

# **Beyond Bothered: Exploring Identity, Stressors, and Challenges of Black Women Ivy Collegians**

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## **Abstract**

Research exploring the experiences of Black women attending predominantly White institutions in the United States is emerging. However, scholarship centering Black women's experiences within Ivy League institutions remains elusive. This study explores the experiences of six Black women Ivy League collegians and their perceptions about how race, gender, and ethnicity shaped their sense of identity and campus interactions while attending an Ivy League institution. Using Black feminist thought as the theoretical framework, findings illustrate salient stressors and challenges while navigating interactions with peers, professors, and other university personnel. This study's findings broaden our understanding of Black women college student experiences within Ivy League institutions and informs institutions of higher education on strategies to best support them.

*Keywords:* Black women, higher education, Black feminist theory, Ivy League institution, identity development

## **Introduction**

Scholars have identified sexism, racism, feelings of isolation, and loneliness as potential barriers that could impede Black women's engagement within academia (Howard-Hamilton, 2003) and lead to psychological distress (Apugo, 2017). Research indicates Black collegiate women continue to experience these challenges in predominantly White spaces (Hardaway et al., 2019; Johnson, 2017; Johnson & Scott, 2020). Despite the burgeoning body of research

exploring the experiences of Black women attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the United States, scholarship centering Black women's experiences within Ivy League institutions remains elusive; a gap we seek to fill in the present study.

Racial and ethnic identity among Black Ivy League collegians further complicates the unique race-gendered experiences they encounter. College student demographics are constantly evolving within the U.S. higher education landscape, as does our understanding of underrepresented students' development and experiences. Moreover, while research on racial and ethnic issues have helped to make definitions of diversity more inclusive on college campuses, more research is needed to explore within-group differences, "which challenge us to move beyond a binary and monolithic understanding of groups as simply Asians, Latinos, Blacks, and Whites" (George Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015, p. 16).

Previous scholarship exploring Black ethnic diversity has shown that racial and cultural identities are an integral part of college student development (Stewart, 2015; Thelamour et al., 2019). However, scholars have criticized the lack of research and frameworks within the student development literature that has explicitly explored identity nuances and development among Black collegiate women (Commodore et al., 2018; Porter, 2017). Black Ivy League collegians' experiences warrant greater attention as few studies have qualitatively explored their experiences while considering their racially gendered identities, particularly within Ivy league Institutions. This study answers the call for examining diversity within groups by focusing on the intersectional identities of Black Ivy League collegians.

We enter this work by exploring a dual chasm of race and gender as experienced by Black undergraduate women. First, Black feminists and higher education scholars have recently drawn attention to the lack of research centering Black women and considering the intersectional identities they possess (Joseph et al., 2020; Patton & Haynes, 2018; Patton & Njoku, 2019). Such voids have been attributed to them historically being captured as monolithic subjects—"Blacks" or "women"—and rarely viewed and understood fully as Black women (Rosales & Person, 2003). To depict the unique experiences of Black women more fully, it is imperative that scholarship centering their experiences considers how these identities are inextricably linked (Collins, 1986). Second, scholars have criticized the damaging trend within higher education discourse that fails to differentiate "Black" student populations by ethnicity or national origin (Griffin et al., 2017). Such methodologies are not only damaging but they assume a homogenization of student experiences, and subsequently student services, when no homogenous group of "Blacks" or "Black women" exists. To bridge these chasms, our work seeks to disrupt the conflation of these identities, which further contributes to "an intersectional erasure of vulnerable populations in higher education" (Patton & Haynes, 2018, p. 12). By unpacking these layers, we seek to explore how race, gender, and ethnicity inform how Black women collegians experience the Ivy League through their standpoint and positionality. The research questions are:

1. How do Black undergraduate women make sense of their racial and ethnic identity as they navigate Ivy League institutions?
2. How do Black undergraduate women navigate Ivy League institutions?

## **Literature Review**

The body of research explicitly centering Black college women's experiences within Ivy League institutions is emerging (Johnson, 2017; Williams, 2011; Williams & Jones, 2021). Black women within the Ivy League experience a range of psychological stressors and find it challenging to balance financial and personal obligations while maintaining a social life (Williams, 2011). Black women experience discrimination and feeling like outsiders both on and off campus (Johnson, 2017). Despite these challenges, Black women attending Ivy League institutions are not deterred by racial or gender-based stereotypes and often prevail to degree completion (Williams, 2011). It is important to explore Black women's higher education experiences across the board at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender. Thus, to garner scholarly insight, this literature review focuses on the identity intersections of Black undergraduate women, organized into three categories: (1) Black women in higher education, (2) Black college women's identity, and (3) Black students at Ivy League institutions.

### **Black Women in Higher Education**

Black women have made great strides in higher education; although they represented just 8% of the total undergraduate enrollment, they took 64% of the bachelor's degrees earned by Black/African American students in 2018–2019 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2020). In his work examining Black women as the “new model minority,” Kaba (2008) revealed that a significantly higher number of Black women compared with Black men, White men and women, or Hispanic men and women were enrolled in college by 2004. We acknowledge that, while narratives of the new model minority myth might paint a portrait of success for Black women collegians through enrollment rates and graduation statistics, such perspectives have largely been rejected by Black feminist and higher education scholars on account of its position of treating Black women as a monolithic group, and by causing “divisive comparisons to Black men, White women, or women of Color” (Porter & Byrd, 2021, p. 2). Furthermore, the new model minority myth perpetuates stereotypes and presumes Black women collegians navigate college devoid of any real challenges, thereby dismissing the unique obstacles they inevitably face due to their marginalized identities (Commodore et al., 2018). Black women's success in college often overshadows the challenges they encounter on the pathway to degree attainment, including isolation (Bartman, 2015; Johnson & Scott, 2020), stereotyped expectations (Patton & Haynes, 2018), state-sanctioned violence, and harassment (Haynes, et al., 2021).

### **Black College Women's Identity**

Students' collegiate experiences represent a crucial transition point for young adults as they explore new freedom and the development of a new identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Positive college student identity correlates to successful college outcomes (Bowman & Felix, 2017). Traditional identity development models have been criticized and deemed inappropriate to explore the identity development of Black collegiate women on the grounds that they serve the “agendas of members of the dominant society” (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 20), and fail to

factor in their “cultural, personal, social contexts, and intersections of identities” (Porter, 2017, p. 88). Through her revised model of identity development in Black undergraduate women, Porter’s framework (Porter, 2017; Porter et al., 2020)—grounded in theoretical and empirical contributions of Black feminist thought—answers the call to capture the socialization processes of Black women prior to and throughout college.

### **Black Students at Ivy League Institutions**

Historically, the scholarly base about Black students at Ivy League institutions has emphasized increasing the enrollment of Black students. In 1998, with Princeton University leading the way, many Ivy League institutions began offering “no loan” financial aid packages to increase the socioeconomic diversity of students on campus. These efforts have also impacted the representation of students by race/ethnicity. However, diversifying America’s Ivy League institutions has not been achieved without its set of challenges. With increased enrollment of Black college students into some of America’s most prestigious universities, the question of “Who is Black on America’s Ivy League campuses?” represents another emerging body of scholarship. Black immigrant students are overrepresented at Ivy Leagues institutions, despite there being few differences in background (academic preparedness, socioeconomic status, etc.) among Black immigrants and natives (Massey et al., 2007). In addition to enrollment, the body of literature exploring the lived, on-campus experiences of Black students at Ivy League institutions continues to emerge. Much of this work highlights race and class tensions. Many elite colleges tailor to the needs of the affluent, which in-turn causes class and culture differences that make it challenging for Black students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds on these campuses (Torres, 2009). Black students’ mere presence on Ivy League campuses is viewed as suspicious (Scott et al., 2021). Indiscriminately, the review of the literature is useful to discern the experiences of Black women college students in higher education. There remains, however, space to explore this unique (doubly minoritized) population as they navigate the campuses of America’s Ivy League institutions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Black feminist thought as a theoretical framework is used to amplify the experiential knowledge of Black women Ivy collegians. Rooted in a “tradition that centers the voices of Black women’s socio-political struggles in a White supremacist capitalist patriarchal imperialist society that privileges Whiteness, maleness, and wealth,” Black feminist thought is a critical theory that allows Black women to articulate their identities and lived experiences (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 18). In her discussion of Black feminist thought, Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 1999) maintained that Black women have occupied marginal positions in academic settings for an extended period. This type of marginality is viewed as the *outsider-within* status, which describes border spaces occupied by groups of unequal power. Although Black women may have been allowed access to spaces where the dominant group has assembled and played an active role in the functioning of White society, they remain excluded from full participation within these spaces. Their role as Black women renders them invisible, as they have no voice when

dialogue commences (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Black feminist scholar bell hooks (1982) highlighted the unique positionality generated by the outsider-within status while describing her childhood in small-town, Kentucky: “Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside and in from the inside out ... we understood both” (p. vii).

Collins also highlighted “controlling images” as a major theme within Black feminist thought, which refers to historical tropes and stereotypical images used to perpetuate oppressive conditions for Black women. She described these stereotypes as “the sexually promiscuous Black woman, the over-sexed-Black-Jezebel, the mammy, the welfare cheat, and the overachieving Black woman who emasculates the Black males in her life” (1986, p. 106). Scholars have also highlighted the sapphire trope, which has historical portrayals of Black women being loud, stubborn, and overbearing and has “as its base one of the oldest negative stereotypes of woman—the image of the female as inherently evil” (hooks, 1982, p. 85). These themes are considered in understanding how Black women Ivy collegians navigate the academy and build upon the scholarly research that has used Black feminist thought to explore Black college women’s experiences.

Lastly, as Black women researchers, we engage Black feminist thought as both theory and praxis through our analysis as we seek to,

add to the body of evidence that already exists about different groups of women and the genders; to descriptively capture and illustrate the nuanced differences between groups of women’s social and material conditions; and to bring forth alternative analyses for referencing gender and racial oppression. (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 18)

As cisgender, critical Black women scholar practitioners, our collective positionality is guided by our research agendas. Ayana Hardaway’s scholarship amplifies the experiences of Black girls and women in P-20 educational contexts using critical qualitative methods. Sharron Scott’s scholarship explores access, equity, and persistence of racially minoritized populations in postsecondary education. Jennifer Johnson’s scholarship advocates for explorations of the Black student experience at the intersection of identity across educational settings P-20. As a praxis of resistance, we reject binary thinking and are intentional in our considerations of how the intersections of different identities and structures of oppressions impact Black women’s experiences.

### **Methodology**

This study utilized a qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) to explore experiences with gender, race, and ethnicity and how these experiences shape students’ sense of identity as well as their experiences navigating the collegiate environment. This study also utilized a phenomenological approach, a method suited to explore the lived experiences of Black women and center their voices as data (Evans-Winters, 2019). The research design was informed by the theoretical perspectives of Black feminist thought.

## **Recruitment**

Data for this study was derived from a larger project that explored the college choice and experiences of Black undergraduate students attending Ivy League institutions (Scott et al., 2021). Purposeful sampling was used for this project as it requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases (Richards, 2009). Recruitment materials were shared via email and social media to campus offices and student organizations at each of the eight Ivy League institutions. Participants were assigned a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.

## **Participants**

The participants were six cisgender Black women, between the ages of 19 and 22. In addition to identifying as Black, two participants reported being Black American, and four participants reported being second-generation immigrants representing the following identities: two identified as being of West Indian descent; one identified as being of African descent; and one identified as being of Black Haitian descent. Of the participants who reported being second generation, all parents were born outside of the United States (Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Cameroon, and Haiti). All participants were current undergraduate students attending an Ivy League institution. Participants' academic majors included a combination of the following: African American studies, computer science, economics, political science, public health, sociology, and urban studies. Participant demographics are outlined in Table. 1.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

Following a semi-structured protocol, two researchers conducted interviews with participants during the spring 2020 term (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) via phone or video. Open-ended questions were asked to allow deeper analysis of the connections among students' racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic identities and the nature of their interactions with others on campus. Interviews lasted approximately 75 minutes and were audio recorded. Dedoose qualitative software was used to manage the audio files, transcripts, and analytic memos reviewed for analysis. After the data were collected, the team met to discuss the emergent findings of the study and to discuss data analysis strategies. Subsequently, the lead author identified a subgroup of six women from the original data sample. Using secondary data analysis methods, the coding of transcripts and categorization of themes were informed by our research questions and theoretical framing. Following inductive and deductive approaches, the lead author engaged in two analytical strategies simultaneously: deductive coding to collect data relevant to the research topic and inductive coding to capture additional information relevant to participants' experiences (Saldaña, 2012). The lead author brought these findings to the team; the team discussed the salience of the themes as they related to previous scholarship and theoretical underpinnings of this investigation.

## Trustworthiness

As co-collaborators, we engaged in several strategies to increase the trustworthiness of this research (Jones et al., 2014). First, two researchers were responsible for designing the original study, and documented the research design process, modifications to the interview protocol, and memos to create an audit trail of procedures. Additionally, the team engaged in member checking to validate the accuracy of data collected from individual participants. Participants were contacted to request additional information to address any inconsistencies between the demographic questionnaire completed and interview responses. Thick descriptions were reported to provide rich detail of the context of the study to enhance transferability (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Finally, as Black women scholars, we discussed how our own experiences of navigating higher education influenced our understanding of the experiences of participants to acknowledge and limit researcher bias in this study.

## Findings

Data revealed shared stressors and challenges experienced by Black women Ivy collegians due to their outsider status, which we characterized as *othering* (being viewed or treated differently) and *bothering* (being worried or concerned; causing uneasiness to one's mental/emotional state) through the following themes: (1) institutional othering; (2) resisting and conforming to controlling images; and (3) oppositional culture. These narratives illuminate how Black women Ivy collegians' experiences of being othered and bothered contributed to their perceptions as they navigated the collegiate environment.

### Institutional Othering

One of the themes interpreted within the study was shared oppressive experiences, which we described as othering, through the following areas: (1) classroom; (2) curriculum, and (3) university personnel.

#### *Classroom*

Participants described dynamics and interactions with their professors and peers within the classroom in which they felt either targeted or rendered invisible. These experiences were shaped by their academic discipline and faculty practices. For example, Shaniece (Black African, Columbia University) described these extremes of feeling invisible/rendered disposable by her peers, and feeling targeted/gaslighted by her professors:

I was in my computer science class, and this is the 400 plus group of students. My computer science teacher was like, "turn around and greet your neighbors so that you can form study groups," and nobody turned around to greet me. I literally turned and people just acted like I didn't exist. I was like, okay?!

Shaniece went on to describe the ways her professors often left her feeling hypervisible as the only Black student in a class: "I didn't notice it until the professor pointed it out. ... This always happens every year, and I'm, like, does it have to be mentioned? As a professor, why

would you mention that to your students?” In addition to experiences shaped by faculty, Layla (Black Jamaican, Columbia University) and Angela (Black, Columbia University) reflected upon their experiences navigating White spaces and being spoken down to and accosted by their peers in the classroom. Layla shared her experience navigating political science courses as her major:

It just kind of becomes this space, kind of like White men who think that they know everything about the Middle East to China who want to show their power and authority about absolutely everything ... there's no way you, as a Black woman, have anything important to say.

Similarly, Angela shared how during her freshman year in her economics class, a peer immersed himself in a conversation she was having with her friend about being “woke”:

He overheard us. So then, like, he starts accosting us ... and he's like, “What do you mean by that? Like, what, what do you mean by ‘woke’? Do you mean people who agree with you politically?” And I'm like, “Bro, like, first of all, was I talking to you?”

Angela interpreted the line of questioning by this male peer to be intrusive and went on to explain how her perception of this interaction was informed by her identity not only as a Black woman, but also as a person from a low-income background in the South. She shared,

I remember Angela Davis making the statement like, “The person is political.” And so, I mean my person is a Black woman from the South who is low income. So, I mean, like, those tensions and those identities definitely make me cognizant of different things.

Vanessa (Black Haitian, Barnard College) reflected on her experiences as a Black woman from a marginally resourced neighborhood and described having to navigate messages coming from professors and the campus president about her ability to meet the challenges of the Ivy League:

That class was horrible. Professor [X] is a racist woman who basically was just so condescending to us. She told us, “College is going to be so hard for you,” like, “you guys aren't really prepared, or made for this education.” Which echoes the statements of our previous president who said public school students are not equipped for Barnard College. ... Like, she publicly said that.

Data revealed that in addition to experiencing oppressive conditions while navigating classroom environments as Black women, perceptions of their experiences and identity are also shaped by identity markers like class status and geographic origin.



## ***Curriculum***

Building upon classroom interactions, Raven (Black, Columbia University) expressed experiencing oppression directly related to a lack of representation within the university curriculum. She shared her reaction while engaging with course materials perceived as oppressive:

I felt that a lot in my contemporary civilizations class, not by anyone in particular, but by the material itself. ... It's just really difficult to hear these authors kind of espousing negative views about Black people. ... There's just some fundamental negation of my identity in this space by these people that I don't really want to hear.

There were also spaces where participants felt more visible and supported to speak freely as Black women. For Vanessa, this was her creative writing class:

It became very clear to me that there are different spaces where I could be an outspoken, really engaged, and critically thinking Black woman. Because that's how I'm read and perceived in every space. Like I can't just be a college student now. I'm the Black girl.

## ***University Personnel***

Beyond the classroom and curriculum, participants described problematic interactions with university personnel based on their position as Black women. Participants shared interactions with university personnel where lines were blurred, and administrators attempted to counsel them about "life as a Black woman." Reflecting on a session with her academic advisor, Shaniece shared:

He was like, "the rates for Black women marrying in general that are professionals are extremely low because there's not a lot of professional Black men available to you." And he said "but considering your demeanor and your intelligence, you will definitely marry a professional. I just don't know if that person is going to be African American." And I said "okay." An old White man saying that, you know ... he was trying to compliment me.

While most of the participants shared feelings of being othered and bothered through campus interactions, interestingly, Vanessa, who attended an all-women's college, reported how Barnard had been "very forgiving ... especially as a Black woman, in ways that other institutions haven't been ... but maybe because we are a women's college, we understand that women specifically need to be given space to make mistakes." Each Black woman in this study experienced stress and challenges because of their outsider-within status, which left them exposed to being bothered as they navigated their Ivy campuses.

## **Resisting and Conforming to Controlling Images**

The second theme reflected the added stressors participants experienced in either resisting or conforming to internally perceived biases and stereotypes while navigating their Ivy campuses. Brea, Shaniece, and Vanessa described how their perceptions of what others thought about them influenced how they perceived themselves in that they experienced internal impositions on their identity. Brea (Black West Indian, University of Pennsylvania) talked about her need to code switch: “I come from a predominantly Black high school. So, raising my voice when I’m passionate is not okay even though there is no anger. People of other races get very intimidated.” Brea felt the need to conform and adopt ways of being consistent with the dominant White campus environment. Similarly, Shaniece described how she adjusted her physical appearance to avoid being perceived as an angry Black woman:

I’m always afraid of the aggressive Black women [stereotype] so I wear soft colors. I make sure I always smell good, make sure my nails are always done. I dress nice every day because I feel like I just can’t walk around with sweatpants ... I feel like I have to always prove myself ’cause I’m a Black woman.

Brea’s and Shaniece’s caution around exhibiting “intimidating and aggressive” behaviors can be attributed to controlling images and the sapphire stereotype.

Conversely, Vanessa described her resistance and refusal to be “silenced” in submission to her White professor and peers:

I’ll push back against my professor; I’ll push back against everyone. Because that’s what the White boys do [laughter]. Why would I do anything different? Like I’m not going to engage in the space differently, especially these like quote unquote “progressive ass spaces” ... where you have these professors that are talking about Karl Marx, but then a Black girl speaks up in class and like suddenly they’re uncomfortable ... I’ve tried being the Black girl who listens to the racist person speaking in class.

## **Oppositional Culture**

The final theme was categorized as oppositional culture to highlight how within-group differences informed perceptions about Black women Ivy collegians’ sense of identity. Black women were othered and bothered by fellow Black students despite sharing the outsider-within status as undergraduates in the larger Ivy college environment. While discussing perceptions of race and ethnicity, participants discussed their awareness of within-group differences that impacted how they were treated. For instance, Angela shared that within the Black campus community she “experienced more violence on the basis of ethnicity than on race.” She reflected, “So, I remember my freshman year, there was a girl who made a comment at the BSO [Black Student Organization] meeting, and she basically said that African Americans have a slave mentality.” Similarly, Shaniece discussed the blatant othering she experienced as a Black person

with parents who immigrated from Cameroon. She stated, “It bothers me because growing up as an African, people always thought that we were dirty, and I got those comments mainly from the Black community.” Brea and Layla, who both identified as West Indian/Caribbean, expressed feelings of being stuck in the middle. Brea explained, “There’s a very obvious divide between African and African American college students.” So, for her, as a Caribbean American college student, she found herself “insulted by both camps.” Similarly, Layla shared:

I would absolutely say at Columbia, that has been a major source of contention that I, as a West Indian, I kind of sat out from ... because I hear it mainly playing out between African students and African American students.

In addition to the tension and biases based on ethnic difference, Vanessa shared combating class bias within the Black student population and reacting to presumptions about being privileged as Ivy League students. In her experience, she recognized that very few Black students came from low-income backgrounds like hers, and this experience isolated her. She asserted, “The same politics of White supremacy play out in the Black community. It’s just like assumed in these elitist spaces, there’s just this assumed identity of we’re all privileged.” Taken together, despite their shared racial identity, and outsider-within positions as members of the campus, the women in this study shed light on the slights, insults, and othering experienced at the hand of other Black students.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Using Black feminist thought as the frame of analysis, this study sought to uncover how perceptions about ethnicity, gender, and class shaped Black women Ivy collegians’ sense of identity and their experiences navigating the collegiate environment. By focusing on the positionality of collegiate Black women, data suggested that despite their ethnic and socioeconomic differences, Black women in this study reported similar experiences based on their “shared location in unjust power relations” (Collins, 2003, p. 68) in the context of White patriarchal Ivy League campuses.

Our work seeks to promote institutional policies and practices uniquely suited to support students of diverse backgrounds and hold institutional agents accountable for promoting culturally affirming learning spaces, particularly for Black women. As it relates to faculty and staff, curricula should be evaluated and revised to be more inclusive by incorporating culturally relevant content of interest for Black women (Commodore et al., 2018). Access to ongoing professional development to build and sustain multicultural competence can enable faculty and staff to better support the needs of Black student populations both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, cultural nuances within the Black community and the perceptions of same-race peers of different ethnicities should be considered by colleges and universities (i.e., student organizations, counseling centers, student services) through structured and funded programs that target racial identity development efforts to support diverse student populations (Griffin et al., 2017). For Black women specifically, support networks and affirming spaces with other Black women are integral to their identity development (Croom et al., 2017). Black women

Ivy collegians are thriving and surviving oppressive college environments, but, as stated by Porter (2017, p. 98), “Black women are not the same, and thus will need varying levels of support and affirmation.”

Study findings answer the call of higher education scholars exploring within-group diversity among Black student populations (George Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015) by highlighting some of the race–gendered and ethnic–gendered complexities experienced by Black women collegians. Within-group research adds to the complexity and understanding of the many factors that shape all students’ experiences. Thus, we better understand how factors like educational opportunities, socioeconomic status, and place of birth impact students. Our findings expand what is known about the peer interactions among and across Black ethnic groups, particularly for Black American, Caribbean, and African students. Future studies should consider the peer relationships among these groups further to better understand how these relationships impact their college student development.

### **Conclusion**

Although Black women collegians are persevering and graduating at higher rates than their peers, they are likely doing so while under duress. Our research has shown that Black women within the Ivy League are no exception. Despite their enrollment among the nation’s most selective and elite institutions, vulnerabilities and barriers remain that could impede their success. To resist and disrupt the imposed social constructions that mute Black women’s differences, this study aimed to amplify these differences to inform best practices used to serve them. We reject the hegemonic narratives about Black college women and Black Ivy collegians serving as new model minorities. Instead, we agree with scholars who asserted:

Those working with and alongside Black women: (a) understand the many facets of their individual and collective socialization processes, (b) acknowledge the larger system(s) of discrimination in which Black women are situated (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism), and (c) make sense of the diverse ways they engage their identities, in order to best support their needs. (Porter et al., 2020, p. 254)

We implore higher education practitioners, particularly those within the Ivy League, to recognize and address stressors and challenges of Black women collegians while navigating their campuses.

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