2015

A Case Study of Respect among Young Urban African American Men

Morgan Zenobia London
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Morgan London

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,

and that any and all revisions required by

the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Barbara Benoliel, Committee Chairperson, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Monica Gordon, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Jason Patton, University Reviewer, Human Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

2015

Abstract

A Case Study of Respect Among Young Urban African American Men

by

Morgan Z. London

MEd, University of North Florida, 2005

BA, Harvard College, 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

August 2015

Abstract

Many young adult African American men living in urban areas adopt a style of self-presentation known as the gangsta image in an attempt to earn and maintain what they may perceive to be respect, self-esteem, and social status. While these young men succeed in earning the respect of their peers, they also may jeopardize their chances of succeeding in mainstream society by engaging in an alienating lifestyle related to their alternative form of status. The purpose of this case study was to explore the concepts of respect and self-esteem as defined by a culture-sharing group of young African American men living in an urban environment. Using the theoretical lens of Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interactions, case studies of 4 young African American males' experience of self-esteem and respect as components of social acceptance were explored. Their sources of teachings about respect and social position received from the authority figures in their environment, as well as the contextual factors that shaped their self-concept were also delineated. The research used a qualitative, case study design. Data were collected from observations, interviews, participatory photography, and document review and analyzed by coding and concept mapping using Atlas.ti software. The key finding was that perceptions of self-respect were connected to ongoing negative relationships with mainstream society and law enforcement. This study contributes to social change by helping human services professionals to comprehend the meaning and significance of respect and self-esteem for this population. This understanding can then inform practices related to engaging and supporting the mainstream success of this important group.

A Case Study of Respect Among Young Urban African American Men

by

Morgan Z. London

MEd, University of North Florida, 2005

BA, Harvard College, 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

August 2015

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Some young African American men are socially marginalized because they have adopted traits associated with the *gangsta* stereotype (Alexander, 2012; Dyson, 1996; Nurse, 2010). This stereotype is informed in part by hip hop culture, and often includes a particular style of dress which may entail jeans that sag below the waistline and *hoodies*, or hooded sweatshirts that can obscure the face. Individuals conforming to this stereotype may speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Additionally, researchers have associated this lifestyle with the genre of music known as *gangsta rap,* hip hop music that glorifies violence, sex, and money (Asim, 2007). These attributes often cause authority figures to presume these young men are criminals (Anderson, 1999; Asim, 2007).

Criminal stigmatization may marginalize young African American men, thus limiting their access to valuable resources such as education, employment, and stable housing (Kaufman, Rebellon, Thaxton, & Agnew, 2008; Martin et al., 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). With minimal expectation of success in mainstream American society, young African American men may think that embracing the *gangsta* stereotype is their best option to gain the respect they desire. They often justify this behavior as their means of earning the respect of their peers and building their self-esteem (Anderson, 1999; Anthony, 2007; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008).

The concept of social respect is perceived as a valuable asset young African American men have not been able to acquire because they have been systematically excluded from the mainstream path to such achievement by teachers, potential employers, and the police (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). Some authors have posited that because young African American men desire respect from the members of their communities, they seek to gain it the only way they believe is available: by embracing the tough and strong *gangsta* stereotype (Agnew, 2008; Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). In assuming this stereotype, young African American men are often caught in a vicious cycle of discrimination and self-defeat; they are treated as potential criminals and are, therefore, ostracized from mainstream society (Alexander, 2012; Reiman & Leighton, 2009; Rios, 2011). This ostracism inhibits the development of healthy self-esteem in this population (Burrell, 2010; Martin, et al., 2011; Pharo, Gross, Richardson, & Hayne, 2011).

Background

The extensive literature on the concepts of self-esteem and social acceptance reveal the negative effects of marginalization on the self-esteem of African Americans (Anthony, Holmes, & Wood, 2007; Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010; Blumer, 1958; Bynum & Kotchick, 2006; Gaylord-Harden, Ragsdale, Mandara, Richards, & Petersen, 2007; Goffman, 1959; Jackson & Henderson, 2006; Kaufman, et al., 2008; Ralphs, Medina, & Aldridge, 2009; Seaton, 2010; Seaton & Yip, 2009). Another category of literature demonstrates how African American youths use racial pride as a

positive coping skill against marginalization (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Contes, & Rowley, 2007; Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards, & Ragsdale, 2009; Phillips, 2010; Prelow, Weaver, & Swenson, 2006). Limited research has been conducted on negative coping skills, such as adopting the *gangsta* stereotype as a means of earning respect.

Alexander (2012), Anderson (1999), and Rios (2011) researched the importance of respect among young African American men living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. However, the available literature failed to provide a thick, rich description of how this population understood and interpreted the concepts of respect and self-esteem. It was therefore worthwhile to investigate this population's understanding of the concepts and the meaning they gave to respect and self-esteem.

Problem Statement

Many young African American men adopt mannerisms and ideals associated with *gangsta rap* imagery in order to earn and maintain respect and social status (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Asim, 2007; Rios, 2011). While these young men succeed in earning what may be of value to them, the respect of their neighborhood peers, they also jeopardize possible chances of meeting the requirements for gaining the social status they seek through education and gainful employment, the acknowledged means of succeeding in mainstream society. By assuming the gangsta persona, these men reinforce the stereotype of criminality that further marginalizes them from mainstream American society. Consequently, authority figures such as educators, employers, and law enforcement officers can respond to them in a negative fashion (Alexander, 2012;

Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). The current literature does not address a gap in understanding how these African American men interpret and incorporate the concepts of social respect and self-esteem as components of their social status in their communities (Alexander, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the concepts of respect and self-esteem as defined by the culture-sharing group of young African American men living in an urban setting in the southeastern United States. Additionally, the purpose was to explore the meaning and significance of these concepts in determining their behavior and lifestyle and the consequences to them.

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

RQ 1: How do young African American men perceive the phenomena of respect and self-esteem as components of their social acceptance?

RQ 2: How do young African American men understand respect in their relations with the authority figures in their environments?

RQ 3: How does young African American men's understanding and meaning of respect differ from that of their family, peers, teachers, or local law enforcement officers?

RQ 4: How does race context and shape young African American mens' self-concept?

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) developed a dramaturgical model of social interaction. The major perspective of this model is that everyone plays specific social roles when interacting with others. Each social role has a distinct set of social rules associated with it. Every social role also has its own set of behaviors and "a distinctive moral character" (p. 13). Furthermore, the individual playing a particular social role only assumes that character for a specific audience. The purpose of performing these different social roles is to gain social acceptance from the audience for whom the role is performed.

The contextual lens through which this study took place was based upon Goffman's dramaturgical model. Based on the literature researched, I postulated that young African American men living in disadvantaged neighborhoods experienced marginalization from authority figures in their communities. This marginalization often resulted in lowered self-esteem. As a means of building their self-esteem, these young men embraced the gangsta stereotype in order to gain social acceptance from their peers.

The use of Goffman's dramaturgical model as a contextual lens made logical sense for approaching this study. I wished to understand how this particular group of young African American men defined respect and how it enabled them to develop a sense of self-esteem. Significant others such as family members and other respected individuals with whom they interacted often provided the guidelines and resources for the development of these characteristics. By observing how participants interacted with

different social audiences, I developed an understanding of how they developed a definition of respect. I also comprehended how the participants in this population came to understand the importance of respect in its contextual environment. Finally, I learned what behaviors gained them social acceptance among different groups or categories of people.

Nature of the Study

The study was a qualitative collective case study. I spent three months with a group of four young African American males. These young men lived in what has been categorized by the U.S. Census Bureau (2012b) as a disadvantaged neighborhood in a city in the southeastern United States. This was the best research approach to take to understand a particular issue, using one or more cases to illustrate it (Yin, 2013). The key phenomenon investigated was respect as it pertained to social acceptance. Data were collected by observation of the research participants. I watched how participants interacted with each other, their family members and other members of the community. I also interviewed the research participants. Finally, I asked my research participants to engage in participatory photography and conducted informal conversations regarding this activity.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

Disadvantaged neighborhood: A region of a city of town, the population of which consists of families and individuals with annual incomes of $30,000 or less (Gaylord-

Harris, et al., 2007; Harris Britt, et al., 2007; Mandara, et al., 2009; Stewart & Simons, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b).

Gangsta: A male who values and engages in delinquent behaviors, such as violence and theft to get what he wants. He possesses an air of cockiness to prove that he is tough (Anderson, 1999).

Gangsta love: The act of embracing and emulating the gangsta stereotype (Alexander, 2012).

Helping professionals: Adults who work in one of the following positions designed to provide human services to individuals and families in a community: case manager, law enforcement officer, mental health counselor, mentor, police officer, probation officer, psychologist, psychiatrist, substance abuse counselor, social worker, or therapist (Aldridge, Shute, Ralphs, & Medina, 2011; Janku & Yan, 2009; Pharo, et al., 2011).

Mainstream American society: The conventional majority of middle and upper class American families with an annual income of $45,000 or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Respect: The receipt of proper treatment and deference; not being anyone's victim, either physically or verbally. It is a tangible asset that gangstas strive to achieve and maintain at all costs; sometimes even their own life (Anderson, 1999; Papachristos, 2009; Rios, 2011).

Self-esteem: The level at which an individual feels accepted by his peers (Anthony, et al., 2007; Bynum & Kotchick, 2006); feelings about themselves (Gaylord-Harden, et al., 2007).

Socioeconomic status (SES): The level of income and wealth owned by an American family (Barak, Leighton, & Flavin, 2010). The higher the level of income or wealth, the higher the SES. Families who have an annual income of $30,000 or lower are considered to have a low SES (Harris-Britt, et al., 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b).

Scope and Delimitations

The specific focus of this study was on the meaning the research participants gave to respect as it pertained to self-esteem, and how that meaning motivated their behaviors. Any issues pertaining to mental illness or substance abuse in this population were beyond the scope of this study. Also beyond the scope of this study were intervention models and counseling techniques for this population. Given these delimitations, young African American men who were receiving treatment for mental illness or substance abuse were excluded from participating in this study.

In order to maximize transferability, I triangulated different forms of data, including individual interviews, participatory photography, participant observation, and document reviews. I also examined and provided viable explanations for discrepant data I encountered during the data collection stage of this study. When presenting the results, I also examined all competing explanations for data results. By presenting conflicting

data and alternative explanations, I hoped to demonstrate that I was receptive and flexible

to follow rather than manipulate the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Murchison, 2010).

Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this study. First, most social scientists

usually spend 1 to 3 years in the field with their research participants. The more time

spent in the field, the more a researcher internalizes the culture she observes and studies.

This helps the researcher provide full details in both field notes and data analysis (Yin,

2013). Academic and economic constraints prohibited me from devoting that much time

to fieldwork. I was only able to spend two hours a day in the field. This could have

prevented me from gathering sufficient details in the field. To minimize this threat to

validity, I collaborated with my research participants to ensure that I provided the correct

information when presenting my results. By engaging in participant collaboration, I

improved the trustworthiness of my findings (Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013).

Second, I was initially concerned that my own personal biases would interfere

with making objective analyses and observations. The 5 years I lived with my oldest son

might have comprised my objective opinion about men who emulate the gangsta

stereotype. There was a risk that I might have transferred some of my feelings about my

oldest son onto one or more of my research participants, especially upon witnessing

behaviors in which my oldest engaged during the time he lived with me. However, I

processed all transference issues with my individual counselor during the data collection

process. I also kept a journal of my emotions during this study to help me maintain my

objectivity. Finally, I shared my data with my dissertation chairperson and gained her

assessment. This way, I ensured a greater chance of an objective analysis.

Third, I am a woman who researched a population of men much younger than I.

Being the mother of three boys, I fought the urge to treat my research participants in a

maternal fashion. Again, I employed my emotions journal and my counselor to process

all such feelings that arose. Furthermore, members of this population deferred to me as a

mother, or even grandmother type (Anderson, 1999; Venkatesh, 2008). Odds were

favorable that these young men did not act naturally in my presence.

In order to reduce this phenomenon, I tried to make it so that I became invisible.

In other words, I sought to blend in with the field environment so that I would be

unobtrusive in my observations (Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013). I dressed in casual

clothes, slouched my posture, and made small talk with the research participants that

involved the use of AAVE in order to establish a rapport. I was realistic that the research

population would not instantly trust me. However, I framed my fieldwork so these young

men saw themselves as being the experts. Thus, I was somewhat successful in getting

them to be themselves in my presence. As time progressed during field work, the young

men became more accustomed to my presence. Consequently, I gradually succeeded in

becoming unobtrusive.

Significance

There is little research on how young African American men living in

disadvantaged neighborhoods perceive respect and self-esteem. Neither is there much

research on how their perception drives their behavior. It was therefore worthwhile to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of this population. Such an understanding can facilitate helping professionals comprehend respect and self-esteem for this population. In turn, this comprehension could perhaps inform this population's development of respect and self-esteem through non-criminal achievements.

The key to all successful multicultural counseling is for the counselor to understand the cultural background and social context of their clients. That requires learning about the culture of which those clients are a part (Sue & Sue, 2008). By acquiring this knowledge, helping professionals can develop a better proficiency at providing more beneficial assistance to individuals in this population. If social science research can demonstrate that this population embraces this self-defeating behavior as a result of marginalization they experience, then perhaps members of the human services industry would be compelled to re-evaluate the standards of assessment currently in use to assist the marginalized populations (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Summary

This study was a case study illustrating the issue of respect within the contextual lens of Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interactions. The purpose of the study was to determine how young African American males understood the concept of respect as it pertained to self-esteem development. The study needed to be conducted because a large portion of this population is marginalized by mainstream American society. The marginalization of this population results in the exclusion of these young men from better

educational and employment opportunities and keeps them relegated to a low SES in which they are forced to hustle to survive. Developing an understanding of this concept can broaden the depth of knowledge about this population amongst social scientists. This in turn may result in the development of effective culturally-appropriate interventions to work with this population.

Chapter 2 contains a review of existing literature related to Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interactions, and discrimination and its effects. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the methodology that will be used to answer the research questions delineated above. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study conducted. Chapter 5 delivers an interpretation of the findings and implications for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As stated earlier, the problem is that many young African American men experience a cycle of self-defeat. Marginalized as gangsters, these young men seek respect the only way they believe is available to them: by being the best gangstas in their neighborhoods. Although young men who do adopt this social role earn the respect of their peers, they also continue to remain marginalized from mainstream American society. The purpose of this study was to gain comprehension of how this population came to understand respect as it related to self-esteem.

The current literature demonstrates that racial discrimination has had negative effects on the quality of lives of African Americans in the areas of SES, employment, education, and family life (Gyimah-Brempong, 2007-2008; Kaufman, et al., 2008; Prelow, et al., 2006; Shutay, Williams, & Shutay, 2011). Researchers have also found that discrimination has negative effects on the development of young African Americans' self-esteem, especially if these individuals lack racial pride (Gaylord-Harden, et al., 2007; Harris-Britt, et al., 2007). Finally, some researchers have found that African Americans have developed a counterculture in response to their marginalization from mainstream American society (Alexander, 2012; Fleury & Fernet, 2011; Sandberg, 2009a; Sandberg, 2009b). This counterculture encourages violence and hypermasculinity as means of earning respect from peers.

After delineating my literature search strategy, I review the literature pertaining to Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interactions. I then analysis the effect of marginalization in different aspects of the lives of African Americans. This literature includes studies on the effects of marginalization on African Americans' self-esteem. I also introduce participatory photography as a tool for giving voice to vulnerable, marginalized populations. Finally, I review the literature that discusses the counterculture that arose as a response to the ostracism this population received. This counterculture endorses violence, criminal activities, and risky sexual behaviors in the name of earning respect (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Fleury & Fernet, 2011).

Literature Search Strategy

I searched Criminal Justice Periodicals, SocINDEX with Full Text, PsychoINFO, and PsychARTICLES for sources pertaining to self-esteem, respect, and criminal behavior. I used the keyword search terms *African Americans, adolescents, critical race theory, criminal justice, respect, self-esteem, social position, gangs,* and *social roles.* My search for sources entailed a snowball sampling method, in that while reviewing one source, I encountered references to other sources, which I then investigated and added as I encountered them. I was thus able to research over 100 peer-referenced sources for this study. This chapter will only highlight the most relevant of these sources.

While searching the literature, I was unable to find much on how young African American males who live in disadvantaged urban areas perceive the concepts of respect and self-esteem. Without an understanding of this population's perceptions, social

scientists cannot comprehend how these perceptions might play a role in directing their behaviors. The challenge was to appreciate the lived experiences of these young men in order to glean a better understanding. The acquisition of this knowledge may inform future support system planning. First, I describe the negative effects of marginalization on different aspects of African American lives.

Marginalization

When slavery and racial segregation were rendered illegal, the privileged elite had to make all marginalization efforts covert (Alexander, 2012; Massey, 2007). Today, it is argued that we are now a nation that is *colorblind* to racial differences (Alexander, 2012; Sue & Sue, 2008). Yet, the largest racial disparity in this country is between Caucasians and African Americans (Massey, 2007).

Poverty and Unemployment

One of the greatest material effects of marginalization is poverty. Economist Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong (2007-2008) noted that in 2005, 11% of all Americans lived at the poverty level. However, over 20% of all African Americans lived at the poverty level. While the average male aged 25 years and older earned an annual salary of $44,850, the average African American male aged 25 years and older earned only $30,791 (Gyimah-Brempong, 2007-2008, p. 175). In 2007, 75% of all Caucasian families owned their homes, while less than half of all African American families did (Massey, 2007, p. 61). These are disturbing statistics because poverty is strongly

correlated to crime (Agnew, 2005; Alexander, 2012; Burrell, 2010; Byimah-Brempong, 2007-2008; Massey, 2007).

In their discussion of crime, Barak, et al. (2010) postulated that differences in SES resulted in differences in quality of education and employment options. These authors also asserted that "Black Americans are more likely than whites or any other minority group to live in toxic physical environments" (p. 109). These include toxic waste disposal sites, landfills, and areas high in smog and pollution. Such environments most likely contribute to the high mortality rate of African Americans (Barak, et al., 2010; Gyimah-Brempong, 2007-2008).

Reiman and Leighton (2009) spoke of the ideological image perpetuated by the American elite: "the poor are morally defective and thus their poverty is their own fault, not a symptom of social or economic injustice" (p. 175). By portraying this image, the wealthy elite have been successful in cutting many forms of government assistance to people living at the poverty level; claiming the assistance is neither needed nor deserved. The poor are simply too lazy to improve their situation.

Unemployment is a problem for many African American males (Agnew, 2005; Alexander, 2012). In 2005, the national unemployment rate for adults aged 25 years and older was nearly 4.5%. The unemployment rate for African American men in that age group was nearly 9%; more than double the average national rate (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Gyimah-Brempong, 2007-2008; Massey, 2007).

The globalization of industry was a major factor leading to the high unemployment rate of African Americans. In the 1970s and 1980s, when manufacturers began transplanting their factories to Third World countries, they left a plethora of unemployed laborers; most of whom were African American (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999). The job openings in the new technological industry required higher levels of education than many of these laborers had. Moreover, many of the new job openings were located in the suburbs, while the African American laborers lived in the inner-cities. Not owning private transportation to travel to these new work sites, they had to rely on public transportation. This system proved both expensive and unreliable (Anderson, 1999).

Hustles. Because many African Americans are restricted from obtaining legal employment, they are compelled to earn their money by any means necessary. Many inner-city and rural African Americans adopt a *hustle*, which is a means of earning money. A hustle can vary in its level of illegality, from benign to malignant (Venkatesh, 2008; X & Haley, 1966). Hustling can be a benign as styling women's hair out of one's home, or as malignant as selling drugs. Hustling in any form is illegal because the hustler works strictly on a cash-only basis. No taxes are declared or filed on these transactions. What is most fascinating about the underground economy is that oftentimes, people with legitimate jobs supplement their incomes with a hustle (Venkatesh, 2008). It is seen as the only way to survive (Venkatesh, 2008; X & Haley, 1966).

Participation in this underground economy is the only viable option for many young African American males who are marginalized by mainstream American society (Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). If they are unable to acquire legal employment as a busboy in a restaurant earning minimum wage, then they have no other option than to develop a hustle on the street. The most popular hustle is also the most dangerous—that of selling drugs. It is so popular because it is the fastest way to earn a large amount of money. Selling drugs is also dangerous because the dealers risk getting arrested or killed with every transaction they make. A young drug dealer can earn up to $1000 a week—all in tax-free cash. Such a temptation is impossible for a young man to refuse, especially if his single mother is working three minimum-wage jobs and can't afford to buy meat to feed the family. Many of these youths do not have realistic monetary expectations. Even though a youth can earn $500 in one day, they can end up earning only twenty dollars a day the rest of the week. That averages out to less than minimum wage (Rios, 2011, p. 61). A young man can work 21 hours a day, risking arrest, injury, and even death with every customer.

The hustle is not limited solely to earning money. It is also used to get what one needs—or wants—from others. The hustle can also be referred to as a *con*. In other words, the aim of a hustler is to manipulate anyone and everyone to give him what he needs or wants. Sandberg (2009a) discovered that a successful hustle involved having the proper dialogue. He interviewed nineteen men of African descent, aged 17-30 years. These men sold drugs in a metropolitan area of Norway known for substance use and abuse. Sandberg (2009a) based his study on Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street* and

Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of social roles. He identified six different narratives that his research participants used to describe how they became involved in drug dealing. The narratives were categorized into *decent* and *street* in respect to Anderson's (1999) work. Each narrative had a specific purpose and was used with specific audiences. For the duration of this work, I will use the term *non-street* to replace the term *decent* coined by Anderson (1999) and Sandberg (2009a).

The non-street narratives were used when the speaker wanted to portray himself as a victim of circumstance in hopes of gaining sympathy. The street narratives, on the other hand, were used to gain respect and attention from the speaker's audience. This work is an excellent support of Goffman's dramaturgical model, in that the dealers obviously donned different social roles for different audiences. Sandberg's findings also suggest that the dealers suffered from self-esteem and self-efficacy issues; thus their need for narratives that strive to increase their sense of self-worth.

Education

In response to globalization, Americans in the mainstream began to train their children so they could acquire the skills needed to get jobs in the new labor market. Yet many inner-city public schools are not equipped to train students in this fashion. Impoverished African Americans continue to lag behind other ethnic groups in educational achievement (Burrell, 2010; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011a; 2011b). Deficits in education are both a result of poverty and a major contributor

to the unemployment and poverty issues of many African Americans (Agnew, 2005;

Reiman & Leighton, 2009). Agnew (2005) reported that:

> Juveniles are more likely to have negative school experiences when they
>
> are assigned to noncollege prep tracks, they are in large classes and large
>
> schools, their teachers spend little time on academic tasks, there are
>
> infrequent evaluations of student performance, other students in the school
>
> discourage academic pursuits, the school sets low academic goals for its
>
> students, school disciplinary practices are poor, and there is little
>
> community involvement in the school. (p. 146)

What Agnew described above is the state of many U.S. inner-city public schools.

Furthermore, many African American students are relegated to special education classes

because they suffer from learning disabilities including attention deficit hyperactivity

disorder (Shutay, Williams, & Shutay, 2011). As a result, African American students are

behind Caucasian students when it comes to reading and math (National Assessment of

Educational Progress, 2011a; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011b). All

of these factors contribute to the fact that many African American children do not receive

a quality education. These factors also contribute to the fact that the dropout rate for

African American students age 16 years and older is nearly twice that of the dropout rate

for Caucasian students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

Alexander (2012) and Rios (2011) discussed how the racial bias of teachers leads

them to pathologically shame students who fit the typical criminal stereotype: young,

African American men who dress in baggy pants and speak AAVE. These educators give their students implicit and explicit messages that they will end up as drug dealers, in prison, or dead (Rios, 2011). Public school educators often give up on such students and direct their focus on the ones they think they can help. Receiving these shaming messages, the youths may lose any interest in academic success. If they have learning disabilities, they will not ask for help because they believe the teachers will shame them further. It is likely that these students will develop resentments against the teachers who shame them and against the education system in general.

Consequently, students who are considered the furthest behind are most likely to stop participating in class and fail to complete assignments. If these students are disruptive in class, then their teachers will merely have them suspended or even notify the police officers who patrol the schools. Once a youth has earned the reputation of being disruptive at school, they are often blamed for any misconduct that takes place in the classroom, whether or not they are responsible. Hence that youth is frequently suspended, arrested, and told they will not achieve in life (Rios, 2011). Failing to complete assignments and participate in class also results in failing school and being compelled repeating grades. Youths in such situations are not prepared to go to college (Alexander, 2012; Burrell, 2010; Rios, 2011).

Anderson (1999) discussed how certain African American males in the ghettos of Philadelphia did not concern themselves with school. These particular youths had adopted the code of the street. *Street* kids saw no need for school, as it was viewed as

"acting white" (Anderson, 1999, p. 97). Street kids were more concerned with earning money than earning a degree. So they focused on ways to earn money instead of going to school. In fact, many of them dropped out of school while in their teens (Anderson, 1999). Those youths did not realize that earning their degrees could have resulted in gainful employment and hence, more money.

Sullivan and Evans (2006) conducted a study in which they sought to develop a better understanding of African American teenagers' sense of self-efficacy as the result of living in the projects. Regarding educational beliefs, Sullivan and Evans (2006) found that if the teenagers believed themselves to be smart, then their actual grades did not concern them. This could be interpreted as documentation to support Anderson's (1999) code of the street. Street kids are not concerned with academic success. If they believe they have street smarts and can earn money in other ways, then poor grades are of no importance. Yet, neither Anderson nor Sullivan and Evans considered the possibility that these kids gave up on school because the school system had given up on them.

Contrary to what Anderson (1999) reported, Fields and Abrams (2010) found that most of the juvenile offenders they interviewed wanted to either graduate from high school or earn their General Education Diploma (GED). However, they were unaware of how many credits they needed in order to achieve that goal. Fields and Abrams (2010) also found that the boys they interviewed had lower educational expectations that the girls. Moreover, the boys expressed a greater willingness to engage in illegal activities in

order to earn money. This finding could be attributed to the low educational expectation held by their teachers. However, the authors did not report this possibility.

It is possible that the boys in Fields and Abrams' (2010) study spent years hearing that they would not go to college or amount to anything by their teachers. Hence, the boys would accept the likelihood that they would not get the skills they need to acquire gainful employment. Burrell (2010) would attribute this finding to the Black Inferiority (BI) campaign. He asserted that too many African Americans had low educational expectations of their children. As long as the children do not fail, they are considered to be doing well in school. Yet a child with a low grade point average is less likely to be accepted into college.

Both Agnew (2005) and Burrell (2010) reported a nationwide set of lower educational standards for African American students. These authors found that lower educational expectations negatively affect curriculum, policies and the allocation of funds to public schools. Thus a public school in a predominantly African American neighborhood would receive fewer funds than a public school in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood because school officials do not expect the African American students to succeed. African American youths attending schools that lack sufficient funds receive the covert—and sometimes overt—message that education does not need to be a priority in their lives (Agnew, 2005; Anderson, 1999).

Family

Fields and Abrams' (2010) finding could also be due to the fact that men are expected to provide for their families. A large part of a young man's masculine identity is tied in with being able to give his mother some money to help out with the bills (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999). A man is also expected to give some money to the mother of his child (Anderson, 1999). If he cannot get a tax-paying job, then he will earn his cash by other means (Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011).

.One of the most notable effects of marginalization has been the rise of single African American mothers (Asim, 2007; Burrell, 2010; Massey, 2007). African American mothers have raised children alone or with the help of extended family since the days of slavery (Asim, 2007; Burrell, 2010). Some scientists argue that this was the start of the implicit message sent to African American men that a father was not an important social role (Asim, 2007; Burrell, 2010). This message was reinforced by the American government throughout the decades (Massey, 2007).

When President Lyndon B. Johnson enacted the War on Poverty, government assistance was made available to help impoverished families, many of which were African American. However, the assistance was only available to single mothers. Often, the fathers brought in too much income to make the family eligible to receive government assistance. Consequently, African American families received the implicit message that a man could not be in the household if the family wanted government assistance. By the 1970s, many African American men did not marry the mothers of their children. Massey

(2007) attributed this phenomenon to the men's desires to make sure their women received financial assistance. Burrell (2010) and Massey (2007) interpreted it as African American men's internalization of the message "They're better off without you."

Phillips (2010) found that "relationships with . . . . family [were] integral to young people's understanding of themselves" (p. 490). How does an African American boy develop an understanding of himself when he does not have a father to influence him? He looks for another father figure. That father figure might be a delinquent peer. Many scholars have reported a significant correlation between single-parent households and delinquent behaviors in youths (Agnew, 2005; Shutay, et al., 2011; Wright & Younts, 2009). These authors reported that a single parent is often too physically and emotionally exhausted to properly supervise her children when she comes home from work. Consequently, the youths end up out on the street getting involved with delinquent peers.

Anderson (1999) reported that parents who had adopted the code of the street pushed the values of the street code onto their children. However, there are many *non-street* parents who still end up with *street* kids, despite the parents' best efforts to prevent this phenomenon. *Non-street* families understood that it was essential for their children to at least pretend to adopt the street code as a survival tactic in the Philadelphia ghetto. Oftentimes, however, the lure of the street was too great and these children ended up adopting the street code. Stewart and Simons (2006) tested this hypothesis of Anderson's (1999) and found the same results.

A mutual distrust and dislike has developed between the parents of such youths and the government officials embroiled in the family's life. Many social services organizations and law enforcement agencies harbor a "blame the parents" attitude for the behaviors of their children (Aldridge, Shute, Ralphs, & Medina, 2011; Jacobs, Miranda-Julian, & Kaplan, 2011). Many parents of gang members and juvenile offenders are often disgusted by the harassment they receive from law enforcement and social services (Aldridge, et al., 2011). These parents also complain that the resources offered by social services are often inappropriate and useless. Yet, when they voice this opinion to their local social service agencies, the parents perceive a lack of concern on the part of the social worker (Aldridge, et al., 2011).

This pathological shame attributed to juvenile and adult offenders and their families often results in the ostracism of African American males by their families (Alexander, 2012). Seeking to avoid a negative label, family members will distance themselves, both physically and emotionally, from loved one who end up incarcerated. The family may band together to protect the children left behind. But they will all abandon the family member who got arrested. This result of pathological shaming leads to the social isolation of so many African American men who end up under the control of the criminal justice system.

Media Bias

Scholars have found that marginalization is continually perpetrated by the media (Bissler & Connors, 2012; Burrell, 2010; Reiman & Leighton, 2009). African American

children watch more television than any other racial group (Ward, 2004). The messages sent by the media denote the ideological image that African Americans are inferior, sex-crazed, crime-prone creatures who do not deserve any special treatment (Reiman & Leighton, 2009). If children initially believe that the characters on television reflect real life, then Caucasian and African American children receive the same inappropriate messages about how African Americans are expected to comport themselves (Burrell, 2010, p. 100).

While reviewing the entire first season of the crime drama *CSI*, Bissler and Connors (2012) identified the following stereotypes: The Urban Cool Minority, The Disadvantaged Youth, and The African American Criminal. Bissler and Connors (2012) also complained that the show trivialized "the lived experiences of minority characters" (Bissler & Connors, 2012, p. 146). These findings are incredibly disturbing, given the enormous popularity of *CSI*. Viewers can watch this show and believe that all African Americans are crude, uneducated criminals who get their just reward by the end of the episode.

The bias of the media can also be observed in local news broadcasts. Simmons (2012) found a positive correlation between people's watching their local news and their beliefs that the crime rate had increased (p. 234). Simmons attributed her findings to the fact that local news shows are more concerned about high ratings than network news broadcasts. Their top stories therefore tend to be more sensationalized, focusing primarily on local homicides and shootings that occur in the disadvantaged

neighborhoods. These disadvantaged neighborhoods are largely occupied by African

Americans. Thus, people who watch more local news were likely to believe that the

crime rate had worsened. This belief also strengthened the stereotype of the "Typical

Criminal: a young, poor Black male aged 14-19" (Reiman & Leighton, 2009, p. 63).

Reiman and Leighton (2009) argued that the wealthy elite controlled the media.

Therefore the ideological image of the African American criminal was perpetuated on

local news, reality shows and crime dramas because the wealthy elite wished to keep

African American males marginalized from mainstream American society. Alexander

(2012) concurred that American media maintained the "Us vs. Them" mentality created

at this country's beginning. When people think of crime and criminals, they think of

African American men (Alexander, 2012, p. 106). African Americans often hold this

believe as well (Burrell, 2010).

Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma

Boothe (2012) blamed ignorance and dysfunction for the high incarceration and

recidivism rates of African American males. Boothe attributed the presence of ignorance

and dysfunction to "racism and the legacy of slavery" (Boothe, 2012, p. 53). The legacy

of slavery is what Schlosser (2006) termed the "intergenerational transmission of trauma"

(p. 431). While Schlosser used this term to explain how survivors of the Holocaust

transmitted the trauma they experienced to their children, this term can also be used to

explain the mindset of today's African Americans. Muslim activist Malcolm X argued

that African Americans lived in a prison inside their minds as the result of slavery (X &

Haley, 1966). Alexander (2012), Asim (2007), and Burrell (2010) all argue that the physical and psychological cruelty of slavery greatly traumatizes African Americans and this trauma was transmitted through the bloodlines of all of the slaves' descendants. Burrell (2010) argued that it is this intergenerational transmission of trauma that has helped brainwash African Americans into believing and perpetuating the BI campaign far better than Caucasians ever could.

The negative images of poor, lazy, criminal African Americans that are presented in biased television shows and news broadcasts could be considered a large contributor to the establishment of a fatalistic outlook and an external locus of control among people living at or below the poverty level (Agnew, 2005; Burrell, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2008). Fatalism begets fatalism. The fatalistic outlook held by the parents is bequeathed to the children. One could argue that slavery was the birth of fatalistic outlooks among African Americans, as well as the development of an external local of control and learned helplessness (Burrell, 2010). These three factors could be a large contributor to the fact that many African Americans settle for mediocre grades in school (Burrell, 2010), are unable to afford to buy houses (Massey, 2007), or do not go to a doctor to manage diabetes (Burrell, 2010; Center for Disease Control, 2012).

While the above literature effectively details the holistic negative effects of marginalization on the lives of African Americans, not one of these studies provides an explanation of how African Americans cope with this marginalization. This is why Goffman's dramaturgical model of social roles is needed as a contextual lens.

Social Roles and Social Acceptance

The need for self-esteem and the need to belong are basic human requirements (Pharo, et al., 2011). In order to get these needs met, Goffman (1959) asserted that people played different roles for different audiences. These social roles are played in order to gain social acceptance from the audience for which they are performed. Goffman (1959) postulated that each social role had certain behaviors and "a distinctive moral character" associated with it (p. 13). These behaviors and moral character instructed one's audience on how to treat the individual portraying the persona in question. Goffman's dramaturgical model provided an excellent explanation of how people take on different roles in order to gain social acceptance.

The basic human needs to belong and to have self-esteem are often met by banding with members of one's race (Nurse, 2010; Pharo, et al., 2011). Pharo, et al. (2011) determined that ostracism negatively affected self-esteem, especially in adolescents and young adults. Nurse (2010) noticed that juvenile offenders associated with other members of their racial group while committed to a facility. It could be argued that by associating with others of the same race, these youths sought and acquired social acceptance. Combining the two findings, it can be ascertained that a youth will do what is necessary to gain social acceptance and avoid ostracism. If this is correct, then a young African American male will do whatever is deemed acceptable by his peers in order to earn and maintain social acceptance; even something illegal or dangerous.

Briggs' (2010) evaluation of a program designed to raise self-esteem among minority youth in London confirmed Goffman's model. Many of the youths who participated in the program felt as though they had to "perform" when they were on the street (Briggs, 2010). This finding also supports Anderson's (1999) notion of profiling, where a young man needs to brag about himself as a means of getting and maintaining respect. The most interesting finding was that Briggs' research participants admitted that maintaining their social roles was sometimes exhausting. This was something I considered during the data collection of this study.

In her doctoral thesis, Anthony (2007) presented a social-role model of interpersonal value. Anthony found that people with low self-esteem were more receptive to compliments about their social commodities than their communal qualities. Anthony argued that this finding demonstrated people's need for social acceptance. Specifically, people with low self-esteem found validation in being accepted by others. Supporting this argument, young men with low self-esteem are more likely to join a gang, especially if they are courted by the members of that gang with offers of social acceptance. Even if the young men are aware of the dangers of gang affiliation, they would willingly risk it to avoid ostracism.

Bergsieker, et al. (2010) conducted a series of quantitative studies in which they demonstrated that African Americans sought respect of Caucasians during interracial interactions. Specifically, the African American research participants wanted to demonstrate competence during their interactions with Caucasians (Bergsieker, et al.,

2010; pp. 251-259). The authors found at a statistically significant level that the African

American research participants believed that their Caucasian colleagues deemed them

incompetent and thus unworthy of their respect. This finding ties in with Blumer's

(1958) position that prejudice was composed of the dominant group's feelings of

superiority over the minority group (p. 4).

Goffman's model provides a plausible explanation of the "no snitching" rule

embedded in the code of the street: "a team must be able to keep its secrets and have its

secrets kept" (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). The disadvantaged community is the team in

question. By withholding information from local authorities, the community maintains

its solidarity. The team could also be a family or a group of youths. The model goes on

to describe a team's secret signals as a secret-keeping tool. Secret signals can be equated

to gang symbols and graffiti, each of which is a means for gang members to secretly

communicate about gang activities.

This study benefitted from using Goffman's (1959) model as a contextual lens in

that the research participants were viewed as playing a role for the sake of social

acceptance. By framing the research participants' behaviors in this way, I reduced my

personal bias against their behaviors and observed the research participants more

objectively.

Self-Esteem

Young African American men see messages on the television, hear messages on

the radio, and receive explicit and implicit messages from authority figures in their

neighborhoods that they will never amount to anything worthwhile. Many African

Americans suffer from low self-esteem as the result of this intergenerational transmission

of trauma (Alexander, 2012; Burrell, 2010; Dyson, 1996). The intergenerational

transmission of trauma is a large contributor to African Americans' lag behind

Caucasians in employment, education, income, mental health and quality of life

(Alexander, 2012; Barak, et al., 2010; Burrell, 2010; Massey, 2007; Reiman & Leighton,

2009).

    Bynum and Kotchick (2006) found that adolescent boys had higher reports of

self-esteem than adolescent girls, yet the boys reported more delinquent behaviors. It is

possible that the boys' reports of delinquent behavior were admitted as a means of

donning a social role they believed would earn them greater social acceptance from their

peers. Most of Bynum and Kotchick's research participants came from families

belonging to the middle and upper socioeconomic classes. Anderson (1999) found that

many youths from such backgrounds tended to glamorize and adopt the street code,

because they considered it a trendy means of rebelling against their parents and their

bourgeoisie lifestyle.

    Jackson and Henderson (2008) found that individuals who were removed from

their communities for incarceration suffered significant decreases in their overall self-

esteem (p. 241). One could infer then, that since African American youth are the one

most frequently incarcerated (Alexander, 2012; Janku & Yan, 2009; Whitehead & Lab,

2012), that this population suffers from low self-esteem more frequently than other

populations in this country. Interestingly, the research participants reported no change in their self-esteem with an increasing number of community removals. Rather, their self-esteem decreased only with their first two incarcerations. After that, their self-esteem maintained at the initially-lowered level. This finding suggests that multiple community removals generate a normalizing effect on young African Americans. This may be especially true if one's peers and/or relatives also experience repeated community removals. It could also represent the development of learned helplessness, in that the youths come to believe that they are going to be removed from their communities regardless of their actions.

Marginalization, either real or perceived, has been found to negatively affect the self-esteem of African American adolescents (Aldridge, et al., 2011; Jacobs, et al., 2011; Prelow, et al., 2006; Ralphs, et al., 2009; Seaton & Yip, 2009). Furthermore, marginalization has been positively correlated with the presence of depressive symptoms in this same population (Prelow, et al., 2006; Seaton, 2010; Seaton & Yip, 2009; Tovar-Murray & Munley, 2007). Finally, SES, level of education completed, and ethnic identity were significantly positive predictors of self-esteem, quality of life, and life satisfaction (Tovar-Murray & Munley, 2007, pp. 66-67). It would thus stand to reason that African Americans belonging to a lower SES with incomplete educations would have lower self-esteem than Americans belonging to the middle or upper classes, who have college degrees or higher.

Racial Pride

Racial pride has served as a positive coping skill against perceived and internalized marginalization (Phillips, 2010; Prelow, et al., 2006). Racial pride's primary function is to combat marginalization and build the self-esteem of African Americans (Harris-Britt, et al., 2007; Prelow, et al., 2006). African American parents who instilled racial pride into their children also prepared them to experience marginalization. Through two separate stepwise multiple regression equations, Harris-Britt, et al 92007) found that children with higher levels of marginalization preparation also had higher levels of perceived marginalization. This, in turn, resulted in these children reporting lower levels of self-esteem. This finding raises the question of how much marginalization preparation is too much before it becomes detrimental to a child's well-being.

Stevenson and Arrington (2009) found that the expression of racial identity was negatively correlated to the racial diversity of a student's neighborhood. If a student lived in a predominantly African American neighborhood, then his racial pride was more openly expressed than that of a student who lived in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood. The question that remains unanswered is why this is the case. Were the African American students afraid of being seen in an unfavorable light by their Caucasian peers? Did they possess as much racial pride as African Americans in predominantly African American neighborhoods? Was it a combination of the two explanations? The authors noticed that parental education and social environment strongly influenced a

youth's perceptions and development of racial identity. That brings another unanswered question: What are the parents' motivations for teaching their children racial pride? All of these questions are beyond the scope of this study. However, they need to be examined in future research.

Mandara, et al. (2009) found a significant negative correlation between racial pride and depressive symptoms in African American boys. This indicated that among African American boys, racial pride was more closely related to self-esteem than for African American girls. This finding suggests that it is more important to instill racial pride in African American boys in order to eradicate internalized racism and marginalization (Harris-Britt, et al., 2007; Phillips, 2010; Prelow, et al., 2006; Mandara, et al., 2009). Yet parents need to be cautious about providing too much preparation for the boys to experience marginalization. Overzealousness in this endeavor could be detrimental to the boys' self-esteem (Bynum & Kotchick, 2006; Harris-Britt, et al., 2007; Prelow, et al., 2006).

Participatory Photography

In Europe, Asia and Africa, participatory photography is being used to empower vulnerable populations by giving them the opportunity to advocate for positive social change (PhotoVoice, 2013). PhotoVoice, a registered charity based in the United Kingdom, uses participatory photography projects in countries worldwide with marginalized populations. Currently, PhotoVoice has over 50 participatory photography projects running in 23 countries (PhotoVoice, 2013). Participatory photography is used

with visually impaired populations (Daw & Badenoch, 2013), as a tool for the integration of refugee children (Orton & Fairey, 2013), as an advocacy tool for marginalized populations (Daw, 2013), and as a therapeutic means of fostering positive mental health in such populations as sex-trafficked women, individuals seeking to overcome addiction, and people adjusting to life after prison (Brandling & Wall, 2013; Fairey, 2013). Sadly, PhotoVoice does not have any participatory photography projects in the United States.

Gangsta Love

Many African Americans living in disadvantaged neighborhoods harbor contempt for mainstream American society (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Asim, 2007; Burrell, 2010; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). Being treated as criminals from a very young age, young African American males receive the explicit message that mainstream American society wants to keep them separate from the rest of the nation. Valuable resources such as education, safe living environments, and viable employment are often denied them (Barak, et al., 2010; Dyson, 1996; Reiman & Leighton, 2009). It has been surmised that many disadvantaged African American youths don the *gangsta* role as a means of boosting their self-esteem (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Goffman, 1959). If these young men are believed to be gangsters, then they are going to be the toughest gangsters possible. By acting as gangsters, this population attempts to reclaim its sense of self-worth. The notion of gangsta love is viewed as a new version of racial pride (Alexander, 2012). By adopting this stereotype, African American males essentially

rebel against and denounce mainstream American culture (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011).

The code of the street is a counterculture to that of mainstream America (Anderson, 1999). Members of both mainstream America and the code of the street want to achieve the American dream of prosperity. However, the members of each culture have different ways of making that dream a reality. In his description of life in the ghettoes of Philadelphia, Anderson (1999) described the dichotomy of *non-street* and street people. Non-street people are law-abiding, have strong values, and a sense of morality. They value education and encourage their children to excel academically. Non-street people have a good work ethic and seek to earn money by honest means. They have more exposure to mainstream American society, usually by means of employment or education (Anderson, 1999, p. 36). Non-street parents tend to have strict modes of parenting their children as a means of protecting them from the street.

Street people, on the other hand, engage in delinquent behaviors, such as violence, theft, and graffiti writing (Anderson, 1999; Lombard, 2013). They glorify violence and condemn academic achievement. They earn their money through hustles, as opposed to tax-paying jobs. Street people usually show contempt for mainstream American society. Everything is a hustle to play and everyone is a mark to be played (Anderson, 1999; X & Haley, 1966). The street family has limited financial resources that they tend to misuse. The lives of street people tend to be disorganized due to the fact that they have a "limited understanding of priorities and consequences" (Anderson, 1999, p. 45). Non-street

people consider street people "to be loud, boisterous, proudly crude, and uncouth" (Anderson, 1999, p. 47).

Street people refer to themselves and each other using the "N" word (Asim, 2007). Non-street people also use the "N" word to refer to street people. The difference is that non-street people use the "N" word solely as an insult. Street people, meanwhile, insult non-street people by calling them "Uncle Toms." This is a blatant accusation that non-street people "act white" (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Rios, 2011). Non-street people teach their children to hate street people because they make all African Americans look bad to Caucasians. Street people are accused of perpetuating all of the negative stereotypes with which African Americans have been burdened throughout this country's history.

Youths who emulate the code of the street demonstrate prowess by engaging in physical violence and acting with an air of cockiness that many non-street African Americans and Caucasians regard as a sense of entitlement or arrogance. Anderson (1999) describes this action as "profiling . . . . representing the image of themselves by which they would like to be known" (p. 22). This behavior supports Goffman's model of social roles, in that these youths are playing a role and instructing their audiences on how they expect to be treated.

Burrell (2010) blames African American youths' adoption of the code of the street on television, movies, rap videos, and video games. These modern forms of entertainment teach African American children that respect is the most desirable

advantage they can attain, and that they need to act like gangstas in order to get that respect. Since African American children watch more television than any other ethnic and/or racial group (Ward, 2004), it stands to reason that African American youth with low self-esteem would prize respect above all else.

Ward (2004) found that frequent media exposure and stronger viewer identification were correlated with lower self-evaluations among African American adolescents (Ward, 2004, p. 289). Ward also noticed that adolescents who strongly identified with sports athletes and music artists had the lowest self-evaluations. Ward (2004) attributed this to the adolescents' comparing their lives to those of the celebrities whom they emulated. The kids felt bad about themselves because they were not as strong, as beautiful or as rich as the people they saw on television.

What Ward did not mention was how the youths who watched a lot of music videos learned to normalize the code of the street. Hip-hop artists such as Lil' Wayne, 50 Cent and Lil' Boosie make videos that glamorize sex and violence. They wear flashy platinum jewelry; they throw money at scantily-clad women who gyrate in front of them; they ride in expensive cars and party in mansions. Impressionable adolescents therefore develop the desire to have what these artists seem to have: the good life. They figure they too can have large fortunes if they live like these rap artists in the videos; by glamorizing sex and violence (Asim, 2007).

Respect

Rios' (2011) 3-year ethnographic study of 40 African American and Latino adolescent males in Oakland, California led to the discovery of the "pathological shaming" of these youths by most authority figures in their lives: teachers, police officers, and local business managers (p. 89). Trapped in a system that criminalizes them from a very young age, these boys see no other way to get what they call "respect." In essence, these young men say, "You think I'm a criminal? Well, then I'm going to be the worst criminal you've ever seen!" Rios was able to identify the fact that the social control under which these youths found themselves led them to rebel against what he called the *youth control complex*:

> Institutions in the community coalesce to mark young people as dangerous risks for noncriminal deviant behavior and, as such, deny them affirmation and dignified treatment through stigmatizing and exclusionary practices. As a result, young people strive for dignity, so that their social relations, interactions, and everyday activities become organized around maintaining their freedom and feeling empowered in a social landscape that seems to deny them basic human acknowledgement. (Rios, 2011, p. 39)

In many cases, this drive for respect is a Pyrrhic victory since their behaviors often result in the boys' involvement in the criminal justice system. This, in turn, keeps them marginalized throughout their lives.

Respect is the most valuable, most fragile asset a *street* youth possesses. Respect is defined as receiving the "right" treatment (Anderson, 1999, p. 33) or the deference one is due. Yet the right treatment is often subjective. The general definition of respect among *street* youth is not being "messed with," either verbally or physically (Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). Respect is treated as a tangible asset that is hard to get and easy to lose. It needs to be protected at all times and at all costs. This cost can even include one's life. Respect is so important, that *street* youths will risk their lives to obtain and maintain it (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Papachristos, 2009).

The search for respect in disadvantaged neighborhoods is a coping skill against the pathological shaming these youths receive from the institutions and authority figures they encounter daily (Alexander, 2012; Rios, 2011). Inner-city youth are shamed by their teachers in school and police officers on their streets. The older they get, the stronger the shaming and harassment they endure (Hirschfield, 2008; Martin, et al., 2011). As the harassment and discrimination increase, so, too, do the delinquent activities of these youths (Martin, et al., 2011). Thus the vicious is perpetuated. The youth control complex seeks to keep African American children ostracized from mainstream society and the youths rebel against the youth control complex to gain the respect and social acceptance of their peers (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Rios, 2011).

There are four ways to earn respect in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The first way is to have the right attire: jeans, shoes, jewelry, and grooming. Having the most expensive material items is one way to gain the respect of one's peers. The possession of

certain material goods helps build the self-esteem of young, African American males

(Anderson, 1999). Many African Americans, particularly those residing in inner-city

neighborhoods, are obsessed with living well and having the best material items (Burrell,

2010). African Americans will often show loyalty to the top brand names such as Nike©,

Sony© and Xbox One© (Burrell, 2010). Since items with these brand names tend to be

expensive, an individual with a low income will hone his hustle in order to pay for a new

pair of Jordans and a platinum chain. This action supports Goffman's (1959)

dramaturgical model, in that these youths are wearing a specific costume to gain social

acceptance. It also supports Anthony's (2007) postulation that people with low self-

esteem are more receptive to compliments validating their social commodities than

people with high self-esteem. They believe that such compliments are a sign of social

acceptance.

The second way to earn respect is to disrespect others. In this counterculture,

denigrating others to raise one's self-esteem is highly encouraged. In this aspect, youths

seeking respect are said to be "'representing' both who they are and . . . . [their 'hood']"

(Anderson, 1999, p. 77). By "representing," a youth demonstrates overconfidence and

denigrates others. This swagger is a message to other males that he is a man who is not

to be challenged. At the same time, however, the young man who is representing is

actively daring other youths to test his courage. When one accepts the challenge of a

youth who is "representing," then the third way to earn respect comes into play: engaging

in physical violence.

One earns respect when he successfully proves that he is not one to cross (Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). The code of the street is often equated with Darwin's theory of natural selection: survival of the fittest. A young man is often strongly encouraged to demonstrate his strength by taking what he wants by "force or stealth" (Anderson, 1999, p. 125). Children in the inner-city are made aware of the street code at an early age, as evidenced by their "ritual play-fighting" (Anderson, 1999, p. 25). Such play-fighting involves the exchange of light punches, staredowns, and sizing each other up. These children copy the actions they witness amongst the older kids in the neighborhood.

Most gang murders that occurred in inner cities in the mid- to late 1990s and early 2000s were carried out to avenge an act of disrespect. Gangs had to maintain their reputations, lest rival gangs sought to crush them. Thus, every disrespectful action had to be avenged for the sake of the gang and the sake of each gang member's sense of respect (Papachristos, 2009). Forty percent of all homicides involving African American victims nationwide stemmed from arguments between the victim and the perpetrator. The basis of the argument was often a real or imagined act of disrespect (Burrell, 2010). By committing these acts of violence, a youth demonstrates that he is not one to be challenged. What street youth call respect, mainstream Americans would call fear (Alexander, 2012; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008).

Hypermasculinity

The fourth way to earn respect is to demonstrate hypermasculinity (Anderson, 1999; Nurse, 2006). According to the street code, a youth defines himself as a man by being aggressive, both physically and sexually. Sexual prowess is strongly encouraged to prove one's manhood. Young men praise a peer's ability to have sex with as many women as possible. This allows a youth bragging rights. If a girl has his baby, that young man has unquestionable proof that he had sex with that girl. It also proves that this young man had enough control over the girl to convince her to have and keep the baby. Having multiple babies by different girls is, therefore, a testament to one's manhood (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010).

The hypermasculinity of the street code exemplifies high levels of misogyny. For street youths, sex is nothing more than a conquest; something that is done *to* a woman, not *with* her. The more sex he had, and can prove he's had, the more respect he gets from his peers. The young women—and any children resulting from the coupling—are seen as nothing more than possessions (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Massey, 2007).

Caring for these women and children is not a mandate in the code of the street (Fleury & Fernet, 2011). There are different reasons for this. First, many of these youth men were themselves raised by single mothers. They have been conditioned to assume that being an involved parent is the sole responsibility of the child's mother (Burrell, 2010; Massey, 2007). Second, many young women in disadvantaged neighborhoods want to have babies because they believe it is the only way they can become independent

(Anderson, 1999). Having a child entitles the young lady to collect her own welfare

check to care for the baby. She no longer needs to rely on her mother or grandmother for

anything except babysitting. With this knowledge, a lot of young men are reluctant to tie

themselves down to one woman, because they cannot be absolutely certain that they

actually fathered the child (Anderson, 1999).

Third, these men are rebelling against the mainstream culture by engaging in

unprotected sex with multiple partners (Alexander, 2012; Burrell, 2010; Fleury & Fernet,

2011). During slavery, African American men were used as studs to breed big, strong

babies who would grow up to work hard. Once a woman was impregnated, the master

moved the man on to another woman for impregnation. This action spawned the

stereotype of the Brute: "the oversexed, menacing black man, ... the well-endowed

Mandingo stud" (Burrell, 2010, p. 42).

This stereotype has been passed down as a part of the intergenerational

transmission of trauma. Hence, hypermasculinity involves perpetuating the Brute

stereotype by engaging in the behavior of casual, unprotected sex with multiple partners,

without taking any responsibility for care of children born from the encounters (Burrell,

2010). The possible contraction of sexually-transmitted diseases does not hinder these

young men from their sexual conquests, despite the fact that African Americans are the

racial group most affected by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). It is interesting to note, however, that many of

the research participants interviewed by Fleury and Fernet (2011) expressed a desire to

enter into a committed relationship and start a family. But they all knew that family life

greatly conflicted with gang life. Every one of the research participants who said he

wanted to have a family also admitted that he would have to leave the gang life in order

to achieve this goal (Fleury & Fernet, 2011).

Fourth, many African American young men do not establish families due to

economic hardship:

> The lack of gainful employment today . . . . deprives young men of the
>
> traditional American way of proving their manhood—by supporting a
>
> family. They must thus prove themselves in other ways. Casual sex with
>
> as many women possible, impregnating one or more, and getting them to
>
> have his baby brings a boy the ultimate in esteem from his peers and
>
> makes him a man. (Anderson, 1999, p. 177)

Having children with more than one woman also motivates these young men to refrain

from seeking legitimate jobs (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999). When a *baby daddy*

has a legitimate job, it gives the mothers of his children the opportunity to *get papers* on

him (Anderson, 1999, p. 172). This involves filing a legal petition for child support. A

man with a legitimate job can have his wages garnished to cover the costs of child

support. Thus, in order to keep as much money as possible, a young man will not acquire

a legitimate job so he cannot be ordered to pay child support.

Hypermasculinity also exhibits high amounts of homophobia (Burrell, 2010;

Nurse, 2006). Many inner-city African American males view homosexuality as "a white

man's perversion" (Burrell, 2010, p. 126). The greatest insult an African American street male can receive is to be called "faggot." That word is far more offensive than the "N" word among African American males who have adopted the code of the street. Expressing hatred for sexual orientations other than heterosexuality is a way to gain respect and prove one's manhood.

Social Order

The street code is all about public social interaction (Anderson, 1999). Those who live by the street code interact with others in ways that guarantee they get respect. The physical aggression that is required in the street code also provides a form of social order. Because violence is so prevalent in inner-city communities, people are less likely to engage in behaviors that would likely cause a violent incident (Anderson, 1999).

Anderson (1999) cited an example he witnessed in the Philadelphia ghetto. One day, he saw a car stop in the middle of the street in front of a local barber shop. The driver of the car did not get out or turn on hazard lights. The driver kept the car standing in the middle of the street for ten minutes. Meanwhile other cars were compelled to drive around this stopped car. This slowed traffic down considerably since there were parked cars on both sides of the street, making free space in which to maneuver the cars limited. Yet not one driver honked at this standing car. Finally, after ten minutes, a man walked out of the barber shop and approached the driver's side of the car. At that point, the driver of the car—a woman—got out of the car and walked over to the passenger side of

the car. The man from the barber shop got into the driver's side of the car and drove

away.

Anderson (1999) proposed that no one honked her or his horn in that situation

because it was unknown whether the driver of the standing car had a firearm and a quick

temper. None of the drivers of the other cars wanted to risk being shot or beaten over

something as trivial as having to move around a standing car. Instead, the other drivers

merely moved around the standing car; thus avoiding an argument and maintaining social

order.

Gangs are often organized in hierarchies that establish social roles for each of

their members (Papachristos, 2009). There are rules—either implicit or explicit—about

personal comportment, style of dress, hand signals, tattoos, gang turf and how a member

can elevate his social position within the gang. To violate these rules is an act of

disrespect that could lead to homicide. Gang members honor the rules and maintain the

code lest their lives are endangered. The threat of physical violence and murder are the

key enforcers of social order for those who live by the code of the street.

The two main reasons crime is so high in inner-city neighborhoods are the

prevalence of poverty and the lack of police protection. Although police officers make

their presence known in inner-city neighborhoods, they appear to be more interested in

stopping and searching young males for drugs than investigating and preventing crimes

that happen to the non-street people in these neighborhoods (Alexander, 2012; Anderson,

1999; Rios, 2011). The youths come to interpret police presence as nothing more than a

representation of the youth control complex (Rios, 2011). As far as the youths are concerned, the police's sole purpose is to harass the youths by searching, beating, and arresting or issuing them citations.

The major crimes that occur in their neighborhoods, on the other hand, are delegated by the police to the youths when the officers tell them "Handle your own business." So they do. The code of the street provides the protection that the police do not. By proving one's fearlessness, a street youth demonstrates that he will not allow himself to be victimized. Neither will he allow the victimization of anyone under his protection (Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). Young men who live by the code of the street prove their manhood by standing up to the police, taking beating from them without complaint, and by protecting their mothers and younger siblings from street crime. If they cannot protect their families from street crime, then the young men prove their manhood by avenging them (Rios, 2011, p. 136).

This is another vicious cycle that is witnessed in inner-city neighborhoods. The community holds true to a "no snitching" rule in that no one tells the police what criminal activities are witnessed in the neighborhood. The police get frustrated at the community for refusing to cooperate with them. Consequently, the officers devote their time and energy to stopping and searching young African American males in the hopes of arresting a drug dealer or gang member. This constant harassment leads the people in the community to continue to distrust law enforcement and maintain the "no snitching" rule. Thus the community is left to police itself (Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). There is often

a mutual relationship between street and non-street people that must be maintained and protected. In other words, both street and non-street people need each other in impoverished communities in order to survive (Venkatesh, 2008, pp. 109-110).

Code Switching

Anderson (1999) identified "code switching" (p. 105) as the ability of a non-street youth to pose as a street youth. It is an important survival tactic for non-street youths living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The self-esteem of youth in the inner-city is precarious to the point that it can be shattered by a single put down (Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011). Children, both non-street and street, are therefore pressured to defend their self-esteem at all costs. For non-street kids, this means adopting the street code; or at least appearing to do so.

On the street, being non-street is considered a sign of weakness. If a child is perceived as weak, he quickly becomes a target for victimization. That child must therefore adapt to the street code in order to prevent being targeted. This requires dressing, talking, and acting like the street kids, both in school and on the street. While this behavior protects the child from being targeted by other street kids, it usually gets the child labeled by school officials as a street kid. This label results in discriminatory treatment from the child's educators and local law enforcement. Many times, a non-street kid will fully adopt the code of the street as the result of being labeled and marginalized by teachers and police (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011).

Code switching is also an important survival tactic for street kids. The ability to code switch can be essential for an effective hustle. Street kids code switch to appear to be non-street for the purpose of hustling someone for personal gain. This is often demonstrated by street youth who switch their dialogue from victim to gangster, depending on their social audience (Sandberg, 2009a; Sandberg, 2009b). Code switching gives further validity to Goffman's dramaturgical model, in that those who switch codes are essentially changing social roles for different social audiences.

Summary

Many young, African American males are caught in a vicious cycle of marginalization and self-sabotage. They grow up in disadvantaged communities, living at or below the poverty level. These young men are usually raised by their single mothers or their grandmothers, because their fathers are not—for various reasons—a part of the youths' lives. The rampant poverty in their neighborhoods results in a high crime rate where these young men live. These young men grow up witnessing, and often becoming victims of crime. Although they see local police in their neighborhoods, these officers only appear interested in frisking them in search of drugs (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011).

These disadvantaged, African American males attend substandard public schools in their neighborhoods, where the police remain a domineering presence (Agnew, 2005; Rios, 2011). The teachers determine that these boys have no future, so they treat them as criminals before they have ever been arrested. If the boys portray street behaviors, they

are suspended from school, sometimes arrested, and told that they will never amount to anything. In their eyes, school quickly becomes just another institution that is designed to keep them marginalized. Hence they lose the desire to succeed academically (Anderson, 1999; Alexander, 2012; Nurse, 2006; Rios, 2011).

As the youths grow older, they experience more harassment from police, who accuse them of being gang members, drug dealers or both (Hirschfield, 2008; Janku & Yan, 2009; Martin, et al., 2011). By the time they are adolescents, they have learned that the police and social workers are not there to help them, but to continue to tell them that they will not amount to anything. If they try to find gainful employment, they are rejected usually because they lack the qualifications for the desired position, or they have no interviewing skills (Alexander, 2012; Rios, 2011). These constant messages of rejection can cause feelings of anger and shame for young African American men, resulting in a lowered sense of self-esteem (Aldridge, et al., 2011; Burrell, 2010; Harris-Britt, et al., 2007; Jackson & Henderson, 2008; Kaufman, et al., 2008). To cope with these feelings, they seek to build their self-esteem the only way that is available; by adopting the street code and embracing the gangsta stereotype (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Rios, 2011).

The gangsta lifestyle is the only lifestyle these young men believe is attainable. They learn quickly that a man is only as strong as the rival he puts down, either verbally or physically (Burrell, 2010; Papachristos, 2009; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008). A man is also as virile as the number of sexual partners he has had and the number of children he

study this population; to spend time with young, African American men who were

marginalized from mainstream American society. I describe my research methodology in

Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the meaning of the concepts, respect and self-esteem and how these concepts shape the lives of young African American men. In this chapter, I present the research design and rationale. The methodology of the study is described, including participation selection, instrumentation, procedures and my data analysis plan. I also delineate my role as the researcher in this study. Finally, I address issues of trustworthiness of the study and ethical concerns.

Research Design and Rationale

My research sample consisted of African American males between the ages of 18 and 25 years, who lived in a disadvantaged neighborhood in a city in the southeastern United States. The research questions were as follows:

RQ 1: How do young African American men perceive the phenomena of respect and self-esteem as a component of their social acceptance?

RQ 2: How do young African American men understand respect in their relations with the authority figures in their environments?

RQ 3: How does young African American men's understanding and meaning of respect differ from that of their family, peers, teachers, or local law enforcement officers?

RQ 4: How does race context and shape young African American men's self-concept?

Research Methodology

The study used case study methodology, using four young African American males living in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood. A collective case study allowed me to examine the concept of respect, using multiple cases to illustrate the concept (Yin, 2013). Over the course of three months, I spent between 24 and 36 hours with these young men; conducting semi-structured interviews, holding informal conversations, and engaging in participant observations with them. I came to comprehend how they formed their understanding of the concept of respect. I also determined how that understanding shaped their self-esteem as they grew into manhood. Finally, I developed a slight understanding of how the shaping of their self-esteem drove their actions and behaviors.

The participatory paradigm was most effective for this study in order to capture the essentials of this population that is marginalized from mainstream American society. In qualitative research, it is essential for the research participants to act as the experts in defining their reality (Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013). Participatory collaboration is an important method of triangulating data and enhancing trustworthiness (Yin, 2013). Since I was an outsider to this population, I needed my research participants to teach me about themselves; their world and their lived experiences.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

As stated earlier, my research population consisted of four young African

American males living in a disadvantaged neighborhood in a city in the southeastern

United States. Since I neither lived nor worked in the neighborhood in which I selected

research participants, I needed to use purposeful maximal sampling as a means of gaining

participants (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). One of the benefits of conducting a case study

is that my sample size could be small. Since outsiders were mistrusted in this

community, I was certain I would not recruit a large number of participants. I informed

my research participants that I was writing my dissertation and that it would be

published. I presumed that being the topic of a book would appeal to the egos of such

youths. Venkatesh (2008) reported such experience doing field work in a housing project

in Chicago. The drug dealer he shadowed told everyone that the researcher was writing

his life story. The drug dealer did not lie; he postured to make himself seem important. I

anticipated such a reaction with news of my publication.

Setting

The city in which I conducted the study was in the southeastern part of the United

States. The city's population was estimated at 842,583 in 2013, with the African

American population of the city estimated at 30.7%. The statewide African American

population is at 16.0% of the total (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The city's median

household income from 2008 to 2012 was $48,143, with 16.1% of the total population

living below the poverty level from 2008-2012. The statewide average was $47,309, with 15.6% of the total state's population living below the poverty level during the same time period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). There were six major neighborhoods in the city, named for their geographical locations. The neighborhood in which my data was collected is referred to as the *Northside* because it occupied the northernmost region of the city limits. The population of the Northside was largely African American. The median annual income of the neighborhood was $25,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b).

The Park. I collected most of my data in and around a community park (The Park) on the Northside. The Park spanned approximately three city blocks in length and four in depth. It sits along the eastern side of a major road in the Northside. There was a fence along the sidewalk of the main road. Outside the gate on the sidewalk was a public bus stop; a bench covered by a red metal shelter to shield riders from the weather. The bus stop faced northbound on the main road.

On the southwest side of the Park was a grassy area. Near the main road fence in the grassy area was a picnic table that was painted hunter green. The paint on the table was fading and chipped. Half of the table top was missing. The picnic table sat directly across the main road from the outdoor car wash. To the left of the grassy area was the building where the Community Center and the Senior Center are housed. Both were open Monday through Friday. The southeastern end of the park housed the community swimming pool. To the left of the building was a basketball court with multiple hoops

alongside all four sides of the rectangular court. Behind the basketball court was a playground. There were also two tennis courts at the northeastern end of the Park. The tennis courts were directly across the main road from a local apartment complex (The Balcony). Between the sidewalk along the main road and the Park was a parking lot for the Park and community center building. (See Figure 1).

The Car Wash. On the western side of the main road was an outdoor car wash. The car wash was set in a parking lot. There was an old wire fence along the southwestern side of the parking lot. There were chairs and low-seating wooden picnic tables along the fence inside the lot.

The ground of the lot was mangled concrete; rough and uneven. There were bottle caps, peanut shells and cigarette butts all over the ground. Along the main road side of the parking lot were orange pylons delineating the boundary between the sidewalk and the car wash.

On the northernmost side of the car wash lot was a space covered by a blue tent. There were about 6 or 7 chairs under the tent where customers were welcome to sit and wait for their cars. Along the back of the tented are was another fence separating the car wash from the Food Store. To the north of the Food Store were The Balcony Apartments; infamous in this city for extreme poverty and drug trafficking among its tenants (See Figure 3).

Neighborhood Stores. Across the street from the car wash was a small strip mall. The first two stores were vacant with boarded windows. To the left of the second vacant store

was a seafood store. To the left of the seafood store was a hair and nail salon. To the left of the salon was a TV repair shop. On the far left (southernmost) corner was a grocery store. (See Figure 2).

Of interest was the fact that there were no fast food chain restaurants such as McDonald's or Burger King in the neighborhood. The nearest Wal-Mart was six miles north of the neighborhood. There were no chain grocery stores in the neighborhood; only independently owned convenience stores on every other corner.

Main Road. The main road ran north and south between The Park on the east side and the small strip mall, the Car Wash, the Food Store, and The Balcony apartments on the west side. There was usually a lot of traffic noise from the cars that drove north or south along the main road. Every 20-30 seconds, loud music could also be heard from passing cars. The music was mostly Hip Hop or R&B. In either case, there was a lot of bass that boomed through the cars so loudly that I often felt the vibration as the cars passed. There was no garbage along the main road.

MAIN ROAD

---------------------------------SIDEWALK------------------------------------

Bus Stop

FENCE SEPARATING PARK & SIDEWALK

PICNIC TABLE

POOL

OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURT

COMMUNITY CENTER
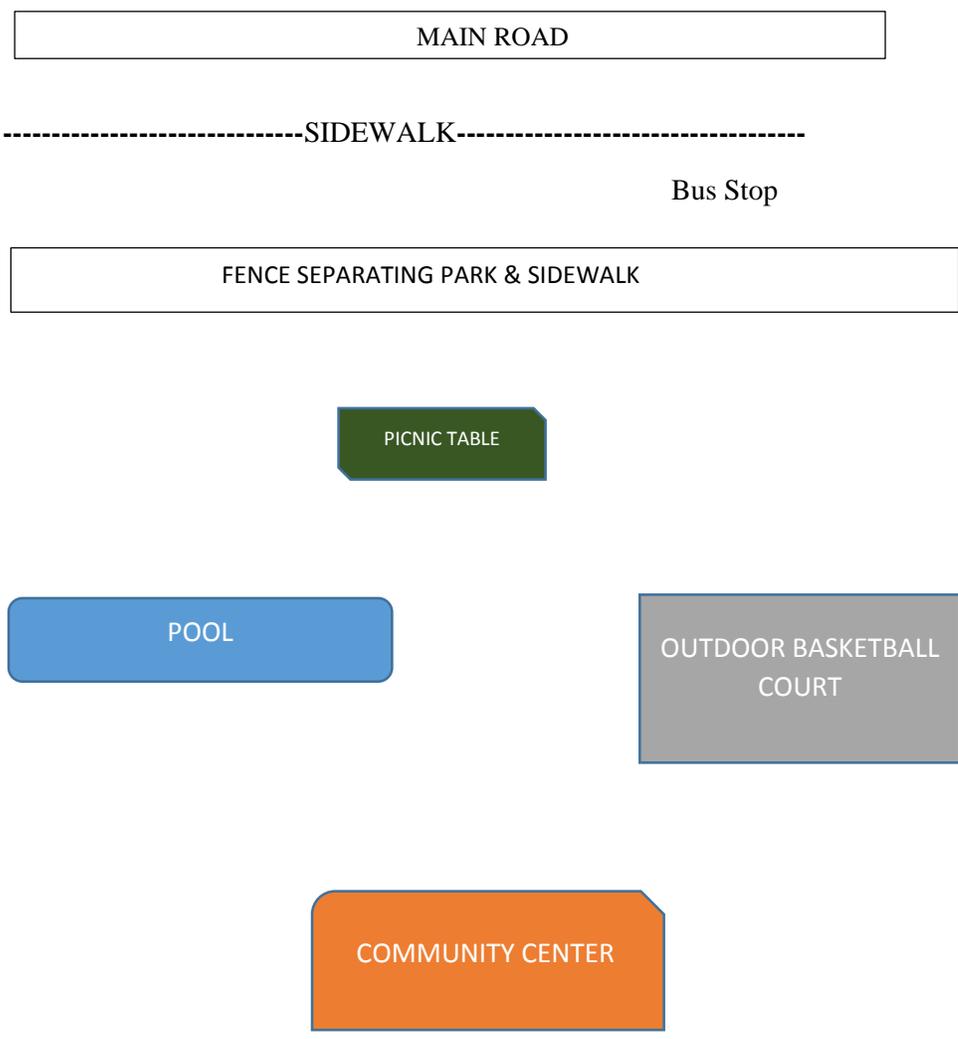
Figure 1: Geographical map of The Park.

SIDE STREET

VACANT LOT

"A" STREET

FOOD STORE

TV REPAIR SHOP

HAIR & NAIL SALON

SEAFOOD STORE

VACANT STORE #1

VACANT STORE #2

"B" STREET

--SIDEWALK---
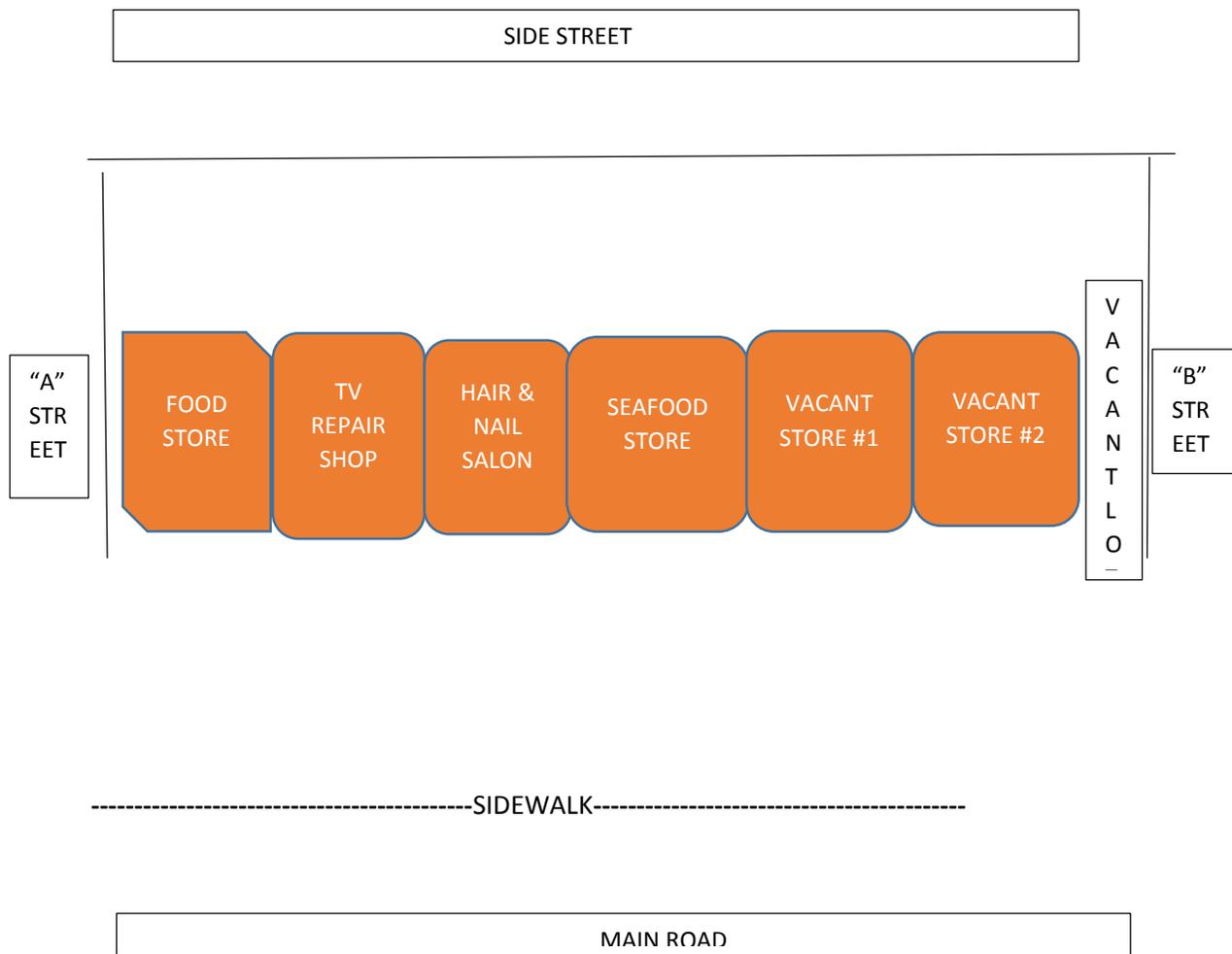
MAIN ROAD

Figure 2: Geographical map of strip mall across the main road from The Park.

SIDE STREET

"B" STREET

"C" STREET

THE FOOD STORE

CAR WASH AND DETAILING

Tented area

-----------------------------------MAIN ROAD---
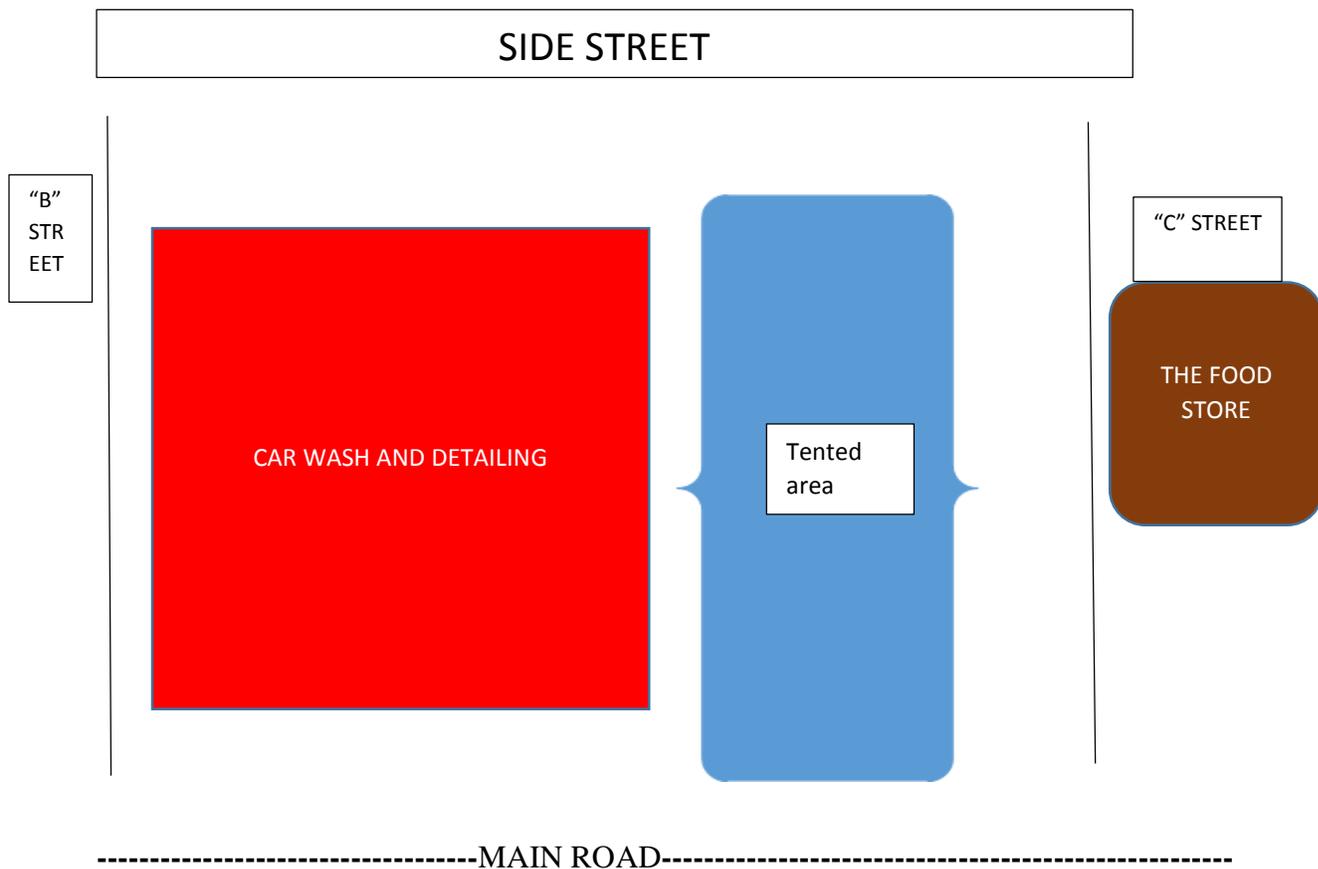
Figure 3: Geographical map of The Car Wash and The Food Store.

The neighborhood where I collected data is known as the Northside. This area is largely populated by African Americans with an annual income of $30,000 or less. These people are members of the working class, working poor, and people living below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). I sought to gain initial recruitment of research participants by hanging introductory fliers about my study around the Northside. The flier included a brief explanation of the purpose of my study, my contact information, and the participation incentive that was awarded to all who

participated in the study. The participation incentive was a copy of the photo album of

the pictures taking by the research participants. A copy of the introductory flier is

included in Appendix A. I also directly approached young African American men I

encountered while conducting direct observation in public places.

Research Sample

Participant selection was based on the following criteria. The research

participants were African American men, who lived on the Northside. They were

between the ages of 18 and 25 years. These young men were not involved in mental

health or substance abuse counseling at the time of data collection. During the selection

process, I asked participants where they lived, how old they were, and whether they

identified themselves as Black or African American. I also asked them whether they

were participating in a mental health or substance abuse treatment program of any kind.

If they met all of these criteria, then I invited them to participate in my study.

A collective case study does not require a large sample size. For such a study, it

is recommended to have a sample size no greater than five (Yin, 2013). I believed that I

would be successful in recruiting four research participants, in order to exemplify the

similarities and differences of the issue of respect as it pertained to these four cases.

Having too large a sample size could have weakened the focus of my analysis (Creswell,

2007; Yin, 2013). Thus, for the sake of the strength of the data analysis, and for the

practicality of time expenditure, I purposefully limited my sample size to four research

participants.

Instrumentation

As the researcher, I was the main data collection instrument (Yin, 2013). I used a variety of data collection techniques. These included participant observation, interviews, document review, informal conversations, direct observation, mapping and participatory photography. Most of the initial data collected was through my direct observation of the field site and research participants. Taking notes from the first day of fieldwork got my research participants accustomed to seeing me write frequent notes. It also ensured that I paid attention to details of every type: the sounds of the neighborhood, the body language of my research participants, the language they used, the clothes they wore, the cigarettes they smoked and the beer they drank. These detailed notes of my direct observations provide a thick, rich description of the context and social interactions of my research participants (Murchison, 2013; Yin, 2013). My observations were logged onto observation sheets following an observation protocol. A copy of the observation sheet is included in Appendix B. Observations answered the following research questions: "How to young African American males understand respect in their relations with the authority figures in their environments;" and "How does young African American males' understanding and meaning of respect differ from that of their family, peers, teachers, or local law enforcement officers?"

Individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. With such an interview protocol, I asked certain questions, including "What does it mean to be a man;" "What does respect mean to you;" and "What kind of advice have you been

given by teachers, family members, and authority figures?" The mandatory questions

that were asked of all research participants are listed in Appendix C. All individual

interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. I acquired signed consent to

record from all research participants.

When these interviews were conducted, my research participants were still

untrusting. Consequently, they did not give open, elaborate responses to many of my

questions. I therefore had to rely mostly on informal conversations that were held during

participant observation sessions to gain in-depth answers to the research questions to

which I initially sought to answer during individual interviews. The responses I received

during these informal conversations helped answer all four research questions. I did not

record these informal conversations on my digital voice recorder. I took notes during the

conversations and recorded important details of the conversation in my digital voice

recorder as I left the site each day.

The legal documents I reviewed were local arrest records. Individuals are not

always the best historians. Research participants might have minimized or maximized

the severity of their legal history as a means of profiling. Arrest records for individuals

who have been arrested in the county's pre-trial detention facility and local correction

center are a matter of public record and are accessible via the Internet. The research

participants' arrest records provided aggregate data of the legal issues the research

participants had—i.e. violent crimes, drug possession, thefts. The collection of this data

merely provided more details to make a quality case study (Yin, 2013). The review of

these legal documents also contributed to the increased trustworthiness of data analysis

results (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Madden, 2010; Yin, 2013).

The construction of maps was a qualitative research tool that provided a visual

demonstration of the context of the research. The geographical maps I constructed

assisted in providing details needed for a full case illustration (Murchison, 2010, p. 39;

Yin, 2013). These geographical maps of the field sites acted as visual aids of the

neighborhood in which my research participants lived. Such maps were effective for

describing uses and perceptions of space (Murchison, 2010).

Participatory photography. Finally, I used participatory photography to collect

data. Participatory photography was modeled somewhat according to PhotoVoice.

PhotoVoice is a registered charity that uses participatory photography as a means of

building "skills within disadvantaged and marginalized communities" (PhotoVoice,

2013). Participatory photography is used as a means of storytelling and for giving

marginalized communities the opportunity to advocate for themselves (Kessi, 2011;

PhotoVoice, 2013). The method of participatory photography was developed by Wang

and Burris (1994), and uses photography "to describe and analyze salient issues" (Gant,

Shimstock, Allen-Meares, Smith, Miller, Hollingsworth, & Shanks, 2009, p. 360). Since

its inception, participatory photography has been used with rural women in China (Wang

& Burris, 1997), homeless populations, and different youth populations (Strack, Magill,

& McDonagh, 2004). This method has become increasingly popular as a means of

getting disenfranchised groups involved in various community projects. Its popularity is

often attributed to the sense of empowerment it gives to children and adolescents who engage in this methodology (Gant, et al., 2009). Participatory photography also gives youth the chance to develop a positive sense of social identity and has been show to build a sense of self-efficacy (Strack, et al., 2004; Fairy, 2013). The photographs derived from participatory photography can be considered physical artifacts, since they represent the research participants' descriptions of their social and physical environments (Yin, 2013).

Due to both financial and time constraints, I was not able to follow the exact protocol established by PhotoVoice. I did not recruit 12 participants, as suggested by the PhotoVoice protocol (Wang & Burris, 1997; Strack, et al., 2004; Gant, et al., 2009). I met with my research participants on a weekly basis and sought to gradually introduce them to participatory photography. I explained that participatory photography was similar to graffiti writing, in that it allowed the research participants to express their views on the state of their community (Farmer & Milos, 2012; Lombard, 2013). Only two of them agreed to take pictures.

I then sought to initiate these two research participants into participatory photography by asking them to spend 15 minutes taking pictures of something green, an innocuous color. They both asked why I wanted pictures of something green when I was researching respect. I explained that I was trying to get them used to taking specific pictures. They both told me my design to "ease" them into participatory photography was unnecessary. They asked me what I wanted pictures of and they took them. The two participants texted me the few pictures they took. They also provided an explanation of

why each picture represented the topic(s) they were asked to photograph (See Figures 4 –

7). These photographs were not analyzed. In PhotoVoice, the person who takes the

photo determines its meaning. The captions in Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 are from the

participants' remarks. These remarks were included in the thematic analysis.

I generated a photo album for all four of the research participants, as

compensation for their participation. I believed participatory photography was an

optimal method of getting my research participants involved in my study. By asking

them to take pictures, I sought to empower them to demonstrate the strengths and

weaknesses of their communities (Strack, et al., 2009). I also wanted them to explain the

significance of the pictures they took. All photos that depicted individuals were

graphically altered to protect the anonymity of the subject of the photo prior to use in the

study.

Procedures

Once I received approval from Walden's Institutional Review Board, I posted

copies of the introductory flier about my study in public places all over the Northside. I

initially hung introductory fliers about my study around the Northside, focusing on places

I thought I might reach the most potential research participants. These included barber

shops, liquor stores, and food stores. I received no phone calls from anyone expressing

interest in my study.

At the same time, I began direct observation of potential research participants in a

neighborhood of the Northside. I sat in The Park or the Car Wash every Saturday

between the hours of three and five p.m. for three months. For the first month, I engaged

in direct observation, watching as many people interact as possible, making detailed notes

in my research journal. I was recognized in the neighborhood. People who had seen me

sitting in The Park or the Car Wash every week began to ask me what I was writing. I

told them I was writing a book. That piqued the interest of a few individuals. As I

answered more questions, I introduced myself and stated the nature of my study. Sadly, I

did not receive as many participants as I would have liked. Nonetheless, I was grateful

for the willing participation of the four young men who read and signed my informed

consent forms. Once the forms were signed, I gave each research participant a copy. I

then locked the signed originals in my file cabinet at home.

I then interviewed each research participant using a semi-structured interview

protocol. Each individual interview lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. I recorded

these interviews using a digital voice recorder. I then transcribed the interviews and gave

each research participant a copy of the transcription. We reviewed it together and in

some cases, I was instructed to make corrections by the research participant. I made

written notes on the transcription. Then I revised the transcription and had it re-reviewed

by the research participant. When I finally earned the research participant's approval, I

stored the transcript onto my hard drive. My computer is password protected and I alone

have the password to access the files.

I spent the remaining ten weeks of data collection engaging in participant

observation with each research participant. Again, these sessions were held every

Saturday afternoon between the hours of three and five p.m. Research participants and I

walked around The Park or "hung out" in front of the Food Store. Twice two of the

participants—Mason and Ladies' Man sat with me while I was a customer at the Car

Wash. During these participant observation sessions, I held informal conversations with

each research participant. These conversations were not recorded at the research

participants' requests. I was, however, allowed to make a few notes in my research

journal. As soon as I returned to my car, I recorded the nature of the conversations into

my digital voice recorder. I then wrote out the research participants' responses to some

of the questions I asked during these informal conversations.

Another research participant, Buddha, allowed me to watch one of his Tae Kwon

Do classes. The studio was located on the Southside of the city, 14 miles southeast of the

area where I collected most of my data. I watched this research participant teach three

classes and participate in the last class of the day; the class for black belts. This was the

only time I collected data away from the Northside.

I discussed participatory photography will all four research participants. I asked

if they were interested in speaking to me in pictures. Two of them agreed; Buddha and

Junior. I asked them to take eight different pictures, representing the following concepts:

the color green, respect, authority, power, manhood, street, and *what it is to be a Black*

man. Buddha and Junior thought it ridiculous to take pictures of something green when it

had nothing to do with my study. Junior took three pictures. Buddha took one. The

pictures were taken by Junior and Buddha's cell phones. They texted the pictures to me

with a few words explaining why they chose to take each particular picture. I emailed the pictures to my home computer and had them password protected, along with the other data. I deleted the originals from my cell phone.

I offered all four research participants a copy of the published findings, and awarded them the incentive for participating in the study; a copy of the photo album of their pictures.

Data Analysis

All transcribed interviews, voice recordings of the interviews, developed photographs, completed observation sheets, field notes and memos were entered into the QDA software Atlas.ti. I engaged in data analysis immediately following each episode of data collection. By analyzing the data already collected, I identified codes and patterns that emerged (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). During the analysis process, I searched for common themes within each case and across all of the cases (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). Once again, the photos were not analyzed. The remarks made by the research participants who took the photos were included in the thematic analysis.

With each phase of data collection, I identified common themes and recurrent patterns that arose from the data. I also paid special attention to all discrepant data collected. It was possible that another pattern could emerge from discrepant data that were gathered. By including a plausible explanation for the existence of discrepant data, I strengthened the transferability of my findings. The themes and patterns that emerged

from the data provided the answers to my research questions. The data are provided in Chapter 4.

Role of the Researcher

During this study, my role evolved as data collection and analysis progressed. Conducting a case study, I was the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2013). At the beginning of data collection, my role was that of observer. This entailed the employment of all of my senses to pay attention to and make note of my surroundings. Taking note of the physical environment—the sights, sounds, and smells—assisted in acquiring necessary details for an accurate depiction of all the cases presented.

As time passed, I earned a little trust from my participants. At that point, my role evolved from observer to participant-observer (Yin, 2013). This entailed engaging in casual conversations and conducting interviews. Finally, my role as researcher included being the student of my research participants (Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013). Since I sought to understand my research participants' comprehension of respect and self-esteem, my research participants were the experts whose knowledge I strove to acquire. By empowering my research participants in this fashion, I worked to remove any perceived power imbalance between me and my research participants.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Prolonged contact with my research participants would have been ideal (Fetterman, 2010; Murchison, 2010; Venkatesh, 2008). The more time I spent with them, the more I internalized their culture. However, familial, financial, and occupational

demands did not permit me to spend more than three months with my research participants. Neither did these obligations allow me to live on the Northside during data collection and analysis. I was only able to make frequent visits to the Northside during that three-month period of data collection. I therefore had to apply other strategies to establish the trustworthiness of my findings.

The first method used was triangulation. I searched the Internet to check for local arrest records of all four research participants. Only Junior had an adult criminal record. While Junior repeatedly told me, "I messed up a couple of times," I was able to ascertain that he had nine misdemeanors and one felony on his record. Unfortunately, I could not access the Juvenile Justice System's records. I was therefore unable to verify whether Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason were in fact, arrested as minors. Triangulating data enhanced both the credibility and dependability of the study.

I also had the participants collaborate with me on data analysis. By engaging in participatory collaboration over an extended period of time, I enhanced the confirmability of my study. I had each research participant review the transcript of his individual interview. Mason and Junior made corrections on their transcripts. This compelled me to revise those transcripts and have the participants re-review them. When the revisions were made, I was given approval by the research participants. Thus I ensured that their meanings were accurately documented without being distorted by my biases by using member checking.

For accountability purposes, I also allowed my participant-coresearchers to monitor the activity journal that I kept during this process. Finally, I showed my list of major themes to Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason. Buddha was out of town competing in a Tae Kwon Do tournament. I explained my reason behind the naming of the themes to the participants' comprehension. They did not dispute the themes I identified. Finally, I had my Dissertation Chair review the raw data, the major themes and the connections between the themes. There was no mention by the research participants or my Chair that additional themes were absent, or that other vital information was missing.

Ethical Concerns

As with any study involving human research participants, ethical concerns must be addressed. Every potential research participant was given a letter of informed consent. The letter was explained to them in plain English that could have been understood by anyone with a fifth-grade reading level. The letter of consent contained a detailed explanation of the study, what participation in the study entailed, and the compensation participants received. The letter told potential participants that they would be recorded during their interviews. The letter also informed all potential participants that their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the right to end their participation at any stage of the research, without fear of reprimand or reprisal. Research participants were also informed that they had the right to participate in the study without being recorded, if they wished. The letter had all of my contact information, so that

participants were able to contact me at any time with questions and/or concerns about the study.

I did not conduct interviews on anyone who did not give me a signed letter of informed consent. During the entire research process, I treated all of my research participants with the same respect and dignity with which I would have wanted to receive in kind. I frequently reminded my research participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to stop participation at any time during the process without fear of retaliation from me, their family members, their employers, or law enforcement officers. Finally, I informed my participants that in order to protect their anonymity, I used code names when referring to them in my writing. I created the code names and committed them to memory. That way there was no risk of the list of code names being discovered. I also informed them of the circumstances under which I was legally and ethically bound to violate their confidentiality: that I had to take steps to protect them if I suspected that they were about to attempt suicide; that I have a duty to warn another and local law enforcement if I suspected that they were about to harm another person; and that I had to call the Child Abuse Hotline if I had any suspicions that a child or an elderly or disabled person was being abused.

Because I was the primary data collector, I was the sole person responsible for storing the data. All files were stored into my computer in the Atlas.ti software. My computer is password-protected and I alone hold the password. The room in which my computer is held can be locked with a key. My husband and I are the only individuals

who have keys to that room. Even though my husband has access to the computer, he

does not have the password to access any of my computer files. In fact, my husband is

virtually computer-illiterate and has minimal desire to improve his skills.

The signed consent forms are kept in a file cabinet in the same rooms as my

computer. This file cabinet has a lock to which I possess the only key. I keep this

cabinet locked, as it is used to hold the confidential information of my former clients. In

accordance with Walden University research guidelines, I will maintain these documents

for a period of no less than five years. At the end of the five year period, I will publish a

statement in my local newspaper stating that I am about to destroy all copies of data from

this study. The notice will include a contact number that interested parties may use to

contact me should they want to obtain copies of their interview transcripts or

photographs. Finally, the notice will list the date on which I intend to destroy these

records. On that scheduled date, I will run all paper documents through a paper shredder

and discard the scraps in my recycling bin.

All computer data was backed up onto a CD-ROM. At the end of data analysis,

all of the data was removed from my computer and stored onto a CD-ROM. This CD-

ROM is also locked in my file cabinet. It will be kept for a period of five years and

physically destroyed at the end of that period. The notice that I will publish for the

upcoming destruction of my paper documentation will include the computer data.

Since this population was not known to trust outsiders, I decided to award a small

incentive to everyone who participated in my study. The incentive was a copy of the

photo album composed of all the pictures taken by the research participants. This photo album was given at the end of data collection to everyone who participated in my study, regardless of whether he took pictures or not.

Summary

A collective case study was the best approach for me to glean an understanding of how young African American males defined the concept of respect and how that definition drove their behaviors. I sought to gain this understanding by answering the questions how this population experienced respect as a component of social acceptance; what teachings about respect and social position this population received from local authority figures; and what were the contextual factors that shaped this population's self-concept. These questions were answered by observation, interviews, document review, geographical mapping, and participatory photography. All data collected by these methods were coded and analyzed through Atlas.ti.

I developed plans to strengthen the credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of this study. These plans included triangulation of data, participant-co-researchers, thick description, the discussion of discrepant data, and an audit trail. All data were kept confidential, with the use of codenames for the research participants. I alone know the true names of the research participants. The only documentation I have kept with the research participants' true names are their signed informed consent letters. Those forms are secured in a locked file cabinet to which I alone have access. The

confidentiality of my raw data was initially maintained on a private, secure computer. It

has been backed up onto a CD-ROM that is safeguarded in a locked file cabinet.

All research participants were fully informed of the nature of my study, and the

risks and benefits involved in their participation. No one was considered a research

participant unless I possessed a signed informed consent letter. All participants

volunteered their cooperation. They were free to leave the study at any time, without fear

of reprisal. The primary ethical consideration I constantly had to address was the

imagined power differential between me and the research participants. I planned on

reducing that differential by empowering the research participants. This was done by

making them participant-coresearchers. Finally, all research participants were awarded

the incentive of a copy of the photo album composed during the study. The findings of

this study are presented and analyzed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the concepts of respect and self-esteem as they are defined by the culture-sharing group of young African American adult males living in an urban setting in the southeastern United States. The focus of the study was the meaning and significance of these concepts in shaping the behaviors and lifestyle of the participants and the related consequences. I present the results of my research in this chapter, which includes the demographic profiles of my research participants, a case study of each, and summary of the data. A chart delineates the major themes that emerged from the data analysis. The data presented in the chart are organized to answer each of the research questions. Finally, I provide a summary of the results, which includes discussion and evidence of the trustworthiness of the data.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ 1: How do young African American men perceive the phenomena of respect and self-esteem as a component of their social acceptance?

RQ 2: How do young African American men understand respect in their relations with the authority figures in their environments?

RQ 3: How does young African American men's understanding and meaning of respect differ from that of their family, peers, teachers or local law enforcement officers?

RQ 4: How does race contextualize and shape young African American men's self-concept?

Research Sample

The research sample consisted of four African American males defined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Profiles of the Research Participants*

Assigned Name	Age	Education	Children	Criminal Record	Employed
Junior	20	GED	1	Yes	No
Ladies' Man	19	9th grade	Unknown	Juvenile	No
Mason	21	High School	Unknown	Juvenile	No
Buddha	18	High School	0	No	Part-time

The four African American males who participated in this study were aged 18, 19, 20, and 21 years. Each self-identified as African American or Black. Each research participant showed a valid state identification card that provided proof of their ages and residency in the Northside. None were participating in any mental health or substance abuse counseling during the time prior to or during the time period of data collection. None were incarcerated during the time of data collection. Three of the research participants spoke only English. The fourth reported English was his primary and preferred language. He also spoke some French. Each research participant read and reported comprehension of the informed consent form presented by the researcher. Each research participant was given ample opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

Each research participant was told he was free to stop participation in the study at any time.

Research participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Two of the research participants, Mason and Buddha, were high school graduates. Mason earned a certificate in masonry; Buddha plans to attend the local state college. Junior earned his General Education Diploma (GED). Ladies' Man dropped out of high school after ninth grade. Junior and Mason are unemployed and looking for work. Buddha is working part-time earning $8.00 an hour for 20 hours each week. Ladies' Man earns money by growing and selling marijuana. At no time during the data collection did I witness this participant in possession of marijuana or engaged in the selling of this commodity.

All the research participants were unmarried. One participant, Junior, claimed he had a 3-year-old son, while two others, Ladies' Man and Mason, were uncertain as to whether they had fathered children. Buddha was certain he had no children. Three of the four participants had been arrested by local law enforcement officers when they were minors. These three participants also admitted to having been stopped by law enforcement officers more than once as adults. Two of these participants served six-month sentences in a Juvenile Justice facility. One had two adult arrests and served two prison sentences. None of the research participants were on probation or parole during the period of data collection.

Case Studies

Junior

Junior is 20 years old. Junior dropped out of high school after being labeled a troublemaker by his teachers. He earned his General Education Diploma (GED) last year. Junior served a six-month Juvenile sentence when he was 17, and two adult prison sentences. He has a three-year-old son, Trey, whom he sees weekly.

While his personal goals are to be a good father to his son, Trey and to get a job at the docks, Junior believes he is unlikely to get employed because of his criminal record. Junior has some experience working menial jobs, but his criminal record hinders his ability to find permanent employment. Moreover, he cannot return to school because of his inability to pay or apply for financial aid. Question 23 of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) asks if the applicant has ever been arrested for the possession or sale of illegal drugs. Junior has two counts of possession of marijuana. Junior sees his criminal record and limited education preventing him from acquiring gainful employment and improving his economic status.

Ladies' Man

Ladies' Man is 19 years old and was raised by his grandmother, while his father was in prison. Ladies' Man learned how to smoke, grow and sell marijuana at the age of 11. He dropped out of school after ninth grade. Ladies' Man seeks to earn the social acceptance of his peers by having sex with as many women as possible. He claims not to

have any children, only because "No girl's ever come up to me saying I gotta buy 'em diapers."

Ladies' Man served a six-month sentence in a Juvenile Justice facility, but has no adult criminal record. He admitted to being stopped and searched by local police more than once. Ladies' Man dreams of being rich, but knows that this is only a fantasy, as evidenced by his statement "I won't get rich 'less I start slingin' dope." Ladies' Man has an incomplete education and no job skills. Neither does he have the desire to complete his education or develop job skills. He believes he makes decent enough money by selling marijuana.

Mason

Mason is 21 and lives with his mother and his younger brother. He graduated high school and earned certification as a mason. Both of these assets give potential for Mason to find gainful employment. Yet he has been unemployed for four years. When asked about his job seeking methods, Mason says he's gone to potential employers and asked about work. But he's told there isn't any to be had. Mason also has limited computer skills, which greatly prevents his ability to expand his job search. Neither does he possess an interview suit, which most likely deters potential employers. Mason speaks fluent African American Vernacular English, which could also deter potential employers. When asked about learning interview skills, Mason equated such techniques as "acting white."

Mason was served a six-month sentence in a Juvenile facility. His arrest was for possession of marijuana. This arrest prohibits him from completing the FAFSA and attending college. Mason also believes his Juvenile arrest prevents him from finding work, since Juvenile records are not sealed in the state where he lives. Mason feels like he will not find work unless someone "gives" him a job. He therefore spends his days smoking marijuana with his friends. Mason's lack of interview skills and juvenile arrest record serve as his greatest barriers to finding work.

Buddha

Buddha is 18 years old and recently graduated from high school with a B+ average. He is the only one of the research participants who reported enjoying school. Buddha also plans on attending a local state college. Unlike the other research participants, Buddha has not spent his entire life in the Northside. Rather, Buddha has had more exposure to mainstream American society and is following on the mainstream American path to achieving the American dream of prosperity and fulfillment.

Buddha has no children and has never been arrested. Buddha also denied ever experimenting with alcohol or drugs. Neither has he been harassed by police. Buddha works part-time at a Tae Kwon Do studio, teaching the martial art to children. He is saving his money to repair his car and plans on becoming a success after he graduates from college. Buddha sees his potential and opportunities as unlimited. Thus, his outlook on life is optimistic.

Data Analysis

Four major themes emerged from the data: (a) the use of symbols to earn respect, (b) communication patterns within the community that demonstrate respect, (c) assessment of potential for earning respect through traditional means, and (d) the importance of manhood. I converted these four themes into two categories: (a) strategies used to manage self- respect and self-esteem, and (b) identification of the factors that contribute to respect and self-esteem.

Theme 1: Strategy to Earn Respect

The research participants use symbolic representations of success to earn the respect of their peers. Choice of clothing and dress style were two specific strategies used as symbolic representation to demonstrate the young men's sense of self. In the neighborhood, being well-dressed requires name-brand clothing such as Nike© or Addidas©. Almost every young man in the neighborhood I encountered wore shorts or jeans that sagged below their waistlines showing the boxers they had on underneath. Their hair was styled either in dreadlocks, a small afro, or shaved into a fade design. All four research participants demonstrated loyalty to Nike© and asserted that they liked the brand because it made them look good. This supports Anthony's (2007) assertion that individuals with low self-esteem will seek social approval through their material possessions as opposed to their personal characteristics. It also supports Goffman's (1959) perspective on presentation of self as a strategy to gain social acceptance. These young men "dress the part" for their social audience. Demonstrating loyalty to name-

brand clothing and the possession and esteem for material items demonstrate that these

young men desire to better themselves and their financial situations. However, Junior has

a criminal record. Ladies' Man has a ninth-grade education, no job skills and no desire to

gain permanent employment. Mason has no interview skills and no desire to acquire

them, lest he be accused of "acting white." These barriers prohibit these young men from

achieving their personal goals of improving their economic status.

Buddha also demonstrated loyalty to Nike$^©$ clothing and shoes. He stated that he

like the style of Nike© products; that they made him "look good." Unlike Junior, Ladies'

Man and Mason, Buddha has no criminal record and intends to go on to college. He is

the one research participant who has no apparent barriers to improving his economic

status.

Theme 2: Communication Patterns within the Community that Demonstrate Respect

This theme emerged from my direct observations of people's social interaction.

They actively acknowledged those they encountered in the neighborhood. They would

verbally acknowledge each other across the Main Road or one of the side streets. Drivers

on the Main Road often honked their horns and waved out their windows as they passed.

Mason stopped talking with me long enough to shout "All right, lil' brother" to another

young man as he got into the passenger side of a vehicle.

I also observed that members of the community deferred to their elders. Ladies'

Man admitted "I ain't about to cuss in front of my grandmamma." Moreover, every male

younger than me called me "Ma'am," no matter how many times I begged them not to. Children in the neighborhood heeded the instructions of adults they encountered without protest. I, too, demonstrated deference to my elders by calling the supervisor of the Car Wash—a man twenty years my senior—"Sir."

Most men I encountered mumbled when they spoke. Junior, Mason and Ladies' Man mumbled when talking to their elders or authority figures. Yet they were loud when talking with their peers. There was frequent use of profanity when women were not part of the conversation. This demonstrates their way of showing respect to their elders and authority figures, as well as being "relaxed" when with their peers. Buddha did not mumble when he spoke to me. He was louder when interacting with his peers in Tae Kwon Do class.

An important piece of communication involved *the talk* that Junior, Mason, and Ladies' Man had with their maternal caregivers. This talk consisted of instructions on how to interact with law enforcement officers in such a way as to avoid a violent outcome. Mason said, "Sometimes a cop'll stop his car in front of us when we just hangin'. He does that when he wants to break up our group;" and "Cops ain't got no love for me." The talk demonstrates a warning to three of the research participants on how they will experience disrespect from law enforcement officers. It is also an instruction on how the research participants are to demonstrate respect to these authority figures. Buddha denied ever receiving the talk from either his mother or his grandmother.

The methods of communication in the community—acknowledging people you know, deference to one's elders, soft speech when addressing elders or authority figures and loud profanity when talking to one's friends—demonstrate means of giving respect among these young African American males. While I never heard Buddha use profanity when interacting with his friends, the volume of his speech significantly increased when no elders or authority figures were present. These means of giving respect within their community demonstrate the research participants' understanding of respect in their relations with the authority figures in their environments. The elders of the community are regarded highly because, as Buddha said, "They've been there." By giving respect, the research participants maintain their level of social acceptance among the community authority figures.

Theme 3: Assessment of Potential for Earning Respect through Traditional Means

Ladies' Man, Junior, and Mason all made statements such as "I ain't getting no crib 'less I start slinging dope" and "Don't nobody want to hire a nigger with a felony" as realistic assessment of their situations. Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason all reported having the talk with their mothers or grandmothers during their pre-teen/early adolescent years. They all admitted that having the talk had depressive effects, as evidenced by Ladies' Man's quote, "I felt like what's the point of trying to be somebody if cops're just looking for a reason to beat my ass."

Mason, Junior, and Ladies' Man also claimed to have experienced marginalization from mainstream American society beginning in middle school. Ladies'

Man asked, rhetorically, "Why would I want to go someplace where everybody was going to give me shit, when I didn't even do nothing half the time." Junior and Ladies' Man reported being singled out as troublemakers while in school. Mason wasn't singled out, but he reported feeling ignored by his teachers. The marginalization experienced by Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason has contributed to their self-concepts of being outsiders. Moreover, the marginalization was effected by authority figures in their community thus sending the overt message that authority figures did not, nor would ever respect them.

Their comments/responses indicate that Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason had experienced intergenerational transmission of trauma, as evidenced by Mason's statement "Our kind been shit on since we was chained to the boats," and Junior's statement "you don't say shit against a white man unless there's a posse got your back." They have learned to associate marginalization with their race. Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason have all personally experienced disrespect in race relations; mostly from law enforcement officers. They all admit that it angers them to the point that they need to smoke marijuana to relax and temporarily forget. This disrespect leads these three young men to believe that they are doomed to be miserable unless by some miracle they come to "roll fat" like their idol, Lil' Wayne. Buddha was the only research participant who was raised within mainstream American society. He denied any experience of intergenerational transmission of trauma. Buddha also denied feeling disrespected or harassed by police.

Strategy of escape. Ladies' Man, Junior, and Mason admitted to feelings of sadness and anger as the result of the lack of respect they perceive from authority figures.

They believe that their situations are not going to improve; thus they seek to boost their level of social acceptance from their peers. They also use the strategy of temporarily escaping their sadness and anger by smoking marijuana. Mason, Ladies' Man, and Junior reported that they were first introduced to marijuana between the ages of 11 and 13 by a friend; around the same ages that they first had the talk with their maternal caregivers. One can infer that this necessary talk influenced these young men's basic human needs for self-esteem and to belong negatively (Pharo, et al., 2011). Thus they began the use of mood-altering substances as a coping skill; a normal coping skill in their community that helps them to maintain their level of social acceptance among their peers. Ladies' Man claimed "Weed is the Black man's medicine," while Mason said he often "Gotta smoke to calm down."

The theme of hopelessness provides answers for the third and fourth research questions. All three believe that they are doomed to a life of ostracism from mainstream American society simply because they were born African American men. Their maternal caregivers warned them at a young age that law enforcement would look for ways to hurt them. Their teachers gave them overt and covert message that they were problem children to be avoided at all costs, depleting their motivation to succeed academically. Finally the negative interactions Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior have had with law enforcement have all confirmed what their maternal caregivers' warnings of law enforcement's blatant lack of respect for them.

Buddha was the only research participant who did not receive the talk from his parents. Neither has he ever been arrested or stopped by police. Buddha denied feeling marginalized by teachers. He has never used drugs or drank alcohol. His lack of negative encounters with law enforcement makes him different in his outlook on the opportunities he has for personal success.

Theme 4: Importance of Manhood

Ladies' Man said, "Me & my daddy ain't gonna be kissing & hugging anytime soon;" "No girl's come up to me saying I gotta buy 'em diapers;" and "I'm a player." Ladies' Man particularly seeks to emulate the long-standing stereotype of the sexual stud by being "a player" (Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010).

Junior said "A man needs to take care of his family;" and "I need to be a daddy for [my son]." Ladies' Man said, "I help [my grandmother] out by feeding myself as much as possible." By portraying themselves as men, Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason maintain a level of social acceptance among their peers. Buddha also portrays himself as a man as a means of earning and maintaining social acceptance and respect from authority figures in his social and professional spheres. These statements indicate that there is a specific delineation of the different responsibilities and behaviors allotted to each gender. By adhering to their defined gender role, Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason maintain their level of social acceptance.

All of the research participants admitted having their mothers or grandmothers giving them love and teaching them the importance of going to school. Mason was raised

by his mother and he did not know his father. Ladies' Man was raised by his grandmother while his father was in prison. Meanwhile, Junior's mother was the only one who visited him when he was incarcerated. Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason also reported that their maternal caregivers taught them how to interact with law enforcement officers in a way to avoid violence. The overall message was "Mama loves you, but the police don't." Buddha was the only research participant who did not receive this message.

All four research participants show love and respect to their positive maternal influences because they are aware of the hard work and dedication these women put into raising them. Furthermore, Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior have learned the lesson that it is a woman's job to raise the children, while it is a man's job to provide for them financially.

The subcategories of defined gender roles, positive maternal influences and women raising men all appear to have contributed to Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason's sense of manhood. Positive maternal influences and women raising men have also contributed to these young men's belief that child-rearing is "women's work", as well as their closeness toward the maternal figures in their families. Ladies' Man has adopted the strategy of earning respect from his peers by donning the *player* persona, in that he feels he needs to have as many sexual conquests as possible in order to prove his manhood.

Nature of Respect

All four research participants demonstrated respect for others by acknowledging people they knew when they encountered them on the street. They also deferred to their elders during every encounter. Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior sought the respect of their peers by wearing Nike$^{©}$ products, esteeming high-priced material goods, and respecting popular Hip Hop artist Lil' Wayne "because he come up from nothing and now rolls fat." Ladies' Man defined respect as "something you give so you can get it." Mason said, "Some people think they gotta be loud to get respect. Some people think they gotta beat other people up."

All four participants learned that respect boosts their self-esteem. They also learned that giving respect usually results in having respect reciprocated—within their community. However, Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason learned that respect was something they would never receive from mainstream authority figures, such as educators and law enforcement officers. The obvious lack of respect from mainstream authority figures caused great damage to the self-esteem of these three participants.

Interactions with law enforcement officers, thoughts on disrespect in race relations, and marginalization from mainstream American society have contributed to Mason, Junior and Ladies' Man's sense of hopelessness. These experiences have given these three young men the implicit and explicit message that law enforcement has no respect for them. This disrespect from mainstream American society has contributed greatly to these research participants' fatalistic outlook, their disregard for mainstream

American society and their disdain for law enforcement. These negative experiences

have also contributed to their adoption of mood-altering substances as a coping skill to

temporarily abate feelings of rage and frustration.

Interactions with law enforcement and marginalization from mainstream

American society also subsidize Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior's negative thoughts on

race relations, as well as the development of their feelings of hopelessness. These three

research participants resorted to the coping skills of using mood-altering substances,

wearing sagging shorts or jeans, speaking AAVE, and esteeming a Hip Hop artist whose

videos glamorize large houses, luxury cars, money, guns, and sex. From informal

conversations and individual interviews, I gleaned that the fatalistic outlook of these three

research participants led them to believe that they would never receive respect of or

inclusion into mainstream American society. Therefore they had no other recourse than

to embrace the ostracized society to which they were relegated. Smoking "weed,"

wearing Nike$^{©}$ products and "getting with honeys" are the ways these three young men

feel better about themselves and their life circumstances. Since Buddha denied any

interactions with law enforcement or marginalization from mainstream American society,

he did not express or exhibit any feelings of hopelessness about his future. He does not

use marijuana or alcohol or feel the need to have as many sexual partners as possible to

prove his manhood.

All four of the research participants agreed that having respect meant "don't start

nothing; won't be nothing." They all believe in the importance of treating others the way

they would wish to be treated in return. However, Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior believe that law enforcement officers and potential employers have no respect for them. They have therefore learned to fear law enforcement officers and to avoid them whenever possible. Buddha was the only one who holds law enforcement officers in high regard. Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason, on the other hand, have learned to fear and loathe law enforcement.

Mason, Junior and Ladies' Man have been racially profiled by police and marginalized by teachers and potential employers. This has taught them to give up on difficult endeavors, such as completing a higher level of education; and instead remain in their disadvantaged neighborhood with an external locus of control and a fatalistic outlook, as evidenced by the quote "Our kind been shit on since we was chained to the boats." Their economically disadvantaged lifestyles also leads these three to emulate Hip Hop artists such as Lil' Wayne because he glamorizes money, power and sex. For all but Buddha, race and marginalization are eternally bound. This also contributes to their fatalistic outlook that their lives will improve. Mason, Ladies' Man and Junior have been relegated to the outskirts of American society. They believe there is no chance of their acceptance into mainstream American society, so they get by the best way they can.

Table 2. *Summary of Findings*.

Nature of Respect within a Closed Community	Getting Respect	Giving Respect
Respect equals self-esteem.	Give respect to get respect within the community.	Acknowledge everyone you know in the community when you see them.
Mainstream American society engenders disrespect, which damages self-esteem	Show loyalty to brand name clothing and shoes.	Speak softly when addressing your elders.
	Expect only disrespect from law enforcement, the keepers of mainstream American society.	"Play house nigga" when stopped by police.
Respect is something that can only be attained within the community by embracing the marginalized counterculture.	Speak loud AAVE using profanity when with one's peers.	Pay your baby's mama whatever money you can.
		Show love to the woman who raised you.
	Talk of big dreams of materialism when with one's peers.	

Buddha provided discrepant data from Mason, Junior and Ladies' Man. While the 18-year-old research participant resided in the same neighborhood as the other three research participants, he did not live there his entire life. He spent his formative years in a large metropolitan city on the West Coast of the United States. He was raised there by

his grandparents and an aunt until he was 8. At that time, his parents moved him to the city where data was collected.

Buddha was encouraged to do his best in school. He was afforded the privilege of attending public schools outside of his neighborhood. Instead of attending the neighborhood high school, Buddha matriculated from a public school in the Arlington neighborhood of the city. This neighborhood has a higher economic bracket than the Northside (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012b). He associated with more Caucasians than the other three research participants. Buddha also began studying Tae Kwon Do while in elementary school. He is currently a 3rd-degree Black Belt who has had the importance of courtesy, loyalty, and respect ingrained into his consciousness for the past ten years (Direct observation, 7/30/14).

In short, Buddha was raised and educated within mainstream American society. He was one of the two participants who graduated from high school. He did not feel singled out as a troublemaker by his teachers. He finished with a B+ average and reported having favorite classes. Buddha is the only participant with plans to attend college. He denied ever being harassed by police. His parents never talked to him about how to interact with police. They felt it was unnecessary, given Buddha's years of Tae Kwon Do. He was the only one of the research participants who was certain that he had not fathered any children. Buddha was the only research participant who exhibited an internal locus of control and an optimistic attitude regarding his present and his future.

While Buddha's data was decidedly different from that of the other three research participants', it was still considered in the identification of the 19 major themes, the discernment of their interconnectedness, and the construction of the larger theme blocks. Instead of excluding it, I felt it essential to include the data. It demonstrates the difference in self-image development of the four research participants as the result of their different circumstances.

Summary of the Analysis

The Meaning of Respect

All four research participants paraphrase the definition of respect as "Don't start nothing, won't be nothing." They are all in accord with the mainstream American society definition of respect: that everyone merits esteem based on the pride of being an individual. However, Mason, Junior and Ladies' Man are cognizant of the fact that they are not given this respect from members of mainstream American society. Since their pre-teen years, these boys received implied and overt messages from teachers and law enforcement officers that they were not respected by mainstream American society. Nor would they earn this respect. Thus, their sense of identity and their level of self-esteem were severely damaged at a very young age. They therefore seek much-needed social acceptance from their peers. Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason seek to get respect from their peers by following the mantra "Don't start nothing; won't be nothing." However, there are those in their neighborhood—usually ones younger than the research participants—who believe they have to earn respect from their peers by either being loud,

having the most expensive material items, or showing some demonstration of their physical prowess. For Mason, Ladies' Man, and Junior, the definition of respect has a codicil: be prepared for somebody to start something. Buddha did not hold this codicil.

All four research participants believed in deferring to one's elders; their parents, guardians, and other elders who lived in their community. They did this out of love and esteem for their elders' experience. Regarding law enforcement however, only Buddha demonstrated positive regard. Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason exhibited blatant contempt for law enforcement; seeking to avoid interactions with police. When unavoidable, Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason were all taught to speak softly, not make eye contact, keep their hands in plain view, and do nothing that could exacerbate the situation. Regarding law enforcement, these three young men define respect as fear.

Buddha's understanding and meaning of respect was in accord with that of mainstream American society. The remaining research participants were certain that law enforcement "got no love for" them, as evidenced by their repeated incidents of harassment. Ladies' Man and Junior were marginalized as troublemakers in middle school, which led them to suppose that authority figures wanted only to partake in the pathological shaming and uniform control of these youths, in accordance with the phenomenon outlined by Rios (2011).

Mason, Ladies' Man, and Junior were treated as problems by teachers and law enforcement beginning as early as middle school. This continuous denigration and marginalization was a huge contributor to their external loci of control and fatalistic

outlook on their lives. Buddha, on the other hand, did not experience this marginalization

during his formative years. Having never been singled out or harassed by authority

figures, he has no reason to feel contempt for mainstream American society. In fact,

Buddha was the only research participant to embrace the mainstream, believing he was

capable to succeeding in education and gainful employment and that his race was not a

barrier to his success. Mason, Junior and Ladies' Man, on the other hand, were in

agreement with comedian Chris Rock's assessment (1999), "When you're White, the

sky's the limit. When you're Black, the limit's the sky."

Interpretations of the findings, implications for positive social change, and

recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter 5.

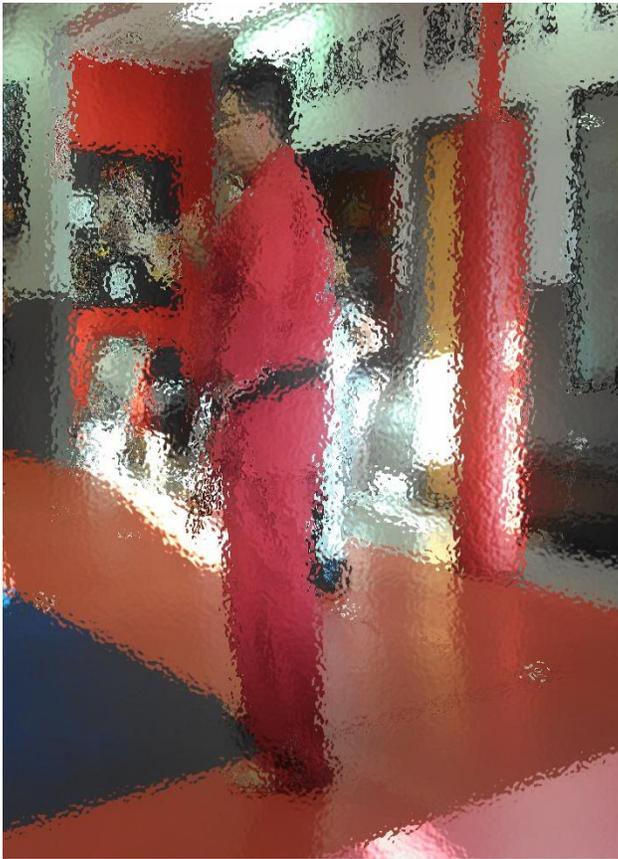*Figure 4.* "This shows respect because it's an Acura. That costs money!"

Figure 5: "This speaks authority, respect, and manhood to me because [my instructor] is

a man I respect and is in a position of authority."

Figure 6: "This says Black man because it's about the only job he can get these days."
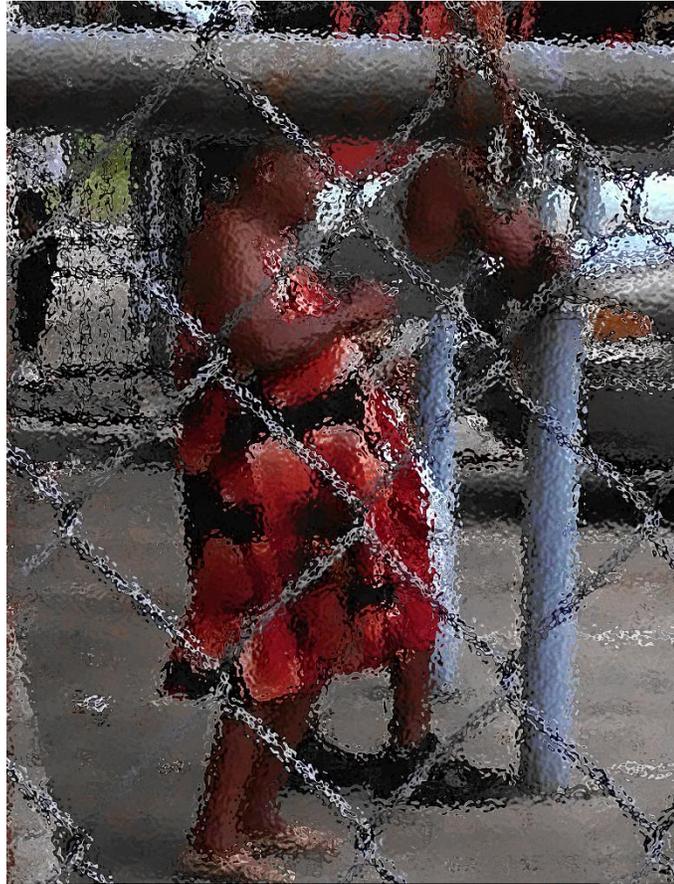
Figure 7: "This says street because you see the same people hanging in the same spot, smoking and drinking beer."

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the concepts of respect and self-esteem as they were defined by the culture-sharing group of young African American males living in an urban setting in the southeastern United States; the meaning and significance of these concepts in determining their behavior and lifestyle and the consequences to them. This was a qualitative collective case study, using a participatory paradigm with four research participants. It was valuable to conduct this study in order to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of young, African American males living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The acquisition of this understanding can be used to develop innovative, evidenced-based, techniques for helping professionals to effectively work with this population.

Key Findings

The key findings of this study were as follows: self-respect is related to the ongoing negative relationship with representatives of mainstream society, in law enforcement. All of the research participants held the same definition of respect: "Don't start nothing; won't be nothing." However, Ladies' Man, Junior and Mason were resigned to the fact that there would always be someone who would start something; law enforcement officers. This supports Pharo, et al.'s (2011) findings that marginalization has a negative effect on self-esteem. It also supports the assertions of Alexander (2012), Boothe (2012) and Burrell (2010) that African Americans tend to suffer from low self-

esteem as the result of the intergenerational transmission of trauma; specifically, the trauma of slavery, segregation and racial discrimination.

Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason have all had negative encounters with law enforcements. They have all been arrested, either as juveniles or as adults. Consequently, they believe that law enforcement officers "got no love for" them. This supports my earlier interpretation of the findings of Alexander (2012), Janku and Yan (2009) and Whitehead and Lab (2012). Namely, that since African American youths are the most frequently incarcerated among the races in the United States, it stands to reason that they experience low self-esteem than other peoples who are not incarcerated as frequently.

Moreover, these three research participants have developed feelings of contempt toward and fear of law enforcement. While these feelings may seem diverse, the research participants do not see it that way (Informal conversations, Summer 2014). Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason were all given the talk by their maternal family members during their early adolescence. Interestingly, this was the same time that they started smoking marijuana. Perhaps their maternal figures gave them the talk because they knew they had started smoking marijuana. I surmise that the talk was given at this time because these women wanted to protect their children from the structural violence they knew these boys would experience as they became older. I also surmise that the talk is a large part of why these young men are so loving and loyal to their maternal figures.

Based on the history of racism and discrimination against African American men in the country (Alexander, 2012; Oliver, 2001; Reiman & Leighton, 2009; Schwebel, 2011), and the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Burrell, 2010; Schlosser, 2006), I propose that Junior's mother, Mason's mother, and Ladies' Man's grandmother were all aware of the possibility that their boys would be approached by law enforcement as African American men. So they did what they could to protect them; they gave them the talk about how to interact with law enforcement when approached by them. All three of these women told their boys to be submissive to law enforcement, not to speak unless spoken to, and to avoid direct eye contact whenever possible. These women gave their boys these instructions because they didn't want to receive a family notification that their boys had been shot or beaten to death by police.

In the summer of 2014, Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason joked about when they first got the talk. However, looking back, they were angry at police who could take away not only their freedom, but their very lives. They hated the fact that there was little, if anything, they could do to remedy this situation. The talk sent the following message to these boys: "Mama loves you, but the police don't. Do whatever you have to to stay alive." The boys were taught to don a submissive role when encountered by police. Ladies' Man referred to it as "playing house nigga," meaning that he pretended to be respectful to police, but it was all a big act. Thus supporting Goffman's (1959) notion of dramaturgical roles for social acceptance. In this case, social acceptance is equivalent to a non-violent encounter.

My findings also support Anderson's (1999) findings of embracing the street code because mainstream American society blatantly rejects them. The code of the street is the counterculture that these three young men believe is their only recourse. Buddha, on the other hand, was raised by non-street relatives. He was also given the opportunity to be educated within mainstream American society. Consequently, Buddha denied ever experiencing marginalization by educators, law enforcement, or potential employers. He is the only one of the research participants who has an internal locus of control and is genuinely hopeful about his future.

Based on the findings of Tovar-Murray and Munley (2007) Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason are expected to have low self-esteem because they live in a disadvantaged neighborhood, and lack a viable means of income. Neither do any of them have a post-secondary education. The marginalization of having a criminal record, combined with the marginalization of being an African American man, combined with low SES and low level of completed education, produces three young African American men with fatalistic outlooks, external loci of control, and deplorably low levels of self-esteem. Even though Buddha lives in a disadvantaged neighborhood, he has a viable means of income and has begun his college career. Thus, he has an optimistic outlook on his future, an internal locus of control and a higher self-esteem than Junior, Ladies' Man, and Mason.

The three research participants' negative encounters with law enforcement and their lifelong relegation to the outskirts of mainstream American society all tie onto the larger themes mentioned in Chapter 4: Strategy to Earn Respect; Communication Patterns

within the Community that Demonstrate Respect; Assessment of Potential for Earning

Respect through Traditional Means; and the Importance of Manhood.

Interpretation of the Findings

What does it do to a young African American man to receive explicit and implicit

message from teachers, potential employers, law enforcement officers that he will never

amount to anything worthwhile? What does it do to a young African American man to

receive the message from his mother "I love you, but society doesn't." This confirms the

messages from the above-mentioned mainstream authority figures. The findings of this

study confirm what Alexander (2012) and Rios (2011) discussed about the negative

effects of pathological shaming from teachers and law enforcement. Junior, Ladies'

Man, and Mason all felt ignored or harassed by the authority figures in their school.

Consequently, they gave up on their educations. Ladies' Man dropped out after ninth

grade. Junior dropped out in tenth grade, but later earned his GED. Mason did graduate

high school, but admitted feeling ignored by his teachers.

Junior, Mason, and Ladies' Man also felt harassed by law enforcement officers

more than once in their lives. As a result, they have nothing but contempt for and fear of

law enforcement officers. According to Goffman (1959), these three research

participants play the social role of "house nigga" during their interactions with law

enforcement officers. This is their way of making certain these interactions do not result

in violence. Simply having to debase themselves in such a way causes anger and shame

because they are demonstrating a lack of self-respect in the name of self-preservation.

Yet, despite this deferential social role that is donned for law enforcement officers, these three young men are actually enraged at being made to feel inferior to and unwanted by members of mainstream American society. They are angered both at feeling subordinate and being powerless to change their social circumstances. So how do they deal with this anger? By smoking marijuana to temporarily abate their rage; selling marijuana to make money; and emulating Lil' Wayne because he earned notoriety with mainstream American society as the result of his videos that glamorize guns, money, and sex. Ladies' Man, Mason and Junior have chosen to embrace the marginalized world to which they have been relegated. Their motto is essentially "Make the best of a bad situation and have some fun wherever and whenever possible."

Any and all efforts to break the cycle of marginalization have been deemed futile by Junior, Ladies' Man and Mason. They see no chance of improving their life circumstances because the guardians of mainstream American society—a.k.a. law enforcement officers—have thwarted their prior attempts made during their pre-teen and adolescent years. Unlike Buddha, these boys were not encouraged to be whatever they wanted. Rather, they were treated as problem children and given implicit and explicit messages that they would only end up in prison or dead.

Structural Violence

Another contextual lens through which these findings can be explained is that of structural violence. This term was coined by Johan Galtung (1969) to explain the means by which the dominant culture uses direct or indirect violence to keep members of the

subordinate cultures in their place: "there may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (p. 171). Christie (1997) asserted that

> Structural violence occurs when economic and political structures systematically deprive need satisfaction for certain segments of society. When economic deprivation occurs, the need for well-being is not satisfied, resulting in deficits in human growth and development. Politically, structural violence engenders the systematic deprivation of the need for self-determination (315).

Since 1969, social scientists have used structural violence to examine social injustices worldwide. These include HIV prevention in India (Argento, et al., 2011); worldwide support for women's equality (Kohrt & Worthman, 2009; Mukherjee, Barry, Satti, Raymonville, Marsh, & Smith-Fawzi, 2011); job insecurity in the United States (Schwebel, 1997); and poverty (Schwebel, 2011). Oliver (2001) focused on cultural racism as a form of structural violence against African Americans. He posited that cultural racism was a "major source of structural pressure which leads to high rates of social problems, including: unemployment, poverty, lack of vocational training, substance abuse, property crime and interpersonal violence" (p 4). Similar to Burrell (2010) and Schlossel (2006), Oliver (2001) argued that African Americans' exposure to structural violence is the explanation for many African Americans' adoption of the

gangsta persona: i.e. being loud, being tough, having the most material items, or

demonstrating sexual prowess in order to earn the respect of one's peers (p. 7). Oliver

(2001) also attributed African Americans' use—and, arguably, abuse—of drugs and

alcohol to cope with the "psychological misorientation" that results from exposure to

structural violence (p. 7).

Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this study. First, I was unable to spend as

much time in the field as I would have preferred. In an ideal situation, I would have lived

on the Northside for three years and conducted a proper ethnography. Sadly, I was only

be able to be in the field two hours a day, once a week for 12 weeks. This was the

greatest barrier to my ability to gather sufficient details. Had I been able to spend three

years of more in the field, I am confident I would have been able to collect and compose

a wealth of data. This, in turn, would have resulted in a thick, rich description of

everyday life for this research population. As a countermeasure for this lack of

fieldwork, I had my research participants review my work to guarantee that the correct

information was provided in my results. This participant collaboration helped improve

the trustworthiness of my findings (Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013).

Second, at the start of data collection, I was concerned that my personal biases

might interfere with making objective analyses and observations. There was a significant

chance of my transferring feelings about my oldest son onto three of my research

participants. Fortunately, upon getting to know each research participant, I was able to

see *them*; not my oldest son. I therefore had minimal transference issues to process with

my individual counselor. I was also able to realize that my feelings toward my oldest son

were driven by my hurt and anger at his blatant rejection of me as a parental figure. I did

not have this issue with any of my research participants. This enabled me to consider

them and their actions objectively. I also shared my data with my Dissertation

Chairperson and gained her assessment to assure an objective analysis.

Third, I am a woman who researched a population of males much younger than I.

All four research participants deferred to me as a mother, or even grandmother type

(Anderson, 1999; Venkatesh, 2008). Odds were favorable that these young men did not

act naturally in my presence. In order to reduce this phenomenon, I sought to blend in

with the field environment so that I would be unobtrusive in my observations

(Murchison, 2010; Yin, 2013). This involved dressing in casual clothes, slouching my

posture somewhat, and making small talk with the research participants that involved the

use of AAVE in order to establish a rapport.

As effective as these methods were in getting the research participants to speak

with me, I was still unable to hide the fact that I was a woman to whom they all deferred

as a mother or grandmother type. Using AAVE with these research participants helped in

getting them to slightly relax in my presence. Yet, I sincerely doubt I was successful in

getting them to fully act naturally in my presence. According to Goffman (1959), these

research participants were playing the dramaturgical role of deferential youths in the

presence of an elder. Again, had I lived in the area for three years or more, I might have

had greater success in becoming truly innocuous. However, since I acted casually during my fieldwork, and passed no visible judgments of the research participants and their behaviors, I was somewhat successful in getting them to disclose rudimentary information about their life circumstances.

Recommendations

Since my original idea was to conduct an ethnography, my first recommendation for future research is to conduct that ethnography. Having the actual time to collect all of the desired data to answer the research questions would provide a thick, rich description of this population's understanding of the concepts of respect and self-esteem and how these understandings motivate their behaviors. The more time spent in the field, the more successful the researcher will be in earning the trust of her research participants. She can gain a deeper understanding of the necessity of "the talk." The researcher can also developed an understanding of what racial pride means to the inhabitants of the field site; if there is any meaning at all. This was an issue into which I could not delve, due to time constraints. The researcher will also be successful in acquiring more research participants, probably by means of snowball sampling (Rios, 2011).

During data collection, I noticed a distinctive separation of the genders when it came to socialization. Therefore, my primary recommendation for future research would be a qualitative study on gender roles in this geographical location. Because of my sex, I strongly suspect that I would have been more successful in getting research participants had I sought out young African American women. Along the same lines, another

recommendation for future research would be to have my study replicated by a male researcher. It is also highly likely that a male researcher might be more successful in gaining male research participants in this population.

One day of data collection, I witnessed an altercation between a teenage boy and an adult male. The teenager engaged in loud name-calling and pushing out his chest. After a while, the adult male in the altercation slapped the teenager. The teenager was enraged, as evidenced by his clenched teeth, pacing the sidewalk and finally racing up to the adult and calling him insulting names in an attempt to get him to fight back. The teenager was literally screaming profanities at the adult male. When these profanities were unsuccessful in engaging the adult in a physical fight, the teenager loudly threatened to come after the adult, saying, "I know where you live" and making hand gestures that resembled a gun.   The teenager did not stop his yelling and pacing until his mother arrived.

This incident reminded me of what Mason had said when I first met him, "Some people think they gotta be loud to get respect. Some people think they gotta beat other people up." Watching this incident and recalling the behaviors of my oldest son, I inferred that the some people to whom Mason referred were younger than he: namely adolescents. Another recommendation for future research would therefore be a mixed methods study on the differences in the understanding of respect and self-esteem according to the age of the African American males. This would involve working with adolescents and older males in this population.

An additional recommendation would be the replication of this study in other geographic locations in the United States, both metropolitan and rural. The purpose of these replications would be to test the generalizability of my findings. Different geographical locations and different urban, suburban or rural settings might have different shaping and context effects on race among African Americans in these settings.

A final recommendation for future research would be a phenomenological study on the effects of law enforcement interactions on the self-esteem of young African American males. The 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri by law enforcement has caused nationwide protests and outrage at the apparent sanction of law enforcement officers to use lethal force against unarmed African American men (CBS News, 2014). This treatment by law enforcement officers was nothing surprising to Ladies' Man, Junior or Mason, as evidenced by their descriptions of their personal interactions with law enforcement. This, in turn, led me to believe that gaining an understanding of how law enforcement interactions affect the self-esteem of African American men could lead to the development of improved education of current and future law enforcement officers to prevent tragic incidents such as the death of Michael Brown.

Implications

In 2011, I worked at a juvenile detention facility, where I conducted individual, group, and family counseling sessions for 28 males, aged 12 to 18 years. Of the 28 youths in the facility, 20 of them were African American. When working with this

population, I approached individuals using my mainstream American society training. I

made repeated suggestions for nonviolent alternatives for conflict resolution and

alternative coping skills to smoking marijuana. Each suggestion was met with the

response, "That's unrealistic." At the time, I thought it was the youths' way of remaining

in the precontemplative stage of change (Miller, 2013). In hindsight, I realize now that I

was guilty of failing to understand the cultural background and social context of my

clients (Sue & Sue, 2008).

One of the primary reasons that African Americans underuse mental health

services is the cultural blindness and overall assumption that techniques developed within

mainstream American society are universally affective in treating people from all walks

of life (Sue & Sue, 2008). This is a fallacy that must be eradicated in order to provide

constructive assistance to this population. The standards of assessment currently in use to

assist the marginalized populations of this country need to be redesigned in order to

appropriately meet the needs of these peoples (Sue & Sue, 2008). The findings of this

study are a primary step in the direction of this necessary reform.

Positive Social Change

Had I been aware of the cultural background of my clients in the juvenile

detention center, I would have been able to involve them in their treatment. We would

have worked together to make realistic goals for them post-release. I might have been

more successful in getting their family members involved in their treatment, because I

would have demonstrated that I was aware of their social and cultural backgrounds. My

clients would have believed that I genuinely understood who they were and what their lives were like outside the detention facility. This would have resulted in a deeper rapport than the one I established with them. Looking back, I believe that the youths I attempted to treat—as well as their parents—only saw me as part of the system that kept them marginalized. They therefore had no reason to trust me, and only regurgitated the futile lessons I taught in daily groups and weekly individual sessions. Very little, if any, of the seeds I attempted to plant took root.

Oliver (2001) argued that cultural racism was embedded in American education, mass media and religion (pp. 4-5). I contend that cultural racism is also rampant in the human services fields of social work (Aldridge, et al., 2011; Sullivan & Evans, 2006), mental health (Bergsieker, et al., 2010; Sue & Sue, 2008), and criminal justice (Alexander, 2012; Barak, et al., 2010). The explicit preference for mainstream American society's goals and achievements has been the foundation on which the United States was built. The opening statement in the U.S. Declaration of Independence "All men are created equal" (Charters of Freedom, 2014) referred only to Caucasian men of property. When the Declaration of Independence was signed, African Americans were still enslaved and considered nothing more than property; equated with livestock. The much-needed redesign of the human services fields needs to start with the younger generations. First, and most importantly, cultural diversity training must be implemented in elementary schools (Schwebel, 2011).

The premise of Caucasian supremacy is still embedded in the major systems of the United States, leaving many African Americans impoverished, undereducated, unemployed, and victims of the criminal justice system (Agnew, 2005; Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Bell, 1973; Burrell, 2010; Janku & Yan, 2009; Massey, 2007; Reese, 2006; Reiman & Leighton, 2009; Reisig, et al., 2007). This supports the first premise of CRT; that racial discrimination is present in every aspect of American life and all non-Caucasians experience it daily (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). There is little possibility for African American men who are subjected to structural violence. There is a need to re-evaluate the cultural bias that exists in the human services fields in order to eliminate it.

In 1984, I had classmates in high school who still referred to African Americans as "colored" because their education on cultural diversity was based on fear, ignorance, and elitism. It is imperative to educate children that being different does not mean being ugly or inferior. It therefore needs to be taught in the elementary schools, and reinforced in middle and high schools across the country. Moreover, cultural diversity needs to encompass more than a generic overview of Black History Month every February. It needs to encompass economic diversity, religious diversity, sexual diversity, and physical diversity. Just making broad statements about African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans does not mean that teachers have done their part to educate children on cultural diversity.

In the mental health field, this education on the multiple diversities of this country also needs to be implemented. One of my greatest frustrations in taking a cultural

diversity class or seminar is that I never feel that the true issue of cultural diversity is actually addressed. One of the reasons I decided to pursue a doctoral degree was to educate future mental health counselors. Consequently, getting a better understanding of the different cultures in America—particularly among marginalized populations—will result in more in-depth examinations of the cultural issues that counselors face and will face. This will segue into the elimination of mere surface-scratching counseling techniques that have been taught in Masters programs over the past decade.
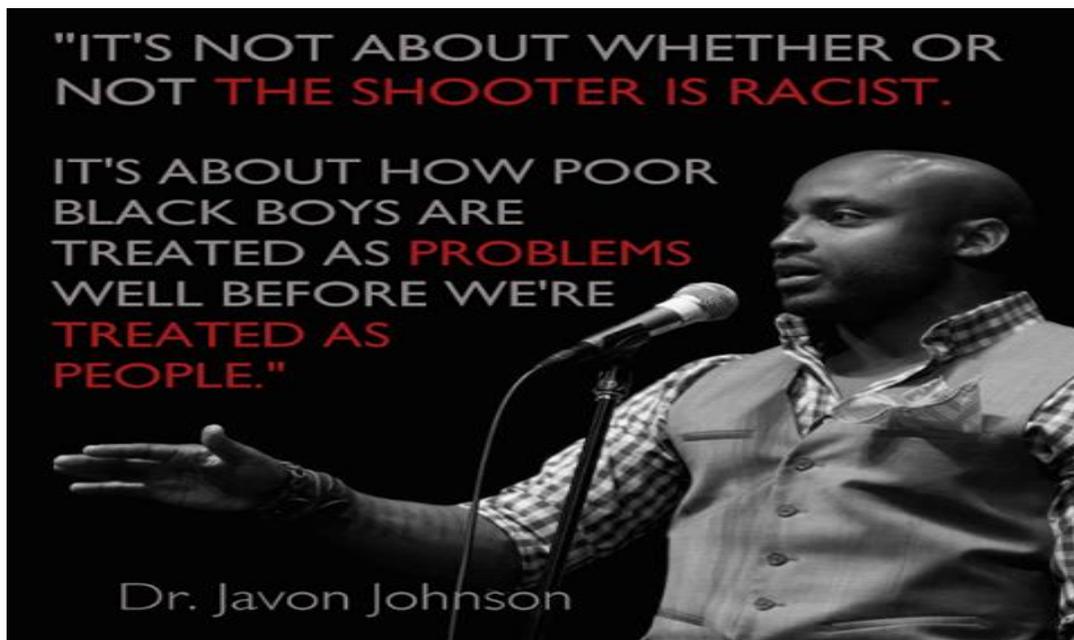
Of course, the criminal justice system needs a complete overhaul. This needs to begin at the police academy level. Cadets need to understand that

> Police violence against African Americans has historically served the function of maintaining an American racial hierarchy in which the criminal justice system as an institution is used to perpetuate white dominance and black subordination . . . . The generalized societal disrespect for African Americans and internalization of antiblack stereotypes are often imported into the police occupational role from larger society. Thus encounters with African Americans are substantially influenced by racially biased socialization experiences which predate the assumption of the police officer role . . . . police violence against African Americans may . . . . be motivated by a conscious desire to reinforce the racial status quo . . . . [and teach] the victim a lesson about the importance of knowing and staying in his place (Oliver, 2001, pp. 14-18).

By educating future criminal justice professionals, the racial status quo can be eliminated.

Conclusion

We have not overcome simply because President Obama won the election in 2008. Unlike many of his peers, President Obama was afforded the privilege of being raised within mainstream American society. Not enough young African American men are granted that privilege. They are left to wallow on the outskirts of mainstream American society, compelled to get by one day at a time; one hustle at a time. Dr. Javon Johnson, an Assistant Professor at San Francisco State University and acclaimed national poetry slam champion has this to say about the issue:

"IT'S NOT ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE SHOOTER IS RACIST.

IT'S ABOUT HOW POOR BLACK BOYS ARE TREATED AS PROBLEMS WELL BEFORE WE'RE TREATED AS PEOPLE."

Dr. Javon Johnson

Enough is enough. It's time to stand up and make a change.

References

Agnew, R. (2005). *Why do criminals offend? A general theory of crime and delinquency.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Aldridge, J., Shute, J., Ralphs, R., & Medina, J. (2011). Blame the parents? Challenges for parent-focused programmes for families of gang-involved young people. *Children & Society, 25,* 371-381. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00282.x

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of color-blindness.* (Revised Edition). New York, NY: The New Press.

Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Anthony, D. B. (2007). *Social acceptance and self-esteem: Tuning the sociometer to interpersonal value.* (Doctoral thesis, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada). Retrieved from

https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/10012/3008/1/Anthony_dissertation.pdf

Anthony, D. B., Holmes, J. G., & Wood, J. V. (2007). Social acceptance and self-esteem: Tuning the sociometer to interpersonal value. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92,* 1024-1039. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1024.

Argento, E., Reza-Paul, S., Lorway, R., Jain, J., Bhagya, M., Fathima, M., Sreeram, S. V., Hafeezur, R. S., & O'Neil, J. (2011). Confronting structural violence in sex work: Lessons from a community-led HIV prevention project in Mysore, India. *AIDS Care, 23,* 69-74. doi: 10.1080/09540121.2010.498868.

Asim, J. (2007). *The N word: Who can say it, who shouldn't, and why.* New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Barak, G., Leighton, P., & Flavin, J. (2010). *Class, race, gender, and crime: The social realities of justice in America* (Third Edition). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bergsieker, H. B., Shelton, J. N, & Richeson, J. A. (2010). To be liked versus respected: Divergent goals in interracial interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99,* 248-264. doi: 10.1037/a0018474.

Bissler, D. L., & Conners, J. L. (2012). Inequalities in *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation:* Stereotypes in the *CSI* investigators. In. Bissler, D. L., & Conners, J. L. (Eds.). *The harms of crime media: Essays on the perpetuation of racism, sexism and class stereotypes,* pp. 127-150. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Bloom, J. D. (2010). "The incarceration revolution:" The abandonment of the seriously mentally ill to our jails and prisons. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics, 38,* 727-734. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-720X.2010.00526.x

Blumer, H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific Sociological Review, 1,* 3-7. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1388607.

Boothe, D. (2012). *Getting out and staying out: A Black man's guide to success after prison.* Memphis, TN: Full Surface Publishing.

Bourgois, P. (1995). Families and children in pain. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city: Readings on doing urban fieldwork,* pp. 32-40. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brandling, J., & Wall, S. (2013). United response: UR in the picture, final report. Retrieved from

http://www.photovoice.org/html/pvmethodology/method_03/report.pdf

Briggs, D. (2010). "True stories from bare times on road": Developing empowerment, identity and social capital among urban minority ethnic young people in London, UK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 33,* 851-871. doi: 10.1080/01419870903254687.

Burrell, T. (2010). *Brainwashed: Challenging the myth of Black inferiority.* New York, NY: Smiley Books.

Bynum, M. S., & Kotchick, B. A. (2006). Mother-adolescent relationship quality and autonomy as predictors of psychosocial adjustment among African American adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 15,* 529-542. doi: 10.1007/s10826-006-9035-z.

CBS News (2014). Unrest over Michael Brown shooting. Retrieved from

http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/unrest-over-michael-brown-shooting/

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2012). HIV among African Americans.

Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/index.htm.

Charters of Freedom (2014). U. S. Declaration of Independence. Retrieved from

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

Christie, D. J. (1997). Reducing direct and structural violence: The human needs theory.

Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 3, 315-332.

Contreras, R. (2009). "Damn, yo—who's that girl?" An ethnographic analysis of

masculinity in drug robberies. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city:*

Readings on doing urban fieldwork, pp. 231-238. New York, NY: Routledge.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and*

procedures for developing grounded theory. (Third Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five*

approaches. (Second Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Daw, M. (2013). See it our way: Participatory photography as a tool for advocacy.

Retrieved from

http://www.photovoice.org/html/ppforadvocacy/ppforadvocacy.pdf

Daw, M., & Badenoch, G. (2013). Sensory photography: Photography for blind and visually impaired people. Retrieved from http://www.photovoice.org/html/pvmethodology/method_04/report.pdf

Dwyer, S. (2012). Walking the tightrope of a mental health act assessment. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 26,* 341-353. doi: 10.1080/02650533.2011.629293.

Dyson, M. E. (1996). *Between God and gangsta rap: Bearing witness to Black culture.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Fairey, T. (2013). Change the picture: Photography with vulnerable women. Retrieved from http://www.photovoice.org/html/pvmethodology/method_02/report.pdf

Farmer, L., & Milos, R. (2012). Graffiti: Giving voice to the indigenous. *DePaul Journal for Social Justice, 5,* 409-419.

Fields, D., & Abrams, L. S. (2010). Gender differences in the perceived needs and barriers of youth offenders preparing for community reentry. *Child Youth Care Forum, 39,* 253-269. doi: 10.1007/s10566-010-9102-x.

Fleury, E., & Fernet, M. (2012). An exploratory study of gang-affiliated young men's perceptions and experiences of sexuality and gender relations. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 21,* 1-15.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research, 6,* 167-191.

Gant, L. M., Shimshock, K., Allen-Meares, P., Smith, L., Miller, P., Hollingsworth, L.
A., & Shanks, T. (2009). Effects of photovoice: Civic engagement among older
youth in urban communities. *Journal of Community Practice, 17,* 358-376. doi:
10.1080/10705420903300074.

Gaylord-Harden, N. K., Ragsdale, B. L., Mandara, J., Richards, M. H., & Petersen, A. C.
(2007). Perceived support and internalizing symptoms in African American
adolescents: Self-esteem and ethnic identity as mediators. *Journal of Youth and
Adolescence, 36,* 77-88. doi: 10.1007/s10964-006-9115-9.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* New York, NY:
Doubleday.

Gyimah-Brempong, K. (2007-2008). Crime and race: A plea for new ideas. *Review of
Black Political Economy, 34,* 173-185. doi: 10.1007/s12114-008-9016-0.

Harris-Britt, A., Valrie, C. R., Kurtz-Costes, B., & Rowley, S. J. (2007). Perceived racial
discrimination and self-esteem in African American youth: Racial socialization as
a protective factor. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 17,* 669-682. doi:
10.1111/j.1532-7795.2007.00540.x.

Hirschfield, P. J. (2008). The declining significance of delinquent labels in disadvantaged
urban communities. *Sociological Forum, 23,* 575-601. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-
7861.2008.00077.x

Jackson, P. B., & Henderson, K. A. (2006). Deviance removal and global self-esteem: Evidence from the Harlem longitudinal study of urban Black youth. *Research in Human Development, 3,* 229-249. doi: 10.1207/s15427617rhd0304_4.

Jacobs, F. H., Miranda-Julian, C., & Kaplan, R. (2011). Parents, families, and the juvenile justice system. In Sherman, F. T., & Jacobs, F. H. (Eds.) *Juvenile justice: Advancing research, policy, and practice,* pp. 199-222. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Jefferson, T. (1853). *Notes on the state of Virginia.* (A New Edition). Richmond, VA: J. W. Randolph. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h490t.html.

Kaufman, J. M., Rebellon, C. J., Thaxton, S., & Agnew, R. (2008). A general strain theory of racial differences in criminal offending. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 41,* 421-437. doi: 10.1375/acri.41.3.421

Kessi, S. (2011). Photovoice as a practice of re-presentation and social solidarity: Experiences from a youth empowerment project in Dar es Salaam and Soweto. *Papers on Social Representation, 20,* 7.1-7.27. Retrieved from http://www.psych.lse.ac.uk/psr/

Kohrt, B. A., & Worthman, C. M. (2009). Gender and anxiety in Nepal: The role of social support, stressful life events, and structural violence. *CNS Neuroscience & Therapeutics, 15,* 237-248. doi: 10.1111/j.1755-5949.2009.00096.x

Lombard, K. J. (2013). Men against the wall: Graffiti(ed) masculinities. *The Journal of Men's Studies, 21,* 178-190. doi: 10.3149/jms.2102.178.

Mandara, J., Gaylord-Harden, N. K., Richards, M. H., & Ragsdale, B. L. (2009). The effects of changes in racial identity and self-esteem on changes in African American adolescents' mental health. *Child Development, 80,* 1660-1675. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01360.x.

Martin, M. J., McCarthy, B., Conger, R. D., Gibbons, F. X., Simons, R. L., Cutrona, C. E., & Brody, G. H. (2011). The enduring significance of racism: Discrimination and delinquency among Black American youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 21,* 662-676. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00699.x

Massey, D. S. (2007). *Categorically unequal: The American stratification system.* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Memmott, M. (2012). Killing of Fla. Teen Trayvon Martin becomes national story about race. Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2012/03/19/148905661/killing-of-fla-teen-trayvon-martin-becomes-national-story-about-race

Miller, W. R. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people change* (3rd Edition). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Moskos, P. (2008). The corner: Life on the streets. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city: Readings on doing urban fieldwork,* pp. 100-106. New York, NY: Routledge.

Murchison, J. M. (2010). *Ethnography essentials: Designing, conducting, and presenting your research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Murkherjee, J. S., Barry, D. J., Satti, H., Raymonville, M., Marsh, S., & Smith-Fawzi, M. K. (2011). Structural violence: A barrier to achieving the millennium development goals for women. *Journal of Women's Health, 20,* 593-597. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2010.2375

National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011a). *The nation's report card: Mathematics 2011.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/dst2011/2012452.pdf.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011b). *The nation's report card: Reading 2011.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/dst2011/2012455.pdf.

National Center for Education Statistics (2012). *The condition of education 2012.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16.

National Institute of Mental Health (2006). Medical expenditure panel survey. Retrieved from http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/cost/mental-healthcare-cost-data-for-all-americans-2006.shtml

Nurse, A. M. (2010). *Locked up, locked out: Young men in the juvenile justice system.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Oliver, W. (2001). Cultural racism and structural violence: Implications for African Americans. In See, L. A. (Editor) *Violence as seen through a prism of color,* pp. 1-26. Binghampton, NY: The Haworth Social Work Practice Press.

Orton, L., & Fairey, T. (2013). Photography for integration: A resource for running photography projects with young refugees. Retrieved from http://www.photovoice.org/html/pvmethodology/method_01/report.pdf

Papachristos, A. V. (2009). Murder by structure: Dominance relations and the social structure of gang homicide. *American Journal of Sociology, 115,* 74-128.

Patillo, M. (2008). The Black bourgeoisie meets the truly disadvantaged. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city: Readings on doing urban fieldwork,* pp. 53-63. New York, NY: Routledge.

Pharo, H., Gross, J., Richardson, R., & Hayne, H. (2011). Age-related changes in the effect of ostracism. *Social Influence, 6,* 22-38. doi: 10.1080/15534510.2010.525852.

Phillips, R. F. (2010). Initiatives to support disadvantaged young people: Enhancing social capital and acknowledging personal capital. *Journal of Youth Studies, 13,* 489-504. doi: 10.1080/13676260903522494.

PhotoVoice. (2013). PhotoVoice. Participatory photography for social change. Retrieved from http://www.photovoice.org/about/.

Prelow, H. M., Weaver, S. R., & Swenson, R. R. (2006). Competence, self-esteem, and coping efficacy as mediators of ecological risk and depressive symptoms in urban African American and European American youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 35,* 507-517. doi: 10.1007/s10964-006-9068-z.

Ralphs, R., Medina, J., & Aldridge, J. (2009). Who needs enemies with friends like these? The importance of place for young people living in known gang areas. *Journal of Youth Studies, 12,* 483-500. doi: 10.1080/13676260903083356.

Reese, R. (2006). *Prison race.* Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Reiman, J., & Leighton, P. (2009). *The rich get richer and the poor get prison: Ideology, class, and criminal justice* (Ninth Edition). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Reitzes, D. C., & Jaret, C. (2007). Identities and social-psychological well-being among African American college students. *Sociological Focus, 40,* 392-412.

Rios, V. M. (2011). *Punished: Policing the lives of Black and Latino boys (New perspectives in crime, deviance, and law).* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Rock, C. (1999). *Bigger & Blacker.* [DVD]. New York, NY: HBO Films.

Sandberg, S. (2009a). A narrative search for respect. *Deviant Behavior, 30,* 487-510. doi: 10.1080/01639620802296394.

Sandberg, S. (2009b). Gangster, victim or both? The interdiscursive construction of

    sameness and difference in self-presentations. *The British Journal of Sociology,*

    60, 523-542. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01254.x.

Scanlan, D. (2012). 1 dead in shooting at Southside gas station in confrontation over loud

    music, police say. *The Florida Times Union,* 11/23/2012. Retrieved from

    http://members.jacksonville.com/news/crime/2012-11-23/story/1-dead-

    shooting-southside-gas-station-confrontation-over-loud-music.

Schlosser, L. Z. (2006). Affirmative psychotherapy for American Jews. *Psychotherapy:*

    Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 43, 424-435. doi: 10.1037/0033-

    3204.43.4.424.

Schwebel, M. (1997). Job insecurity as structural violence: Implications for destructive

    intergroup conflict. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 3,* 333-351.

Schwebel, M. (2011). Victories over structural violence. *Peace and Conflict, 17,* 85-99.

    doi: 10.1080/10781919.2010.535138

Seaton, E. K. (2010). The influence of cognitive development and perceived racial

    discrimination on the psychological well-being of African American youth.

    Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 39, 694-703. doi: 10.1007/s10964-009-9438-

    4.

Seaton, E. K., & Yip, T. (2009). School and neighborhood contexts, perceptions of racial

discrimination, and psychological well-being among African American

adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38,* 153-163. doi:

10.1007/s10964-008-9356-x.

Shutay, J. C., Williams, J., & Shutay, R. A. (2011). Predicting conduct disorder, drug use

and court involvement for expelled adolescents: Developing theoretically based

explanatory models by gender. *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice, 7,* 9-28.

Simmons, A. D. (2012). Crime news sources and crime views: The relationship between

news media exposure patterns and White's opinions about criminal justice issues.

In Bissler, D. L., & Conners, J. L. (Eds.). *The harms of crime media: Essays on*

the perpetuation of racism, sexism and class stereotypes, pp. 224-238. Jefferson,

NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Stevenson, H. C., & Arrington, E. G. (2009). Racial/ethnic socialization mediates

perceived racism and the racial identity of African American adolescents.

Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15, 125-136. doi:

10.1037/a0015500.

Stewart, E. A., & Simons, R. L. (2006). Structure and culture in African American

adolescent violence: A partial test of the "Code of the Street" thesis. *Justice*

Quarterly, 23, 1-32. doi: 10.1080/07418820600552378.

Strack, R. W., Magill, C., & McDonah, K. (2004). Engaging youth through Photovoice.

Health Promotion Practice, 5, 49-58. doi: 10.1177/1524839903258015.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2008). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice.* (Fifth Edition). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons

Sullivan, M., & Evans, T. (2006). Adolescents living in public housing: Self-perceptions of competence and family satisfaction. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 23,* 513-531. doi: 10.1007/s10560-006-0072-7.

Tovar-Murray, D., & Munley, P. H. (2007). Exploring the relationship between race-related stress, identity, and well-being among African Americans. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 31,* 58-71.

United States Census Bureau. (2012a). Current population survey (CPS) – definitions. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/cps/about/cpsdef.html

United States Census Bureau. (2012b). Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2011. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf.

United States Census Bureau. (2013). Small area income and poverty estimates. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/data/2011.html

Venkatesh, S. (2002). 'Doin' the Hustle': Constructing the ethnographer in the American ghetto. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city: Readings on doing urban fieldwork,* pp. 179-185. New York, NY: Routledge.

Venkatesh, S. (2008). *Gang leader for a day: A rogue sociologist takes to the streets.* New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Wang, C. C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior, 24,* 369-387. doi: 10.1177/109019819702400309.

Ward, L. M. (2004). Wading through stereotypes: Positive and negative associations between media use and Black adolescents' conceptions of self. *Developmental Psychology, 40,* 284-294. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.40.2.284.

Wright, B. R., & Younts, C. W. (2009). Reconsidering the relationship between race and crime: Positive and negative predictors of crime among African American youth. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency, 46,* 327-352. doi: 10.1177/0022427809335170.

Wynn, J. R. (2005). Guiding practices: Storytelling tricks for reproducing the urban landscape. In R. E. Ocejo (Ed.). *Ethnography and the city: Readings on doing urban fieldwork,* pp. 118-126. New York, NY: Routledge.

X, M., & Haley, A. (1966). *The autobiography of Malcolm X.* New York, NY: Grove Press.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A

Introductory Flier

RESPECT

What is it?

How do you get it?

I want to know!

Volunteers needed for a research study on respect. Looking for men ages 18-25.   Call Morgan at (904) 349-5688. Serious callers only!

Appendix B

Observation Sheet

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
SETTING[1]: Physical Location: Day of the Week: Time of Day: Weather: Background Noises/Smells: 	
PEOPLE[2]: Clothing: Jewelry: Other Accessories: Actions Performed:	

---

[1] Bourgois, 1995; Fetterman, 2010; Madden, 2010; Moskos, 2008; Murchison, 2010.
[2] Anderson, 1999; Anthony, 2007; Anthony, et al., 2007; Burrell, 2010

Postures/Body Language/Facial Expressions: Speech:	
Social Interactions[3]:	

[3] Asim, 2007; Bergsieker, et al., 2010; Gaylord-Harden, et al., 2007; Goffman, 1959

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Date of Interview:

Time:

Place:

Interviewee:

Age of Interviewee:

Questions:

1. Tell me about the music you listen to. Who's your favorite artist & why?[4]

2. Tell me about your family. Who raised you? Who do you live with now? How long have you lived in this neighborhood?[5]

3. Do you work or go to school? Where?

4. IF INTERVIEWEE HAS OR HAS HAD A JOB: How are (have) you (been) treated by employers? [6]

5. IF INTERVIEWEE DOES NOT HAVE A JOB: How do you get money to live on?[7]

6. How do you spend your money? How often do you shop for clothes or food? Do you give money to family members?[8]

---

[4] Asim, 2007; Contreras, 2009; Dyson, 1996; Wynn, 2005
[5] Wynn, 2005
[6] Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999
[7] Agnew, 2005; Barak, et al., 2010; Venkatesh, 2008
[8] Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Venkatesh, 2008

7. IF INTERVIEWEE DOES NOT SAY HE HAS KIDS LIVING WITH HIM: Do you have kids? How often do you see them? How do you spend time with your kids? How do you get along with their mother?[9]

8. Where did you go to school? Did you graduate? How did you do in school? How were (are) you treated by teachers? How were you treated by police officers in your school?[10]

9. Has a police officer stopped you for any reason?[11] Please tell me about it: were you suspected of doing something; did you get arrested; the feelings attached to the incident. Did being stopped by the police change your attitude toward law enforcement in any way? Are you on probation or parole? Have you ever been on probation?

10. Tell me who you're closest to in your family. Why?[12]

11. Tell me who you have the most strained relationship with in your family. Why?

12. What does it mean to be a man?[13]

13. What is respect?[14]

14. How do you get respect?

15. How do you keep respect?

16. How could you lose respect?

---

[9] Anderson, 1999; Dyson, 1996; Fleury & Fernet, 2012

[10] Agnew, 2005; Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011a; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011b; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2012.

[11] Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 1999; Hisrschfield, 2008; Rios, 2011

[12] Anderson, 1999; Massey, 2007; Venkatesh, 2008

[13] Anderson, 1999; Asim, 2007; Burrell, 2010; Fleury & Fernet, 2012

[14] Anderson, 1999; Asim, 2007; Rios, 2011; X & Haley, 1966

17. What's your reputation in the neighborhood?[15]

18. Who in the neighborhood do you have beef with? Why? How do you plan on settling it?

19. If you could have anything in the world, what would it be?[16]

20. How do you plan on getting what you want?

---

[15] Anderson, 1999; Burrell, 2010; Papachristos, 2009; Rios, 2011; Venkatesh, 2008
[16] Burrell, 2010