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**FACEDOWN IN THE MAINSTREAM: BLACK MEN'S EXPERIENCE
OF GENDERED RACISM AND RESILIENCE IN RELATION TO
COLLEGIATE SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Edward Marcellus Garnes entitled "FACEDOWN IN THE MAINSTREAM: BLACK MEN'S EXPERIENCE OF GENDERED RACISM AND RESILIENCE IN RELATION TO COLLEGIATE SENSE OF COMMUNITY." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

Jacob Levy, Major Professor

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**FACEDOWN IN THE MAINSTREAM:
BLACK MEN'S EXPERIENCE OF GENDERED RACISM AND
RESILIENCE IN RELATION TO COLLEGIATE SENSE OF
COMMUNITY**

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edward Marcellus Garnes
December 2019

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the life, legacy and love of my mentor Dr. Joseph L. White, whose eternal support and influence guide my work as an activist and African centered scholar.

I also dedicate this thesis to the sacrifice, encouragement, and infinite wisdom of my grandparents Elizabeth and James Lowe, father Ed Garnes, Sr., and brother Everett Garnes who have my back on the other side.

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to expand the psychological research on gendered racism by examining the negative racial experiences of Black men and their emotional resilience in relation to college satisfaction. A secondary aim is to examine possible difference between Black men who are intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes on the variables of interest (i.e., negative experiences, resilience, and collegiate psychological sense of community). Results support the conclusion that Black men at predominately White institutions PWIs, regardless of whether they participate in collegiate sports, tend to express lower magnitudes of collegiate psychological sense of community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	5
CHAPTER THREE METHODS	17
CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	23
CHAPTER FIVE LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	30
LIST OF REFERENCES	32
APPENDIX	40
VITA	42

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Think it is when it ain't all peaches and cream

That's why some are found floating face down in the mainstream

-Outkast, *Mainstream*, 1996

Wrestling with the psychological, physiological, and biopsychosocial tolls of racism is a troubling assurance associated with Black life (Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). Black men at predominately White institutions (PWIs) readily discuss what it means to be both “black” and “a man” as their daily stressors are chiefly school related racist interactions that lead to dread about being accepted, employment of self-concealment, and dire need of social support (Watkins et al., 2007). Campus based indignities like racial microaggressions foster both academic and social isolation (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Predominately White institutions (PWIs) prove to be unsafe and unwelcoming spaces for Black men whose struggle to assimilate causes a lack of sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2008). Black undergraduate men are the least retained between sexes and all racial groups at universities (Harper, 2006). For Black men, matriculation at PWIs can be likened to war as anti-Black male stereotyping, excessive hypersurveillance/policing, and racial microaggressions on campus illicit stress responses (resentment, fear, disappointment) coined racial battle fatigue by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007). PWIs see no worth in pleasing, retaining, or graduating Black men (Harper, 2009).

Considering the ponderance of research detailing PWIs abusive, unduly hostile, and woefully neglectful treatment of Black men, what becomes puzzling is the inability of colleges and universities to recognize there may be a direct relationship between the burden of gendered racism and how it impacts the ability to bounce back from adversity and develop a level of satisfaction with an oppressive White space. Herein lies the crux of this study's interest into lived experience of Black men on White campuses: 1) Does gendered racism deter resilience or empower it? 2) Does gendered racism promote psychological sense of community or curtail connectedness? The primary purpose of this study is to expand the psychological research on gendered racism by examining the negative racial experiences of Black men and their emotional resilience in relation to collegiate psychological sense of community. A secondary aim is to examine possible difference between Black men who are intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes on the variables of interest (i.e., negative experiences, resilience, and collegiate psychological sense of community).

Theoretical Framing: African Centered View of Black Men

Whether it was Richard Wright, whose searing 1947 autobiography *Black Boy* saw him laboring for a meaningful Black manhood to call his own, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, a heady offering published in 1952 illuminating the struggle of invisibility and invalidation, or James Baldwin's 1963 tome *Fire Next Time* which wavers between righteous anger and compassion, Black men have spoken to the inconvenience of being both Black and male in America. White and Cones (1999) summarize this unique psychological dilemma:

One of the major psychological traps preventing Black males from actualizing their dreams is getting caught up in the web of dichotomous thinking that arises from polarities generated by living under White oppression: the inclusion/exclusion dilemma, acceptance versus rejection of mainstream norms and goals, Black versus White lifestyles, acquiescence versus assertive confrontation, macho toughness versus authentic caring, and so on. (p. 144)

The disciplines of counseling and psychology historically have been governed by the schoolings and theories of White psychologists (Sue & Sue, 2008). Though the discipline of psychology has tried to understand the psyche and lifestyles of Black people using archaic psychological theories “it is difficult if not impossible to understand the lifestyles of Black people using traditional psychological theories, developed by White psychologists to explain White behavior” (White, 1972, p.5). These traditional theories often produce depictions of Black men as weak, deficient, and/or inferior. Black masculinity has been separated from its African roots and fixed to a White dominant ideology learned and perpetuated by Black men (Oliver, 1989). So instead of a picture of resilience or strength in the face of oppressive forces, Black men are rendered to be pathological participants in their own demise. Brown (2011) argued that over the last three decades, considerable attention has been given to the poor social and educational conditions of Black males perpetuating the notion that Black men are in crisis.

Quite to the contrary, the historic discrimination and gendered racism Black men encounter just may lead to resilient coping that ensures their success. Oliver, Datta, and Baldwin (2019) give credence to the necessity of considering an African centered approach by finding

that Black students at a PWI reported a greater propensity to manage stress in an adaptive fashion. They further posit “repeated exposure to social inequality and discrimination has fostered a sense of perceived ability to cope with numerous stressful encounters” (Oliver, Datta & Baldwin, 1988, p. 1642).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Racism

Racism, or disparate treatment based on social categorization, can be conceptualized across multiple domains. There is the individual level, where intrapersonal racism reflects internalized beliefs and attitudes about the inherent inferiority of groups (Goosby, Cheadle, & Mitchell, 2018). Structural racism is discrimination built into the foundations of institutions including schools, places of employment, housing and legal systems. These interpersonal and structural forms of discrimination are supported by customs and behaviors that produce a network of relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that inextricably shape life possibilities and health inequities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). With over 90% of African American emerging adults reporting multiple racial discrimination occurrences annually, studies have steadily found that racial discrimination extorts psychological and physiological costs (Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015). Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams (1999) advance a biopsychosocial model in considering racism as a stressor for African Americans. Their model is anchored in the premise that the awareness of an environmental stimulus as racist results in amplified psychological and physiological stress responses that constitute an intricate relationship between an assortment of psychological, behavioral, sociodemographic and constitutional factors. (Clark et al., 1999). Pascoe and Richman (2009) conceptualize discrimination as a social stressor that initiates heightened physiological responses (i.e., cortisol secretions, heart rate, blood pressure increase) which can negatively impact health overtime.

Perceived racism may well induce depression for countless African Americans through tendering self-esteem threats, causing learned helplessness, and making the group's failure to receive normative returns more noticeable (Clark et al., 1999).

Racial resentment surfaces in myriad subtleties. Contemporary forms of racial resentment manifest themselves as a subtle form of prejudicing mediating Whites' belief in traditional values and Whites' negative attitudes towards Blacks, also known as the "new racism" (Tope, Pickett, & Chiricos, 2015). Dovidio and Gaertner (2004) define this new form of bias as aversive racism, markedly different from the blatancy of old fashioned racism in that it is buoyed by subtlety and frequently characterizes the attitude of the contemporary White liberal. Aversive racism is marked by a glaring duality: denial of personal prejudice and covert resentment and negative beliefs about Blacks. Sue et al. (2007) expound on this notion of subtle or well-intentioned racism in their definition of microaggressions, which are commonplace verbal, behavioral, and environmental spurs that convey hostile or disparaging racial slights or affronts. Whether racism changes forms or is labeled new, aversive, or microaggressive, the historic motivation has always remained the same: exploit resentments, vulnerabilities, and racial biases for political or economic gain (Alexander, 2010). Dubois (1935) declares subtle racism as compensatory as he itemizes benefits bestowed Whites via a "psychological wage" conferring mental ease and social superiority:

It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public

parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. (p. 700).

Masculinity

Black men combat distinctive experiences of stereotypes related to both race and gender (Hall, 2001; Majors & Billson, 1993). Wester, Vogel, Wei, and McLain (2006) highlight the cultural conundrum facing expressions of masculinity by Black men ,who in attempts to meet very Eurocentric norms of gender, fail mightily. The authors theorize Black men fail because they not only abandon Black value systems but also engage oppressive forces that do not allow for the full expression of any gender roles, thus causing gender role conflict and psychological distress. When examining the social construction of masculinity, Connell (1995) opines hegemonic masculinity is a traditional view of manhood which privileges and internalizes White, heterosexual normative behavior. O'Neil (1981) linked the following six behavioral patterns to Male Gender Role Conflict(MGRC): (a) restrictive emotionality; (b) socialized control, power, and competition; (c) homophobia; (d) restrictive sexual and affectionate behavior; (e) obsession with achievement and success; and (f) healthcare problems. White and Cones (1999) illuminate troubling findings through social constructions of masculinity that moralize White male superiority including: 1) repositioning reality by giving no credence to the ways in which Europeans have used religion, research, Jim Crow, and other social impediments to cast Black men as inferior 2) manipulating advancement and achievement in favor of Whites 3) promoting illusions of objectivity and fair play 4) embedding negative images and dehumanizing messaging

in the collective conscious to create deficiency models. Harris, Palmer, and Struve (2011) qualitative study on the meanings of manhood and their behavioral derivatives revealed that Black men framed their masculinity through toughness, aggressiveness, material wealth, restrictive emotionality, and responsibility. The behavioral manifestations of these beliefs were centered around leadership and student success in college, engaging in sexist and constrained relationships with women, and homophobia and fear of femininity. Behaviors that illustrated patterns which parrot O'Neil's (1981) conceptualization of gender role conflict and Connell's (1995) hegemonic, White normative construct.

Oliver (1989) as well as hooks (2004) highlight how framings of Black masculinity become apparent in the college context by way of internalized oppression. Coined "stereotype threat" by Steele and Aronson (1995), this internalization of stereotypes can lead to negative evaluations of self which permeate cognitions and impact achievement. These notions of inferiority directly impact Black men in higher education as Harris, Palmer, and Struve (2011) documented that Black men strike a "cool pose" and elude engagement in campus activities, because they consider student involvement as not masculine or Black (Harper, 2009). Dancy (2010), a qualitative study, found that Black masculinity was influenced by four institutional forces: "(a) institutional recognition; (b) constructing faculty/student relationships; (c) mentoring and supporting; and (d) bridging campus and community." Gender, especially how Black masculinity is constructed and experienced, is worthy of critical examination. To this end, an underlying premise of this study is to seek out counter narrative framings of Black masculinity that rely on personal stories in ways analogous to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), who counter deficient stories that sustain White dominance and silence communities of color. In measuring

Black masculinity through counter narratives, Harper (2009) found defiant responses to stereotypes as well as an unwillingness to accept inferiority expectancies in leadership and achievement of Black men. Further, the gendered racial experiences of Black men at PWIs may also necessitate counterspaces where they can be free to “keep it real” in ways oppressive, White centric spaces, which constrain the full expression of their manhood or humanity, do not allow.

Intersectionality

Black Men’s Gendered Racism

The real world and collegiate experiences of Black men necessitate the employment of an intersectional approach which allows for exploration of the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender. Black men experience masculinity differently as a result of their multiple identities—age group, sexuality, spirituality, or socioeconomic status (Cooper, 2006). Luckily, there are a number of scholars who utilize intersectional approaches to study the racialized experiences of Black men. Griffith, Ellis, and Allen (2013) found the nature and power of the men’s racial experiences were exceedingly affected by the fact that they were both African American and male. The authors found two major social deterrents on Black men’s gendered stress: 1) striving to satisfy socially and culturally vital gender roles (work stress/subsistence blues) 2) being an African American man in a society with hierarchical racial groups of differential privilege (racism at work/vocational blues). Bowleg (2016) detailed how Black men’s multiple social identities intersect to reflect interlocking social–structural inequalities and introduces a Black Men Experiences Scale (BMES) which seeks to measure macroaggressions and negative racialized experiences. Hammond (2012) uncovered everyday racial discrimination

was connected with more depressive symptoms across all age groups of Black men. Griffith (2012) posits that men's health is shaped by race, ethnicity and other characteristics that have important social, political, economic and cultural meaning; therefore, an intersectional approach can simultaneously examine the realities of what it means to be both Black and male. Schwing, Wong, and Fann (2013) developed the African American Men's Gendered Racism Stress Inventory (*AMGRaSI*) to account for the unique gendered racism stress experienced by men of color. Coined by Crenshaw (1989) and rooted in a feminist ideology to explain the lived experiences of Black women, intersectionality serves as a framework for conceptualizing how multiple social locations (e.g. race, sexuality, class, gender) reflect social inequalities buttressed by racism, classism and heterosexism. While the author uses Crenshaw's term intersectionality as an operational definition to explain the gendered racism of being both Black and male, it is not to suggest that one gender (Black women or Black men) is more oppressed than the other. The gendered racism consideration of this work serves to aid in a more distinctive consideration of Black men's racialized encounters and the bewildering impact of gender. Further, this consideration seeks to investigate what Mutua (2006) calls progressive Black masculinities which are uncommon and pioneering practices of the masculine self engaged in the struggle to transform social structures of domination which inhibit the full development of human personality.

Being Black, a Man, and Student Athlete

Harper (2009) demonstrated Black men ,who were student athletes, to be the foremost stereotyped group on college campuses. Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden (2004) assert the

proliferation of Black men in the college sports domain propagates limiting racial characterizations of intelligence. These athletes are praised as luminaries on the field yet punished in the academic quad by “inherent structural contradictions that contribute to the lack of educational achievement” (Hawkins, 2010, p. 14). Hawkins further explains seedy “institutional arrangements” that prioritize winning of the mental health, well-being, and humanity of Black men who are athletes. Institutions seldom afford Black male student athletes access to evolve or experience purposeful engagement beyond the confines of athletics (Harper, 2016). For Donnor (2005), the root cause of abuse enacted on Black male athletes is an American system of White privilege which devalues Black agency and holistic development. Cooper (2016) delineated a model to boost educational outcomes and holistic development of Black men who are athletes: (1) self-identity awareness, (2) positive social engagement, (3) active mentorship, (4) academic achievement, (5) career aspirations, and (6) balanced time management. Due to maltreatment in higher education, Oseguera (2010) found Black male athletes employ resistant strategies to ensure success off the field: (1) disguise athletic identity (2) distrust higher education personnel and peers (3) refuse academic assistance and (4) avoid courses with other student-athletes. Armstrong and Jennings (2018) highlighted how the intersections of being Black, a man, and a student athlete causes one to brave racial stereotypes and identity threats due to the confluence of age, gender, and social class.

Resiliency

Rutter (2013) defines resilience as “an interactive phenomenon that is inferred from findings indicating that some individuals have a relatively good outcome despite having experienced serious stresses or adversities – their outcome being better than that of other

individuals who suffered the same experiences.” Resilience can be understood as an interplay between individuals and their environment within settings like family, school, culture, and community. Resilience can also be operationalized as an adaptive strategy that allows an individual to bounce back from adversity which Newman (2005) defines as “the human ability to adapt in the face of tragedy, trauma, adversity, hardship, and ongoing significant life stressors.” In keeping with tenets of positive psychology, aimed at human maintenance of joy, well-being, and optimal functioning, Masten (2001) outlines resilience as a common place/normal human adaptive process comprising “everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies” of individuals, kinship networks, and societies. O’Leary and Ickovics (1995) posit that resilience is not only about the effective negotiation of risk but also one’s ability to “thrive,” which involves the employment of individual and social resources to return to a state of psychological balance after challenge. The authors' concept of resilience as “thriving” also endorses a view that challenge is beneficial as it unearths qualities that make a person better off after successfully negotiating difficulty. Carver (1998) frames psychological thriving or being “better off” after hardship through features including skills and knowledge (new skills post adversity), confidence (mental mastery), strengthened personal relationships.

Considering the enduring psychological impact of legacies of slavery, dehumanizing messages of media and social spaces, and the mental impact of institutional discriminations like the ones found at PWIs, this study intentionally explores how Black men bounce back and thrive in the face of negative racial experiences uniquely aimed at forecasting their demise. To this end, resiliency research on African American populations is mounting. Lerner, Dowling, and Anderson (2003) advance a portrait of resilience that identifies critical mindedness (against

racism and oppressive forces), active engagement, flexibility (adaptation to cognitive, emotional, social, and physical situational demands), and communalism as protector factors in Black communities. White and Cones (1999), who identify resilience as a major characteristic of Black psychology, advance an African centered notion of resilience that asserts personality maturity cannot be realized until tragedy is transcended in order to “become stronger in the broken places, to keep moving towards revitalization and psychological renewal” (p. 49). Utsey et al. (2008) found that resiliency minimized psychological distress in Black college students. Kim and Hargrove (2013) highlight a bevy of studies and critical reviews of Black male persistence in higher education including Harper (2012) who declared that Black men persisted and excelled at PWI’s despite institutional impediments by employing resilient strategies as well as Moore, Madison-Colmore and Smith (2003) who found students coped with microaggressions through internal belief, resilience, and engagement.

Psychological Sense of Community

Psychological sense of community “consists of an individual’s feelings of affinity, commitment, dependence and interdependence within a group” (Wiseman, Gonzales, & Salyer, 2014, p.174). Although psychological sense of community studies have concentrated on demographic variables, personality traits, like those of the Big Five, and campus involvement, scant attention has been paid to the role of race on campus climate. Historically, when these studies detail college settings, psychological sense of community studies have been homogenous and normative samples not disaggregated by race/ethnicity. However, race can be a powerful explanatory factor in the college domain. This racial consideration is line with Lounsbury and Deneui (1996) call to operationalize psychological sense of community from an interactionist

perspective that could examine affective experience (i.e. loneliness, alienation, and satisfaction) as well as behavioral outcomes (i.e. participation in college organizations, retention, and attrition). Perceptions of racial climate significantly account for the PSOC of students of color, even after controlling for other variables previously related to sense of community (Berryhill & Bee, 2007). Black undergraduate students feel excluded at PWIs with Black students being most displeased with campus climate (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Students of color recognized campus climates as more racist and less accepting than did White study participants (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Essed (1990) emphasized that racism is closely linked to everyday situations, attitudes, and practices. Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, and Bylsma (2003) illustrated the everyday racism experience of Black students at PWIs by having them journal on their daily encounters and finding four themes emerge: 1) staring, suspicious and threatening gazes 2) verbal expressions of prejudice, including direct racial slurs, culturally insensitive commentary, and generalized negative stereotypes about Blacks 3) bad service, desperate treatment via university spaces like classrooms, stores, and public spaces 4) miscellaneous interpersonal offenses characterized by awkward or impolite behavior from Whites. Alienation persistent at PWIs, often the settings of racialized climates, deeply lowers Black men's sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2008). A psychological sense of community and active engagement are paramount to Black men feeling connected because these factors allow for gains in areas including racial and gender identity development, college adjustment, and resolving masculine identity conflicts (Harper, 2012).

Current Study

Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to expand the psychological research on gendered racism by examining the negative racial experiences of Black men and their emotional resilience in relation to college satisfaction. A secondary aim is to examine possible difference between Black men who are intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes on the variables of interest (i.e., negative experiences, resilience, and college satisfaction). Specifically, the following research question will be addressed:

Research Question (RQ) 1: Are there differences between the current sample self-identified Black men (both participants who are intercollegiate athletes and those who are not intercollegiate athletes) and the normative sample of Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) Scale? Hypothesis (Hy) 1: The self-identified Black men in the current sample will express a significantly lower collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample of PSC Scale. Hy 1a: Participants who identify as collegiate athletes will express lower sense of community relative to the normative sample. Hy 1b: Participants who do not identify as collegiate athletes will express lower sense of community relative to the normative sample.

RQ 2: Do Black men who participate in intercollegiate athletics differ from non-athletes in terms of negative racial experiences, emotional resilience, and college sense of community? Hy 2: Black male athletes will endorse more negative experiences related to stereotypes of being a violent criminal and participating in sports relative to their non-athlete counterparts. Hy 3:

Black male athletes will express a greater sense of community than their non-athlete counterparts.

RQ 3: Do Black men's negative racial experience and resilience explain a significant amount of variance in collegiate satisfaction? Hy 4: The linear combination of Black men's negative racial experience (as measured by the three subscales of the African American Men's Gender Racism Stress Inventory) and emotional resilience (as measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale) will predict collegiate psychological sense of community (as measured by the PSC scale)—for the Total sample, and by sub-groups of athletes and non-athletes. Hy 4a: The bivariate and partial correlations between negative racial experiences variables and PSC will be negative. Hy 4b: The bivariate and partial correlation between resilience and PSC will be positive.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Participants

A sample of Black men (n=153) consented to participate in this research study. To be eligible, participants had to meet the following criteria: at least 18 years of age, speak fluent English, identify as Black men, and be enrolled at a predominantly White institution (a college or university who historically has a majority of it's population identify as White.) Though participants in the original sample (n=153) met all criteria for participation, a number of respondents (n=53) did not sufficiently answer questions on the African American Men's Gender Racism Stress Inventory (*AMGRaSI*) to bear statistical significance and were excluded from analysis. Consequently, the final sample (n=100) was used for data analysis.

As far as athletic status, participants were divided in this way: Non-athletes (69.70%) and Athletes (30.30%) with Track (48.15%), Basketball (22.22%), Football (14.81%), Other (14.81%) representation in sports.

When queried about other racial/ethnic identities in addition to being Black, Hispanic/Latino represented (3%), (1.92%) were White/Caucasian, (.96%) identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, and (.96%) were Biracial/Multicultural.

Pertaining to sexual identities, responses therein revealed a break down of: Heterosexual (75.26%), Gay (14.43%), Bisexual Asexual (6.12%), (5.15%), Intersex (4.08%), Queer (2.06%), and Pansexual (1.03%).

In regard to geographical profile, respondents represented 23 U.S. States as follows: TN (23%), GA (14%), FL (8%), CA (8%), NC (6%), MD (5%), IA (4%), MI (3%), TX (2%), MA (2%), OH (2%), IL (2%), CT (2%), KY (2%), NY (2%), DE (1%), NJ (1%), AL (1%), WI (1%), VA (1%), PA(1%), MO (1%), KS (1%), Unknown (5%), and Outside of US/Unknown (2%).

With respect to socioeconomic status, respondents segmented along these lines: Working Class (23.23%), Lower Middle Class (25.25%), Middle Class (23.23%), Upper Middle Class (18.18%), Upper Class (2.02%), Don't Know (5.05%), and No Answer (1.01%).

As to highest level of education, replies were as follows: High School Degree/GED (4.04%), Some College (28.28%), Associate's Degree (6.06%), BA/BS/BFA or Equivalent (16.16%), Some Graduate School (10.1%), Master's Degree (MA, MFA, MSW, MBA, ect.) (28.8%), Doctorate Degree or Equivalent (PhD, JD, MD, etc.) (5.05%), and Other (2.02%).

With reference to income level, participants were as follows: Less than \$5,000 (4.08%), \$5,000 through \$11,999 (6.12%), \$12,000 through \$15,999 (6.12%), \$16,000 through \$24,999 (6.12%), \$25,000 through \$34,999 (4.08%), \$35,000 through \$49,999 (17.35%), \$50,000 through \$74,999 (14.29%), \$75,000 through \$99,999 (10%), \$100,000 (18.37%) and greater, Don't know (12.24%), and No response (1.02%).

In the matter of hearing about the study, respondents were characterized in this fashion: survey forwarded through email (33.94%), referred to survey by friend (33.03%), Facebook (14.68%), survey forwarded through list-serv (5.5%), no Answer (1.83%), found link on message board (.92%), Psychological Research on the Net (.92%), Other (9.17).

Measures

Demographics: A self-report questionnaire was used to obtain information on age, race, socioeconomic status, educational level, athlete or non- athlete status, and other demographic information.

African American Men's Gender Racism Stress Inventory (AMGRaSI; Schwing, Wong, and Fann, 2013): This measure has the distinction of providing empirical evidence to the gendered racism unique to Black men and was one of the only, if not the first, instruments to do so. More importantly, this inventory takes a decidedly African centered approach as nine experts in African centered psychology were consulted to maximize content validity. The *AMGRaSI* is a 15 -item self-report instrument designed to assess three common stereotypes of African American men: violent criminal, absentee father, and sports athlete. The items are evaluated on a five point Likert scale ranging from 0-4: 0 = This never happened to me, 1 = This event happened, but did not bother me, 2 = This event happened & I was slightly upset, 3 = This event happened & I was upset, and 4 = This event happened & I was extremely upset. The *AMGRaSI* has demonstrated good internal consistency with reliability coefficient alphas ranging from .76 to .88. Responses from the current sample yielded an alpha of .90, which is consistent with prior research. Items on the Violence Subscale include: (Others have interacted with me in a way that suggests I might be violent toward them.; I have experienced a White person locking his/her car door when I am nearby; I have experienced a White woman shifting her belongings to the other side when I am nearby.). Absent Fatherhood Subscale items include: (I have noticed that the media tends to portray Black men as uncaring fathers; I have heard the stereotype that Black

fathers are not financially involved in their children's lives). The Sports scale lists items including: (I have been mistaken as playing a sport (e.g., basketball, football) that I don't; Someone has assumed I am more interested in a particular sport e.g., basketball, football than I actually am.)

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (*CD-RISC-10*; Campbell-Sills *Stein*, 2007):

This scale was created to address aspects of resilience and for use in clinical practice. The original CD-RISC is a 25 item scale that has been studied in varied populations and across cultures including college students, athletic groups, trauma patients, and military personnel. Variation of mean scores exist with different settings; however, the psychometric properties sustain in nearly all studies. The original CD-RISC is a 25-item scale assessing resilience during the last month, with higher scores indicating higher resilience capacity. The items are evaluated on a five point Likert scale ranging from 0-4: not true at all (0), rarely true (1), sometimes true (2), often true (3), and true nearly all of the time (4). The shortened CD-RISC -10 is comprised of 10 items, each rated on a 5-point scale (0-4). The CD-RISC -10 measures a person's ability to adapt to change, bounce back from life hardships, and cope with pressure. Sample items include: (Able to adapt to change; Under pressure, focus and think clearly; Coping with stress strengthens). Examination of the internal consistency estimate for the current sample yielded an alpha of .91.

Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community Scale (*PSC*; Lounsbury and DeNeui, 1996): The collegiate PSC is a 14-item self-report scale that measures students' overall satisfaction with college life, including personal and family satisfaction with college choice, willingness to donate money as alumni, and campus life. It is rated by using a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores representing

higher sense of community. Sample items include: (I really feel like I belong here.; I wish I had gone to another college instead of this one; There is a strong feeling of togetherness on campus). Coefficient alphas range from .88-.92. The alpha for the current sample was .94.

Procedure

After obtaining approval for human subjects use by the University of Tennessee's Institutional Review Board, potential participants were recruited via email solicitations through established college/university networks who were made of predominately Black male coaches, administrators, staff, and faculty at Research 1 institutions in the south, mid-west, west coast, and east coast. Specific emphasis was placed on universities with built in programs and recruitment efforts that targeted African American males which included bridge programs, rites of passage programs, mentoring circles, and African American male research groups. A collective of over 50 influencers, journalists, media personalities and activists who cover issues related to African American men were also employed to distribute email recruitment letters and survey link via social media platforms. Participants completed the measures described above in online format utilizing Question Pro. Responses were exported to a SPSS data file and analyzed using SPSS version 23 software.

Data Analysis

A one-sample *t* test was conducted on the PSC scores to evaluate whether the sample (n=100) mean was significantly different from mean of the normative sample of 774 college students representing 23 universities/colleges from various sizes.

Four independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to evaluate whether participants who were intercollegiate athletes differed from participants who were not intercollegiate athletes on the study variables (e.g., *AMGRaSI*, *CD-RISC-10*, and *PSC*). Due to the imbalance in group sample size, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was employed for each test.

A multiple linear hierarchical regression was conducted to evaluate how well the gendered racial experiences and resilience measures predicted collegiate sense of community. The scales of the *AMGRaSI* were used to operationalize gendered racial experiences and *CD-RISC-10* scores were operationalized to measure resilience.. The gendered racial experiences variables were entered on the first step in a stepwise fashion, and the resilience score was entered on the second step to examine possible additional variance explained above that explained by gendered racial experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Question (RQ) 1: Are there differences between the current sample self-identified Black men (both participants who are intercollegiate athletes and those who are not intercollegiate athletes) and the normative sample of Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) Scale? Hypothesis (Hy) 1: The self-identified Black men in the current sample will express a significantly lower collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample of PSC Scale. Hy 1a: Participants who identify as collegiate athletes will express lower sense of community relative to the normative sample. Hy 1b: Participants who do not identify as collegiate athletes will express lower sense of community relative to the normative sample.

A one-sample *t* test was conducted on the PSC scores to evaluate whether the sample ($n=100$) mean was significantly different from mean of the normative sample of 774 college students representing 23 universities/colleges from various sizes. The current sample mean of 39.90 was significantly lower than the normative mean (49.71), $t(100) = -7.49, p < .001$. The effect size *d* of $-.75$ indicates a large effect. Therefore, results support (Hy) 1.

Examining a subset of the sample which includes participants who were student-athletes, also yield similar results. The student-athlete sample ($n=30$) mean of 41.40 was significantly lower than the normative mean (49.71), $t(29) = -3.09, p = .004$. The effect size *d* of $-.56$ indicates a moderate to effect. The results support the conclusion that African American male college

students, regardless of whether of participate in collegiate sports, tend to express lower magnitudes of collegiate sense of community. Therefore, the data supports both hypothesis Hy 1a and Hy 1b.

RQ 2: Do Black men who participate in intercollegiate athletics differ from non-athletes in terms of negative racial experiences, emotional resilience, and college sense of community?

Hy 2: Black male athletes will endorse more negative experiences related to stereotypes of being a violent criminal and participating in sports relative to their non-athlete counterparts. Hy 3: Black male athletes will express a greater sense of community than their non-athlete counterparts.

Four independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to evaluate whether participants who were intercollegiate athletes differed from participants who were not intercollegiate athletes on the study variables (e.g., *AMGRaSI*, *CD-RISC-10*, and *PSC*). Due to the imbalance in group sample size, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was employed for each test. None of tests were significant: Violent Criminal: $t(121) = 0.29, p = .792$; Absent Father: $t(113) = 0.24, p = .809$; Sports: $t(110) = -0.13, p = .896$; Sense of Community: $t(99) = 0.70, p = .491$. Therefore, the data rejects both Hy 2 and Hy 3.

RQ 3: Do Black men's negative racial experience and resilience explain a significant amount of variance in collegiate satisfaction? Hy 4: The linear combination of Black men's negative racial experience (as measured by the three subscales of the African American Men's Gender Racism Stress Inventory) and emotional resilience (as measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale) will predict collegiate psychological sense of community (as measured by the PSC scale)—for the Total sample, and by sub-groups of athletes and non-athletes. Hy 4a: The

bivariate and partial correlations between negative racial experiences variables and PSC will be negative. Hy 4b: The bivariate and partial correlation between resilience and PSC will be positive.

A multiple linear hierarchical regression was conducted to evaluate how well the gendered racial experiences and resilience measures predicted collegiate sense of community. The scales of the AMGRaSI were used to operationalize gendered racial experiences and CD-RISC-10 scores were operationalized to measure resilience. Table 1 provides the results for the bivariate and partial correlations between the study's predictors with PSC score. The gendered racial experiences variables were entered on the first step in a stepwise fashion, and the resilience score was entered on the second step to examine possible additional variance explained above that explained by gendered racial experiences. Using the whole sample, the stepwise approach yielded only one significant predictor of PSC score—perception of participating in sports, $F(1, 95) = 4.39, p = .04$. Neither the other two gendered racial experiences scales yielded significant prediction, and were dropped from the regression equation. The correlation between the Sports scale and PSC was .21, indicating approximately 4% of the variance of collegiate sense of community. In step 2, resilience was added to the regression, but did not yield significant R^2 change-- $F(2, 94) = 2.44, p = .09$.

In examining subsets of the total sample, participants who identified as being intercollegiate athletes, the stepwise approach yielded only one significant predictor of PSC score—perception of being a violent criminal, $F(1, 25) = 7.55, p = .01$. Neither the other two gendered racial experiences scales yielded significant prediction, and were dropped from the regression equation. The correlation between the Violence scale and PSC was .48, indicating

approximately 23% of the variance of collegiate sense of community. In step 2, resilience was added to the regression, but did not yield significant R^2 change— F change .14, $p = .716$.

In examining subsets of the total sample, participants who identified as being intercollegiate athletes, the stepwise approach yielded only one significant predictor of PSC score—perception of being a violent criminal, $F(1, 25) = 7.55, p = .01$. Neither the other two gendered racial experiences scales yielded significant prediction, and were dropped from the regression equation. The correlation between the Violence scale and PSC was .48, indicating approximately 23% of the variance of collegiate sense of community. In step 2, resilience was added to the regression, but did not yield significant R^2 change— F change .14, $p = .716$.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to expand the psychological research on gendered racism by examining the negative racial experiences of Black men and their emotional resilience in relation to collegiate psychological sense of community. A secondary intention sought to examine possible difference between Black men who are intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes on the variables of interest (i.e., negative experiences, resilience, and collegiate psychological sense of community). Using a validated measure of gendered racism, *AMGRaSI*, a scale which takes seriously the unique positionality of being both Black and a man, impact on collegiate psychological sense of community was assessed.

First, it was hypothesized that self-identified Black men in the current sample would express a significantly lower collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample of the PSC Scale. This postulate was supported. Participants who identified as

collegiate athletes were assumed to express lower collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample, and this hypothesis was supported. These results support the conclusion that Black men at PWIs, regardless of whether they participate in collegiate sports, tend to express lower magnitudes of collegiate psychological sense of community. While Black men as a group are often viewed as homogeneous, research has demonstrated them to be heterogeneous with diverse interest and perspectives (Harper & Nichols, 2008). So, when one considers that Black men are not monolithic and still all lack satisfaction with their college experience, this finding bears significance. The data point to environment clues as only 10% strongly agreed to feeling a strong sense of togetherness on campus, only 15% strongly agreed to feeling real sense of community at their school, only 18% strongly agreed to really enjoy attending their college, and only 19% of participants strongly agreed they felt a sense of belonging on campus. Buttressed by other research, these findings should not be viewed in isolation. In a recently published article, Lewis et al. (2019) found that Black students at a PWI reported suffered considerably more incidents of racial microaggressions as compared to their Asian American, Latinx, and Multicultural counterparts. Further, those who reported suffering considerably more incidents of racial microaggressions also conveyed lower sense of belonging. Strayhorn (2008) opined mitigating factors like alienation, disregard, and unwelcoming environments, that have come to define PWIs, make it challenging for Black men to “fit in,” thus many quit schools due to lack of sense of belonging. Traversing PWIs, Black men often face hostile campuses where negative stereotypes about them abound (Strayhorn, 2013). Black students in White colleges constantly compete against stereotypes at levels that far exceed their peers and elicit high levels of dissatisfaction (Feagin et al., 1996; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). In

the current study, 87% of participants were assumed to play a sport that they do not, 83% replied others have interacted with them in a way that suggests they might be violent toward them, 97% noticed that that the media portray Black men as uncaring fathers. Considered in tandem, feeling socially isolated and warding off incessant stereotypes indeed explains Black men's significantly lower collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample of the PSC Scale.

Secondly, support was not found for the following hypotheses regarding Black male athletes: 1) Black male athletes would endorse more negative experiences related to stereotypes of being a violent criminal and participating in sports relative to their non-athlete counterparts. 2) Black male athletes would express a greater sense of community than their non-athlete counterparts. While no evidence was found to confirm these premises in relation to Black male athletes, this may suggest that there is something so specific to being Black men that negative experiences related to stereotypes of being a violent criminal and participating in sports occur with such frequency it makes athletic participation a moot point. For example, Harper (2015) unearthed a compelling finding, 94% of the 32 Black men surveyed qualitatively admitted they were falsely assumed to be a student athlete. This misidentification of Black men playing a particular sport was especially pronounced among those matriculating at public research universities.

Thirdly, in relation to descriptive statistics it was hypothesized that the linear combination of Black men's negative racial experience (as measured by the three subscales of the African American Men's Gender Racism Stress Inventory) and emotional resilience (as measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale) would predict collegiate psychological

sense of community (as measured by the PSC scale)—for the Total sample, and by sub-groups of athletes and non-athletes. In addition, it was assumed that the bivariate and partial correlations between negative racial experiences variables and PSC would be negative. Conversely, it was hypothesized that the bivariate and partial correlation between resilience and PSC would be positive. Partial support was found for Total sample as perception of being a violent criminal explained 4% of the variance (but in a positive direction). By subgroup, for athletes, perception of being violent criminal had a positive significant relationship both bivariate and partial, also had a significant positive bivariate correlation with perception they played sports. For non-athlete, no significant correlations. Also, resilience was not significantly correlated either. It is important to note that negative racial experiences assessed by the *AMGRaSI* considered lifetime exposure and not just experiences of racism in college.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations

The research findings of the current study should be considered in light of several limitations. First, the original sample size (N=153) saw 53 participants removed from the data as they did not complete the survey to the point of statistical relevance. For example, in many of these cases, participants skipped a significant number of questions regarding exposure to stereotypes casting them as a violent criminal, absent father, or athlete. This may be explained by mere test fatigue as respondents simply became tired and exited the survey all together. Another explanation could be that the questions about negative racialized experiences, specific to Black men, produced an unintended triggering effect facilitating psychological distress and rendering participants incapable of moving forward. Secondly, while the Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) scale asks questions germane to the college experience, the African American Men's Gendered Racism Stress Inventory (*AMGRaSI*) assesses lifetime exposure to stereotypes and does not account for the social settings that racialized incidents took place.

Implications For Future Research

Though much intersectional research on Black men has been in the domain of public health, education, and sociology, counseling psychology, a discipline committed to ways in which environmental/situational influences impact personhood and boasting a commitment to social justice broadly defined, must come to terms with the deleterious effect being both Black and a man has on collegiate psychological sense of community and belonging. The current study

supports the conclusion that Black men at predominately white institutions (PWIs), regardless of whether they participate in collegiate sports, tend to express lower magnitudes of collegiate psychological sense of community relative to the normative sample of the PSC Scale. An institutional seriousness must pervade PWIs who fail to account for the ways hostile, racialized spaces disenfranchise Black men on campus, inundate the psyche with dehumanizing messages, and push many out of institutions of higher learning. Harper (2009) demands institutional seriousness to up end PWIs negligence in furnishing the necessary environments for engagement and failure to research and fashion strength based solutions to social factors that force Black men to abandon university settings. Hausmann, Ye, Schofield, and Woods (2009) confirmed “students’ sense of belonging to the university community as a significant determinant of their commitment to the university, their intentions to persist, and their actual persistence” (p.664). Black men matter. The discipline of counseling psychology must lay bare the experiences of Black men at PWIs in hopes resources are placed to aid in therapeutic interventions, grant making opportunities for progressive programming, and development of curriculum that boldly confront the stereotypes that curtail expansive visions of Black manhood.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

The bivariate and Partial Correlations of the Predictors with Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community (PSC)—Total Sample, Student-Athlete Sample, and Non-Athlete Sample

Predictors	Correlation between each predictor and PSC			Correlation between each predictor and PSC controlling for all other predictors		
	Total	Athlete	Non-Athlete	Total	Athlete	Non-Athlete
AMGRaSI-violent	.17*	.48**	.004	.08	.48**	-.002
AMGRaSI-absent father	-.04	.10	-.13	-.11	-.20	-.13
AMGRaSI-play sports	.21*	.32*	.15	.22*	-.063	-.16
CD-RISC-10	-.06	.05	-.13	-.07	.075	.13

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

VITA

Award-winning writer, activist, counselor, and basketball coach, Atlanta native Edward Marcellus Garnes is the founder of From Afros To Shelltoes, a community-based organization uniquely focused on cultural productions that bridge generation gaps between youth, elders, and the hip-hop community. Garnes has received The Atlanta Tribune Man of Distinction Award and holds a B.A. in English Writing from DePauw University and a M.A. in Counseling from Michigan State University where he studied as a Competitive Enrichment Fellow. His seminal essay “Black Boy Blues Suite: A Love Poem To My Father In E -Flat” appears in the anthology *Where Did Our Love Go: Love and Relationships in the African American Community* edited by Gil Robertson. As a highly sought-after commentator on hip hop, Black identity, manhood, and popular culture, Garnes has appeared on CNN’s Headline News, BET, Young Black Entrepreneur Magazine, CW Network, Fox’s MY TV Network, Sirius Radio, CBS Radio, and allhiphop.com. Garnes has served as both a Chancellor’s Fellow and Graduate Diversity Enhancement Fellow in Psychology at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. He co-stars in the internationally acclaimed documentary film series *Elementary Genocide* directed by Rahiem Shabazz. His national manhood tour *Sweet Tea Ethics* has featured famed brothers Dr. Cornel West & Clifton West.

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