “Where are you living?” She's black and she's like: Where are you living? And I was like “I'm in [name of dorm].” She's like: “How come you're not living in [Africana House?]” I was like: “To tell you the truth, I decided to go to [Urban Ivy] like that day that the applications were due and I didn't have the time to write to get into [Africana House.]” And [she's] just like: “So that's the reason why you're not living in [Africana House?] Because you didn't wanna write an essay?! And she was like: “You know, you're so ignorant, like you would prefer to live with the white people than to live with the black people because you don't want to write an essay?” Like she got into like this big thing and it basically boiled down to like you would rather isolate yourself from the black people, by living in the [white dorm] or you'd rather isolate yourself from black people than participate in like all this stuff that's gonna be happening in [Africana House] like because you didn't want to write an essay... But it was like almost like at that point I felt like the divisions... Like this is the first time like that I'm living with a group of black people.

Sandra felt excluded from her same-race peers because of this encounter and her time-consuming schedule on the university swim team made it especially difficult to make black friends.

Goku came from a predominately black suburb of Philadelphia and decided to live in Africana House during his freshman year so that he could partake in an active black social life with others he had much in common with.

Interviewer: Did you want to live with students of your own racial background and cultural background?

Goku: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, why?

Goku: Because you can relate to them, you can just relate to them, their lifestyle. I mean I think that's just like any race, people who are just like you, I guess

Interviewer: So it feels comfortable?

Goku: Right, just most comfortable.

Although he had attended an integrated high school, Goku's social circle had been all black. Nonetheless, the black student body he encountered on campus was different than anything he had previously experienced in his working class upbringing:

Goku: I had never been exposed to bourgeois black people-rich black people, I guess... Because I mean, I knew they existed, I just never met them. You know?

Interviewer: Like, give me an example of what would make someone bourgeois.

Goku: I mean, bourgeois in the sense of the mind-set...I just mean...I just mean, like-the upper class. Upper class.

Interviewer: But, how would your mind-set be different than a not rich black person?

Goku: Hmm—how do I explain this? They spend most of their life around predominately...even more predominately than I've been in-more predominately white environments than I've been in.

The hardest part of adjusting to college for Goku was integrating himself into such a small and diverse black student body, telling us that:

...it might have been one of the more difficult things for adjusting to...was the small black community and the way that...out of that 500 [black students], you're not all together. Like, you see the same people all the time and all the black people know each other. And, so, it's a different dynamic. And, a lot of the black people here, most of them, aren't dealing with black people in large numbers...So, yeah, so, I guess, I was expecting, I don't know-you have a lot of black people who come from neighborhoods or environments where there weren't a lot of other black people... Because if you're a black person, you should, at least, be able to see where I'm coming from. But, if you can't, that just shows that—that just shows where your mind is—where your mind is at.

Pilar shared Goku's sentiments about how black students from integrated backgrounds were quite different than her, illustrating these differences by describing her friend who had grown up in a predominately white suburb:

One of my friends who came from a situation where it was predominately white students, like, she was the only black person in her little friend circle, coming here

and mixing with all the black people who had been around black people and knew songs from way back when and dances from way back when and knew all these different things that she didn't know. Kinda like made her feel like...just made her feel different. Like, she talked different. Like, everything was just kind of different. I'm not saying she couldn't transition with people who were her friends. It just made her really scared that she was different...I mean, I think she looked at that as being-she kind of missed out on...blackness, or something? I don't know.

For many of the black students who had grown up in segregated neighborhoods, they equated blackness with having fluency in particular African American styles and behaviors. Goku explained that those students from predominately white backgrounds knew little about urban Black America, pointing out that:

Goku: Like, you don't watch the same shows as us, you don't listen to the same music as us. You didn't listen to the same music as us when we were kids...You're watching all the shows that the kids at your school are watching. You're watching Sweet Valley High, you're watching...something like Dawson's Creek and things of that nature.

Interviewer: That would mean you were more black?

Goku: More white... If I'm more upper income black, what's different about my...You're more in that whole opera, classical music-that type of culture...I mean, when you're in that type of culture, you're in a predominately white culture because black people as a demographic, aren't really involved in those kind of things. Like, you might have played tennis and golf. Things like that.

Sean, a freshman, had grown up in San Jose California around a large majority of blacks and Latinos and he attended an all black charter school where he played basketball. In his interview, he remarked on his discomfort when he was unsuccessful in his attempts to say hello or make eye contact with other black students he encountered on his way to class. He was used to living in a mostly black world where his same-race peers shared the same experiences and interactional styles as him:

Sean: ...And then I got here, I realized the [black] people aren't like the people from back home, they're not friendly, they're not, like you can't just walk up to somebody, like hey, how you doing. I don't know, it just seems like people are in their own little mode...I mean I don't know, cause like it's weird because like where I'm from in San Jose it's like I'm from East San Jose and so it's a majority, the majority is a minority...So it's like you see, you know what I'm saying, like for the most part you either know them or you've seen them. So it's like, what's up. And if you haven't, it's like most of them are pretty cool...It's rare that you see white people...

Interviewer: What's different about this place with black people?

Sean: Just I don't know, like I guess their lives. Like my friends, my close friends back home...and the fact that we went to the same schools, we did a lot of the same things. Like I don't know, like the way we view the world was like real similar so like we talked and we understand each other and it's just like yeah, all right, that's cool.

Sean made few friends his freshman year, mostly keeping to himself. He hoped to pledge a black fraternity his sophomore year in hopes of meeting other blacks that shared his interests.

At her racially mixed magnet high school in inner-city Philadelphia, Julie's friendship circle had been comprised of other working class students like herself and she was startled by her first real encounter with affluent black people:

Interviewer: Does it seem like people have money here?

Julie: Mm, hmm, even the black people, yeah.

Interviewer: Even black people?

Julie: Mm, hmm.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about that.

Julie: ...a lot of my friends come from, like they have money... Yeah, yeah, or if they're not doctors and lawyers, they just have money, like their parents can afford to pay their tuition, you know... They may have a little financial aid but they don't get as much as like I get, you know, like those types of things.

Julie who was the first in her family to attend college had won a full scholarship to attend the university's business school.

Yolanda's interview took place during her first semester at the University. At her private boarding school, she had been one of two blacks in her graduating class. She was awed by the relative size of the University's black student body:

Um, it's really weird being around so many black people, [laughing] [I]'m like: 'Wow, this is weird!' [laughing] Like, ah, like, 'cause um, when I was at [name of boarding school], I know there's like two of us... I think some people like, for instance, black people who went to public schools that are like, have so many black people and then they come here, and they're just like: '[softly] there are no Black people here!' I'm just like, 'what are you talking about?!' [laughing] 'Yes there are!' Even though, percentage-wise, there aren't but I'm just like, wow!

She went on to speak at length about her adjustment to campus and how her pre-college perceptions of the black student population as being mostly working class and the white student body all rich were incorrect. She learned that some of her white friends were financial aid recipients unlike her classmates in high school:

Yolanda: ...I pretty much thought it was pretty much just going to be, black people who are on financial aid [chuckles].

Interviewer: Why would you get that perception?

Yolanda: 'Cause it was kind a like that at [name of high school]... Where it was like, we were pretty much the only ones who were like, in programs, and had scholarships, and stuff. Like, even though other people like, there's some people—not everybody there was like, upper class rich or whatever.

Likewise, she was also quite surprised to find out that there were quite a few other black students at the university whom she could relate to culturally.

Interviewer: Anything surprise you when you first got here?

Yolanda: I was surprised at how many Africans there were here. 'Cause I was so used to being the only African, so that, you know when someone was like, oh Ghana and, Nigeria, or Tanzania, and some people were actually born there, it's just like: "Really!?"

Yolanda was quickly disappointed, however, when she did not automatically make a slew of same-race friends, as she assumed she would. She was chagrined by the many black cliques she encountered and found it hard to fit in:

...I don't know if this is gonna be one of the questions, but one of the things that had, ah, attracted me to Urban Ivy, was the fact that like it seemed like the black community here, was so, ah, so comforting, and it was like just welcoming, and so I'm just like, 'you know, that's great,' you know, and I, I really liked [it here] then I came here and it's so not like that, like it's like, first there's so many different cliques. I know every, everyone has cliques, but it's just like, the fact that okay, there's so few of us here anyway for there to be such animosity between different groups...it's just like, ridiculous.

In high school, Yolanda was happy with the fact that she had friends from many different racial and ethnic backgrounds and that they had all gotten along. For her, the divisions among the black students at the University were very unsettling:

Yolanda: My clique or whatever, was like, just a, a, rainbow of colors [laughs]! And, it was just like, and it was just, it was just fun that way...

Interviewer: How did you think it was gonna be here before you got here?

Yolanda: I mean, I really, I didn't know...all the black people I had met before I came here, were really, really nice, and I mean, that was part of the reason why I wanted to be at [Africana House], 'cause I knew most of the black people were there, so I figured there was going to be a lot of the nice people who I met, and it was cool, 'cause it did seem like a little family...But I didn't really think about how it would be, in terms of me hanging out with people outside my race, or how it would be perceived, 'cause I guess, being that, um, at, my boarding school, um, boarding high school...but, that didn't mean you didn't have friends who were outside your race...I think I just subconsciously figured it would be fine, um, and then I came here and - [pause] like the first, the first, um, week or so...I pretty much was just hanging out with only black people...and then once my classes started, that's when really got to know, know different people and everything. But um, but I just said it still didn't dawn on me that, you know, you're, you're supposed to just hang out with black people, until, you know, I think it was one day I was like walking down the street, it was me, my [Indian] roommate and the [Chinese] girls across the hall, and like, there were people sitting on the little stoop by [Africana House]...I don't know, it was just the look kind of was like, 'hmm,' and then I realized...I'm not with any other black person and I was just like, 'Whoa!' [laughs]

Yolanda, like many others we interviewed, felt enormous pressure to be accepted by same-race peers, which often meant limiting interactions with students who were not black. This desire took a great emotional time on many students as they grappled with both the academic and social challenges of the University.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis was based on qualitative interview data gathered from black students attending a selective private university in a large US city. Comparisons between our interview sample and a representative sample of students at the same institution revealed

that our subjects were broadly representative of the black student body and that black students coming from an integrated background were generally of higher socioeconomic status and more frequently of immigrant origins than black students originating in segregated schools and neighborhoods. We also showed that the social profiles of black students from integrated backgrounds closely resembled those of white students attending the same university.

Of course, our analysis carries the standard limitation of most qualitative studies: it is based on data from a single research setting and cannot necessarily be taken as representative of other institutions attended by black students. Urban Ivy's elite reputation and large endowment enables an especially diverse campus body that is perhaps not typical of less selective and smaller institutions. Nonetheless, the sociodemographic diversity of Urban Ivy's black student population and its specific institutional context provide a fruitful opportunity to study racial issues within a heterogeneous community. Our findings echo and extend those of Smith and Moore (2000, 2002) whose analysis focused on a very different kind of campus (a small liberal arts college).

We find clear evidence that the degree of neighborhood and school segregation experienced while growing up, along with social class, strongly affect black students' social acclimation and academic preparation for college. The quality of education received by black students in integrated schools appears to be superior to that received by black students in segregated schools, with smaller class sizes, greater access to advance placement courses, and other academic resources. As a result, students from integrated schools felt much better prepared academically for a competitive collegiate environment relative to students from segregated schools, and consistent with this perception, they earned higher grades once in college. These benefits of an integrated education came at a social cost, however, as students from predominantly white schools had little contact or experience with same-race peers, and little contact or experience with lower class people of any race.

As a result, segregation was not only a key factor in conditioning students' academic preparation, but also influenced their social preparation for college life. Our interview data suggest that coming from an integrated versus segregated background influenced how and why students made the decision to attend Urban Ivy, a selective university located in a large central city containing a sizeable black community. Both sets of students were attracted by the presence of an established black community nearby and the presence of a significant number of African Americans and black-oriented programs on campus, but they were attracted for very different reasons.

Black students from an integrated background welcomed the chance to establish friendships and associations with same-race peers and for the first time immerse themselves within a predominantly black social milieu. High school for them had often been a fatiguing experience for them. As one of but a few black students at school, and often the only black student in AP and honors courses, they felt like they were always on view. Race generally took center stage as these students strove to prove themselves intellectually and socially to their white peers and teachers. Without a significant network of black peers to fall back upon, they felt socially isolated and often reported feeling interpersonally alienated, having no one who really understood them or their circumstances. Urban Ivy was a big draw for them because of its urban location in a substantially black city, the wealth of opportunities it offered to participate in black cultural and social activities, and its reputation as being "black friendly."

For black students from segregated backgrounds, in contrast, attending Urban Ivy meant safety and comfort, offering a familiar social space in which they could find other people

who shared their values and a refuge from a white world they perceived as alien and often hostile. Growing up in segregated schools and neighborhoods with other poor and working class blacks, they were very comfortable with street vernaculars and inner-city cultural forms but were unsure of the social norms and behavior expectations of white academia. Attending a university with an established black presence in a heavily black city meant they could get a prestigious, high-quality education while minimizing contact with an elite milieu they found off-putting if not downright threatening.

These contrasting perceptions and expectations set up both groups of students for social and psychological shocks once they matriculated and began to interact with other black students. Those who came of age in integrated schools and neighborhoods, although better prepared academically and more comfortable socially in a white academic world, were nonetheless less familiar with urban black culture and often felt uncomfortable interacting with lower class African Americans from inner-city backgrounds. They were disappointed to realize there were divisions among black students and startled to find that shared skin color did not automatically provide entrée into same-race peer groups. Contrary to their initial expectations, race remained problematic despite having ready access to a black peer group. In fact, because of the extreme heterogeneity of the black student body on campus, race proved even more subject to contention than in high school and many students from integrated backgrounds sadly realized that they could not get along with every black person they met.

Meanwhile, black students from segregated backgrounds found they often had little in common socially, experientially, or culturally with students who had grown up in integrated settings. They learned that the implicit assumptions they had long held about the commonality of interests, sensibilities, and styles among African Americans were incorrect. They were startled to discover that not all black students were like them and that interacting only with same-race peers did not mean they could escape confrontations with alien lifestyles and values. For many students, campus activities and events provided their first exposure to affluent black Americans who did not speak Black English Vernacular and were unfamiliar with the symbols, signs, and behavioral styles of the inner city. Rather than offering security and safety, the diversity of black students on campus further complicated race and rendered assumed black identities problematic.

In sum, although black students from integrated and segregated backgrounds both were attracted to Urban Ivy for the same reason—to interact with a critical mass of same-race peers—their contrasting expectations about the nature of those same-race interactions set up both sets of students for a letdown as the realities of intraracial diversity set in. Paradoxically, it is on the campuses of America's elite universities that African Americans come to appreciate the heterogeneity and diversity of the black experience. Our work replicates the findings of Smith and Moore (2000, 2002) and like them we call for greater attention and sensitivity among both social researchers and college personnel to the diversity of black student bodies on today's college campuses, not only with respect to social class and interracial experience, but also in terms of immigrant and multiracial origins.

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Table 1

Characteristics of black college students who lived in integrated and segregated neighborhoods as high school students compared with white students

Background characteristics	White	African Americans	
		Integrated	Segregated
<i>Survey sample</i>			
Demographic background			
Single parent household	11 %	10 %	53 %
Parent born abroad	15	58	30
Regional background			
Northeast	63	71	77
Midwest	10	9	2
South	10	5	16
West	16	14	6
Socioeconomic background			
Parent a college graduate	86	81	60
Parent has advanced degree	50	47	30
Parent manager or professional occupation	69	64	51
Parent owns home	94	76	84
Applied for financial aid	67	66	84
N	155	67	64
<i>Interview sample</i>			
Demographic background			
Single parent household	9 %	37 %	21 %
Parent born abroad	14	75	47
Regional background			
Northeast	64	74	87
Midwest	0	0	0
South	5	12	7
West	23	12	7
Socioeconomic background			
Parent a college graduate	91	100	60
Parent has advanced degree	77	88	27
Parent manager or professional occupation	75	53	33
Parent owns home	95	100	53
Applied for financial aid	27	75	93
N	22	8	15

Table 2

Characteristics of high schools attended by black college students classified by level of segregation compared with whites

School characteristics	White	African Americans		
		Integrated	Mixed	Segregated
Survey sample				
Public school (%)	65	25	80	85
Number AP exams passed	3.8	2.5	2.5	1.1
Self-rated Preparation (0–100)	73	73	63	56
High school GPA	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8
College freshman GPA	3.4	3.1	3.1	2.7
N	155	78	20	53
Interview sample				
Public school	68	40	100	60
Number AP exams passed	3.8	2.3	1.3	0.8
Self-rated preparation (0–100)	86	87	75	60
High school GPA	3.9	3.4	3.9	3.9
College freshman GPA	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.7
Average size of graduating class	253	217	263	322
Average class size	22	17	29	29
Average percentage black	3.6	9.4	32.0	51.7
N	22	4	5	15

Table 3

Racial/ethnic composition of high school and college peer networks of black respondents to the interview sample by level of high school segregation

Racial-ethnic composition	Integrated	Mixed	Segregated
High school peer network			
Black	31 %	68 %	88 %
Latino	10	11	3
White	41	19	10
Asian	11	3	0
Other	7	0	0
College peer network			
Black	66 %	75 %	97 %
Latino	9	8	0
White	19	8	2
Asian	1	1	0
Other	5	8	0

Due to rounding error, not all percentages add up to 100 percent

Table 4

Black interview respondents' motivations to attend by level of high school segregation

Reasons and motivations	Integrated	Mixed	Segregated
Reasons to attend Urban Ivy			
Academic reputation	82 %	88 %	100 %
Financial aid	37	75	60
Minority recruitment	27	50	60
Urban location	64	75	80
Black presence	37	13	25
Specific majors or courses	27	0	25
Athletics	18	13	0
Motivation for intraracial interaction			
Desired to live with other blacks	73 %	75 %	100 %
Desired to live in black theme dorm	55	86	60
Desired black friends	82	71	100
Desired Black-oriented activities	73		100

Reasons and motivations are not mutually exclusive and therefore do not add up to 100 %