

ONWUKA DU BRUYN, ONYINYECHUKWU ONU. Ph.D. *We Are Not Monolithic: Exploring the Intersectionality of Multiple Identities and Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in the United States.* (2024)  
Directed by Dr. Ayesha Boyce & Dr. Aileen Reid. 225 pp.

Historically, the field of program evaluation has been dominated by middle class White practitioners often lacking diversity in race, gender, and cultural perspectives (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2014). Recent years, however, have seen a concerted effort to promote diversity among evaluators. According to Hopson and Rodriguez (2014), this shift is crucial for bringing in varied perspectives, more so cultural elements into practice (Hopson & Shanker, 2023) that enhance the relevance and effectiveness of evaluations. In the field of program evaluation, investigations about the experiences of evaluators from a variety of backgrounds is emerging (Arias Orozco, 2022; Boyce et al., 2023b). Evaluators of color often face unique challenges and opportunities in the field of program evaluation. Their experiences are characterized by navigating professional environments that may not fully understand or value their cultural and racial perspectives (Arias Orozco, 2022; Avent et al., 2023; Boyce et al., 2023b). Black African women in the field of program evaluation in the United States occupy a unique intersection of race, nationality, and gender, because it shapes how they perceive their work and navigate their personal and professional lives (Symonette, 2009), yet the exploration of their professional experiences remains scarce.

This dissertation ventured into understanding the distinct challenges and opportunities these women face, shaped by their multifaceted identities. It acknowledges the significant gap in empirical research regarding their experiences, especially considering how their combined identity of being Black, African, and woman influence their professional journey. This study's theoretical framework draws from a variety of theories, namely critical race theory (Crenshaw,

1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), Black feminist-womanist (Collins 2022; Crenshaw, 1990), Afrocentrism (Asante, 1991; Kambon, 1992), and transnationalism (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Collectively, these theoretical lenses provide a multifaceted perspective that helps to deepen the understanding of the experiences of Black African immigrant women in professional evaluation practice. Specifically, these theories offer critical insights into how race, gender, and immigration intersect to influence these experiences. This study utilized a qualitative methodological approach to understand the lived experiences of and advance the literature on the evaluation of Black African women evaluators. Specifically, this study employed semi-structured interviews with Black African women evaluators in the United States.

The results of the study revealed the rich, complex narratives of Black African women evaluators, showcasing their professional journeys, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to navigate these challenges. Their stories highlighted the critical role of intersectionality, cultural competence, and inclusivity in shaping their professional practices and identities. The findings from this study not only contribute to the academic discourse on intersectionality, cultural competence, and inclusivity but also offer practical implications for fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the field of program evaluation. In conclusion, this dissertation is a clarion call to the evaluation field to acknowledge, celebrate, and incorporate the rich and diverse array of experiences, identities, and cultural values that Black African women evaluators bring to their work. It is a testament to their resilience, innovation, and the transformative potential of integrating diverse perspectives into evaluation practice, ultimately contributing to more effective and impactful evaluations.

WE ARE NOT MONOLITHIC: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF MULTIPLE  
IDENTITIES AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN  
EVALUATORS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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A Dissertation  
Submitted to  
the Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro

2024

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the pillars of strength, sources of inspiration, and circles of support that have illuminated my path throughout this journey.

To my late parents, whose memory burns brightly as a guiding light in my heart: your love and wisdom continue to be the bedrock upon which I build my dreams. Though you are not here to witness this milestone, every achievement is a tribute to the life and lessons you gifted me.

To my beloved husband, who has been my steadfast partner in every sense: your encouragement and unwavering belief in my capabilities have been the wind beneath my wings. Your love and support make every challenge surmountable, and every joy magnified.

To my precious triplets, Chukwudubem, Chukwunonyelum, and Nwanyiugo: you are the most beautiful miracles of my life. Your laughter, curiosity, and boundless energy fuel my days with purpose and happiness. You inspire me to be better, do better, and dream bigger.

To my siblings, extended family, and dear friends: your unconditional support and constant encouragement have been my sanctuary. The strength I draw from our shared bonds and your unwavering belief in me has been instrumental in this endeavor.

I extend a special dedication to all Black women. Particularly, I pay a special homage to all Black African women evaluators, whose resilience, excellence, brilliance, and leadership blaze trails in our professional field of program evaluation. Your exemplary dedication, remarkable contributions, tireless advocacy, and impactful work do not just raise the bar—they transform landscapes, inspiring generations to come, and underscore the power of our voices and visions.

To all of you who have been a part of my story, directly or indirectly: this dissertation stands as a testament to our collective spirit, love, and perseverance—your influence is indelibly etched in every word.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to God, whose grace has been my fortress: Your presence in my life brings peace and clarity, guiding my steps with faith and filling my journey with blessings beyond measure.

APPROVAL PAGE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pursuing this degree and conducting this research have been a momentous undertaking that I could never have done without the support of many people. My deepest gratitude goes to my Co-Chair and former Advisor Dr. Ayesha Boyce who took a chance at admitting me in 2018 into the Educational Research Methodology (ERM) program at University of North Carolina (UNCG) and since then, has remained a huge source of support. Thank you for your guidance, insights, and belief in my work that allowed me to pursue my passion with conviction. I count myself blessed for the opportunity to have been under your tutelage and build a personal relationship with you.

I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my Co-Chair, Dr. Aileen Reid: you have always been there for me throughout my doctoral journey and personal life. I am grateful for the countless ways you have supported me, and I remain forever grateful for the gift of you in my life and being *Mama Nnukwu* to our Triplets Gems.

To my committee members, Dr. Sandra Ayoo and Dr. Thomas Archibald: I thank you for your time, expertise, valuable feedback, and support throughout this dissertation process. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from you and to have benefitted from your wisdom.

I would like to thank the ERM faculty and colleagues for their support, especially in the last two years in making sure that I progressed with my studies despite my unique situation at the time. To my friends who played a role in this journey: I want to say thank you for your show of love, encouragement, prayers, and unwavering support during this doctoral journey. I am grateful to have shared this journey with you.



To my siblings and extended families—Udebekee Clan, Onwuka, and du Bruyn: I want to say a huge thank you for always believing in me, praying and cheering me on throughout the way; even when it felt as though I couldn't carry on, you kept rooting for me, of which I am extremely grateful.

To my husband, Gert: Thank you for your love and understanding throughout this my academic sojourn in the United States. A special thank you goes to my Triplets Gems, Chukwudubem Jasper, Chukwunonyelum Garnet and Nwanyiugo Sapphire, for your beautiful smiles, hugs, and kisses that gave me strength to pull through this dissertation journey. I love you more than words can express.

To everyone mentioned and many others who have played a role in my academic journey: I Am Because We Are! Thank you from the depth of my heart and may God bless you all immensely. Amen.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiv
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Personal Connection and Positionality Statement .....	1
Problem Statement .....	6
Purpose and Significance of the Study .....	7
Research Questions .....	9
Theoretical Framework of the Study .....	9
Critical Race Theory .....	9
Black Feminist-Womanist Theory .....	10
Afrocentrism .....	10
Transnationalism .....	10
Definition of Terms .....	10
Summary .....	11
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	13
Introduction to the Literature Review .....	13
The Field of Program Evaluation .....	13
Intersectionality .....	15
Overview of Intersectionality .....	15
Applications of Intersectionality .....	16
Intersectionality and Social Justice .....	17
Intersectionality and Program Evaluation .....	19
Culture and Program Evaluation .....	20
Defining Culture: A Primer .....	20
Significance of Culture in Program Evaluation .....	21
Culturally Responsive Evaluation .....	22
African Cultural Values and Practices Relevant to Program Evaluation .....	23
Role of African Values and Practices in Program Evaluation .....	23

Representation of African Cultural Values and Practices in Program Evaluation.....	24
Approaches/Methods Authentic to African Culture and Identity in Evaluation and Research.....	27
Ethno-Philosophy and Proverb-Based Evaluation Approach.....	27
Afrocentric World View and the Ubuntu Philosophy .....	28
Building Relationships .....	29
Studies of Professional Experiences .....	29
Professional Experiences of People of Color/Minoritized Groups .....	29
Professional Experiences of Black People .....	31
Theoretical Framework .....	33
Critical Race Theory .....	37
Black Feminist-Womanist Theory .....	38
Afrocentrism Theory .....	40
Transnationalism .....	42
Summary.....	45
<b>CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>47</b>
Research Objectives and Research Questions.....	48
Research Design .....	49
Population and Sample Selection.....	51
Data Source and Data Collection Procedure .....	52
Data Analysis.....	54
Data Quality.....	54
Ethical Considerations .....	56
Limitations of the Study .....	57
Timeline.....	58
Summary.....	59
<b>CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Introduction.....	60
Overview of Interview Participants and Use of Pseudonyms.....	60
Findings by Research Questions .....	63
Research Question 1A: What are the Professional Experiences (e.g., Training, Projects, Sectors) of Black African Women Evaluators in North America? .....	63

Definitions.....	63
Data Used.....	64
Overarching Finding.....	64
Research Question 1B: To What Extent do the Professional Experiences Align with their Intersecting Identities as Black African Women?.....	66
Definitions.....	66
Overarching Findings.....	67
Themes.....	67
Theme A: There is an Interplay of Racial and Cultural Identities in Professional Contexts.....	67
Theme B: Personal Identity has an Impact on Professional Practices.....	69
Theme C: Black African Women Evaluators Advocate for Inclusion and Leverage Reflective Practice to Overcome Professional Insecurities.....	72
Theme D: Black African Women Evaluators Navigate Professional Challenges and Opportunities.....	75
Research Question 2A: What do Black African Women Evaluators View as their Professional Identity, Role, and Practice?.....	81
Definitions.....	81
Data Used.....	82
Overarching Findings.....	82
Theme A: Authentically Integrating Cultural Identity into Professional Practice is Powerful.....	83
Theme B: Black African Women Evaluators are at the Forefront of Advocating for Inclusivity and Representation, Crucially Amplifying Diverse Voices in their Field.....	86
Theme C: Black African Women Evaluators are Committed to Leveraging their Personal and Cultural Experiences to Foster More Inclusive and Equitable Evaluation Practices.....	87
Theme D: Black African Women Evaluators Adopt a Multidimensional Approach that Encompasses Cultural Insight and Global Adaptability.....	92
Research Question 2B: How and in What Ways Do Their African Values and Practices/ Tradition/Heritage Show Up in Their Work?.....	94
Definitions.....	94
Overarching Findings.....	94
Theme A: Integrating Lived Experiences and African Cultural Values as the Foundation of Professional Evaluative Work and Methodology.....	95
Theme B: Embracing African Heritage and Cultural Sensitivity in Professional Evaluative	

Practices: A Focus on Community-Centric Approaches, Respectful Engagement, and Inclusivity in Methodology.....	103
Research Question 3: What Methodological Frameworks, Evaluation Approaches, and Theories Do Black African Women Evaluators Feel Resonate with Them and Show Up in Their Work?.....	111
Definitions.....	111
Data Used.....	112
Overarching Findings.....	113
Theme A: Black African Women Evaluators are Engaged and Invested in Methodologies and Approaches that are Inclusive, Culturally Responsive, and Empowering.....	113
Theme B: The Methodologies and Evaluation Approaches/Theories Utilized Align Closely with the Personal Identities and Experiences of Black African Women. ....	117
Summary.....	117
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	121
Discussion of Findings.....	122
Intersecting Identities and Their Impact on Black African Women Evaluators in Professional Settings.....	122
Professional Identity, Role, and Practice.....	125
Authentic Integration of Cultural Identity and African Values into Professional Practice ...	128
Advocacy for Inclusion and Reflective Practice.....	132
Global Perspectives and Adaptability in Evaluation Practice.....	134
Methodological Frameworks and Evaluation Approaches.....	135
Challenges and Strategic Navigations.....	138
Implication of the Study.....	140
Conclusion.....	141
Limitations of the Study.....	142
Recommendations for the Field and Future Research.....	144
Comprehensive Cultural Competency Training.....	144
Institutional Support for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives.....	144
Mentorship and Professional Development Opportunities.....	145
Integration of Diverse Evaluation Methodologies.....	145
Ongoing Research and Dialogue on Intersectionality and Evaluation.....	146
REFERENCES.....	147

APPENDIX A: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR SCREENING SURVEY ..... 173

APPENDIX B: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE ..... 181

APPENDIX C: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR INFORMED CONSENT  
FORM.....184

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENT..... 190

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT/EMAIL FOR BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN  
EVALUATORS ..... 224

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Characteristics and Descriptions of Theories .....	33
Table 2. Dissertation Timeline .....	59
Table 3. Participant Pseudonyms and Country of Origin.....	61
Table 4. Participants' Demographic Characteristics.....	62
Table 5. Methodologies/Theories/Approaches Utilized by and That Resonate with Black African Women Evaluators .....	118

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Engaging with the Intersection of Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist-Womanist Theory, Afrocentrism, and Transnationalism .....44



## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a substantial increase in the number of people of African descent who have immigrated to the United States (Tamir, 2022). The number of Black people who entered the country as immigrants increased to 4.6 million in 2019, up from more than 800,000 in 1980. It is anticipated that the Black immigrant population would account for close to one third of the rise in the Black population in the United States by 2060 (Tamir, 2022). This indicates that one out of every 10 people of African descent living in the United States was born outside of the country (foreign-born). The number of people of African descent who have immigrated to the United States has increased at a rate that is far higher than from any other region. From the year 2000 to 2019, the number of people of Black African descent who immigrated to the United States surged by 246%, going from 600,000 to 2.0 million. As a direct consequence of this, the proportion of the country's foreign-born Black population that is composed of people born in Africa has increased to 42%, from 23% in the year 2000. This indicates that the number of Black immigrants from Africa currently residing in the United States has increased by more than three times since the year 2000 (Tamir, 2022). Black immigrants to the U.S. share some of the racialized experiences of native Black Americans, such as racial profiling, discrimination in employment, microaggression and stereotypes, but also have distinctive cultural contexts and identities which provide both unique opportunities and experiences of prejudice (Mwangi & English, 2017).

### **Personal Connection and Positionality Statement**

I am a Black, African, cisgender female, Nigerian, Christian, Ibo speaking, mom of triplets, and Western-trained evaluator. The impetus for this study stems from my personal background as a Black African female professional in the domain of program evaluation, as I

strive to comprehend the intersection of my identity and professional practice. I did not need to consider the social and political ramifications of my race until I began my graduate studies and research assistantship in the United States. As a woman from a highly patriarchal nation, I have first-hand experience with the difficulties that accompany living in a society that privileges cisgender men. As a foreigner, I observed that I was treated differently, and in some instances, in less-than-desirable interactions, which led me to believe that I was deficient in some ways. Professionally, I was the only Black foreigner on a project where I was not trusted to conduct the data collection. Since I was not born in the United States, this raised the question of what it means to be a Black African woman in the United States and how I will fit in professionally when I graduate. As I sought answers to the question of how my multiple identities will impact my professional evaluation experience, I noticed that no information exists regarding the intersection of multiple identities and their impact on Black African women's professional evaluation experience. In light of the high rate of Black immigration, particularly from Africa to the United States in recent years, it is essential to include their perspectives. I believe that one way to achieve cultural sensitivity is to gain an understanding of the experiences of Black African women, as they may have valuable information to share regarding their culture and point of view that can be utilized to improve evaluation services.

As an educated Black African woman working in the field of evaluation, I bring a unique standpoint that is shaped by my personal experiences and cultural background. Being Black and African have instilled in me a sense of cultural pride, a respect for my heritage, and a commitment to fighting racism and discrimination. As a cisgender female, I value gender equity and equality, especially having experienced the challenges that come with living in a society that privileges cisgender males. As a Nigerian, I value community and family, and have a strong

sense of national pride. Being a Christian has instilled in me values such as compassion, forgiveness, and the importance of a spiritual connection. As an Ibo woman, I have a deep connection to my language and culture, and value the preservation of these. Being a mom of triplets continues to teach me the importance of balancing multiple responsibilities and valuing the unique qualities of each individual. Overall, my values are shaped by a complex interplay of these different aspects of my identity, as well as my life experiences, personal beliefs, and cultural context. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate how a deeper understanding of the intersection of multiple identities and professional experiences of Black African Women evaluators will be crucial to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation and consequently contribute to the program evaluation literature on issues centered on intersectionality.

I recognize the importance of acknowledging my positionality in exploring the complex professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. I believe that the intersectionality of identity, particularly in the context of race and gender, plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of Black African women evaluators in North America. As a Black African woman, I am aware of the challenges and opportunities that come with navigating multiple identities in professional spaces. I believe that understanding and addressing these intersectional issues is critical to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of evaluation. However, I also acknowledge that my positionality as a Black African woman may influence my research to some extent. I am aware that my experiences and perspectives may not necessarily reflect those of all Black African women evaluators, and I am committed to being transparent about my standpoint throughout the research process.

In sum, I believe that embracing and honoring the positionality of Black African women evaluators is critical to advancing our understanding of the professional experiences of this group. As a researcher, I strive to approach this topic with sensitivity, nuance, and a commitment to amplifying the diverse voices and perspectives of Black African women in the evaluation field.

An increasing amount of research is being published on Black immigrants' educational experiences as a direct result of the growing population of Black immigrants in the United States. However, studies frequently fail to uncover the ways in which intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality affect professionals who are Black, African, immigrants and particularly women (Mwangi, 2014). Much research has been conducted on how gender affects the workplace, but fewer investigations have been conducted on the interaction of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, and professional experience. Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about projects, policies, and programs, particularly about their effectiveness and efficiency. In both the public and private sectors, evaluators strive to provide objective analysis so that stakeholders can make well-informed decisions about program improvements, expansions, or future developments (Vedung, 2017). As Patton (2015) eloquently states, "Program evaluation is essential to public accountability and learning." The history of program evaluation can be traced back to the early 20th century, initially influenced by social reform movements and the need for government accountability. Its evolution reflects changes in societal values, government policies, and academic thinking. Weiss (1998) describes how program evaluation grew from rudimentary methods to a sophisticated blend of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The evolution of program evaluation has been marked by an increasing emphasis on participatory and mixed-

methods approaches. These changes reflect broader shifts in social science research methodologies, as well as the growing complexity of programs being evaluated. Fitzpatrick, Sanders, Worthen, & Wingate (2012) highlight the transformative impact of incorporating diverse methodological approaches in evaluation practices. Historically, the field of program evaluation has been dominated by middle class White practitioners often lacking diversity in race, gender, and cultural perspectives (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, Worthen & Wingate, 2012). Recent years, however, have seen a concerted effort to promote diversity among evaluators. According to Chouinard and Hopson (2016), this shift is crucial for bringing in varied perspectives that enhance the relevance and effectiveness of evaluations. In the field of program evaluation, investigations about the experiences of evaluators from a variety of backgrounds is emerging (Boyce et al., 2023b, Arias Orozco, 2022). Evaluators of color often face unique challenges and opportunities in the field of program evaluation. Their experiences are characterized by navigating professional environments that may not fully understand or value their cultural and racial perspectives (Avent et al., 2023, Boyce et al., 2023b, Arias Orozco, 2022). Boyce et al., (2023b) and Reid et al., (2020) posit that Black evaluators' identities, roles, and practice are inherently intertwined and contribute to their commitment to social justice. Culture is an integral part of evaluation and, as evaluators, it is our job to understand how a group of people perceive an intervention, communicate their views, and act on the knowledge gained from the evaluation. African values and practices are essential in program evaluation, providing a culturally responsive framework to ensure the evaluation process is respectful, participatory, and responsive to the needs and perspectives of program participants (Chilisa, 2015; Cloete, 2016; Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018).

Intersectionality, as conceptualized by Crenshaw (1990), emphasizes the interconnections between social identities and experiences, specifically those related to race, gender, and class. This framework acknowledges that individuals' experiences and opportunities are influenced by the interaction of multiple social identities. In the field of program evaluation, the concept of intersectionality is highly relevant, as the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status can shape how evaluators perceive their work and navigate their personal and professional lives (Boyce et al., 2023b; Reid et al., 2020; Symonette, 2009). Understanding and considering intersectionality is crucial for promoting social justice and equity (Crenshaw, 1990). In their study, Thomas et al. (2018) underscore the importance of intersectionality in understanding these experiences, particularly for Black African women evaluators. Whilst recent studies have increasingly focused on the experiences of evaluators of color, shedding light on both the challenges they face and the invaluable perspectives they bring to the field, there has not been any study that investigated the experiences of Black African women evaluators. This study investigated the interactions of gender, race, nationality/transnationality, and culture of Black African women in their practice of program evaluation in the United States.

### **Problem Statement**

Black African women in the field of program evaluation in the United States occupy a unique intersection of race, nationality, and gender, yet the exploration of their professional experiences remains scarce. This dissertation ventures into understanding the distinct challenges and opportunities these women face, shaped by their multifaceted identities. It acknowledges the significant gap in empirical research regarding their experiences, especially considering how their combined identity of being Black, African, and woman influence their professional journey. Factors like immigration status, language barriers, and institutional racism further complicate

their professional development, networking, and navigation of power dynamics in the workplace, as highlighted by Ellis and Chen (2013) and Mwangi et al. (2019).

The field of program evaluation has seen a growing focus on culture, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in recent years, a trend mirrored in academic discussions, as indicated by research from Chilisa et al. (2015), Dahler-Larsen & Mbava (2019), and Thomas & Madison (2010). Although the empirical research about the experiences and perceptions of evaluators of color is emerging (Arias Orozco, 2022; Boyce et al., 2023b; Reid et al., 2020), specific research on Black African women in this field is missing. This gap is significant, as the unique intersection of their identities likely influences their professional experiences, a point highlighted by Nash (2008).

While previous studies have examined the workplace experiences of Black women (Collins, 2022; Opara, Sealy & Ryan, 2020) and African immigrants in the United States (Djamba, 1999; Okonofua, 2013), there is a conspicuous absence of research focusing exclusively on Black African women evaluators. This dissertation aims to fill this void, providing a deeper insight into how their intersecting identities mold their professional lives. This investigation is crucial not only for a thorough understanding of the program evaluation field but also for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the profession. Additionally, it will address this monolithic notion that others have of a particular population—in this case, Black African women.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

My dissertation aims to explore the complex professional experiences and identities of Black African women evaluators in the United States. It seeks to investigate how the intersection of various identities, such as race, gender, culture, and immigration status, shape their

professional experiences. In addition, the study aims to examine the role of African cultural values, practices, and beliefs in shaping the experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. Through a framework combining Critical Race, Black feminist-womanist, Afrocentric, and transnationalism theories, this study will focus on how intersecting identities of Black African women evaluators influence their professional experiences and practice.

This study is significant because it will fill a gap in program evaluation literature about the intersection of identities and professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States, and how they incorporate African cultural values and practices into their evaluation design. By providing new insights into the unique experiences and perspectives of this specific group of evaluators, this study will broaden our understanding of cultural competence in evaluation, contribute to the development of more inclusive and culturally appropriate evaluation methods and approaches, and inform strategies for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation. Ultimately, this research builds on the literature about the experiences of evaluators from historically minoritized populations and has the potential to improve the quality of evaluations and their impact on underserved communities.

A qualitative approach was employed to investigate the experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in the United States who self-identified as Black, African—either as African immigrant, first generation African immigrant or second-generation African immigrant—woman, and practice program evaluation in the United States. A screening survey consisting of both open- and closed-ended questions was used to determine eligibility, thereby identifying suitable participants. The eligibility criteria for participation included identifying as a Black, African, woman, and actively practicing evaluation in the United States.



## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the professional experiences (e.g., training, projects, sectors) of Black African women evaluators in North America?
  - a. To what extent do these experiences align with their intersecting identities as Black African women?
2. What do Black African women evaluators view as their professional identity, role, and practice?
  - a. How and in what ways do their African values and practices/traditions/heritage show up in their work?
3. What methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, and theories resonate with Black African women evaluators and show up in their work?

## **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This study's theoretical framework draws from a variety of theories, namely critical race theory, Black feminist-womanist, Afrocentrism, and transnationalism. Collectively, these theoretical lenses provide a multifaceted perspective that helps to deepen the understanding of the experiences of Black African immigrant women in professional evaluation practice. Specifically, these theories offer critical insights into how race, gender, and immigration intersect to influence these experiences.

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) provides a framework for understanding how race intersects with power structures and shapes societal inequalities. It provides a powerful lens for analyzing and challenging the ways in which race and racism shape society and the legal system. Its unique

characteristics have had a significant impact on critical legal studies, social justice movements, and academic discourses on race and racism (Crenshaw, 1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)

### **Black Feminist-Womanist Theory**

Black feminist-womanist theory provides a crucial perspective in understanding the experiences of Black women and their contributions to feminist thought and social justice movements. It sheds light on the complexities of Black women's lives and advocates for a more inclusive and equitable feminism that recognizes and addresses the intersecting forms of oppression they face (Crenshaw, 1990; Collins 2022).

### **Afrocentrism**

Afrocentrism theory provides a lens for critically examining the historical and contemporary experiences of African and African diasporic communities and their contributions to human civilization. It aims to challenge the Eurocentric perspectives and celebrate the richness and diversity of African cultures and heritage, promoting a more inclusive and equitable representation of global history and culture (Asante, 1991; Kambon, 1992).

### **Transnationalism**

Transnationalism theory provides a valuable perspective for understanding the complexities of contemporary migration and ways in which globalization and transnational networks shape the lives and identities of individuals and communities across borders. It highlights the interconnectivity of people and cultures in an increasingly interconnected world and challenges conventional notions of fixed national identities (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995).

### **Definition of Terms**

*African*: refers to a person who is from or descended from a country on the continent of Africa. In the context of this study, this term may be used to refer to women who were born or

have parents who were born and raised in sub-Saharan African countries or have African ancestry.

*Black African:* refers to a person of the Black race with African ancestral origins in sub-Saharan Africa (Agyemang, Bhopal & Bruijnzeels, 2005).

*Immigrant:* refers to a person who moves to a foreign country with the intention of living there permanently. This term may be used to refer to women who were born outside of the US and have since moved to the US to live and work.

*First-Generation African Immigrant:* refers to a person who is the first in their family to move to a foreign country, in this case, the United States. In this study, this term refers to women who were born in Africa and are the first in their families to move to the United States.

*Second-Generation African Immigrant:* refers to a person who is born in a foreign country, in this case, the United States, to parent(s) who immigrated to the United States from Africa.

*Foreign-Born:* refers to a person who was born outside of the country they currently reside in.

*Woman:* is a gender identity and a term used to refer to someone who identifies as an adult female human being (Collins Dictionary).

### **Summary**

This chapter addressed the background, problem description, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the problem, and definition of terms utilized in order to investigate the complicated identities and professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. The chapter also discussed the ideologies that influenced the research, which included critical race theory, Black feminist-womanist theory, Afrocentrism, and

transnationalism. The next chapter provides a review of relevant literature on the intersection of identities, African culture and values, and professional experiences of Black African women in the context of program evaluation in the United States.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Introduction to the Literature Review**

As a reminder, the purpose of this study was to explore the complex identities and experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. It investigated how the intersection of various identities, such as race, gender, culture, and immigration status shaped their professional experiences. In addition, the study examined the role of African cultural values, practices, and beliefs in shaping the experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States.

This chapter features the literature relevant to the multiple identities of Black African women evaluators and their professional experiences in North America. In the literature, intersectionality, African values and culture, and professional experiences of people of color/minoritized groups and Black African women evaluators were examined. This chapter is organized as follows: (a) Program Evaluation; (b) Intersectionality; (c) Relevance of African Culture and Values in Program Evaluation; (d) Professional Experiences; and (e) Theoretical Frameworks.

### **The Field of Program Evaluation**

Program evaluation is a rapidly growing field that focuses on assessing the effectiveness of various programs and interventions with the goal of providing evidence-based insights that can inform decision-making and improve program outcomes (Patton, 2018). According to Stufflebeam (2007), program evaluation is “the systematic collection and analysis of information about program activities, characteristics, and outcomes to make judgments about the program; improve program effectiveness; and/or inform decisions about future programming” (p. 5). Program evaluation seeks to answer questions about a program’s performance and value and

should have three outcomes—assess program implementation, assess program results, and highlight program enhancement strategies (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015). Program evaluation can be traced back to the early 20th century when scholars began to develop methods for assessing the effectiveness of social programs and policies (Freeman, Rossi & Sandefur, 1989). However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that program evaluation emerged as a distinct field of study, with the development of systematic approaches and formalized methods for evaluating programs (Scriven, 2003), when the federal government began requiring program evaluations for all programs that received federal funding. Since then, program evaluation has grown in importance as a tool for assessing the effectiveness of programs and policies (Chelimsky, 2007).

The profession of program evaluation has acknowledged the significance of integrating culture as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) ideas and practices into assessment processes (Boyce, 2017; Boyce et al., 2023a). Jackson et al. (2018) assert that DEI is essential for guaranteeing that program evaluations are inclusive, egalitarian, and culturally sensitive. This necessitates that evaluators analyze how power dynamics and systemic oppression may shape the experiences of program participants and influence program outcomes. Thus, there has been an increasing emphasis on cultural competency in program evaluation, which requires an awareness of the cultural norms, beliefs, and practices of program participants and stakeholders (Hood, Hopson, & Kirkhart, 2015). This technique requires evaluators to collect and analyze data in a culturally sensitive manner to ensure that assessment results are accurate and reflect the experiences and viewpoints of all program participants (Hall, 2020). The intersection of identities, particularly race and gender, can influence how program evaluators perceive and approach their work (Boyce et al., 2023b). The sections following overview the importance of

studying the intersection of identities and professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States.

## **Intersectionality**

### **Overview of Intersectionality**

Intersectionality theory posits that social identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, intersect and interact with each other to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This framework has become increasingly essential in comprehending the intricacy of identity and oppression (Bilge & Collins, 2016; Crenshaw, 1990; Collins, 2019; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). The concept of intersectionality has its roots in the work of early feminist scholars, such as Sojourner Truth and Anna Julia Cooper, who advocated for the rights of Black women during the nineteenth century (Crenshaw, 1987). However, it was Kimberlé Crenshaw who coined the term “intersectionality” in her 1989 article *“Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics.”* Since then, intersectionality has been a central concept in feminist theory, critical race theory, and social justice movements.

According to Crenshaw (1990), traditional feminist and anti-racist approaches were inadequate in addressing the experiences of Black women as they tended to focus on only one aspect of their identity, failing to account for the intersectionality of race and gender. Thus, she coined the term intersectionality to describe how various forms of oppression intersect to create unique experiences of marginalization that cannot be understood by examining race and gender separately. Similarly, Collins (2020) argues that Black women’s experiences cannot be reduced to either their race or gender alone but are instead shaped by the intersection of multiple factors, including race, gender, class, and sexuality. Collins also critiques mainstream feminist theory,

which tends to focus on the experiences of White, middle-class women, neglecting the experiences of women of color. It is crucial to recognize the historical and institutional context in which intersectional identities are formed, as they are not simply a combination of different social categories, but rather a complex and dynamic interaction between them (McCall, 2005).

However, according to Nash (2008), the concept of intersectionality has been simplified to a rigid checklist of social categories, which is unable to adequately convey the multifaceted and ever-changing nature of identity. Hence, intersectionality should be rethought of as a dynamic and continuing process that acknowledges the nature of identity as one that is continually shifting and developing. Bilge (2013) offers a critique of the predominant feminist approach to intersectionality, stating that it has focused too much on the experiences of privileged women and proposes redefining intersectionality to encompass the experiences of marginalized groups, such as women of color, lesbian women, and women with disabilities. Furthermore, intersectionality, though a crucial concept in understanding the complexities of identity and oppression, must be understood as a dynamic and evolving process that takes into account the various intersections of identity and privilege.

### **Applications of Intersectionality**

Intersectionality theory has been applied in various fields, including social work, evaluation, healthcare, education, and policy development, among others. In social work, intersectionality has been shown to be particularly useful in understanding the experiences of marginalized and oppressed groups (Collins, 2000). For example, intersectionality has been applied to better understand the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care and to develop strategies for improving their outcomes (Grooms, 2020). Similarly, in evaluation, intersectionality has been used as a tool for understanding the complex factors that influence



program outcomes and for developing more inclusive and effective evaluation methods (Bowleg, 2012). For instance, researchers have used an intersectional framework to examine the impact of race, gender, and social class on HIV prevention programs for women of color (Hankivsky, 2012).

Despite the benefits of using an intersectional framework, there are also challenges associated with its operationalization in practice. One challenge is the difficulty in accurately measuring and analyzing intersectional identities and experiences (McCall, 2005). Additionally, there is a risk of essentializing and oversimplifying identities when using an intersectional framework (Goldberg, 2008). Therefore, it is important to use a nuanced and context-specific approach to applying intersectionality in different fields.

In education, intersectionality has been applied to understand and address the educational disparities faced by marginalized students (Crenshaw et al., 2015). For example, an intersectional approach has been used to examine the experiences of Black girls in school and to develop strategies for improving their outcomes (Morris, 2016). Similarly, in healthcare, an intersectional framework has been applied to understand and address the health disparities faced by marginalized groups (Bauer, 2014). For instance, an intersectional approach has been used to examine the impact of race, gender, and class on healthcare access and outcomes for women of color (Hankivsky, 2014).

### **Intersectionality and Social Justice**

Intersectionality is a crucial concept for promoting social justice and equity. It acknowledges the interdependence of social identities and the ways in which these interconnections produce distinct experiences of privilege and oppression for different people (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is the recognition that people are subjected to multiple layers

of discrimination as a result of their race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, and other social identities. These multiple layers of discrimination stem from the fact that people have different social identities (Collins, 2015). When working toward social justice, it is essential to understand the ways in which different identities intersect and affect one another. It is vital to take an intersectional strategy in order to guarantee that all people are included in the efforts to achieve social justice. According to Boyce et al. (2023b), Black evaluators' identities, roles, and practice are inherently intertwined and contribute to their commitment to social justice. The authors suggest that understanding this intersectionality is critical for promoting social justice through evaluation.

The experiences of Black women, who may be subjected to both racism and sexism, will not necessarily be resolved by merely addressing racism on its own. Equally, tackling sexism by itself will not necessarily alleviate the experiences of disabled women, who may be subjected to both ableism and sexism in their daily lives (Crenshaw, 1990). An intersectional approach avoids reinforcing damaging stereotypes and assumptions about particular groups, which is another benefit of taking that method. For instance, making the assumption that all women are confronted with the same obstacles disregards the reality that women's experiences of oppression are uniquely shaped by the intersections of their identities (Collins, 1998). In order to truly appreciate intersectionality, it is essential to concurrently explore multiple types of oppression and identity, as well as to conduct an in-depth analysis of power and oppression (Parent et al., 2013; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). This involves realizing that social disparities are deeply rooted in institutional and structural systems that serve to maintain discrimination and inequality in society (Risman, 2018). In order to foster more inclusive and fruitful practices, intersectionality

can be applied to certain sectors or disciplines, such as the arts, therapy, human movement, and education (Clarke & McCall, 2013).

The promotion of social justice and equity requires an approach that takes into account multiple intersecting identities. When individual identities are studied in a vacuum, it is easy to overlook the existence of oppressive systems because it is easier to focus on the specifics of an individual's life. An intersectional approach, on the other hand, enables a more comprehensive understanding of the varied and complicated experiences of individuals. Thus, it is crucial to incorporate an intersectional approach into both study and practice in order to ensure that no individual is excluded, and that harmful assumptions and prejudices are avoided (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Collins, 2015; Few-Demo, 2014; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

### **Intersectionality and Program Evaluation**

Intersectionality is a framework that highlights the interconnectedness of social identities and experiences, particularly race, gender, and class (Crenshaw, 1990). Intersectionality recognizes that individuals' experiences and opportunities are shaped by the interaction of multiple social identities. The concept of intersectionality is particularly relevant in the field of program evaluation because it recognizes that individuals' experiences and opportunities are shaped by the interaction of multiple social identities. The intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status can influence how program evaluators perceive and approach their work and how they navigate their professional and personal experiences (Boyce et al., 2023b; Reid et al., 2020; Symonette, 2009). Intersectionality is a crucial concept for promoting social justice and equity (Crenshaw, 1989). In the field of program evaluation, investigation about the experiences of evaluators from a variety of backgrounds is emerging (Arias Orozco, 2022; Boyce et al., 2023b). Boyce et al. (2023b) posit that Black evaluators' identities, roles, and practice are

inherently intertwined and with social justice at the core. The authors suggest that understanding this intersectionality is critical for promoting social justice through evaluation.

## **Culture and Program Evaluation**

### **Defining Culture: A Primer**

Culture is a complex and nuanced topic that carries particular meanings in different disciplines, and that changes over time (Reiger, 2020; Boccock, 1992). Culture does not yet have one accepted and customary definition, despite its centrality and relevance in many areas of human life (Ginzberg, 2017). Even though culture has several definitions, scholars such as Rieger (2020) consider that there are commonalities between these definitions. Culture, together with identity, can be understood as cohesive or intertwined elements that connect individuals within a social group, grounding their feeling of belonging (Day, 2011). Language, values, customs, beliefs, worldviews, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating are all examples of culture, according to the American Evaluation Association (AEA, 2011). Furthermore, culturally significant elements (such as race/ethnicity, religion, social class, language, handicap, sexual orientation, age, and gender) and contextual aspects (such as geographic region and socioeconomic circumstances) are thought to be important in forming someone's culture.

Boyce and Chouinard (2017) also emphasize how culture includes a variety of related factors such as language, sexual orientation, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic place, among others. Norms such as the definition of community, the concept of space and time, logic, notions of leadership, decision-making patterns, beliefs about health, help-seeking behavior, individualism versus collectivism, attitudes toward the elderly, and problem-solving approaches require extensive inquiry and observation for the outsider to comprehend (Hanley, 1999). According to Rieger (2020), having an understanding and sensitivity to various cultures

avoids stereotyped thoughts/actions that fail to recognize the nuances of others. Culture is frequently studied in research and program evaluation because of its importance, complexities, and far-reaching implications.

### **Significance of Culture in Program Evaluation**

The rising corpus of empirical, conceptual, and theoretical research and literature on the significance of culture and setting in the profession does not exclude program evaluation (Bowen & Tillman, 2015). Those who conduct evaluation bring with them perspectives that represent their values and culture; hence, evaluation cannot be culture neutral. So, what is culture in terms of evaluation practice? What effect does it have on the evaluation profession? Why is it critical for an evaluator to continuously reflect on his or her own culture? How can I, as a practitioner, embrace other people's cultures while still dealing with difficult cultural challenges in practice using valid methodological approaches? In order to answer some of the concerns raised above, and keeping in mind the difficulties in providing answers, it is necessary to define culture first.

Culture is a multidimensional notion that cuts across popular and scholarly settings (Chouinard, 2016). Similarly, culture is a set of taught and shared behaviors, values, practices, and beliefs that are shared by a certain group of people (Frierson et al, 2010). Evaluators with cross-cultural competence place an emphasis on culture. It is a vital aspect of program evaluation (AEA, 2011).

To address the diverse needs of local communities and the historical, political, and socioeconomic positioning of policies and programs, for instance, Acree & Chouinard (2020) emphasized the importance of paying attention to the cultures embedded within and surrounding evaluations, research, communities, and programs. To ensure that the culture of the evaluand and the needs of those being served are of the utmost importance, a number of evaluation

methodologies and frameworks can be used to address culture in evaluation and serve as a guide for practitioners, for example, the culturally responsive evaluation (Hood, 2004).

In recent decades, terms such as cultural responsiveness and cultural competence have also become omnipresent in many fields of social inquiry such as program evaluation (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017; Hood et al, 2015). As a result, the field's literature has been heavily concentrated in recent years on culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) discourses, and other culture-centered methodological methods. Moreover, many of the efforts of scholars and people who work in the field have been focused on how evaluation theory and practice are centered on culture.

### **Culturally Responsive Evaluation**

The origins of CRE can be traced back to the field of education, particularly Carol Lee's (1998) and Ladson-Billings' (1995) work on culturally responsive pedagogy and Edmund Gordon's (1995) and Sylvia Johnson's (1998) work on educational assessment. This line of thinking was further developed by Hood (1998), who moved from culturally sensitive teaching to culturally responsive assessment, and then to introducing culturally responsive evaluation to the field. The link between culturally responsive assessment and culturally responsive evaluation was established within the framework of validity theory (Hood, Hopson, Kirkhart, 2015). Furthermore, Messick's (1989) definition of validity and articulation of consequential validity which emphasized the role of both positive and negative consequences in validation also influenced Hood's initial thinking of culturally responsive evaluation (Hood, Hopson, Kirkhart, 2015). The concept of multicultural validity introduced by Kirkhart (1995) also built upon Messick's attention to consequences which highlighted the importance of social justice as a bridge from culturally responsive assessment to culturally responsive evaluation.

The historical roots of CRE are largely defined by Stafford Hood's study (2004), as well as the major contributions of others in the evaluation profession over the last 10 to 15 years. This can be attributed to the fact that evaluators work in diverse cultural, contextual, and complex communities all over the world. Moreover, the demand for evaluation by non-profits, government, and the general public has been on the increase (Hood, Hopson, Kirkhart, 2015). CRE is a comprehensive framework for situating evaluation within a cultural context (Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas, 2010). In addition, CRE is a buzzword in the evaluation field that has been described as arising in a variety of circumstances and addressing social, economic, political, and environmental issues (Acree & Chouinard, 2020). It is one of the many approaches to evaluation used in the field of evaluation to attend to cultural issues (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). It opposes culture-agnostic evaluation and admits that every evaluating endeavor must include culturally determined values and ideas. It emphasizes the importance of culture in comprehending, analyzing, and making decisions. It also promotes indigenous ways of knowledge. CRE strives to give a voice to those groups that have been marginalized historically by bringing equity and balance to the evaluation process (Hopson, 2009).

### **African Cultural Values and Practices Relevant to Program Evaluation**

#### **Role of African Values and Practices in Program Evaluation**

African values and practices shape the identity, beliefs, and behaviors of African communities and play a significant role in promoting social cohesion and collective identity (Asante, 2016). One of the fundamental values in African culture is the concept of community, emphasizing the interdependence of individuals within the larger social group, which can lead to strong social networks and a sense of belonging that provide support in times of need (Mbiti, 1990). African spirituality, characterized by a deep respect for ancestors and maintaining balance

and harmony with nature, is also an important value (Etta & Offiong, 2019). African values and practices are essential in program evaluation, providing a culturally responsive framework to ensure the evaluation process is respectful, participatory, and responsive to the needs and perspectives of program participants (Cloete, 2016; Chilisa, 2015; Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018). Community involvement and participation is one of the main ways to incorporate African values and practices into program evaluation, as African cultures place great value on community engagement (Chilisa et al., 2016; Easton, 2012).

Additionally, storytelling and other forms of oral tradition can capture and convey program participants' experiences and perspectives in a more meaningful and accessible way than traditional evaluation methods, which can inform program design and implementation (Chilisa & Malunga, 2012; Easton, 2012). The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), has continued to make significant contributions to the development of evaluation practice in Africa, emphasizing the importance of evaluation for promoting accountability, learning, and improvement. They developed the African Evaluation Principles, a framework that outlines a guiding principle in Africa that emphasizes the importance of cultural relevance, equity, independence, and sustainability (AfrEA, 2021).

### **Representation of African Cultural Values and Practices in Program Evaluation**

African epistemology is a critical examination of the origins, nature, scope, and justification of knowledge through the lens of the African conceptual scheme. African epistemology necessitates an examination of what makes epistemology African. In the African context, knowledge is not abstract, but contextual. Knowledge is spatially and temporally connected in that it is shaped by these categories. Knowledge is learned and validated via interactions with others (Gwaravanda, 2019). It acknowledges and respects divergent viewpoints.



The African knowledge system respects the community's role in knowledge acquisition and preservation. The cultural conceptual scheme becomes critical in that it serves as a framework for describing, analyzing, validating, and evaluating information. The hierarchy of knowledge begins with the community, then with groups, and last with the individual (Gwaravanda, 2019).

African ontology envisions a hierarchical classification of creatures and forces according to their categories, with God at the pinnacle. The African's entire existence is predicated on its ontology (Etta & Offiong, 2019). According to Asante (2020), several components in the African mind influence how humans behave in response to reality, including "the practicality of wholism, the predominance of poly-awareness, the idea of inclusivity, the unity of worlds, and the importance of personal relationships" (p. 2). Abanuka (1994) emphasizes the importance of the ancestors in African epistemology in order to better illustrate the ontological relationship of African epistemology. Tempels et al. (1959) assert that the African view of the world as a collection of forces (beings) is analogous to "a spider's web in which no single thread can be made to vibrate without shaking the entire network" (p. 41). As a result, African-centric knowledge is derived from a series of relationships. As with a spider's web, knowledge of one facet of reality is inextricably linked to knowledge of others (Onyewuenyi, 1991; Tempels et al., 1959).

As Mawere (2011) points out, knowledge in African epistemology is defined as an integrative comprehension of the world. It requires the acceptance of the fact that the entire cosmos is one entity. Every component of reality is interconnected with every other part of reality. As a result, Africans believe that reality is in harmony with the totality of their perspective. In African epistemology, knowledge and wisdom are intrinsically linked together. The African seeker of knowledge is not only interested in a science of reality, but also in

practical understanding on how to deal with specific issues. Ani (2013) concludes that, in addition to the purportedly ‘unscientific’ nature of African-oriented epistemology, the power-knowledge nexus interactions play a vital role in deciding what constitutes valid knowledge and what does not, as well as what constitutes invalid information.

Chilisa et al. (2016) stated that evaluation serves as a lens through which judgments are made and standards are established for what should be regarded as genuine program outcomes, the knowledge that assesses that reality, and the values that underpin the practice. It has evolved as the most heinous instrument of epistemic imperialism in poor countries. Indigenous scholars are criticizing the way evaluation research is performed and advocating for the decolonization and indigenization of evaluation methodology. Over time, indigenous assessment methodologies with evident roots in culture, philosophy, history, and people’s lived experiences have emerged in an attempt to represent African culture in evaluation. To properly place these frameworks, it is necessary to consider key questions such as “who began the program, the program’s objectives, and the program’s cultural and contextual appropriateness” (Chilisa 2012, p.120) when designing an evaluation strategy. As evaluators, we understand context is the foundation of all evaluation and that culture permeates all contexts (LaFrance, Nichols, & Kirkhart, 2012).

Indigenous worldviews, ideologies, concepts, and knowledge to which non-indigenous researchers do not have access should inform the realities we strive to explain (Chilisa, 2012, p. 120). African culture can be represented in evaluation by concentrating on culture and context, which is why indigenous evaluators are debating the use of culturally responsive indigenous evaluation (CRIE) as a method of representation (Bowman & Dodge-Francis, 2018). The Ubuntu worldview is built on the emotional connection and interdependence of the African people. It exemplifies how Africans collectively own and do things rather than individually. Muwanga-

Zake (2009), for example, employed the Ubuntu concept of collaboration, togetherness, cooperation, and consensus building to include teachers in the evaluation planning and implementation process. Ubuntu was utilized to inform a method for obtaining access to and rapport with participants through sitting with the Bantus, understanding their needs, and, if feasible, eating with them. By interacting with the indigenous population in this manner, inclusiveness and social justice are emphasized.

Chilisa & Malunga (2012) and Chilisa et al. (2016) used the African evaluation tree metaphor to propose four evaluation frameworks based on African philosophies. The African-rooted evaluation discourse is broadened by delving deeper into the four research and methodological evaluation frameworks and how their application can help restore, revitalize, retribute, and protect African identities and values. These evaluation methodologies are conceptualized along a continuum, beginning with the least indigenous evaluation approaches, and progressing to third-space methodologies (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018).

## **Approaches/Methods Authentic to African Culture and Identity in Evaluation and Research**

### ***Ethno-Philosophy and Proverb-Based Evaluation Approach***

Ethno-philosophy is an approach that focuses on the collective world views of diverse African peoples as a unified form of knowledge (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). This philosophy is based on the fact that knowledge is the people's experience encoded in their language, culture, values, stories, songs, folklore, and experiences. Language, stories, songs, and folklore all serve as repositories for knowledge, from which it can be retrieved and disseminated. The languages, metaphorical expressions, proverbs, and cultural practices such as arts, artifacts, pottery, sculptures, home paintings, basket weaving, folklore, and legends serve as powerful tools for

Africans to challenge academic imperialism and explore alternative epistemologies beyond Western disciplines (Chilisa et al., 2016).

In addition, African scholars can draw on African literature, concepts, and theories found in language, proverbs, metaphors, folklore, stories, songs, artifacts, and oral traditions to create or construct entirely new evaluative techniques (Chilisa & Malunga, 2012; Easton, 2012).

Proverb-based evaluation approach serves three functions: (a) to remind us of where we are and what our culture means; (b) to give critical advice for finding out why people do what they do; and (c) to mobilize local stakeholders to participate actively in the evaluation, thereby promoting local ownership of the program (Easton, 2012). The strength of this strategy is its ability to value participants' realities, knowledge systems, and value systems (Chilisa et al., 2016).

### ***Afrocentric World View and the Ubuntu Philosophy***

According to the Afrocentric worldview, there are three main goals evaluators should be aware of: to legitimize the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for collecting and studying data; to uncover any hidden, subtle, racist theories that may be embedded in current methodologies; and to keep inquiry grounded in a strict interpretation of place (Muwanga-Zake, 2009). Muwanga-Zake (2009) argues that the focus of work should be to decolonize and indigenize evaluative research by shifting the focus away from externally determined program goals and objectives and toward the people's agenda. According to Muwanga-Zake (2009), Ubuntu served as a guide for developing a strategy for obtaining access to and developing rapport with participants. Similarly, the Ghanaian Nnobia and Sankofa philosophies serve as "epistemological guideposts for African evaluation that contributes to the indigenous knowledge of evaluation" (Asante & Archibald, 2023, p.156).

Techniques such as “welcome Bantu, sit with them, learn their needs, and if feasible dine with them” (Muwanga-Zake, 2009, p. 418) were employed to get access to the research location. By applying the Ubuntu philosophy and the I/We relationship, emphasizing inclusiveness, a non-indigenous evaluator can undergo a complete transformation by first accepting generic African values and then moving on to accept the ethno-philosophy dominant in a specific location.

### ***Building Relationships***

Building genuine relationships among stakeholders and in the overall evaluation system and developing mutual respect between evaluators and the indigenous community will produce evaluations that serve a larger decolonization agenda, which is critical for sustainability, resilience, and well-being of the indigenous people/community in Africa. Relationship-building skills are essential for conducting evaluations in Indigenous communities (Cram, 2018). Spirituality and religion are critical components of Indigenous peoples’ understanding of their world and place within it. As a result, it is critical for evaluators working in indigenous contexts to demonstrate cultural humility. This cultural humility is only possible when evaluators, indigenous or non-indigenous, explain their cultural position/stance. Commitment to respectful interactions lays the framework for all sorts of evaluative cooperation and sharing and signifies a shift away from solely focusing on the cultural responsiveness of methodologies toward re-framing knowledge in an epistemological manner that values indigenous ways of knowing (Cram, 2018).

## **Studies of Professional Experiences**

### **Professional Experiences of People of Color/Minoritized Groups**

The professional experiences of people of color/minoritized groups are diverse and complex. One common thread is the pervasive impact of racism and microaggressions in various

professional settings. Racism in healthcare settings is a topic that has been explored by several authors, including Serafini et al. (2020) and Ko and Dorri (2019). Serafini employed a mixed-methods, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the prevalence of racism among physicians of color and its influence on their capacity to deliver high-quality healthcare services. The study's results indicated that racism was a pervasive occurrence among physicians of color, which had detrimental effects on their ability to provide optimal care. In a study conducted by Ko and Dorri (2019), it was found that primary care clinicians and clinic directors of color in an underserved agricultural region encountered instances of professional bias, harassment, and discrimination. These findings were derived from in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with 26 participants. Within the realm of higher education, faculty members belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups have reported experiencing feelings of isolation, primarily stemming from a dearth of support from their respective institutions, colleagues, and surrounding communities.

Additionally, an examination of the counseling program encounters of marginalized students has been undertaken by Cohen et al. (2022) and Varney et al. (2019) through the utilization of semi-structured phenomenological interviews and interpretive phenomenological analysis (p. 31). The results of the study indicated that students encountered difficulties in the process of incorporating their cultural identities and managing their racial and ethnic identities within the context of their counseling practices (Cohen et al., 2022; Varney et al., 2019). Furthermore, Park and Bahia (2022) conducted research on the experiences of racialized and Indigenous graduate students in their capacity as emerging researchers. The researchers conducted interviews with a sample of 22 individuals who identified as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Through the lens of critical race theory and an examination of color-

blind racism, the study examined the distinct obstacles encountered by these students in relation to their cultural identities and experiences of marginalization (Park & Bahia, 2022).

Additionally, the study conducted by Collins and Barnes (2014) explored the interconnections between race, class, and gender within health and human service organizations. The findings underscored the significance of comprehending privilege and power dynamics as crucial factors in fostering greater inclusivity within work environments. In the realm of program evaluation, Reid et al. (2020) employed survey methodology to investigate the influence of racial identities on the perceived roles and evaluation practices of evaluators of color. The study contends that evaluators of color encounter discrimination, tokenization, and various biases that can hinder their effectiveness in conducting evaluations.

### ***Professional Experiences of Black People***

The professional experiences of Black people have been the subject of research for decades, and studies have consistently shown that Black professionals face unique challenges and barriers in the workplace. Discrimination, stereotyping, and microaggressions are pervasive experiences for Black professionals across a wide range of industries and professions (Truitt & Snyder, 2020; Cirincione-Ulez, 2020). Several studies have explored the experiences of Black professionals in various fields, including nursing, corporate leadership, higher education, sport and exercise psychology, music therapy, and program evaluation. These studies consistently reveal that Black professionals face various forms of discrimination and marginalization which negatively impact their mental health, well-being, and career progression (Carter & Davila, 2017; Webb 2019; Wingfield 2007; Truitt and Snyder, 2020; Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015; Slay and Smith, 2011; Lander and Santoro, 2017; Wingfield and Wingfield, 2014). For instance, Truitt and Snyder's (2020) study on Black nursing professionals and CNAs in long-

term care settings found that participants were subject to lower expectations, harsher criticism, and reduced opportunities for advancement. The authors also reported that participants experienced stress, anxiety, and burnout linked to their experiences of discrimination and stereotyping in the workplace.

According to Carter and Davila (2017), Black professionals in sport and exercise psychology experienced different forms of microaggressions in their workplaces, such as being subjected to negative stereotypes, being questioned about their qualifications, and experiencing isolation and exclusion from their colleagues. These microaggressions ranged from inappropriate comments about skin color and hair texture to assumptions about their interests and abilities. These experiences were often subtle and difficult to identify, but they had significant impact on the professional's well-being and work performance. Similarly, Webb (2019) found that Black music therapists experienced racial discriminations and microaggressions in their workplaces and academic programs, including being overlooked for promotions and opportunities and being excluded from social and professional networks. Further, African American professionals experienced gendered racism in the workplace, particularly the "modern mammy" and "angry Black man" stereotypes (Wingfield, 2007). The "modern mammy" stereotype portrays African American women as nurturing and motherly, yet incompetent and emotional. This stereotype subjected African American women to having low-status, low-paying jobs, and being overlooked for promotions and leadership positions, as well as the perception that they were not assertive or capable of leadership roles (Wingfield, 2007).

Additionally, Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto's (2015) study on the racial microaggression experiences and coping strategies of Black women in corporate leadership positions found that participants experienced racial microaggressions, which led to feelings of



frustration and invisibility. These experiences of Black professionals can have a significant impact on their well-being and work performance, and it is essential to create safe and inclusive workplaces to promote their success. To achieve this, studies suggest several strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion, including addressing structural and systemic racism, recruiting and supporting Black professionals, diversifying curricula, increasing representation in leadership positions, creating safe spaces for Black professionals to connect and support each other, and educating colleagues and clients on the impact of microaggressions (Carter & Davila, 2017; Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015; Slay & Smith, 2011; Truitt & Snyder, 2020; Webb 2019; Wingfield 2007). The professional experiences of Black people are complex and challenging. Black professionals face unique barriers and challenges that require comprehensive strategies to address, including promoting diversity and inclusion, addressing structural and systemic racism, and creating safe and inclusive workplaces. It is essential to recognize and address the impact of stereotypes, discrimination, and microaggressions on the well-being and career progression of Black professionals to promote their success in the workplace.

### Theoretical Framework

A combination of theories including critical race theory, Black feminist-womanist Theory, Afrocentrism, and transnationalism informs the theoretical framework of this study.

Table 1 provides a high-level overview of each theory and their interconnections.

**Table 1. Characteristics and Descriptions of Theories**

Characteristics	Critical Race Theory	Black Feminist-Womanist Theory	Afrocentrism	Transnationalism
Intersectionality	Recognizes intersection of race, class, gender, etc., in shaping oppression.	Considers intersection of race, gender, and class in analyzing Black women’s experiences.		

Characteristics	Critical Race Theory	Black Feminist-Womanist Theory	Afrocentrism	Transnationalism
Social Construction of Race	Emphasizes race as a socially constructed concept used to justify power and oppression.		Highlights the importance of African culture, history, and knowledge in shaping racial identities.	
Structural and Institutional Racism	Critiques systemic racism ingrained in social, economic, and political structures.			
Counter-Storytelling	Uses narratives to challenge dominant narratives and amplify the voices of marginalized groups.			
Interest Convergence	Acknowledges the convergence of marginalized and dominant interests for racial progress.			
Critique of liberalism	Critiques the limitations of liberal approaches in addressing systemic racism.			
Centering Black Women's Experiences	Centers perspectives of historically marginalized groups in discussions of race and racism.	Highlights the experiences and perspectives of Black women marginalized within mainstream feminism.		
Critique of Mainstream Feminism	Critiques limitations of traditional civil rights approaches to addressing racism.	Challenges exclusion of Black women from mainstream feminism and civil rights movements.		

Characteristics	Critical Race Theory	Black Feminist-Womanist Theory	Afrocentrism	Transnationalism
Emphasis on Community and Collective action			Emphasizes the role of community and collective action in Afrocentric movements.	
Embracing Cultural and Historical Contexts			Emphasizes the importance of cultural continuity and historical legacies in African contexts.	
African-Centered Perspective			Centers African perspectives and experiences in analyzing racial dynamics.	
Cultural Continuity and Historical Legacy			Recognizes the importance of cultural continuity and historical legacies in African contexts.	
Reclaiming African Knowledge and Traditions			Advocates for the recognition and revival of African cultural knowledge and traditions.	
Empowerment and Positive Self-Image		Promotes cultural pride and positive self-image among Black women.		

Characteristics	Critical Race Theory	Black Feminist-Womanist Theory	Afrocentrism	Transnationalism
Concepts of Ma'at and Sankofa			Recognizes the importance of balance and harmony in African cultural traditions and also encourages learning from the past to inform present actions and future progress.	
Dual or Multiple Belonging				Acknowledges immigrants' connections and sense of belonging to multiple countries.
Transnational Practices				Recognizes and analyzes immigrants' activities and networks across borders.
Networks and Social Capital				Emphasizes the role of social networks and social capital in transnational experiences.
Structural Factors				Emphasizes that transnational practices are shaped by broader economic, political, and social structures.
Policy Implications				Advocates for policies responsive to the transnational practices and needs of immigrants.

## **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. CRT, which is a theoretical framework utilized in this study, places a central emphasis on experiential knowledge and the lived experiences of individuals of color, specifically Black African Women. CRT provides a framework for understanding how race intersects with power structures and shapes societal inequalities. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), CRT recognizes that racism is a fundamental part of society and that it is embedded in legal systems and institutions. Its aim is to expose and challenge these systems to create a more equitable society. CRT recognizes the importance of intersectionality in understanding the experiences of marginalized groups. For instance, race, gender, class, nation of origin, and other factors intersect to shape the experiences of individuals and groups. Crenshaw (1990) highlights the importance of considering multiple forms of oppression when addressing issues of social justice and argues that mainstream feminism fails to address the experiences of women of color who face multiple forms of oppression. Hence, the introduction of the concept of intersectionality as a tenet to highlight the ways in which race, gender, and other factors intersect to shape the experiences of women of color.

One of the critical contributions of CRT is its emphasis on the lived experiences of people of color who are often marginalized in mainstream discussions of race and racism (Crenshaw, 1987, Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT centers the perspectives and voices of historically oppressed individuals to recognize the ways in which their experiences inform our understanding of race and racism (Bell, 1995). Additionally, Ladson-Billings' work emphasizes the importance of recognizing the role of race and racism in education and that CRT can be used to understand the experiences of marginalized students and to challenge institutional racism in

schools. CRT in education emphasizes the importance of recognizing the role of race and racism in education and the need to create more equitable educational opportunities for marginalized students and promote cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT is not anti-White or anti-American but aims to expose and challenge systems of oppression, according to Ladson-Billings (2021). In sum, CRT has emerged as an important theoretical framework for addressing racism and promoting social justice. Its core principles recognize racism as fundamental, intersectionality as significant, and challenge systems of oppression. Its application in education emphasizes cultural responsiveness and equitable educational opportunities for marginalized students, while in law, it highlights the need to challenge and transform legal systems that legitimize oppression. Overall, CRT provides a powerful tool for understanding the experiences of marginalized groups and promoting social justice in various fields (Bell, 1995; Caldwell, 1996; Crenshaw, 1990; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1998 & 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

### **Black Feminist-Womanist Theory**

Black feminist thought and womanism analyze the contextual and interacting influences of history, culture, race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression (V. G. Thomas, 2004). Although Black feminist thought and womanism have different theoretical bases, they both provide investigation of the social and psychological experiences of Black women, giving Black womanhood a context. These frameworks promote the inclusion of social context for Black African women participants in the research process. Together, Black feminist thought and womanism place the development, attitudes, and behaviors of Black African women in a cultural context (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Black feminist thought focuses on the experiences of African American girls and gives them the freedom to define and interpret their own reality (Taylor,

1998). This viewpoint is based on the idea that theories regarding African American girls and Black African women should be informed by both “academic knowledge” and “daily experiences” (Taylor, 1998).

According to Banks-Wallace (2000), Black feminism also places “academic knowledge” and “daily experiences” in the framework of oppression based on race, gender, and class. Black African ladies’ collective and individual worldviews, behaviors, and outcomes are shaped by these interlocking repressive influences. Black feminist thought is based on four guiding principles: (a) the use of concrete experience as a standard for meaning; (b) the evaluation of knowledge claims through discourse; (c) an ethic of caring; and (d) an ethic of responsibility. The lived experiences of Black women are given significance in each sector. Research on Black girlhood is further contextualized by bringing up womanism into this conversation. Many academics consider womanism to be a different name for, an extension of, or a subset of Black feminism (Banks-Wallace, 2000; Collins, 2000). Nonetheless, womanism is defined by Phillips and McCaskill (2006) as a distinct idea with unique objectives, traits, and strategies that are not comparable to Black feminism. The inherent requirement of speaking from and about one’s own experiential location is the fundamental tenet of womanism (Phillips et al., 2006). Womanism is a social transformation paradigm that evolved from Black women’s experiences and methods of problem-solving in the real world. The objectives of womanism include using everyday people to solve problems, putting an end to all types of oppression for everyone, reestablishing harmony between people and nature, and re-establishing contact between living things and the spiritual world.

The study of intergenerational coping mechanisms used to promote and preserve harmony between people, nature, and the spiritual realm is encouraged by womanism. These

coping mechanisms include mothering, communication, self-help/mutual aid, and spirituality as a form of problem-solving. These techniques are acquired by Black African ladies through socialization. The teachings that are passed down from one generation to the next, both indirect and direct, are known as socialization. African women are taught or shown how to employ these methods by their moms, grandmothers, and other mothers as they move through various environments. Womanism emphasizes the significance of considering multigenerational survival mechanisms as an intuitive and quantifiable process (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015).

### **Afrocentrism Theory**

Afrocentricity is a theoretical paradigm that seeks to promote the centrality of African culture, history, and worldview in the analysis of social phenomena (Asante, 2011). According to Asante (2011), Afrocentricity is an intellectual movement that emerged in the 1980s as a response to the marginalization and erasure of African perspectives in Western intellectual traditions. Asante (1991) defines Afrocentricity as “an orientation that views African culture as central to the processes of human development” (p. 170). In this perspective, African culture and history are seen as vital sources of knowledge and insights that can inform social work practice and research. The Afrocentric theoretical framework seeks to understand the experiences of Black people from an African-centered perspective, emphasizing the importance of cultural and historical continuity and the centrality of African knowledge and traditions in shaping the experiences of Black people (Asante, 1991; Kambon, 1992). This approach also seeks to empower Black people by promoting cultural pride and a positive sense of self (Myers, 1993).

Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) argue that an Afrocentric approach can enable practitioners to engage with clients from a position of cultural humility and respect for diversity. This perspective emphasizes the importance of decolonizing social work education and practice



by challenging the dominant Eurocentric paradigms and promoting alternative ways of knowing (Asante & Archibald, 2023; Kane & Archibald, 2023).

Further, Afrocentricity is not a monolithic or essentialist perspective but a critical and reflexive approach that seeks to explore the diversity and complexity of African cultures and identities. Incorporating Afrocentric principles into research methodology by adopting a holistic and interdisciplinary approach recognizes the interrelatedness of social phenomena (Kershaw, 1998). Some of the key concepts of the Afrocentric theoretical framework include the idea of “ma’at,” which is the Egyptian concept of balance and harmony, and “sankofa,” which is the Akan concept of learning from the past in order to move forward (Asante, 1991; Asante & Archibald, 2023). Afrocentricity can provide a lens through which to examine how race, gender, culture, and other factors shape the experiences of Black African women in the workplace. By prioritizing African perspectives and experiences, Afrocentricity can challenge dominant narratives and biases that may marginalize or erase the experiences of Black African women evaluators. It can also provide a platform for them to articulate their own experiences and perspectives, which can inform evaluation practice and policy in more equitable and inclusive ways (Schiele, 1996). Using an Afrocentric approach to evaluation can also highlight the importance of context and cultural sensitivity in evaluation practice. It can lead to more culturally responsive evaluation designs and methods, which can improve the quality and validity of evaluations conducted with Black African women and other marginalized groups. Overall, Afrocentricity can play an important role in promoting equity, inclusion, and social justice in evaluation practice by centering the perspectives and experiences of Black African women evaluators and other marginalized groups.

## **Transnationalism**

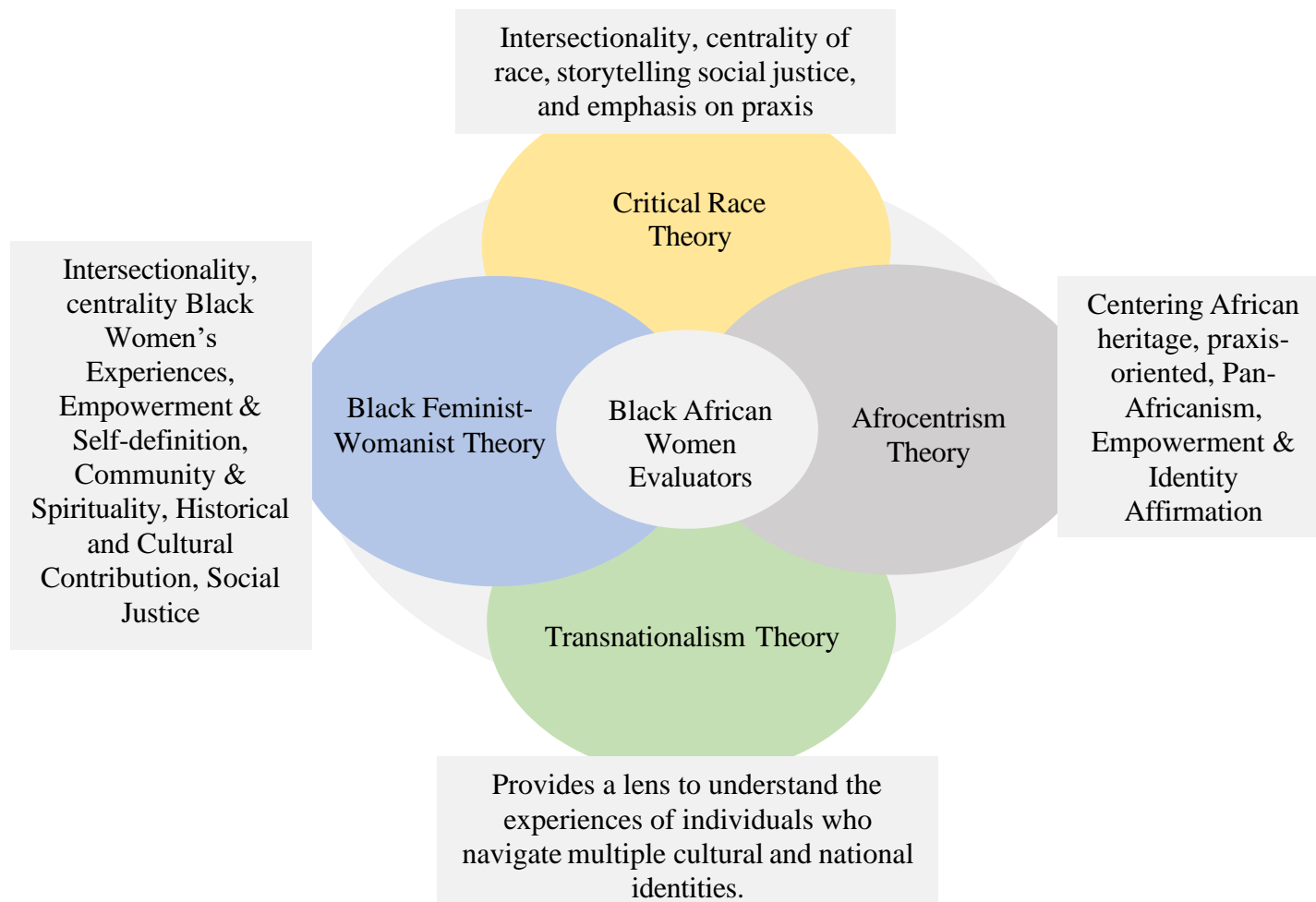
Transnationalism refers to the relationships and activities that link people and institutions across national borders, resulting in the formation of transnational communities and identities (Schiller et al., 1995). Transnationalism challenges the traditional nation-state model, which assumes that people have a fixed national identity and loyalty to a particular state (Blanc et al., 1995). Instead, transnationalism suggests that people have multiple identities and loyalties, and that these identities are constantly shifting and evolving in response to changing social and political contexts (Blanc et al., 1995). Schiller and colleagues (1995) argue that transnationalism represents a shift from the traditional immigrant model, which assumes that immigrants will eventually assimilate into the host culture and abandon their ties to their homeland. Instead, transmigrants maintain ties with their home country and community while also integrating into the host society. This results in the formation of transnational communities and identities that span national borders. The authors argue that transnationalism is a result of globalization and the increased mobility of people, goods, and information across borders.

Vertovec (2001) examines the relationship between transnationalism and identity. He argues that transnationalism challenges the idea of a fixed, essential identity by highlighting the multiple and fluid identities that individuals and communities can possess. Transnationalism allows individuals to maintain multiple affiliations across national borders, creating hybrid identities that draw on different cultural, social, and political contexts. The author also suggests that transnationalism can be empowering for marginalized communities by providing them with new forms of political and social agency. Blanc, Basch, and Schiller (1995) continue the discussion on the implications of transnationalism for nation-states and cultural identities. They argue that transnationalism challenges the notion of a bounded, homogeneous nation-state by

creating new forms of cultural and political identities that cross national borders. They suggest that transnationalism can be both a threat and an opportunity for nation-states, depending on how they choose to respond to it. Nation-states that are open to transnationalism can benefit from increased economic and cultural exchange, while those that resist it risk becoming marginalized and isolated.

Figure 1 depicts the interconnectedness of the theories that inform this study's theoretical framework and how it shaped the Black African woman evaluator. The top circle (critical race theory) depicts the specifics of CRT. Consideration of these CRT characteristics aid in the investigation of how systemic racism intersects with other identities, such as gender and race, to shape the experiences of Black African women evaluators (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). The left circle (Black feminist-womanist theory) prioritizes and acknowledges the perspectives and experiences of Black African Woman evaluators (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). The lower right circle

**Figure 1. Engaging with the Intersection of Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist-Womanist Theory, Afrocentrism, and Transnationalism**



(Afrocentrism) honors African heritage and culture while encouraging a positive sense of identity and empowerment in their professional pursuit as Black African woman evaluators (Asante, 1991; Kambon, 1992). The bottom circle (transnationalism) investigates how Black African woman evaluators maintain ties to their home cultures, participate in transnational networks, and navigate their transnational identities while working in the United States (Blanc et al., 1995; Schiller et al., 1995).

Taken together, I observe that the Black African Woman Evaluator is at the crossroads of CRT, Black feminist-womanist, and Afrocentric theories, while also comprehending the impact of diaspora experiences (transnationalism) on their professional journey. Furthermore, this combined theoretical framework advances methodological innovation in program evaluation.

The intersectional and culturally responsive methodologies that emerge from this synthesis are likely to be more effective in capturing the complexities of diverse evaluation contexts. This is particularly pertinent in a world where evaluators increasingly operate in multicultural and multidimensional spaces. The methodologies developed from this framework will not only acknowledge but actively incorporate the diverse cultural, racial, and gender identities of evaluators and stakeholders. This multifaceted approach will promote a better understanding of the experiences of Black African women evaluators as they navigate their professional landscapes.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed literatures relevant in exploring the multiple identities and experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. Intersectionality, African values and culture, professional experiences of Black African women were examined. A

collective of theories such as critical race theory, Black Feminist-Womanist Theory, Afrocentrism, and transnationalism upon which the study draws were discussed.

### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In the field of program evaluation, there is a notable absence of research focused on the experiences of Black African women in the United States. This dissertation casts a spotlight on these women, delving into their professional journeys in evaluation, including how they integrate African values and practices into their work. It also explores the influence of their multifaceted identities on their professional roles and the unique methodological and evaluative approaches they employ.

The study's objective was to deeply understand the lived experiences, particularly how the women's cultural backgrounds, values, and identities shape their professional lives. This chapter details the methodology adopted for the research. This study utilized a qualitative methodological approach to understand the lived experiences of and advance the literature on the evaluation of Black African women evaluators. Specifically, this study employed semi-structured interviews with Black African women evaluators. Subsequently, in this chapter, I stated my positionality, restated the research objectives and research questions and followed up by describing the various key components of the research methodology carried out in the study: (a) research design; (b) research ontological and epistemological framework; (c) Population and Sample Selection; (d) Data Instrument; (e) Data Collection Method; (f) Data Analysis; (g) Data Quality Criteria; (h) Ethical Consideration; (i) Data Collection Timeline; and (j) Research Design Limitations.

As I approached this work, I realized that I have several preconceived notions regarding Black African women evaluators. I am assuming that they can easily speak about their experiences and would want to, that they have felt different from other evaluators of color and White counterparts, that they hold different views about intersectionality and its impact on

professional experiences than their evaluators of color and White counterparts, and that their experience may be similar to mine. In some ways, I hope to find validation for my experience and to discover how others fit into the world of program evaluation so that I can feel more confident about my place within it. To address these issues, I will use a detailed journaling form to record personal impressions and reflect on any potential biases while conducting participant interviews and analyzing the data.

### **Research Objectives and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the complex experiences and identities of Black African woman evaluators and understand the ways in which their multiple identities intersect with and shape their professional evaluation experiences in United States. Specifically, this study investigated how the intersection of various identities, such as race, gender, culture, and immigration status, shape their professional experiences. In addition, the study examined the role of African cultural values, practices, and beliefs in shaping the experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. As described in the previous chapter, a combination of theories consisting of Critical Race, Black Feminist-Womanist, Afrocentric, and transnationalism theories were the lens through which the study examined how the intersecting identities of Black African women evaluators influenced professional experiences and practice. This research contributes to the discussion about the intersectionality of identities, roles, and practice in the field of program evaluation, and it extends the study of Boyce et al. (2023b) to a population of evaluators whose voices have never been represented or contributions celebrated as it relates to their identities and professional experiences. Additionally, this study contributes to the discussion about fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation.



To achieve the research objectives, the research questions that guided the study are restated below:

1. RQ 1: What are the professional experiences (e.g., training, projects, sectors) of Black African women evaluators in North America?
  - a) To what extent do these experiences align with their intersecting identities as Black African women?
2. RQ 2: What do Black African women evaluators view as their professional identity, role, and practice?
  - a. How and in what ways do their African values and practices/traditions/heritage show up in their work?
3. RQ 3: What methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, and theories resonate with Black African women evaluators and show up in their work?

### **Research Design**

The research examined the role of intersectionality in the professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. To better understand the perspectives of Black African women evaluators, I employed a qualitative study as the research design. This approach allowed for an in-depth study of participants' subjective experiences, and it was particularly beneficial for exploring nuanced experiences, such as those related to intersectionality of identities. In addition, qualitative studies are an appropriate research design because they provide researchers with a method to evaluate and understand the dynamics of a concept, in this case, to provide insight into the lived experiences of Black African women evaluators (Creswell, 2007). Similarly, when little is known about participants' lived experiences, an in-depth qualitative method provides an emergent design and rich, thick

descriptions that aid in comprehending participants' experiences across diverse and intersecting identities (Boyce et al., 2023b).

Qualitative studies are epistemologically social constructivist studies that hone in on how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Khalke, 2014). The goal of this research design was to discover and comprehend the perspectives that participants use to guide their actions in certain social situations (Hatch, 2002). Using this design allowed participants to share their interpretation of their lived experiences that framed their perceptions on how their multiple identities influence their professional experiences and practice, as well as contribute to the discourse on the intersection of identities and professional experiences. In a qualitative study, the research is the primary data collection and analysis tool. Hence, I began by assessing and reflecting on myself as member of the society and my position as a researcher which is positioned within a specific social-historical framework (Merriam, 2009; Choy, 2014). I the researcher took on a subjective role in this study, emphasizing the use of description, analysis, and interpretation (Hatch, 2002), as well as drawing on my own personal experiences (Stake, 2010). In this study, all the research questions were answered by conducting semi-structured interviews with participants who met the inclusion criteria—self-identified as Black, African, woman and who practice program evaluation professionally in the United States. For this study, Black African was determined as either the participant was born and raised in sub-Saharan Africa and/or was a child of a parent born and raised in sub-Saharan Africa. To determine participants who met the inclusion criteria, an intake/screening survey (Phase One) was first administered and from there, participants were invited to participate in the interview (Phase Two) if they were willing. The intake/screening survey was also used to collect demographic information.

## **Population and Sample Selection**

In this study, I targeted a specific participant population as the data source to answer the research questions. Overall, the inclusionary criteria included participants who self-identified as Black, African, woman, 18+ years, and who practice program evaluation in the United States. I used two non-probability sampling techniques to determine participants for the study. The first sampling method that I utilized was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability or nonrandom sampling which involves the intentional selection of members of a particular sub-group within a population to collect data from the population under study or where members of the target population that meet certain criteria such as availability at a given time, easy accessibility, willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study (Krosnick et al., 2014; Etikan et al., 2016). As previously mentioned in the research design section above, I employed a two-phase approach, In Phase One, I administered a 5-minute intake/screening survey to determine eligibility as well as collect participants' demographic information. Participants who met the inclusion criteria and completed the survey were redirected to a Calendly website to schedule an appointment for an interview if they were willing to participate, which was the Phase Two of the study. I sent out a recruitment email (see Appendix E) distributed the description of the study and the Qualtrics survey to known contacts via email and on my personal Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. The second sampling technique that I utilized was snowball sampling, also known as chain referral sampling; this is a method where participants with whom contact has been made already will use social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Noy, 2008). This sampling technique according to Creswell (2007) is appropriate when sampling participants in sharing lived experiences that relate to the research

questions being investigated. In this study, participants whom I already had contact with used snowball sampling to reach out to other program evaluators and researchers and asked them to participate in the study and requested that they share the study description and intake/screening Qualtrics survey with other program evaluators and researchers that were interested in the study. A total of 36 participants completed the survey; 15 met the inclusion criteria. Of the 15 participants that met the criteria, 14 were willing to participate in the interview (which was Phase Two of the study) and scheduled an appointment for an interview. All fourteen were interviewed on a first come first serve basis.

### **Data Source and Data Collection Procedure**

I had only one data source for this study, which was Black African women evaluators. I used two data collection methods. The first was the Qualtrics Intake/Screening Survey which was administered to determine the eligibility criteria and collect demographic information of participants who eventually took part in the main study. The survey comprised multiple choice and open-ended questions that asked participants about their location of practice, how they identify, age, length of professional practice, highest level of education, if they had any formal evaluation training, their names, and email address. The Qualtrics Intake/Screening Survey can be found in Appendix A. The second data collection method I used for this study was the semi-structured interview, which was the main data method used. The essence of “in-depth interviewing lies in the curiosity to comprehend the firsthand encounters of individuals and the significance they derive from those encounters” (Taylor, Bogdan, & Devault, 2015, p.102). These interviews explored and provided a deep understanding of the intersectionality of the multifaceted identities and the professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States.

I created a semi-structured interview protocol to guide my interview process and to ensure that the information that was shared by the participants answered my proposed research questions. The Semi-Structured Interview Protocol can be found in Appendix B. The interview protocol focused on understanding the professional experiences of Black African women evaluators; how these experiences align with their intersecting identities as Black African women; what they view as their professional identity, role, and practice; how their African values and practices/heritage/traditions show up in their work; and what methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, and theories resonate with them and show up in their work.

After participants scheduled an interview appointment on Calendly and prior to conducting the interviews, I sent out a meeting confirmation email which also contained the consent form (Appendix C) and the semi-structured interview protocol for them to review and prepare ahead of time for the interview. Sending the interview protocol ahead of time allowed for a rich discussion with participants. The interview lasted between 45 minutes and 60 minutes and was recorded on Zoom, which is an audio recording software. After the interview, I uploaded the audio file from the Zoom recording into the transcription software known as Otter.ai. This software transcribed the audio into text. I proceeded to clean the data using the clean verbatim technique, which tries to remove superfluous speech features while keeping the key substance and meaning of the participants' comments (Zhou et al., 2013). After cleaning all 13 transcripts, I member-checked each one to ensure that I appropriately conveyed their perspectives when I wrote the study's findings. I emailed the transcripts to each participant individually and asked them to let me know if they needed any changes, additions, or deletions. If they were satisfied with the transcription, I asked that they notify me that no revisions or adjustments were required. Most of the participants had no edits, while few participants made spelling edits to sections of

their transcripts. I assigned a pseudonym to each interview participant to ensure confidentiality of participants' identities but still being able to distinguish them as I presented the findings. All data were maintained in a password-protected file.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the cleaning of the transcripts, I used *Atlas.ti* for my analysis and applied the six-phase guideline outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006): “(a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generate initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, e) defining and naming, (f) producing the report” (p. 87). I read through each transcript at least twice to get acquainted with the narratives of the interview participants. Thereafter, I began developing the coding scheme to determine the experiences and perspectives of the Black African women evaluators. Inductive and deductive thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). I used short descriptive sentences to designate the codes. I assigned a name or code to each major concept or central idea in the transcript (Glesne, 2016). I utilized an iterative technique, which means that as each interview was coded, I checked the previously generated codes to determine whether new codes were required or if the existing ones properly captured the data. Then, I developed a codebook that outlined the meaning of each identifiable code., which was reviewed by external peer reviewers who were conversant with the study.

### **Data Quality**

With qualitative research, a concern is the quality of data gathered to answer the research questions. Various conceptualizations exist for data quality or validity, as posited by Cho and Trent (2006). However, this study adopted a constructivist paradigm, which maintains that knowledge is socially constructed, and that absolute truth does not exist. Instead, realities can be

understood in diverse ways (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The study primarily emphasized the notion of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is defined as confidence in the correctness and representation of findings gained via the evolution of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These criteria arose from an effort to create criteria that are more or less like those often employed, which are internal and external validity, reliability, and consistency (Guba & Lincoln, 2001).

*Credibility:* This is akin to internal validity, which approximates truth about inferences regarding causal relationships. This is how well your inferences match various participants' experiences in the settings at hand. To achieve this, member checks and peer debriefing were employed (Guba & Lincoln, 2001). I used member checking which consists of participants reviewing the data, interpretations, and conclusions to confirm that the representation of the data is reflective of their statements. I also employed peer debriefing of data collected by engaging a person who was familiar with the topic of study to externally review the interpretation, results, and findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Raskind et al., 2019).

*Dependability:* This is comparable to reliability, which involves the use of an external auditor to examine all aspects of the social inquiry, the methodological decisions made and the reasons for such decisions made (Guba & Lincoln, 2001). Dependability for this study was established by the inclusion of internal reviewers (dissertation committee) and external peer reviewers.

*Confirmability:* Comparable to objectivity, it is the ability to judge fairly. It is a central tenet of constructivism that true objectivity is impossible to achieve. Hence, steps must be taken to reduce researcher bias as much as possible and to inform readers of study shortcomings and

researcher's assumptions. Confirmability refers to how well the inferences obtained are anchored in evidence or can be linked back to data. This was accomplished in this study through the use of an audit trail, which entailed maintaining records of all steps taken throughout the research process, and a detailed description of the methodology, so that the integrity of the research results can be examined. Also, admission of researcher's beliefs, assumptions, and role will be implemented to increase confirmability (Shenton, 2004). It is imperative to be mindful of the influence that one's perspective and position as a researcher may exert on each phase of the research endeavor (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015), hence, I took into consideration my role as a key instrument in a qualitative study, as well as acknowledging my African background.

*Transferability:* This refers to the degree to which results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I facilitated transferability judgment through thick description, describing not just behaviors and experiences, but contexts as well, so behaviors and experiences may become meaningful to an outsider.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The participants of the study were all treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro Institutional Research Board (IRB). These included (a) obtaining written/verbal consent from participants in the study, and (b) using pseudonyms to protect identities. The study solicited information about the lived experiences of Black African women evaluators. To ensure the participants' comfort, I talked about myself and connected with them about similar lived experiences. Also, I provided reassurance that they were not obligated to respond to any question that evoked discomfort or emotional and/or psychological distress associated with the discussion about the intersectionality of identities



among historically racialized populations. The IRB Approval Document is presented in Appendix D.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study, while offering insightful contributions to the understanding of Black African woman evaluators' experiences in the United States, is subject to few limitations. However, these few limitations, such as the sample size, may also be considered as strengths given the very specific population of study. First, the scope of the research is geographically limited to the United States, which means the findings may not be fully generalizable to other countries and regions with different socio-political contexts. This geographical focus could restrict the broader applicability of the study's conclusions to Black African women evaluators working in other parts of the world.

Second, the methodology employed, primarily qualitative interviews, though rich in depth and detail, might not capture the full spectrum of experiences and perceptions among Black African women evaluators. The reliance on self-reported data could introduce bias, as participants may have reservations about sharing negative experiences or may portray their experiences in a more positive light. Furthermore, the sample size, while adequate for qualitative research, limits the ability to make widespread generalizations about the experiences of all Black African women evaluators in the field.

Additionally, the study's focus on Black African women evaluators, while crucial for highlighting specific challenges and contributions, also means that it does not encompass the experiences of other minority groups in the evaluation field. The unique challenges faced by other underrepresented evaluators could provide additional insights into diversity and inclusion in program evaluation, suggesting an area for future research.

Lastly, the rapidly changing landscape of program evaluation and the ongoing evolution of diversity and inclusion practices mean that the findings of this study represent a snapshot in time. The dynamic nature of the field and societal attitudes towards race, gender, and professional identity may affect the long-term relevance of the study's conclusions. These limitations notwithstanding, the study contributes significantly to the dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion in program evaluation, offering a foundation for further research and policy development in this critical area.

### **Timeline**

This dissertation took approximately eight months to complete (Table 2). I defended my dissertation proposal in Spring 2023. I developed the data collection protocol in Summer 2023 (June/July) and obtained IRB approval by in October 2023. Then, I began recruitment of participants and data collection in October–November 2023. Data cleaning and initial data analysis were ongoing alongside continued data collection. Data cleaning and analysis was concluded in December 2023. I shared a final draft of my chapters 1–4 in January 2024 and submit a final draft of my chapters 1–5 to my dissertation committee by early mid-February 2024. I defended my dissertation the last week in February 2024.

**Table 2. Dissertation Timeline**

Steps in Dissertation Process	Months							
	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024
Proposal defense	X	X						
Development of protocol and participant information sheet	X	X						
IRB approval	X	X	X					
Recruitment of participants			X	X				
Conduct interviews with participants			X	X				
Data cleaning and analysis			X	X	X			
Write chapters 4 & 5				X	X	X		
Submit a first complete draft of chapters 1–5.							X	
Review and submit a final draft of chapters 1–5								
Dissertation defense								X

### Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was employed for this study, the research design, and the reason the qualitative study was chosen. It also included the positionality of the researcher, the description of the participants, and sampling techniques that were used in the study. Additionally, the recruitment of participants, data collection, data analysis procedures, limitations and delimitations of the study were discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

### **Introduction**

This chapter describes in detail the findings of a qualitative study on the professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in the United States. This study examined how their experiences intersected with their identities as Black African women evaluators. In-depth interviews were used to collect data, with a focus on personal narratives and professional reflections. The findings revealed the nuanced ways in which race, gender, and cultural background overlap and influence evaluators' professional lives. The results for each of the three questions are shown. The roadmap for findings includes: (a) the research question is presented first; (b) terms are defined and operationalized where necessary; (c) an overarching finding for the question is presented; (d) themes within the overarching findings are presented; and (e) each of the themes is expanded upon, including the presentation of relevant synthesized data. The definition of terms presented under each research questions did not come from the data. As I shift from theme to theme, I remind the reader which research questions are being answered and which theme is being built upon. Finally, I present the findings with pseudonyms to ensure that the interviewees' confidentiality is maintained.

### **Overview of Interview Participants and Use of Pseudonyms**

In reporting the findings from the interview data obtained through this study, I employed pseudonyms to uphold and respect the confidentiality promised to the evaluators who generously consented to participate in these interviews. This approach was not merely a methodological choice, but also a commitment to ethical research practices set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for informed consent involving human subjects, ensuring that no information presented would trace back to them directly, thereby safeguarding their anonymity. Through reflective

practice involving meticulous maintenance of memos and introspective reflections, it became evident that this approach significantly influenced the dynamics of the interviews. The evaluators, reassured by the confidentiality measures and the ethical rigor of the study, engaged more openly and candidly. This openness translated into a wealth of in-depth and insightful data, enriching the study’s findings. Table 3 which follows provides the pseudonyms and country of origin (brief background information) for interview participants.

**Table 3. Participant Pseudonyms and Country of Origin**

Pseudonym	Country of Origin
Jomiloju	Nigeria
Asilia	Kenya
Abina	Ghana
Maame	Ghana
Omotore	Nigeria
Digiola	Nigeria
Zuri	Uganda
Abebi	Nigeria
Chisimdi	Nigeria
Ekemma	Nigeria
Ngodibe	Cameroon
Tiaraoluwa	Nigeria
Ifenkili	Nigeria

Table 4 displays the demographic characteristics of the study participants. It shows that most (50.0%) of the participants fall within the age range of 35 to 44 years. Furthermore, a substantial majority (58.3%) are of Nigerian nationality. Approximately 54% of the participants have practiced program evaluation for a duration of less than five years within the United States.

**Table 4. Participants' Demographic Characteristics**

Variable	N (Percent)
Age	
25–34 years	5 (35.7)
35–44 years	7 (50.0)
45–54 years	2 (14.3)
Country	
Cameroon	1(8.3)
Ghana	2 (16.7)
Kenya	1 (8.3)
Nigeria	7 (58.3)
Uganda	1 (8.3)
Years of Experience	
Less than 5 years	7 (53.8)
5–10 years	4 (30.8)
11–15 years	1 (7.7)
16–20 years	1 (7.7)
Type of Evaluator	
Internal Evaluator	4 (28.6)
External Evaluator	3 (21.4)
Both	6 (42.9)
Other (Please Specify)	1 (7.1)
<i>*Administrator</i>	
Highest Level of Education	
Master's Degree	6 (42.9)
Doctorate Degree	8 (57.1)
Any Formal Evaluation Training or Certifications	
Yes	10 (71.4)
No	4 (28.6)

The findings are organized by themes and, where appropriate, supporting quotes were inserted to demonstrate the contribution of the 13 participants in this study.

## Findings by Research Questions

### **Research Question 1A: What are the Professional Experiences (e.g., Training, Projects, Sectors) of Black African Women Evaluators in North America?**

#### *Definitions*

*Professional Experience:* Professional experience within this context can be broadly defined as the cumulative knowledge, skills, and competencies that these evaluators have gained through various aspects of their careers. It includes not only practical tasks and functions as evaluators, but also their training and roles within organizational structures/sectors and their interactions with colleagues, clients, and other stakeholders. (Schwandt, 2017)

*Training:* This includes both formal education (e.g., degrees, certifications) and informal learning opportunities (e.g., workshops, conferences, professional development courses) related to evaluation theory, methodology, and practice. It might encompass specific areas like quantitative and qualitative analysis, program design, data collection and management, reporting, and ethical considerations. (Ford & Wroten, 1984; Jain, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Craig, 1970)

*Project:* This refers to the specific evaluation projects that these evaluators have participated in or led. It's important to consider the types of projects (e.g., program evaluation, policy evaluation, impact assessment) they have worked on, the sectors involved (e.g., healthcare, education, community development, social justice), the roles they played (e.g., lead evaluator, data analyst, team member), and the level of responsibility they held. (Mertens & Wilson, 2018)

*Sector:* This refers to the different fields or areas where these evaluators have applied their skills. These can include a wide range of sectors, such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, private companies, research institutions, and international development

organizations (Rossi et al., 1993). Understanding the diverse sectors these evaluators have worked in gives insight into their breadth of experience and adaptability.

### ***Data Used***

The data used to answer this question included: (a) demographic survey and (b) Black African women evaluator interviews.

### ***Overarching Finding***

Findings from the analysis of data showed the inherent diversity and adaptability within the field of program evaluation. The overarching finding highlights that professionals enter the field from various disciplines, including education, psychology, and statistics, often leveraging their unique backgrounds and experiences in their evaluation roles. They face a range of challenges, such as methodological complexities and resource limitations, necessitating a combination of technical expertise and creative problem-solving. The evaluators' educational and cultural backgrounds significantly influence their approaches, introducing a variety of perspectives and enriching the practice. Central to their professional journey is the commitment to continuous learning and adaptability, essential in navigating the ever-evolving field of evaluation. This finding underscores the multifaceted nature of evaluation work, where adaptability and ongoing development are key to success.

This section presents a detailed analysis of the professional journeys and perspectives of Black African women evaluators. The findings are based on interviews with 13 participants. The evaluators interviewed came from a diverse array of academic fields, such as psychology, education, agriculture, public health, and economics. One participant, transitioning from a background in educational psychology to evaluation, stated, *“I looked into myself: what are the skills that I think I have? And given my experience with doing some sort of evaluation in my*



*dissertation, I felt I could thrive in that space.*” This reflected a self-directed path, leveraging existing skills and interests to enter the field of evaluation. Many of the participants did not start their careers intending to become evaluators. Their entry into the field came about through unexpected opportunities or while they were exploring various career paths. Many participants seamlessly integrated their personal interests or primary fields of study with evaluation. One individual combined their passion for agriculture with evaluation, focusing on food security and environmental conservation. Another, with a background in criminal justice and communications, found their niche in evaluation while working for a consulting firm, leading to further specialization in research methods, measurement, and evaluation. The training these participants received varied widely. Some had formal education in evaluation methodologies, while others acquired skills through online courses, workshops, or on-the-job learning. A participant with a background in guidance and counseling and education psychology highlighted their transition into evaluation through online courses after moving to the United States. These varied experiences demonstrate that pathways into evaluation work are multifaceted, often influenced by a blend of academic training, personal interests, and the fluid nature of career development.

The field of program evaluation, while offering a myriad of opportunities, also presents a set of unique challenges, as identified by the participants of the study. These challenges range from methodological dilemmas to practical difficulties in implementation. A recurring theme in the interviews was the struggle with methodological aspects of evaluation. Participants highlighted issues such as the complexity of designing effective evaluation frameworks, the difficulty in selecting appropriate metrics, and the challenges in data collection and analysis. As one evaluator noted, *“Finding the right balance between qualitative and quantitative methods*

*can be tough, especially when dealing with diverse stakeholders who have different expectations and understandings of what evaluation should entail.*” Many evaluators pointed out the limitations posed by resource constraints. This includes not only financial limitations, but also constraints in terms of human resources and time. “*We often have to do more with less,*” shared one participant, “*which means being creative in how we approach evaluation but also being mindful of the potential compromises in quality.*”

Several evaluators spoke about the difficulties of navigating organizational politics. Balancing the need for objective evaluation with the interests and agendas of different groups within an organization can be challenging. As one evaluator expressed, “*There’s always a fine line between providing honest, useful feedback and maintaining good relationships with key players in the organization.*” These challenges highlight the complexities inherent in evaluation work, requiring a blend of technical skills, creativity, diplomacy, and resilience. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the advancement and credibility of the field. The personal backgrounds of evaluators significantly influence their professional practices, as evidenced by the stories and experiences shared by the participants.

### **Research Question 1B: To What Extent do the Professional Experiences Align with their Intersecting Identities as Black African Women?**

#### ***Definitions***

*Intersecting Identities* refers to the complex and overlapping social and personal characteristics that make up an individual. These identities can include factors like race and ethnicity, gender, class, religion, age (Settles & Buchanan, 2014; Chavis & Hill, 2008).

## ***Overarching Findings***

- ◆ The professional experiences of Black African women evaluators in North America are deeply influenced by the intersection of their racial, cultural, and gender identities. These identities shape their career trajectories and color their day-to-day interactions in predominantly Western professional settings. They face unique challenges, including navigating stereotypes, asserting competence, and advocating for inclusive practices, all while balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Their unique cultural backgrounds enrich their evaluative thinking, allowing them to address biases and enhance inclusivity effectively.

## ***Themes***

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are presented below in support of the overarching finding:

- A. There is an interplay of racial and cultural identities in professional contexts.
- B. Personal identity has an impact on professional practices.
- C. Black African women evaluators advocate for inclusion and leverage reflective practice to overcome professional insecurities.
- D. Black African women evaluators navigate professional challenges and opportunities.

### ***Theme A: There is an Interplay of Racial and Cultural Identities in Professional Contexts.***

- This theme explored the intricate interplay of racial and cultural identities among Black African women evaluators in the United States. It provides a nuanced understanding of how these evaluators perceived and navigated their professional landscapes, focusing on two key sub-themes: the *amalgamation of racial and cultural identities* and the *challenges of navigating diaspora dynamics*.

**Racial and Cultural Identity Convergence.** The evaluators' stories revealed a deep fusion of their racial and cultural identities, which significantly influenced their professional pathways and interactions. Jomiloju, an evaluator of Nigerian descent, eloquently encapsulates this reality, *“Regardless of context, our Blackness is a constant. We endure similar microaggressions and stereotyping in professional settings, a testament to the pervasive influence of racial identity.”* This statement encapsulates the inescapable reality of racial identity shaping every aspect of their lives, including their professional lives. Omotore reflected on the complexity of addressing intersectionality within their professional practice: *“In my professional role, right now, program leaders are trying to figure out how to address intersectionality in evaluation.”* This highlights the ongoing challenge of integrating these complex identities into professional settings. Jomiloju further articulated the duality of being both Black and African. She expressed:

My Nigerian heritage shapes my identity distinctly from Black Americans. It's ingrained in my upbringing, language, and cultural practices. This rich tapestry of my African roots, combined with the shared experience of being a Black woman, exemplifies the essence of intersectionality. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

This dual identity places them at the intersection of varied cultural and racial experiences, impacting their professional credibility and approach, which provides a unique perspective that is invaluable in the field of evaluation. This perspective allows them to see and understand nuances that might be missed by others, enhancing their ability to conduct culturally sensitive and inclusive evaluations.

**Navigating Black Diaspora Wars.** The tension between African and African American identities emerged as a significant factor in their professional journeys. This internal conflict

within the Black community influences their professional interactions and the perceptions they encounter. These evaluators navigate a landscape where their African heritage and their identity as members of the broader Black community in the U.S intersect in complex ways. As Jomiloju further recounted:

As an African immigrant, or a child of African immigrants, the experience can be particularly challenging. There's a prevalent misconception that Africa, as a continent, is a place of mystique and wonder, which often leads to oversimplification and stereotyping. At times, this can be dismissive, leading to a response of indifference. However, what is striking is that within the Black community, especially during childhood, children of African immigrants often face ridicule from other Black kids. This adds another layer to the complex identity and cultural dynamics we navigate. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

This statement highlighted the stereotypes and misconceptions they often confront about their African heritage. The issue of diaspora wars further complicates their experience and is seen as counterproductive because at the core, both groups—Africans and African Americans—share understanding of common experiences, and both face similar challenges.

***Theme B: Personal Identity has an Impact on Professional Practices.***

- Personal identity significantly influenced professional evaluative thinking and decision making, particularly among Black women evaluators of African heritage.

These evaluators integrated their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds into their professional roles, enriching their approach to evaluation with a unique perspective and heightened awareness of biases. This integration of personal and professional identities led interview participants to more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and nuanced evaluations.

**Identity-Driven Decision Making and Evaluative Thinking.** This theme explored how the evaluators' personal identities intricately shaped their approach to evaluative thinking and decision making. These evaluators, enriched by their African heritage, bring a unique perspective to their roles which is deeply informed by their own experiences. This perspective is instrumental in identifying and addressing biases and privileges inherent in evaluation processes, fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. Abina from Ghana, reflecting on the integration of her identity into her professional ethos, shared:

My identity is integral to every aspect of my professional life. It influences my thought processes and serves as the lens through which I approach my work. Being acutely aware of my own experiences, I also recognize the privilege from which I operate. In my interactions, I prioritize understanding and validating others' experiences. I focus on actively listening, reaffirming their efforts, and exploring ways to integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into our collective work. This approach stems from my belief that my identity is inseparable from my professional ethos, guiding me to be empathetic and inclusive. (Abina, Ghanaian)

Similarly, Maame shared her experiences of initially facing doubt in professional settings due to her identity of being a Black African woman, but later gaining respect by showcasing her expertise.

Adapting to a new environment has been challenging. I've found myself in situations where I had to prove my worth and capabilities. When my observations were confirmed by others, it was a turning point for me. This experience has taught me the importance of being upfront and confident, especially when presenting myself to stakeholders. It's a journey of self-affirmation and growth. (Maame, Ghanaian)

The intersection of their multiple identities played a significant role in shaping the evaluators' professional decisions and perspectives. Their unique background brings a distinct lens to their evaluation work, enriching their approach with diverse insights and considerations. Asilia described the infusion of their identities into their work:

My multiple identities are integral to who I am, and being conscious of these identities is crucial for me. They not only influence my personal decisions, but also how I approach and interpret my work. When I'm involved in decision making or analyzing data, I bring these diverse aspects of my identity to the table. It's important to acknowledge that these identities can affect my subjectivity, especially in qualitative research. For instance, when we're collecting data in African institutions, my familiarity with the Kenyan context deeply influences how I view and understand the information, particularly when it resonates with my understanding of Kenya. This self-awareness is key in recognizing the potential biases and perspectives I bring to my professional role. (Asilia, Kenyan)

This melding of personal and professional identities enables them to offer a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the projects they evaluate. This awareness underscores the evaluators' recognition of the impact of their individual experiences on their professional judgment and decision-making processes.

**Balancing Personal Identity and Professional Roles.** Some evaluators continually navigated the delicate balance between their personal identities and their professional roles. This balancing act involved ensuring that their individual perspectives and experiences do not negatively influence their professional responsibilities, particularly in qualitative work. This acknowledgment highlighted by Asilia, showed the ongoing effort to maintain objectivity and professionalism while embracing the richness of their personal experiences. Asilia shared:

For me, self-awareness is key. It's about understanding who I am and how my identity shapes my actions and decisions. In my professional life, especially when making decisions, I bring my varied identities into play. I realize that these identities influence my subjectivity, particularly in qualitative work. They affect how I interpret data and the perspectives of others. For example, when collecting data at African institutions, my familiarity with the Kenyan context significantly informs my understanding. It shapes how I view participants and the data I obtain, as I naturally relate to what I know and understand about Kenya. This awareness of how my identity influences my work is crucial, as it helps me recognize the lenses through which I view and interpret information. (Asilia, Kenyan)

This insight points to the constant negotiation between personal understanding and professional obligations.

***Theme C: Black African Women Evaluators Advocate for Inclusion and Leverage Reflective Practice to Overcome Professional Insecurities.***

- This theme focuses on how Black African women evaluators, drawing on their personal experiences and reflective practices, advocate for inclusion and overcome professional insecurities. They navigate challenges like impostor syndrome and cultural differences in evaluation practice, leveraging their unique perspectives to foster diverse representation and cultural sensitivity in their work environments. This theme underscores their significant role in enhancing the impact and relevance of evaluation practices through their distinctive insights and advocacy.

Evaluators advocated for inclusivity based on their personal experiences. They often faced impostor syndrome—not experiencing internal success, despite being high-performing in



external, objective ways—or self-doubt, and struggling to find their professional voice. Their experiences highlight the importance of inclusive work environments that nurture diverse talents and perspectives. Omotore’s experiences as a Black African woman heightened her awareness of inclusion and diversity, influencing her to push for these aspects in her evaluation work:

My intersecting identities have profoundly shaped my understanding and approach to my role, especially concerning issues of diversity, equality, and inclusion. This heightened consciousness drives me to advocate consistently for inclusivity in all projects I lead. Whether it’s ensuring gender-representative data or questioning if tools are designed to accommodate people with disabilities, I am always striving to integrate these essential aspects of inclusion. My aim is to see these considerations become a standard part of how we operate, reflecting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to our work. (Omotore, Nigerian)

Digiola recounted overcoming impostor syndrome and finding her voice in the evaluation field, emphasizing the role of reflective practice and supportive work environments in her professional development:

Living in South Africa has been a significant learning curve for me. Initially, I grappled with impostor syndrome and felt like I had lost my voice. Despite these challenges, I recognized the abundance of opportunities available. To overcome my doubts, I developed a routine: after every meeting, I would turn to my journal. There, I would write affirmations, reminding myself to believe in my dreams and capabilities. Professionally, my journey can be likened to transplanting a plant to new soil. It’s about adapting to a different environment, where thriving involves not only acclimatizing but also retaining one’s essence. (Digiola, Nigerian)

Furthermore, most evaluators shared that they adapted their skills across different cultural contexts. Their African heritage often provided them with unique vantage points from which to navigate cultural differences in evaluation practice, advocating for diverse representation and cultural sensitivity. For example, Zuri shared an instance where she applied her African experience to manage cultural conflicts in evaluation practice, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity:

In my previous role as an advisor, I would incorporate aspects of African cultures into my work. Understanding these cultures was essential in navigating certain situations. If someone without African experience had been in my position, it would have been challenging to handle such situations. (Zuri, Ugandan)

Abebi shared similar sentiments where she discussed balancing her qualifications with representing the communities served in evaluation work, ensuring their voices are heard in the impact evaluation:

I must ensure that I support their needs and understand their experiences, ensuring that it translates into the impact generated by the work being carried out. I also have to assert my qualifications as a Black African woman in this role, which involves evaluating projects that are intended to make a meaningful impact on communities. (Abebi, Nigerian)

In conclusion, Black African women evaluators play a vital role in shaping a more inclusive and empathetic evaluation field. Through their personal journeys of overcoming professional insecurities, such as impostor syndrome, and leveraging reflective practices, these evaluators have not only found their own voices but have also become advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work. Their unique experiences and cultural insights are

instrumental in ensuring that evaluation processes are not just comprehensive but also deeply sensitive to the varied nuances of the communities they serve. This theme underscores the transformative impact of embracing and integrating diverse perspectives into professional practices, thereby enriching and strengthening the field of evaluation.

***Theme D: Black African Women Evaluators Navigate Professional Challenges and Opportunities.***

- This theme delves into the experiences of Black African women evaluators as they confront and overcome stereotypes and assert their competence in their professional roles. Faced with the need to demonstrate their expertise in environments that may harbor biases, these evaluators employed strategies to assert their value and contribute meaningfully.

Their narratives reveal the complexities of juggling multiple identities and the journey from being doubted to gaining acceptance and respect in their field.

**Overcoming Stereotypes and Proving Competence.** A recurring challenge for these evaluators is the need to overcome stereotypes and assert their competence in professional settings. They often find themselves in positions where they must demonstrate their expertise and value in environments that may harbor biases or preconceptions. These aspects of their identity often require them to employ strategies to assert their competence and value in settings that may not fully recognize or appreciate their contributions. Omotore articulated the complexity of this experience:

Juggling the identities of being Black, a woman, and African, all while working as an evaluator, presents its unique set of challenges. Each of these aspects contributes to my

experience and perspective, making my professional journey complex yet distinctively rich. (Omotore, Nigerian)

Maame from Ghana recounted an experience of initial skepticism from colleagues:

I recall a project where we assessed the evaluation needs of Extension educators, and I was the facilitator for one of the focus groups. In my line of work, we place great importance on interpreting body language and nonverbal cues. As the session began, I sensed a hint of doubt among the panel members. However, about 10 to 15 minutes into the discussion, as I confidently steered the conversation and shared my knowledge and experiences, the atmosphere shifted. By the end of the session, several panelists approached me to express their appreciation. They acknowledged my expertise, saying they were eager to see the outcomes of our work. They noted that the insights provided by myself, my advisor, and colleagues would be valuable to them. They appreciated how the discussion had clarified their needs. Initially, I was hesitant to trust my own perception of this change in attitude, but it was a validating experience. (Maame, Ghanaian)

This narrative captures the journey from doubt to acceptance, underscoring the evaluators' resilience and determination to establish their credibility. Maame discussed further the burden of educating colleagues about diversity within the Black community. She expressed a sense of duty to inform others about the range of diversity within the Black community, emphasizing the importance of this task from her perspective as a Black woman. She notes a lag in acknowledging this diversity, particularly in professional settings. The challenge extends to program leaders struggling with incorporating intersectionality into evaluations.

This responsibility highlights the evaluators' role in challenging and reshaping narratives within their professional sphere. This finding from the data addressed the challenges of confronting workplace insecurities and the pressure to prove competence. It reflects the experiences of Black African women evaluators who often face doubts about their capabilities, not due to their lack of skill, but because of preconceived notions and biases in their work environments. Their journey involved not only showcasing their competence but also dismantling the insecurities projected onto them by others. For example, Abina shared an experience of being wrongly accused of trying to steal jobs, reflecting deeper insecurities and biases of others and the need for resilience and support networks in such situations:

I've been accused of trying to steal someone's job. In these moments, I remind myself of my deep-seated confidence and self-belief. It's a continual process of navigation. I wish I could say such instances are one offs, but they're not. Navigating these challenges is part of dealing with people, as everyone reacts differently for various reasons. When faced with accusations of job-stealing, my internal response is light-hearted: I'd much rather win the lottery and stay at home. I'm committed to my work, not to taking anyone's job. If winning the lottery were an option, I'd gladly let someone else have my job while I enjoy my riches at home. (Abina, Ghanaian)

Similarly, Maame recounted overcoming initial doubts about her abilities by confidently presenting her knowledge and skills, thus earning respect and overcoming cultural barriers:

One significant challenge in my professional life, as I've realized, is a reluctance to embrace new opportunities. This hesitancy often stems from a fear of whether I truly deserve these chances or if I'll be able to perform effectively. For instance, I often worry about my communication skills, even though my colleagues have reassured me that they

understand me clearly. This internal dialogue about my perceived shortcomings sometimes holds me back, but I'm working to overcome these self-doubts and embrace growth and new experiences with more confidence. (Maame, Ghanaian)

Almost all the evaluators shared that they often needed to clarify their unique experiences and perspectives, which might be overshadowed by generalized assumptions about their racial and cultural identity. They shared that this struggle encompassed their effort to be seen as professional first, beyond the narrow lenses of stereotypes. Abebi shared that she is faced with overcoming internal challenges like imposter syndrome and external challenges of having her expertise underestimated or questioned due to her identity. She highlighted the struggle of asserting qualifications amidst stereotypical assumptions:

Beyond what I've already mentioned about challenging mental models, a significant internal struggle I'm currently facing is impostor syndrome. Having been in my current role for about a year, I find myself in a team where there are very few, if any, who share my background. This lack of representation among the evaluation team is a constant reminder of my uniqueness. As a result, I am working on finding and asserting my voice in this diverse group of people from different walks of life. It's a balance of embracing my distinct perspective while ensuring I am heard and valued in this environment.

(Abebi, Nigerian)

Similarly, Chisimdi addressed the challenge of being tokenized or presumed to have a deep understanding of all Black experiences, emphasizing the importance of approaching different evaluation projects with humility and respect:

Dealing with tokenism is a significant challenge. One key lesson I've learned is to be upfront and honest with my organization about the tasks I'm assigned. I make it clear that

my experiences may not directly relate to those of the communities we serve. My approach involves doing thorough research to understand these diverse groups better and always entering these spaces with humility. This approach has been instrumental in my work with various communities, including indigenous groups and the Latino population, whose experiences vastly differ from mine. I've learned the importance of humility, respect, and a willingness to learn. These qualities have proven invaluable, particularly during interviews and focus groups with community members. I find that when you approach people with humility and respect, they are more likely to open up and engage meaningfully. (Chisimdi, Nigerian)

### **Navigating Misconceptions and Excelling Beyond Assumed Identities in Evaluation.**

Most evaluators mentioned being confronted with and continue to navigate misconceptions about their capabilities based on their African and Black identities. They often faced assumptions about their familiarity with certain cultural experiences and must work harder to prove their competence, transcending racial and gender stereotypes in their professional roles.

Ngodibe discussed how working harder to overcome perceived incompetence due to her identity impacted her confidence and professional approach:

The necessity to work hard and prove your competence is something that stays with you for a long time. I've been reflecting on how these ingrained efforts can also affect our current work. The experiences and beliefs that reside in our subconscious mind can subtly influence our actions and decisions. It's a continuous interplay between past experiences and present responsibilities, shaping how we approach and execute our professional duties. (Ngodibe, Cameroonian)

Chisimdi tackled the false assumption that shared race implies shared experiences, particularly in relation to the African American community:

Despite being Black, African, and a woman, it's important to acknowledge that I don't share the same experiences as every individual within these groups. In my work, I'm often confronted with the assumption that all Black people have similar experiences, which is not the case. Just because I can conduct research on Nigerian contexts doesn't mean I inherently understand or relate to all Nigerian experiences, especially since my own upbringing was different. I make it clear that my identity does not automatically enable me to comprehend what others are going through. It's a misconception to assume that shared demographic characteristics equate to shared experiences. This is something I've had to clarify repeatedly in my work. People know their own stories and nuances, and it's not as simple as saying, "I'm Black, you're Black, so we understand each other. Such assumptions can be misleading and can create unrealistic expectations in professional settings. As an immigrant, I don't always possess the contextual knowledge of certain communities, like those in Oakland [CA], which can be challenging when there's an expectation for me to be familiar with these specific contexts.

(Chisimdi, Nigerian)

Focusing on her role as an evaluator, Tiaraoluwa does not let her racial or gender identity dominate her professional approach, emphasizing her expertise and methodology over personal identifiers. As she highlighted:

I have never viewed myself through those specific lenses. I don't personally identify myself in those ways, especially in my professional role. I primarily see myself as an evaluator. When I approach a project, I don't consciously think about how being a Black



woman should influence my approach, because I've never seen that as a defining aspect of my identity. It's something that I started considering only after coming to the United States. (Tiaraoluwa, Nigerian)

The findings from the data revealed the complex journey of Black African women evaluators who, amidst overcoming stereotypes and asserting their competence, navigate the intricacies of professional environments while addressing misconceptions about their abilities and advocating for a deeper understanding of intersectional identities.

In sum, Black African women evaluators in the United States navigate a complex professional landscape where their racial, cultural, and gender identities significantly influence their work. These identities shape their evaluative thinking, leading to more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches. They confront challenges like stereotypes and impostor syndrome, yet use their unique perspectives to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Their personal and professional experiences blend, enhancing their credibility and impact in program evaluation. Ultimately, these women play a pivotal role in enriching the evaluation field with diverse, nuanced perspectives and practices.

### **Research Question 2A: What do Black African Women Evaluators View as their Professional Identity, Role, and Practice?**

#### ***Definitions***

Professional identity, role, and practice of Black African women evaluators are defined as follows:

*Professional Identity:* self-perception and values that Black African women evaluators associate with their work as evaluators, which include aspects like their expertise, ethics, commitment to social justice, intersectionality of their identities, and their contribution to diverse

communities. It also encompasses how they are recognized and perceived within the professional field of evaluation. This could be reflected in their reputation, career opportunities, leadership positions, and influence on evaluation methods and practices (Ryan & Schwandt, 2002).

*Role:* The specific functions and responsibilities Black African women evaluators hold within evaluation projects or organizations. This could include roles like lead evaluator, data analyst, team member, project manager, or methodological consultant. It could also mean their broader contributions and influence they have beyond their formal role. This could involve mentorship, community engagement, advocacy for marginalized groups, and shaping the narrative of evaluation within diverse contexts (Patton, 2010; Skolits et al., 2009).

*Practice:* The application of specific evaluation methods and tools, tailored to the needs of projects and stakeholder groups. It can also be defined as the conscious reflection on and adaptation of evaluation practices to address issues of power, bias, and inequity. This involves incorporating anti-racist and culturally relevant approaches, centering the voices of marginalized communities, and challenging traditional evaluation norms (Yarbrough et al., 2010; Shadish & Epstein, 1987; Ghere et al., 2006).

### ***Data Used***

The data used to answer this question were the Black African women evaluator interviews.

### ***Overarching Findings***

- ◆ The study highlighted that Black African women evaluators possessed a complex professional identity closely tied to their cultural heritage. It focused on values like equity, justice, and methodological rigor in their roles. They strived for authenticity, inclusivity, and cultural understanding, while addressing intersectionality and systemic

inequalities in their work. Overall, these evaluators exhibited a commitment to global perspectives, resilience, and transformative practices, grounded in their cultural roots of dedication and hard work.

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are presented below in support of the overarching finding:

- A. Authentically integrating cultural identity into professional practice is powerful.
- B. Black African women evaluators are at the forefront of advocating for inclusivity and representation crucially amplifying diverse voices in their field.
- C. Black African women evaluators are committed to leveraging their personal and cultural experiences in order to foster more inclusive and equitable evaluation practices.
- D. Black African women evaluators adopt a multidimensional approach that encompasses cultural insight and global adaptability.

***Theme A: Authentically Integrating Cultural Identity into Professional Practice is Powerful.***

- Black African women evaluators intricately intertwine their cultural identity with their professional roles, embracing authenticity as a key component of their work.

Analysis of the interview data showed that Black African women evaluators actively weave their unique cultural identity into the fabric of their professional roles, recognizing the profound impact of authenticity. They prioritize fostering genuine connections, understanding that trust and rapport are built upon shared experiences and authentic self-expression. They consciously present themselves in a way that honors their cultural background, showcasing their heritage not as an anomaly, but as an asset that enriches their professional skillset. This sentiment was shared by Ifenkili:

Personally, I identify as Nigerian American. My roots are in Nigeria, as both my parents are from Nigeria. Although I was born in New Jersey, I consider myself a Nigerian American cisgender woman and a mother. All these layers contribute to my evaluation and cultural identity. (Ifenkili, Nigerian)

Zuri from Uganda shared the significance of acknowledging and embracing her cultural identity within the professional sphere and that the act of claiming her specific African identity is not merely a personal preference; it is a deliberate choice to bring her unique perspective and understanding to her evaluation work. She recognized that her cultural background equipped her with valuable insights that may not be readily apparent to others, particularly in situations involving African countries. She commented further:

As an African evaluator, I strongly identify as such. I have found myself clarifying this to people due to my Black skin, as they sometimes assume I am African American. I want to emphasize that I am African, not American, and this distinction is essential. I bring this identity into my profession, even here in America. In certain contexts, especially while working with international organizations that collaborate extensively with African countries, I emphasize my perspective as an African evaluator. When reviewing reports from African countries, I can provide insights and understanding that may not be immediately apparent to an American. So, my professional identity combines both my African background and the perspective I've gained as part of the American context.

(Zuri, Ugandan)

In articulating the fusion of their professional and cultural identities, participants consistently emphasized the notion that their African values and traditions are not mere relics of the past but living, dynamic forces that shape their methodologies and approaches. They actively

leverage their cultural heritage to enhance the depth, trustworthiness, and rigor of their evaluations. Furthermore, they draw upon African philosophies of communalism and collaboration, creating spaces where diverse voices are heard and respected, leading to a richer understanding of the communities they evaluate. Chisimdi eloquently expressed this sentiment:

I incorporate my cultural experiences and background into my work. I often discuss my roots and the aspects of my culture, including food, within my professional space.

Everybody knows I'm Nigerian. Everybody knows that I am Igbo. I bring my cultural experience, my cultural background into this work, and being able to connect with people from different backgrounds is something that I hold very dearly to my heart. I do this not merely as a personal embellishment, but as a means to foster authentic connections.

(Chisimdi, Nigerian)

This finding goes beyond a superficial acknowledgment of cultural heritage; it represents a deliberate and conscious effort to leverage cultural identity as a source of strength and a reservoir of unique perspectives.

Chisimdi continued to share that the integration of African values and traditions was not seen as a constraint, but as a catalyst for innovation and a distinctive contribution to the broader professional discourse. It reflected a nuanced understanding that diversity, in its truest sense, encompasses not only racial or gender differences but also cultural richness. This theme encapsulates the idea that authenticity in professional spaces is not sacrificed when one embraces their cultural identity—instead, it becomes a source of resilience, creativity, and a unique vantage point.

In summary, the interview data from Black African women evaluators highlights the seamless integration of cultural identity into their professional lives, transforming authenticity

into a key element of their work. These evaluators use their heritage as an enriching asset to build genuine connections and trust, rooted in shared experiences and authentic self-expression. This approach surpasses mere acknowledgment of cultural heritage, rather utilizing it as a unique strength and perspective, thereby redefining professional diversity as a blend of racial, gender, and cultural richness. Their narratives revealed that embracing cultural identity in professional settings is not just about maintaining authenticity but leveraging it as a source of innovation, resilience, and a distinct professional viewpoint.

***Theme B: Black African Women Evaluators are at the Forefront of Advocating for Inclusivity and Representation, Crucially Amplifying Diverse Voices in their Field.***

- These evaluators, drawing from their own experiences and cultural backgrounds, are fervently dedicated to elevating the voices of minorities and underrepresented groups. They assume the roles of advocates and agents of societal change, leveraging their professional platforms to champion well-being, justice, and equity—principles deeply ingrained in their personal ethos and aspirations.

A key finding was the participants' unwavering commitment to inclusivity. They emphasized the need for intentional efforts to amplify minority voices in their work. This approach went beyond merely recognizing diversity; it involved actively including perspectives that might otherwise be marginalized. Maame vividly illustrated this:

I have been dedicated to providing a voice and a platform for minorities or the underprivileged to share their stories. This approach stems from my background as a Ghanaian. In Ghana, I was in the majority; but once I arrived here and the dynamics changed, I realized that I needed to be intentional in ensuring that my voice and the voices of others were heard. (Maame, Ghanaian)

This commitment from Maame above translated into a conscious effort to ensure representation from all groups, especially in fields dominated by demographics unlike their own. Another important aspect highlighted by some participants was their advocacy role. For example, Digiola viewed herself as a catalyst for positive change, ensuring that underrepresented voices are not only heard but also elevated. As Digiola put it:

Okay, so I don't think of it as an evaluator; I think of it as who I am, like, my professional identity is rooted in my life's value. So, before I became an evaluator, I had this goal of using research and community engagement as a tool for fostering well-being in communities. So, I knew that was my life's calling; I love to use research; I love to engage in community engagement activities, to foster well-being in people. So, when I came to evaluation, that remains the core of what I'm doing—that whatever I'm doing has to have the end goal of well-being. (Digiola, Nigerian)

These narratives reflected a profound dedication to equity and justice, with evaluators seeing their role as integral to bringing about societal transformation through their professional work. The emphasis on methodological rigor, coupled with a deep understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusivity, highlights the unique and powerful position of these evaluators in influencing change and promoting well-being in various communities.

***Theme C: Black African Women Evaluators are Committed to Leveraging their Personal and Cultural Experiences to Foster More Inclusive and Equitable Evaluation Practices.***

- This theme revealed that the professional identity of Black African women evaluators is a dynamic blend of multiple dimensions, providing a nuanced understanding essential in the field of evaluation. Their commitment to leveraging personal and cultural experiences

fosters more inclusive and equitable practices, demonstrating how embracing multifaceted identities enhances their professional capabilities and contributions.

When asked about how participants viewed their professional identity, role, and practice, they highlighted the interconnected nature of their identities, considering factors such as race, gender, age, and cultural background. They revealed the profound awareness and consideration of the multifaceted layers that constitute their identity landscape, emphasizing the need to navigate and comprehend the complexities inherent in possessing multiple identity dimensions within the evaluation field. They mentioned that their identities are not singular, but rather, a blend of diverse elements, each contributing a nuanced perspective to their roles. As Ifenkili articulated:

In my evaluation projects, I draw heavily from my own lived experiences, particularly what it's like to be a birthing person in the United States. My cultural lens also plays a crucial role, as it shapes how I approach my work and understand the perspectives of others. Additionally, I consider how people from my part of the world, where I have my roots, perceive evaluators. These diverse identities and experiences are not just background elements; they actively shape and define my approach to my work. They guide how I conduct evaluations, interact with participants, and interpret data. (Ifenkili, Nigerian)

This finding seemed to suggest that conducting evaluations with an intersectional perspective necessitates acknowledging the complex interplay among different aspects of identity. It goes beyond acknowledging diversity as a checkbox exercise and delves into the intricate dance of identities, wherein being a Black woman is not isolated from being African or being young is intertwined with being a mother. Ifenkili describes this intersection of Black



African and female as being unique and gives her that feeling of a unicorn and a sense of pride which she sees as an advantage over her competition in her professional sphere.

Furthermore, participants stated that navigating the complexities of identity is not a burden but an opportunity for enriched perspectives. They expressed that recognizing their multifaceted identities enhanced their ability to bring a comprehensive understanding to their work, especially in contexts where nuanced considerations are vital. Chisimdi articulated thus:

I always describe myself as a Black woman; I'm Nigerian; I'm African; I lead with that; everybody knows I'm Nigerian. So, when I'm doing evaluation projects, I think about my lived experience, and what it's like to be a birthing person in the United States; I think about the cultural lens, and how ... people from parts of the world that I'm from, and West Africa and southeastern Nigeria .... what does that mean for how we show up in evaluation opportunities? What does that mean for ... people's judgement of us by our name or our phenotype, when we come in the room as evaluators. I also think about my age; I think people are very surprised that I have been so successful, to be so young. And so, a lot of times, when I'm competing for contracts, or [have been] in a space of competition, a lot of the other firms or bigger companies will be surprised that my small company is able to compete. So, these are the identities that I think really shaped my work as an evaluator, being a woman of color, being Nigerian, being young, being a mother, and having that context, always with me. (Chisimdi, Nigerian)

Jomiloju shared:

I do say I'm a child of Nigerian immigrants, or I'm Nigerian American, because I always have to acknowledge my privilege of where I come from—not just compared to how my parents [moved] here compared to me being born here. And so, sometimes I struggle with

identity, because I always say, “Oh, I’m a Black woman evaluator. And yes, I’m also African too, as well.” But in terms of like, privileges, I’m just like, okay, what about... African evaluators that had to...go through a different route to get their education? Because, for example, we’re talking about...educational access, especially...I’ve seen this...growing up in our community, that some people have to...take odd jobs, because their degree wasn’t equivalent to here, compared to me that I was born and raised here. It’s easier for me to get some opportunities or to get some access in that sense, based on...citizenship criteria. But when I look within, okay, my racial identity, and me as a woman, I still have barriers. Black women in this country still face a lot of issues and barriers...in terms of getting them to their leadership positions, or even getting access to health care. So, for example...Black and maternal health; I feel like that’s a global issue, because even Black women are getting mistreated here. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

While still discussing their professional identity and role, several participants emphasized their resilience in confronting and overcoming challenges to promote inclusivity and equity in evaluation. These Black African women evaluators are dedicated to challenging biases and advocating for justice, using evaluation to drive positive change and address social disparities. Their commitment to maintaining an unwavering equity lens in their work demonstrates a persistent effort to combat systemic biases, even when faced with resistance from those in decision-making positions. Abebi encapsulated this sentiment, noting her dedication to pushing back against unhelpful practices and mental models, underscoring her commitment to using an equity lens in all aspects of her work. This resilience is not only a response to the challenges these women face, but also a fundamental aspect of their professional ethos, reflecting their deep commitment to principles of fairness and justice in their field. Abebi aptly described this stance:

So, we spend a lot of time, you know, fighting back against things that may not be useful, even providing alternatives and then having to fight those mental models with those who make the final decision on whether or not whatever we suggest is helpful, right? And sometimes it just doesn't work, because we're not in those positions of power. But I still do it as much as possible because I feel like it's important. And I feel like I wouldn't be living up to why I got into the field if I didn't push back...I would say that's how I like both. That's how I kind of described myself as an evaluator who uses that equity lens in her work as frequently as she can. (Abebi, Nigerian)

Furthermore, they commented that their resilience extended beyond individual challenges and encapsulated a broader advocacy for equity and justice. Evaluation, for them, is not just a profession but a means to contribute actively to societal transformation. As Omotore expressed:

My professional identity as an evaluator is deeply rooted in the principles of fairness, equity, and justice. These values are central to my role in the inclusive education hub within my organization. Our work primarily revolves around these key attributes, with a strong focus on promoting equity and justice in educational settings. These principles are not just abstract concepts for me; they guide every aspect of my professional activities, influencing how I approach and execute evaluations, and how I interact with and advocate for inclusivity in education. (Omotore, Nigerian)

This sentiment underscores a commitment to utilizing their expertise for the betterment of society, positioning evaluation as a powerful tool in addressing systemic issues. In addition, Ifenkili viewed her multicultural background and multilingual abilities as a unique advantage in her professional role and enhanced her capacity to effectively conduct evaluations, setting her apart in the field and enabling her to bring a diverse perspective to her practice. She commented:

For me, I see it as an advantage over my competition, because I have this dual culture; I'm multilingual; I have the ability to be comfortable in both the African continent and United States arena. And so that duality, really, I think, sets me apart from the competition. (Ifenkili, Nigerian)

In sum, the integration of personal and cultural experiences into evaluation practices results in more nuanced, empathetic, and equitable approaches. These professionals challenge conventional methodologies and foster a more inclusive, representative evaluation landscape. Their stories vividly demonstrate how embracing their complete identities not only deepens the impact of their work but also contributes significantly to both their professional realms and the broader community. Ultimately, their contributions mark a paradigm shift in evaluation, recognizing diverse perspectives as vital to achieving genuine equity and a deeper understanding in the field.

***Theme D: Black African Women Evaluators Adopt a Multidimensional Approach that Encompasses Cultural Insight and Global Adaptability.***

- Black African women evaluators bring a unique global perspective to their work, adeptly adapting their methodologies to suit various contexts they encounter. Their ability to navigate different geographical settings and merge diverse identities and experiences is central to their approach. This adaptability is rooted in their cultural heritage, reflecting a commitment to bridging cultural divides and enhancing understanding in diverse and complex landscapes.

A key aspect of their approach mentioned specifically by Abina from Ghana is the intentional representation of minority and underprivileged voices. She also spoke of a transformative journey away from a rigid, purist mindset towards a more inclusive, people-

centric philosophy. This shift as mentioned by Abina emphasized the service-oriented nature of their work, focusing on the benefits to the communities they serve. She described her evolution:

I define it as a recovering purist.....I'm recovering from that kind of mindset and that set

of approach [sic] because I have come to realize that the evaluation and the work that we do is in service of the people of who [sic] we are working for. (Abina, Ghanaian)

Findings from the data analysis showed that evaluators' professional identity was deeply intertwined with their personal values and life experiences. Ngodibe connected her work to her background, explaining her drive to create impactful change, especially for disadvantaged groups. She puts it:

So professionally, I would say, I am proud to be Black African woman doing something that I love doing, because my goal in life is how to bring change in whatever domain I am in.....That's like my big concern. (Ngodibe, Cameroonian)

Their commitment to inclusivity and representation, particularly of minority and underprivileged voices, and their shift from a rigid approach to a more flexible, people-centric philosophy, highlight the transformative nature of their work. Rooted in their personal values and life experiences, their professional identity is not just about evaluation but about driving meaningful change and positively impacting the communities they serve. This multidimensional approach sets them apart, making them invaluable assets in the field of evaluation and agents of societal transformation.

## **Research Question 2B: How and in What Ways Do Their African Values and Practices/ Tradition/Heritage Show Up in Their Work?**

### ***Definitions***

African values, practices/tradition/heritage in the context of this study are defined as follows:

*African values:* refer to the principles and beliefs that are deeply rooted in the diverse cultures of Africa. These values are often centered around community, respect for elders, spirituality, and a strong sense of morality. These values shape social interactions and community life, influencing everything from family structures to governance (Gyekye, 1996).

*African Practices:* encompass the varied cultural, social, and religious activities unique to African societies. They often involve rituals, ceremonies, and customary behaviors passed down through generations. These practices maintain cultural identity, provide social cohesion, and often serve educational or therapeutic purposes in the society (Mbiti, 1990).

*African Tradition/Heritage:* refers to the collective legacy of African societies, including customs, arts, languages, and historical experiences (Wiredu, 1996).

### ***Overarching Findings***

- ◆ Black African women evaluators embodied a unique synthesis of cultural, personal, and professional experiences, significantly enriching their roles in the field of evaluation. As an overview in the previous section, their diverse backgrounds, including experiences as immigrants and minorities, imbued them with a deep understanding of and commitment to inclusivity, social justice, and community engagement. This multifaceted perspective was not only a testament to their resilience but also enhanced their effectiveness, enabling them to conduct evaluations that were context-specific, impactful, and transformative.

Their work, deeply rooted in their cultural heritage and personal journeys, challenged traditional norms, and leveraged their comprehensive training to advocate for change and ensure the effectiveness of programs.

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are presented below in support of the overarching findings.

- A. Integrating lived experiences and African cultural values as the foundation of professional evaluative work and methodology.
- B. Embracing African heritage and cultural sensitivity in professional evaluative practices: A focus on community-centric approaches, respectful engagement, and inclusivity in methodology.

***Theme A: Integrating Lived Experiences and African Cultural Values as the Foundation of Professional Evaluative Work and Methodology.***

- In analyzing the narratives of Black African women evaluators regarding the factors that have shaped their understanding of their roles in the field of evaluation, a rich blend of cultural, personal, and professional influences emerged. They highlighted how they drew upon their cultural roots and personal experiences, particularly influenced by their African upbringing, to shape their roles in the field of evaluation.

Findings from the analysis of data show that participants consistently expressed a cultural commitment to excellence, emphasizing the importance of diligence and precision in their work. This ethos is not just a personal trait but was seen as a cultural expectation deeply ingrained in their upbringing. Jomiloju spoke to the importance of recognizing and integrating one's identity, social justice, and lived experiences into their role. This integration was not solely about acknowledging one's positionality as a Black woman, but also considering other facets of

identity that intersected with their professional life, such as socioeconomic status and upbringing. Evaluators integrated personal and societal contexts into their evaluation work, acknowledging the role of social factors and identity. Jomiloju noted:

Definitely, social justice, in terms of social factors and identities, is really important in the role of evaluation. The reason why I interconnect these two is because when dealing with communities, it's crucial to understand their lived experiences and how they navigate society. As evaluators, coming from an academic expertise side, we sometimes may forget this. However, if you consider your identity as a Black woman, for instance, you have to recognize your own lived experiences before entering academic spaces. You can't pretend to be oblivious to the issues affecting your community just because of your academic background. When it comes to identity, we also need to be bias-free when incorporating these identities into our work. We can't just say, "I'm a Black woman, so I understand the issue." We must remember there are different types of identities, like socio-economic status and neighborhood quality. It's important to consider, "Yes, I'm a Black woman, but I grew up in the suburbs and had certain opportunities that another Black woman might not have had." So, in evaluation work, it's crucial to acknowledge your positionality, but also not to ignore other identities that intersect with your own.

(Jomiloju, Nigerian)

Also, the cultural value placed on community and inclusivity was highlighted, with Omotore noting how African culture prioritized the collective approach and well-being of the community, which in turn shaped her evaluation practices to be inclusive and community oriented. She mentioned:



In African culture, there's a profound value placed on community well-being and the role each individual plays. This cultural principle is something I bring into my professional practice, ensuring that everyone has a role, and that collective well-being is always a priority in our approach. (Omotore, Nigerian)

In lending her voice to African factors that have shaped her understanding of her role, another evaluator, Ngodibe, discussed the cultural nuances of communication and interaction, especially between genders, that can affect data collection and the design of research methodologies. The emphasis here was on a culturally informed approach that ensured the methods and tools used in evaluation were sensitive to and aligned with the cultural dynamics of the population served. She opined that:

Coming from an African background, I understand certain cultural dynamics, like the interactions between men and women, which can be crucial in certain research contexts. This cultural insight allows me to design methodologies that are respectful of these dynamics and, thus, more effective. (Ngodibe, Cameroonian)

Similarly, international perspective was mentioned as crucial, especially for evaluators working with immigrant populations, providing empathy and insight into the "otherness" that has shaped their worldview and professional approach. Digiola reflected on the role of being an immigrant and a mother, emphasized the desire to create a better world for her children and to ensure that her professional identity and work reflected this aspiration. Also, the minority experience was viewed as integral to her professional approach, particularly in the context of diversity, inclusion, and equity conversations that are increasingly prevalent, as expressed thus:

Being an immigrant has really shaped my understanding of my role. It's a peculiar experience, being an immigrant, because you bring your whole self to your role, and

myself includes the fact that I am an immigrant. This has influenced what I do, and part of being an immigrant is also being a minority. This has enhanced my understanding in the roles I've been in. I approach my work with the uniqueness of being a minority in a majority context. Especially in DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) conversations, my perspective as a Black immigrant in America, particularly when I am in a room full of people who are not, shapes how I approach my role. (Zuri, Ugandan)

Ekemma also mentioned:

But I think the piece about race, and then the piece about being African, not so much African, but being international, being an immigrant, I think those things ... changed the way I view things, and they also changed the way people view me. (Ekemma, Nigerian)

Furthermore, training and academic preparation were also cited as significant factors.

Asilia discussed how rigorous training in both quantitative and qualitative research methods equipped her to handle various data analyses and design tools effectively. This academic grounding has allowed for a nuanced approach to her program evaluation practice. She said:

Things like my training, being trained. ... I've been being trained in not just having a PhD, or just having a PhD, backed by strength in research methods, just being grounded in quantitative and qualitative work. I know everything—maybe not everything—but [a] majority; I can analyze any kind of data; I can design tools. And, during my master's, we did a class, I remember, on program evaluation. And so, ... we did things around ... the logic models, and things like how we do, like from the start of the project to the end, and you know, we always do class assignments. So that is ... just my training; we did that class on program evaluation, so ... those are some of the things that I feel like, they influence my, my context, my work, or positive things that influence yesterday, the work

that we do, are things that I might say I have that maybe some of my colleagues might not have working on this project. (Asilia, Kenyan)

In addition, personal experiences of marginalization and the desire for social justice were recurrent themes. Digiola's research into marginalization during her doctoral studies opened her eyes to the pervasive issues of exclusion and oppression, which now shaped her work as a transformative evaluator. This commitment to addressing inequity was further underscored by the emphasis on empowering communities to have a seat at the table in evaluation processes. As she stated:

I will say that another thing that has shaped my interest in working as an evaluator, specifically as a critical transformative evaluator, is my experience during my doctoral dissertation research. I realized that there are different forms of marginalization, not just in DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), but also in areas like mental health, where certain groups are often excluded. Digging deep into the research opened my eyes to the fact that virtually every issue we deal with as social scientists involves exclusion, marginalization, and oppression. The process of writing my doctoral dissertation really shaped my thinking. Also, being a mother of two kids in America, I want my work and research to contribute to creating a better world for my children, so they don't have to endure what I went through. These are major factors that have shaped my professional identity. (Digiola, Nigerian)

The notion of lived experience was also crucial. Evaluators stressed the need to elevate the voices of those with lived experiences relevant to the evaluations being conducted as this approach ensured that the unique perspectives and needs of the population served are considered and that the evaluations were not solely informed by academic or external expertise. Jomiloju

underscored the importance of recognizing the unique journeys and challenges individuals face within society, especially in marginalized communities. This understanding, she said, was crucial for evaluators who must interpret data within the context of these experiences. Abina took this a step further by emphasizing that lived experiences often hold more weight than mere representation. For Abina, it's not just about having diverse faces in the room; it's about the depth and nuance that came from a shared history and experience, which can significantly differ even within groups that might appear homogenous to outsiders. This theme reflects a great appreciation for the complex tapestry of individual and collective narratives that shape community dynamics and influence outcomes. These evaluators emphasized the critical role of understanding individual and cultural experiences in evaluative work. For example, Jomiloju expressed:

In my evaluative work, it's essential to deeply understand the lived experiences of individuals and how they are navigating their place in society. This involves more than just surface-level observation; it's about delving into the nuances of their daily lives, their struggles, and triumphs, and how these experiences shape their interaction with societal structures and programs. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

Abina shared:

I firmly believe that lived experience matters more than surface-level representation. This is evident in my own life, where my experiences as an African differ significantly from those of an African American born here. These varied experiences bring different perspectives and insights, which are crucial in ensuring evaluations reflect real-life contexts and are not just based on assumptions or stereotypes. As evaluators, we have the power to elevate lived experiences and give voice to those often unheard, bringing

diverse narratives to the forefront and challenging traditional power dynamics within the evaluation process. People say representation matters, and I agree. But I think lived experience matters more. My lived experience, though on the surface I may appear African American or Black, is very different from an African American who was born here. This should be considered in our work and in how we interpret results. How people live affects how they define certain things, which is often defined by those in power. For example, in my work with disconnected youth, or Opportunity Youth, we define disconnection as being detached from the workforce and education system. But in rural and native indigenous communities, the youth are engaged in activities that connect them, though not in a traditional sense. (Abina, Ghanaian)

Abebi commented:

As a proud Black African woman, my identity allows me to push forward the perspectives of people who look like me. In advocating for inclusivity, I strive to ensure that diverse narratives are not only heard but also valued and integrated into our evaluations, fostering a more comprehensive understanding. (Abebi, Nigeria)

Chisimdi and Tiaraoluwa reflected on the intrinsic cultural and personal values of dedication, excellence, and resilience that drive their work ethic and professional approach. Chisimdi spoke of the cultural expectation to excel and the competitive spirit that has been instilled in her from a young age, acknowledging how this has made her a very dedicated professional. She also touched on the cultural norm of humility and quiet strength, particularly for women, and how she has navigated and challenged these norms in her own career. She said:

In my culture, there's a strong emphasis on dedication and not giving up, which I bring into my professional life. For me, giving up is not an option; it means exploring every

possible avenue to find a solution. This cultural value of perseverance significantly influences how I approach my work. We're very dedicated people. We're very focused people. We're very driven people. And I bring that to my work now. So even though I'm struggling with perfectionism, I am very glad that culturally I was able to learn dedication; I was able to learn ... motivation, I was able to learn how to encourage myself; even when things are down, like, it's very hard for me to give up. Like, for me to give up means I've tried everything, and it didn't work. And I feel like, culturally, that's something that I saw around me. Everyone works hard. Everyone worked hard in Nigeria. Everyone still works hard. And it's like, that is what were [sic] the foundation that we are brought up with. And I think honestly, culturally, and personally, these values interact and influence me in my professional life. (Chisimdi, Nigerian)

Tiaraoluwa further discussed the ingrained belief that any task worth doing is worth doing well—a principle taught by her parents that she has carried into her work. She described this as not just a personal trait, but a cultural attribute that influenced her work's quality and analytical approach. This theme emphasized the evaluator's commitment to maintaining a high standard of work, shaped by deep-rooted cultural and personal values of excellence as articulated by Tiaraoluwa thus:

The way I grew up, I did not subscribe to mediocrity, in the sense that my parents taught me whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well. And so, maybe that's a culture; I would say that idea of not being a mediocre or not doing work that is subpar, is, you know, a cultural thing. Personally, I am that person, in that I am not an overachiever. But I always like to make sure I have done something, and I've done it well. I derive satisfaction and joy from doing something well. If I knew I had done it well, I would feel like I was worth

it. So, maybe that's a personal thing. Like, I'm a little analytical—critical thinking and, I think, analytical may be the word that [describes] somebody who wants to make sure you've looked at the pros and the cons and the consequences. (Tiaraoluwa, Nigerian)

***Theme B: Embracing African Heritage and Cultural Sensitivity in Professional Evaluative Practices: A Focus on Community-Centric Approaches, Respectful Engagement, and Inclusivity in Methodology.***

- This theme revealed how the unique cultural backgrounds and experiences of Black African women evaluators not only guide but enrich their evaluative methodologies. By incorporating community-centric values, respectful engagement, and culturally sensitive approaches, these professionals demonstrate a deep understanding of the dynamic interplay between cultural heritage and professional expertise.

In this research, I explored the integration of African heritage and values into the professional practices of Black African women evaluators to further understand how and in what ways their heritage showed up in their work by asking the participants for specific practices/tradition they incorporated in their work. Findings from the analysis of data placed emphasis on the blend of respect, community-centric approaches, hard work and a strong sense of responsibility, and integrity.

**Community-Centric Approach.** A recurring theme was the incorporation of community-centric values, highlighting the importance of inclusive and collaborative approaches. Jomiloju emphasized bringing together diverse voices into the evaluation process, reflecting a community-centered approach deeply rooted in her Nigerian heritage, which aligned with the African concept of Ubuntu, which stresses communal interdependence and

collaboration. She also emphasized a solution-focused approach and the role of active listening in her evaluation processes. She said:

Bringing community voices together is a key aspect of my current role, where I aim to include students and program leaders in the evaluation process. This approach fosters more collaboration beyond just my evaluation team. Definitely, being community-centered is important. I might add, perhaps controversially, that Nigerians tend to ask a lot of questions. I incorporate this by asking numerous questions, like a questionnaire, and employing active listening skills to gain clarity and follow-up in my evaluations. I also believe in being solution-focused, as I think Nigerians are naturally inclined to find solutions quickly, especially when facing challenges. This trait allows me to focus on solutions rather than dwelling on problems. I believe in looking ahead to the next steps, as no one wants to stress over what the problem might be. These are core aspects of my approach, influenced by my cultural background and traditions. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

Respect in Professional Practice. Respect, particularly for elders and authority figures, emerged as a central value that influenced the evaluators' practices. Participant Asilia, drawing from her experiences in Kenya, mentioned the importance of thorough preparation and respectful engagement in professional settings, a practice stemming from her cultural upbringing. She also highlighted the ethos of hard work and going beyond the expected, as demonstrated in her commitment to completing a project despite the lack of immediate rewards. She commented:

I mentioned the importance of respecting your elders, which is a significant part of my cultural upbringing. In my work, I need to coordinate many things, ensuring I've done my background work and perhaps talked to a few people to get a sense before reaching out to a larger team or partners outside of my immediate circle, like at Arizona State, for



example. This is because I want to be sure that I am not just making decisions arbitrarily, but that I'm informed and doing the right thing. I also emphasize the need to respect other people. These values I've mentioned earlier, drawn from my African traditions, significantly inform how I approach my work. Although the aspect of African traditions is broad, I borrow certain aspects from my upbringing to guide how I undertake the work that I do. (Asilia, Kenyan)

Similarly, Omotore and Ekemma, from Nigeria, emphasized respect, particularly in the context of age and position, along with cultural sensitivity in a multicultural Nigerian environment. They shared:

Specifically, a practical tradition that I think is really important is respect. How I define respect in this context may differ from how I would define it if I were in Africa, or specifically in Nigeria, where I'm from. In Africa, age and position are factors that command respect. However, the way respect is manifested here, where I am currently, is probably different from the ideal in my cultural context. Navigating this difference can be strange at times. This aspect of African heritage that I bring with me is sometimes seen as unusual by others. (Omotore, Nigerian)

Ekemma also commented:

I think some of our core values, particularly respect for the elderly, play a significant role in my perspective. While respect might seem obvious, it's such a fundamental cultural value in my background, especially the respect for people older than oneself. This cultural emphasis on respect naturally extends to the populations I study in my work. Coming from a culture where respect is important, prized, and valued, it's not a stretch

for me to show genuine respect to the groups I work with. So, I believe this respect is a key aspect of my approach. (Ekemma, Nigerian)

In the same vein, Abina from Ghana emphasized the value of respect for all individuals, regardless of their educational background or social status, and the importance of being courteous and respectful in professional interactions. She explained:

I would say respect. Treat everyone with respect. I think everyone would respect, pay attention. I'll say that that's a big day. It doesn't matter. You could have 100 PhDs; you might have never been in school. I am going to listen; I'm going to engage you the same way. I will engage someone with a PhD, it doesn't matter. Like it doesn't matter about your credentials, whatever. I am still going to learn—see the opportunity to learn in every situation. (Abina, Ghanaian)

**Hard Work and Resilience.** The evaluators consistently highlighted hard work and resilience—shaped by their African heritage—as integral to their work ethics. This was epitomized by Omotore's reference to the “esteem power of an African woman,” exemplified by going above and beyond in her work, reflecting a cultural norm where perseverance and commitment are highly valued, especially in challenging circumstances. This is also a sentiment shared by Asilia, who highlighted the ethos of hard work. Omotore shared:

Yes, I think hard work, going above and beyond, is really a testament to the strength and resilience of an African woman. It's about pushing through challenges, with the belief that 'I can do this, I should do this, I have to do this.' It's adopting a mentality where I feel the need to do twice as much, maybe to prove a point. I recognize that this mindset may also stem from confronting biases, including those I might hold myself. So, it's

about hard work, putting in extra effort, and going above and beyond to achieve certain goals. I think that's one significant aspect of my approach. (Omotore, Nigerian)

Asilia shared:

I'll give an example. Towards the end of 2022, a colleague I was working with moved to another position. We were handling a lot of data, and because of that, I had to work extra hours without expecting any pay. For almost a month or more, I didn't have a weekend, working from Saturday to Sunday to ensure the success of the project. We had a deadline at the end of May and needed to produce a report by July. Some might choose to work just from 8–5 and no more, but in my mind, I was determined to complete the task. In my Kenyan community, we often go out of our way to ensure everything works well. For instance, I spent time reaching out to friends for support, especially as I was learning to code qualitative work using NVIVO for the first time. This was about going beyond to get the necessary support. We managed to have the report ready by July. This is an example of my tradition: to do the right thing, whether or not there's something to gain from it. Fortunately, the project did give me a small token afterwards, which I hadn't expected. I was focused on getting the work done for everyone's benefit. (Asilia, Kenyan)

**Inclusivity and Methodological Approaches.** Inclusivity in research methods was a key focus, with participant Digiola from Nigeria highlighted the importance of valuing every individual's contribution, in line with the Yoruba proverb that she cited, “Owo omode oto kpe-kpe ta gbowo kere.” This was complemented by Abebi's emphasis on language inclusivity in data collection, ensuring comfort for non-English speakers, as well as Ngodibe's focus on considering minority and disadvantaged groups in evaluations. Their comments included:

I think being a properly bred African girl, everything I do is mostly based on my upbringing. This influences my work, including how I interact with colleagues. For instance, in my office, while most colleagues might just focus on their laptops in the morning, my home training encourages me to say hi and greet everyone. In Africa, there's a Yoruba proverb, [*Owo omode oto kpe-kpe ta gbowo kere*], which means that an adult cannot put their hand into a small jar meant for palm wine, as it won't fit, just as a child cannot reach a high shelf. This implies that everyone has limits, and everyone matters. This proverb deeply influences my work. In any research work I do, I ensure that every person in the team is heard, from those at the top to those at the bottom. This Yoruba proverb reinforces the idea in my work that every voice counts, regardless of position or intellectual standing. (Digiola, Nigerian)

Abebi shared:

One thing I emphasize is the importance of accommodating cultural and language differences, especially when working with communities for whom English is not their first language. When conducting interviews or similar activities, it's crucial to have people who speak the language present. For instance, in a previous position, there was an interview with someone who spoke Yoruba, a language I don't speak but understand. Having someone in the room who could not only understand but also ensure that the interviewer was interpreting what the interviewee was saying correctly was valuable. It made the interviewee feel comfortable. So, in terms of cultural understanding and connection, I consistently advocate for ensuring that data collection is done appropriately, especially with groups that are not Americanized and do not speak English. The goal is to

make sure these individuals feel comfortable sharing their stories and information, which is essential for the work we're doing. (Abebi, Nigerian)

Ngodibe mentioned:

I'm an African woman and a mother. Coming from a continent that experienced colonization, we understand how colonial-powers-imposed supremacy make us feel inferior. As an evaluator, I constantly consider minority groups because colonialism and racial dynamics have taught us about disadvantage. When someone seeks to dominate over others, it reinforces the notion that the disadvantaged group knows less. I consistently think about these groups of people, and as an evaluator, I am particularly passionate about projects that focus on them. My goal is to ensure that these individuals are not overlooked in our work as evaluators. (Ngodibe, Cameroonian)

**Cultural Sensitivity and Responsiveness.** Zuri from Uganda spoke about her experiences in navigating cultural differences in professional settings, demonstrating the importance of understanding and respecting cultural norms in effective communication and collaboration. She expressed:

There was a conflict situation that I had to deal with, involving cultural differences. My role was to ensure that the work was completed collaboratively by navigating these cultural differences. I had to communicate with both parties, helping them understand each other's perspectives and emphasizing that the request for work didn't equate to disrespect. It was about accomplishing tasks efficiently. I explained that the man's behavior was influenced by his cultural background, where direct communication from women may be uncommon. Sensitivity was essential. These are the kinds of challenges I've faced, and they require specific skills. The African experience was valuable in

navigating such situations. Without it, handling such a situation could have been much harder, potentially escalating into a significant issue. (Zuri, Ugandan)

Similarly, Chisimdi emphasized the importance of embracing differences and understanding historical contexts. She draws parallels between the diversity and complexity of Nigerian society and her work in the United States, applying these insights to foster respectful and contextually aware evaluation practices. She commented:

I think another thing culturally is embracing differences. I say that, because when I mentioned how diverse Nigeria is, I understand that. And it's also similar to how I do work here. So, I'm able to bring in some other perspective of how diverse Nigeria is to be able to apply to my work here, where one of the things that I think we always say is, "It's not a one-size-fits-all approach." And it really isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. So, I've been able to use that. I think another thing, too, is historical, like what's historically defined or shaped a community or a group of people, specifically? As an evaluator, that's very important. Now, for example, we want to talk to a group of people who have been historically forgotten; they're marginalized; they don't have access to resources, and you want to come in and then ask them questions. They're most likely not going to answer you, or they're probably going to be hostile towards you, and rightfully so. Because they probably had a bunch of people come and ask them questions that have not gone anywhere, that just sit somewhere or they're being othered. And so, I resonate with that, from where I come from, where everything in Africa is bad news: "Oh, don't go there, and something will happen." Or, "If you go to the north, they're all like this." And it was like, "That's ridiculous! Do you lump a group of people into one space?" Like, why can't we accept that people are different? And it's okay, right? I think that is something that

I've learned culturally to bring in. And we still even struggle with it in Nigeria. But I think coming to the US, I've been able to understand, embrace, and accept—accept that everyone is different. And that it comes into ... when I'm doing research and evaluation, which obviously ties into respect, ties into humility, ties into meeting people where they're at, and understanding historically, what shapes them, be it trauma, be it culture, be it ... any of that that might shape or influence how they will respond or react to me coming in as an evaluator asking questions. And also, what would I use the information that they share with me to do as well? (Chisimdi, Nigerian)

In conclusion, the narrative from the participants presented above illustrates the impact of African heritage and cultural sensitivity on the professional evaluative practices of Black African women. It underscores their commitment to incorporating community-centric approaches, respectful and inclusive engagement, and culturally attuned methodologies in their work. This integration not only enriches their professional practices, but also ensures that evaluations are deeply reflective of and responsive to the diverse, complex cultural dynamics and historical contexts of the populations served. Through this lens, these evaluators exemplify the invaluable role of cultural heritage in shaping professional methodologies, demonstrating a powerful blend of cultural insight and professional acumen.

**Research Question 3: What Methodological Frameworks, Evaluation Approaches, and Theories Do Black African Women Evaluators Feel Resonate with Them and Show Up in Their Work?**

*Definitions*

Methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, and theories are defined as follows:

*Methodological framework:* refers to the structured set of methods and procedures used to conduct research, analysis, or evaluation in a systematic way. It encompasses the theoretical underpinnings, philosophical assumptions, and the specific methods chosen for data collection and analysis. This framework guides researchers in their investigation, ensuring consistency, reliability, and validity in their findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

*Evaluation approaches:* refers to an underlying philosophy or theoretical perspective that informs the evaluation design and the choice of methods and analysis. It's not about specific methods or tools, but the overall logic of the evaluation. This encompasses the theories, methodologies, and practices that guide evaluators in designing, implementing, and interpreting evaluations. These approaches can vary significantly, depending on the purpose of the evaluation, the stakeholders involved, and the context in which the evaluation is conducted. They inform how evaluators conceptualize questions, choose methods, and interpret findings (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

*Evaluation theories:* refer to the conceptual frameworks, models, and principles that guide the systematic assessment and analysis of programs, policies, interventions, and other social phenomena. They are the foundational ideas and principles that underpin how evaluations are conceptualized, designed, and conducted. These theories influence the choice of methods, the interpretation of data, and the way findings are used. They can range from theories that focus on the utilization of evaluation results to those that emphasize participatory approaches or the importance of context in evaluation (Alkin, 2012).

In this study, evaluation approaches and evaluation theories were used interchangeably.

### ***Data Used***

The data used to answer this question were Black African women evaluator interviews.



## *Overarching Findings*

- ◆ **Black African women evaluators expressed profound commitment to and advocacy for methodologies and approaches that are deeply rooted in community engagement, cultural responsiveness, and empowerment.**

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are presented below in support of the overarching finding:

- A. Black African women evaluators are engaged and invested in methodologies and approaches that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and empowering.
- B. The methodologies, evaluation approaches/theories utilized align closely with the personal identities and experiences of Black African women evaluators.

### ***Theme A: Black African Women Evaluators are Engaged and Invested in Methodologies and Approaches that are Inclusive, Culturally Responsive, and Empowering***

- Participants discussed how they integrated their cultural perspectives and experiences into their professional practice, ensuring that their methodologies are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and empowering for the communities they serve.

**Community-Centric and Participatory Engagement.** Findings from the analysis of data showed that a predominant theme that emerged in the practice of Black African women evaluators was the emphasis on community-centric and participatory methods. They mentioned placing significant emphasis on involving community voices directly in the evaluation process, which is characterized by a deep engagement with community voices and perspectives, ensuring that the evaluation process is not just about communities but with and for them. This approach goes beyond mere consultation to ensure active participation, where community members are not just subjects of the research but co-creators of knowledge. Jomiloju shared:

I did a lot of participatory research methods, where, for one project, we did engage ... committee members into ... helping with the development of the survey; this is where I was working for [a] behavioral health organization. So, with the value of participatory method, it was nice to get ... community voices and community's perspective in the survey development. However, I think with participatory method, there are definitely some limitations to it, where ... the core value is to recognize, I guess, the community identity. (Jomiloju, Nigerian)

Additionally, Digiola, mentioned the empowerment through evaluation approach which she expressed as a strong commitment to empowering communities through the evaluation process. This included building local capacities for self-evaluation and ensuring that evaluation findings are accessible and useful to stakeholders. The goal is to leave a lasting impact beyond the evaluation, contributing to the self-sufficiency and agency of the communities involved.

Digiola shared:

Regardless of what the project is about, it has to be equitable. Everyone has to feel—there has to be justice for everyone, especially those people that have been previously marginalized. So that's my lens, regardless of work. Then, in terms of my methodology—so I said initially I was using, I use the word participatory. And by participatory, I mean, every person in the conversation, we believe they are co-creators of knowledge. They have equal voices; there [are] no knowledge experts. Their voices are equal, and what they contribute is valued as expert knowledge. Furthermore, I'm now learning that true participation should also empower individuals. Empowerment involves helping them recognize the assets within their communities, so they don't have to rely on external sources indefinitely. Our goal is to move beyond traditional evaluation work and

provide capacity building so that by the end of each evaluation, the people involved can conduct their own evaluations independently. (Digiola, Nigerian)

**Culturally Responsive and Holistic Evaluation.** Evaluators also mentioned a consistent theme of adopting evaluation practices that are not only culturally sensitive but also responsive to the broader socio-economic and cultural contexts of the population they served. They further mentioned that this approach involved considering racial, equity, empowerment, and transformational aspects in evaluation, ensuring that the methodologies are not only effective in gathering data but also in fostering positive change and social justice. Jomiloju shared, *“I want to implement more of the culturally responsive, equitable evaluation framework, where it’s like we are addressing evaluation through a holistic lens, not only like the racial or equity lens, but also empowerment and transformation.”* Ifenkili also commented thusly:

I started my own consulting company around seven years ago, and I started doing evaluation work. It’s all based on culturally responsive, equitable evaluation and the ability to deliver good results that have a lens of equity to our clients. (Ifenkili, Nigerian)

Similarly, Zuri expressed the notable focus on being adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of the community or population served. This flexibility, she said, ensured that the evaluation methods and approaches remained relevant and effective in diverse and evolving contexts. She mentioned:

So ... one of the approaches that is constantly in my practice is being responsive to those needs, and changing the methods or evaluation methods or designs or questions depending on what those values are that the stakeholders care about. And what their needs are. Yeah. (Zuri, Ugandan)

**Mixed-Methods Approach.** During the discussion about methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, or theories, most participants showed a preference for a mixed-methods approach, balancing the measurable outcomes and the qualitative of program participants. They mentioned that this preference was rooted in the desire to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the impact and processes involved in programs. They also emphasized that the choice of method often depends on the specific questions being answered, indicating a nuanced and context-specific application of methodologies. Maame articulated:

Because I love to understand lived experiences, that is the expression I will use, like, I want to understand that, and I want to understand how interventions are influencing program participants' decisions and stuff like that. So, if you leave it to me, I will mostly go with qualitative. Right? But then, "I want to see what is out there" is what I'm hearing from this participant or stakeholder ... right? So, I also want to talk to the broader community. I tend to favor mixed-methods approach, right? I tend to focus on the utilization or the development aspect where I know that whatever responses I'm getting, has to be useful or should be useful to changing lives or changing the program life or building capacity of the staff or people involved with a program. But in all that I do, I make a conscious effort also to work with the program managers and the stakeholders that are leading the charge or that called me on board. I utilize the mixed method if it's required, because often it would depend on what kind of question the stake holder or the program wants to be answered. (Maame, Ghanaian)

To summarize, the approaches described above, which emphasized community-centric engagement, culturally responsive evaluation, and a balanced use of mixed methods, demonstrate

Black African women evaluators' commitment to creating evaluations that are meaningful, equitable, and transformative.

***Theme B: The Methodologies and Evaluation Approaches/Theories Utilized Align Closely with the Personal Identities and Experiences of Black African Women.***

Furthermore, evaluators shared how they incorporated these methodologies, what they saw as benefits of the methodologies/theories/approaches and how they resonated with them as Black African women evaluators. Presented in Table 5, which follows, are the thoughts of the evaluators from the analysis of findings.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate the multifaceted benefits and deep personal resonance of these methodologies and theories, particularly for Black African women professionals. These approaches not only enhance the quality and inclusivity of the work, but also align closely with the personal identities and experiences of the individuals employing them.

### **Summary**

The chapter detailed the diverse professional experiences and challenges faced by Black African women evaluators in the United States, emphasizing their adaptability, commitment to continuous learning, and the influence of their educational and cultural backgrounds on their evaluation approaches. It highlighted the importance of inclusivity and leveraging personal and cultural experiences to enrich evaluative practices, underscoring the evaluators' roles in advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion within their professional settings. Themes include the integration of African values and practices, the impact of intersecting identities on professional experiences, the strategies used to navigate professional challenges and opportunities, and the methodologies and evaluation approaches/theories they utilize.

**Table 5. Methodologies/Theories/Approaches Utilized by and That Resonate with Black African Women Evaluators**

Methodology/ Theories	Evaluator's Description	Benefit discussed by Participants	Personal Resonance with Participant	Direct Quotes from Participants
Participatory Method	Emphasizes community engagement and inclusion, empowering marginalized communities in decision making.	Enhances inclusivity and representation in research.	Empowering for the researcher, particularly as a Black African woman, fostering a sense of agency and inclusivity.	“I just love how we engage the community to contribute to the work, because I just think, you know, just based on identity with like, being Black and African woman, we are no, like, as I mentioned, about exclusion for some time. I understand like that feeling like Oh, community members not contributing to research, because there has been that historical lens of no Black and people of color communities being excluded out of research. So, kind of being in that scene where, okay, because the community that we worked with was [a] Latino community. So, they weren't blocking me, but it was [a] Latino committee, but still, it was empowering, because it's like, yeah, like, even me, as an evaluator, and who's a professional, I have been excluded out of spaces, too. So, to see that committee being included resonated with me, because it's like, yeah, like, even as us who are professionals, we get excluded from spaces. So, we also need to make sure that the communities that we're working with don't feel excluded as well. So, that's why the participatory method was, like I said, even though it has limitations, it was empowering to see like communities who have been excluded from this work are now contributing to their work.” – Jomiloju, Nigerian
Culturally Responsive Approaches	Adapting methodologies to different cultural contexts, ensuring relevance and sensitivity.	Ensure research is culturally relevant and respectful.	Resonate with the ethos of valuing diverse cultural backgrounds, crucial for cultural sensitivity.	“It's about understanding the culture in which you're going to be working. ... And modifying whatever approach like with native indigenous people, they think about things happening in a cyclical way, right? So, it's a cycle, a logic model is linear. If you're going to have a framework that is going to ground them, you can present a linear framework. So, you have to adapt, you have to change what you're doing, as long as the components of a logic model is there, right? You change it and you modify it to that culture. You don't go in saying, 'Well, this is how a logic model is supposed to be designed, supposed to do.' No. That's not the right way of thinking. That's not the other way of life. So, it's about understanding the work that you're doing, and the people you're doing the work with, and allowing them to come in, and allowing their voices and their lived experience to help you make tweaks and adapt it to that culture.” – Asilia, Kenyan

<b>Methodology/ Theories</b>	<b>Evaluator's Description</b>	<b>Benefit discussed by Participants</b>	<b>Personal Resonance with Participant</b>	<b>Direct Quotes from Participants</b>
Qualitative and Mixed Methods	Focus on understanding nuances and deeper meanings beyond quantitative data.	Provide a comprehensive understanding of issues, capturing the full spectrum of human experience.	Reflect an introspective and reflective nature, allowing for a deeper connection with the subject matter.	“I know that sometimes when you go with the numbers, there are some deeper meanings or deeper understandings that you might miss, right? So that is why I bring in the qualitative—kind of let a person open up to find the nuances that ... we may have missed using the quantitative approach.” – Maame Ghanian
Theoretical Underpinning and Social Justice	Using theories that promote social justice, equity, and inclusion to examine cultural, structural, and colonial factors.	Grounds work in a framework that challenges systemic inequalities.	Allows the researcher to view issues through a lens that acknowledges and addresses societal injustices.	“I do, I see theory is like glasses; if you're wearing a sunshade, the sun is going to shine as bright as it is shining. If you're wearing a green glass, you'll see the Earth big green of some sorts. ... I see theory as a lens that informs whatever work we do. So, one of the first things we do is to ensure that we have a theoretical underpinning that is geared towards social justice, equity, and inclusion. For example, I'm thinking of even, sometimes might not be able to have just one particular theory that might make us like, look at work through different lenses. Let me use my PhD as an example; I had to use like three theories, because my work is in mental health. So, I use theory of help seeking; I used theory of behavioral change. And I used critical theorists. So, just to provide you with the example, my sample was on MEALS. So, I use critical theory to explain how power and hegemony affects MEAL, students' help-seeking behavior. So that is what I'm saying. We're looking at how cultural, structural, and colonial factors influence whatever problem you're handling using the theoretical lens. So that's how we do it. So, first thing is, made sure that we have a very good theoretical lens that will look at all the aspects of the problem we are trying to handle.” – Digiola, Nigerian

<b>Methodology/ Theories</b>	<b>Evaluator's Description</b>	<b>Benefit discussed by Participants</b>	<b>Personal Resonance with Participant</b>	<b>Direct Quotes from Participants</b>
Collaborative and Stakeholder Involvement	Advocates for involving stakeholders in every step of the process.	Fosters a sense of partnership and mutual learning, enriching the research process.	Encourages collaboration and partnership, aligning with the researcher's professional ethos.	"I guess we could call it like collaborative; it's collaborative in the sense that our partners are stakeholders. The people who are funding me to do this work are involved in every step of the way. That way, they get to see how I do my work. They get to see how we're able to come together to develop things. And when I say we come together, is we co-creates interview guides; I could take the first passage doing an interview guide, but I have to make sure I share it with them; I have to make sure that they have feedback. 'Okay, does this make sense? Does this not make sense?' Oh, we don't have one to ask this question. But I'm like, 'Well, it's important to ask it. This is why it's important to ask it,' that we were able to have a dialogue; I've noticed that in cases where the stakeholders have been very involved, it's easier to be able to understand the now words. So, we do the process; we collect all the information qualitatively and quantitatively, and to tell a story and come up with like action items, recommendations." – Chisimdi, Nigerian
Intersectionality and Cultural Sensitivity in Reporting	Emphasize considering and reporting data in ways that are culturally sensitive and acknowledge full experiences.	Promote a more nuanced and respectful approach to data analysis and reporting.	Reflect the complex identities and experiences of the researcher, particularly as a Black African woman.	"So, just using data, but like telling, telling stories with data in a way that acknowledges the full experiences of the people that you're studying. So how about we look at their employment? What kinds of jobs are they doing? ... Are they in full time jobs where they can take time off or the other in hourly pay jobs where if they don't work for an hour, they don't get paid? Whereas maybe the White families are in jobs where they can afford to take time off. And it's still paid because they work? The end monthly wages. So, just those nuances; it's still data, you're still analyzing data, but like someone else might stop by the first statement, and then just do the pilot. But why do we see what we see?" – Ekemma, Nigerian
Data Analysis and Equity	Involve disaggregating data to understand diverse perspectives and experiences.	Ensure that all individual perspectives, especially from marginalized communities, are heard and considered.	Highlight the importance of recognizing diverse perspectives in data, echoing the researcher's commitment to equity.	"As a data analyst, we're not just using methods that would lump everyone together, but we want to see, as much as possible, every individual in the story. What else reporting? Yeah, those reports, we like to ensure that the voices, is because it's possible for me as an evaluator to give credence to the voices of the most powerful, then that will not be in line with who I am as an evaluator, who I am as an African, but then giving voices to the people whose voices matter in that story. Yeah, for example, if you're working in a school, and you want to improve, maybe teaching experiences, students are the ones whose voices count in that story. So, their voices must be the ones who debate that's my assets." – Digiola, Nigerian



## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is divided into multiple sections, and it synthesizes the findings of this study within the ambit of its objectives and research questions, articulating a narrative that bridges the empirical evidence with the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review. I will first discuss findings in relation to the literature on intersectionality of Black African women and their professional evaluation experiences. I will also explore how these findings could influence the field of program evaluation in the foreseeable future as it relates to evaluators of color, specifically Black African women who practice evaluation in the United States. Also included in this chapter are the implications, conclusions, recommendations, and future research.

Findings from this study emphasize the importance of an intersectional lens in understanding and addressing the complexities of identities and professional environments of Black African women evaluators in the United States and was grounded in the combination of four theories including critical race theory, Black feminist-womanist theory, Afrocentrism, and transnationalism. Specifically, in this Chapter, I discuss seven major findings related to the intersectionality and professional experiences of Black African women evaluators. I want to acknowledge the fact that the study utilized a convenience sample; hence, Black African women from only five African countries—Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda—shared their experiences. Most of the participants identified as Nigerians.

A combination of theories, including critical race theory, Black feminist-womanist theory, Afrocentrism, and transnationalism, inform the theoretical framework of this study.

## Discussion of Findings

### **Intersecting Identities and Their Impact on Black African Women Evaluators in Professional Settings**

The professional experiences and intersectional identities involve delving into the nuanced professional lives of Black African women evaluators in North America, examining how their intersecting identities—encompassing race, gender, culture, and often immigration status—affect their career trajectories, experiences, and opportunities within the field of program evaluation. Rooted in the Black feminist-womanist framework, this examination of Black African women evaluators' professional experiences underscores the inseparability of race and gender in shaping their lives. It recognizes that the interplay of these identities, along with cultural and immigration factors, not only affects their career trajectories but also exposes them to a specific matrix of domination that Black feminist-womanist theory identifies as uniquely confronting Black women (Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981). This theory affirms that the professional hurdles and opportunities encountered by these women are reflective of broader systemic oppressions, thereby requiring that solutions be equally intersectional and informed by the lived experiences of Black women (Crenshaw, 1991; Lorde, 1984). Crenshaw (2013) highlights that this exploration is deeply informed by the theoretical underpinnings of intersectionality, which posits that multiple social identities intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the macro social-structural level.

Black African women evaluators encounter a unique set of challenges and opportunities shaped by their intersectional identities (Boyce et al., 2023b). Their professional experiences are not only influenced by their technical skills and sectoral expertise but also by how they navigate the complex dynamics of race, gender, and cultural background in predominantly White-

dominated fields. Joseph, Haynes, and Patton (2021) highlight that this intersectionality often subjects them to unique forms of discrimination and bias; these biases often manifest in stereotypes questioning their competence and leadership capabilities, leading to a persistent need to prove their worth, a phenomenon known as “stereotype threat” (Steele, 1998). Drawing from the foundational principles of critical race theory, it is evident that Black African women evaluators navigate a professional landscape entrenched in systemic racism. This landscape is shaped by their intersectional identities (Boyce et al., 2023b), which not only subjects them to unique forms of discrimination and bias—rooted in deeply ingrained societal structures—but also challenges stereotypes questioning their competence and leadership capabilities. This persistent stereotype threat exemplifies CRT’s assertion that racism is embedded within the very fabric of our societal systems, necessitating a vigilant, ongoing struggle for Black African women to assert their worth and redefine professional norms in their favor (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Such stereotypes can result in increased scrutiny and assumptions about their expertise, adversely affecting their professional growth and self-perception. However, these unique forms of discrimination and bias also provide a distinct lens through which they approach their work, offering valuable insights and perspectives that enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of program evaluation (Joseph, Haynes, & Patton, 2021).

Moreover, the cultural identities of Black African women offer valuable perspectives that enhance their professional practices, especially in evaluative roles. However, applying these culturally rooted methodologies can sometimes lead to resistance or misunderstandings in workplaces unaccustomed to such diverse approaches. This highlights the necessity for culturally responsive practices that value and integrate these unique perspectives (Frierson et al., 2010).

The professional training and projects in which Black African women evaluators engage are frequently marked by their efforts to assert their expertise and credibility in environments that may undervalue their contributions due to racial and gender biases (Iheduru-Anderson, Agomoh, & Inungu, 2021). Despite these challenges, many such evaluators have successfully leveraged their cultural and experiential knowledge to navigate and influence the sectors in which they work, including health, education, and social services, contributing to more culturally responsive and equitable evaluation practices. The alignment of their professional experiences with their intersecting identities is evident in how these evaluators integrate African values and practices into their work. Their approach to evaluation is often community-centric, holistic, and narrative-focused, reflecting African cultural emphases on storytelling, communal well-being, and collective decision-making. Such integration not only challenges the dominant paradigms of program evaluation but also enriches the field with diverse methodologies and perspectives that prioritize cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness (Serpell et al., 2020).

The intersectionality of race, gender, and culture necessitates that Black African women evaluators employ strategies to navigate the professional landscape effectively. These strategies include building a strong professional identity that embraces their intersecting identities, seeking supportive networks, and advocating for diversity and inclusion within their organizations and the evaluation field at large (Avent et al., 2023; Jones, 2016). It is imperative for organizations to cultivate cultures that acknowledge and value the diversity Black African women bring to the professional realm. This involves creating environments where these women can freely express their identities without fear of bias or discrimination and where their contributions are recognized and appreciated (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Despite facing tokenism, microaggressions, and the constant pressure to prove their capabilities, the intersectional identities of Black African

women equip them with unique perspectives that enrich evaluative practices. Their ability to understand cultural and contextual nuances allows them to employ inclusive methodologies that capture diverse voices and advocate for equity and inclusion (Greene, 2005; Ortiz & Jani, 2010).

Addressing the experiences of Black African women evaluators involves challenging the monolithic narratives that simplify their identities. Recognizing the diversity and richness of their experiences, shaped by the intersection of race, gender, and culture, is essential for appreciating the full scope of their professional and personal lives (Crenshaw, 1995; Stewart, 2020; Warner & Shields, 2013). The main takeaway is that the *intersectionality of racial, cultural, and gender identities is pivotal in shaping the unique professional experiences* of Black African women evaluators, underlining the need for inclusive and equitable environments that recognize and value their diverse perspectives. Moreover, there is a need for a paradigm shift towards recognizing and valuing the diverse perspectives and methodologies these professionals bring, thereby enriching the field and promoting a more comprehensive understanding of intersectionality's impact on professional experiences.

### **Professional Identity, Role, and Practice**

Reflecting the core principles of Black feminist-womanist theory, the professional trajectory of Black African women evaluators in the United States is intricately shaped by the confluence of race, gender, nationality, and cultural heritage. This alignment underscores the theory's emphasis on the unique, intersectional challenges and resilience of Black women navigating spaces where their professional identities and cultural perspectives converge to foster advocacy for inclusivity and equity (Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981).

According to Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010), these evaluators navigate a complex landscape where their professional identities are not just tied to their technical competencies but

also to the rich cultural perspectives they bring to their work (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1990). Their roles extend beyond traditional evaluative tasks, incorporating advocacy for inclusivity and equity within the evaluation community and the broader societal context (Boyce et al., 2023a).

Situated at the nexus of multiple cultural narratives, Black African women evaluators exemplify the essence of transnationalism through their work. By leveraging their unique positions, they not only promote culturally responsive and inclusive evaluation practices but also bridge diverse cultural divides. This approach highlights the dynamic interplay of their transnational identities and the global exchange of ideas, practices, and values, enriching the evaluation field with a multitude of perspectives (Vertovec, 2009). Rooted in Afrocentrism (Asante, 1987), the evaluative practices of Black African women evaluators are imbued with a deep commitment to African values—community orientation, collective well-being, and storytelling (Askew, Beverly, & Jay, 2012). This not only enriches the evaluative process but also serves as a testament to Afrocentrism’s call for reclaiming and centering African perspectives and epistemologies in spaces traditionally dominated by Eurocentric paradigms (Chilisa, 2012). Hopson and Shanker (2023) highlight that by integrating these cultural elements into their practice, they challenge the dominant Eurocentric paradigms in evaluation, advocating for a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the programs and communities they assess.

Their professional practice is characterized by a critical engagement with methodologies and frameworks that honor the complexities of diverse communities. This includes a preference for participatory and collaborative approaches that empower stakeholders and reflect a commitment to social justice and equity (Bohonos & Sisco, 2021; Fetterman, 2012). The Black African women evaluators’ work is deeply informed by their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds, which not only shape their approach to evaluation but also influence how they

navigate professional spaces often dominated by individuals who may not share their intersectional identities.

The role of Black African women evaluators transcends mere job functions; it embodies a mission to bridge cultural divides and bring to the fore the voices of marginalized communities. Chang and Cochran-Smith (2022) highlight that their practice is a testament to the power of integrating personal identity with professional commitment, where the evaluator's role is seen as pivotal in challenging systemic biases and fostering change (Kirkhart, 1995). This perspective is crucial in promoting diversity and inclusion within the field of evaluation, ensuring that evaluations are not just technically sound but also socially relevant and culturally competent.

Moreover, these evaluators contribute to the body of knowledge in program evaluation by introducing perspectives and methodologies that are rooted in African epistemologies (Kane & Archibald, 2023), offering alternative ways of knowing and understanding impact (Smith, et al., 2020). Their work challenges the evaluation community to reconsider what constitutes evidence and how cultural contexts influence the interpretation of data and findings.

In conclusion, the professional identity, role, and practice of Black African women evaluators are marked by a deep commitment to cultural responsiveness, equity, and social justice. Through their work, they demonstrate the critical importance of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives in evaluation, thereby enriching the field and ensuring that it serves the needs of all communities equitably. Their contributions highlight the need for the evaluation field to continue evolving, embracing diversity not just as a theoretical ideal but as a practical necessity for achieving meaningful and transformative evaluation outcomes. The main takeaway is that their *unique cultural perspectives challenge dominant evaluation paradigms, advocating*

*for methodologies that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and rooted in African epistemologies,* thereby enriching the evaluation field with diverse insights and approaches.

### **Authentic Integration of Cultural Identity and African Values into Professional Practice**

The integration of cultural backgrounds and African values and practices within professional settings, particularly among Black African women evaluators in the United States, represents a pivotal convergence of cultural heritage within modern evaluation practices and marks a significant contribution to the field of program evaluation. This discourse leverages the rich insights gained from analyzing these evaluators' experiences, spotlighting the critical influence of cultural identity on their methodological approaches, the transformative impact of cultural integration on evaluative practices, and the indispensability of cultural competency in conducting inclusive and nuanced evaluations. Exemplifying transnationalism, Black African women evaluators' methodological approaches embody a seamless integration of their African cultural heritage with their professional practice in the United States. This melding of cultures not only enriches their evaluative work but also bridges diverse worlds, showcasing how transnational cultural flows and identities can enhance and diversify professional settings in meaningful ways (Vertovec, 2009). Cultural identity stands as a fundamental element in the Black African women evaluators' methodologies, shaping their engagement with various evaluation contexts. The unique perspectives derived from their African heritage and personal journeys provide a lens through which they navigate and interpret the evaluative landscape, offering a level of understanding and empathy often absent in conventional evaluation frameworks. According to Waller, Quinn, and Harris (2022), this fusion not only enriches the evaluative process but also fosters a more inclusive and holistic approach to program evaluation.



Rooted deeply in Afrocentric principles, the evaluative practices of Black African women in the United States are a testament to the transformative power of African values—community orientation, collective responsibility, respect, and storytelling. This approach not only challenges the prevailing Eurocentric evaluation paradigms but also reclaims and centers African wisdom, demonstrating the indispensable role of cultural heritage in enriching modern evaluation practices (Mazama, 2001).

The concept of Ubuntu, which translates to “I am because we are,” (Kane & Archibald, 2023; Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013; Uwizeyimana, 2020) underscores the importance of community and interconnectedness in African cultures. Anofuechi (2022) highlights that this philosophy greatly influences the evaluators’ approach to their work, emphasizing collective well-being and mutual respect over individual achievement. In practice, this translates into evaluative methods that prioritize participatory approaches, ensuring that all voices, especially those of marginalized communities, are heard and valued. The emphasis on storytelling and oral traditions in African cultures further enriches this approach, allowing evaluators to capture nuanced perspectives and experiences that quantitative data alone might overlook.

Moreover, the role of African values extends beyond methodological approaches to influence the professional identity and role of Black African women evaluators. Their cultural heritage informs their sense of purpose and commitment to social justice (Boyce et al., 2023b), guiding them to leverage their professional skills in service of community empowerment and transformation (Sales, Galloway Burke, & Cannonier, 2020). This alignment of professional practice with personal values and cultural identity enhances the evaluators’ effectiveness, enabling them to navigate complex socio-cultural dynamics sensitively and effectively.

Through the lens of Black feminist-womanist theory, the integration of cultural heritage into the professional identities and roles of Black African women evaluators embodies a profound commitment to social justice. Their work, deeply influenced by their intersectional experiences of race, gender, and cultural identity, serves as a powerful vehicle for advocating inclusivity, equity, and empowerment within the field of program evaluation (Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981). Incorporating African practices and traditions into their work, these evaluators challenge the dominant Western paradigms of evaluation, advocating for a more culturally responsive and equitable approach (Asante & Archibald, 2023; Kane & Archibald, 2023). By doing so, they not only contribute to the diversification and enrichment of evaluation practices but also address critical gaps in cultural competency within the field. Their work highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse cultural perspectives in program evaluation, highlighting how such inclusivity can lead to more accurate, effective, and meaningful evaluation outcomes.

This cultural vantage point empowers the evaluators to identify and address biases, ensuring their evaluations encompass a wider array of human experiences. By infusing their cultural insights into their professional practice, these evaluators significantly enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of their evaluation. By employing culturally responsive methodologies, they not only adhere to but also expand upon the best practices in evaluation, incorporating considerations of social justice and equity, vital in today's diverse global landscape. This methodological approach aligns with and exemplifies the principles outlined by Frierson et al. (2010), underscoring the importance of culturally responsive evaluation methodologies. Moreover, cultural competency transcends the mere recognition of diversity, demanding an active engagement with and comprehension of the cultural dimensions that inform

individual experiences. The evaluators' practice accentuates the necessity for cultural competency in challenging biases and achieving inclusive evaluations. Their approach aligns with Thomas and Madison's (2010) discourse on integrating social justice into evaluation, illustrating how cultural competency is paramount in confronting systemic biases and championing equity within evaluative practices.

Cultural competence in evaluation practice is crucial for ensuring that evaluations are not just effective but equitable, involving a deep acknowledgment and integration of diverse cultural perspectives throughout the evaluation process. Kirkhart (2010) highlights the significance of cultural competence in enhancing the validity and reliability of findings, asserting that culturally relevant and sensitive evaluations are essential for accurate and meaningful insights. The distinct contributions of Black African women evaluators, through their integration of cultural backgrounds and experiences into evaluation practice, signify a critical advancement in the field. Their work not only enhances the inclusivity and effectiveness of evaluations but also positions cultural competency at the forefront of evaluative excellence.

The evaluators' commitment to integrating African values and practices also reflects a broader movement towards decolonizing evaluation methodologies. By centering African epistemologies and ontologies, they challenge the hegemony of Western scientific methods, advocating for approaches that respect and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and cultural contexts (Asante & Archibald, 2023; Kane & Archibald, 2023). This not only contributes to a more just and equitable evaluation practice, but also empowers communities by acknowledging and valuing their cultural heritage and wisdom.

By drawing connections between their practices and broader discussions on diversity and inclusivity in evaluation literature, this analysis illuminates the essential role of cultural

integration in advancing the field towards more nuanced and culturally responsive evaluation practices. A key takeaway from this study is that the *cultural backgrounds and experiences of Black African women enrich their evaluative approaches*, fostering evaluations that are more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and nuanced.

### **Advocacy for Inclusion and Reflective Practice**

Black African women evaluators are at the vanguard of fostering inclusive and reflective evaluation practices, seamlessly incorporating their distinctive professional and cultural identities into their evaluative work. In the spirit of Black feminist-womanist theory, these evaluators' advocacy for inclusive and reflective practices not only champions the diversity within evaluation fields, but also foregrounds the critical importance of incorporating the intersectional identities of race and gender into their professional ethos. This approach embodies the theory's call for a deep acknowledgment of the unique struggles and contributions of Black women, ensuring their perspectives are integral to fostering more equitable evaluation practices (Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981).

They advocate for methodologies that not only acknowledge but also celebrate diversity, significantly elevating the inclusivity and effectiveness of evaluation practices. Drawing upon the work of Sue et al. (2009), it's evident that Black African women evaluators epitomize cultural competence in their evaluative approach. They demonstrate a deep understanding of cultural intricacies, ensuring their evaluations are attuned and reflective of the diverse populations with which they engage. This methodological perspective ensures the rich complexities of varied communities are recognized and honored, establishing a foundation of respect and sensitivity in their evaluation work. The evaluative practices of these professionals serve as exemplars of the culturally responsive methodologies articulated by Frierson et al.

(2010). Integrating their personal experiences and cultural insights into their evaluations, they challenge conventional norms and broaden the scope of traditional methodologies. Their work underlines the importance of acknowledging and valuing the cultural heritage of the communities involved, promoting an evaluation practice that is both inclusive and equitable.

Again, echoing Thomas and Madison (2010), the integration of social justice into evaluative practices resonates greatly with the ethos of Black African women evaluators. Their dedication to reflective practice actively questions biases and strives for equity. This methodological stance not only propels the evolution of evaluation practices, but also ensures the incorporation of diverse perspectives and experiences, cultivating a field that is equitable and just. Drawing upon the foundational principles of CRT, these evaluators' methodological stance on questioning biases and striving for equity exemplifies a committed effort to dismantle systemic barriers within evaluation practices. Their dedication to reflective practice and social justice underscores a critical CRT perspective, advocating for the inclusion of marginalized voices and experiences to cultivate an evaluation field grounded in equity and inclusivity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Aligning with participatory evaluation principles as highlighted by Cousins and Whitmore (1998), these evaluators embrace a collaborative approach with stakeholders. This engagement ensures that the evaluations are not only culturally responsive but co-created with the communities they aim to benefit, thereby enriching the evaluation process with authentic insights and participatory integrity. Incorporating Schön's notion of the "reflective practitioner," this study emphasizes the significance of ongoing learning and reflection within evaluation practices. Black African women evaluators exemplify this paradigm through their commitment to culturally responsive and socially equitable practices, showcasing a comprehensive approach

to navigating the complexities and biases inherent in evaluation processes. The main takeaway is that their work *exemplifies an approach to evaluation that integrates social justice, participatory methods, and continuous reflection*, contributing to a more equitable and responsive evaluation field.

### **Global Perspectives and Adaptability in Evaluation Practice**

The integration of global perspectives and cultural insights by Black African women evaluators significantly enriches the field of evaluation, fostering more nuanced, effective, and inclusive outcomes. These evaluators bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and global experiences, enhancing the scope and depth of evaluation practices. Their work emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse cultural and global viewpoints to better address complex societal issues. Global perspectives provide a broader context for understanding and addressing issues, enabling them to apply lessons learned from different cultural and geographical settings. This global outlook encourages the adoption of innovative methodologies and practices that are more responsive to the complexities of the issues being evaluated. Bamberger et al. (2010) discuss the value of incorporating global perspectives in evaluation, highlighting how such approaches can lead to more comprehensive and contextually appropriate evaluation strategies, demonstrating how such approaches contribute to more effective and relevant outcomes.

Embodying transnationalism, Black African women evaluators' global outlook fosters the adoption of innovative methodologies that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, making evaluative practices more responsive to complex global issues. This transnational perspective not only enriches evaluation with diverse insights but also promotes a dynamic exchange of ideas and practices across nations, reflecting a commitment to a globally interconnected and culturally nuanced evaluation field (Vertovec, 2009).

While the integration of global perspectives and cultural insights offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges, such as navigating cultural nuances and ensuring inclusivity. However, these challenges are seen as opportunities for growth and learning. Mertens and Wilson (2018) highlight the importance of adaptability in overcoming these challenges, ensuring that evaluations are conducted in a manner that respects and values diverse perspectives. By incorporating global perspectives and cultural insights, Black African women evaluators contribute significantly to the empowerment of marginalized communities. Their practices ensure that the voices and experiences of these communities are heard and valued in the evaluation process. Mertens (1999) notes the transformative potential of such inclusive evaluation practices, which not only improve the quality and relevance of evaluations but also contribute to more equitable outcomes. The contributions of Black African women evaluators highlight the indispensable role of cultural and global insights in the field of evaluation. These elements are crucial for achieving more inclusive, equitable, and effective evaluation practices. The work of Black African women evaluators exemplifies the importance of diversity in enriching evaluation practices and achieving meaningful and impactful outcomes. The main takeaway is their ability to *navigate cultural nuances and adapt methodologies to diverse contexts*, underscoring the value of diversity in enriching evaluation practices and achieving impactful outcomes.

### **Methodological Frameworks and Evaluation Approaches**

The selection and adaptation of evaluation methodologies by Black African women evaluators represent a nuanced engagement with both their cultural heritage and professional commitments. This intersectionality informs a unique approach to program evaluation that is deeply rooted in African philosophical underpinnings and values, marking a significant departure

from conventional, often Western-centric, evaluation practices. This section explores how these evaluators integrate culturally responsive methodologies to align their work with broader goals of inclusivity, social justice, and community empowerment.

African philosophical traditions emphasize communalism, interconnectedness, and holistic approaches to understanding phenomena (Chilisa, 2012; Phatshwane, 2024). These values are mirrored in the evaluators' methodological choices, which often prioritize participatory, qualitative methods that facilitate deeper engagement with communities and stakeholders. Santamaría et al. (2022) highlight that by leveraging methodologies that foreground the voices and experiences of those often marginalized in programmatic assessments, Black African women evaluators enact a form of evaluation that is not only culturally sensitive but inherently political, challenging dominant paradigms and advocating for change (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The adoption of Afrocentric methodological frameworks is a testament to these evaluators' commitment to embedding African values into their evaluative work. Afrocentric methodologies focus on empowerment, the validation of African cultural knowledge, and the rejection of pathologizing narratives about African communities (Asante, 1991; Noyori-Corbett & Moxley, 2021). Through these frameworks, evaluators ensure that their work contributes to a more nuanced understanding of program impacts, one that respects and reflects the complexities of African and diasporic experiences.

Moreover, the integration of storytelling and narrative inquiry as evaluation methods is another significant aspect of their work. Storytelling, a deeply rooted African tradition, serves as a powerful tool for data collection and analysis, offering insights into the lived experiences of individuals and communities in ways that traditional metrics may not capture (Sankofa et al.,



2023). This approach not only enriches the evaluative process, but also reinforces the importance of narrative and experience as valid sources of knowledge.

Black African women evaluators also navigate the challenges of adapting Western evaluation methodologies to better fit their cultural contexts. This often involves a critical assessment of existing theories and practices, selecting those elements that can be harmonized with African-centric values, and modifying others to ensure cultural relevance and sensitivity (Kovach, 2010). Their evaluative practices thus reflect a dynamic interplay between different knowledge systems, underlining the importance of methodological flexibility and innovation.

The strategic navigation through systemic barriers and professional spaces highlights the evaluators' resilience and ingenuity. They not only face but actively counter the challenges posed by prevailing stereotypes and the undervaluing of culturally specific knowledge, advocating for the incorporation of diverse epistemologies in evaluation research (Smith, 2021). Their efforts contribute significantly to the ongoing discourse on decolonizing methodologies (Asante & Archibald, 2023; Kane & Archibald, 2023; Smith, 2021), pushing for a more inclusive and equitable evaluation field. The main takeaway is that Black African women evaluators *are redefining evaluation practices by blending cultural heritage with professional ethics, utilizing participatory, Afrocentric methodologies to champion inclusivity and challenge Western-centric norms.*

In conclusion, the methodological frameworks and evaluation approaches adopted by Black African women evaluators underscore the profound impact of cultural identity on professional practices. Their work exemplifies how evaluation methodologies can be both a reflection of and a response to the evaluators' cultural heritage, offering important lessons on the

value of inclusivity, cultural competence, and the transformative potential of culturally responsive evaluation.

### **Challenges and Strategic Navigations**

Black African women evaluators navigate a complex landscape marked by systemic barriers, microaggressions, and challenges to their professional credibility. These obstacles are not merely incidental but are deeply embedded in the structures and practices of the evaluation field, reflecting broader societal issues of racism, sexism, and cultural bias. Despite these challenges, these evaluators employ a range of strategies to overcome obstacles, demonstrating resilience, leveraging professional networks, and advocating for diversity and inclusion within their field (Munday, 2023).

Systemic barriers, including institutional racism and sexism, often manifest in the marginalization of Black African women's voices and expertise in professional settings. These barriers are compounded by microaggressions—subtle, often unintentional, expressions of bias or discrimination—that these evaluators encounter regularly (Sampson, 2022). Such experiences can undermine professional confidence and contribute to a sense of isolation within the field (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, the negotiation of professional credibility is a constant challenge, as Black African women evaluators must often work harder to prove their competence and authority in spaces that are predominantly White and male (Spates et al., 2020).

To navigate these challenges, Black African women evaluators adopt several strategies. Resilience emerges as a key theme, with evaluators drawing on inner strength and cultural heritage to persist in their professional roles despite facing adversity. According to Linnabery, Stuhlmacher, and Towler (2014), this resilience is not just individual but is supported by a

collective sense of purpose and community, emphasizing the importance of solidarity among Black African women and other marginalized groups in the field.

Networking and mentorship are crucial strategies for overcoming barriers and advancing professionally. By building supportive relationships with peers and mentors, Black African women evaluators gain access to valuable resources, opportunities, and advice that can help navigate the complexities of their professional landscape (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). These networks can provide a sense of belonging and support, counteracting feelings of isolation and facilitating shared strategies for dealing with microaggressions and discrimination.

Advocacy for diversity and inclusion is another important strategic navigation. Black African women evaluators actively work to promote cultural competence within the evaluation field, advocating for practices and policies that recognize and value diversity in evaluative work. This includes pushing for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in evaluation processes, the development of culturally responsive methodologies, and the creation of more equitable opportunities for evaluators from diverse backgrounds (Crenshaw, 1990; Hood, Hopson, & Frierson, 2014).

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Black African women evaluators are significant, yet through resilience, networking, and advocacy, these professionals not only navigate these obstacles but also work to transform the field of evaluation. Their efforts underscore the importance of diversity and inclusion, not only as moral imperatives but as essential components of effective, culturally responsive evaluation practice. The main takeaway is that despite facing systemic racism and sexism, *Black African women evaluators employ resilience, networking, and advocacy to navigate challenges*, transforming evaluation practices to prioritize diversity and cultural responsiveness.

## **Implication of the Study**

The findings from this study, grounded in the rich theoretical backdrop of intersectionality, Afrocentric methodologies, transnationalism, and culturally responsive evaluation practices, underscore the vital role of cultural competence and inclusivity in the evaluation field. The unique professional challenges and strategic navigations of Black African women evaluators reveal systemic barriers that necessitate a reevaluation of current practices and policies within the evaluation community. The study highlights the importance of integrating cultural competence into evaluation practices. This calls for continued training programs and professional development initiatives that equip evaluators with the skills to conduct culturally responsive evaluations, acknowledging and valuing the cultural contexts and perspectives of diverse communities. The experiences of Black African women evaluators emphasize the need for policies that address systemic biases and promote diversity and inclusion within the evaluation field. Organizations and institutions should implement policies that actively combat racism and sexism, creating equitable opportunities for evaluators from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally, the methodological approaches adopted by Black African women evaluators, which align with their cultural perspectives and values, offer valuable insights for the broader evaluation community. This highlights the need for methodological flexibility and the inclusion of diverse evaluative frameworks that enrich the evaluation process. Also, the significance of networking and mentorship in navigating professional challenges suggests that stronger, more inclusive professional networks are crucial. Professional associations and institutions should create spaces and opportunities that facilitate mentorship, collaboration, and support among evaluators from diverse backgrounds. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue about intersectionality in evaluation. It calls for further research into how intersecting

identities affect evaluators' experiences and how these insights can inform more equitable and effective evaluation practices. In conclusion, this study not only sheds light on the specific experiences and contributions of Black African women evaluators, but also serves as a catalyst for broader changes within the evaluation field. It emphasizes the need for continued dialogue, research, and action to ensure that evaluation practices are truly inclusive, culturally responsive, and reflective of the diverse societies they aim to serve.

### **Conclusion**

This study marks a pivotal exploration into the intersecting realms of professional experiences, cultural identity, and evaluation practices among Black African women evaluators in the United States, tracing a journey from the backdrop outlined in Chapter I to the nuanced discussions in Chapter V. Chapter I set the stage by delineating the study's background, emphasizing the need to understand the unique experiences and identities of Black African women evaluators. It highlighted the research objectives aimed at exploring how these evaluators' identities shape their professional experiences and the influence of African cultural values on their work.

Chapter II expanded on this foundation through a comprehensive literature review, situating the study within a constellation of critical race, Black feminist-womanist, Afrocentric, and transnationalism theories. This review illuminated the existing gaps in the literature, particularly the underrepresentation and undervaluation of Black African women's contributions to the field of program evaluation.

In Chapter III, the methodology was meticulously outlined, demonstrating the qualitative approach taken to delve deeply into the evaluators' experiences. This methodological rigor

ensured that the voices of Black African women were centered, allowing for an authentic exploration of their professional landscapes.

Chapter IV presented the heart of the study—its findings. Here, the rich, complex narratives of Black African women evaluators were unveiled, showcasing their professional journeys, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to navigate these challenges. Their stories highlighted the critical role of intersectionality, cultural competence, and inclusivity in shaping their professional practices and identities.

Finally, Chapter V synthesizes these insights, underscoring the study's contributions to a deeper understanding of the importance of embracing diverse perspectives and methodologies in program evaluation. It calls for ongoing dialogue, research, and policy development to ensure that evaluation practices are equitable and sensitive to the cultural dimensions of the populations assessed. The findings from this study not only contribute to the academic discourse on intersectionality, cultural competence, and inclusivity but also offer practical implications for fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within the field of program evaluation.

In conclusion, this dissertation is a clarion call to the evaluation field to acknowledge, celebrate, and incorporate the rich and diverse array of experiences, identities, and cultural values that Black African women evaluators bring to their work. It is a testament to their resilience, innovation, and the transformative potential of integrating diverse perspectives into evaluation practice, ultimately contributing to more effective and impactful evaluations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study, while offering insightful contributions to the understanding of Black African women evaluators' experiences in the United States, is subject to a few limitations. However, these few limitations, such as the sample size, may also be considered as strengths given the very

specific population of study. First, the scope of the research is geographically limited to the United States, which means the findings may not be fully generalizable to other countries and regions with different socio-political contexts. This geographical focus could restrict the broader applicability of the study's conclusions to Black African women evaluators working in other parts of the world.

Second, the methodology employed, primarily qualitative interviews, though rich in depth and detail, might not capture the full spectrum of experiences and perceptions among Black African women evaluators. The reliance on self-reported data could introduce bias, as participants may have reservations about sharing negative experiences or may portray their experiences in a more positive light. Furthermore, the sample size, while adequate for qualitative research, limits the ability to make widespread generalizations about the experiences of all Black African women evaluators in the field. In this case, the sample size of 14 participants in this study can be considered as a strength given the population of study and the location.

Additionally, the study's focus on Black African women evaluators, while crucial for highlighting specific challenges and contributions, also means that it does not encompass the experiences of other minority groups in the evaluation field. The unique challenges faced by other underrepresented evaluators could provide additional insights into diversity and inclusion in program evaluation, suggesting an area for future research.

Lastly, the rapidly changing landscape of program evaluation and the ongoing evolution of diversity and inclusion practices mean that the findings of this study represent a snapshot in time. The dynamic nature of the field and societal attitudes towards race, gender, and professional identity may affect the long-term relevance of the study's conclusions. These limitations notwithstanding, the study contributes significantly to the dialogue on diversity,

equity, and inclusion in program evaluation, offering a foundation for further research and policy development in this critical area.

## **Recommendations for the Field and Future Research**

### **Comprehensive Cultural Competency Training**

Institutions and organizations within the evaluation field should invest in comprehensive, culturally responsive training for evaluators. Such training should go beyond basic awareness of diversity and inclusion principles to include practical skills for conducting culturally responsive evaluations. According to Grote (2008), this entails understanding the socio-cultural backgrounds of communities being evaluated, recognizing and mitigating biases in evaluation practices, and employing methodologies that are respectful and reflective of diverse cultural values and norms. Culturally responsive training programs should be developed in consultation with experts from diverse backgrounds to ensure they are genuinely inclusive and effective. Additionally, these programs should be made an integral part of ongoing professional development, with regular updates to reflect evolving societal norms and values.

### **Institutional Support for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives**

Evaluation organizations and institutions should actively support diversity and inclusion initiatives through both policy and practice (Winkle-Wagner & Locks, 2013). This includes creating frameworks that ensure representation from diverse groups in leadership positions, decision-making processes, and evaluation projects. Policies should explicitly address the recruitment, retention, and promotion of Black African women evaluators and other underrepresented groups, aiming to dismantle systemic barriers that hinder their professional advancement. Further, institutions should commit to a regular review of their practices to



identify and eliminate any form of discrimination or bias, thereby fostering an environment where all evaluators can thrive and contribute their best work.

### **Mentorship and Professional Development Opportunities**

Establishing mentorship programs tailored to the needs of Black African women evaluators and other minority evaluators can provide crucial support and guidance (Gandhi & Johnson, 2016). Such programs should pair emerging evaluators with experienced professionals who can offer insights, advice, and advocacy. These mentorship relationships can help navigate the unique challenges faced by minority evaluators, including navigating microaggressions, building professional credibility, and advancing in their careers. Moreover, professional development opportunities should be accessible and relevant, including workshops, conferences, and courses that address the specific interests and challenges of diverse evaluators, thereby enhancing their skills and visibility in the field.

### **Integration of Diverse Evaluation Methodologies**

The field of program evaluation should embrace and integrate a broader range of evaluation methodologies that reflect the cultural contexts of the populations being assessed. Mwirigi (2023) highlights that this recommendation calls for a paradigm shift towards valuing and incorporating indigenous knowledge systems, participatory approaches, and other non-traditional methodologies into mainstream evaluation practice. By doing so, evaluations will not only become more culturally relevant and sensitive but also more effective in capturing the nuanced impacts of programs and policies on diverse communities. Funding agencies and evaluation bodies should encourage and support research and innovation in these areas, providing resources for evaluators to experiment with and refine these methodologies.

## **Ongoing Research and Dialogue on Intersectionality and Evaluation**

Finally, there is a critical need for ongoing research and dialogue on the intersections of race, gender, culture, and other identity factors within the evaluation field (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011). This involves not only academic research but also practical discussions within professional networks, organizations, and at conferences. Such efforts should aim to deepen the understanding of how these intersections affect evaluators' experiences and the evaluation process itself, leading to more nuanced and effective evaluation practices. Encouraging the publication and dissemination of research findings on these topics can help to raise awareness and foster a more inclusive and reflective evaluation community.

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# APPENDIX A: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR SCREENING SURVEY

10/5/23, 10:15 PM

Qualtrics Survey Software

## Information Sheet

**Project Title:** The Role of Intersectionality in the Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in North America: A Qualitative Study.

**Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisors (if applicable):** Onyinyechukwu Onwuka, Ph. D. Candidate; Dr. Ayesha Boyce; and Dr. Aileen Reid

**What are some general things you should know about research studies?** You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty. Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

**What is the study about?** This is a dissertation research study. Your participation is voluntary. The major purpose of this study is to explore the intersectionality of multiple identities in the professional experiences of Black African Women evaluators in North America—United States or Canada. Within this purpose, focus is given to how Black African Women evaluators view their professional identity, role, and practice, how their African values and practices show up in their work and the methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches and theories resonates with with them and show up in their practice.

**Why are you asking me?** You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as a Black African Woman evaluator practicing evaluation in North America—United States or Canada. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

**What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?** In Phase 1, a 10-minute screening/intake Qualtrics survey will be administered. The survey will collect your demographic information. If you meet the inclusion criteria you will be redirected at the end of the survey to a Calendly website to schedule an appointment for interview, which is the Phase 2 of the study if you are willing to participate. In Phase 2, after scheduling an appointment on Calendly and prior to the interview, a meeting confirmation email, consent form, and a semi-structured interview questions will be sent to you for review. The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes in a recorded interview session over Zoom with the Principal Investigator, answering a set of research questions and describing your evaluation experience. After the interview has been completed, the researcher will send you the transcript and a summary of your interview to member check your data.

**Is there any audio/video recording?** The researcher will record digital audio of all individual interview session conducted during this research study. These recordings will be transcribed via Otter.ai and analyzed to pull out common themes and critical statements. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transfer to a written de-identified transcript. Information collected during this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described below.

**What are the risks to me?** The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact **Onyinyechukwu Onwuka at oonwuka@uncg.edu (or 336-389-7540), Dr. Ayesha Boyce at ayesha.boyce@asu.edu, or Dr. Aileen Reid at aileen.reid@uncg.edu.** If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

**Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?** By participating in this study, you will help inform the research literature about the professional experiences of evaluators from historically minoritized populations and promoting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation. While

there are no direct or indirect benefits for you to participate in this dissertation research study, the questions will provide an opportunity for professional and personal reflections.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?** There are no costs to you, or payments made for participating in this study.

**How will you keep my information confidential?** De-identified data will be stored within a password secure folder in UNCG approved data storage as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. The master key listing the identities of participants and their pseudonyms used for the research will be secured in the UNCG Data classification policy. This data will be kept for future research and maintained by the researcher. Currently, UNCG requires that data be stored for five years following closure of the study. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transfer to a written de-identified transcript. Contact information of participants who are eligible and/or not invited to participate in the interviews will be deleted. Information of participants who weren't chosen for interviews will be deleted after analysis has been conducted but the data will be reported as findings for context.

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Audio recordings will be kept secure within Otter.ai servers. Otter uses AWS services for its data storage in the AWS region West, United States. Otter uses AWS S3 storage and enables AWS SSE (Server-Side Encryption) on data (S3 buckets). It encrypts the key itself with a root key that it regularly rotates. Amazon S3 server-side encryption uses a 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES-256). Transcripts will be de-identified and kept secure within a password secure folder in UNCG approved data storage as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transcription.

For the demographic data collected through Qualtrics, the service uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data. Surveys data are protected with passwords, with services hosted by trusted data centers that are independently audited using the industry standard SSAE-18 method. A master list linking the participant's name to their pseudonym will be maintained and stored in the UNCG approved data storage location with further password protection within the spreadsheet itself. All data will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy.

**Will my de-identified data be used in future studies?** Your de-identified data (e.g transcripts) will be kept and may be used for future research without your additional consent.

**What if I want to leave the study?** You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

**What about new information/changes in the study?** If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:** By scheduling and joining an interview, you are providing your informed consent agreeing that you read, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing to take part in this research study and all of your questions concerning this research study have been answered. Through your participation in the interview(s), you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this research as described in this document.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study, "The Role of Intersectionality in the Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in North America: A Qualitative Study."

As a part of this study, demographic information of participants will be reported within the results section of the dissertation.

Based on your responses, there will be a Calendly link for you to click so you can schedule an appointment for an interview at a later date.

## **Main Survey**



Are you currently practicing as an evaluator in North America (United States and/or Canada)?

- No  
 Yes

What is your age?

- Under 18 years  
 18 - 24 years  
 25 - 34 years  
 35 - 44 years  
 45 - 54 years  
 55 - 64 years  
 65 - 74 years  
 75 - 84 years  
 85 year or older

How long have you been practicing evaluation in the US and/or Canada?

- Less than 5 years  
 5 - 10 years  
 10 - 15 years  
 15 - 20 years  
 More than 20 years

Are you an

- Internal Evaluator  
 External Evaluator  
 Both  
  Other (Please Specify)

What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school diploma
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
- Some college, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate or professional degree

Have you received any formal evaluation training or certifications?

- No
- Yes

How did you receive training to become a professional evaluator?

- Coursework within my academic studies
- Professional experience within a workplace setting
- Post-graduate training specific to evaluation research
- My academic degree was in program evaluation / evaluation research
- Other (please specify)

Do you identify as a Black African?

- No
- Yes

Please check any or all that apply

- I am a child of a parent born and raised in sub-Saharan Africa
- I was born and raised in sub-Saharan Africa
- Other (Please specify)

What is your home country?

Do you identify as a woman?

- No
- Yes

What sector do you work? (Select all that apply)

- Education
- Healthcare
- Non-Profit
- Other (Please specify)

Please check any or all that apply

- I am a member of American Evaluation Association (AEA)
- I am a member of Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)
- I am a member of Africa Evaluation Association (AfrEA)
- Other (Please specify)

What is your first name?

What is your last name?

What is your email address?

Are you willing to participate in an interview to explore the role of intersectionality in professional experiences of Black African Women evaluators in North America?

- No
- Yes

Thank you for your participation in this survey! Your responses are extremely valuable to us!

To schedule an interview, please select [a day and time \(calendly\)](#) that works best for you , and an Outlook invite containing the Zoom link will be shared with you.

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Powered by Qualtrics

## APPENDIX B: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Protocol Intro Script

Hello, my name is Onyinyechukwu Onwuka, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Educational Research Methodology department of the School of Education. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study as a part of my dissertation. Within this qualitative research study, I will be interviewing approximately 15 evaluators who identify as Black, African, and woman, and practice evaluation professionally in US and/or Canada to learn how and in what ways the intersection of their multiple identities influence/impact their professional experiences and practice. As a part of this conversation, I will be asking about topics that may surface emotional and/or psychological distress related to the discourse on the intersection of identities of historically racialized populations and will also ask you to discuss experiences of a personal and professional manner.

This interview should take approximately 45–60 minutes to complete, and to build the validity of my data, once we complete this interview, I will develop a de-identified transcript for you to review for accuracy and any clarification of information you provide. Before we begin, did you have any questions about the study, the release of information, or the interview process itself? As a part of constructing a transcript, I plan to audio record this interview; are you okay with me starting the recording?

**RQ 1: What are the professional experiences (e.g., training, projects, sectors) of Black African women evaluators in North America? To what extent do these experiences align with their intersecting identities as Black African women?**

- 1) To begin, tell me about your background and how you first became involved in evaluation work?
- 2) Tell me about your experience being trained as a professional evaluator. What was that like? *(If they respond to having formal training.)*

- a) Share some examples of how your training was aligned or not with your intersectional identity as a Black African woman.
- 3) How do you relate with the intersecting identities you hold as a Black, African, woman, and evaluator?
- 4) How and in what ways have your intersecting identities impacted your evaluation practice?
- 5) What unique challenges have you faced as a Black African woman working in evaluation in the United States/Canada? (*Probe for intersecting identities*)
  - a) How have you navigated these challenges or leveraged these opportunities in your own career?

**RQ 2: What do Black African women evaluators view as their professional identity, role, and practice? How and in what ways do their African values and practices/traditions/heritage show up in their work?**

- 1) How do you, as a Black African woman, define your professional identity as an evaluator?
  - a) What do you see as the core values, skills, and knowledge that are central to your role and practice?
    - i) Which of these feels uniquely African to you?
  - b) (*if needed*) What personal and cultural factors have shaped your understanding of your role in the field of evaluation?
- 2) Can you describe any specific practices or traditions from your African heritage that you incorporate into your work?
  - a) Do these identities show up in your work? If so, how do these practices inform your approach or perspective?
- 3) In what ways do you see your African values showing up in your work? Can you provide specific examples of how these values have influenced your professional practice?

**RQ 3: What methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches and theories do they feel resonate with them and show up in their work?**

- 1) What methodologies, evaluation theories, or approaches inform your research or practice?
  - a) How do you incorporate these theories/approaches into your work?
  - b) (*if needed*) What does that look like in practice?
  - c) What benefits do you see from using these approaches?

- 2) How do these approaches, methodologies, and theories resonate with you, particularly as a Black African woman?
  - a) What about [identified theory/methodology/approach] makes it resonate with your intersecting identities?
- 3) How do the approaches that resonate with you align with your professional experience as an evaluator in North America?
  - a) What tensions arise?
  - b) How do you navigate those challenges?
- 4) In your opinion, what unique contributions can Black African women bring to the practice of evaluation?

These are all the questions. Is there anything else you would like to add before we conclude?

APPENDIX C: BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATOR INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

**CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT**

**Project Title:** The Role of Intersectionality in the Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in North America: A Qualitative Study.

**Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisors (if applicable):** Onyinyechukwu Onwuka, Ph. D.

Candidate; Dr. Ayesha Boyce and Dr. Aileen Reid

**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join. If you do choose to join you can withdraw your consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There are no monetary benefits for participating in the study; however, there may be potential benefits in regards to the study providing you reflective opportunities to consider your identity and how that may relate to your professional experiences. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.



### **What is the study about?**

This is a dissertation research study. Your participation is voluntary. The major purpose of this study is to explore the intersectionality of multiple identities in the professional experiences of Black African women<sup>1</sup> evaluators in United States and/or Canada. Within this purpose, focus is given to how Black African women evaluators view their professional identity, role, and practice; how their African values and practices show up in their work; and the methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches, and theories that resonate with them and show up in their practice.

### **Why are you asking me?**

You are being asked to take part in this study because you may identify as a Black African woman evaluator practicing evaluation in United States and/or Canada. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

### **What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?**

In Phase 1, a 10-minute screening/intake Qualtrics survey will be administered. The survey will collect your demographic information. If you meet the inclusion criteria you will be redirected at the end of the survey to a Calendly website to schedule an appointment for an interview, which is the Phase 2 of the study if you are willing to participate.

In Phase 2, after scheduling an appointment on Calendly and prior to the interview, a meeting confirmation email, consent form, and a set of semi-structured interview questions will be sent to you for review. The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes in a recorded interview session over Zoom with the Principal Investigator, answering a set of research questions and describing your evaluation experience. After the interview has been completed, the

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<sup>1</sup> This study targets participants who are biologically female and identify as woman.

researcher will send you the transcript and a summary of your interview to member check your data.

**Is there any audio/video recording?**

The researcher will record digital audio of all individual interview sessions conducted during this research study. These recordings will be transcribed via Otter.ai and analyzed to pull out common themes and critical statements. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transfer to a written de-identified transcript. Information collected during this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described below.

**What are the risks to me?**

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. If you have questions, want more information, or have suggestions, please contact Onyinyechukwu Onwuka at [oonwuka@uncg.edu](mailto:oonwuka@uncg.edu) (or 336-389-7540), Dr. Ayesha Boyce at [ayesha.boyce@asu.edu](mailto:ayesha.boyce@asu.edu), or Dr. Aileen Reid at [aileen.reid@uncg.edu](mailto:aileen.reid@uncg.edu)

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project, or benefits or risks associated with being in this study, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855) 251-2351.

**Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?**

By participating in this study, you will help inform the research literature about the professional experiences of evaluators from historically minoritized populations and help promote greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation. While there

are no direct or indirect benefits for you to participate in this dissertation research study, the questions will provide an opportunity for professional and personal reflections.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**

There are no costs to you, or payments made for participating in this study.

**How will you keep my information confidential?**

De-identified data will be stored within a password secure folder in UNCG approved data storage as outlined in the UNCG Data Classification Policy. The master key listing the identities of participants and their pseudonyms used for the research will be secured in the UNCG Data Classification Policy. This data will be kept for future research and maintained by the researcher. Currently, UNCG requires that data be stored for five years following closure of the study. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transfer to a written de-identified transcript. Contact information of participants who are eligible and/or not invited to participate in the interviews will be deleted. Information of participants who weren't chosen for interviews will be deleted after analysis has been conducted but the data will be reported as findings for context.

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Audio recordings will be kept secure within Otter.ai servers. Otter uses AWS services for its data storage in the AWS region West, United States. Otter uses AWS S3 storage and enables AWS SSE (Server-Side Encryption) on data (S3 buckets). It encrypts the key itself with a root key that it regularly rotates. Amazon S3 server-side encryption uses a 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES-256). Transcripts will be de-identified and kept secure within a password secure folder in UNCG approved data storage as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. Audio recordings will be deleted upon transcription. For the demographic data collected through Qualtrics, the service uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data. Survey data are protected with passwords, with

services hosted by trusted data centers that are independently audited using the industry standard SSAE-18 method. A master list linking the participant's name to their pseudonym will be maintained and stored in the UNCG approved data storage location with further password protection within the spreadsheet itself. All data will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy.

**Will my de-identified data be used in future studies?**

Your de-identified data (e.g., transcripts) will be kept and may be used for future research without your additional consent.

**What if I want to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By completing this survey and/or scheduling and joining an interview, you are providing your informed consent agreeing that you read and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing to take part in this research study, and all your questions concerning this research study have been answered. Through your participation in the

interview(s), you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this research as described in this document.

Version Date: October 5, 2023

## APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENT

Date: 10-28-2023

**IRB #:** IRB-FY24-58

**Title:** The Role of Intersectionality in the Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in North America: A Qualitative Study

**Creation Date:** 8-17-2023

**End Date:** 10-4-2024

**Status:** Approved

**Principal Investigator:** Onyinyechukwu Onwuka

**Review Board:** UNC-Greensboro IRB

**Sponsor:**

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### Study History

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<b>Submission Type</b> Initial	<b>Review Type</b> Expedited	<b>Decision</b> <span style="color: red;">Approved</span>
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### Key Study Contacts

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<b>Member</b> Ayesha Boyce	<b>Role</b> Co-Principal Investigator	<b>Contact</b> astillma@uncg.edu
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<b>Member</b> Onyinyechukwu Onwuka	<b>Role</b> Principal Investigator	<b>Contact</b> ooonwuka@uncg.edu
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<b>Member</b> Onyinyechukwu Onwuka	<b>Role</b> Primary Contact	<b>Contact</b> ooonwuka@uncg.edu
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<b>Member</b> Aileen Reid	<b>Role</b> Investigator	<b>Contact</b> amreid3@uncg.edu
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## Initial Submission

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### Getting Started

#### **About Cayuse Human Ethics**

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Cayuse Human Ethics is an interactive web application. As you answer questions, new sections relevant to the type of research being conducted will appear on the left-hand side. Therefore not all sections may appear. You do not have to finish the application in one sitting. All information can be saved.

**Additional information has been added throughout the form for guidance and clarity. That additional information can be found by clicking the question mark in the top-right corner of each section.**

For more information about the IRB submission Process, IRB Tracking, and UNCG IRB Tasks, please refer to the [Cayuse Human Ethics Procedures Manual](#).

#### **Getting Started**

---

Throughout the submission, you will be required to provide the following:

- Detailed Study Information
- Study-related questionnaires
- Informed Consent Forms
- Study Recruitment Materials

#### **UNCG IRB**

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- You cannot begin data collection until a formal approval letter from the chair of the IRB has been received.
- Please allow for four weeks for IRB review of your submission. For studies requiring full committee review, the UNCG IRB meets regularly throughout the year.
- **If your study is funded**, please note that it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to link your IRB application to your Cayuse SP record.
- For more information regarding the UNCG IRB, consent form templates, and FAQs, visit our [website](#)

\*required

- **I have read the information above and I am ready to begin my submission.**
- **I understand that it may take at least four weeks for IRB review.**

---

✓ Yes



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

With the implementation of Cayuse and the ability to have a more streamlined application, **there is no longer a separate exempt application.** All submission types - exempt, expedited, and full committee - are now submitted on the same application.

**\*\*\*Please provide accurate responses to the screening questions below and do not attempt to trigger a shorter application**

---

\*required

1) Does your project involve a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, which is designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge?

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- The above question is the federal definition of research. If your submission meets the federal definition of research, please respond "yes"
  - You should only answer yes if your activity meets all the above
- 

✓ Yes

\*required

2) Will you be obtaining information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction (in-person OR online/remote) with the individual, and use, study, or analysis of the information or biospecimens? **PLEASE NOTE:** Merely obtaining information FROM an individual does not mean you should answer Yes unless the information is also ABOUT them.

- **This would include:** Any communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject such as using in-person or online questionnaires/surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, treatment interventions, etc.

- **\*\*\*Remote data collection (ex: Zoom, electronic survey, etc.) is still an interaction/intervention even though the research team may not meet face-to-face with participants. Those using remote data collection options, must still answer "yes" to this question**

---

Yes

\*required

**3)** Will you be obtaining, using, studying, analyzing, or generating identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens collected through means other than direct interaction? This would include data, records or biological specimens that are currently existing or will be collected in the future for purposes other than this proposed research (e.g., medical records, ongoing collection of specimens for a tissue repository).

---

Yes

No

No

No

\*required

**Is this a multi-institutional study?**

---

Yes

No

\*required

**What type of activity is this submission for?**

---

- Research Study
- Clinical Trial
- Drug/Device Study
- Quality Improvement Project
- Program Evaluation
- Evidence Based Practice (EBP)
- Other

\*required

**What is your status at UNCG?**

---

Faculty

Student

\*required

Please choose the applicable category.

---

Undergraduate Student

Graduate Student

\*required

Please enter your anticipated graduation date.

---

05-02-2024

\*required

Please choose the applicable option below

---

Thesis

Dissertation

Other

Staff

**Study Personnel**

---

*Note: If you cannot find a person in the people finder, please contact the IRB Office immediately*

\*required

### **Principal Investigator**

---

*Provide the name of the Principal Investigator of this study*

Name: Onyinyechukwu Onwuka

Organization: Graduate Student

Address: 1400 Spring Garden Street , Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

Phone:

Email: oonwuka@uncg.edu

\*required

### **Primary Contact**

---

*Provide the name of the Primary Contact of this study*

Name: Onyinyechukwu Onwuka

Organization: Graduate Student

Address: 1400 Spring Garden Street , Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

Phone:

Email: oonwuka@uncg.edu

\*required

### **Faculty Advisor**

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*Provide the name of your Faculty Advisor*

Name: Ayesha Boyce

Organization: Education (School/Unit)

Address: 1400 Spring Garden Street , Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

Phone:

Email: astillma@uncg.edu

### **Co-Principal Investigator(s)**

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*Provide the name(s) of Investigator(s) for this study*

Name: Aileen Reid

Organization: Education (School/Unit)

Address: 1400 Spring Garden Street , Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

Phone: (336) 334-4505

Email: amreid3@uncg.edu

### **Other Personnel**

---

- *Provide the name(s) of other personnel for this study (ex: research assistants)*

- **PLEASE NOTE:** Research team members listed in this section **DO NOT have editing rights** to edit a study submission. They are unable to make changes to a study submission or respond to stipulations.

\*required

### External Researchers

---

Will this study involve a collaboration with researchers that are **not affiliated with UNCG?**

*An external researcher would be a collaborator who is unaffiliated with UNCG or at an institution external to UNCG*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please only list external staff who will directly interact with research participants or will have access to identifiable data. Questions regarding this can be sent to [ori@uncg.edu](mailto:ori@uncg.edu)

Yes

No

\*required

**Will this study be externally funded?**

---

Yes

No

\*required

### Study Site

---

*Please select the location of the study*

✓ UNCG Main Campus

\*required

***Please provide the names of the UNCG departments where recruitment and/or data collection will take place***

---

Educational Research Methodology

**External Site (sites external to UNCG)**

**Study Dates**

---

***Please provide the anticipated study start and end dates. As a reminder, this section is informational only. Recruitment and data collection cannot begin until IRB approval has been obtained.***

\*required

**Start Date**

---

10-04-2023

\*required

**End Date**

---

03-15-2024

***Additional information and guidance may be found by clicking the question mark in the top-right corner of each section***

---

\*required

### **Subject Enrollment**

### **Total Study Enrollment**

---

- *Please enter the total number of subjects anticipated to be enrolled.*
- *It is recommended that the researcher submit a number that is more than the anticipated amount so as not to over-enroll.*
- *If using Qualtrics or another online survey tool, please either set a cap on the survey or monitor the number of participants that have completed the survey so as not to over-enroll.*

80

\*required

### **Ages**

---

*Select the age range of subjects that will be enrolled in this study. Please be sure to check all options that may apply.*

[Birth to less than 1 month](#)

[1 month to less than 12 years old](#)

[12 years old to 17 years old](#)

18 years and older



\*required

## **Vulnerable Populations**

---

*Please check the population(s) that will be enrolled. Check all options that apply.*

[Pregnant Women](#)

Minors with Parental Consent

[Prisoners](#)

Cognitively Impaired Adult Subjects

Non-English speaking

Other

None of the Above

### Is this study a clinical trial?

---

*Click the question mark to the right for the definition of a clinical trial*

**Registration of a clinical trial on ClinicalTrials.gov is required if a study meets any of the following criteria:**

- [Applicable Clinical Trials](#) (regardless of funding)
- [NIH-funded](#) and [any externally funded](#) studies that meet the [NIH definition of clinical trial](#)
- A clinical trial subject to the [revised common rule](#) – a clinical trial conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency ([45 CFR 46.116](#) (h) Posting of clinical trial consent form)
- [Billing insurance \(per CMS policy\)](#) – regardless of funding, although these almost always fall into one of the other categories anyway

**NOTE:** If a researcher plans to submit to an [ICMJE journal](#) for publication, \*ICMJE requires, and recommends that all medical journal editors require registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of first participant enrollment as a condition of consideration for publication.

Yes

No

\*required

### Study Background

---

Provide a summary of the background and rationale for this study (i.e, why is the study needed?).

- Do NOT exceed one paragraph.
- Do NOT include a literature review.

In recent decades, there has been a substantial increase in the number of people of African descent who immigrate to the United States. An increasing amount of research is being published on Black immigrants'

educational experiences as a direct result of the growing population of black immigrants in the United States. However, studies frequently fail to uncover the ways in which intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality affect professionals who are Black, African, immigrants and particularly women. The intersection of Blackness, 'Africanness', and womanness creates unique challenges and opportunities for Black African women evaluators, which are further compounded by factors such as immigration status, language barriers, and institutional racism. These factors impact their professional experiences, such as their ability to access professional development opportunities, build relationships with clients and colleagues, and navigate complex power dynamics in the workplace. While empirical research about the experiences and perceptions of evaluators of color is emerging, there is a dearth of research on the experiences of Black African women evaluators who occupy a unique intersection of identities that may shape their professional experiences. Understanding the ways in which multiple identities intersect with and shape the professional experiences of Black African women evaluators is crucial for advancing the field of program evaluation and promoting greater DEI in the evaluation profession. Existing research has examined the experiences of Black women in the workplace and the experiences of African immigrants in the United States, however, there is no research that focuses specifically on the experiences of Black African women evaluators.

\*required

## **Hypothesis**

---

*Provide the study hypothesis.*

Participants in this study will provide perspectives and lived experiences that illustrates how the multiple identities of Black African Women Evaluators influence professional experiences and practice to better contribute to the discourse on the intersection of identities of historically racialize population.

\*required

## **Objectives / Research Questions**

---

*Provide the study objectives.*

*RQ 1: What are the professional experiences (e.g., training, projects, sectors) of Black African women evaluators in North America? To what extent do these experiences align with their intersecting identities as Black African women?*

RQ 2: How and in what ways do the values and practices/traditions/heritage of Black African Women

Evaluators influence their professional identities, roles, and evaluation practice?

*RQ 3: What methodological frameworks, evaluation approaches and theories do they feel resonate with them and show up in their work?*

\*required

### **Outcome Measures**

---

*Provide the main study outcome measures.*

N/A

\*required

### **Inclusion Criteria**

---

*List and describe the inclusion criteria.*

The inclusion criteria for participation include identifying as a Black, African, Woman, 18 years and older, and actively practicing evaluation professionally in the United States and/or Canada.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

---

\*required

Does this study have specific exclusion criteria?

---

✓ Yes

\*required

*List and describe the exclusion criteria*

---

---

Individuals who meet the inclusion criteria, but identify as non-Black, African, and Woman.

Individuals who meet the inclusion criteria but are not practicing program evaluation in United States and/or Canada.

\*required

*Justify any exclusion based on race, gender, or ethnicity. If this does not apply, state n/a*

---

As this study is focused on the perspectives of intersecting identities of historically racialize/minoritized population, a focus on racial and gender identification of Black African and Woman, eliminates analysis of program Evaluators who are not from historically racialize/minoritized population.

No

***Additional information and guidance may be found by clicking the question mark in the top-right corner of each section.***

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\*required

**Describe all study procedures.**

---

In Phase 1, a 10 minutes screening/intake Qualtrics survey will be administered. The survey will collect participants' demographic information. Participants who meet the inclusion criteria will be redirected to a Calendly website to schedule an appointment for interview, which is the Phase 2 of the study if they are willing to participate. A description of the study and the Qualtrics survey will be distributed to known contacts via email and on my personal social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) accounts. Additionally, snowball sampling will be used to reach out to evaluators and researchers to ask them to share the study description and screening/intake Qualtrics survey with other evaluators and researchers that might be interested in the study. The list of participants from the screening survey will serve as my sample frame, from which I will identify between 15 and 20 participants for the interviews (Phase 2) on a first come first serve basis.

In Phase 2, after scheduling an appointment on Calendly and prior to the interview, a meeting confirmation email, consent form, and a semi-structured interview questions will be sent to you for review. The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes in a recorded interview session over Zoom with the Principal Investigator, answering a set of research questions and describing your evaluation experience. After the interview has been completed, the researcher will send you the transcript and a summary of your interview to member check your data.

I will conduct interviews with program evaluators who identify as Black, African, Woman, 18 + years, and practice program evaluation in the US and/or Canada. Interviews will be recorded on Zoom, and recordings/transcripts will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. Data analysis will consist of individual coding and theming. For the survey data, descriptive analysis will be conducted. Information of participants who weren't chosen for interviews will be deleted after analysis has been conducted but the data will be reported as findings for context.

\*required

**Describe your recruitment procedures.**

---

*Please include:*

- *ALL recruitment procedures being used for this study*
- *Where participants will be recruited from*

In Phase 1, a 10 minutes screening/intake Qualtrics survey will be administered. The survey will collect participants' demographic information. Participants who meet the inclusion criteria will be redirected to a calendly website to schedule an appointment for interview, which is the Phase 2 of the study if they are willing to participate. A description of the study and the Qualtrics survey will be distributed to known contacts via email and on my personal social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) accounts. Additionally, snowball sampling will be used to reach out to evaluators and researchers to ask them to share the study description and screening/intake Qualtrics survey with other evaluators and researchers that might be interested in the study. The list of participants from the screening survey will serve as my sample frame, from which I will identify between 15 and 20 participants for the interviews (Phase 2) on a first come first serve basis.

Phase 2 - After scheduling an appointment on calendly and prior to the interview, a meeting confirmation email and consent form will be sent to participants for review. The interview will last between 45 and 60 minutes. After the interview has been completed, the researcher will send the participant the transcript and a summary of their interview to member check their data.

I will conduct interviews with program evaluators who identify as Black, African, Woman, 18 + years, and practice program evaluation in the US and/or Canada. Interviews will be recorded on Zoom, and recordings/transcripts will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. Data analysis will consist of individual coding and theming. For the survey data, descriptive analysis will be conducted. Information of participants who weren't chosen for interviews will be deleted after analysis has been conducted but the data will be reported as findings for context.

\*required

**Has site approval been obtained?**

---

***NOTE:*** *If research will be conducted on the UNCG campus only or the recruitment script will be sent out by a listserv or group manager on the researcher's behalf, please state "n/a"*

Yes

No

✓ N/A

## Study Documents

---

Ex: in-person recruitment script, social media script, flyer, email script, etc.

[Follow-up Email Script\\_IRB.docx](#)

[Member check Email Script\\_IRB.docx](#)

[Black African Women Evaluators\\_Recruitment Email\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2 .docx](#)

[Black\\_African\\_Women\\_Evaluators\\_Intake\\_Survey\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.pdf](#)

[Social Media Script\\_RevisedIRB\\_V1.docx](#)

[INELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT E-MAIL SCRIPT\\_IRB.docx](#)

\*required

### **Describe Payment/Incentives.**

---

*Please include the payment/incentive amount, payment/incentive schedule, and if payment/incentive will be pro-rated.*

*If not applicable, state n/a*

N/A

\*required

### **Describe the duration of study participation, the length and number of study visits, and the timetable for study completion.**

---

This study involves the completion of a 10 mins Qualtrics screening/intake survey and one interview session with an estimated time of 45-60 mins, as well as a member check stage where the researcher will send a summary of the interview to the participant to elicit any clarification or additional information from



the participants.

The survey will commence in October 2023 and will be open for 3 to 4 weeks. The member check will be done between November 2023 and January 2024.

This study should be completed by March 2024.

\*required

**Describe the information to be gathered and the means for collecting and recording data.**

---

***Example:*** Qualtrics, remote data collection (Zoom, Google Meet, etc), in-person interviews, etc.

*If previously collected data is to be used, describe the proposed uses of these data.*

A 10 mins Qualtrics screening/intake survey that will collect background/demographic information will be conducted prior to an interview.

A 45-60 minutes password-protected audio recorded interview will be conducted over Zoom. I will collect the participants' interview narratives via audio recordings. Video recording will occur in Zoom during the course of the interview based on the comfortability of the participant, however only the audio recording will be used for transcription.

The audio recording will be uploaded into the transcription software known as Otter.ai. This is where the audio will be transcribed into text. This transcript will be edited for accuracy, then summarized for participants to check the data for accuracy and clarity of information. Any clarifications made to the data will be noted on the transcripts for analysis.

## **Study Instruments**

---

- *Attach all instruments (i.e. personality scales, questionnaires, evaluation blanks, etc) to be used in the study.*
- ***For online survey / questionnaire instruments, please provide PDF or Word documents and not the link to the online survey/questionnaire.***

[Black African Women Evaluator Interview Protocol\\_EditedIRB.docx](#)

[Black\\_African\\_Women\\_Evaluators\\_Intake\\_Survey\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.pdf](#)

\*required

**Survey, Questionnaire, or Interview**

---

*Will the study utilize surveys, questionnaires, or interviews?*

✓ Yes

\*required

Attach all copies of surveys, questionnaires, or interviews

---

[Black African Women Evaluator Interview Protocol\\_EditedIRB.docx](#)

[Black\\_African\\_Women\\_Evaluators\\_Intake\\_Survey\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.pdf](#)

No

\*required

**Will the survey, questionnaire, or interview record any information that can identify the participants?**

---

***Example:*** Names, email address, student ID, etc.

✓ Yes

No

\*required

**Please justify why the survey, questionnaire, or interview needs to record identifiable information.**

---

The identifiable information such as names and emails will be needed to disseminate the meeting invitation (Zoom link) and provide participants with data summaries. These identifiable information will be kept in a UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. I recognize that on Zoom calls, the names of participants may be recorded on the Zoom recording. The interview will be primarily audio recorded via Zoom, but based on the comfortability of the participant, a video recording may occur via Zoom.

The interview audio recordings will be transcribed and identifying information will be removed from the transcription record. The recordings and transcribed interview will be stored in an electronic folder in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. However, in order to ensure the confidentiality of participants' identities, I will identify a pseudonym for each interview participant that would be further utilized to distinguish them. These aliases will be used to monitor the participants' feedback so that their responses can be confidentially reviewed. All data will be maintained in a password-protected file.

\*required

### **Genetic Testing**

---

*Will this study involve genetic testing?*

Yes

No

\*required

### **Drugs, Devices, Biologics**

---

*Will the study involve administering any of the following? Check all that apply.*

Drug

Biologic

Device

None of the above

\*required

## Participant Data, Specimens, and Records

---

*Does this project involve the collection or use of materials (data or specimens) recorded in a manner that could identify the individuals who provided the materials, either directly or through identifiers linked to these individuals?*

Yes

\*required

**Please describe what materials (data or specimens) will be used and how they will be used**

---

Names and email addresses will be used to disseminate the Zoom link, and provide participants with data summaries. Audio recordings will be collected to enable transcription of the interview into text.

No

\*required

**Will this study involve a blood draw?**

---

Yes

No

\*required

**Will Protected Health Information (PHI) obtained directly from a covered entity (CE) be used?**

---

Yes

✓ No

***Additional information and guidance may be found by clicking the question mark in the top-right corner of each section.***

---

\*required

**Do you anticipate study participants will be subject to any risks?**

---

Yes

No

### **Potential Risks**

---

\*required

***Describe any known or potential risks and how those risks will be minimized***

---

Breach of confidentiality-

- Names and identifying information will be removed from the transcription record.
- The recording and transcribed interview will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy.
- Only the Principal Investigator involved in this study will have access to the information.
- A master list of all participants and their associated pseudonym will be maintained and kept in a separate location from recordings and interview transcriptions with further password protection within the spreadsheet itself.

\*required

*Describe any potential legal, financial, social, or personal affects on subjects of accidental data disclosure*

---

I do not foresee any affects of data disclosure.

*If relevant, describe procedures for providing a referral for any participants who are found, during the course of this study, to be in need of psychological counseling or medical follow-up. This would generally occur in studies where there are questions about depression or suicide or studies where there is potential for injury.*

***If this section is not relevant to your study, respond N/A***

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\*required

### **Expected Benefits**

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*Describe the expected direct benefits for participants (if any) and/or society that will arise from this study. For example, a direct benefit to the participant may be a free hearing test or fitness test results*

***NOTE: Monetary incentives, such as cash, gift cards, or drawings, cannot be listed as benefits***

The potential benefit of participating in this study is contributing to research knowledge by helping to inform the research literature about the professional experiences of evaluators from historically minoritised populations and promoting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of program evaluation. While there are no direct or indirect benefits for you to participate in this dissertation research study, the questions will provide an opportunity for professional and personal reflections.

\*required

### **Will deception be used as a method of data gathering?**

---

Yes

✓ No

## Safeguarding Participant's Identity

---

\*required

**What uses will be made of the information obtained from the subjects?**

---

**Examples:** Thesis, Dissertation, journal article, conference presentation, etc  
Dissertation, journal articles, conference presentations.

\*required

**Please describe how participant's privacy will be maintained.**

---

***Please include:***

- *Use of pseudonyms/ Study IDs*
- *Private location for data collection (if applicable)*
- *Whether or not a master list linking the participant's name to their pseudonym/study ID will be maintained*

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Audio recordings will be kept secure within Otter.ai servers. Otter uses AWS services for its data storage in the AWS region West, United States. Otter uses AWS S3 storage and enables AWS SSE (Server-Side Encryption) on data (S3 buckets). It encrypts the key itself with a root key that it regularly rotates. Amazon S3 server-side encryption uses a 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES-256). Transcripts will be de-identified and audio recordings will be deleted .

For the demographic data collected through Qualtrics, the service uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data. Surveys data are protected with passwords, with services hosted by trusted data centers that are independently audited using the industry standard SSAE-18 method.

A master list linking the participant's name to their pseudonym will be maintained and stored in the UNCG approved data storage location with further password protection within the spreadsheet itself.

All data will be stored in UNCG approved data storage locations as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy.



Information of participants who weren't chosen for interviews will be deleted after analysis has been conducted but the data will be reported as findings for context.

\*required

**Please describe how confidentiality of data will be maintained.**

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***Please include:***

- *Data storage location(s) / data management plan*
- *Data retention period,*
- *Data destruction plan*

De-identified data will be stored within a password secure folder in UNCG approved data storage as outlined in the UNCG Data classification policy. The master key listing the identities of participants and their pseudonyms used for the research will be secured in the UNCG Data classification policy. This data will be kept for future research and maintained by the researcher. Currently, UNCG requires that data be stored for five years following closure of the study.

Audio recordings will be deleted upon transfer to a written de-identified transcripts. Contact information of participants who are eligible and/or not invited to participate in the interviews will be deleted.

\*required

**Informed Consent**

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***Describe the procedures for obtaining informed consent for adult participants over the age of 18.***

For the demographic survey, participants will be provided with a link to the Qualtrics intake survey, that will include the informed consent detailing all the guidelines and confidentiality details of the study itself prior to taking the survey. Eligible participants for the interview, who are willing to participate and have scheduled an interview time will also be emailed the consent when confirming the meeting information.

Since online signature is not accepted by UNCG, a waiver of documentation will be requested.

\*required

**Will participants receive a copy of the consent or be provided with the opportunity to save, print, or screenshot the consent?**

---

Yes

No

\*required

## Parental Consent /Assent

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*Describe the procedures for obtaining parental consent / assent for minors under the age of 18.*

***If this does not apply to your study, state n/a.***

N/A

## Waiver of Documentation (Signed) Consent

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\*required

**Would you like to request a waiver of documentation (signed) consent?**

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***NOTE: Participants must still be provided with a consent form to read, but they do not need to provide their signature***

✓ Yes

\*required

Does your study meet the following criteria?

---

That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and  
✓ involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context

No

## Full or Partial Waiver of Consent

---

\*required

Would you like to request a full or partial waiver of consent?

---

Yes

No

\*required

Will you be requesting a Limited Waiver of HIPAA Authorization?

---

Yes

No

Are you requesting a Waiver of HIPAA Authorization?

---

Yes

No

\*required

**Upload Consent./Assent Forms**

---

[Consent Form\\_Black African Women Evaluators\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.docx](#)

Conflict of Interest

\*required

**Do you or any investigator(s) participating in this study have a financial interest or other interest related to this research project?**

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Examples: Board membership with an agency related to this study, financial interest with company or vendor related to this study, etc.

Yes

No

## Outside IRB of Record

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### Study Protocol

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*Attach the protocol for this study that was reviewed by the Outside IRB.*

### Outside IRB Approval

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*Attach the IRB Approval from the Outside IRB.*

## Study Procedures

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### Study Documents

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Example: in-person recruitment script, social media script, email script, flyer, etc.

[Follow-up Email Script\\_IRB.docx](#)

[Member check Email Script\\_IRB.docx](#)

[Black African Women Evaluators\\_Recruitment Email\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2 .docx](#)

[Black\\_African\\_Women\\_Evaluators\\_Intake\\_Survey\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.pdf](#)

[Social Media Script\\_RevisedIRB\\_V1.docx](#)

[INELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT E-MAIL SCRIPT\\_IRB.docx](#)

### Study Instruments

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Attach all instruments (i.e. personality scales, questionnaires, evaluation blanks, etc) to be used in the study.

[Black African Women Evaluator Interview Protocol\\_EditedIRB.docx](#)

[Black\\_African\\_Women\\_Evaluators\\_Intake\\_Survey\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.pdf](#)

### **Site Approval**

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### **Participant Protection**

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#### **Informed Consent Forms/Assent Forms**

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[Consent Form\\_Black African Women Evaluators\\_RevisedIRB\\_V2.docx](#)

### **Site Approval Letter**

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### **External Researcher Training**

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Other

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Training Documents, Debriefing script, etc.

## APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT/EMAIL FOR

### BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN EVALUATORS

Greetings!

My name is Onyinyechukwu Onwuka, and I am a doctoral candidate in the educational research methodology department at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG). I am hoping to recruit you to be a participant in my dissertation research titled, *“The Role of Intersectionality in the Professional Experiences of Black African Women Evaluators in North America: A Qualitative Study.”*

Black African women evaluators are chosen for this study to specifically discuss the intersectionality that is a part of a historically racialized/minority population and can speak to its impact on professional experiences in North America (U.S and Canada). I am interested in learning more about your professional evaluation experiences and practice as a Black African woman. By joining this study, you would be asked to complete a 10-minute online Qualtrics demographic survey. Based on your responses to the Qualtrics survey, you may be eligible to participate in a 45-to-60-minute Zoom interview.

If you are willing to participate, please click this [link](#) to be directed to a Qualtrics demographic survey, which includes a Calendly appointment scheduling link at the end to schedule a day and time to participate in a 45–60 minute interview. Once the appointment for the interview is confirmed, a follow-up email containing the meeting information, the semi-structured interview questions, along with an informed consent will be shared with you. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential. Only the research team will have access to your responses. In addition, your name will not be associated with any of your responses in the



transcription nor in later research.

Please feel free to reach out to Onyinyechukwu Onwuka ([oonwuka@uncg.edu](mailto:oonwuka@uncg.edu)) with any questions or concerns about the research study in general.

Best regards,

Onyinyechukwu Onwuka, MS.

Ph.D. Candidate

Version Date: October 5, 2023