

“In the Skin I’m in ...I Represent a Different Version of What Help Looks Like:” Black Women Sport Psychology Professionals’ Experiences in Applied Sport Psychology

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Dedication

First, I want to dedicate this to my boys, who are not boys anymore as they have grown into young adults throughout this process. They have endured the entirety of the tweens, teens, and now young adulthood with the PhD always playing in the background of our lives. In spite of the sacrifices and the parts of their mom they did not have access to all the time they kept on believing in me and loving me. LoRen and Ryan did your best to be great at whatever you all attempted whether it be school, acting, or sports. I want you to know that I did this for you. I started it for you, and I have finished it for you. There is nothing more important to me than the respect and love that comes with your presence in my life. You two are my greatest accomplishments. My lifelong goal is to be in the Hall of Fame of motherhood. That is why I prioritized you two and did my best to make you proud.

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Abstract

Black Feminist Applied Sport Psychology (BFASP) is a culturally inclusive theoretical framework for centering Black women's experiences in applied sport psychology (Carter et al., 2020; Couch et al., 2022). For the past two decades, (White) Feminist applied sport psychology professionals (FASPPs) described the experiences of Black women as unique but were overlooked in research and participant pools due to the prioritization of White women's and Black male sport experiences. (Carter & Davila, 2017; Carter & Prewitt-White, 2014; Gill, 2020; Hyman et al., 2021). The purpose of this study was to explore the life and work experiences of BASPPs (i.e., faculty, staff, or in private practice). Of particular interest was how Black women have navigated life in the othered and marginal spaces of applied sport psychology. Thus, the specific research question was: What are the experiences of Black women in applied sport psychology research and practice? Grounded in Black Feminist Applied Sport Psychology (BFASP; Carter, 2020; Manu, 2020), Black feminist thought (BFT; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989), Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP; Schinke et al., 2019), and informed Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology (Hill, 2012), 16 Black female sport psychology professionals were interviewed regarding their experiences in the field of applied sport psychology ($M = 10.25$ years). A four-member research team plus an external auditor constructed four domains and 39 categories to represent their experience: (a) *Blackness- Black Girlhood Family Foundations*; (b) *Whiteness-Ebony in the Ivory Tower- The Gate(s) and their Keepers*; (c) *Whiteness- Black Women in the Profession: The Firsts and Only's*; and (d) *Black womanhood: Self Stories, Finding the Sistahood, Leaving a Trail*. Participants' accounts revealed a diversity of experiences which varied by class, ethnicity, and athlete identities which determined their interests in sport and education. Also, participants' experiences who pursued

graduate degrees discussed the lack of representation among their classmates and faculty.

Participants experienced microaggressions and macro assaults based on racist and sexist tropes (e.g., “angry Black woman”). Finally, participants advised Black women aspiring to a career in sport psychology to connect with other Black women, live your truth, find your people, and there is space reserved for you.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Black Women are currently leading at the highest levels of social, economic, and political contexts, not to mention their prominent place in sports and entertainment. From the first woman to be elected Vice President to the first Black woman nominated to serve a life appointment as a supreme court justice, some have deemed this time as the decade of the Black woman (Estevez, 2019). Women's sport is also experiencing the ascendancy of the Black women as not only firsts and bests but achieving the status of the greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.s) in Serena Williams, Simone Biles, and the newest to reach the first and only status in Winter sports - Olympian and gold medalist Erin Jackson to name a few. In this past 2021 (2020) summer Olympics in Tokyo, we witnessed Black women and Women of Color (WOC) such as tennis player Naomi Osaka and track athlete and thrower Raven Saunders bring to the forefront and elevate mental health and sport and performance psychology as an essential tool in mental health and performance excellence (Adams, 2021).

Furthermore, the dual pandemics, racial reckoning, and social injustice exposed the race, gender, and class oppression still firmly in place in all sectors of American (United States; US) society. The shifting of power in the economic and social context of sport and the field of applied sport psychology was forever changed in its positioning in the allied health fields that support athletes at the highest levels. After the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, professional athletes demanded from their sport administrations and organizations not only justice, but the resources needed to treat and support racial trauma, mental health, and called for People of Color (POC) and in particular Black men and women to fulfill those practitioner roles

(Adams, 2021). This shift has also manifested at the NCAA level as well with the creation of new positions, and an all-out search for Black or African American practitioners (Soong, 2019).

Even though the number of Black women in applied sport psychology has grown in recent years, the number of Black men who are sport psychology professionals are barely able to be counted. This has put an undue burden on Black women having to be a “one stop shop” for mental health, performance excellence, and to fulfill the roles of diversity, equity, and inclusion “experts” for mostly Black male athletes. In addition, there is little known about the experiences of these women, the paths that it took for them to reach these coveted positions, and the support needed for them to professionally develop in the field (Hyman et al., 2021).

This has been true for a long time. Until recently, Black women’s lived experiences have been relatively absent in feminist applied sport psychology research (FASPPs; Gill, 2020; Hall, 2001; Hyman et al, 2021, Oglesby, 1981) even though there have been calls by Black¹ feminist applied sport psychology professionals (BFASPPs) to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences (Carter & Davila, 2017; Carter et al., 2020; Hall, 2001: Hyman et al, 2021).

Moreover, feminist applied sport psychology professionals (FASPPs) have described the experiences of Black women as unique but overlooked due to the prioritization of White women’s experiences (Roper 2002, 2008; Whaley 2001) as well as an emphasis on Black male experiences for those scholars considering race at all (Carter & Prewitt White, 2014; Gill, 2020; Schinke et al., 2019).

¹I use interchangeably the terms *Black* and *African American* to describe women who were born in the US and are of the African Diaspora.

The Status of Black Women and Leadership in Applied Sport Psychology

Despite these obstacles, BFASPPs are becoming more visible than at any other time in the history of the field (Carter, 2020; Carter & Davila, 2017; Carter & Prewitt White, 2014; Hyman et al. 2021). The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) has in recent years appointed the first Black female fellow, elected the first African American female president, and the first African American female Diversity Committee chairperson. While it is encouraging that a few Black women have ascended to key leadership roles in AASP, on the whole, scholars have remained relatively silent in relation to inquiry focused on or conducted with/by this population (Carter et al. 2020; Gill 2020; Hall, 2001; Hyman et al., 2021). Recently, BFASPP Carter (2020) served as the editor of a FASP textbook; this was the first for Black women in sport psychology and a resource now used in graduate coursework. Further, Carter and Prewitt White (2014) emphasized the need to center race and more importantly experiences of racism prominently throughout applied sport psychology practice and research. Additionally, they argued for inclusion and demarginalizing race in the field of sport psychology and believed that this is what has been keeping Black women relegated to the margins of AASP.

Furthermore, the persistent marginalization of BASPPs whether done in the field's predominately White research participant pools or in the number of White feminist faculty, researchers, applied practitioners, and those that serve on peer-reviewed editorial boards (Carter & Davila, 2017; Gill, 2020) perpetuates a form of maintenance of the status quo and White privilege which serves to mute BASPPs' stories (Gill, 2020). Additionally, over two decades ago, Hall (2001) described the institutional, cultural, and individual barriers present for BASPPs; she argued that "the persistent fusion of race and class for people of color is a chronic problem in research" (p. 388). Unfortunately, to date, the truth of this statement continues to be accurate.

In other words, the postgraduate and professional environment of sport psychology has proven to be a microcosm of larger society with regard to racism, sexism, and classism (Hall, 2001). The sport environment also reflects the socialization and positioning of Black women in the same way it manifests in the broader US context (Collins, 1990; Hall, 2001). For example, the presence of Black women in both the sport and leisure context have been a matter of hypervisibility and invisibility simultaneously; however, systemic oppression has created a new iteration of invisible marginality (Mowatt et al., 2013; Sesko et al., 2010). Moreover, the path to participation at all levels of sport has been deeply rooted in the reality of how Black women came to be in the United States as people of African descent who were enslaved and socialized to be at the bottom of the social, political, and economic ladder (Collins, 1990); enslaved Black women were seen as unhuman, field workers, domestics, breeders, nannies, and sexual objects (Collins, 1990). Black women's journey into the social and economic context of sport and now the field of sport psychology has been a treacherous one where the systemic barriers and obstacles that slowed down White women's access to the field all but blocked Black women's presence and ascension to leadership to a trickle (Carter & Prewitt-White, 2014; Hall, 2001; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002).

Although White feminist applied sport psychology professionals (WFASPPs) introduced feminism into sport psychology (e.g., Bredemeier, 2001; Bredemeier et al., 1991; Gill, 2020; Harris, 1973; Krane, 2001b; Oglesby, 1981, 2001; Roper, 2001; Whaley, 2012), WFASP is finally evolving to include Black feminism and WOC into its discourse (Carter, 2020; Gill, 2020; Hyman et al., 2021; Manu, 2020; Roper & Fisher, 2020). I am hopeful that BFASPPs like myself can expand WFASP by including a theoretical framework that further critiques the ways Black women are hypervisible in sport and applied sport psychology and also “represented in

stereotyped and commodified ways” (Mowatt et al., 2013, p. 644). I have initiated this work in the current study by hearing from BFASPPs about their own experiences.

Statement of the Problem

BFASSPS (although few in number) are as stated above somewhat visible in the field of applied sport psychology yet remain invisible in applied sport psychology research (Gill, 2020). The goal of the current dissertation project was to interview BFASSPS at all levels of experience (i.e., MS, PhD, PsyD, faculty, and practitioner) and from different family and class backgrounds. My hope for this study was fulfilled with the details the women shared about their identity journeys related to how they self-identified, stories of family upbringing, sport and educational experiences, role models, allies, accomplices, and the possible barriers and obstacles to reaching their desired destination in the field of sport psychology. In particular, I was interested in their matriculation to and through graduate school and obtaining faculty or staff positions. In addition to interrogating the negotiation of their intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989, 2021; Remedios & Snyder, 2018), and race-gendered and classed experiences, (Hyman et al., 2021; Simien et al., 2019) their upbringing, sport, and educational experiences in through, and (sometimes) out of the field of sport psychology.

One rationale for the current study was to help applied sport psychology professionals understand; (a) the intersectional identity transitions that BFASSPs can experience – this is essential so that we can offer culturally competent education, research, training, internships, post docs, role models, mentors, and peer mentor networks to support BFASPPs (Carter & Prewitt White 2014; Carter & Davila, 2017; Hyman et al., 2021); (b) how BFASSPs navigate White sport psychology spaces – this is complex (Gunter, 2020; Norwood (2020); (c) the lack of support structures needed for matriculation and equitable access for BFASSPs (Carter & Prewitt

White, 2014); and (d) the ways Black female Certified Mental Performance Consultants (CMPC)

- a. When did you first know or recognize that you were considered by society to be Black or African American?
- b. What were your most salient identities at different times during their upbringing, education, and professional journey?
- c. How did you matriculate and find sport psychology as a profession?
- d. Who were your role models in sport psychology?
- e. Describe ways you may resist oppression or discrimination in your everyday experiences working in the field of sport psychology?

are situated as often the *only* professional people of color in the sporting/performance context; being the “only” one creates stress, pressure, isolation, othering, and stereotypes of the angry Black women and “mammy” /strong Black woman that ultimately cause trauma and harm to BWSPPs (Carter & Rossi, 2019; Remedios, 2018). In addition, the system of oppression in higher education resulting in the lack of Black women professionals is gendered racism keeping the sport psychology world’s (i.e., White women/Black men) status quo in place with regard to exploring the unique lived experiences of BASPPs (Carter & Davila, 2017; Carter & Prewitt-White, 2014; Hyman et al., 2021; Waller et al., 2016).

Purpose of the Study and Guiding Research Questions

Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to explore the life and work experiences of BASPPs (i.e., faculty, staff, or in private practice). Of particular interest was how Black women have navigated life in the othered and marginal spaces of applied sport psychology. Thus, the specific research question was: What are the experiences of Black women in applied sport psychology research and practice? Sub-questions included

Most Relevant Definitions

Afrocentric Epistemology is a way of knowing (i.e., knowledge production) from the perspective and experience of a person of the African diaspora (Collins, 1996).

Black or African American: the racialized names given to individuals of African descent born in the United States of America (Essed, 1991).

Black Feminist Thought (BFT) is a body of knowledge conceptualized by Patricia Hill Collins (Collins, 1990). Those who utilize BFT take an intersectional approach to exploring the experiences of WOC. The three themes that pervade BFT as presented by Collins (1986) are: (a) the interlocking nature of oppression, (b) the value of self-definition and self-valuation, and (c) the importance of redefining Afro-American women's culture to include elements such as sisterhood, motherhood, and creative expression.

Black Feminist Standpoint Theory (BFST) is a distinctive Black women's standpoint that has been used to produce and validate alternative ways of knowledge in academic research that reflects the thoughts, interests, self-defined standpoints, and the thematic content of African American women's experiences (Collins, 1990).

Endarkened Feminist Epistemology (EFE) is African and African American women's ways of knowing and knowledge production. Those who utilize EFE in their work align with an alternative epistemology that addresses personal, and, most of all, social, cultural, and spiritual ideologies and methodologies concerning Black women (Dillard, 2000).

Feminism is "a movement to end sexist oppression" (hooks, 1984, p. 28). Further, hooks (1984) suggested that feminism is the "...struggle that takes place anytime anywhere any female or male resists sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. Feminist movement happens when group of people come together with an organized strategy to take action to eliminate patriarchy (p. xii).

Feminist applied sport psychology professionals (FASPPs) are those who assume FASP and “challenge the status quo and recognize that applied sport psychology professionals and scholars must force [be intentional] in their practice and be socially just, intersectional, and multicultural whilst elevating the needs and experiences of women” (Carter, 2020, p. 1).

Gender “...refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity” (APA, 2015).

Gendered racism is the racial oppression of Black women as structured by racist and ethnicist perceptions of gender roles (Essed, 1991).

Participant is “one of several terms used to identify the individuals that researcher’s study. The term also implies the ethical, political, and pedagogical relationship between the researcher and those they study. Participants are knowledgeable insiders and assist the fieldworker in gaining and maintaining access, developing an insider’s understanding, and checking emerging understandings” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 149).

Intersectionality is a way of addressing the persistent interlocking and simultaneous oppressions suffered by Black or African American women (Crenshaw, 1989); Intersectionality is not located in the body – it is in the structures that the body is located in (Crenshaw, 2021).

Race is a sociopolitical term that classifies people according to sociopolitical and economic categories where membership is determined by physical characteristics (Helms, 1990).

Racism: a racial group’s prejudice against an individual or group of individuals based on their race reinforced by legal authority, institutional control, and systems of power (Essed, 1991).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

In this literature review, I first discuss a brief history of Black women's presence in sport. After that, I explore the foundations of Black Feminism (BF), Black Feminist Thought (BFT; Collins, 1990) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as well as Womanism (Walker, 1983). Next, I discuss feminist applied sport psychology through the evolution of (White) feminist applied sport psychology (WFASP; Gill, 2020; Roper & Fisher, 2020), Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP, e.g., Fisher et al., 2003; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) and finally Black Feminist Applied Sport Psychology (BFASP; Carter, 2020; Hyman et al., 2021).

The History of Black Women in Sport: Absent and Silenced

The absence of Black women's presence in the sporting context is not reserved solely for the FASP context. Long before the establishment of FASP, Black women's presence in sport was not acknowledged, recognized, or promoted (Waller et al., 2016). As Waller et al. (2016) stated, the "position of Black women in America has often been one of constant struggle to find her voice and for it to be heard and included in the historical narrative of the African American athlete story" (p. 53). They further contended that scholars' spotty record of reporting on the experiences of Black women is due to the fact that "America has historically held and perpetuated a marginalized ideology of women" (p. 62). Despite the amazing accomplishments of Black women at all levels and in a variety of different sports, Black women were left off the White newspapers' sports pages. Opportunities for dialogue about and representation for Black sporting women laid buried underneath the weight of historic oppressions including racism, sexism, classism, and patriarchy (hooks, 1981).

This was even true for Black female athletes competing at the highest levels of sport. For example, Bass (2002) explained the plight of Black women Olympians as a kind of “invisibility due to the intersectionality of race, gender, and class” (p. 172). However, those who utilize BFT (BFT; Collins, 1990) have sought to bring Black women into the center of study (hooks, 1984). I have accomplished this with Black female sport psychology professionals in the current study.

Black Feminism

Black feminism has a long tradition that dates back to the 1800s. Black intellectuals/feminists such as Sojourner Truth, Anna Cooper, Ida B. Wells, and Mary Church Terrell contributed to the first wave of feminist movement with speeches concerning the multiple levels of oppression they were suffering (Collins, 1986). Their goal was to empower Black women at multiple locations of their gender identification, class, and race. Their mission, most of all, was to affirm Black women and the Black communities they were a part of and to empower the role of Black women within their communities.

Metaphorically, BFT began as speeches given by African American women to African American women, and then those speeches grew up to be Black women writers. Once grown, they came to be known as Black Feminist and in many cases interchangeably Womanist scholars. More recently, Black feminist/Womanist scholars are using theory as agency and producing knowledge that begets "grown women"- Black Feminists (Walker, 1983). The theoretical frameworks such as BFASP, Womanism, Womanist Theology, and Endarkened Feminist Epistemology (EFE) are the metaphorical "children" born to the previous century of pioneering Black intellectuals and activists (CRC, 1982; Dillard, 2000). Consequently, the nature of Black women's scholarship originated at the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression,

and their ontology, epistemology, and theorizing allow them to continue to work out the details of this standpoint (Manu, 2020).

In other words, Black Feminism and Womanism originated from Black and African American women who were born into and raised on the margins of the social structures of the United States. Black women survived enslavement and decades of an apartheid system in the United States called Jim Crow laws. Black feminists were raised by economically, politically, and ideologically marginalized African American mothers. These women were the daughters and granddaughters of enslaved Black women whose very existence depended on walking the tight rope of race/gender/class oppression (Carter-Francique, 2017; Collins, 1996). The hallmark of BFT is the Black woman's collective resistance to dominant hegemonic cultures (i.e., White, male, middle class, able-bodied, and heterosexual). In addition, Collins (1986) explained that BFT consists of observations, interpretations about Afro-American womanhood, and ideas produced by Black women that clarify a standpoint of and for Black women.

Collins clarified this standpoint with a working definition that shared several underlying assumptions and underpinnings of BFT. The first assumption of Collins (1986) strategic design of BFT began at the inseparable relationship between the structure and thematic content of thought from the historical and material conditions that shaped the lives of BFT's producers (i.e., Black women theorist; p. 16). As Collins further explained, "while Black feminist thought may be recorded by others it is produced by Black women" (p. 16). The second assumption is that Black women hold a unique perspective on their experiences, and there are certain commonalities they share. However, Collins emphasized in the third assumption that Black women's standpoint is not monolithic; Black women are diverse in class, region, age, and sexual orientation and have distinct ways of expressions of any common themes they may share. Fourth

and most relevant to the academic literature is Collins' statement proclaiming the "one role for Black female intellectuals is to produce facts and theories" attending to the Black female experience and to make clear the "contours" (p. 16) of those standpoints for Black women who may be unenlightened to their present socio-political positioning. Collins's construction of BFT deposited an essential theoretical thread that is woven throughout the experiences and scholarship of current Black feminism.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term that was conceptualized out of the discipline of anti-discrimination law (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw (1989) devised the new term as a way of addressing the persistent interlocking and simultaneous oppressions Black women faced and that Black feminist had been speaking about since Sojourner Truth. She imagined these oppressions as operating like in a traffic grid that intersected a four-way stop on a road or street, with Black women in the center. Moreover, intersectionality was born out of a flaw within the law, which dictated that the Black woman client being represented by a lawyer needed to choose one identity (i.e., race *or* gender) but not both, even though both intersected to cause unique multiplicative oppressions. Crenshaw (1989) sought to examine how the law, feminism, and the dominant political framework tended to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis. She argued that "the presence of a single-axis framework exposed a distortion of the multidimensionality of the experiences of Black women...was an errant combination and revealed how Black women are theoretically erased" (p. 139) from consideration in these areas. Although Crenshaw (1989) was credited with the coining of the term, it is important to note that Collins (1990) and Crenshaw (1989) point to the earlier work of Black women feminists such as those in the Combahee River Collective (CRC; CRC, 1982); those in the CRC not only examined the intersections of race, gender, and class, but also sexual

orientation, sexual violence, identity politics, and the social inequalities that effected Black women's every day lived experiences. For example, those in the CRC first discussed and then analyzed the "interlocking oppressions" of Black women in their mission statement and calls to action.

In other words, intersectionality has been a core idea of BF and BFT. It is a methodology that centered Black women in every analysis (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw 1989). In sum, while Crenshaw (1989) critiqued theoretical and political institutions that excluded Black women from consideration. Crenshaw (1989) developed a Black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, and antiracist politics as the focus of her lens. In conclusion, these Black feminist thinkers believed that intersectionality spotlighted the multiple and interlocking oppression of race, class and gender, and the persistent marginalization of Black women at all locations of the socio political and economic contexts (Collins, 1986; Crenshaw, 1989).

Marginality. The historical record of Black women's experiences of enslavement, exclusion from the Women's Suffrage Movement, sexism in the Civil Rights, and the Black power movement reveals Black women situated on the margins of life (Collins, 1986). hooks (1981, 1984) described the marginal existence of these women from the perspective of Black women being voiceless and misrepresented culturally. These factors have been shown to impact how Black women experience life, especially in terms of how they are impacted by the bias that White men and women have about them (Norwood, 2020). Thus, Collins' (1986) concept of the "outsider within status" of Black women became an excellent depiction of the Black woman's unique experience in all levels of society. Additionally, hooks (1981) agreed that the benefits of this status generated the development of a particular way of seeing reality for Black women. Also, as hooks (1981) stated, "we (Black women) looked both from the outside in and in from

the inside out...we understood both” (p. vii). Finally, Collins (1986) accepted that while it is true that African American women are mostly unheard and unseen, their relative positions of alterity (i.e., the state of being other or different, otherness) enabled an insider perspective when positioned on the margin and within structures of exclusion.

To be sure, pioneering Black feminist scholars and culturists such as hooks (1981) and Collins (1986) have identified marginality as a critical component of Black feminism. Collins argues that the creativity produced by Black female intellectuals gave way to a Black feminism that reflects a particular standpoint on self, family, and society. She explained the phenomenon as a way of producing heightened abilities to create and succeed in all areas of their lives and society.

Further, in articulating the sociological significance of BFT Collins (1986) described three themes in this “outsider within” concept: (a) Black women’s self-definition, and self-evaluation, (b) the interlocking nature of oppression, and (c) the importance of Afro-American women’s culture (see p. 14). The first pillar is based on empowerment for Black women that came from creating self-evaluations (i.e., esteem) and self-definitions (i.e., identity) that enabled them to hold positive, multiple images and to - most importantly - repel society's images and representations that are negative and controlling. Secondly is the importance of Black women’s confrontation and deconstruction of what Collins explained as “a matrix of domination” (p. 21); this matrix was formed by an overarching and interlocking systemic structure of domination (i.e., race, gender, and class oppression) of Black women, similar to Crenshaw’s idea of intersectionality. Thirdly, Black women’s politics and activism are interlaced through their academic work and production. Lastly, Black women’s unique cultural legacy inherited from Black women leaders gives them the character traits of persistence and tenacity to not only resist

but to transform daily discrimination into justice and scholarship by and for Black women and men (Collins, 1990). In sum, Collins and Crenshaw's work as Black feminist advocates in their respective fields made way for another iteration of Black feminist resistance in Black feminisms' expansion into Womanist thought (Walker, 1983).

Womanism

Similarly, and within the realm of Black feminism, womanism emerged (Walker, 1983). Collins (1996) described the Black women of the Combahee River Collective (CRC) in the 1970s - who embraced womanism – as silence breakers. Walker (1983) provided the foundational writings and captured the essence of womanism in a definition in her book of prose and poetry titled *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens*. Walkers' explication of womanism included four variations of meanings that sought to describe what a “Womanist” might be.

For example, the first meaning in Walker's (1983) definition sought to explain the use of the word *woman* in *Womanist*. In African American culture, Walker shared that being deemed as a “grown woman” is your singular ticket to grown womanhood. Moreover, girls are not considered grown until specific life experiences occurred in their lives. So, it is common for older women to lament to younger curious, fierce, and questioning girls, “You tryin’ to be grown” (p. xi). Another nuance of the meanings found in Womanism came from the universality or what some view as spirituality that Walker (1983) contended a Womanist embodied holistic and love life; she celebrated the loves of the Womanist that included “the Spirit,” music, dance, food, “roundness, struggle, the Folk, herself” (p. xi). In addition, Walker's explanation contains references to women who love women and (men) sexually and/or non- sexually, women who appreciated and preferred women's culture, emotional flexibility (i.e., valued tears as a natural counterbalance of laughter) and women's strength. In the same way that those who espouse BFT

embrace a humanist framework, those who espouse Womanist thought are said to embrace a more fully embodied, humanist, and universal version of Black Feminism (Collins, 1996).

As with other Black Feminist strivings, Womanism was created by Walker as a result of White feminism's narrow scope and focus on gender, and more specifically, to resist Whiteness and anti-Blackness embedded in the White feminist movement (Collins, 1996). Collins (1996) argued that Walker (1983) offered a slight towards (White) feminism by stating, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (p. xi). Collins (1996) viewed Womanism as a concept derived in contrast to feminism that conveys the full-bodied expression of feminism, enhancing its substance, and conceptually merging race and gender in terms of all people, and, in particular, for Black women.

Further, Sanders et al. (1989) summarized Womanism as a movement and an avenue for African American women that privileged and authorized women of African descent to center their experiences, perspectives, and voices on themselves. Sanders and colleagues (1989) noted that the focus of Womanism is on what is most inspirational and most powerful to African American women (Sanders et al., 1989). Walker expressed the characteristics of a Womanist as bold, audacious, willful, and, most importantly, courageous; Womanists know what it takes to be heard and love their whole body, own their sexuality, choose to love as rational beings, and take care of themselves is a priority. A Womanist understands that just her being in the conversation is an interruption, a disruption, and a direct action (Collins, 1996). A Womanist scholar also wants to know what makes African American women tick in society and how they develop intellectually.

Womanism also provided an avenue to foster stronger relationships between Black women and Black men, which is a very important issue for African American women,

“regardless of politics” (Collins, 1996, p.11). Walker espoused Womanist to “have a commitment to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male, and female” (Walker, 1983, p. xi). Thus, Womanism “seemingly supplies a way for Black women to address gender oppression without attacking Black men” (Collins, 1996, p.11). In other words, the vision of Womanists is to co-exist with men and women of different colors (i.e., race and ethnicity) “like flowers in a garden yet retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity” (Collins, 1996, p. 11).

Further, in terms of the academy, Collins (1986) noted that “Black women have long occupied marginal positions in academic settings” (p. 14). For sporting women, the sociopolitical position of Black women, unfortunately, is less about the margins and more about if they are present at all. BFT is centered on three dimensions of oppression for Black women they are economic, political, and ideological. Collins (1990) viewed economic oppression at the same level as gender and race and viewed political oppression as embedded in the laws and policies that have denied Black women access to areas such as higher education. In addition, the dimension of ideological oppression in all sectors of society has allowed negative and controlling images to stereotype, discriminate, and pathologize Black women in all areas of society.

Feminist Applied Sport Psychology

Consequently, in the field of applied sport psychology, multiple scholars over the past few decades have called out, lamented, and documented the scarcity in the numbers of sport psychologists of color (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002), investigations of the experiences of WOC within the sport and feminist applied sport psychology community (Hall, 2001), and the void in sport and exercise psychology research agendas that exclude race and ethnicity (Bejar et al., 2021; Duda & Allison, 1990). The search for scholarship in the field of applied sport

psychology and the subfield of cultural sport psychology comes up wanting (Duda & Allison, 1990).

Specifically, the marginalized position of Black or African American sport psychology researchers and/or the Black or African American female athlete participant and their experiences have not historically or contemporaneously been investigated (Bejar et al., 2021; Duda & Allison, 1990; Hall, 2001; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002; Martens et al., 2000). It was White women who entered and assisted with the establishment of sport science teaching and research centered on White women. These initial applied sport psychology roots took hold at the end of the civil rights movement and at the height of the women's movement with Harris and Oglesby leading the charge. At that time Black women were cordoned off at Historically Black Colleges and Universities because of the slow pace of integration in higher education. While Black women were competing on Olympic teams and for schools like Tuskegee and the Tennessee State Tigerbelles they were not reaching graduate school or the level of doctorate in sport science (e.g., kinesiology) or applied sport psychology. This lack of a clear path to the field has resulted in a nearly silent and voiceless Black Women's applied sport psychology scholarship perspective, Black female athletes' experiences, and minimal research cache. Hall (2001) was one of the first and most articulate at describing this dearth (see Gill, 2020).

In fact, the search to find Black women in the profession and in scholarship in the field of applied sport psychology has been a long one. For the last 20 years (from 2001 until 2021), even the mere mention of Black women specifically is hard to find. For example, Hall (2001) was the first and only Black woman scholar to comment on the lack of representation of Black women athletes in applied sport psychology scholarship and is lauded by Gill (2020) to be “a stellar feminist model” (p. 29), even if no one took up her 2001 call. The cornerstone of Hall's (2001)

work could be found at the intersection of race, gender, and class in the context of sport; she decried the myth of sport as a level playing field and spoke of the prevalence of racism and sexism that pervades the experience of Black female athletes. She further stated that “for women of color, race and gender are accompanied by racism and sexism within and outside of athletics” (p. 386). Hall was the first scholar in applied sport psychology to foreshadow the concept of intersectionality. Hall grounded her positionality in feminist consciousness; she explicated the marginalization of Black women and WOC in the form of stereotyping and tokenizing in dominant sporting discourse and spaces. Hall described that when Black women were included in research, scholars lumped Black women together with all WOC, thereby marginalizing their experiences (Duda & Allison, 1990; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002).

Therefore, revealing the nature of the research engine that is powered by “me” search, which means (White women and men) individuals who aspired to be researchers and who obtain tenured track positions at Research I institutions investigate what “they” are most interested in and that also fills a gap or extends research that is already there. Thus, if for the first ten years of applied sport psychology researchers (White women) carving out their space in the field (away from White men and Black men). Simultaneously Black women were categorically blocked for social, economic, political, and racially discriminatory admission practices, lack of financial support, and or first generational positioning. To be sure if there were not Black women searching and (re) searching each other (i.e., we search) then there would be no deposits to look for. In other words, “there are no Black women here”.

Hall (2001) made this assertion in the 2001 special issue of *The Sport Psychologist* focused on feminism in applied sport psychology. She discussed sport and applied sport psychology as a site of gendered racism; in addition, she challenged (White) feminist applied

sport psychology's (FASP) preoccupation with gender resulting in the marginalization of WOC. Moreover, she sought to explore the experiences of WOC and African American women in sport; and while the expressed aim was to cover WOC she mentioned that African American women's high visibility among WOC was based on Black women's cultural history with sport participation. While many WFASP scholars had previously addressed issues of sexism in the field, both in terms of research and practice (i.e., the entire 2001 TSP issue on feminism in applied sport psychology. Hall (2001) was the first Black feminist applied sport psychology scholar to suggest in-depth that variables impacting WOC in sport (i.e., race, racism, stereotyping, discrimination, social isolation, acculturative stress, biased media framing, narrow opportunities for participation, truncating girls and women into particular sports, exclusion, and selective inclusion based on class, racial bias, and oppression at the individual, cultural, and institutional levels) should be illuminated and investigated in the applied sport psychology feminist consciousness as worthy areas of inquiry.

Looking back on Hall's (2001) call to action now, we can see that she was also calling out to WFASP scholars to acknowledge fundamental issues such as avoiding positioning White women as the norm in research, looking at culture instead of race, and providing women and girls of color wider parameters when it comes to the variety of sports in which they are able to participate. She offered solutions covering applied sport psychology research and training and urged feminist applied sport psychology professionals to produce literature about WOC that is strengths-based instead of inquiry focused on deficits. In conclusion, Hall (2001) put forth a cease-and-desist charge to WFASPPs to stop being complicit in the silence concerning the intersection of sport, race, class, and gender; she stated, "just as feminist sport psychologists appreciate that women are not men with breasts, sport psychologists must appreciate WOC

within a cultural context” (p. 396). This should have meant that WFASSP scholars would start being more intentional and inclusive in their research.

White Feminist Applied Sport Psychology (WFASP)

According to Gill (1995), it was challenging for applied sport psychology scholars to even introduce feminism into the field. For example, only a few (White) women sport scientists began using a feminist approach and analysis related to applied sport psychology in the 1970s. Foundational WFASP research was pioneered by Harris (1973) on the misconceptions of women’s physical abilities, work, and menstruation. Oglesby (1978) followed with revolutionary ideas about women in sport, particularly the promotion of sport for women. To be sure, their work provided information about women which could encourage them to go out into the world of sport and take the field to improve their health, vitality, and increase joy and challenge in athletic competition (Harris, 1973; Oglesby, 1978). In addition, Oglesby (1981, 2001) was the first applied sport psychology scholar to situate inclusivity of Black women in sport as an integral part of her feminist approach. She offered contextualized research and information to understand the Black sporting woman; she also pointed to what she called “distortions, inaccuracies, and silences revealed in the social/psychological literature on Black women in America” (p. 1). Furthermore, she called out White-oriented education systems, physical education systems, and the media.

In 1991, Bredemeier (who was a student of both Harris and Oglesby) and her students at Berkeley (i.e., Gloria Desertrain/Solomon; Leslee A. Fisher; Debby Getty; Nancy E. Slocum; Dawn Stephens; and Jaime Warren) conducted the first feminist applied sport psychology project. It was focused on the epistemological perspectives of women who participated in physical activity. Forty-seven women participating in five physical activities (intercollegiate field

hockey, individual noncompetitive activities, lesbian softball, bodybuilding, and expedition mountain climbing) were interviewed over two 90-minute individual sessions. Results revealed that in general participants utilized the same epistemological perspectives and orientations in both physical activity and daily life.

Moving forward 10 years to the year 2001, the first (and only) special issue devoted to FASP was published in *The Sport Psychologist* (i.e., Bredemeier, 2001; Gill, 2001; Krane, 2001; etc.). These scholars extended Harris' (1973), Oglesby's (1981, 2001) and Bredemeier and colleagues' (Bredemeier et al., 1991) reach and scope of feminist work. They focused on ending sexist oppression through feminist praxis (Bredemeier, 2001), the history of the contributions of women in the establishment of applied sport psychology as a field (Gill, 2001), sexuality and sexual orientation (Krane, 2001, 2001b; Krane & Barber, 2003), and feminist epistemologies, methodologies, and analysis (Whaley, 2001), feminism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist cultural studies (Roper, 2001, 2002, 2008), etc. While the TSP special issue was a unique and important representation of what feminist scholarship could be and how it could serve as a launching off point for future research, it also painted a bleak picture regarding the lack of production of FASP research related to Black women and by Black women.

Moreover, Prewitt-White and Fisher (2019) addressed the contemporizing of traditional feminist thought (WFASP) in applied sport psychology. They reviewed historical points of victory and failures to move along with the "waves" of feminist theory and address the rate needed to make feminist applied sport psychology practice diverse and inclusive of race, culture, and class. The authors included definitions of feminism, short biographies on feminist icons, a feminist "wave" review with the corresponding time frames, explanations, and thoughts concerning the ideas of a possible post-feminist era. Additionally, the authors recognized Black

female voices and WOC whose work persisted in identifying and naming women on the margins of society and sport and how to use scholarship in ways that are socially just, and from a standpoint of sisterhood and advocacy. Prewitt-White and Fisher (2019) state in their conclusion:

As those who advocate for a movement to end sexist oppression continue to fight for equality in the twenty-first century (e.g., the rape culture, sex trafficking, reproductive health, etc.), it is important that all people be recognized as vital Participants in the movement, regardless of if they self-identify as feminist or not. While words and language are important, if those who advocate for feminism remain preoccupied with a label, we may disenfranchise those willing to fight for the greater cause, the movement to end sexist oppression and all oppression as well as the universal rise of women's rights. We are living in the critical time when we can end the fragmentation of feminism. (pp. 15-16)

Prewitt-White and Fisher (2019) demonstrated with their assessment of feminism in applied sport psychology a sensibility that is grounded in a definition of feminism offered by bell hooks (2000) in her "reboot" of feminism. She defines in her book from Feminist theory from Margin to Center as feminism is the movement to end sexist oppression and sexual exploitation. Prewitt-White's and Fisher's work to this end is evidence of the true meaning of hook's visionary aim.

According to Carter (2020), Prewitt-White and Fisher (2020), and others in Carter's (2020) edited book *Feminist applied sport psychology*, Black feminist applied sport psychology (BFASP) and Womanist Thought is an appropriate and timely theoretical framework in answering the call (or from a Womanist spiritual perspective, their *calling*). Furthermore, filling in the gaps of (White) feminist applied sport psychology with a Black feminist sensibility (Collins, 2000, hooks 1981) is long overdue in this field. Prewitt-White and Fisher (2019)

summarized feminist legacies in applied sport psychology that have been historically centered on White middle-class women, and also research focused on gender and sexual orientation, but they found little for their review on race and ethnicity. Similarly, Gill (2007) wrote:

gender and cultural diversity are integral parts of sport. Participants are diverse, and sport takes place in a culturally diverse world. However, gender and cultural diversity issues are rarely addressed in applied sport psychology. Applied sport psychology research is dominated by Western perspectives, and professional practice reflects the cultural boundaries of elite sport. Reviewing applied sport psychology from a multicultural perspective challenges our worldview, enriches our scholarship and practice, and advances applied sport psychology in the public interest.

Black Feminism/Womanism pushed Gill's claim further in that this cross-disciplinary framework was birthed out of the need for Black female intellectuals to first attain agency in order to become researchers and then to perform research from a Black women's worldview while centering Black women as the subjects of that attention.

Cultural Sport Psychology

At the same time that the special issue of TSP devoted to feminism was brewing, an alternative framework was forming which focused on the ways that cultural identity impacts sport experience and vice-versa. Early proponents of cultural sport psychology (CSP, i.e., Fisher et al., 2003; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002; Ryba & Wright, 2010; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) like Kontos and Breland-Noble (2002) were directive in their call as was Hall (2001) for more practitioners of color. Prior to this, Duda and Allison (1990) challenged sport and exercise scholars to "...give serious consideration to the role of race and ethnicity in producing human behavior"; they believed that "...failure to address moral consequences of diminishing ethnic

minorities' experiences...leaves the theoretical understanding of the human condition in these contexts biased and distorted at best" (p. 115).

CSP scholars (i.e., Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009; Smith, 1999) argued that applied sport psychology scholars held a Western ethnocentric bias that disconnected disenfranchised members of the sporting community (i.e., queer people, people of color, women) from "their social relation and their own ways of thinking feeling and interactive with the world" (Smith, 1999, p. 28). Ryba and colleagues (Ryba et al., 2010) proposed a cultural discourse of applied sport psychology that deals with issues of marginalization, representation, and social justice through theory, research, and practice in sport and exercise psychology; they were "...specifically concerned with marginalized groups and issues of transnational identities, sites of belonging, and contested cultures" (p. 6).

In other words, CSP scholars investigate topics such as social difference, power dynamics, ethics, social justice, marginalization, disenfranchisement, and how athletes and exercisers are positioned in a specific context (Ryba et al., 2010). Those who utilize CSP are also self-reflective, self-reflexive, and deploy a variety of methodological approaches including narrative inquiry (Fisher et al., 2003).

Moving Forward: From FASP to an Inclusive BFASP

As previously mentioned, in 2020, BWSPP Carter (an African American female and Womanist applied sport psychology practitioner and women's health equity advocate) served as the first Black female editor of an applied sport psychology textbook surveying FASP. This volume was a collective effort of multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi gendered, non-binary identity authors and included (White) feminist, Black feminist, and Womanist Thought and theorizing. . Carter attributes the collective of feminists, Black feminists, Womanists, and multicultural

applied sport psychology practitioners and their "testimonies" as fellow sojourners and guides in her finding her own Womanist voice (Carter, 2020). For myself as a burgeoning African American BFSP researcher and Olympian, this is the textbook and the message of which I have been wishing and waiting; my wish to see me and others like me in the pages and on the minds of Black female scholars came true with this book.

Additionally, pioneers of Feminist thought are featured in this revolutionary FASP/BFASP scholarship. In her introduction, Carter (2020) names the works of several other feminist, critical race theorists, and sport multicultural researchers such as Carole Oglesby, Leslee Fisher, Vicki Krane, and Ruth Hall and how they called out the sparse literature and minimal acceptance of feminist applied sport psychology before Carter's own scholarship. Carter further describes contemporary feminist practice encompassing gender scholarship, neglected women's experiences, patriarchy, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, empowerment, and a described feminism as a "process-oriented approach that shifts the emphasis from personal change to social change" (Gill, 2020, p. 369).

Moreover, the authors urged FASP practitioners to take a definitive stance to incorporate diverse, inclusive, and socially just action into their practice. They called for a "doing" of FASP by honoring and understanding feminist history, challenging (W)FASP to engage the concept of intersectionality, and the centering of (W)FASP work around vulnerable individuals such as WOC and indigenous people. In their final chapter/call to action, Carter and colleagues (Carter et al., 2020) – including Oglesby – suggested that feminism is "walking in community with girls and boys, men and women to create equal and compassionate communities" (p. 209). Further, they proclaimed that FASP is meant to "interrogate the ways in which sporting environments are obligated in creating and maintaining safe, compassionate, and healthy spaces for athletes,

professionals, (and) fans” (p. 209); they invited other scholars to consider “...alternative research methodologies and a complete rejection of racist, capitalist, and patriarchal sport branding” (p. 209). FASP professionals such as these insist that it is imperative for feminism to be intersectional and posit that Black and White intersectionality is only a start; the inclusion of trans, queer, lesbian, and bisexual women’s experiences, and transnational liberatory frameworks are also essential to an action-oriented FASP framework.

In many ways, therefore, BFASP can be said to be an evolution of the inclusive intent of FASP in Carter’s (2020) edited volume of work as well as the work of WFASPPs who came before it. We are now ready to center our work on diverse focal points and advocate for an BFASP which attends to issues such as the intersection of race, class, and gender, and the ways in which the integration of these intersectional components are negotiated in FASP research and practice. Finally, Carter and her colleagues for the first time that I am aware of deposit and insert into a FASP textbook the terms "Black feminist applied sport psychology (BFSP) and Womanist Applied Sport Psychology" (p. 1); in this way, they are making space for aspiring BFSP/WSP practitioners like me to pursue scholarship centering these ideas.

However, despite the work of WFASP researchers over the past few decades, we must remember that feminist theories and models such as FASP are still in the developmental stages of growth in the field of FASP (Carter, 2020). Consequently, the introduction of BFASP and Womanist approaches can expand the scope of WFASP for researchers and practitioners who seek space for Black Women, WOC, and transwomen athletes of color. These scholars can push for more diversity and inclusion in the field of applied sport psychology. However, BFASP scholars who endorse BFT must remember that oppression is interlocking and multiplicative, not

additive and cannot be drilled down to one aspect of subordination (i.e., race, class, gender) for Black women in the sporting context.

Black Feminist Applied Sport Psychology Professionals (BFASPPs) Literature

Several Black women applied sport psychology students, practitioners, and scholars contributed to the FASP textbook (Carter, 2020) with their unique positioning on issues of feminism, Black women's standpoint, BFT, and the conundrum of race, class, and gender (i.e., Gunter, 2020; Manu, 2020; Norwood, 2020). Manu (2020) asserted BFT as a way to recognize race, gender, class and sociocultural factors that combine to create oppression for Black women. She summarized the state of the absence of African American women in sport with a look toward BFT critiques of feminism of operating from a position of Whiteness, and assuming universal womanhood for all women yet excluding the perspectives and experiences of non-White women. Also, Manu (2020) puts forth Black feminist standpoint theory as a powerful tool capable of combatting the historical silencing and pathologizing of Black women in sporting literature (p. 72). Manu highlights Collins (1990) and Crenshaw (1989) BFT, marginalization, outsider within status, intersectionality. Manu aligned her writing with BFT scholars before her and critiqued the negative stereotypes and controlling images Black women suffer in the sporting context. Finally, Manu (2020) further detailed stereotypes that perpetuate oppression and exploitation of Black women, and in doing, so she highlighted BFT's addressing of the economic, political exploitation, and subjugation of Black women. Consequently, Manu sought to expose the generational, systemic, institutional, and intersectional stereotypes that persist to control Black women's minds, bodies, and souls through the guiding framework of BFT and in the context of applied sport psychology.

BFASP Most Recent Literature

To date feminist applied sport psychology scholars have gingerly addressed race (Hall, 2001) and highlighted a couple of the stereotypes in work done on media stereotypes by White feminist allies, Fisher, Withycombe, and Prewitt (2010) provided catalysts to expand BFT in applied sport psychology. Norwood (2020) offered a treatise on the pivotal variables of race, class, and gender in sport in a chapter in FASP. She proposed a plan of action for valuing the experiences of Women of Color and suggested closing the intersectional understanding gap for White people who seek to attend to White fragility and White supremacy. Besides addressing the gap, the plan would also include policy making and increasing and improving the inclusion and understanding of others. This understanding would assist individuals in acknowledging that race and class are central factors that shape everyday lived experiences for Black women. Hall (2001) reported the factors included are how class impacts availability of some sports and income, WOC are overrepresented in sports that require the least equipment and facilities, and finally “how race and socioeconomic status may also influence how much encouragement a Woman of Color receives in a sport where the number of Women of Color is nominal or absent” (p. 388).

Furthermore, in 2001 Hall argued the resistance to change discrimination, and racial bias was a perpetuation of an uncompromising “White (and male) hierarchy of power and privilege” (p. 387) resulting in the triple jeopardy of race, gender, and class oppression in sport. Norwood (2020) agreed with Hall in her critique of the reticent stance concerning the inaction on social justice issues, lack of inclusion, and discrimination against gender and racial minorities exhibited by those in applied sport psychology. Norwood (2020) urged applied sport psychology professionals to consider the ways power, privilege, and oppression influence individuals’ psychological well-being and that subtle biases can have profound effects on conceptualization,

diagnosis, and treatment of mental health concerns (Hall, 2001). Subsequently, Dewar (1993) stated the impact of ignoring race meant for Women of Color in sport the depositing of their culture (i.e., racial identity) at the proverbial door of their sporting experiences (p. 389). Finally, Norwood describes intersectionality as a juggling act that is performed daily in the case of a woman of color's intersecting identities related to race, gender, and class (Dewar, 1993; Hall, 2001). She concluded that intersectionality in sport (i.e., the trifecta of race, class, and gender) for Black women and trans WOC is a layered experience that deserves attention and resources created from a BFASP theoretical framework.

BFSP scholars critiqued White feminist applied sport psychology for overlooking, erasing, stereotyping, and ignoring the multiple consciousnesses of Black women in sport. Gunter (2020) wrote in the FASP textbook her reluctance to identify as a feminist, or a feminism grounded in the White feminist standpoint of for some meant separation from men. For Black women feminism includes all people being free. (White) feminism seemed to produce a separatist stance in terms of men and leaned toward heterosexual normativity. This stance has created a reputation that plagued White feminist practice to date; in fact, the stigma and negative stereotypes associated with White separatist feminists have kept some Black women from identifying as feminists altogether (Gunter, 2020; hooks, 1981). A primary reason for Black feminists not associating themselves with the work of the White feminist movement was the multiplication of race onto their identity as (heterosexual normativity) women; in other words, even though Black feminists were committed to the freedom of Black women, they were just as committed to the freedom of all people, including Black men (Collins, 1990; CRC, 1982; hooks, 1981). Hall (2001) wrote about how WOC have a difficult time “embracing a philosophy that has not taken

their needs into account, and how sport is no different from the experiences of WOC in other environments” (p. 387).

Recently, immediate past president of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology Professionals (AASP) and one of the few African American applied sport psychology professionals wrote about her reluctance to be identified and labeled as a feminist (Gunter, 2020). Gunter explained that her obscured perspective on feminism came from a historically loaded (i.e., racist, exclusive, and reserved for White middle-class women) term that dissuaded her from taking a feminist approach in her personal, professional identity and her practice. Primarily, this reticent stance developed due to her identity as a Black female, and her identification residing in her primary identifier as race rather than gender. Her critique of White middle-class feminism was that it included “inaccurate assumptions, misperceptions and a fragile notion of solidarity” (p. 183). She explained that for her to ascribe to feminism meant excluding WOC and men from her vision. Furthermore, she assessed that the historical exclusion and persistent indifference to racial issues were also associated with (White) feminism; in other words, this version of feminism made her see herself as marginalized within the feminist movement. To her, feminism was limited in its scope and evolution concerning cultural identities, race, class, gender, and separatism in terms of being pro-women and, in general, anti-men, ultimately casting men as the villains with no clear consideration of multiple cultural identities.

Additionally, Gunter (2020) positioned herself and her work as a valuing of “othered” identities, multiculturalism, and grounding in social justice theories. These components were the most salient in her professional journey. Furthermore, her sustained belief was that (White) feminist theory was not inclusive; however, she realized her perspective had been limited and

based on minimal exposure to contemporary models of feminism. Consequently, she stated that she has discovered that FASP has targeted social and cultural influences, promoted advocacy work, and adopted social justice as a focus. Gunter's' present view of FASP is as a vehicle of empowerment and engagement in praxis toward social change; she noted that the most recently published FASP literature has pushed a more inclusive and diverse agenda; for example, in Carter's (2020) edited FASP book, scholars included an emphasis on WOC and trans WOC athletes and boldly introduced Black feminist applied sport psychology and Womanist approaches in applied sport psychology research plans.

In the past five years, Black women have begun to publish literature including Black women, diversity, or Black athletes as the center of analysis. In 2016, Larsen wrote about the experiences of Black women assistant basketball coaches being tokenized into roles as recruiter or caretaker. In that same year Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) critiqued the current state of diversity and multicultural competence in applied sport psychology. They sought to address AASP continued dearth in diversity in its ranks and scholarship and made suggestions for moving forward. Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) concluded their analyses with questions of "Where are the stories of the minorities? (p. 230). Finally, these scholars admonished AASP to acknowledge

the influences race, gender, sexual orientation, and class have on an individual inherently affects successful delivery of services. It is important for AASP to promote the value of critical race awareness in applied sport psychology through our field of applied sport psychology. Recognizing racial influences in sport represents an essential component sport represents an essential component of successful delivery of applied sport psychology consultancy (p. 230).

In 2017, Carter and Davila introduced the first study looking at racial microaggressions in the experiences of Black female sport and exercise professionals. They directly asked a small but growing percentage of SEPs about their professional experience to begin to fill in the gaping hole in the academic literature concerning Black women sport and exercise professionals (SEP's). The authors' findings highlighted the field's persistent colorblind ideology, racism, discriminatory practices, and the underlying themes of various forms of racism (i.e., racial microaggressions) that pervade the day-to-day interactions for Black professionals in SEP. This groundbreaking work succeeded at "creating a necessary, critical, and difficult dialogue about Black professionals (specifically) and professionals of color (broadly) experiences in SEP" (p. 287).

Finally, the most recent and specific precursor to this current study Hyman et al. (2021) explored the experiences of six Black female identified applied sport psychology professionals from a feminist and BFT perspective and juxtaposition to the applied sport psychology field being dominated by men. They discussed the persistent historical invisibility of WOC within the sport context and utilized a (White) feminist theoretical framework and Black feminist analytical lens. In this study, Hyman and colleagues examined the pervasiveness of Whiteness, masculinity, and the lack of representation in applied sport psychology. Results demonstrated the significant influence that race and gender (i.e., intersectional identity, Crenshaw, 1989) has on their professional experiences. The themes of the discourse included "the interplay of personal and professional identity, a sense of responsibility to others and a vigilance with White colleagues" (p. 1). Insights from the findings highlight the resilience of BWASPPs, the importance of community, and recommendations for increased representation, greater cultural awareness, and humility with practice and research, and greater recognition of service as a part of professional

practice” (p. 1). This work sought to extend the literature and fill in the gap, the current study aims to increase the amount and depth and fill the gap with a broader and more in-depth study of the lives of BWASPP and answer the recommendations and the call of the growing body of literature concerning Black women in applied sport psychology.

Lastly, in a study I conducted that was recently published into the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology’s special issue on racism*; (Couch et al., 2022); I used a Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill, 2012) team. I interviewed Black female Olympians about their experiences and transitions of identity as they progressed from childhood to post-Olympic competition (Couch, Fisher, McHenry & Moore, 2022). I listened to the stories of Black women Olympians and their narratives led me to answer the call made by Hall (2001), White feminist applied sport psychology professionals (WFASPPs, Gill, 1995, 2001; Roper, 2001; 2008), and cultural sport psychology researchers like Dr. Fisher and colleagues (i.e., Fisher et al., 2003, 2005) in this current dissertation work. I wanted to focus on bringing to the forefront Black women centered research in the context of applied sport psychology (FASP; see also Carter & Prewitt-White, 2014; Carter & Davila 2017; Hyman et al., 2021). My response is rooted in an ethic of care with BFT (Collins, 1990; Few et al., 2003; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Manu, 2020), the legacy of cultural sport psychology (Fisher et al., 2018; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009), and my commitment to social justice through equitable research inquiries focused on Black women in the applied sport psychology field presently and for the ones that will follow (Carter, 2020).

Conclusions

Sport historians and feminists like Vertinsky and Captain (1998) declared that the reconstruction of African American women’s history is a “feminist endeavor” (p. 552). In this review of literature, I have highlighted feminism as a socio-political movement, cultural

zeitgeist, and an academic focus of applied sport psychology research. White feminism has been intricately woven into the fabric of applied sport psychology since its beginnings; the construction of feminist applied sport psychology has been executed by (White) feminist voices and advocates through pioneering White females in a plethora of subdisciplines. The pioneering women of physical education and cultural sport psychology were not only the builders but architects of the future of feminist applied sport psychology (Harris, 1978, Oglesby, 1981).

However, the many permutations the field required in order to expound on feminist perspectives and approaches has only recently included Black applied feminist applied sport psychology thought. Feminist applied sport psychology/cultural studies scholars such as Fisher and colleagues (e.g., Fisher et al., 2003) as well as Hall (2001) and Oglesby (1981, 2001) were mission-minded in their aims to use feminism to broaden applied sport psychology's reach and scope to include a more diverse and culturally relevant focus. Furthermore, FASP has been the conduit for that change to come. FASP's introduction of BFP and Womanist applied sport psychology is the juggernaut in the evolution of FASP that the pioneers intended (i.e., Hall 2001; Oglesby, 2001). Therefore, the review of literature presented in this text has evidenced BFT substantial and potential contribution to Black women at all levels of sport psychology.

I have sought to explore the history of BFT and Womanism as well as WFASP and CSP (CSP) to see how they could be integrated to make a substantial contribution to the field of applied sport psychology in terms of addressing historical, systemic, individualized, and group forms of the racial, gendered, and class oppression of Black women. Moreover, this integration is a socially just and equitable contribution offering unparalleled opportunities for sport psychology scholars to explore alternative epistemologies and theoretical frameworks that more thoughtfully represent the intersectional sporting world, and, in particular, Black women.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the key elements of qualitative methodology used in this dissertation. First, I address my positionality which inform my beliefs, values, and perspectives as a Black Woman in Applied Sport Psychology. My positionality guides my choices including the research topic, theoretical framework, my worldview, and the methodologies I use. I present the research paradigm, methodological lens, and methodology of Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill, 2012) as it is what I used in the current study. Lastly, I give an overview of the current study to include the details of sampling, participants, procedures, and the data analysis process (Hill, 2012).

Positionality

Personal reasons for this research. My primary personal justification for this work is my sociocultural identity location as a Black woman, Christian, mother, PhD student in applied sport psychology, learning and development consultant in higher education administration/human resources, a Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) former athlete and coach, a client of applied sport psychology, and a two- time Olympic track and field athlete. As a Black woman entering this field at the masters' degree level nearly a decade ago, I found myself asking: *Where are the Black women? Am I the only one?* I kept looking for work done by, for, and with Black female applied sport psychology students, researchers, and professionals. While I was able to locate research focused on NCAA Black female athletes in the fields of sport studies, sport history, and sport sociology (Bruening, 2005; Carter-Francique, 2017; Carter-Francique et al., 2017; Dewar, 1993; Smith, 1992; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998), there was at the time only one conceptual paper in sport psychology where the

experiences of WOC and the gendered racism that emerged in sport psychology was explicitly named (Hall, 2001).

After attending my first AASP conference as a graduate student and former Olympic athlete, I was surprised to see my former applied sport psychologist for the Olympic Team (i.e., a naturalized citizen from Spain) present and accounted for, and yet could count the number of Black people at the conference on two hands. Her presence and the applied sport psychology work she did with me in my personal and professional life for nearly a decade made me believe that sport psychology was an option (Balague, 1999). Her work made all the difference in my track and field career and moreover in how I identified and what I valued in my life. However, to not see myself was very different than when I was a track and field athlete. I wasn't sure if I belonged or if I could finish my masters let alone pursue a PhD. At that conference, the door of my Black feminist consciousness flickered until I read my first Black feminist psychologist's article by Hall (2001); as previously mentioned, she wrote about the sport experiences of Women of Color which included Black women athletes and information about acculturative stress, racism, and stereotyping. These are all the "ism's" I suffered as an athlete but didn't have names for them. The light bulb that came on in my head was "I am not the only one, there may be others!"

Additionally, a spotlight hit me again when I read an assignment in Fisher's (2015) *Women, Sport, and Culture* class that included a statement by Dewar (1993) - she wrote that in order to survive in White sport spaces, Black women sometimes "leave their culture at the door." So, I began a search for Black people in sport psychology - Black women like me in particular. In my cohort, I was lucky because there was one other Black woman and another that was biracial (Black and Caucasian), and I thought that there must be more Black women in the field

somewhere. Maybe I just had not been around long enough. It took me quite a while to wrap my head around how there could be so many Black athletes and so few Black practitioners as well as very little research or practice focused on our unique cultural characteristics.

The results of my search yielded research on Black men – however scarce – but research on Black women in sport psychology, there was none. With no one giving attention to the reality of this obscurity, to me, this seemed to be limited me and White practitioners’ knowledge, skills, and abilities to possibly deliver culturally appropriate interventions. I worried about how the great divide of White male and female practitioners’ power and privilege seemed to be a system of oppression that worked to keep me and all who looked like me at the bottom, on the periphery, or simply out of the field all together. While it is true that White female researchers were doing great work on gender difference and LGBTQ+ athlete issues, it appeared to me as though they were doing “me- search”.

I reflected that my “me” is wholly different than the dominant narrative or cache of research present in the field. Who or what theory would assist me in my career trajectory as a Black woman? I then decided to center my research on Black women after finishing master’s degree coursework and taking sport history classes that allowed me to research Black women in sport, after taking a sport and religion course from a Black male professor, and a sociology course that introduced me to Feminism, Black feminism, and the Combahee River Collective (i.e., Black women personified). My research passion and duty-bound assignment came together for me once I decided that Black women – and myself - were worth my time, care, and attention, and the Black female athletes and professionals in the sport context needed someone to step up.

I also realized after doing a literature review of feminism in sport psychology that the “feminism” and the research they provided was primarily for White women, by White women,

and with White women. Consequently, as the years went by and I matriculated through to my PhD program, Fisher and I realized that I would be the first Black woman to get a PhD as a student of hers and in Sport Psychology at the university. Even though there was a Black male PhD student who had matriculated through the sport psychology program 15 years ago with another advisor, I would be the first Black woman to complete a PhD in Sport Psychology at UT! Thus, the current study came from that moment and our discussion/understanding that if there were no Black women being accepted into PhD programs in Sport Psychology, there will be very little attention given to Black women as research participants without Black women to do it. And that is where I entered and my work began.

In the academy, I want to move research that has been referred to as “me” search - only the White “me” – using Black feminism and BFT to be “WE” search. “WE” search is intellectual inquiry by Black women intellectuals, for Black women, and with Black women; it is a collective enterprise between the researcher and the researched that not only locates Black people in the field but also emancipates them...sets them free inside and outside. Few and colleagues (2003) articulated my aim as a Black female researcher in the following way:

as Black women who study Black women, we must remember that our participants are not mere subjects of research but active agents in defining who we are and have been and why we do things the way we do as a diverse yet collective group, (p. 210)

A critical issue concerning the duty of the Black woman researcher is accountability to Black female participants in giving them attention and care to the sensitive topics (i.e., racial trauma, abuse, racial battle fatigue) that will be discussed in the interview. As Few et al (2003) surmised - and I agree with - as a Black women researcher, that I am also privileged to be:

a conduit of Black women's experiences; we are not necessarily the authors of such experiences, but we are accountable to Black communities and are also responsible for debunking racist and sexist stereotypes of Black women while being careful not to perpetuate multiple oppression in our own works. (p. 210)

Therefore, as a Black woman researcher, I am intentional about the ways I present the experiences and images of Black women academically. I also want to balance participants sharing traumatic experiences with what can possibly be gained from learning about the trials and pain suffered. And further the ways this knowing could save lives and assist with the mental health of Black women (Few et al., 2003)

As a researcher, I was looking to uncover the secret codes that has kept the status quo of sport psychology permanently lodged in place and suppressing Black women and people of color in general. I wanted to peel back the curtain and look into the lives of Black women who have reached the highest levels of academic and professional sport psychology positions and learn about them and what it took for them to reach the field and what it will take for them to stay. I wanted to illuminate a path and a network of *abolitionists* and others allies and accomplices that have assisted these Black women toward their sport and academic freedom. This freedom will mean more visibility and Black representation in the field, thus more people of color and more specifically Black women seeing this field as a viable career option, and finally more students who feel like this is a profession that is for them.

Social and Practical reasons for this research. The barriers and hindrances that BFASPPs experience along the path of reaching the highest levels of sport psychology impact the field's creation of knowledge and the practice of ASP. Almost two decades ago, a specific call for more practitioners of color and culturally situated interventions was made (Fisher et al.,

2003; Hall, 2001; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009; Ryba & Wright, 2010); however, in the past decade there seems to be no substantial increase in studies or conceptual literature on or about Black women in applied sport psychology to be forthcoming, with the exception of Carter's (2020) edited book.

However, it is important to note that in the last five years there has not only been a surge of Black women rising to the ranks of leadership in AASP, but also several sources of groundbreaking scholarship, including this dissertation, a forthcoming special issue of JASP on Racism in Applied Sport Psychology (where I have article that has been accepted and judged to be outstanding in all categories), and an entire textbook edited by and with significant contributions from Black women practitioners, students, and academics (see Carter, 2020). Therefore, I believed that it was a social and practical imperative that I continue to pursue this line of inquiry by extending this long neglected line of research on Black Women in the applied and academic context.

In addition, it is essential to explore how BASPPs gained access to the field and the challenges of their intersectional identity (i.e., socio political position at the bottom of the ladder, Collins, 1990) they faced along the way. Their stories are important and will help other Black women and WOC who are choosing to enter the profession navigate through the maze of gendered racism and systemic oppression, barriers to entry, retention, and sustainability in the field.

Theoretical Framework

Black Feminism Thought

I believe that BFT is a culturally appropriate map to chart a rarely ventured theoretical journey in the field of sport psychology (Carter, 2020; Hyman et al., 2021). As noted above, the

way that I view the world, my theoretical framework, and what grounds me as a researcher are the summation of my personhood as a Black woman, my experiences as a Black woman, and how I now understand my “social location and that of others in the world” (Few et al., 2003, p. 206). My worldview was mined, shaped, and honed by discovering another feminism (i.e., BFT; Black feminism) that is not White, and that taught me to self-identify, self-evaluate, value myself, and clarified my standpoint as a Black woman. For me, it also promoted Afro American women’s culture to me. For the first time, at 45 years old I became proud and loud about being a Black woman with no apologies or shame (Carter Francique, 2017; Collins, 1990; Dillard, 2006; Hall, 2001)

I no longer chose to work to be neutral and palatable and less threatening to White people. Black feminism and BFT introduced me to myself and provided a view into my culture, a voice, and a language to describe what was happening to me. Once exposed to CSP, Black feminism, the CRC (1982), Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and Womanism (Walker, 1983); I could integrate all of my identities especially as a woman of faith into all parts of my life including being an academic. Black feminisms and the ontology and epistemology (i.e., endarkened feminist epistemology; Dillard, 2000) that align with this body of thought equipped and compelled me to position all the parts of my intellect and effort toward the academic emancipation of myself and others who would follow.

In other words, for this study, BFT is the structure, the safe house, the abolitionist space, on the (sport and academic) underground railroad that frames and moves the data collected from these BSPPs not only to make an investment in the academic cannon but also to plant seeds into the minds and hearts of the participants, Black and White practitioners’ future endeavors (Carter & Prewitt-White, 2014; Couch et al., 2022; Hyman et al., 2021; Bejar et al, 2021). BFT provides

a way of addressing the needs of all people who desire diverse, equitable, inclusive, and free sport and academic spaces (Carter et al., 2020; Collins, 1990; Manu, 2020).

As I described in the literature review, both Lourde (1983) and Collins (1990) described the foundations of BFT (from the inclusive process and philosophy of Black feminism) as a social movement that encouraged the self-conscious struggle of Black women and men. However, Collins (1990) expanded Black Feminism when she conceptualized BFT as a field of inquiry that encapsulated both feminist and critical race theories (CRT; CRC, 1982, Crenshaw, 1989). BFT is defined as “specialized knowledge that reflects the thoughts, interests, self-defined standpoints, and the thematic content of African American women’s experiences” (Collins, 1990, p. 47). BFT included Black women’s experiences with “work, family, motherhood, political activism, and sexual politics” (p. 47). Furthermore, Few and colleagues (Few et al., 2003) argued for the suitability of BFT as a “guiding theoretical framework for investigating Black women’s lives” and as “an impetus to examine the dynamics of race, ethnicity, color, class, and gender in...participant-researcher relationships” (pp. 204-205).

Using BFT, myself – like Collins (1990) sought to validate the experiences of Black women in the creation of knowledge. That is, we both engaged in research *for* Black women and attempted to avoid the positivistic voyeurism inherent in White Eurocentric traditions of inquiry which have historically objectified participants. A core component of BFT is grounded in an activist perspective that evolves through a three-phased process: knowledge, consciousness, and empowerment. For example, in the first phase – knowledge – knowledge occurs when an individual (i.e., the Black woman or participant) feels validated as her experience is heard. In the second phase – consciousness – the participant progresses past knowing toward a consciousness concerned with the factors that influenced her experience in the first place. The third phase –

empowerment – occurs when the individual focuses on social change through their newly found explication of a contextualized understanding of their personal, interpersonal, and political power as a Black woman (Collins, 1990). Three-dimensional BF power, therefore, is (a) personal power as experienced through agency and the individual’s capability to effect change; (b) interpersonal power as negotiated by having influence over others with regard to an individual’s location in society, interpersonal skills, or credibility; and (c) political power that is utilized effectively in formal and informal ways in order to appropriate resources in an organization or community (Collins, 1990).

In other words, scholars who espouse BFT address the historical marginalization of Black women because of their membership in a specific social category characterized by their race and gender (Carter, 2020; Couch et al., 2022; Manu, 2020). Also, Collins (1990) suggested Black women’s marginalized status creates a common or shared experience and one that has placed Black women in the U.S. at a disadvantage resulting in them having to navigate both the dominant culture and the Black culture simultaneously (hooks, 1984). Further, Both Lourde (1983) and Collins (1990) described the end goal of BFT as the empowerment of Black people and the actualization of a humanist vision of community. To be sure, BFT is derived from critical social scientific inquiry whereby Black women chose themselves first as scholars, the foci of study, and agents of social justice in the building of their social worlds and personal lives (Collins, 1990; Few et al., 2003).

In sum, there are four major principles of BFT: “(a) Black women’s concrete experiences as a criterion of meaning, (b) use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, (c) an ethic of caring, and (d) an ethic of responsibility” (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015, p. 510). These characteristics are also compatible to qualitative inquiry (Few et al., 2003) and to CSP which is a precursor to

the adoption of a Black feminist consciousness in sport psychology. My hope is to advocate for the use of BFASP as a more inclusive feminism that will center the experiences and needs of Black women and all genders, races, and marginalized identities in the field of sport psychology.

Research Paradigm

Paradigm and Assumptions

In the proposed study, I am guided by the theoretical framework of BFT and informed by the method of Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill, 2012). This is because I wanted to engage in meaning-making related to the individual and collective experiences of BFASSPs whose voices are seldom heard or amplified in the field. CQR is positioned between post-positivism and constructivist paradigms (Couch et al., 2022; Hill, 2012). The goals of CQR researchers are to build and (re)represent as near to the ways in which participants experience and perceive their own worlds (Hill, 2012). In addition, CQR researchers recognize that their individual worldviews also impact how interview “themes” are constructed and the data is ultimately interpreted (Couch et al., 2022; Fisher et al., 2018). Therefore, at a minimum of four different team members from a variety of identity locations were assembled to form a CQR research group; while each member within the group may interpret the data differently, the strength of more than one interpretation added to the richness of the constructed data (see Couch, accepted for publication; Fisher et al., 2018).

According to Hill (2012), what guides CQR researchers’ work are nine key principles: (a) small sample sizes; (b) an inductive approach; (c) the use of open-ended questions in interviews; (d) a reliance on participant words; (e) the importance of context; (f) multiple viewpoints in data analyses; (g) consensus in data analyses; (h) attention to culture, trustworthiness, and ethics; and (i) a continuous return to the data (Hill, 2012). The smaller sample sizes allow for participants’

words and experiences to be interpreted with contextual depth. And, the participant and researcher also work together in the interview, constructing a narrative that best represents participants' experiences; this is done through the use of a semi-structured interview guide with follow-up probes, pointing participants to detailed aspects of their experience (see Couch, accepted for publication; Fisher et al., 2018; Lauer et al., 2018). Further, CQR (Hill, 2012) allowed me to construct participants' meaning connected to their experiences in context, and with a BFT-centered analytical approach to their stories (Collins, 1990, 2000).

Methodological Lens

The worldview that I hold, and the direction of this study align well within the aims of BFT and CQR (Hill, 2012). The creators of CQR (i.e., Hill, Thompson, and Williams et al., 1997) described reality from the paradigm of a constructivist ontology (i.e., constructions of reality as multiple and equal), and describe the relationship between the researcher and participant influencing each other resulting in an epistemology that is also constructivist. Those who utilize CQR position themselves in the middle of the paradigm of post-positivist and constructivism; they traditionally focus on keeping biases at bay in the reporting of results so as to not influence them. While managing biases is a part of post-positivist work, Hill and colleagues (Hill et al., 1997) have sought to blend post-positivism and constructivism. Additionally, they also recognized that the elimination of biases is not realistic or attainable and that a researcher cannot truly exhibit a perspective that is wholly objective. Therefore, Hill et al. (2005) is grounded in an ontology and epistemology that is constructivist and utilizes some attributes of post-positivism.

Since my worldview also leans toward a non-Eurocentric research and theoretical paradigm with the addition of Black feminist methodologies, CQR more fully expresses and

operationalizes my constructivist and interpretivist stance – it is in line with the theoretical underpinnings of these African and African American female ways of knowing and knowledge production. My worldview is situated in a way that meaning is constructed and not created (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, Crotty wrote that meaning is “contingent upon human practices being built in and out of interactions between human beings and their world, and developed, and transmitted with an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Thus, bias cannot be bracketed out of human interaction but must be brought to the surface and become a part of the research process. The social collective process is how meaning is derived in this paradigm. I concur with Pascale (2001) “in that knowledge and meaning are always partial, conditional, and perspectival...there is no possibility of timeless and universal knowledge” (p. 50). Consequently, my interpretivist view is a philosophy of social construction that reveals a social world that is “produced through meaningful interpretations” (Pascale, 2001, p. 22) As an interpretivist, I emphasize the meaning people make rather than the facts and seek to move participants and myself to a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by uncovering aspects that have been hidden (Crotty, 1998).

Thus, the guiding principle of a constructivist paradigm allows me as a user of CQR to be intentional and intensive in my investigations of a relatively small number of cases in ways that are natural and holistic. For CQR, context is primary and appropriate for the small sample rather than focusing on large sample with an even larger amounts of data that will result in data that is generalized. CQR is solely utilized to assess the sample and the context in which the inquiry is located (Hill et al., 1997). The gathering of this specific sample and contextually focused data is through the use of open-ended questions. This interview strategy is an essential tool in the collection of data in CQR protocol. Those who use CQR fulfill the constructivist requirement of

allowing the participant to interpret their own experiences and then construct meaning from those experiences shared. Previous research has indicated that interviewing and interacting with participants would not have otherwise considered and also allows for new ways of interpreting experiences at a different and time and context (Hill, 2012).

Subsequently, the use of semi-structure interviewing and further probing into the participants' ways of interpreting and constructing meaning from their experiences can bring forth deeper understanding for myself and the participants. This deeper knowing encourages agency, having the knower better understand their world, and reveals to them their own "subjective identity (i.e., the minds awareness of its own representations)" (Pascale, 2001, p. 30).

As stated above, the characteristic of CQR include encouraging description, empathizing, and being insistent on understanding the meaning of the data from the participants' perspective (Hill et al., 1997). With the use of inductive analysis, thick description to represent the participants' perspective (Giorgi, 1985), consensus to assist with the comprehensive process of analyzing data (Hill, 2021), and a feminist and Black feminist approach to working with participants in the context of a research conversation that encourages open dialogue (Few et al., 2003); I began the current study.

Procedures

Team member positionality. The research team included me (a Black Woman), a mixed-race male, and two White women who are experienced in doing work in Cultural Sport Psychology and experienced in using CQR. Before collecting data, all five team members signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C). Next, they individually developed a narrative or bias statement containing their positionality vis-à-vis race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality,

spirituality, organized competitive sport, and applied sport psychology. In the first meeting, we discussed our own experiences related to these identities with each other.

Bracketing interview. In addition, to get a feel for the interview guide, I underwent an individual bracketing interview (see Appendix D) conducted by my advisor using the same interview guide that I used with participants. I served as the interviewer for all interviews in the current study. My expectation for the interviews were to find kindred spirits and participants with similar views to mine concerning athletics, and the field of applied sport psychology. I expected their concerns would mirror mine about the lack of Black women and men being present in the field. Finally, a bias that I became aware of was that I would find former athletes turned academics and their reason for pursuing the field was to stay connected to sport and athletes. Lastly, I learned more about my expectations and biases and decided to open myself up to the possibilities of what the participants might share that would be different than my story. At the end of the bracketing interview, I was pleasantly surprised with the reflexive nature of the interview protocol. Although I was the participant I learned more about my motivations and intentions for the current study and that assisted with my preparation for the nearly two plus hours of interviews.

Self-reflective and reflexive practices. Finally, I engaged in many reflexive and self-reflective practices throughout the entire research process in order to enhance my awareness of the ways that my own experience might be reflected in the data, from conceptualization of the study through to the data analysis and write-up. I monitored my position (i.e., subjectivity) by reviewing entries in my researcher journal as well as theoretical memos and considered my participant relationships which is a “critical component for maintaining a focused research agenda” (Few et al., p. 210). As Few and colleagues reported,

self-reflexive research maintains a research agenda to secure a forum for participants to express, be accountable to, defend, and validate knowledge claims that contribute to Black women's collective experience. In other words, our research methods center Black feminism as an identity politics for Black women in the research process for both researcher and participants. (p. 210)

Thus, I engaged in five reflective practices: (a) prayer and reading the Bible; (b) keeping a personal journal; (c) continuously working through my feelings, thoughts, emotion, etc. (related to the data); (d) writing field notes and research activity logs; and (e) video logs after interviews and recording data analysis Zoom meetings for further reflection on the analysis process with and through the research team members. By self-monitoring and recording these experiences, I became more aware of my positionality vis-à-vis the research process and the continual interactions with my reflections grounded by the conversations with the research team (see, for example, Couch, accepted for publication; Fisher et al., 2018).

Participants

Sixteen Black Women Sport Psychology Professionals (BWSSPs) working in multiple sections of sport performance (i.e., educational, or mental performance settings; see Table 1) participated in the current study. All were current members of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP). Two self-identified as mixed race (Caucasian Black and Hispanic Black), one self-identified as Caribbean, two self-identified as African/first generation American, one self-identified as West Indian/first generation American (i.e., U S), and the remaining 10 self-identified as African American. The average age was 37.25 years (ranging between 26-62 years of age). Participants averaged 10.25 years (ranging from 1-34 years) of experience, either in educational settings or mental performance settings. Six participants held PsyDs; five held

mental health licensure such as clinical psychologist, behavioral rehabilitation therapist, or mental health counselor; four held PhDs; and five held master's degrees with a sixth currently pursuing a second master's degree. Two participants had served as faculty members and one of those participants now serves as a non-tenured faculty member; five participants worked in professional sport. Two participants worked in university athletic departments at the time of the study, four practice in non-sport professional context, one works for a nonprofit precollege program, and one participant practices as a youth CMPC. The sixteen participants represented a diverse and broad representation of the work that MPCs are doing across sport and business or organizational structures.

Interview Strategies

Feminist interviewing. An essential tool for data collection in qualitative research is the research interview (Merriam & Tisdale, 2015). There is a large body of research in the feminist literature on women interviewing women and the dynamics of those interactions (Few et al., 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Johnson-Bailey, 1999) The choice to use interviewing aligns with CQR (Hill, 2012) and the constructivist paradigm of making meaning with participants. Additionally, those who utilize a BFT framework have suggested gathering stories through open dialogues, (research) conversations, and asking questions (Collins, 1990, Few et al., 2003). Hesse-Biber (2012) described the method of interviewing as a process, a discussion focused on a research inquiry, and an encounter in which one person asks for information from another (Merriam, 2009). Patton (2015) suggested that regardless of how the interview is done for the purposes of research, the primary aim is to obtain information that is specific to what is in and on the participant's mind.

Moreover, qualitative scholars agree that the key to conducting an effective interview is to ask good questions that will allow the participant to give the most information possible (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015). More specifically, feminist interviewing allows for the in-depth process to be fully realized through conversational, relational, and collaboration with participants in providing a safe environment to share their story which at times may be difficult and sensitive and possible revisiting harm or traumatic memories (Few et al., 2003). Additionally, Johnson-Bailey (1999) made an important distinction in the exploration of interviewing within the Black culture (scholar acknowledged Black culture is not monolithic) and confronted conflicts and concomitant issues that arose when Black women researchers interviewed other Black women. She pointed to “tensions that arise in the interview process related to the differences in color and class” (p. 659) that may be present. She suggested that while race and gender were commonalities and could be unifying issues...the participants “often conceptualized them differently” (p. 659).

Hesse-Biber et al. (2006) suggested that feminist interviewing be friendly and sisterly. As they stated, “in-depth interviewing is seen as a means of giving vulnerable subjects voice in the making of their own history (p.20). Further, Hesse-Biber (2012) described one of the primary concerns of feminist interviewing as a tool of social justice and bringing to the forefront voices that have been disregarded or marginalized. Another goal of feminist research is to have nonhierarchical relationships and utilize the researchers’ reflexivity to ensure a more equitable research relationship (Reissman, 2008). According to Roper and Fisher (2019), the relationship is complex, rooted in power dynamics, and informed by cultural pillars that structure the relationship. Consequently, along with collaboration, feminist researchers reflect from a critical standpoint and remain flexible and adaptable in acting on what is learned.

Black feminist interviewing. Similarly, in BF research, many of the feminist techniques of interviewing are present. However, while (White) feminists initially believed that being the same gender was the answer to deep collaboration (Reinharz & Chase, 2002). Roper and Fisher (2019) observed, “while the researcher and participant may share some common identities or experiences, this does not guarantee a shared meaning” (p. 61). Similarly, BF researchers such as Few et al. (2003) write about race as a possible unifier but not always a neutralizer of difference in class and other identities. Moreover, Few et al. (2003) discovered from research conversations with Black women faculty several issues that arose during interviews such as “color, class, gender, linguistics, nationality, sexuality, and physical attractiveness, and of how these issues...affect interactions with participants” (p. 207). This is similar to the concept of *sister-to-sister talk* (i.e., Sister-to-sister talk is Afrocentric slang used to describe congenial conversation or positive relating in which life lessons might be shared between Black women; Few et al., 2003, p. 205). Few et al. (2003) explained the importance of the concept of *sisterfolk* and the negotiation of insider status in the interview process with Black women when discussing sensitive topics of me being a Black woman. As Few et al. (2003) stated, “A Black female researcher is not necessarily deemed a home girl by Black female participants because of the many ‘isms’ that come into play throughout their interactions” (p. 207). In the current study, I attended to the issues and dynamics that arose with my participant-researcher interactions (i.e., race, class, gender, and power) and acknowledged them when they emerged with check-in questions (i.e., How did that experience make you feel?) or by clarify probing questions (i.e., In what ways did you experience the trauma? Are there stories that you can share about this?). I was prepared for the complexity of the researcher-participant relationship from Few et al. (2003) and their research statement:

As Black women researchers we share race and gender with our participants, but barriers are possible because of differences in class sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality. In other words, the ‘isms’ of daily life-racism, sexism, and classism...must be negotiated with participants through the research process. Sharing certain identities is not enough to presume an insider status. Idiosyncrasies are embedded in our identities that inevitably create moments of intimacy and distance between the participant and researcher. (p. 207)

Finally, I was aware of ongoing unspoken discourse and the dynamic of hierarchal power shifts in our relationship, and I was mindful of the possibility that my “color, speech, and body language could affect how I am accepted and perceived by my participants as a trustworthy confidant” (p. 207).

Further, Johnson Bailey (1999) described the interviewing phase of qualitative research as “dynamic” (p. 668). She believed that each interview was unique, situational, and unpredictable, and the mix of personalities and circumstances would impact the interview environment. She admitted that power issues are present, and the researcher must be vigilant in recognizing the “balance of dialogue research agendas, and societal hierarchies, basically each interview is a special unit of work unto itself” (p. 668). Moreover, this does not change when women interview women, when Blacks interview Blacks, or when Black women interview Black women (Johnson-Bailey, 1999). While Johnson-Bailey (1999) shared that one does not have to be Black to be engaged in an effective research interview, she noted that the intensity of the scenario when Black women talk within racial and gender boundaries can be beneficial. Further, Johnson-Bailey offered that when there are fewer margins to mitigate, the research setting can take on electrifying and intimate aspects. For example, the trading of race and gender stories can

create more stories, and longer stories are told. Johnson Bailey shared the benefits of conversations that were layered in research interviews with Black women in the following way:

there were silent understandings, culture bound phrases that did not need interpretation, and nonverbalized answers conveyed with culture-specific hand gestures and facial expressions laced throughout the dialogue. At times these shared issues of race and gender were connections between the women. (p. 669)

Johnson-Bailey (1999) also surmised that sometimes when interviewing Black women, it was arduous. The differences within the relationship could sometimes become shackles if the researcher is not aware of the precarious nature of gaining acceptance and building trust. Also, the advantage of interviewing Black women was centered on the ability to talk within the racial and gender group dynamic. Finally, she stated, “the link of shared backgrounds and similar pains led the women on both sides of the tape recorder to greater intimacy and trust and occasionally to tears” (p. 669). In the current study, and because of COVID-19, I was on the other side of the computer screen with them in their home, car, or office, in my home office there were tears, laughing, finishing each other’s sentences, moments of intense emotion, in-depth thought, and discussion. In sum, feminist interviewing and CQR are aligned in many ways. The active listening component calls for attention to the unique details of Participant stories, a commitment to the researcher as a primary instrument, relational alliances, and the desire to hear the stories, collaborate on the narrative, and have holistically engaged approaches.

Semi-structured interview guide. The aim of creating a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix D) was to design questions which captured participants’ experiences of their family upbringing and recognizing when they knew they were as Black, and Black and female (intersectional identities). These questions about their most salient identities were interwoven as

I asked the participants to describe their athletic/sport and educational journey and finding the field as well as the experience of being Black and female (i.e., intersectional) as an applied sport psychology professional at different times along their journey. For example, participants were asked questions related to the following time periods and contexts: (a) *initial sport and educational experiences*; (b) *transition to college and undergraduate college/university*; (d) *graduate school and supervision/training*; (e) *transition to career*; and (f) *academic or professional practice*. Participants talked about their intersectional identity experiences during each time period and how they felt about the experiences they shared. In addition, all participants were asked a series of demographic questions at the beginning of the interview to build rapport (i.e., age, racial identity, ethnic identity, family structure, major, school attended, GPA, etc.; see Table 2). Because of the small number of BWSPPs in the field of applied sport psychology, participants were asked to choose a pseudonym to represent themselves in the data and to preserve their confidentiality.

Participant recruitment. After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I set out to recruit 5-10 BWSPPs who had either completed a PhD, PsyD or MS and were working in the field of applied sport psychology, either as an academic, student, or practitioner. I followed Hill et al., (1997) advised on sample size (i.e., 12-15 participants), large enough to see a pattern in their experience. Thus, I recruited all participants via purposive sampling (Patton, 2015) and used existing professional contacts. This method worked extremely well. Within the first 24 hours, there were three responses, and by the end of the first week, there were seven interviews scheduled. By three weeks, nine interviews were completed. By the end of 30 days, I had reached and exceeded my first goal for the sample size.

The women were reaching out to each other in their group chat and individual emails, telling each other about my work, and talking about the great experience they had in having an opportunity to talk about their journey (i.e., “natural” snowball sampling; Patton, 2015). I had to increase the number of participants in the approved IRB and cut off interviews at 16 in order to complete the timeline of the data collection phase of the study.

Inclusion criteria. Criteria for inclusion focused on the level of education, race, sex, gender, and professional work a self-identified woman had in the field of applied sport psychology. In specific, the criteria were participants who identified as Black and or African American female, and a professional practicing in applied sport psychology at all sport levels (i.e. youth through to professional or amateur leagues, higher education (i.e. research or athletic departments, counseling centers), business or corporate entities, clinical services in applied sport psychology spaces. These criteria best assisted me in understanding the phenomenon (i.e., the research problem and the research question; Jones et al., 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Patton (2015), this method assumes that the researcher can gain the most insight from purposefully selected participants. Patton (2015) contended that those who use purposeful sampling find logic and power in information-rich participant experiences that will provide an in-depth study of the phenomenon.

These contacts received detailed information about the research project and then spread the word to those who may be interested in participating in the study. Contact information for myself was included in the recruiting email. After hearing from the first group of interested participants, I established new contacts via snowball sampling (Patton, 2015). Next, I individually emailed participants an informed consent form (see Appendix E) then, we set up a time that they were to be interviewed that was convenient for them.

Interviews. All interviews took place over the Zoom video conferencing platform from my home office. The primary choice was Zoom because of the capability to video record and to save the recording on a secure password protected platform. Interviews were also digitally audio-recorded simultaneously in order to ensure the capturing of the data and a more convenient verbatim transcription. Recordings will be deleted on or before one year of completion of the study. Verbatim transcriptions were completed after each interview by primary researcher and paid research assistant and emailed to the participants for their review. The participant's opportunity to provide feedback and comment allowed for recall and suggestions to be added or deleted. This method is also in line with simultaneous data collection and analysis in the research process, as suggested by Merriam and Tisdale (2016). CQR methods during the data analysis phase also require collaboration with participants; this means sending them the transcripts and the domain table for review (Hill, 2012). There were seven changes in the transcripts related to confidentiality.

Main study interviews. Following the scheduling of the Zoom interview, I sent a calendar invite to each participant with the date, time, and Zoom link for the interview to take place and a reminder to review the informed consent form (see Appendix E) that was sent in the recruitment email (see Appendix F). Next, I used the semi structured interview protocol (see Appendix D) as guide for the interview. Due to the COVID- 19 pandemic and the participants living and working across the entirety of the country, it was neither feasible nor desirable to conduct face-to-face interviews in their natural setting. The average length of the interviews were 126 minutes and 6 seconds (ranging from 1:48:56 to 2:35:14). As previously mentioned, each interview was transcribed verbatim, deidentified, and returned to each participant via email with a thank you letter (see Appendix G).

After the 16th interview, interviews were closed, because it appeared to me that the threshold of saturation and theoretical sufficiency (Hill, 2012) had been met and there were no new interpretations of meaning or information provided. The goal of rich, deep, and diversity within the sample collected was accomplished. Thus, a detailed map (see Appendix B; Table 2) and an understanding of how BWSPPs - with intersectional identities - negotiated and navigated the obstacles and barriers they faced on their way to and throughout their career in applied sport psychology was then created.

Data Analysis

Primary research team members. The research team is integral to the data analyses process in CQR (Hill, 2012). The research team is to consist of a minimum of four members and members are to provide a diversity of perspectives (Hill et al., 2005). As mentioned previously but here in more detail, in the current study, the research team consisted of four members: Myself (i.e., a Black female doctoral candidate in sport psychology and motor behavior), one Black female MS graduate from a sport psychology and motor behavior program currently working in diversity in an athletic department, one White female CMPC/PhD in sport psychology and motor behavior currently working in private consulting practice, and one Hispanic and Caucasian male CMPC/PhD in sport psychology and motor behavior currently working as an assistant professor in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior. The external auditor was a White female CMPC/PhD in sport psychology currently working as a Full Professor and my PhD advisor. The diversity of the racial, gender, and educational make up was important as it reflected the diversity in the sample of Black women from all walks of life and educational backgrounds. The team was also chosen because of their qualitative research experience and working with CQR as a methodological frame, their background and research interest in CSP,

feminist, and BF theoretical frameworks. All members of the research team had been athletes either at the high school or college level, with two research team members having a professional career in sport after college and one member being a two-time Olympian. The research team members all reviewed and signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C).

Addressing biases. Moreover, at the start of the first research team meeting and prior to the first data analysis session, we addressed our biases collectively, as previously mentioned. Those who utilize CQR (Hill, 2012) believe that this task will ensure rigor and reveal to each team member their own particular point of view, self-awareness, and self-knowledge. Biases of the team included the perspective of the applied sport psychology field was a White male-dominated space and that Black women while a few are leading at high levels; the numbers represented were unknown. Also, they believed that the research available concerning Black women was inadequate and the voices of the participants should be heard and valued. During the process of analysis, biases and assumptions were discussed throughout to keep them at the forefront of our minds as we inductively analyzed the data. At the point of any disagreements between team members, we would refer back to and make a note of the line number in the transcript and discuss it further to resolve any disagreement about our interpretation. The primary goal was to return to the data with any questions.

Specific data analytic procedures. After each research team member read each transcript all the way through to gain an overall understanding of participants' experiences (Thompson, Vivino, & Hill, 2012), they met to come to consensus. Both I and one other research team member transcribed the data by auditing the automatic Zoom transcript and re-listening to the interview to make sure they aligned. The research team met multiple times (seven total meetings); our initial meetings centered on reviewing the first half of the transcripts and

establishing some preliminary domains and categories from the core ideas. We also intermittently communicated via email and shared documents. Once the domain list was compiled from these first meetings, we kept reading through all transcripts and “refined the domains and categories with emerging core ideas” (Thompson et al., 2012; p. 105). The Zoom meetings were recorded in order to have a transcript to go back to with any questions regarding what was discussed.

We also engaged in five major steps together in line with the CQR data analytic process (Hill, 2012). First, after creating the initial domains, we inductively established a topical instead of time-bound domain structure (and a sub-domain list) capturing the meaningful and unique themes within the time periods used as topical areas on the semi-structured interview guide. CQR requires to re-represent as closely as possible how participants saw and experienced what they shared in their own words in the form of domain, subdomains, and categories. Then, we pulled out participants’ own words from the transcripts and constructed core ideas and summarized experiences within each domain/time period. Next, we developed a more refined category structure from the core ideas within each domain (Hill et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2012). Core ideas are summaries derived from the participants’ own words that best represent the essence of domain and the category (Thompson et al., 2012). The goal of the core ideas is to remain consistent with the data and avoid interpretation (Hill et al., 2005). We reached the highest level of analysis of the data by comparing across the individual cases (Hill et al., 2005).

After this step, and after achieving consensus on the domain, category, and core ideas from the transcripts, myself and the research team split up into a total of four teams of two analyzing at least eight participants each which covered the 16 participants. We conducted the cross-analysis in Zoom breakout rooms, where each constructed category was compared against

each informant transcript to determine the frequency of the category (i.e., *typical*, *general*, *variant*; Hill, 2012). Categories that were present in most all cases or all but one were tagged *general*. Categories that applied to half the cases or one less were *variant* (Hill et al., 1997).

Returning and re-returning to the raw data was a common occurrence for each individual research team member - as well as for the research team as a whole - throughout the entire data analytic process. We also put into each cell of the cross-analysis spreadsheet line numbers to support each participant for each of the categories in the table (see, Table 2). This re-returning allowed the research team to solidify their constructed findings and turned out to be our scaffolding for re-representing participants' experiences (Hill, 2012).

The demographic and domain tables were sent to each for feedback (Hill, 2012; see Tables 1 and 2). Each participant read through her transcript, the demographic table, and the domain table; she was then asked to make further suggestions on how the research team could refine the domains and categories related to her experiences. In this sense, each informant served as a kind of external auditor for checking her own experience against what was constructed by the research team (see Hill, 2012 for a description of the role of a traditional external auditor). Participants offered feedback concerning anonymity in deidentifying certain context, roles, and locations in order to protect their anonymity. One participant shared that she had been thinking a lot about her identity since she participated in the interview and wanted the researcher to change the places in the transcript when she referred to herself as "female" to "woman or girl" (personal correspondence). Most participants (12) responded thank you, this is interesting, pride, and that everything looked good to them.

Finally, following Hill (2012), the research team committed to trustworthiness via three criteria: (a) establishing the integrity of the data, (b) balancing subjectivity with reflexivity, and

(c) communicating their findings explicitly and with care related the applicability to applied sport psychology research and practice (Hill, 2012). The external auditor received a copy of the sixteen transcripts, demographic table, and the preliminary domains, and category tables. The external auditor, a White female CMPC/PhD in sport psychology and current Full Professor in sport psychology with knowledge and expertise in feminist applied sport psychology theory, praxis, and literature, a cultural sport psychology pioneer and experienced using CQR as a methodology. She challenged the research team to further distill the very large domain table and to return to the research question to adequately represent the journey of the lifespan of data that was shared throughout the transcripts. After the research team made changes to the domain table, she also gave feedback on whether the domains that were re-constructed were appropriate given the data and whether the categories and core ideas reflected the words of the participants found in the raw data (Hill et al., 1997). Finally, the research team integrated the suggestions from the external auditor and completed a final cross-analysis (see, Appendix B, Table 2); they then sent the final table to participants for their records and comments. Participants responded with a thank you and without any additive suggestions or additions.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The purpose of the current study was to explore the life and work experiences of Black Women Sport Psychology Professionals' (BWSPPs; N=16) Of particular interest was how Black women have navigated lie in the othered and marginal spaces of applied sport psychology. Thus, the specific research question was: What are the experiences of Black women in applied sport psychology research and practice? Black feminist thought (BFT) and Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP) were the theoretical underpinnings of the current study and are compatible in their empowerment, cultural foundations, and social justice focus; in fact, Few et al., (2003) shared the suitability of BFT as a guiding theoretical framework for inquiry into the lives of Black women. Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill, 2012) was used as the method for sampling, data collection, and analysis. In this chapter, I discuss the findings while using the participants' words to best represent their perceptions and experiences.

A five-member research team constructed four domains and 39 categories (see Table 2) to best represent these BWSPPs' experiences. The four domains constructed were: (a) *Blackness, Black Girlhood: Black Family Foundations*; (b) *Whiteness, Ebony in The Ivory Tower: The Gate(s) and its Keepers*; (c) *The Profession: The Firsts and Only's*; and (d) *Black Womanhood: Self Stories, Finding the Sistahood, Leaving Trail*. Below, each domain is highlighted with quotes from each category.

Domain I: Blackness-Black Girlhood: Family Foundations

The first domain highlighted Black girlhood as experienced by being a part of "my family." "Dad," "mom," "siblings," and "aunts" were inextricably connected with participants' personhood, their place in their own bodies, and in the world. BWSPPs discussed the salient

parts of their identity during their introduction into their families of origin, sport, and educational worlds; this included participants first memories and/or experiences when they knew themselves to be Black in relation to their families of origin and or the society at large. In particular, this occurred in the K-12 educational system and in various other youth organizations or student-focused groups. Their family stories, interactions, and instructions gave them a blueprint for how to live in the world and be of the African Diaspora-Black. The Black extended family, community support, peers, neighbors, and the understanding that "...as a Black girl, you must be excellent in order to succeed" were hallmarks of their family upbringing and Black female socialization. The eleven categories for Domain I included: (a) *Black Family History: What does it mean to be Black?*; (b) *Seeing the difference (otherness)*; (c) *the pride/oppression of Black personhood*; (d) *Black extended family*; (e) *Black excellence*; (f) *gender role for little Black girls*; (g) *sport and athletic identity*; (h) *prioritizing educational success and K-12 school choices*; (i) *college as a given*; (j) *identifying a profession*; and (k) *socioeconomic status and access to higher education*.

Category a - Black Family History: What Does it Mean to be Black?

Participants' family members taught them about their Blackness, through stories of their family's lineage and Black US history, trivia, and literature. Participants' families instructed them on how to behave in spaces and with people outside of their family. Participants' family members such as fathers, mothers, grandparents, siblings, and neighbors supported them and helped them understand their Black identity. This included Black and White people who looked out for and provided a place to stay, direction, athletic support, and knowledge about the recruiting and college application process. Additionally, the salience of family and their family history was strong.

For example, Olivia described growing up in the same town where her mother grew up: “My grandparents lived there as well, and so I grew up very close to my mom's parents geographically and emotionally.” She continued,

We spent a lot of time at my grandparents’ house, and I often remember my grandfather saying things like, “the White folks don't care about you, so you need to take care of each other,” talking about me and my sisters and my cousins... It was a lot of talk about our Blackness and how you know “White people don't care about us”... but we also spent a lot of time playing Black history trivia and my grandfather was one of the smartest men I know, and he often would just have random facts that he wanted us to know about and a lot of it was Black history and so we just grew up with grandpa always giving us random facts about Black history and Blackness... knowing that I'm Black and recognizing that makes me different than a lot of people that I see around me outside of my family.

Category b: Seeing the Difference (Otherness)

Participants recognized in their girlhood that they were Black and that made them different with people they encountered outside of their family. However, they did not quite understand that their difference would illicit microaggressions and microinsults (Sue, 2007). In fact, participants sometimes suffered from *colorism* (Russell et al., 1992), from having darker skin and being made fun of, or being called the N word or being called out in school which affected their self-worth and confidence. Those participants with a non-dominant sexual orientation also became aware of how this differed from their heterosexual family/peers. And many participants experienced difference at the elementary school stage; however, those who were not born in the United States (i.e., participants were ethnically or nationally different than African American) experienced difference after coming to the US.

Jeanie shared that it was when she saw White people for the first time at three years old that she realized she was Black. Smythe remembered times while attending her predominately White elementary school when she was called out as Black. She shared:

There were certainly times that I was called different racial epithets and had to have discussions with my parents about what that meant and how people were viewing me and that continued probably throughout my middle school... maybe isolated because of my Black identity.

Daisie recalled recognizing difference, too, as she stated:

My race... just noticing the physical difference would be the narrative I got at home, so my parents preparing me to go out to someone else's house and they were White, so there's a certain way I' supposed to act when I go out. so that narrative at home and then just being with my other friends at their house and see how they lived differently, and they communicated differently.

Category c: Pride in and Oppression of Black Personhood

Participants became aware that just being Black (nationality/ethnicity) and/or African American gave them a sense of pride, a positive sense of self, love for self, and provided a foundation for success in life. Participants also experienced oppression from self, White, Black peers, and family from overt and covert messages they received because of their Blackness.

For example, Janet's early childhood family interactions and her predominantly Black middle to high class socioeconomic status gave her "an air of pride in being Black..." – there was "...exposure to individuals from all sorts of entertainment background, sport and music - it was like always this air of puffing your chest out and being proud to be Black." Etta's family also infused in her a sense of pride with knowledge about Black history as she shared:

So, I knew very young that I was Black. And I can't think of any instance when I was ashamed to be Black - I always was Black and proud, and I don't think I ever considered how other people perceive me until I was probably much older.

Participants described how they also internalized the oppression they experienced because of being Black. For example, Evelyn shared a story about one of the first times she realized she was Black. She stated:

There was a boy in class - White boy, blonde hair, blue eyes - I had a crush on him, and all the girls had a crush on him, and I remember saying to myself, "I'm not going to be able to kiss (White male classmate)- He is not going to like me because I'm a Black girl."

Category d: Black Extended Family

Black extended family also made a big difference in participants' lives. For example, when Daisie experienced homelessness because of her disputes with her parents about her sexual identity in high school—and was feeling helpless and hopeless—it was a neighbor who took her in. She shared:

So, I didn't even know if I could graduate high school. I got so down on myself, I stopped going to class. I was like, "what's the point?" I didn't have the offer yet for a scholarship. I didn't have a home. And I had given up actually. And it was a neighbor of my parents that stepped up. And he noticed he hadn't seen me at the house, and they had a niece who went to my school, and they asked her where has she been and she was like I heard that she was homeless right now. It was a Black family, and so they sent her to school and said tell her to come to our house.

Category e: Black Excellence

Black excellence was also prevalent in participants' interviews. For example, they believed that they needed to work twice as hard to be successful, to be as good as White people for the same outcome, and in order to be successful in education sport and professional life. Nina recalled:

I'm not even sure where I made the connection, I think I received a message growing up, I don't think it was in the K through five, but I remember the message of you know, "you have to be good," right? Like you have to be oftentimes.... Black people "you have to work twice as hard to get half as much," it was the message was more along the lines of "you have to be good" -so that there's no question in your skill, your ability, and your right to be there. That is your calling card - your performance and the way in which you show up what justifies your right to be in that space, so you need to be good and in addition, the fact my parents were educators, so they had high standards anyway for performance.

Sonia also spoke of her dad's focus on her getting an education. She shared:

I felt like I had to prove myself... I mean I felt like regardless of whether it's professional, academic, or athletic.... I felt I had to prove myself. And I felt like because I was Black, I just had to be like, I had to stand out, I had to be a star, I had to be exceptional I still have that today. Just that kind of mindset, I have to work hard to work three times as hard just to stand out.

Category f: Gender Roles for Little Black Girls

Participants became aware of how expectations of them as girls/women differed from expectations of boys/men in sport and in life. For example, participants communicated that their

Black family's gender expectations and roles regarding sport (i.e., "sport should be fun," something to do, or as a means to access higher education) limited their own knowledge related to opportunities they had to play a sport in college. Participants did not know that they could walk on to a sport or play sport and have support academically. They thought they had to choose and realized too late that they could have continued to be involved in sport or be a collegiate athlete.

In addition, they also recognized the structural barriers that were at work related to sexism in women's sport. Daisie as a gifted teenage athlete lamented:

I also recognized that I was a female. And that meant something because females don't have the same opportunities athletically as males do, so I had plenty of male friends who were on track you know for professional leagues, and I just knew that was not a reality for me and the only real reality was either a national team or basketball because the WNBA was [just] taking off at this time.

Category g: Sport and Athletic Identity

Participants reported being exposed to sport by their families and/or peers. Many experienced a love of sport, physical activity, and athletics early in life. While there were only four participants who actually played sport at the college level, nearly all participants loved to play, watch, or be around athletes and the sporting environment. Most were introduced to sports by their families as a way to get scholarships to college or because it was a way to see Black people ascend to higher levels of social and economic success.

For example, Nina described how her athletic identity was the reason she was in the position she is in life now. In addition, she connected academics to her athletic identity:

I was a student-athlete, at a certain point, I was training year-round, I was balancing school with training demands, and again there was no sport without the academic piece. At that point in time, salient identities were Black female and student ...not just athlete but student-athlete because the student was the gateway to the athlete part.

For Daisy, her most salient identity in high school was sport or athlete: "Sport was number one and that was probably because that's all anyone knew of me and that's all I knew of myself for the most part." And, for others, sport was a place that was safe and a source of support. Surrogate fathers (i.e., coaches), family (i.e., teammates) allowed them to feel like they belonged and more comfortable in their own skin. For example, Evelyn revealed that sport was a safe space for her in the wake of her parents' divorce and the abuse she experienced in her home: "Sport for me was an escape, it was a safe space for me to exist, particularly because of (abuse) in my childhood." Her basketball coach was like family, a person she remembers as one of the more important people in her upbringing and development.

In addition, Nina chose to leave swimming for basketball because of the isolation and lack of support she felt in the White-dominated sport of swimming. She reported that she was one of the only Black athletes in the city and the competition from within and without wore on her. At 14 years old, she made a switch. She shared:

I was tired of trying at that point as a 13-14-year-old, I didn't want to have to try to see my way forward. I just want to chill and be with my friends and that's not happening in swimming... basketball was where there was an acceptance - it felt like there was an ease of being in that environment. And from a cultural identity standpoint, you're bringing something to the table that's a little different. But in terms of the ease of being in the

environment, it was much easier to be in that space - it was fun, it was relaxing, it was enjoyable, it felt more congruent.

Category h: Prioritizing Educational Success and K-12 School Choices

Participant reported attending predominantly White K through 12 schools based on their family's desire for the best education. This transpired even if it meant going outside of the neighborhood (i.e., being bussed) or living in a predominantly White neighborhood so that they could attend the best schools.

For example, Sun's Caribbean nationality and British-based educational background gave her the opportunity to go to college preparatory school and graduate from high school when she was 16 years of age. Her parents were then able to send her to college in the United States. Evelyn was bussed out of her all-Black town to attend a grammar school. This made her question how her parents could afford it. She said:

I don't know how my mom afforded it. I don't know how my mom or dad afforded for me to be going to grammar school and then in seventh grade I went back to my town's all Black public school. I think my mom just couldn't afford the tuition anymore for grammar school.

Category i: College as a Given

Participants' self and family expectations were that participants would attend college. This was expected and not just a goal to be worked for but a reality to be lived out with or without direction or support.

For example, for Cookie and her family, education was the key:

I was pretty much an overachiever for the most part - like a lot of pressure on me to perform well academically because I would have been the second generation to graduate

high school and go on to college for both sides of my family and it was a really big deal to my grandparents. I remember I was six years old and he [Grandpa] set me on his lap and said, “Listen -these White people got a lot of money and you need to make sure you get every little bit of it and you need to make sure you go to school and get an education” and so even if like I didn't really feel like I knew what I wanted to do...I knew I was going to go to college.

Olivia reflected:

So, I don't think I thought about it... I knew I was going to college but... I didn't know why or what for, but I knew I was going. My grandparents... my grandfather had gone, both my parents had gone, so kind of just a known fact - I was going to college. By the time I got to probably my junior year in high school, I started to focus in on what I was actually interested in that I might want to study.

Category j: Identifying a Profession

Participants described a professional vision from as early as 11 through to high school (i.e., desire to become doctor, lawyer, engineer, psychologist, professional athlete) that aligned with their family's expectation for them to get an education and a good job to be successful. Noa reported that she wanted to be a medical doctor because in her immigrant family, there were just three choices: “I don't know if you're familiar with like [African nationality] parents but it's you're either a doctor, you're a lawyer, or you're an engineer...I really liked science, so I was going to be the doctor.”

There were several others who were interested in becoming psychologists, PhDs, and, for a few, the Women National Basketball Association (WNBA) or the Olympics. Clinical psychology was high on the career aspiration list for many of these young Black girls. For

example, Sun was young when she knew she wanted to pursue a career in psychology. As she explained, “At 11 years old, I wanted my PhD in psychology...I come from this family that my parents are, neither of them are real big talkers...and I want to be that for people like me who don’t have that.” Evelyn’s goals mirrored Diedre’s and Noa’s - she said:

I always knew I was going to be a doctor (PhD) or a lawyer, there was one part of me early on that I did think about doing like computer technology...But I always had those goals of being either a doctor or lawyer.

Category k: SES Status and Access to Higher Education

Participants’ socioeconomic status and first-generation student or student-athlete status influenced their college choices, opportunities, and obstacles faced when applying for and getting accepted to certain colleges. Their SES status was a salient part of their Black girlhood and their future educational experiences and opportunities.

For example, Janet’s life shifted after her parents divorced and she moved back to her mother’s hometown where she would wind up going to college. The identity of low SES really stuck out to her as she reflected on her experiences during girlhood. As she conveyed:

I tell you right now, one of the more salient identities for me was coming from a low-income household, because it was a constant...I was constantly reminded of that...every opportunity that was placed before me was based off the initial eligibility for anything had to do with the fact that you know I came from a household where there wasn’t a lot of money.

SES status was also a pervading theme in the experiences of Daisie, Smythe, Nina, Diedre, and Evelyn. Smythe’s parents told her, “Hey, this is a basketball” – “...we don’t have any money -

you need to get a scholarship;”and so, for her, she said, “I was on a path of, you know, I’m playing this sport for a purpose.” Nina spoke of her father’s plans for her:

So, for my dad, the goal was a scholarship, I think he wanted me to play nontraditional sports, because there were more scholarship opportunities...I never had the thought or desire to play basketball in college...I was much more interested in the academic opportunities.

Diedre’s family sent her to a private Catholic school. When it was time to go off to college, while she did get some support, there were loans and debt which consistently blocked internship and potential job opportunities. Her families low socio economic status also impacted finding or knowledge of resources and financial capital for college; she also did not want to burden her parents. Evelyn was bussed to a grammar school and described that when her parents divorced, her mom could no longer afford the grammar school. So, she started attending the public school in her all-Black town:

My mom just couldn’t afford the tuition anymore for grammar school, so I went there, so I was advanced...at that time in my life, I didn’t feel welcomed in the grammar school, right, as a Black girl, and I didn’t feel welcome in the Black public school because of my education at the time being situated as White. So, I was everywhere, and nowhere at the same time.

First generation status also impacted participants and their understanding of college scholarships. For example, some were more interested in an academic while others were interested in an athletic scholarship. It also depended upon which school were recruiting them. As Olivia explained, “I was like, okay, so what are some other options to me in terms of where I can go to school? and at that point, it was really, where can I get a basketball scholarship?” Mia

also was trying to decide if she would continue with basketball, which would pay for her first year. Otherwise, if she would go to a more prestigious school that would be more expensive, the money that her parents had spent on the private high school she attended made this decision even weightier in her mind.

For those who were first generation college students, they reported not having direct knowledge about the college application process. As a result, they experienced difficulty navigating the transition to college. Half of the participants indicated that they were first generation academically and there was also a few reporting first generation athletic status. Daisie noticed what she described as a “different entrance” for minorities into the college system. She stated:

...recognizing that those of us who were there that were minority, especially being an athlete ...you have kind of a different entrance and there's almost his feeling of “you're not really supposed to be here; this is a privilege for you to be here” and when I went in, we were handed our scholarships as we walked up. So, you were either handed your full ride or partial, but you didn't know what you were getting until you got there. It was weird - it was kind of chaotic and really like I wasn't supposed to be there because other players had their parents and support, and I was mostly just on my own. I don't think I ever felt like I was supposed to be there.

Participants also alluded to the fact that money factored into access to higher education, and, at times, excluded them from experiences such as research and engagement in higher education. In fact, when asked what would have been the most helpful during the undergraduate experience, Evelyn declared, “Money, shoot. I’m a broke college student.” Even while on academic and athletic scholarship, she worked as an intern for a professional team and still reported needing

money to survive. As Mia transitioned to college, she described a really difficult decision regarding her choice of school because of her parent's middle-class status. She had the opportunity to continue her basketball career and play out of state for the first year until an injury her senior year changed her options:

Factoring into the decision at that time was, what is affordable? To pursue this other identity as an athlete or pursue these next steps in the student realm...like what is financially manageable? And that was playing into it as far as getting in-state tuition and the high probability of some education academic scholarship versus walking on [to basketball] because of injuries during the recruiting season for basketball. So, I walked on my first year and then got a scholarship for my last three years. And just what I was doing...like financially to my family...was also in the back of my brain.

Domain II: Whiteness: Ebony in the Ivory Tower (The Gates and Their Keepers)

The second domain was constructed to describe participants' most treacherous and arduous part of their journey which was filled with confrontations with the unknown parts of their identities, how others perceived them, and their hypervisibility and simultaneous invisibility in the ivory tower. Their undergraduate, graduate, and professional training were housed in this – at times - house of horrors; at other times, these spaces were experienced as safe with certain gate keepers granted them access and guided them on their way. The 11 categories in this domain included: *(a) pathways and barriers to access navigating higher education system for first generation student and/or athletes and lack of support from mentors (the gate keepers); (b) access to the gates: advisors and mentors); (d) college athletics (student athletes and non-student athletes); (e) the racialized tower spaces and places; (f) college city/town racist climate; (g) lack of knowledge of resources and staff to assist with navigation; (h) Black woman student*

stories; (j) mentor/advisor/role models (needed); and (k) student worker- the grind; (l) encountering Blackness- discrimination, racial trauma/oppression; (m) embracing and engaging in Blackness and safe spaces (Networking, career transition, resiliency, and relationships); (n) resisting White supremacy [speaking up for Blackness] (advocating, activating, agitating)

Category a: Pathways and barriers to access: Navigating Higher Education

Participants reported experiencing a lack of support from mentors and/or advisors due to their lack of understanding of the Black experience, Black student needs specific to racialized experiences, lack of creativity, and flexibility within the historically and predominantly White Eurocentric male-dominated academic system. For example, Noa experienced what she believed to be bad advice from an academic advisor as she was trying to navigate organic chemistry on her way to becoming a medical doctor. As she shared:

I ended up changing my major from biology to sociology because I wasn't doing well in organic chemistry. At the time I thought, if I'm failing, I want to be able to graduate and so I let - looking back like it still hurts me to this day, but I let this advisor talk me out of continuing with that major and just switched my major to sociology. And I remember her words: "It's much easier and you'll be able to handle it." I just wish I had someone that looked like me that could have given me... it was my junior year - I already had two years biology under my belt... I've already gone this far... Just thinking about it now, I get so upset with myself that I let someone talk me out of that. Don't let them tell you that you can't do it.

Janet's advisor also impacted her choice of undergraduate major. She explained:

There was actually a Black woman faculty member and instantly the department matched us as mentor-mentee based off being identified as a Black woman and that was probably

the worst match I've ever had in terms of mentorship... At the time, there was only one Black faculty member in that department... I noticed how she was treating the other students in the program who were also assigned to her as a mentor and they were White women. That became very visceral for me to the point where I asked for, I spoke up and I was just like, "I need another mentor." I did not tell them why... it was more so because I became very dejected and questioning my skills and abilities and my worthiness of being in the program because of the way that she treated me in comparison to the other students who White women.

Category b: Access to the Gates: Advisors and Mentors

Participants had a few situations where mentors, advisors, or peer student groups provided specific guidance and direct connections which helped them gain access and experience with navigating higher education. Participants named this as "Other mothering" in the university space.

For example, Kaye described a program that made all the difference in her experience in both her undergraduate and graduate studies. She described the program and the Black male psychology mentor she had like this:

But the university was small enough where people took interest in you, in what you were doing. Doctor [Black male psychologist in my undergrad] being there and taking Black psychology I also had the rare opportunity to be a T.A. as an undergrad. To a counseling skills class...everyone knew each other, and no one was letting anyone fall through the cracks. So, there was intentionality from professors and the few staff members that were on campus and student affairs, whether it was a financial aid officer or one of the individuals that worked in the Deans of Students Office. But that person knew

everyone... young married African American male who just really took hold of every student Black student at that school... it was an Underground Railroad... so all of this was ideally just the love of Black folks and that's what we would say back in the day, the love and appreciation of Black folks and we're not gonna let you not graduate from this university. Even to this day, I'm connected to every mentor that I had from undergrad and even as a professional.

Category c: College Athletics (Student-Athletes and Non-Student-Athletes)

Participants reported using athletics to gain scholarships or preferred walk-on status to access higher education. Gender was also a barrier to utilizing college athletics to gain access to college admission, funding, and also specific guidance and direct connections. Participants for example, Sun and Diedre perceived their lack of access and knowledge to how college athletics worked as not providing them with an opportunity to keep playing the sports they loved or to bring their full potential to a sport. As Sun shared:

Oh yes, I was gonna walk on. So, my sport is field hockey -right - I really like the team sports a lot. Here is what would have helped me massively - you could be talking to an All American and Hall of Famer right now but I'm not. If somebody would have said, Sun, there's an athletic department that will help you with tutoring or your schedule or if somebody would have said the freaking female hockey coach is Black!!! So, my thinking because goal-oriented, gotta get this PhD, my parents spending this money- I can't be around here playing field hockey and getting bad grades. I didn't grow up like I gotta get a Division One because nobody would have been able. I think the big thing for me was not failing in school academically and not knowing that I had that kind of support because I'm a good student but not knowing that made me make the decision to just stick

to school now 100%. It would have helped me cause first of all Black female field hockey coach would not have let me fail... we don't push that side of ourselves even though some of us have it.

Diedre and Sun's stories were similar; Diedre joined club sports but felt she was so much more than that as she compared herself to her peers. She remembered:

I feel like the club part of looking back on it, like it's more of the frustration. So, I think for me getting to that school and seeing athletes like the DI athletes, I'm just saying I'm more athletic than these people. I don't understand how they are able, you know, they are part of like sports, now they got all these free clothes, they get free food, and they get all this stuff. I could be doing that as well... I'm looking at all these sports in general. If someone doesn't know someone, they wouldn't know about this. How do they access this? So, it was like frustration on my part - the opportunities I missed out on.

While there were four student-athletes who were on teams, there were other participants for whom college athletics also played a role in their experience in the Ivory Tower. Noa and Etta both ran track in high school but focused on academics when they went to college. While Noa was unaware of her ability to walk on, she said:

I think it was my junior year and I was like, oh I knew a friend who didn't come in on the track team, but like her sophomore year decided to just, let's go out and you know try it out - and was on the team, and I didn't know we could do that. But I considered it at that point, like hey, maybe I'll just join cross country, cause I did that in high school as well so but then again education was the point - right - and so I was like, well like even if not, even going to do this professionally or anything, I'm like, what's the point? So, I kind of dropped it at that point.

Etta attended a university on an academic and music scholarship. As she put it:

So, I actually had the opportunity to walk on to the track team...I realized that because I was on an academic and music scholarship, and I just maybe could have made it work... I was proud of myself that I was able to walk onto the team, but I quickly realized I would that it wasn't fun...and I was doing it for fun.

Category d: The Racialized Tower Spaces and Places

The ivory tower (i.e., higher education) structured participants into spaces and places that were, at times, unsafe for participants. Their racialized experiences and positioning traumatized their psyche and their career trajectory. Participants experienced racism, microaggressions, macro assaults, and stereotyping in the classroom, where they lived on campus, and while participating in student life (i.e., the broader campus climate). Many participants described experiencing racialized riots, demonstrations, classroom walkouts, biases and prejudice against student-athletes; social justice experiences like the graduate student revolt in the 1990s through to 2014 with the Trayvon Martin murder were described by participants.

For example, Janet spoke of herself, and her best friend being fed up with the microaggressions and macro assaults that were being perpetrated by White classmates against Black professors. Evelyn talked about deciding not to stay at her first university because of the predominately White party culture. And Nina experienced waking up on Saturday morning at her university to “Dixie” music and confederate flags.

Cookie shared that there was a Black student group that helped to lead protests and supported Black students on her campus. She explained:

I remember being a freshman in protesting for the first time on my campus about this whole situation with Trayvon Martin and it was late at night - it was like 10:00 o'clock,

we were laying on the concrete, just lying there all in solidarity with one another and having these posters and then getting up the next day and hearing like what people were saying around the campus about people that were doing that, not even realizing that I was a part of that group and they were just like, why would they even do that? I remember something else happened on campus – soon, we were, it was junior year because Trump had been elected and we called our group [our community Black southwest university], it's a whole family, like everybody knows the name of this girl that gets pushed off the sidewalk walking to class and, basically, she gets told to “go back where you came from,” like the day after he was elected. And once again, there was another call for protest...my director [in my program] was like, “I better not see you out there” and I was like, Dang, really? Silence because I really wanted to have this career in sport but almost it felt like I needed to put my Blackness on the back burner, to be able to have the career that I thought I wanted.

Janet described her university's' attempt to plan a forced get together for Black and White students. She shared:

At this university, I think there was one time that really sticks out to me and it was when the Panhellenic society decided to put together these - I called them “orchestrated get togethers” - where it was like, you know, the Black fraternities and sororities getting together with some of the other Greek organizations that have their own facilities (because, you know, like Black Greeks didn't have a facility) or you know, there's White sorority houses or fraternity houses and they would host like these combined luaus. So, it was always interesting in like that it was a very structured environment, and they were like trying to corral the Black students to go support it. It is always just didn't sit right

with me and I don't know, maybe it's a bias or just over-generalization but I've never once thought of good things happening at a frat house. So, I think that was one time where it was kind of like, it felt forced like as a Black woman. I was like, “Oh, I don't want any part of going over there.”

Category e: College City/Town Racist Climate

Participants experienced racial trauma and racist attacks not only on campus but in the cities and towns where the campuses were located (i.e., broader community). It seems as though participants the region of the country and/or state also impacted the racial climate of college towns.

There were a few participants who reported attending the same graduate program. This program had an amazing reputation and an allied White program director, but participants experienced the town as terrifying. For example, even though Daisie attended basketball camps multiple times in this town [before she attended graduate school there], she didn't experience the racism until she came back as a graduate student. She reported:

So, there's challenges in [south-eastern university grad school town] - one was when we stepped out of the program, it was a very different experience, so when we left our building, it was not the same. And then you very much realized, ain't so many of you here, and so it wasn't long that when I was in town that I was called the N word - it did not take long. I was up on the main strip and I was going to get gas and someone just randomly - a guy, group of guys in a truck yelled out at me - and at first, it was like, “Did I hear that correctly?” and then I'm **** - it was kind of like, say it and run, so I couldn't say anything back...right...and it's sat with me all day, bothered me. I remember that and I didn't talk about it or say anything about it but then it happened again not long after and

I don't remember where I was with the context...but I remember it happening again and then it just so happened that a male Hispanic classmate in our cohort had experienced someone calling him a “beaner” or something like that and he was all messed up about it and I was like, “Well, someone yelled out the N word to me.” We immediately jelled together, like we got to be there for each other.

Category f: Lack of Knowledge of Resources and Staff Available to Assist with Navigation

Participants reported lacking the knowledge about existing resources and/or staff available that could assist them as Black students navigating the spaces and places of higher education. From the athletes needing to connect to the broader Black population on campus to the non-athletes needing direction in advising and connecting with their professors and or mentors, participants shared about the situations that they wished they had someone who looked like them tell them things they needed to know. As Sun put it:

Somebody to tell me that I wasn't, that it wasn't going to all come to me because I've got a master's degree, I still expected that degree to like do something for me - right - and eventually or like no, it just gave me loans and I didn't really make much money or much more money. I only had to work two jobs. I don't know but I've always had a bunch of jobs. If somebody would just tell me like just because that happened, you still have to work the same level of intensity work to like to get the promotions.

Nina also didn't have Black representation or the multicultural training she needed. Her White male supervisor's lack of cultural competence, minimization or active avoidance of multicultural issues seemed to have impacted her getting fully developed as a practitioner. She expressed having to take on that task on her own. And she decided to not have conversations about race

with her supervisor because of this. She believed that he would not be able to get it, and he was her biggest advocate. As she described it:

My primary supervisor in my grad program - because he's a White male. However, he was nothing but supportive and encouraging throughout my career and experience. And like I said, some of the conversations around race that we didn't have because I didn't bring them up right now. Granted, as he could have brought them up as well, but I don't, I don't place all of that responsibility on him per se but I will say we maintained a relationship to this day and I feel like he has been a staunch advocate and when I felt more confident and more comfortable in my professional identity and in the intersection with my personal self to say what's happening with the diversity... he's been the one who I've been able to have that conversation with and so I think that's critical.

Category g: Black Women Student Stories

Participants reported being one of the only or one of a few in the classrooms, cohorts, and campus spaces they participated in. Janet and her best friend resisted the microaggressions from her classmates, she reported:

Remember how I shared with you that my minor turned into African American studies? The majority of people in those classes were not like me. They were White students and there were a lot of interesting dynamics in the classroom settings specifically in those courses... where depending on the instructors... who were ironically very diverse. We had instructors from the continent of Africa, and also we had some domestic instructors. However it was a majority White students, and I witnessed on several occasions where students would challenge the content being taught. Which is fine that's what the university experience is supposed to look at things with a critical lens, but there was this

undertone of challenging it... without any substance or right. And without introducing an alternative perspective or any kind of content that would support whatever the challenges. And so, for me there were plenty of experiences, where I find myself getting hot in this class. I'm sitting back and watching those dynamics at play and wondering if the individual was truly curious or were they just doing it to hear themselves speak or to undermine the level of respect that was due to the instructor and so there were on multiple occasions several occasions in fact so much so that one of the other of the two of us that were in that class there was one particular incident where my friend she just jumped up out of her seat and just like she just let them have it like I can't sit here and just watch you disrespect this teacher yeah and we both just got up and walked out of class.

Smythe had a few instances with her cohort where being the only Black student was highlighted. She described an incident of macro assaults from her professor:

We had to talk about different microaggressions, and the professor wanted us to write down different microaggressions and the things that people say that were racist, a lot of my classmates felt uncomfortable saying it out loud and demanded that we do it in small groups and it became like a very big discussion. This was like on a Friday - we had class on maybe Monday and he's like, "Let's table this and maybe we can do small groups on Monday." So, now I'm panicking all weekend; sitting in a small group and having to hear my teammates - our classmates - say all these racist things. So, I get to class on Monday and start crying and saying like,

Do you understand the challenging situation that you're expecting me and other - you know...people of color with it in this classroom? Just sit around in small

groups and how you say all these racist things because you're too embarrassed to say it in a large group, where now, at least if I hear it, I can look to...other people of color and feel like I'm connected, not alone? I hope all of you had a great weekend because I sat for the past 48 hours worried about this exercise

Category i: Mentor/Advisor Role Models (Needed)

Participants wanted more representation in terms of seeing Black people in mentor, advisor, faculty, and supervisor roles in higher education spaces. As Smythe disclosed:

You know, I think it would have been helpful. So, my coach my senior year - my coach got fired and she brought and they brought in a Black female coach and I think if my freshman year I had had a Black female coach and other role model or somebody to talk you through some of that would have been really powerful. Because - again - I was struggling through all this myself with no one to talk to, like all the coaches on staff were White females which was great but they're all females - right - like it was very powerful but none of them were Black and so all these things I would have been struggling with, I think I would have really opened up to someone if they had looked like me.

Category j: Student Worker (the Grind)

Participants had to work outside jobs in order to survive through undergraduate and graduate studies which sometimes limited cohort connection and assistantship (teaching or research) opportunities. They reported working two or three jobs while matriculating through higher education and challenging their will to survive; as teaching assistants or graduate assistants, they also went into some significant debt. For example, Evelyn held down an internship with a local professional sports organization while an undergrad and then was an instructor at a community college when she was in graduate school. Sun also commented on how

she worked so many jobs in graduate school she had a car accident with her recently purchased car and totaled it because of being exhausted.

Additionally, during the transition to graduate school and becoming a professional. for many of the women, they held down professional jobs in other fields (i.e., Smythe and Olivia were coaches and Olivia also worked in corrections).

During Sun's PhD program, she worked full-time at a university hospital which was 35 minutes away from her program. There were times she said felt "slighted" (i.e. not thought of or included) by the White graduate program culture because there were no Black people:

Well, so in my PhD, so once again, I worked full-time as a PhD student - I commuted 30 miles each way, yes - ...I did that several times each week and I worked a full-time job. Sometimes, I taught at an HBCU or at the local state college, and so for me, I felt like othered in that setting because I wasn't, you know, going to school all day long and doing homework all night long. Like I had a whole life...a mortgage, like all the things adult learners have to deal with. Yes, I've felt othered.

Category k: Encountering Blackness- Discrimination, Racial Trauma/Oppression

The complex and dual relationship in both Black culture and the dominant culture forced Black women to have to negotiate these dual "isms" in their daily interactions. Discrimination in the form of the insidious and pervasive racist and oppressive practices of racial microaggressions permeated their everyday experiences as Black women, students, and professionals. Participants encountered a difference between how society perceived them and how they perceived themselves which required reflection on Blackness in society, in academia, and other professional spaces. Many of the participants described their feeling of naivete, being dumb, or

not being able to recall or remember specific instances in retrospect until being interviewed. Noa shared,

so for you know a number of times like again I wasn't really I knew that people saw me as like Black an African American and when I worked a second job I didn't realize that people don't they don't see that in a positive way at times if that makes sense like I always I was very prideful of like I'm African nationality American and it wasn't until an experience working at one of my jobs that I realized, oh like that's not how people see me... like I see myself like this really hard working smart you know? When people see me, they don't ...I mean obviously they don't know my experience, but like they don't necessarily see a hardworking... they just see a Black woman and then all the stereotypes that comes with it. If that makes sense.

Participants experienced discrimination, racial trauma, and racist and sexist oppression as undergraduates and graduate students in the classroom and in relationships with students, faculty, and staff. Sun shared her experience, she stated:

like the social injustice that was when like my Black experience I started to experience...so either I was just too dumb to know what was happening, but now I'm with my friends who are like that's real messed up...like to have my guys pointing out that's racism. Why are they following us around the store? Because they think we're gonna steal from them. So that's why my racial identity is different from our racial identity in the Caribbean.... but my racial identity United States that's when it came storming on me, because I was like Oh no, we're sitting in these streets they can't be treating us like this! One of my friends got assaulted, and beat up by the police the university police was all in the newspaper... some of them were athletes who were

assaulted...but only the Black kids got sent to the university jail, the frat boys got to go wherever they went... I was like that cannot happen we will sit in these streets we will turn out we didn't break anything up but we silently protested.

Category I: Embracing & Engaging in Blackness & Safe Spaces (Networking, career transition, resiliency, and relationships)

Participants embraced their Black identity through learning more about their racial identity, some by reading Black authors, taking courses, and a few adding minors to their degree. Sun describes her experience as being “woken up.” She shared:

I took so many African American studies classes, like as many as I could take as electives because they weren't a part of psychology. We didn't have Black psychology, but there was a point like I don't know exactly when it happened. I don't know if it was like somebody walking around the store following me. That is when my Black identity as a Black person in America and in the United States got woken up. Because I didn't grow up here, I felt compelled to learn that's when I started... I said I will not read another book by somebody who is not Black. And I didn't read a book by nobody that wasn't Black for like 10 years.

Participants joined sororities participated in mentoring programs, and Black student undergraduate or graduate groups to find places that felt more comfortable. Participants found belonging, “family,” Black culture, and community outside of the main (White) campus spaces with family friends, church, their family, or their off-campus work environments. Etta shared:

So, I'm Greek [a member in a sorority). I pledged my sophomore year of college. My academic scholarship was a Black scholarship it was named for one of the Black businessmen and philanthropist. It was for all Black folks who did decent in college or in

high school. We were an organization. We had monthly meetings. We supported one another. We did stuff for Black folks on campus and in the community. I eventually moved into leadership in the organization it gave me a community. I have two nephews in college, and I tell them college is amazing because you can find your people. Like whoever you are you can find your people in college, and it was really easy for me to do that, because it was this network I was involved in a few organizations. And then of course I was in the university orchestra still but there were however [only] three of us. I was happy. I feel like I came into my own. I mastered the art of negotiating different identities, interacting with different types of people. I became a lot more comfortable. I was now around a group of Black educated folks like the majority of the time it was easier for me to find my voice and be comfortable with who I was all the time. And not that I was uncomfortable before, but I was very careful about how like you convey your identity to others. I don't want to use the word police, but I didn't police my identity as much so in college. I think even when I was around White folks; I was still more comfortable just talking.

Participants attempted to identify and spend time in safe spaces on their campus such as Black student programming, organizations, Black Greek life, and multicultural centers or peer support programs on campus or in the community. Participants gave examples of such spaces. Cookie relayed her community experience when she said, "I really leaned into the community that was there like the multicultural center...[and] were connected to a specific church that I'd go to and I'm probably still a pseudo member." Kaye really believed her safe space at her university made all the difference in her life and career. She described the experience of participating in

Miss Ebony this way:

What was so powerful again about [West Coast University] is they have this one group called “Miss Ebony” and “Miss Ebony” was an organization for all of the young Black girls at [West Coast University] so we had a person who was over us in from student affairs department that was our leader, and she would have different meetings. I mean different people came in and spoke to us but the topic, was always about being a Black female and just empowering us and that really left a legacy for me because from that point on post my graduate studies every institution that I've worked at I created a Black woman support group that was critically important.

Noa shared:

So now going to college I was with this whole group of people who looked like me! And I'm like wait where have you all been? And so, it was very eye opening. It was very like warming. I went to my first Black student association group; and I just looked around like there are people here that got my experiences, and I didn't know how to put it into words ...like that's how it's been, and so I just remember like going to that first meeting and feeling like very welcome.... in heartwarming, right? But feeling like I lost out... they were talking about lots of things. There were people older than me I felt like very behind. How have I been so naive to think that you know that the system works for me? Like all of the privilege, and not realizing like there are I do have privilege in some areas it was just like eye opening. I remember leaving that meeting feeling very happy...like secure and like happy that I chose this place, but I also have a got a lot of work to do... I've got a lot of work to do.

Category m: Resisting White Supremacy [Speaking up for Blackness] (Advocating, Activating, Agitating)

Participants while learning in educational spaces felt forced to speak up as the representative for marginalized or Black women or Black people. Participants believed their continuing to be or exist in educational spaces at the highest levels was a form of resistance in itself and being an advocate activist or agitating for those who were present or that would come after them. Janet began by advocating for herself against internalized racism from her Black professor. Nina shared:

I do remember moments where I would be one of maybe two Black people in the class. Maybe the only Black female in this particular class and kind of being asked to comment on the Black experience in certain situations these were not my sports psychology classes per say these were regular psychology classes, but I remember being like I cannot be the spokesperson for everybody. But I remember that feeling at grad school more than I had ever experienced it in any academic setting, and so as a Black woman feeling like I'm being called upon to explain this experience of a collective people on a regular basis felt like without any care or concern for what that question or putting me in that position does, I definitely remember that.

Domain III: Whiteness, Black Women in the Profession: The Firsts and Only's

Domain III was constructed to describe the most tenuous transition that participants navigated: finding their way to the profession of applied sport psychology. They reported, in fact, that there is still not a clear signpost leading Black women to sport psychology. The good news was that there were some gatekeepers (i.e., advisors and supervisors) who granted access for professional supervision and training. They also again encountered being the only one or the

first in terms of representation and they questioned if there was space and a place for them; however, all but two managed to carve out some room for themselves and find their positions or businesses and people as they moved deeper into the profession. The 10 categories constructed in Domain III included: (a) the *firsts and only's: Black Women Leaders in The Association for Applied Sport Psychology*; (b) *higher education: A very ivory tower and athletic departments*; (c) *professional sport spaces (the only woman)*; (d) *finding sport psychology, practitioner, educator, or clinical?*; (e) *creating space in the field starting businesses and networking*; (f) *navigating success and failure*, (g) *angry Black woman and other tropes, disrespect, and disregard*; (h) *competition: what do you know? client and organizational resistance*; (i) *imposter syndrome*; (j) *helping/healing athletes and performers*.

Category a: First and Only: Black Women Leaders in The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)

Many of the participants reported being the first, one of a few, or the only Black woman in the professional “ivory tower.” Their presence was sometimes acknowledged because of difference or high visibility but they reported feeling invisible in terms of power and positioning.

For example, Sun described AASP or the professional association as “Lily White and male.” While high-level leadership roles held by the participants were obtained through intention or election to the position, the accompanying weight of being the representative of the race wore thin and put undue burden on their skill acquisition, abilities, psyches, and professional growth.

As Evelyn reflected:

When I went to the first AASP conference... I could count on one hand the amount of Black people that were there and so we went to breakfast and after that we just had breakfast and we're like, “There's no Black people here.” So, the next year me and [First

name of BWSPP], we're like, okay, let's just have breakfast again as Black people. So, then I was like, let's make this a thing - let's just us little Black people get together. To me, my first impression was to get out. There is nothing...nothing other than White people. And what are they, what type of White cult is this? There was also not a lot of gender diversity, and there was more openness around sexual orientation.

Participants' impressions were that AASP was as a White space that was dominated by White men. Participants also acknowledged the newness of the field and the recent progress and improvement in representation in leadership; however, they expressed frustration with the pace at which the organization embraced diversity and inclusion efforts.

Sun shared that her first impression of AASP was "White and male." Janet's word was "elitist." It appears that the very Black women who were leading at all levels had a love-hate relationship with the organization and found themselves in formal separations, annual drop-ins, or just divorcing the organization all together. Olivia disclosed that after attending a regional multicultural AASP conference, the way it was explained to her was that this regional multicultural conference was for Black folks...like people of color, basically. As she explained it:

How it was explained to me is like that's where the Black people go, so like yes, please, I'm going...then I went to big AASP, and I was like, "Oh, this is not the same thing." Besides the fact that it was very White which wasn't surprising because everything is very White, I was more surprised that it was so many students....so I'd gone to this like first year AASP mixer, thinking I'd find other professionals and was like one or two other people who are in the same kind of situation, like they were new professionals...so that

was kind of disappointing...because I thought it would be more useful for my growth.

And it was very like “student” which is great - that’s not what I needed.

For Nina, her experience with AASP was also one of marginalization. She shared:

When I entered the field, it was dominated by White men - that was not only the perception but that was the reality, and when it came to discussions about diversity. And this is based on evidence that was kind of witnessed at the conferences, kind of what kind of sessions were highlighted. When they talk about diversity, what were they talking about there? It tended to be gender at times, it was international versus domestic issues, but very rarely was it race, like straight up race. And, so, from my first AASP conference ...I remember looking around being like, “Where are the people who look like me?”

Because I know sport is diverse and I know that people who participate in sport look like me. So, where are the professionals in this space that are providing services that look like me? So, let me just say, the idea of sports psychology being White male-dominated like persisted in my mind for a while, like I saw that and just felt that particularly in interacting with professional organization for like three years and then I stopped attending professional organizational activity. Just based on what I see, is there room for me as a Black professional? Is there a seat at the table for me, right? And that’s a part of what led me to stop attending the professional activities was because I was, I don’t see where there is a seat for me, and I don’t have the energy to create a seat. I am trying to make it through grad school, and I can revisit this table if I so choose to in the future...I do recall at the first conference being struck by the lack of visual diversity present in terms of those attending the conference. The two subsequent conferences, I remember, I even wrote comments during one of the conference evaluations about the lack of

diversity and presentations and the lack of diversity in presenters and I saw the same thing in the third year, and nothing seemed to be changing.... over three years' time period, nothing changing sounds like maybe there isn't room. I don't have time to figure it out, so I am going to step away.

Evelyn also spoke about a decade-long traumatic fight within and without of AASP:

I will just say the biggest barriers that I experienced completely outside of my education was working within AASP, working within higher education. It was the friction of my research, looking at intersection, of democratic discrimination being a Black woman within a predominantly White space and so I think that is just so important to have your work - a family of people who understand you. At that time, I didn't but also you know it's OK to get HR involved, it's OK to tell people "What you're doing is racist and what you're doing is patriarchal dominance." People nowadays have the language for that and at that time it wasn't available; higher education is such a hard place to navigate, particularly for Black women and if you are Black woman whose work is around Black women it's doubly challenging...So, I guess that would be the final things that I add. Pray for them, AASP is another institution that has been signed to uphold you know just racist patriarchal policies in order to protect it; they know that's how I feel about it. So, we've come a long way...but AASP has committed so much harm to so many different people, AASP is also a mirror for the field, so the harm that people have felt inside of AASP—the lack of diversity, inclusion with inside AASP—directly reflects that which is of the field as well the larger field of sports psychology. And so we need this organization - which is the largest sport psych - to get its act together in order to begin to push the greater field of sport and exercise psychology, [to] demonstrate excellence within

inclusion and equity; it will cause others in exercise psych programs and professionals to begin to demonstrate that excellence in DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] as well and just support and include from marginalized groups like Black women and you know indigenous women and individuals. Like that's a lot of work to be done, a lot of work to be done.

Category b: Higher Education Institutions: A Very Ivory Tower and Athletic Departments

Participants who reached faculty or instructor positions reported experiencing a lack of good faith trust and mentor advisors to assist with the tenure process. They were also frequently misjudged to be angry Black women, aggressive, combative, or difficult to work with. For example, Etta described her experience as a tenure-track faculty member in this way:

It was a tenure track position. I was there for one year, I got married a month after this job...it was the perfect job in a terrible location. As a tenure track position at a master's-level institution. So, research was a requirement, I wasn't expected to bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants. But the university and the city it was in was like 90% White, like 1% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 2% Black, just really. It was awful. And when I got there, I essentially became the department chair, so the woman who interviewed me or one of the women who interviewed me I actually took her job. But I did not know that she was leaving, and they were supposed to be hiring someone else in order to grow the department because they had so many students and that person ended up not accepting the job. So as a result, I got a healthy boost in pay; however, I turned into an administrator which is not what I wanted to do. So, there I was, in the perfect location but a terrible job and so at that time, I'd just been married - my husband and I were living separately - and I got to a point where I thought we were going to be making our life

there - the job was so bad and I was so miserable - I couldn't ask him to move there... I remember I started applying for just any job that was remotely interesting.

Those participants who worked at universities as mental health and mental performance providers in college athletic departments reported feeling happy to be a representative but did not hold the power or position necessary to create real change and or provide adequate support for the athletes of color. Olivia found herself asking the question:

As a Black person, how much, like how Black can I be? I kind of felt that out to see what was like acceptable and what was an acceptable amount of Black. And I know at the beginning, it felt like zero percent was acceptable and so I became a version of myself that I thought that people wanted. And I was still doing good work, but I just obviously - not my full self, well at least working with my administration. By the end of my tenure at a southeast university, I had become like, "Alright - this is my show, ok, like this is... what we are doing? You can take it or leave it" and I left - right - because, so if this is...now, I remember saying at some point (I had been asked to do something that wasn't on my job description and it really didn't have much to do with my role at all) and I said, "I don't have time for this - I literally do not have time to do this extra thing" and I was told, "Well, if your boss tells you that you have to do this thing and you don't do it then maybe you shouldn't work here" and I said, "That's a chance I'm willing to take" and I said that and I meant it and then I left.

Category c: Professional Sports Spaces (The Only Woman)

Participants who were working in professional sport and other corporate or service organizations experienced marginalization. This constitutes for African American women in some ways disempowerment in the system. They were also pigeonholed into taking on an

inordinate amount of weight and responsibility for doing everything (i.e., racial justice, activism, mental health, and performance, etc.). Participants were also asked to perform their job duties while fulfilling caretaking roles specific to their intersectional identity without the necessary (DEI) expertise needed to meet the holistic needs of athletes/performers. For example, Smythe described it as:

I think one of the challenges - I'm saying is just one piece of...not wanting to be the default expert of everything about race and inclusion or diversity and inclusion, yet also finding frustration that there are people I feel like...noncolor but just White people...who may feel like they're an expert or because they've worked within the Black community, that they can speak on issues and not ask anyone, for someone who has expertise in this area, advice, guidance on what to do. And an assumption that they know what to do and they can speak on it on their own. And not always having to be the one [to] step in, to challenge the one to step in and challenge or to do that work. And I think that's something that certainly at this job that once I got here and everything - between COVID-19 and George Floyd and the recent injustice coming to light - that they automatically put me at the head of the DI group. And I did it because I felt like it was necessary; but you know there are certainly people who have more experience in education in this area than me that could and should be brought in. But instead of bringing them in, they put somebody who is a White male in charge and has experience working within the Black community but is limited in his own awareness of how he impacts the group. So, for my career, it's this balance between learning how to impact -because my job isn't to lead a DEI group, my job is to lead the wellness and clinical services of the program and this is something in addition - and balancing the needs of what my job outlines, making sure I'm doing that

really well, also supporting some of the initiatives and being able to help while also like respecting like that piece about people getting paid you know? You're asking me to add on my plate but that can be a full-time job for someone with my already crazy workload.

Category d: Finding Sport Psychology (Clinical Practitioner or Educator - Which Path?)

As stated previously in Domain I, thirteen participants identified a professional vision for their future. For many, that vision began with knowing and understanding that with a degree or license in clinical psychology, they could have a profession that could provide for them and their future family (i.e., find a job or develop a private practice). However, many found the sport psychology field by chance. They stumbled upon it through a colleague, coworker, friend or a smoldering love for sports and being around athletes.

For example, Olivia was coaching Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball and started doing group therapy with her team while working on her postdoc. Applied sport psychology was mentioned to her by a colleague:

Oh, there this thing about sport and I just wonder how I could get into it. And he started talking to me about a woman who worked with professional sport. He gave you her name and then my supervisor said, “There's this other woman who was at the [school] and she's giving a talk and it's about sports psychology” and so I walk in and doctor [BWSP] is talking about sports psychology 101 and so I'm just like staring at her, like soaking up everything she has to say and at the end I walked up to her and I was the only other Black person in the room and we have this whole conversation and she explains what sports psychology is and what she does. I probably met her a month before I finished my postdoc. I kind of said to myself, like, if there were ever a time to make a pivot, this

would be it. So I only researched positions essentially that I knew I actually wanted in sports psychology or something related to sport.

Etta found sport psychology after completing an internship in a healthcare field that she reported hating:

Sports psychology was one of the last classes I took my spring of my senior year - the instructor was terrible, just like inappropriate, not very educated, like they pulled in some adjunct to, I don't know what she was doing but it was a terrible class - but the content resonated with me. And you know, like growing up, I was always an anxious athlete. It occurred to me that this would have been really helpful. And so, I actually started a master's program in exercise physiology, cause I had been accepted, it was paid for. After a semester, I was miserable -I just dropped out and decided to try again with sports psychology. I knew that's what I wanted to study; there weren't a ton of programs then -there was a handbook, and they would make it every five years or so. So, I had that handbook. I went through it. I knew that I should get into an assistantship. So that was my criteria.

Nina found sport psychology when she was finishing up her master's program: "Once I talked to the psychiatrist - when I was finishing up my master's program - she mentioned sports psychology and I looked into it. I said, "Ok, this could be pretty cool!" Furthermore, Nina clarified her position choosing the clinical route to applied sport psychology. Nina shared her path:

I wanted to be a licensed mental health provider and I wanted sport psychology to be a specialty area and so that's what prompted me to go to a PsyD program because they offered a specific concentration in sport and exercise ...so it wasn't to get to sports

psychology. I wanted to be a clinical psychologist, and when I realized that sports psychology was an area that you could specialize...I knew I wanted to be the doctor ...I wanted to get a situation where when I sign my name that was the only signature and in order to do that. I wanted to have the doctor in front of my name and the necessary letters behind it because there comes a level of respect and prestige with that title. So, I knew I wanted that for a licensed mental health provider for me psychology was a way to get that. I don't want sports psychology as a base because I want to have the license.

Category e: Creating Space in the Field by Starting Businesses and Networking

Participants who started consulting businesses created space in the marketplace by networking with other Black professionals and by being willing to pivot. Participants reported that as Black women, they were expected to figure it out and to be creative in making space or finding a way forward for themselves in the field.

For example, Sun came to this realization during her PhD program and working full-time at a university hospital:

Establishing my business—that's a joy and a challenge, both, but more I think it's more joy because when I worked for the army for those ten years...so, you know, I graduate, I went to school, graduated, worked for the army for 10 years. So, it's not working in sport, but I've always had my business. And so, that was my foothold, my connection to sport and that is how I continue to build skill and continued to impact athletes, and that's how people learned about me and what I could do for athletic and mental health, but also their athletic performance. So, start my own business, I never truly thought I would act, like I never saw myself, I only saw myself as one thing, right, let's be real... like a psychologist really my whole life. So, I never saw myself as an entrepreneur or business owner...just

somebody like a practitioner of psychology like my whole life, so whether it's clinical, counseling, I only saw myself as a psychologist.

As Nina explained:

Being able to work full-time in the world of sport and to even do so through my private practice... I think the ability to have a career, that is pretty full-time in the world of sports psychology or clinical and sports psychology...huge...I never ever anticipated that was the case. I never even thought that I would own a private practice, which may allude to one of the failures, or what I used to perceive as a failure was being laid off from the job at the counseling center which forced me to go into private practice. I had never had a situation where the plan, especially the academic plan that I had set forth, was not accomplished. Like I had an academic plan and plan to achieve. And this is the first time where being laid off is not part of the plan. There were financial troubles happening across the state, in state institutions, so there was a reduction in force of all the counseling center staff members that replaced full-time employees, to contract laying us all off, and so I thought of that as a failure. I was wondering if there was something that I did, something that could have been done differently; the idea of being laid off felt like failure. [It] became the best transition ever. It became a doorway to many, many more opportunities. But going through that did not feel good because I did not have a Plan B - my plan was to stay at this job for 30 years and retire.

Category f: Competition Within the Field-What do you know? Client and Organizational Resistance

Participants reported feeling invalidated and experienced targeted attacks in terms of their personhood credentials and expertise concerning their jobs or abilities to work with clients. They

experienced specific instances in which White male colleagues tried to “go for” their job or clientele or tried to “help” them, which felt disingenuous. Janet experienced this phenomenon and conveyed it as such:

I think there's something to be said about the savviness that, you know, each person can bring to the table in understanding business. That makes sense. And I'm not talking about like that textbook business administration stuff. I'm talking about what makes the most sense realistically from a business standpoint. Like what does this look like? How do you navigate spaces? And honestly in a field where people literally come for your job, like they don't care that they know that you don't have a contract that exists - they come for your job like every day.

Jeanie also experienced this phenomenon. As she conveyed:

I think as a female, I feel like I'm always trying to prove that I can do as much as males and would be good as a male or do the same job as a male because there's always, there's always the one that thinks he can do it, that a woman can't do the job. There's always one that comes up - I mean, there's always a White male that thinks he can come in or help me do something that I'm already doing, but because he's got some other kind of connection, he can help me do something... always, I can't even tell you. Not like two or three times, I mean at least 15 to 20 times, as I've had experiences with somebody, a White male that thinks you can come in and help me do something. It's the darndest thing. I'm like I even had somebody recently said to me, “I see you're just starting out in your sports psych career.” I needed some assistance... I didn't respond on LinkedIn; I didn't respond to it. So that is what you got off of my profile? I have nothing I can say to that.

This phenomenon also happened in the academy in athletic departments. Participants experienced obstacles and barriers there as well, because of their perceived youth or inexperience which undermined their professional identities and perceived competence. Sun described a scenario that happened with an athletic director; in her university athletic department, where she is the only trained mental health provider on the executive staff:

It's both like a joy and a challenge. Like sometimes...dealing with a White man - foolish, entitled, arrogant, dismissive- "Don't think you know what you're talking about," and will challenge, but not just like... If I had \$1 for every time, I heard somebody say "you're the expert... And I really don't even know how you do what you do but" and then either reject all I said and "I don't think that like - no I'm not doing that." Ok..well, let me see how that works out for you because you know, you call, you say I am an expert but you choose not to take the expert's recommendation. So, you choose to do that. You know, there could be some...consequences and repercussions...but to agree with that, I can't...it's so frustrating. If I have a dollar for every time that I got that from...a coach and administrator. The kids [student-athletes] don't really do it. They don't challenge me much.

Category g: Angry Black Woman and Other Tropes-Disrespect and Disregard

Participants reported experiencing microaggressions, macro assaults, racial profiling, racial attacks, and stereotyping (i.e., angry Black woman) including being relegated into roles specific to their intersectional identities and excluded from professional networks. For example, after discovering that a male faculty member, who interrupted her in class, went to her department chair and complained about her, Etta explained that:

...he said that I had been “aggressive and disrespectful” in front of my class... the situation was later corrected, right, like I articulated exactly what happened. But you know, that's one situation like I know that wouldn't have happened to someone else, but I think that's one example that kind of sums up my experience as a Black woman while at a [Midwest university] and in sports psychology and in teaching.

Olivia shared how she was also stereotyped as:

...being too “aggressive or combative,” which I've been called before. It worked. I was trying to show people that I'm here for a reason - I'm a professional. I know what I'm talking about. I also looked younger...so asking folks what my major was or what my what year I'm in felt kind of invalidating. [Administrator] got his usually staff in front office and upper administration who again wants you to do very, a very particular type of work, with no regard for who you are and how you have to show up every day. And, so, mentioned before, I was called “combative.” I was called combative because I was asked a question and I answered it, but the answer I gave, they didn't want the answer. And it wasn't even the kind of conversation where someone right or someone wrong - it was me asking questions to clarify. It was me correcting and you said something about me that I know to be untrue. How is that being combative or rambunctious? And, so, the challenges have been working in a system of patriarchal White supremacy and not being able to call it patriarchal White supremacy out loud because now you're the problem child and you're the troublemaker. I don't know - I'm not sure really you want to work here, right? Yeah.

Participants also experienced disrespect and disregard of their skills, abilities, and expertise from colleagues in academia and in professional organizations. In these spaces, they

were pushed away from some jobs, or they stepped away themselves. Etta shared an incident when she was in the middle of teaching a class:

It started with students telling me, “I’ve never, you know, had a Black professor before - like, do you have a PhD?” Or having a graduate student apply to the program [who] refused to call me doctor; never stated why. Right, like he never explicitly said why he wouldn’t call me doctor, but it was obvious. And you know kind of dealing with a lot of those types of situations amongst Whites. And I mean there’s some social class stuff there too. So, students and faculty members not calling me by my title or reluctantly calling me by my title. I can think of one professor in particular. For some reason he felt like his class was more important than mine and I don’t know if it was because I was a Black person, because I was a woman, or because I was younger...I remember teaching and he had a guest speaker apparently who was coming and he walked into my class and I said, “Excuse me, I’m teaching” and he said, “Oh, I know. I have a guest speaker coming.” And I said, “That’s great, but you need to leave” and the students are kind of laughing right because they’re like, “Oh shoot - like Doctor Etta” and he grumbles and stuff. There was a little you know back and forth but he left.

Olivia disclosed:

I was on staff with two other White men, one of whom had his PhD and one who did not. And anytime the three of us as a mental health team came into the room, it was doctor *Whiteman*, Dr *Whiteman*, and miss [Olivia’s last name]. And I always thought that was interesting. The first couple times, I noticed it but didn’t say anything; and then I also was kind of hoping that my supervisor would have said something and [he] didn’t. And looking back, he should have—I think he should have, but he didn’t. So, I do remember

feeling like, ok, this is one of those other sorts of extra fights that I'm going to have to do. Then I had to find palatable ways to tell people that I too am a doctor; because I wasn't so much concerned that you're calling the person who's not a doctor a doctor - that's not my journey...I don't care. But you're calling me, you're not calling me a doctor and I am. And I don't generally care about the title unless you're going to give it to people; because if you're going to give it, then I need mine too. So, finding ways to address microaggressions in a way that I didn't feel like I was being too aggressive or combative.

Category h: Imposter Syndrome

Participants reported experiencing impostor syndrome as real and present early in their career and sometimes as a part of their continued work. As Smythe relayed:

I think sometimes there's this impostor syndrome. I think sometimes you see a lot of White males who know how to talk a lot of ***** and then express a lot of knowledge but don't have the wisdom or awareness to apply it. And you can be over, you can feel overwhelmed by how other people talk and speak to one another in the same language and feel as though you don't belong. And it's really hard to ignore that noise and recognize that you, just you being you provides a different awareness, a different perspective, a different way of thinking that is absolutely needed within this field. And to remind yourself of that, I wish someone kind of told me that, that there's a certain group of people who might do it a certain way, that maybe even have like dialogue that they can share with one another, and maybe make you feel like an outsider. And stuff that I've experienced today, working in mostly male environments. But that's the reason why diversity, inclusion is so important is because there's diverse perspectives that are needed to help a team grow and build; and sometimes people are consumed with their own little

inner circle, sometimes you need to almost force your way in to help them understand that there's a different perspective. And so...I think for a lot of Black females, there's a lot of impostor syndrome and wondering whether or not they belong. And just being yourself, you absolutely do that that alone, right - it's an asset - and to appreciate that and to recognize that as a strength I think really important.

Category i: Helping/Healing Athletes/Performers

Participants revealed that the reason they are sport psychology professionals is because of their love for athletes and the opportunity to help them succeed. Those who had been athletes also noted that their experience of competitive anxiety, coach abuse, the mental health needs of former teammates (trauma, healing), and being a person of color were reasons for their staying in the field. As Daisie articulated:

Once I was in it, I knew this is what I can do, and this is something in this field that I can enjoy as a career. I knew I would like it. It wouldn't feel like work. And also, I had a passion for seeing athletes succeed. I don't care what race or gender you are; I love seeing athletes succeed. I like to train people, I like to give to people sport advice all the time, especially because the level of athletics I was on that people would have killed their kids. Calling me, I was always open to it and I still am and so I enjoyed that, and I enjoy helping people succeed. I'm like, "Look, they did what I told them to do," the way they do it now.

Nina communicated:

I think the joys and challenges sometimes are one in the same - the joys, being able to work with people, to be invited into their world - so to try to help them. The challenge is sometimes being invited into the world of other people, to try to help them because you

know we don't control anything in any situation. We're truly are trying to help, but that can be a daunting task. It's rewarding when you see a person move in the direction they want to go, but it's still daunting. Like I think we can never, never step away from the fact that these are people's lives we're talking about - and the fact that when I sit and have a conversation with somebody, it's not just a conversation about a benign topic but it's a conversation about some aspect of their life. And that's huge. And I think there's a responsibility to that. So, I say challenge - I don't know, I feel like challenge is the accurate word to describe it; it's a responsibility that I think is not to be taken lightly... you always have to be aware that this is real, what it is that we're doing - whether we are talking about personal issues from a health standpoint or whether we're talking about mental skills from a mental performance consultation standpoint - these are people's lives that we are working with. And so, I think that's really, that really sits with me. But I do appreciate the opportunity to give back to the community who oftentimes is expected to give so much and from whom so much, as poor people, pull from this community pool of athletes and performers. Our time and their expectations that we placed upon them and what we think they're supposed to give us, that I do take value and honor to hopefully be a part of that...giving back to them. Because I think that's really important as well in terms of the work. I do...since I have been in private practice and have entered into the world of pro sport.

Domain IV: Black Womanhood: Self Stories, Finding the Sistahood, Leaving a Trail

Domain IV was constructed to represent how Black women in the current study defined for themselves their own self-stories and described bringing themselves to a profession that wasn't built for them. This "bringing of self" and connecting with each other in the profession –

as well as taking on leadership roles - made them believe they could impact others on their paths. The categories included: (a) *Becoming 'Me' - Bringing your full self (I am here) bringing our full self to the work-Resisting thought your Black womanness (humanity) and through subverting the system;* (b) *professional purpose/calling;* (c) *personal faith and belief;* (d) *representation matters, role models (looking for Black women);* (e) *Black woman's Sistahood network;* and (f) *Black women in applied sport psychology-our present reality.*

Category a: Becoming Me -(I am here) Bringing Your Full Self to the Work- Resisting through your Black Womanness (humanity) and through Subverting the System

Participants shared their journey to awareness of their intersectional identities and the experiences and decisions they had made on how they would bring their truth and full selves (i.e., humanity) to their professional lives. As Olivia put it:

...because I'm a little bit further in my career and a little bit more comfortable being me, the joys of being able to be me and seeing how I as my full self am able to positively impact other people. And how the things that I tried to make smaller before serve me now, you know, so like, I'm a little quirky but I'm also I think pretty funny. And talking about my Blackness, talking about my queerness, talking about my womanness, like all those things I can put together and say, "Here this is," how I made it through a particular scenario; and we may not share every single identity but there's something in there that I'm sure you can get from the things that I've gone through.

As Cookie reflected:

There's space for you and you don't have to dilute parts of you to fit that space. You as your whole self-it's what is necessary for a group of people. I think it's like Black women in any profession were taught that there are certain aspects of ourselves that have to be

muted, diluted, died, too, so we can be successful; and I think when you do that - especially in the space of sports - you do yourself and athletes present and future a disservice. Because there's somebody there that's going to be missed because you aren't being your complete self.

Participants also described the reality of the experiences of being first or one of the first to lead, to gain higher education, to garner positions in professional sport, and to advocate, agitate, aggravate, and resist. They believed that their intentional presence was a way of combating discrimination and oppression in the field of sport psychology. Olivia recalled how she was asked to evaluate athletes in a different way than she'd been trained as a psychologist. She was being asked to evaluate athletes on their draft potential:

I had a lot of reservations about being part of that. I only wanted to be a part of, "Do you have a [mental health] issue? Come find me -let's talk about it." I did not want to be a part of the evaluation part because that felt icky, it felt... I approach my work, my life - so my wife is giving me this language of "humanity first" and that's how I approached my work and that's how I approached my life. And it didn't feel like "humanity first" - it felt like, "What can we make off of you? How can we squeeze the most out of you?" and so that said, there was like this color line that I was straddling because of my position, and so I very much identify with these Black athletes because I'm a Black woman. But I also have been hired by this very White organization in this very White town. And I have an obligation. And so, when you're asking me to be a part of the draft interview process, while you want me to ask specific questions to figure out how much value will [you] get from this player, I'm gonna kind of subvert the system and ask different questions. Because I'm more interested in, "Are you going to be a good fit for us?" which is what I

told the players; I said, “Come - I don't get to make decisions whether you get drafted or not, but I do want to know if you'll be a good fit and if you feel like you want to be here.”

And was I supposed to do that? No, no - but that's what I did.

Category b: Professional Purpose/Calling

Participants believed that their presence in the field was greater than just being a sport psychology professional. They believed that it was a professional calling. As Sun put it:

But I think one thing that's helped me always is to know what I'm doing, like why I'm here with my purposes and what my goals are...I'm walking in my purpose, and this is my purpose. I guess I could be doing it somewhere else but where else could I do it and at this level? I guess there's somewhere else, but I haven't found it. Like I don't really, I don't really run for money. I know that's just in the career; like I want to do something great in this field and we've only seen one group, like White guys mostly.

As Evelyn communicated:

I believe that nothing that is done, is done alone and that you know whether you believe in God, the universe, there's always a greater power that is guiding you and it's guiding you to your purpose. And so for me, I believe that this is part of my purpose, particularly in helping people just around health and sport and exercise, and creating communities of health - whether that's through the mechanism of sport for exercise or nutrition. So, it's very big for me, very big and my family – we're all a family - that's deeply spiritual, yeah, period.

Category c: Personal Faith and Belief

Participants' faith was very important to them and was a part of their calling. They reported that faith was integrated into everything that they did with clients; in other words, if

clients wanted their faith to be a part of the work, then participants believed in the centering and grounding work of spirituality and a higher power, guiding and supporting the efforts of both themselves and their clients. Most were Christian. As Cookie stated:

Spirituality is very important to me - it drives a good majority of my approach. While I don't openly talk about it with my clients or anything like that - unless they bring it up or they want to be a part of the process (I don't bring it up) - but for me personally, I rely on my wisdom, I rely on discernment, I rely on prayer to God; lead me on to how I should create plans for people and most importantly the people I should work with. So, I don't, I don't just, when people have reached out to me after that initial meeting, I'd be like, "Yeah, no - I'm not the best fit for you - this ain't what you think - I'm gonna let you know right now - go ahead and keep it over there."

Nina imparted:

I used to not talk about the spiritual part at all because I thought, you know, sport and religion - there weren't a lot of conversations about the intersection of those two. And yet, we'll have a moment of silence at games, they will have prayers at games, they will have you know different things that bring up religious Christian principles into the situation. And so I think religious identity develop is another process that we have to go through; I don't think we talked about that one nearly enough but I think it should be talked about more. For many people who adhere to a particular religion or spiritual practice, that usually influences their values and their core beliefs and like their foundational thought processes. And so, I think one of the ways that my spirituality certainly plays out is evidenced by verse scripture which is Hebrews 11 one that says, basically, faith is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for. I think walking this path

and sports psychology has been one of faith, of walking forward when the path is unseen. The other scripture that comes to mind is second Timothy 17 -God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind; and I think the fear of letting go...was really reflected in being more comfortable, of being who I was and who out and allowing who I am as a person to intersect who I am as a professional as opposed to feeling like I need to be a blank slate where I need to keep who I am completely out of a situation. Like understanding how I can use who I am as a strength and as a way of building and cultivating a relationship as opposed to thinking that was a completely negative thing that I needed to abandon in order to be a professional.

Category d: Representation Matters: Role Models (Looking for Black Women)

Participants recognized that their existence in the field is really important for representation, recruiting, and retaining practitioners of color. They believed that it was essential that they be seen, see others, and that they have other Black women as peers to grow with professionally. As Janet explained it:

Yeah, just being Black, I think the environment is constantly making that identity salient, even when, not even paying attention to it. So being hypervigilant about my Black identity is something that over the course of time has become really involuntary so to speak. At the pro level, even more; so, I think it goes back to how we've opened up, right, so practitioners are reaching out and saying, "Hey - I got this person who wants to work with a Black practitioner - can you work with them? Or do you know somebody who can work with them?" Like can you do research, just like I can find somebody and properly vet to make sure that they understand the nuances that go with it, but somehow that responsibility tends to come my way because I'm new in my role, in my position and in

my function within the system. It's OK for now, but I'm working to figure out how to empower them to do the same legwork that I'm being called upon to do because I can't be the practitioner and provider for everybody.

As Nina put it, she believed that Black women sport psychology professionals represented a different package or version of what *help* could look like; thus, they were changing the narrative and making space for those who will come after:

Because I was moving in professional spaces that were primarily - I think when I first entered the world of pro sport where being a female was something that was very hot on the radar - being aware of my own identities and female in isolation because I was moving in professional spaces that were primarily male sports for a while. And I might be one of two females that they may see on the operation side of the house in a day...a whole day - but they just did not interact with a lot of females because they're not a lot of females on the operation side. So, I was very aware of that dynamic and what that dynamic might generate; but add the Black piece back to it because a lot of the young men that I was working with identified as African American and a lot of them expressed a preference - should they have to talk to a counselor, they have the council - they expressed preferences for African American woman. So, I think that on one hand, I was like, "Oh, this can be tricky - I got to be aware of this, navigate this"; on the other hand, I feel like it became a superpower because I think the reason that sometimes African American females are preferred as providers in that space is because generally speaking there is some Black woman who has played a positive role in that young man's life and they're able to identify that. So, I feel like as a Black female professional, I sometimes get the benefit of that association - right - there's an assumption that as a Black woman, I'm

going to be able to provide some support and nurturing encouragement, something that's going to be positively experienced in the way that they may have experienced that with people in their lives. So, I think I think that's critical and that's important for me to be aware of. I also think that within the professional landscape, I still feel like sometimes it's a challenge for people to accept and raise their faces for the purpose -yeah – train[ing] acceptance curve there - recognize that the field...professionals that exist are more diverse now than they were historically.... I think just in the skin that I'm in, I represent a different version of what help can look like. I helped to provide a level of de-stigmatization simply by being the mental health professional that walks in the room; I can communicate as it relates to this idea of mental skills training or mental performance or mental health or mental wellness, whatever label you want to put on it. Like I can communicate that from a standpoint of being a person who's had lived experiences as a Black person...right and so I'm not talking about what I think - right - I'm talking about what I know. And I think that can add a level of credibility to those who look like me.

In addition, participants also mentioned being a part of various Black professional work groups or networks in association with AASP, the American Psychological Association (APA), or through networks - built as a result of exclusion in large professional or higher education associations – where they met very important mentors. They shared Black women assisted them with gaining access to the field as did White male and female supervisors. For example, Nina found her internship at the location where a BMSP was the supervisor. Both Nina and Jeanie were recipients of the access granted by the lone Black male sport psychologist in the professional graduate program they attended. As Nina stated:

A Black male sports psychologist supervisor will always be a role model and someone that I saw who was in the field. My Black female classmate sports psychologist will always be a role model [too]- just seeing her walk her path. [Black woman sport psychology fellow] ...someone who I did not know personally but I saw she was one of the few voices that I could hear and faces that I would see at AASP conferences when I returned - she was one of the voices that I started to hear and see and was like, “Wait - what is she doing?” So, I think that was very salient.

Category e: The Black Woman’s Sistahood Network

BWSPPs serving solo in business, athletics, and academics reported now being connected with each other. They have established a sisterhood network where they encourage, inspire, and educate each other with connections to opportunities, clients, and jobs, allowing them to ascend into areas of leadership within their chosen focus. They highly value relationships with other Black women and have the need to see and be seen, support one another, and assist each other in growing personally and professionally. In fact, seeing Black women in leadership positions and having opportunities to connect with them gave participants validation and confirmation that they are in the field for the right reasons at the right time, no matter race, gender, SES, or sexual orientation. Many also spoke of the importance of being mentored and providing mentorship to younger women or paying it forward to those that would come after. Olivia beamed when she shared:

Hands down - it's my tribe of Black sport psychology friends. There are so many things that Black women can understand; there are so many things that people who work in sport can understand. They're only a small subset of things that Black women psychologist, sports psychologists experience and understand. And so, I remember one

time I was having a particularly hard week dealing with front office staff and I said something in the group chat of Black women sports psychology professionals and she responded and she's like, "Girl, I know" and I knew that she knew because I knew that she unfortunately had those experiences too. And so, they have been what has kept me in part, like, I know you guys know what I mean and even if you haven't had this exact experience. You've experienced something like it at some point in life. And so not only can you commiserate with me, but you can also say, "So this is how you approach, this is how you formulate this email, these are the specific words that she uses." They've taught me how to negotiate from my salary, they've taught me how to respond to a particularly difficult colleague, they taught me how to be a Black woman psychologist...And so, when that feels like it's centered, I can handle anything else. And so, it doesn't matter what fires or wars I've been battling at work or in the field... I can do anything because I have this group of people behind me, and when I need help...I know who to call.

Participants also encouraged young Black women to find their people, be proactive and intentional about connecting with and securing personal support and a peer network to be fulfilled and whole as a Black woman and professional. Olivia stated:

I wish I had found my support system sooner. Because the first couple of years, I did a lot of things figuring out and stumbling and all that by myself. And had I known all these women earlier, I don't think - it's no fault of, you know, no one's fault - but had I known all of these women earlier, I think the things I had gone through would have been a whole lot easier and I wouldn't have had to struggle quite as much. I had a sisterhood.

Category f: Black Women in Sport Psychology: Our Present Reality

The BWSPPs interviewed in the current study have established themselves at every level and in every context of athletics and sport performance. They want us - and the ones to come after us – to know that they are here to stay and that there is room for more and that they will support other young Black women. Participants are looking forward to the future and the place that Black women will have in it. For example, Sun's advice for young Black women included:

If that's what you want to do, don't allow anything to get in your way of becoming a Black woman sports psychology professional, regardless of the barriers. Don't expect that there won't be barriers because it's not easy. But if that's what you want, don't let anything stop you from doing it. And pray now - that's not everybody jam, but you need something, you need something supernatural.

And, as Smyth advised for those who want to work within a university system:

[For BWSPs] the level of engagement in reaching out is really important. But it's promising that there are a lot more sports psychologists within universities. And even if you're a sports psychologist, it's most likely not a person of color. I would reach out to them to learn more about the field because I think the one thing about this field - especially within the university counseling center - I think most sports psychologists know there's a dire need to have more clinicians of color. I would hope that their experience would be similar to mine, that someone kind of sees talent in you and wants to be that support system to help guide you and direct you to the right path. So first, I would say reach out if you feel comfortable...sports psychologists within your university. If that's not a possibility, I would suggest joining AASP or APA, but you can join like one of the Sigs that align to some of your values and identities and start building relationships

with people who are similar to you. And you can start talking to them about their path and how they went about, kind of getting to the spot that they're in. Because I think there's a lot of Black sports psychology - especially Black female sports psychologists - who really want to help and grow the number of professionals in this field and are more than willing to talk to you.

Nina's advice was to:

Identify African American women who are in sports psychology and talk to them to find some students, some peers who you can talk with along your journey. Because sometimes with the people who are already in the field, they'll automatically be a level of difference for them, they'll already be a level of looking up to them in a way. You need to be able to look beside you to see people walking with you. I would also say do good work and do good work is not just about the work that you do; that's a part of it. But do good work is develop a solid foundation, learn theory, understanding the guiding principles that underlie the sports psychology work. We're not just talking to people. But understand what goes into the theory and the foundational principles that go into this work - understand that and develop a good foundation for yourself. And understand that foundation can come from experiences in sport and experiences outside of sport but develop a good foundation. The second thing is always, always, always, always do your best. I don't care if it's volunteer. I don't care if it's paid. I don't care if 500 people see. I don't care if two people see it. Always do good work because do your best because that's your imprint, that's your unique signature, that's your stamp that you leave on everything that you do and on the people that you interact with. That stamp is what will carry your name and the ones that you don't even know exist. And always remember that we work in

the world of sport and performance, but we work with people. And don't ever lose sight of the fact that you are working with people and there's a responsibility that comes along with that - there's a humility that should come along with that. But we work with people. And so, no matter how much of an avid or rabid sports fan you may be, your task is to be a fan of the person that's participating in the sport because that's who you serve... so, establish a foundation, always do your best, remember you work with people, and that's the best work, and find your tribe!

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Future Directions, and Conclusions

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to explore the life and work experiences of BASPPs (i.e., faculty, staff, or in private practice). Of particular interest was how Black women have navigated life in the othered and marginal spaces of applied sport psychology. Thus, the specific research question was: What are the experiences of Black women in applied sport psychology research and practice? Using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill, 2012) and a five-member research team as the method, as well as Black Feminist Thought (BFT) as the methodology, we constructed four major domains to represent 16 BASPPs' experiences in sport psychology: (a) *Blackness-Black Girlhood and Family Foundations*; (b) *Whiteness-Ebony in the Ivory Tower- The gates and their keepers*; (c) *Finding the Profession: The Firsts and Only's*; and (d) *Black Womanhood: Self Stories, Finding the Sistahood, and Leaving a Trail*.

BFT is the theoretical framework that guides the current discussion. Few et al. (2003) emphasized that in qualitative research endeavors investigating sensitive issues with Black women, the Black-participant/Black-researcher relationship can offer an ethical, empowering, caring, and holistic reflection on Black women's lived experiences. The lived experiences of Black women sport psychology professionals at all levels (i.e., MS, PsyD, PhD) are significant, and are worthy to be explored and highlighted in applied sport psychology research; in addition to highlighting BFASPPs who can serve as a beacon (i.e., representative) to current and future Black students, athletes and POC in the field, this inquiry and these findings offered a opportunity to reflect for participants in terms of talking about the intersectional oppression they suffered as they matriculated in and through educational and sport spaces.

According to Manu (2020), those who utilize BFT as a theoretical framework should address the ways that sexuality, gender, class, and race – in addition to other sociocultural factors - interlock to create oppression that Black women uniquely experience. Further, Collins (2000) identified three dimensions which intersect to create a particular kind of oppression that Black women experience in the United States: (a) *economic*; (b) *political*; and (c) *ideological*. For example, the *economic* dimension explores the historical economic exploitation of Black women, pointing to the important role of class as well as raced and gendered oppression throughout history. The *political* dimension allows scholars to examine policies and laws that are in place which serve to restrict equal access to education for Black women as well as voting rights. Finally, the *ideological* dimension centers on negative images and stereotypes which serve as a “...system of social control designed to keep [Black] women in an assigned, subordinate place” (p. 5).

Thus, according to Few et al. (2003), those who utilize BFT are specific in their “integration, validation, and centering of Black women’s unique realities, and reject the notion of universal laws of behavior, favoring idiosyncratic approaches by focusing individual functioning, goals, and meaning within Black and female reality” (p. 206). In sum, the historical, economic, political, and ideological experiences which have shaped the perspectives of who and what Black women represent are central in Black feminism and are also front and center in this discussion of the significant findings from the current study.

Convergent Findings

There were three significant findings that converged with previous research. The first convergent finding centered on revelations about the ways that participants intersectional identities (i.e., race, gender, age) impacted their personhood and access to educational, sport, and

professional opportunities. Few et al. (2003) described Black women as influenced by their position in the world, the “interplay of familial, immediate community, societal, generational, and socio biological levels of influence” (p. 206). The participants in the current study chronicled their experiences being a part of a Black family and an extended family through community and sport and described the influence this upbringing had on their journeys (Chatters et al., 1994). According to Few et al., (2003) Black female socialization has taken place in multiple locations and those locations may differ as a function of various sources of influence. Moreover, Black female socialization illustrates what is unique “in the interactions of gender, race, culture, ethnicity, age, and social class” (p. 206).

Furthermore, participants in this study discussed being taught by their parents - and having expectations of themselves - to be more than an athlete. They believed that they could be athletes and enjoy sport but also had the understanding that they had to be twice as good and be academically excellent to be taken seriously; in fact, their focus on finding the most efficacious path to the profession - by being able to serve athletes’ mental health needs *and* sport performance needs – germinated out of Black and academic excellence being essential in their family upbringing and expectations for little the Black girls (Lesane-Brown (2006).

The second convergent finding was that experiences that participants had in professional organizations such (i.e., AASP), in sport organizations, the NCAA, corporations, the military, and higher education reflected the status quo in terms of being White and male dominated. They also described the need as great for Black representation (i.e., faculty, advising and supervision), Black or POC role models, mentors, and peers to assist in navigating the Ivory Towers of education and the field. This is in line with what Butryn (2002) reported almost 20 years ago related to the Whiteness and maleness of the applied sport psychology field. Participants in this

study wanted to see representation at all points on the path to the profession. Representation is also needed to mitigate intersectional oppression participants felt and to avoid “racial battle fatigue” and burnout from the onslaught of micro aggressions and assaults that came during education, supervision, and training, and in the field through internal and external competition for jobs (Carter and Davila, 2017).

Similar to the findings of Carter and Davila (2017), participants in the current study also “shared repeated instances where their educational background or professional credentials were questioned, their skill set critiqued, and their overall knowledge, experiences, and ability to practice or research sport psychology was ‘ignored, downplayed, or questioned’ (p. 290)”. They experienced discrimination and racism in their workplaces and in their communities. In fact, participants who worked in academia or college athletic departments reported instances of differential treatment and race-gendered combat (i.e., heightened monitoring, policing, and surveillance) with their colleagues, just as in Carter and Davila’s sample. In addition, stereotyping and microaggression created a sense of mistrust and increased self-consciousness for the aggressed and the indirectly aggressed individuals (Carter & Davila, 2017).

The internal and external pressure to prove not only their worth but to be hypervigilant in overperforming in competency and skills further reinforced a hostile work environment. In other words, due to racial microaggressive experiences, study participants felt internal pressure to prove their expertise, ability, and skills. The experiences of racism were layered and confusing due to their intersectional identities and they were challenged to clarify which identity was aggressed – this further compounded their trauma. Further, their responses were consistent with Sue (2008) in that Black participants were performing daily sanity checks and/or or having a healthy paranoia. This was evident, for example in Olivia’s question of, “How Black can I be? Is

this going to be regular racism or overt or the kind that is in your face?” Lastly, participants in both this study as well as Carter and Davila’s (2017) reported trying to reframe, positively and negatively, the landscape they were navigating in order to survive and avoid the landmines in everyday interactions with colleagues.

The third convergent finding was that spiritual and/or religious (i.e., Christian) beliefs, faith, purpose, and/or a feeling of “calling” was integral to participants’ self-identification, self-valuation, and practice. BWASPPs described how they used spirituality both personally and professionally, reserving their use of spirituality in professional practice only for performers who wanted to engage their personal faith in their sport experience. Sport and religion are burgeoning research areas but have been a part of sport since sport came from Europe in the form of muscular Christianity in the 19th century (Meyer, 2012).

Balague (1999) advocated for the use of religious/spiritual frameworks in sport psychology consulting with elite athletes. She contended that in the course of their applied work, Certified Mental Performance Consultants (CMPC) will at some time in their career have athletes whose “supreme motivation” is spiritual or religious beliefs and/or practices. There will also be athletes who simply hold those beliefs and want acknowledgement of their presence in the interventions (Balague, 1999; Egli et al., 2014). Balague further stated the need for interventions to coincide with the athlete's values systems and align with the meaning they assigned to their sport participation (Balague, 1999). Values integration is important for athletes’ holistic development as individuals. Ravizza (2002) offered a similar philosophical framework for CMPCs to address the “whole person” or become athlete-centered in their orientation.

Lastly, Waller (2016) articulated spirituality is sometimes used synonymously with religion. Waller (2016) defined spirituality as “the subjective experience of God expressed in

prayer, mediation, contemplation, and mysticism” Further, Waller (2016) extrapolated the “flexibility, creativity, tolerance, and respect for alternative insight” (p. 200). that emanates from the experience of spirituality. Consequently, it is the relational element in spirituality that connects the individual to active engagement and is central to the meaning of what it means to be spiritual. Watson and Nesti (2005) reviewed the role of spirituality in sport psychology consulting and suggested that spirituality should be seriously considered when consulting with athletes; similar to participants in the current study, they believe that spirituality has an important role to play in fostering excellence in human activities, enhancing health and well-being, sport performance, and contributing to individual holistic personal growth.

Unique Findings

There were several findings from the current study which were unique. The first unique finding came out of addressing the need to hear from BWASP experiences and to learn more about who they are as women and as professionals. Roper (2002, 2008) explored the career experiences of White women in the field and also has been an advocate for studies with POC. Roper (2001) wrote about how integrating a feminist approach also has the potential to critique the lack of diversity, not only within our research efforts (Duda & Allison, 1990), but among the professionals who make up our field. It should be noted that at the time of Roper’s writing, there were very few Black women practitioners and Black feminism had not been introduced in the field. Thus, it was important in the current study to align with a more culturally and specific (Black) feminist methodology, methods, and theoretical framework to center and support Black women.

Scholars such as Duda and Allison (1990), Hall (2001), Kontos and Breland-Nobles (2002) and Withycombe (2011) have called for decades for race and gender to be considered in

applied sport psychology research. Additionally, Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP) scholars (Fisher et al., 2003, 2005; Ryba & Wright, 2010; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) have been faithful members of the chorus. And recently, BFASPPs and others in the field have contributed to a growing focus on inquiry by and with Black women participants. For example, in the past decade or so, Carter et al. (2020) and Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) have centered a majority of their work around Black feminism, diversity, equity, inclusion, multicultural competence, racial microaggressions; most recently, Hyman et al. (2021) explored the experiences of six Black sport and exercise practitioners and detailed their professional lives.

For the first time as well, there have been studies conducted (the current study plus Couch et al., accepted for publication) and textbooks (i.e., Carter et al., 2020) written by and for Black women further extending Carter et al.'s (2020) focus on the need for a Black feminist sensibility to accompany the traditional [White] applied sport psychology framework. This is in line with Collins' (1990) BFT approach where Black women are the generators of a Black female consciousness; the current study also allows us an opportunity to clarify a Black woman standpoint for Black women which could result in empowerment and the promotion of Afro American women's culture in the applied sport psychology space. Highlighting Black women in applied sport psychology will also allow for a broader footprint on the psyche of young Black girls and boys looking for their place in sport outside of being an athlete; this awareness of the profession will hopefully allow them to see themselves becoming a sport psychology professional and could lead them to the field (Kontos & Breland Noble, 2002).

The second unique finding was that BWASSPs were racially gendered and class-situated, meaning that they had different experiences depending upon whether they were from the African diaspora or were African American, came from a lower socioeconomic position or a

higher one, and/or self-identified as heterosexual or LGBTQ. No researchers to date have reported about the unique intersections of identity that BWASSPs from different countries (who are doing applied sport psychology) have. For example, the Black women who were of the African diaspora (i.e., Caribbean, West Indian, African, or Biracial/mixed race) reported having a different experience and understanding what it meant to be Black and live in the U.S. than those who were born in the U S and were raised as African American. This was particularly true for those BWASSPs who grew up as athletes in the Southeastern U S.

There were at least four participants who were not solely African American in their national origin or ethnicity. Two were of the African continent, one was born in the United States and her family was West Indian, and one was a Caribbean national. When asked questions concerning the salience of Black identity at different points, it was evident that their ethnicity and/or nationality resonated more with them than being Black; and being Black American did not resonate at all. In fact, Sun recognized that in to support her African American friends, she needed to learn more about African American history. Additionally, Jeanie suffered horrific bullying because she moved to the U S when she was three years old from the African continent; she, in fact, called her home “Little Africa.” She attributed her foundations, work ethic, and self-identification to her family’s ethnic pride. Her upbringing and the African American Black children’s’ othering of her oppressed her in multiple ways. For example, she was the only Black person in her group of all White friends. With Deidre, gender and religion were more salient. Her neighborhood was mostly Black immigrants and she wanted to play football but her Catholic school prohibited boy and girls playing sports together.

In addition, sexual orientation and class were also differentiators in terms of BWASPP identity. For example, there were participants who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer and

most salient identities were gender related. For Janet and Diedre, however, their low socioeconomic status along with being Black was a driver in their experiences moving through systems that were not built for or expecting them. And, while Janet was able to navigate past class through using her community, Diedre continued to struggle and did not quite reap the benefit of her education and training in sport psychology in the same way.

A third unique finding was the discovery and building of intentional, caring, and supportive professional peer (see attachment, *The Black Woman's Professional Network: The Sistahood*) relationships and networks for personal, professional growth, and sustainability in the field. This may have been in lieu of having Black mentors or supervisors in the field (Hyman et al., 2021). Participants shared how important it was to “find your people” (Etta) in one’s professional context, especially one like sport psychology where career paths are piecemealed. There is not a cookie cutter path, and relationships with colleagues are critical to ensure ethical and competent practice. As Nina stated, “representation across race, gender, and culture matters for finding one’s “tribe.” This does not take away from mixed race and gender relationships, but points to the fact that representation is not only critical to initiating growth in diversity in the profession, but to also sustaining diversity in the profession because relatability on a cultural level is essential to mattering and belonging.

A fourth unique finding was that BWASPPs reported being “the only one,” one of a few, or the first in the field. However, because of this, they exercised their humanity through existing (i.e., being fully present), being creative, and advocating for themselves and others by subverting/resisting systemic oppression and inviting other Black women, men, and POC to not only resist, but build stronger practitioner-athlete relations.

Black feminists incorporate this activist perspective toward research and practice through a three-phase process: *knowledge*, *consciousness*, and *empowerment*. The concept of *knowledge* begins with validating the individual's experience as an authoritative standpoint (hooks, 1984). Recent research with sport and exercise professionals promoted making “the invisible visible by addressing the underlying themes of race and racism” (Carter & Davila, p. 288) and highlighting the specific interactions for Black Women in sport psychology practice (Hyman et al., 2021). Participants also shared about the importance of naming the reality of systemic oppression in the field (i.e., become *conscious* of it). They stated this was critical to remaining in the field. The acknowledgement of abuse – naming it and recognizing that it did happen and confronting it – are all integral to a Black feminist consciousness.

This action-oriented knowing moves beyond knowing to understanding what factors have influenced that experience. Few et al. (2003) noted that not only is *empowerment* a major construct of BFT, but it is also prioritized within the context of Black women's lives.

Empowerment is also the first step to social change and requires:

...contextualized understanding of power in three dimensions: a personal power (i.e., experiencing oneself as an agent of change with a personal capability to affect change); (b) interpersonal power (i.e., having influence over others because of one social location, and to personal skills, or credibility); And (c) political power (i.e., effectively utilizing formal and informal means to allocate resources in an organization or community). For feminist, power is conceptualized not as a limited resource but that which is created maintained, lost, and or regained in the processes of social interaction. Through the use of Black feminism as a tool of analysis, the domains of power that constrain Black women, as well as how such domain domination can be resisted are conceptualized into action.

Black feminists strive to make research practical, accessible, and empowering for the participant, the researcher, and the communities of which both are a part. (Few et al., 2003, p. 206)

In addition, Collins' (1986) cross disciplinary BFT frames the experience of "Afro American female intellectuals, marginality as an excitement to creativity" (p. 15). In other words, Black women's outsider within status at the bottom of the socio-political ladder explains that because of being pushed to the margins and the discrimination and oppression associated with this positioning Black women are more creative. Thus, BFASPPs have been forced to use creativity in negotiating access and opportunities for leadership at the highest levels of applied practice.

Participants' responses to dealing with the sum total of racial microaggressions, discrimination, and overt racism was to be resilient, pivot, and keep moving forward, using their Black family foundations of hard work and Black excellence given to them from their families and understanding their positioning and not letting that stop them. Hyman et al. (2021) found similar understandings of the resiliency and persistence of the Black woman.

Future Directions: Practical and Research Implications

According to Fisher (2003), there is a lack of adequate training ensuring that graduate applied sport psychology programs have supervisors that are skilled in assisting their supervisees/consultants in recognizing and confronting social justice issues. Further, it is imperative that programs begin to integrate curriculum and training experiences that will allow for the critiquing of the power structures that continue to prop up sport psychology coursework, research, and practice. Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) critically analyzed how AASP was addressing the lack of organizational diversity, and multicultural competency at all levels of the organization including at the student-in-training and at the highest levels of the profession. They

found that nothing less than a full commitment to promote competency with regard to race, sexuality, and diversity will suffice in today's sport environment. Carter and Prewitt-White (2004) surmised that “opening up spaces that inhibit accessibility for all populations and recognizing the efforts of those contributing to the advancement of marginalized individuals within the field of sport psychology” (p. 229) is required for the advancement of the field.

In addition, the field cannot keep relying on BWASPPs/clinicians to assume the role of DEI expert because of their intersectional identities. Such reliance on stereotypes can perpetuate the “mammy” or now “Strong Black Woman” stereotype that positions and overburdens Black women (Wingfield, (2007). Hyman et al. (2021) reported a similar cultural tax or invisible labor requirement levied on Black women sport psychology professionals as found in the current study; this additional service is often unacknowledged and can lead to burnout, as BWASPPs often carry a heavier workload (Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017). Furthermore, Hyman et al. (2021) discussed, Black women sport psychology professionals expressing “a sense of responsibility” (p. 11) which would then lead them to extra service on top of their full-time positions. These put-upon professional demands went beyond the scope of their job duties or professional practice.

Furthermore, cultural competence training must go beyond a focus on learning about different cultures to caring about the mental health and well-being of Black women and POC serving in predominately White spaces. Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) and Fisher et al. (2003, 2005) have discussed training in the area of diversity and multicultural service delivery for CMPCs and how that might impact service delivery. White students in graduate programs need to have the opportunity to process and reflect on their own race, class, ethnicity, etc., and on how they impact their own worldview and practice. It is important to not only understand but to resist oppression and aid in their own cultural competency and development. They need to process and

understand their own histories and identities and uncover assumptions about skin color and how that relates to their future practice (Butryn, 2002; 2009).

Finally, Carter and Prewitt-White (2014) posit that there is much more work to be done to clarify that minoritized practitioners do not have the burden of owning and possessing the sole ability to hold and process the struggles of the minoritized clients they serve. This is truly group work and just as Janet stated, this work must be shared with the dominant group for the mental health of minoritized consultants and the effective work with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color BIPOC athletes and performers.

Future Research

In terms of future research, in addition to documenting changes in graduate training with a focus on more culturally competent practitioners, there are many areas to explore such as focusing on the effects of gendered racism and intersectionality with other WOC in sport psychology. Research with undergraduate students related to their understanding and access to the field would also be fruitful. Additionally, further research and practical applications should be developed with this population in mind, specifically regarding ways to support, sustain, and professionally develop BWASPPs. To be sure, AASP and APA 47 need to formalize CMPCs' "BIPOC Pathways to Professional Sport Psychology" and to support BWSPP through empowerment opportunities (i.e., summits, partnerships with organizations), encouragement (mental health support, racial trauma healing), enrichment (professional development), and more fully enhance the building out of the Sistahood network. These recommendations are in line with previous research and with current AASP programs such as *We Lead*. Also, for potential Black female students - as early as high school and definitely at the undergrad and graduate school level - promotional materials and possibly inviting participation at regional conferences to

recruit, retain, and resource students on the professional path to the field. Activities could include job shadowing, internships, and early learning opportunities to know that this field exists and that there is space for them. The necessity of developing a sustainable structure of Black mentorship and membership that is widely promoted and accessible through AASP or APA 47 is the most inclusive way to reach little Black girls as they are identify their professional vision and seek a path to their future.

Despite the limitations of the structure of the current study (i.e., interviews via Zoom during COVID-19; interviews at one time point in participants' lives), participants were grateful and shared willingly and openly with the me, a Black female researcher. They viewed this opportunity as one of reflexive healing. Some commented that they had not had the opportunity reflect on their journey to where they are; and, for them, it created a space for awareness, acknowledgement, accountability, and future action. It is important to remember that Black women are not monolithic in their identities (i.e., race, class, athletic identity) and this study was to gain an in-depth inquiry into the experiences of all Black women. Consistent with Carter and Davila (2017), the experiences of Black women because of their intersectional status are unique and complex in comparison to almost anyone else. Additionally, I identify as a Black woman and have had common experiences of oppression and intersectional discrimination. Therefore, I found the participants' stories both affirming and devastating.

Conclusions

This is the largest study conducted exploring the experiences of Black Women in the field of Sport Psychology were explored through in-depth interviews and framed through the lens of Black feminism. In the current study, BWASPPs' experiences of family upbringing, matriculation through the sport and educational system, and their experiences of research and

professional practice were expanded upon. More specifically, BWASPPs were asked about their most salient identities from the first time they recalled identifying as Black through the lifespan until the time of the interview. The responses resulted in seeing a pattern of BWASPPs negotiating and navigating their intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989) and the barriers and obstacles of social, economic, and political systems of oppression in higher education, sport, and the field of applied sport psychology.

Their “superpower” came in the form of Black womanhood. And never was this more apparent than when dealing with athletes and clients who were hurting from experience oppression themselves. Participants’ undaunting spirit and unflinching will (i.e., resilience) served to move them through the closed gates to where they would reach their desired professional goals. Discovering themselves, their allies/accomplices, and their Black Professional Network—The Sistahood—sustained them. In addition, they had a mind and heart to pass it on and pay it forward for those that would come after.

Post-Script

Metaphorically, for me and the participants this journey was a series of safe houses with abolitionist, allies, and accomplices who were sympathetic to our cause. The Sistahood would like to make it easier and possible to reach the goals you have set for yourself and offer opportunities for young Black students to find the profession earlier and feel visible and valued. The ultimate goal is to create to a system that will lead them to the other side to where they become the abolitionist, allies, accomplices, freedom riders, and changemakers. June Jordan said it best: *We are the people we’ve been waiting for* and as Etta in the current study declared: “It’s Us! We are Here!” This field is for you, you belong, and this field needs you!

“If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression “

The Combahee River Collective (CRC, 1982)

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Table 1 Demographics

Name	Age	Marital Status	#Years in SP	Time in Current Position	Org Size # of Employees	Type of Organization	Degrees	#Years with Degree	Graduate School Location
Smythe	41	M	9	1.5	250	Professional	MEd/PsyD	9	NE/MW
Deidre	29	S	3	3	50	Non-Profit	MS	4	NE
Janet	44	M	9	1	200	Professional	MS/PsyD	9	W
Olivia	34	M	5	1mo	1	Professional	MS/PsyD	6	MW
Etta	34	M	9	4	600	Academic	MS/PhD	9	NE
Sun	51	D	19	4	170	NCAA	MS/PhD	15	NE/SE
Kaye	62	S	35	33	1	Professional	MS/PhD	33	MW
Nina	44	S	16	16	1	Professional	MS/PsyD	15	NE/W
Jeanie	51	S	21	5	130	Professional	MS	5	SE
Mia	27	S	5	130	12	Professional	MS	5	SE
Noa	32	S	6	1	200	NCAA	MS/PsyD	1	W/NE
Sonia	26	S	2	2	12	Professional	MS	2	SE
Rayder	30	S	7	5	8	Professional	MS	2	W
Daisie	28	M	5	1	1	Youth/HS	MS/MS	1	SE
Cookie	26	S	5	2	1	Youth/HS	MS	2	SE
Evelyn	37	D	13	6mo	200	Academic	MS/PhD	14	NE

Appendix B: Table 2 Summary for domains, categories, and frequencies.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Domain I Blackness -Black Girlhood and Black Family Foundations		
a. Black Family History: What does it mean to be Black?	Ps family members taught them about their Blackness, through stories of their family's lineage, Black American history, trivia, and literature. P's family instructed them on how to behave in spaces and with people outside of their family.	15/16 General
b. Seeing the difference (otherness to be othered)	Ps recognized that they were Black and that made them different than people they encountered outside of their family. Ps suffered from having darker skin and being made fun of or called out in school, which affected self-worth and confidence. Ps with a non-dominant sexual orientation became aware of how this differed from straight family/peers.	16/16 General
c. Pride of Black Personhood and Oppression of Black Personhood	Ps became aware that just being Black (nationality/ethnicity) and or African American gave a sense of pride, a positive sense of self, love for self, and provided a foundation for success in life. Ps experienced oppression from self, White, Black peers, and family from overt and covert messages they have received because of their Blackness.	11/16 Typical
d. Black Extended Family	Ps had extended family that included Black and White people who looked out for and provided a place to stay, direction, athletic support, and knowledge about the recruiting and college application process.	11/16 Typical
e. Black Excellence	Ps believed that they needed to work twice as hard to be successful, as good as White people for the	14/16 General

	same outcome, and in order to be successful in education, sport, and professional life.	
f. Gender Roles for Little Black Girls	Ps became aware of how expectations of them as females differed from expectations of males in sport and in life. Ps also shared their Black family's gender expectations and roles. Sports being fun and something to do or as a means to access higher education. Ps shared the knowledge about the opportunity to play a sport in college was limited for girls.	11/16 Typical
g. Sport/athletic identity and sport as family and means to an end.	Ps. Were exposed to sport by their families and/or peers and experienced a love for sport, physical activity, and being around athletes early in life.	11/16 Typical
h. Academic Excellence and K-12 school choices.	Ps attended predominately White K-12 schools based on family's desire for the best, even if it meant going outside their community, or living in a predominately White neighborhood.	5/16 Variant

Table 2 Continued

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
i. College as a given	Ps self and family expectation is that Ps would attend college; going to college was a given.	11/16 Typical
j. Identifying a professional vision.	Ps described a narrow career choice from an early age (i.e., desire to become doctor, lawyer, engineer, psychologist) that aligned with family expectation to get an education and get a good job.	9/16 Typical
Domain II Whiteness-Ebony in the Ivory Tower: The Gates (s) and Their Keepers		
a. Navigating Higher Education for First Generation students and /or athletes.	Ps reported being unaware of what to do or how to navigate college and the college process and the barriers in place that hindered success. P' shared their first-generation status as an undergrad and graduate student impacted the educational experience in significant ways.	11/16 Typical

	Participants were expected by themselves, their families and college acceptance requirements to perform at high academic levels to maintain scholarships or assistantships	
b. Access to the gates: advisors and mentors.	Ps had situations where mentors, advisors, or peer student groups which provided specific guidance and direct connections which helped P's gain access and experience with how to navigate higher educations	9/16 Typical
c. College athletics (student athlete and not student athletes).	Ps used athletics and/or affiliated sport participation to gain scholarships or preferred walk on status to access higher education. Gender was also a barrier to utilizing college athletics to gain access to college admission, funding, and also specific student athlete support services on campus	13/16 General
d. The Racialized Tower Spaces and Places	Ps experienced racism, microaggressions, macro assaults, and stereotyping in the classroom, living on campus, and participating in student life. (Broader campus climate	9/16 Typical
e. City/Town Racist Climate	Ps experienced racial trauma and racist attacks on campus and particularly in the Broader town/community of graduate school.	11/16 Typical

Table 2 Continued

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
f. Lack of Knowledge of resources and staff available to assist with navigating the spaces and places.	Ps lacked the knowledge of resources and/or staff available to assist them as Black student to navigate higher education	6/16 Variant
g. Black Women student stories, classmates, and cohorts.	Ps reported being one of the only or one of a few in the classrooms and campus spaces they participated in.	9/16 Typical
h. Mentor/advisor and role models needed	Ps wanted more representation and to see Black people in faculty and or supervisor roles	13/16 General
i. Student Worker (the grind)	Ps had to work jobs outside of academia to survive through undergraduate and graduate studies which sometimes limited connection with cohorts and assistantships (teaching/research) opportunities. Ps reported working two or three jobs and significant debt.	11/16 Typical
j. Encountering Blackness, discrimination, racial trauma, oppression	Ps experienced discrimination, racial trauma, and racial and sexist oppression as students in the classroom and in relationships with students, faculty, and staff. Participants encountered a difference between how society perceive them and how they perceived themselves which required reflection on Blackness in society and academia	14/16 General
k. Embracing and Engaging in Blackness, networking, career transition, resiliency, and relationships and safe places.	P's joined sororities, mentoring programs, and Black student undergraduate or graduate groups to find places that felt comfortable. Ps found belonging, "family," Black culture, and community outside of the main (White) campus spaces with family friends, church, their family, or their off-campus work environments. Ps attempted to identify and spend time in safe spaces on their campus such as Black student safe spaces.	13/16 General

Table 2 Continued

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Domain III-The Profession: The Firsts and the Only's		
a. Firsts and Only's: Black Women Leaders in The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)	Ps impressions and experiences with AASP are that it was a White space that was dominated by White men. Ps also acknowledged the newness of the field and the recent progress and improvement in representation in leadership however, they expressed frustration with the pace at which the organization embraced diversity and inclusion efforts	8/16 Typical
b. Higher Education Institution: A Very Ivory Tower Athletic Departments	Ps who reach faculty or instructor positions experiences lack of good faith, trust, and mentors/advisors to assist with the tenure process and are frequently misjudged to be angry Black women or aggressive, combative, or difficult to work with. Implicit and explicit bias, in equitable, exclusionary hiring/tenure practice, racial battle fatigue) Ps who work as mental health/performance providers in college athletic departments feel happy to be a representative but do not hold the power or position necessary to create real change and adequate support for the student athletes.	6/16 Variant
c. Professional Sport Spaces (only Black woman)	Ps who are working in Professional sport and other corporate or service organizations experience marginalization, and are pigeonholed to take on an inordinate amount of weight and responsibility for doing "everything" (racial justice, activism, performance etc.) Ps are asked to perform their job duties while fulfilling caretaking roles specific to their intersectional identity without the (DEI) expertise needed to meet the holistic needs of the athlete/performer.	8/16 Variant
d. Finding applied sport psychology. Clinical Psychology as the path to Applied Sport Psychology	Ps tumbled upon sport psychology by luck, chance, or a friend, advisor, or peer told them about the field. P's chose the pathway of clinical sport psychology because of knowledge about the field and more Black role models and to provide all services to be more marketable/hirable.	
e. Creating space in the field by starting businesses (private practice, networking, brand building (figuring it out)	Ps SES, and lack of opportunities to participate in research or find jobs in the field resulted in them "figuring it" out and creating space in the marketplace by starting businesses, networking with other Black professionals, and building a brand. Ps reported as Black women they were expected to figure it out and to be creative in making space or finding a way forward.	7/16 Variant

Table 2 Continued

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
f. Angry Black Woman and other tropes Disrespect and Disregard	Ps experienced microaggressions, macro assaults, racial profiling, and racial attacks, stereotyped (i.e., angry Black woman) including relegation into roles specific to their intersectional identity and excluded from professional networks. Ps experienced disregard of skills, abilities, and expertise from colleagues in academia, and in professional organizations which pushed some away	13/16 General
g. Imposter Syndrome	Ps reported imposter syndrome as real and present early in their career and sometimes as a part of their continued work	5/16 Variant
h. Helping/healing athletes/performers	Ps shared their love for athletes and desire to help them succeed. Participants noted competitive anxiety, coach abuse, issues of former teammates (trauma, healing).	13/16 General
Domain IV Black Womanhood: Self Stories, Finding the Sistahood, Leaving a Trail		
a. Becoming “Me”-Bringing your full self to the work (humanity). Resisting through your Black womanness and through subverting the system	Ps shared their journey to awareness of their intersectional identities and the experiences and decisions they have made on how they will bring their truth, full selves, to their professional lives. Ps shared the reality of the experiences of being first or one of the first to lead, to gain higher education, to garner positions in professional sport, and academia to advocate, agitate, aggravate, and resist. P believed that their intentional presence is a way of combating discrimination and oppression in the field of sport psychology.	13/16 General
b. Professional Purpose/Calling	Ps believed that their presence in the field is greater than just being a sport psychology professional. Ps represents a different version of what help can look like thus changing the narrative and making space for those who will come after.	11/16 Typical
c. Personal Faith and Belief	Ps faith is integrated into everything that they do even with clients if they want their faith to be a part of the work. Ps believe in the centering and grounding work of spirituality and a higher power guiding and supporting the efforts of the P and the performer.	11/16 Typical

Table 2 Continued

<i>Category</i>	<i>Core Idea</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
d. Representation Matters: Role models (looking for Black women)(Relationships, needing to see each other, help each other, and support) finding themselves in the field and each other	Ps participate in various forms of Black professional work groups or networks in association with AASP, APA or networks built as a result of exclusion in professional or higher education associations. Participants shared Black women assisted them with gaining access to the field, recognition of their existence was necessary for representation, recruiting, and retaining practitioners of color. To be seen, see others, and have other Black women as peers to grow with professionally. Ps shared that seeing Black women in leadership positions and having opportunities to connect with them gave them validation and confirmation that they were in the field for the right reasons at the right time no matter race gender, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. Participants found their black women and allies in the field and encouraged young black women to find their people, be proactive and intentional about connecting with and securing your personal support and peer network.	13/16 General
e. Black Women in applied sport psychology: Our Present Reality	Ps shared what it means to be fulfilled and whole as a Black woman and professionals Ps shared advice for young Black women pursuing sport psychology that encouraged authenticity, belonging, empowering, and advocating for yourself in the field. Ps experiences with AASP are issues of if I belong, where they fit in, and what the future might look like, even though they believe that its better than it was. P's want to continue to make change and increase diversity the membership and the culture of AASP and Higher Education: Wishes for the future (& Black Men & women) Participants shared advice for young Black women pursuing sports psychology that encouraged authenticity belonging, empowering, and advocating for yourself in the field	16/16

Appendix C: Research Team Member's Pledge of Confidentiality

Study Title: "In the Skin I'm in...I Represent a Different Version of What Help Looks Like:"
Black Women Sport Psychology Professional's Experiences in Applied Sport Psychology

As a member of this project's research team, I understand that I will be reading transcriptions of confidential interviews. The information in these transcripts has been revealed by research Participants who participated who participated in this project on good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information in these transcriptions with anyone except the members of the research team of this project. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

_____	_____
Research Team Member	Date
_____	_____
Research Team Member	Date
_____	_____
Research Team Member	Date
_____	_____
Research Team Member	Date
_____	_____

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

“In the Skin I’m in...I Represent a Different Version of What Help Looks Like:” Black Women Sport Psychology Professional’s Experiences in Applied Sport Psychology

Introduction:

- Greetings
- Informed Consent
- Permission for Recording

Please choose a pseudonym to represent yourself in the data.

Demographics					
Marital Status:	Single	Married	Partnered	Separated	Divorced
	Widowed				

Age:

Number of Years in Sport Psychology:

Number of Years in current position:

Current Institution or organization Size:

Current Institution or Organization Type:

Number of years with PhD:

Where did you go to undergraduate school?

Where did you attend graduate school?

From what institution did you obtain your PhD?

Interview Questions

Initial Sport and Educational Experiences

1. When did you first know or recognize that you were considered by society to be Black or African American? Which identity is the most salient and why? Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation?
2. What were your sport experiences like growing up? How about your K-12 experience? What were your goals associated with sport? How about education? Do you have any feelings about how you felt back then? In what ways did your sport and educational goals influence your choices for university? What were your most salient identities back then? How did you feel about them back then? What was most helpful to you at that time?

What else, if anything, would have been helpful during your initial sport and educational experience?

3. Think back when you were transitioning to college. Are there any stories that relate to how you felt back then? What if any were your concerns about the university climate for racial minorities entering college? Were you concerned about your classes or your major? Did you participate in sport in anyway? Did you fear any possible discrimination?
4. Did you fear for your safety in anyway? How did being female and African American factor in? During that time how would you have identified yourself?

What else, if anything, would have been helpful during transition to college?

College or University Section:

5. [Campus Experience]

Think about your entire collegiate sport and educational career. Overall, how do you feel about being a female African American student and or athlete? Are there any stories that relate to how you felt back then? What kind of expectations did you feel or have? How was being an African American female related to those expectations? Did you ever get pigeonholed into any particular role because you are an African American female? How comfortable were you with the campus climate for African American females and or African American athletes? Were you challenged academically? What was the support like for your academic life?

What else, if anything, would have been helpful in terms of being African American, female, and or an athlete during your college experience?

Graduate School and Career Path

6. Think back to your graduate school experience? Are there any stories that relate to how you felt back then? What was your application process like? How did you choose the program you were going to apply to? What was it like getting accepted to your first program? How did you find graduate school? How did you support yourself financially? What were some of the joys and challenges of being in graduate school? What kind of expectations did you feel? How was being an African American female related to those expectations? Did you experience awkward or tense moments regarding your race gender or in the program? How do you identify yourself at that time?

What else, if anything would have been helpful in terms of being African American female and or an athlete during your graduate school experience?

Transition to PhD and or Career

7. How did you decide to pursue a career in sport psychology? Describe your career path and how you progressed in sport psychology. Did your race or gender or both play into your career as a sport psychology professional? Do you have any feelings of what you may have felt back then? What were your three most salient identities at the time?
8. What if any are the stereotypes you have experienced as a sport psychology professional? Are there any stories that relate to how you felt back then? What stands out is meaningful to you about this experience? What were your experiences with micro assaults or micro aggressions? What were if any challenges, barriers, or obstacles you faced as a Black woman in graduate school? Describe your experiences with training, supervision, and dissertation phases of your career? What role does being African American and female play in those experiences? In what ways did the identities of African American, female, and other identities intersect at this time in your life?

What else, if anything, would have been helpful in terms of being African American, female and an athlete during your graduate school experience?

Career Experiences Section

9. Who or what were your role models in sport psychology? Are there any stories that relate to how you felt back then? Tell me about your first experiences working in the field of sport psychology. What were some of the joys and challenges of being a sport psychology professional? What kind of expectations did you feel? How was being an African American female related to those feelings or expectations? What challenges, barriers, or limitations have you encountered? What have been the skills necessary to do

the job? Tell me about your successes, how about any failures? Describe ways you may resist oppression or discrimination in your everyday experience in sport psychology?

10. You have been in this position for (insert number) year(s). What has allowed you to persist, why have you stay the course, and if you had the opportunity would you choose this career path again? In your life now how would you describe yourself first? African American? Female? Sport psychology professional? Other? e.g., religious mother in parentheses? What role does being an African American female play in those experiences? In what ways did the identities of African American, female and sport psychology professional intersect in your life?

Identity Intersections: Race, Gender, etc.,

11. How does spirituality influence your life as a sport psychology professional? How has your race, gender, or class impacted your experience in sport psychology?
12. How has a lack of representation of Black women at the PhD or professional level in sport psychology impacted your choices and your practice? What is your perspective of the lack of diversity in the sport psychology profession? First impressions of AASP? What advice do you have for African American women pursuing careers in sport psychology?

Conclusion

1. [Conclusion Question] Is there anything else you would like to add about being a female African American sport psychology professional that we haven't discussed that would have made your sport, educational experience, sport psychology, or professional experiences is better in terms of being an African American female?

Thank you so much for your time. Remember that this interview is confidential. Also, in the very near future, we will be sending you your transcript as well as a table with common themes from your interview for your feedback!

Appendix E: Informed Consent Statement

Consent for Research Participation

Research Study Title: “In the Skin I’m in...I Represent a Different Version of What Help Looks Like:” Black Women Sport Psychology Professional’s Experiences in Applied Sport Psychology

Researcher(s): **Sharon Couch, Principle Investigator**, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Leslee Fisher, Co-PI, Faculty Advisor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

We are asking you to be in this research study because you self-identify as a Black female applied sport psychology student, researcher, or professional practitioner (i.e., Black applied sport psychology professional; BASPPs).

What is this research study about?

The purpose of the research study is to explore the experiences of BASPPs (i.e., student, faculty, private practice). Of particular interest is how Black women have navigated life in marginal spaces of applied sport psychology. Thus, the research question is: What are the experiences of Black women in applied sport psychology research and practice?

How long will I be in the research study?

If you agree to be in the study, your participation will last for 1-2 hours and will involve one Zoom call.

What will happen if I say “Yes, I want to be in this research study”?

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to:

- *Talk to Sharon for one-two hours via Zoom from wherever is comfortable to you.*
- *Be willing to have the Zoom call recorded for transcription purposes.*
- *Choose a pseudonym to represent yourself in the data.*
- *Look at the transcript to see if you think it represents what you said.*

Look at the final thematic table to see if you think it represents your experience accurately.

What happens if I say “No, I do not want to be in this research study”?

Being in this study is up to you. You can say no now or leave the study later. Either way, your decision won’t affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Tennessee.

What happens if I say “Yes” but change my mind later?

Even if you decide to be in the study now, you can change your mind and stop at any time.

If you decide to stop before the study is completed, you can:

1. *Contact the researchers and let them know via email.*
2. *Decide what happens to your information already collected for the research.*

Are there any possible risks to me?

It is possible that someone could find out you were in this study or see your study information, but we believe this risk is small because of the procedures we use to protect your information. These procedures are described later in this form.

Are there any benefits to being in this research study?

There is a possibility that you may benefit from being in the study, but there is no guarantee that will happen. Possible benefits include helping other applied sport psychology students, researchers, and practitioners better understand how to support Black women in the field. Even if you don't benefit from being in the study, your participation may help us to learn more about Black women's experiences. We hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?

We will protect the confidentiality of your information by having you select a pseudonym to represent yourself in the data in addition to de-identifying and aggregating the data. All data will be stored on a password protected cloud service and will only be shared with authorized researchers in the study.

If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information will not be used.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what information came from you. Although it is unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information, we collect about you. These include:

- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.

What will happen to my information after this study is over?

We will not keep your information to use for future research or another purpose. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from your research data collected as part of the study.

We will not share your research data with other researchers.

Will I be paid for being in this research study?

You will not be paid for being in this study and it will not cost you anything to be in this study.

What else do I need to know?

Number of research Participants. About 20 people will take part in this study. Because of the small number of Participants in this study, it is possible that someone could identify you based on the information we collected from you. However, as stated above, we are minimizing that risk by the procedures we're using.

Who can answer my questions about this research study?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, contact the researchers, Sharon Couch at srcouch@utk.edu; 865-719-2576 or Leslee Fisher at lfisher2@utk.edu; 865-974-9973.

For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865-974-7697
Email: utkirb@utk.edu

Statement of consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. I understand that I am agreeing to be in this study. I can keep a copy of this consent information for future reference. If I do not want to be in this study, I do not need to do anything else.

Appendix F: BWSPP Recruitment Letter

I am the principal researcher in a qualitative research study examining the experiences of Black and African American women who have obtained a PhD or PsyD degree, and/or MS degree and research, teach, or practice applied sport psychology. Your current position along with your exceptional credentials meet the sampling criteria of my research, and therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation study.

As a study a participant, you would be included in the following:

1. An interview lasting no longer than two hours. I would like to conduct face to face interviews through computer mediated communication software specifically Zoom.
2. You will also be provided with a typed copy of your interview transcript for your review.

Should you choose to participate, I will contact you to schedule your interview appointment. You will also receive a copy of the informed consent form required by the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board.

I sincerely hope that you will contribute to this research in the field of applied sport psychology, by accepting participation in this study. Your time is valued, and your consideration is much appreciated. Please feel free to contact me via email with any question about the research.

Be Well and Be Safe!!

Sincerely,
Sharon R. Couch
Principal Investigator
University of Tennessee
srcouch@utk.edu

Appendix G: Thank you email

Dear

Thank you so much for having this research conversation with me! It will leave a legacy for Black women in the field of sport psychology. I have attached the transcript as promised for your review and any feedback you may have on keeping your anonymity in place will be appreciated.

The transcripts in full will only be seen by the research team. Any quotes that I use for the dissertation manuscript will be complete deidentified. Thank you and I will be sending you the domains or themes soon.

Be Well and Be Safe!

Sincerely,
Sharon R. Couch
Principal Investigator
University of Tennessee
srcouch@utk.edu

Appendix H: IRB Approval Letter



October 12, 2021

Sharon Renee Couch

UTK - University Wide - Employee & Organizational

Re: UTK IRB-21-06534-XM

Study Title: Leading from the Margins: Intersections of Identity for Black Women in Applied Sport Psychology

Dear Sharon Renee Couch:

The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) reviewed your application for the above referenced project and determined that your application is eligible for **exempt** review under 45 CFR 46.101. Category 2 with limited IRB review: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by .111(a)(7). Your application has been determined to comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval of your application (version 1.5). You are approved to enroll a maximum of 10 Participants. Approval of this study will be valid from 10/12/2021. Application v 1.5, Exempt 2 Limited IRB Review, Waiver of Documentation of Consent, n=10

3. 2021 Couch & Fisher informed consent form v 1.1
4. 2021 Couch and Fisher interview protocol Leading from the Margins v 1.0
5. 2021 Couch Recruitment Email v 1.0

Any revisions in the approved application, consent forms, instruments, recruitment materials, etc., must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Approval of this study is valid for three years. If a Study Update Form is not submitted in iMedRIS and approved by the IRB prior to 10/11/2024, the study will be automatically closed by the IRB and no further study activity will be permitted until a Study Update Form is received. Please be sure to also submit a Study Closure Request (Form 7) when all research activity, including data analysis, has been completed.

Sincerely,



Lora Beebe, Ph.D., PMHNP-BC, FAAN
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement

1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529

865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

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VITA

Sharon Couch currently serves as a Senior Learning Consultant and Business Partner for the University of Tennessee System HR Office of Employment and Organizational Development. Before joining University of Tennessee, System HR-EOD. Although Sharon's professional acumen and Olympic accomplishments as a track and field athlete produced NCAA All Americans; her dream was to further her academic career as well. In 2014, she completed a Master of Science in Kinesiology. She is currently in dissertation phase of a PhD in Kinesiology focused on the experiences of Black Women in sport and performance psychology. Sharon has had the opportunity to serve as an academic coach in the student success center, an academic advisor for the College of Education Health and Human Science, and now is perfectly situated in her dual role for the Herbert College of Agriculture. Her service work is robust and extends to the entire campus as the former Chairperson for the Chancellor's commission for Blacks, and various advisory boards for diversity, equity, inclusion, and leadership for UTK. Her greatest joy and most notable achievement is being a mother to LoRen (19 1/2) and Ryan (17 1/2). Ms. Couch's mission is to educate, encourage, and inspire all whom she has the opportunity to serve!