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# Black Male Genocide: Sanctioned Segregation In American Policy

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**BLACK MALE GENOCIDE: SANCTIONED SEGREGATION IN AMERICAN POLICY**

by

**ALTON MAXEL JAMES IV**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

2017

MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND  
POLICY STUDIES

Approved By:

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Advisor

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Date

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## DEDICATION

*To my ancestors, to mom (JoAnn), dad (Alton III), sister (Lauren), my wife (Christol), and my son (Ethan)—I stand on the shoulders of titans. For all that we have done, for all that we do, and for all that is yet to come, I salute you. I love you with all of my being and beyond the depths of meaning that the most beautiful words could express! Thank you for all of your love and support; I am truly grateful and humbled! For you Ethan, my greatest desire is to leave behind a world in which you can chart your destiny based on your compassion rather than your color.*

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## CHAPTER 1 A 60 YEAR HISTORY OF HEGEMONIC SEGREGATION

### Introduction

Genocide is a word that piques fear, passionate commentary, profound misery, and outrage for many. Within the context of the United States, it often conjures images of American Slavery and The Trail of Tears. In a global context, it can elicit memories of The Jewish Holocaust, Rwandan genocide, Armenian genocide, or genocide taking place throughout the Middle East during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Witnesses of these horrible atrocities can recall groups of people publicly and viciously executed without pause or remorse. Women, children, and even babies have endured cruel torture and even slaughter. However, one can argue that American ideology places itself upon a moral pedestal by noting itself as “The Beacon on a Hill”—by naming its president the “Leader of the Free World.” This mindset denounces any participation in genocide—only perhaps as taking a stance in eradicating it globally. Such terms place the United States in the position of having the moral high ground over the rest of humanity; however, history does not support that assertion.

Contemporary examples of such a stance include American military engagement in Kuwait, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, and Syria. Literally and relatively speaking in regards to the dictionary definition of genocide, it would be difficult to classify acts of genocide enacted by Americans on American soil since the abolition of slavery. American History has witnessed a multitude of acts of genocide when applying a more functional definition of genocide. The murders of the Black residents of Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 as a result of the prosperity of “Black Wall Street” are definitive examples. The forced servitude of Chinese laborers for the creation of the American Rail System that led to thousands of deaths is another

stark example. Furthermore, the Irish-American immigrants (that were forced into low-wage servitude to replace the free labor of Black<sup>1</sup> slaves upon abolition) endured many deaths.

Ultimately, these atrocities seem rarely discussed in general American discourse. Moreover, these events do not fully encapsulate the level of genocide that takes place in the United States. While religious and racial sects may not physically battle in the streets, targeted and systemic measures are taken to cripple various communities throughout society. Thus, it is paramount to redefine the use of the word genocide to reflect the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If the policies that govern a nation are inherently hegemonic and racist in nature, then one could question the attitudes and beliefs of its creators. However, the author argues that various policies are not only hegemonic and racist in nature, but they purposefully segregate groups within the population to strip them of rights and citizenship—a disenfranchisement that often leads to poverty, isolation, poor health, incarceration, and even death.

Given that the United States operates under the economic system of capitalism, there are financial incentives built into various policies that directly harm Black males in society. For some stakeholders, it is profitable to expand for-profit schools that disproportionately exist in poor minority areas (Boyd, 2007); it is profitable for prison management companies to increase the prison population (Chan, 2010); and, it is profitable to disallow mass transit in communities of color that would give them access to new housing and jobs (Fotsch, 2007). Although one could argue that these various policies were not designed to harm Black American males, the outcomes are clear regarding their impact. So, if policy makers enact policy that yields

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<sup>1</sup> Considering that the term “Black” is often synonymous with “African-American” in the United States, the term is capitalized in this research as to respect that group—one stemming from collective experiences of historical oppression. As a further means of contextualizing this research, “African-American” is unused since the denotation would be referring to African born people residing in the United States.

detrimental results and fails to create policies to ameliorate those issues, then the policy makers and their affiliates (de facto) sanction the effects.

Because American citizens do not outwardly see acts of violence between Hutu and Tutsi or the Shia and Sunni on their streets and in their neighborhoods, America is inclined to only acknowledge obvious conflicts as being genocide. However, if American policies can ensure that a group receives a poor education, few employment opportunities, limited transportation access, subpar health care, limited funding for public services, high rates of incarceration, and a whole host of other grave problems, it is by all accounts "killing" that group. The marginalization of citizens occurs if they cannot function as other citizens in the society. Therefore, for the sake of this study and commentary on hegemonic policies within the United States, genocide will be defined as: *efforts that systematically disenfranchise a group by stripping its autonomy, power, and ability to contribute within society in a way that ensures its health, vitality, education, livelihood, and ability to maintain its population of those with active citizenry status (being free from jail, prison, the inability to vote, or premature death).*

Upon chronicling all of the factors that mitigate life outcomes for Black males, one of the most striking effects occurs during the formative years when going through higher education. When assessing all student demographics in the aggregate, women earn 55% of all of the college bachelor's degrees awarded—while men receive 45% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Over the last century, women have earned an increasing number of the overall awarded degrees compared to men. Quite obviously, before women were allowed into universities, women were unable to earn degrees. The trend exacerbates in the Black community. Currently, Black women earn 66% of bachelor's degrees versus 34% for Black males (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) [NCES]. Based on the NCES data, the negative rate at which college

degree acquisition occurs in the Black community far exceeds other demographic groups. While early childhood factors yield deleterious realities for Black male academic success, several other negative factors exist.

The overrepresentation of Black males in special education is well documented; furthermore, the criminal justice system over represents Black men in its population. However, despite the political and societal systems that overtly hinder success for this group, current research does not adequately account for the increased rate at which Black women earn more degrees than Black males (as compared to all women earning more degrees than men). In light of this fact, one or more series of factors must be operating on the subsurface to account for such data.

One can argue that a cultural phenomenon is responsible for the disparity in college degree attainment between Black men and women. Early childhood research indicates the amount of vocabulary a child possesses most accurately predicts a child's academic success. Unfortunately, in the Black community writ large, minority students enter school with 50% less vocabulary than their majority counterparts (Christ & Wang, 2010). Modern research attempts to determine why Black males have traditionally not succeeded educationally. Contemporary research tries to assess this phenomenon via the impact of single-parent homes, poverty, crime, drugs, the school to prison pipeline, the overrepresentation of Black males in special education, unemployment, underemployment, college access, etc. among others. However, there is little research that attempts to determine how policies that account for gaps in academic performance between Black men and women these purposefully create these phenomena.

Thus, it is prudent to assess how Black men are uniquely and purposefully negatively impacted by American policy over their life course. More specifically, it is important to

understand these phenomena since the 1950s when Blacks began to be allowed to participate in public higher education from a policy standpoint in greater numbers within state-funded and private colleges and universities; although, it would be perfectly logical to include policies that extend back to the antebellum United States. However, for the sake of this study, the research focus area will be narrowed and delimited. Nevertheless, Black men have been a marginalized group both in society and higher education. Neither individual nor group of people can be completely isolated and insulated within society from a social interaction standpoint—without choosing or creating it. Given that understanding, the author argues that American policy has been genocidal and hegemonic in nature—bluntly, it is purposefully destroying and dismantling of the lives of Black males in the United States. Furthermore, that destruction could potentially be deemed as uniquely responsible for the disparity in degree attainment between Black men and women. Hence, the author hypothesizes that the institution of segregation has disproportionately affected Blacks in America and uniquely impacts the gap in college degree attainment between Black men and women.

***Given this hypothesis, the following questions become of particular pertinence:***

*Research Question 1:* What 4-year university graduation attainment rates are yielded for Black males (compared to Black women) when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood compared to those who grow up in a more diverse community?

*Research Question 2:* Do Black males reduce the degree attainment gap between Black men and women when accounting for 6-year graduation rates as a function of neighborhood racial diversity/segregation?

In assessing the nature of Black males' status and standing, it can be deemed prudent to contextualize this issue from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century until the present time. Considering that Blacks, in general, were either enslaved, at the mercy of “Jim Crow Laws,” disenfranchised in most



regards, or (de facto) legally murdered (lynching), the 1950s provides a meaningful epoch in which to assess the status as mentioned earlier due to the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. Moreover, due to the substantial media coverage, Black males were viewed in the public eye in a light not previously witnessed due to the widespread adoption of televisions in American households. While the collective efforts of W.E.B. Dubois, Booker Washington, Thurgood Marshall, Jesse Owens, Marcus Garvey, Langston Hughes, and many others were extraordinary and noteworthy, arguably none of these figures created the level of media attention and national attention, as did the onset of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

As previously discussed in the introduction to this study, a myriad of factors is integral to the state of the lives of Black men throughout history. Current metrics include analyzing the difficulty of raising Black males in single-parent homes, poverty levels, crime, The War on Drugs, early childhood education, the school-to-prison pipeline, special education, unemployment, underemployment, college access, attendance, and graduation among others prove salient and relevant. Additionally, these factors (or realities) in many of the lives of Black males present significant implications for families, communities, educators, policy makers, and other practitioners. One can argue that only since the 1990s can one begin to fully contextualize the degree attainment gap in the Black Community in regards to the previously stated implications.

The 1950s and 1960s, as an era and context, did not have to grapple with these implications entirely. Only in the passing of the Civil Rights Acts and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were baseline standards of societal participation established. Furthermore, the landscape of contemporary “Black Urban Living” developed during the aftermath of the 1970s and the 1980s. These eras endured the effects of “White Flight,” suburbanization, ghettoization, racial and

financial isolation, economic deregulation, the “War on Drugs,” and the advent of modern “Black Counterculture.” When attempting to understand these constructs as they relate to the 1950s and 1960s, few data can be found in both qualitative and quantitative forms as we assess policy outside of Jim Crow, considering Civil Rights Legislation became law during this period. Thus, to understand the how the wider society viewed the lives of Black men in this era, the experiences of Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Eldridge Cleaver will be utilized, as well as salient accounts of Stokely Carmichael and James Baldwin. Their lives help illustrate the polar extremes of how society viewed Black men and people; this is not meant to represent all Black men or to place them in specific and rigid identities. Rather, the contextualization of these notable figureheads is assessed utilizing a Comparative Historical Perspective<sup>2</sup> for the sake of this analysis (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003).

They (King, X, Cleaver, Baldwin, and Carmichael) are arguably the most influential, visible, and controversial Black males of the era that possessed contrasting views and lenses of the state of the lives of Black men. While five individuals cannot fully encapsulate an entire group’s identity, they are uniquely representative of not only how many Black males identified themselves but also to how society was exposed and viewed “Black Maleness.” Consequently, the development and growth of visual and audio media during this era presented an unparalleled view of Blacks that was previously impossible. As previously mentioned for the sake of this analysis, a Comparative Historical Perspective will be employed. It is at this juncture where a thorough discussion and analysis of these figureheads can take place.

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<sup>2</sup> "Conceiving comparative historical analysis as defined by three specific emphases—a concern with causal analysis, the exploration of temporal processes, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison typically limited to a small number of cases—does not encompass all comparative and historical work on large social structures, cultural patterns, and processes of change" (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003).

## The 1960s

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** As perhaps the most famous and celebrated Civil Rights Leader in the history of the United States, Dr. King's commentary on the state of Black men is unique. Although some of his commentary as it pertains to Black Masculinity surfaces in speeches or writings, a great understanding solidifies from his communicated idealized version of how men should think and behave. However, Dr. King did have shortcomings (as a leader and individual) that are antithetical to how he believed men should think and act. Furthermore, this can raise questions as to how he may personally define his ideologies of "Black Masculinity." The two greatest shortcomings that Dr. King managed was his refusal to fully utilize and acknowledge the contributions of women<sup>3</sup> and gay activists<sup>4</sup> in the Civil Rights Movement and his noted extramarital affairs (Smiley, 2014). Although one's personal shortcomings do not define the individual or his/her beliefs, it is perhaps noteworthy to consider those are contradictions or paradoxical entities as they relate to Dr. King's efforts as a man and Civil Rights leader. His shortcomings complicate and nuance an analysis of how "Black Masculinity" can be assessed during this era through the lens of Dr. King specifically.

The last year of Dr. King's life was tumultuous in many regards. He essentially became a pariah in both the Black and White communities across the United States—a state of ostracism that led to his bankruptcy at the time of his assassination (Smiley, 2014). It is somewhat prophetic that he was killed one week before presenting his greatest commentary on "Black

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<sup>3</sup> Claudette Colvin is a typically unremembered freedom fighter that refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus before Rosa Parks's refusal. On March 2, 1955, she was the first person arrested for resisting bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama. However, the Civil Rights Movement leaders decided to not use her as a figure-head because she was a pregnant unwed teenager (Hoose, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> Bayard Rustin was a leader in The Civil Rights Movement, as well as being an advocate for socialism, non-violence, and gay rights. (D'Emilio, 1999)

Masculinity." On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1968, Dr. King led a march for sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. Considering the rights of Black people had been grossly violated since the days of slavery up until this point (and arguably in modern times), the rights of Black janitors were even lower on the totem pole of respect. The sanitation workers protested by donning signs with the slogan, "I Am a Man!" to demand recognition of their dignity and humanity (Estes, 2000). Ultimately, the campaign of this protest aimed to stake a claim as to the definition of what it meant to be a man—particularly a Black man.

Estes (2000) presents the essential reality that definitions of both Black and White masculinity rely on the definitions of womanhood from all demographic groups (p. 154). Ironically, a Black woman, Cornelia Crenshaw was one of the most vital figures of the protest. It was she who urged the protestors to focus on the notion that race was the "real" issue as it related to their suffering (specifically being a Black man in The United States). It is interesting that a woman would not take the chance to illustrate the sexism intertwined with the racism; yet, her primary goal was the betterment of treatment for Blacks—in general. She worked alongside Reverend Ezekial Bell as the central leader (outside of Dr. King) to secure labor rights. "Black ministers and White labor leaders quickly overshadowed her public role in the strike, as the media cameras and local citizens focused their attention on the more traditional male leaders of the labor and civil rights movements" (Estes, 2000, p. 157).

The protestors worked under the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union led by Bill Lucy at that time. He spoke to the sanitation workers and urged them to stand together *as men* and make demands. While this may have been Lucy's personal feeling about masculinity, it was clear that the protestors adopted this mindset as well (Estes, 2000). However, Lucy continued to operate under the guidelines set by Dr. King in

regards to protest—the matter was still to remain non-violent. As Estes (2000) notes, the sanitation workers took solace in the lyrics of the music of Muddy Waters and the sounds of B.B. King. Muddy's lyrical content establishes manhood as being based on sexual prowess—a notion that when coupled with the union leaders' demands for wage increases, sick leaves, pensions, and health insurance laid the foundation of the current stereotypes of "Black Masculinity" (p.158-159). Essentially, this sets the tone for the idea of economic and sexual prowess as being central aspects of "Black Masculinity" found in the some of the music of Black males throughout the 80s, 90s, and 2000s (Lewis, 2006). Fittingly enough, music was the backdrop to the ministers and union leaders that held protest songs after police used mace on protestors a few weeks before Dr. King led his protest march (Estes, 2000).

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) President, Roy Wilkins, eventually joined the protests on March 14<sup>th</sup> and argued that in the procurement of higher wages, workers could fulfill their “traditional” role as men by taking care of the financial needs of their families (Estes, 2000). Dr. King echoed these sentiments preaching, “We are tired of our men being emasculated so that our wives and daughters have to go out and work in the White lady's kitchen, leaving us unable to be with our children and give them the time and attention they need” (Estes, 2000, p.160). Entrenched within this statement is the fact that masculinity is defined by adequately providing for the household; although, Black women serve White homes as a part of the low wage labor force and help domestically in their homes. Here lies the selective participation of women that does not equal the status of men. However, King did note that regardless of race, women should have a choice as to whether they worked within or outside of the home. The sense of verbal and physical emasculation that Black men endured began to wear on the collective health of the Black community as many Black men started to see

nonviolence as obsolete (Estes, 2000)—further evidence of the pariah status that Dr. King endured. As violence erupted during the negotiations, it was clear that a new generation of protestors redefined aspects of masculinity as taking up arms. These new contrasting forms of masculinity fell in line with the views of another prominent figurehead—Malcolm X.

Beyond the struggle for Dr. King to have society view Black men as humans worth dignity and respect, America killed Dr. King for his efforts. However, the most disturbing aspect of his assassination is the fact that the United States government was found to be a co-conspirator in his murder. In the 1999 case *King vs. Jowers*, the jury found government agencies to be partly responsible for the assassination of Dr. King. "At the conclusion of the nearly four-week trial, the jury adopted a verdict offered by the parties finding that Jowers and 'others, including government agencies' participated in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015). Despite the findings of the jury, the United States government still exclaims:

"After considering the trial evidence in light of all available, relevant information, we still conclude that the Jowers and Wilson allegations are not credible and that there is no Raoul...We recommend no further federal investigation of the Jowers allegations, the Wilson allegations, or any other allegations related to the assassination unless and until reliable substantiating facts are presented. At this time, we are aware of no information to warrant any further investigation of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015).

One could argue that it would be highly improbable for a government to admit to the assassination of a figure fighting for equality, yet it highlights the tumultuous relationship between the United States and Black peoples—especially when those people attempt to become equal within that society.

**Malcolm X.** Malcolm X's address on the status of Black men and their fight for equality is notably and vastly different than that of Dr. King—as is his past. Having escaped a past of

criminalization and ultimate incarceration, Malcolm Little changed his name to Malcolm X and turned to Islam and a paradigm that called for Black America to directly and authoritatively respond to racism and its infrastructure. As a non-adopter of King's non-violent movement and call for primarily legislative action, Malcolm X called for a much different realization of Black manhood. Malcolm X once exclaimed at a militant labor forum:

“I'm the man you think you are. And if it doesn't take legislation to make you a man and get your rights recognized, don't even talk that legislative talk to me. No, if we're both human beings we'll both do the same thing. And if you want to know what I'll do, figure out what you'll do. I'll do the same things—only more of it” (Brietman, 1965, pg. 197-198).

Some of the most compelling commentary that X contributes toward the notion of masculinity involves the history of his relationship with his father, Earl Little. Having been killed by the White terrorist group, The Black Legionnaires, Earl Little's prescription for Black Masculinity was a direct threat to White Masculinity. As Saldana-Portillo (1997) illustrates, "Earl Little represents for Malcolm X not only his natural father. Little also represents an organic, patrilineal tie to a revolutionary consciousness and an ethnic, patrilineal tie to a prior civilization, both of which are generally the strict purview of White citizenship through the myths of the founding fathers and immigrant histories" (p. 293). Furthermore, "Malcolm X, through *his* enunciatory act, fills the X, symbolizing the loss of a patronymic history, *with* a patronymic history of resistance, justice, courage, independence, and self-determination, characteristics generally reserved for the trope of (White) American subjectivity” (Saldana-Portillo, 1997, p. 293).

While Malcolm X's contributions to The Civil Rights Movement and the fight for The Black Community were profound, history arguably favors Dr. King's methods over X's. As Saldana-Portillo (1997) also notes, "By representing the revolutionary subject as the enlightened

subject possessing full consciousness, as the unitary, self-determining subject, and as the central self-contained agent of transformation, Malcolm X concludes by privileging the modern self-reliant as the model for oppositional consciousness—a model that is ultimately untenable in the modern world" (p. 306). Therefore, if Blacks had adopted this framework of action, major bloodshed would have likely been the outcome. However, if accepting the first corollary, Malcolm's revolutionary portrayal of idealized Black masculinity involves a level of consciousness and intellectual/emotional superiority to the climate of the day. This display indirectly posits Dr. King's approach as being watered-down or patronizing to The Mainstream American Society.

This examination offers the reality that Black men (and The Black Community writ large) are incapable of existing in a racist society in which it cannot challenge its place and deservingness to be considered men and women. Essentially, such a society will simultaneously admonish the efforts of the likes of Dr. King to seek fair treatment and the desire for a Malcolm X vision for Blacks to have an 'equal seat at the table.' Both men and their respective ideologies were assassinated (both literally and figuratively) within the contexts of their efforts. Saldana-Portillo (1997) also contributes, "The black nation mythically survives by itself within, but apart, from white America" (p. 307). Given the notion that its existence is mythical, Saldana-Portillo suggests that its survival is also unbelievable—that it must be by ways of providence or magic. It conjures the idea of an apple tree thriving and bearing fruit through a harsh winter when an apple tree was never designed to bear fruit in the season. How can a group survive in a climate designed to destroy it? Most notably, the two most central Black leaders of the era prescribed to paradigms that ultimately did not change The Black Nation's ability to survive within (and with) White America.



Furthermore, although the historical account of X's assassination blames members of the Nation of Islam for his death, the head of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover issued a telegram on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1964 to New York's FBI office. He exclaimed, "Do *something* about Malcolm X enough of this black violence in NY" (Ali, 2015). Ali (2015) also illustrates that it was standard practice to assign up to 24 police officers to Malcolm X's rallies. But, just a week after enemies firebombed his home, there was not a single officer assigned at the entrance of the ballroom where X was murdered—only two policemen were actually on the premises but at a distance from the stage. While a court case never determined that American agencies were complicit in the murder of Malcolm X, it is important to understand that the government wanted to end his influence. Hence, while this research fails to espouse conspiracies, it is still important to note the salience of the disdain that the United States government and its agencies had toward both Dr. King and Malcolm X—agents of equality for Black men and Black peoples.

In comparing the doctrines and deaths of both King and X, they are important because they are somewhat opposites. Thus, one might believe that it would be possible to perhaps fall somewhere in the middle of their conflicting ideologies to solidify acceptance and inclusion in society—yet this was not the case. Nevertheless, the third most significant Black male leader of the era arguably falls somewhere in-between the extremes of King and X—Eldridge Cleaver.

**Eldridge Cleaver.** As Taylor (2010) notes, Eldridge Cleaver had a dream of racial reconciliation. Racial reconciliation is perhaps the most salient example of a doctrine that falls in between the ideologies of Dr. King and Malcolm X. While Dr. King wanted equality and Malcolm X demanded equity 'by any means necessary,' Eldridge Cleaver merely sought reconciliation. Taylor (2010) further notes that Cleaver's model of racial reconciliation is "predicated on cultural hybridity rather than social justice" (pg. 71). Taylor's assertion is quite

poignant when considering that the group that he so proudly led (The Black Panthers) worked on the fringes of the traditional American Society. Cleaver did not spread his agenda to national outlets—rather, he contained his words and efforts within local Black communities. Completely without the aid of government assistance, The Black Panthers created programs like a child development center, community health classes, benefit counseling, and free social programs (dental care, food, and clothing) amongst a plethora of other community programs. One must question why a country deemed this man a threat that led initiatives only within the Black community (initiatives totally isolated and segregated from the wider society). Ultimately, Cleaver was forced to leave the United States in 1968 to avoid prison from an incident involving a shootout with the police that left another Black Panther member dead (Taylor, 2010).

The year 1968 proved to be tumultuous for the state of Black affairs and progress. Cleaver was forced to flee the country just two days after the assassination of Dr. King. And just two short months later, Robert Kennedy was assassinated on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1968. Furthermore, the cause of Black progress stifled when Cleaver returned to the United States in 1975. After experiencing a religious transformation and returning as a born-again Christian, Cleaver denounced the socialist systems of the rest of the world and stated, "the American political system is the freest and most democratic in the world" (Rushdy, 1999, pg. 97). As even more notable examples as to Cleaver's lack of utility as a Black leader upon his return, Cleaver espoused his created religion 'Christlam' (a combination of Christianity and Islam) and joined the Republican Party and supported Ronald Reagan (who he previously denounced). Following the 1940s and 50s, the Democratic Party became more associated with supporting policies and initiatives supporting Black and minority people; yet, with Cleaver's newfound allegiance to the

Republican Party, his stance could arguably stand as an adoption of an 'Uncle Tom'<sup>5</sup> persona. Hence, Cleaver's return to the United States offered little to no hope of leadership for The Black Community writ large.

**James Baldwin and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure).** Given that the American response to Dr. King and Malcolm X was one of assassination and its response to Eldridge Cleaver was ostracizing him, two figureheads held a much different position from them. First, James Baldwin was an influential intellectual of the time that consistently brought to light the historical injustices of American treatment of Black peoples. He insisted that America was always going to be against Black persons and that it was essentially a futile effort to attempt to be treated equally in its society. Despite not receiving the same media coverage as Dr. King or Malcolm X, James Baldwin wasn't targeted in the same way—essentially because his stance issued the sentiment that Blacks are not welcomed and should just disassociate from The United States. He took this philosophy to heart with himself, as he became an ex-patriot by settling in France for the remainder of his life; the assassinations of Dr. King and Medgar Evers (another prominent freedom fighter of the day) spurred his departure (American Masters, 2006). One can argue that the United States sanctioned his departure, as it happened without incident or notoriety.

On the other hand, his contemporary Stokely Carmichael was viewed by The United States in a much different light. Known for coining the phrase "Black Power," heading The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and advocating for Black Nationalism, America

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<sup>5</sup> Defined by Dictionary.com as a noun being *disparaging and offensive*.

1. A black person, especially a man, considered by other black people to be subservient to or to curry favor with white people.
2. A person who exhibits overly deferential behavior.

deemed his presence and his influence a threat. Having been incarcerated on numerous occasions for his advocacy of Black Rights, he could no longer stand by and merely advocate for non-violence. He switched gears in saying that violence was appropriate for self-defense (contrary to Dr. King) for the security of Black peoples in American society. Furthermore, he ultimately made the larger push for Pan-Africanism. Despite having been born in Trinidad and residing in America for a great portion of his life, his travels in 1967 forced him to make a decision to formally leave the United States in 1969 (just a year following the murder of Dr. King). His denouncing of American life was so great that he changed his name to Kwame Toure—embracing his African Heritage and honoring the President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, and the President of Guinea, Sekou Toure (Cobb, 2011). One can argue that America reveled in his departure as his visibility and influence decreased with his remoteness. Essentially, the author claims that this neither illustrates that The United States did/does not value nor want the citizenship of Black and Brown peoples within its borders as Toure exclaimed.

**The 1960s—a synopsis.** The author argues that the 1960s were the most socially transformational decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. The author further suggests that Dr. King, Malcolm X, and Eldridge Cleaver were the three most prominent men of this period that shaped Civil Rights for Blacks—particularly when considering their celebrity. Additionally, they were perhaps those that received the most coverage for their involvement. It is important to include James Baldwin and Kwame Toure in this analysis since they reached the height of Black Consciousness. Thus, the assassinations of two of the five are troublesome, and the others were exiled or left the United States—an exile (Eldridge Cleaver) that returned and denounced the very struggle he dedicated his life to fighting. The United States was potentially facing another civil war with the level of animosity, violence, and rioting that ensued. One could deem feasible

that efforts to disenfranchise minorities and Black men changed their approach from overt forms of oppression and destruction (as to avoid physical confrontation) to more covert destruction in the shape of an underlying economic assault that then began in the 1970s.

### **The 1970s: “White Flight,” Suburbanization, and Ghettoization**

The aftermath of the political, social, and societal upheaval of the 1960s resulted in the transmogrification of metropolises around the United States. The fallout from racial riots and the assassinations of Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy left the United States to transition during a period of high tension. Racial divides were arguably more salient than during the 1950s. However, racism and ethnic tensions manifested themselves in a new form. While direct violence between Black and White forces diminished, racism and conflict realized itself as a new type of segregation and isolation. Urban centers, like Detroit, that once had a diverse community began to become significantly homogenized (U.S. Census, 2010). These communities for the first time were subject to populations that were comprised mostly of minority residents. Sociologists call the phenomenon “White Flight” (Andersen, 2016)

White residents began to leave urban centers around the country at unprecedented rates. Consequently, the economic reality began to shift starkly within and outside of the cities in question. Considering that White residents held the majority of capital within those communities, the result of their flight significantly depressed those areas economically. Because their exodus from urban centers was a result of racism and riots, discrimination from those fleeing residents against those who remained created another layer of disenfranchisement for Black inhabitants of those cities. Not only was the deprivation of capital a major issue for remaining Black families, but many of the jobs that Whites provided left those cities as well (Wurdock, 1981).

Consequently, Black residents in urban centers began to experience a level of poverty unseen since the Great Migration in the 1950s (Massey & Eggers, 1993). The racial and political climate of the decade introduced covert forms of discrimination that worked to limit the rights and inclusion of Black people in society. Redlining and gerrymandering became staples of 1970s legislation that forced Blacks to be more isolated and politically neutralized (Dreier, 2003); gerrymandering is the manipulation of boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one party or class. Gerrymandering prevented Blacks from voting or for voting for people or legislation that would improve the lives of Blacks. The author argues that, as a result, many Blacks became apathetic about their ability to influence and participate in political affairs—a disconnection that reaped serious repercussions for Black people over the coming decades. On the other hand, redlining is a discriminatory practice by which banks, lending institutions, and insurance companies refuse or limit loans, mortgages, and insurance for housing and small businesses, within specific geographic areas, especially in inner-city neighborhoods. While the establishment of the GI Bill and The Federal Housing Administration arguably were hailed as marvelous and egalitarian policy decisions for American citizens to mitigate issues of segregation (particularly the kind created by gerrymandering and redlining), the bills were highly divisive, selective, and segregated as they manifested in day-to-day life (Dreier, 2003).

The Federal Housing Administration presented itself as being a benefit to lower and middle-class citizens seeking to purchase homes and contribute to society as homeowners. However, as Light (2010) illustrates, "Histories of the emergence of federally sanctioned mortgage underwriting in the United States have made racial discrimination a central theme. In studies of policies and procedures at the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), scholars have identified how, thanks to close ties between

the American real estate industry and the nation's newly created housing agencies, from the 1930s appraisers formally and informally valued white over black populations" (p. 634). Despite the perceived benefits of the program on the surface, newer data illustrate a lack of actual benefit for Black families. Önder (2002) found:

“The results suggest that contrary to expectations and the aim of the FHA, its programs do not significantly contribute to homeownership rates in distressed and low-income census tracts and MSAs. The high impact of FHA in relatively wealthy areas can be attributed to the use of FHA loans by households with high default risk or less wealth, and living in these areas. Similarly, the higher impact of FHA on whites than blacks can be also explained by the use of FHA loans by whites who have a higher default risk and less wealth than blacks. In addition, although white first-time homeowners may be using FHA-insured loans, the blacks using FHA-insured loans may not be first-time homeowners. The negative effect of FHA on homeownership in distressed neighborhoods might be explained by the mobility of households out of these neighborhoods when they become homeowners” (p. 634).

Tangentially, the GI Bill produced similar irregularities in regards to its implementation. Turner and Bound (2003) reveal that White men prospered greatly from the GI Bill writ large. However, educational attainment and economic growth for Blacks were significantly miniscule—especially when noting the academic achievement for Black men in the South (p. 171). This research also highlighted several key facts: “1) Access to GI Bill benefits for Blacks was substantially limited (virtually unattainable) in the South; 2) There were no federal standards for implementation (despite being a federal bill) and states had drastically different methods of implementation; 3) Unfortunately, for those more likely to be limited to the South in their collegiate choices, the G.I. Bill exacerbated rather than narrowed the economic and educational differences between blacks and whites” (Turner & Bound, 2003, p. 172)

One of the most devastating outcomes of the GI Bill related to housing—like FHA. Woods's (2013) research found:

“The policies pursued by the FHLBB, FHA, and VA had devastating consequences for African American veterans who wanted to become homeowners. These federal agencies,

still in existence today, actively denied loans to African Americans and the neighborhoods they occupied and continue to bear a burden of responsibility for the exclusion of 97.4 percent of African American veterans from federally insured and guaranteed GI Bill home loans” (p.412).

Additionally, the nexus of housing opportunities and economic viability assert themselves in tangible life outcomes for Black people—particularly Black men. Because home equity loans accounted for 2/3rds of middle-class wealth, homeownership has historically been the centerpiece of financial security. As Woods (2013) noted from the 2009 "Racial Wealth Gap" study from The Pew Research Center, the 30% racial gap in homeownership was responsible for the greatest difference in financial. These effects are not solely limited to the initial implementation of The GI Bill. As Woods (2013) further found through The 2009 Pew Study, in 2009 the average White family had more than 20 times Black families—\$134,992 compared to \$5,677. The author argues and agrees with Woods’s (2013) assertion, “This unprecedented federally endorsed stimulation of the American housing market was profoundly racially biased. It will take an equally aggressive reparations program for African American veterans and their descendants to close both the racial homeownership and wealth gaps that continue to grow.” (p. 413).

**The War on Drugs.** While the segregation and stratification of demographic groups in The United States became prominent fixtures of society during the 1970s, The War on Drugs was the lynch pin that cemented the racist efforts to eliminate Black men as a viable group of people in American Society. One of the former aides to President Nixon, John Ehrlichman, told Harper’s writer Dan Baum that:

“The Nixon Campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin. And then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their



homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did” (LoBianco, 2016).

Although the statement illustrates going after Black people in general and not specifically Black men, it is important to understand the trends of incarceration. According to The Federal Bureau of Prisons, women only make up 6.7% of all incarcerated people (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2016). Furthermore, although the aforementioned policies like the GI Bill, FHA, gerrymandering, and redlining do not overtly express their goals to harm Black men; an implicit target is placed on Black men since men have historically been the called upon to be breadwinners and decision-makers within groups and communities. Therefore, by stripping the autonomy and power of Black men, systems can ensure the dismantling of entire groups, communities, and generations of citizens—as outlined by John Ehrlichman’s account of The War on Drugs. At this juncture, society is then primed to create a cycle of poverty and imprisonment through the economic assault that took place on American Citizens—with a particular effect on Black men and Black communities.

### **The 1980s: “Reaganomics”**

The economic assault on American citizens arguably began with the advent of Reaganomics. Even at the end of Reagan’s presidency, macroeconomists Georges de Menil and Patrick Minford foresaw the damaging aspects of Reaganomics. They believed economist Olivier Blanchard “underestimated the adverse effects that the current (1987) account deficits induced by Reaganomics might have” (Blanchard, Branson, & Currie, 1987, pg. 53). In retrospectively assessing the merits of such an argument, we now realize how pervasive the effects of Reaganomics have become. Reaganomics created tax breaks for the wealthy and big businesses while deregulating markets to allow companies to operate with diminished oversight. Reaganomics contributed to the movement to privatize operations within businesses. The push

for privatization (that has only gained more momentum since the 1980s) continues to force many Americans (particularly Black Americans) out of the middle-class. As pensions began to fade from corporate benefit packages, employees had to contribute increasing amounts of money toward their health benefits, unions began to be busted, and the security blanket for poor and lower class Americans began to be erased (Hacker, 2004).

Given those changes to the economic and employment structure in America, Black families were disproportionately affected since Blacks on average have significantly less wealth than Whites. To understand the effects of Reaganomics, one can look to 1965 during the Kennedy/Johnson Era and The War on Poverty. At the time, "65.6 of Black children lived below the poverty line. But by 1969, the poverty rate fell to 39.6 percent." Given the fact that taxation on the highest income bracket was 70% in 1965, it is a staggering figure to note that taxes dropped to 50% by the end of his term (Spriggs, 2009). Furthermore, Reagan's fiscal policy reduced taxation from individual income and corporations and used Social Security surpluses to subsidize the budget. Unfortunately, more social programs discontinued as federal expenditures over the course of his presidency toward education, training, and income support fell an entire percentage point of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the economy. When compounded with inflation, the loss of funding is only exacerbated when taking into account the reduced dollar amount (Spriggs, 2009, p. 123).

Despite a growth rate of more than double for Black high school graduates between 1970 and 1980, income remained virtually unchanged (Spriggs, 2009, p.128). Spriggs (2009) notes, "The fact that economic gains failed to keep pace with increases in the educational attainment of African Americans is attributable to the fact that pay rates for African Americans at given levels of education did not remain constant relative to whites" (p. 128). When taking into account the

animosity toward affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies, the deterioration of relative income and unemployment rates as compared to Whites with the same jobs or levels of education becomes quite salient (Spriggs, 2009, p.123).

Spriggs (2009) also illustrates that the highest unemployment rate for Whites since 1954 was 9.7%. From May 1974 to July 1997, Blacks had an unemployment rate above 9.7 for each month. Spriggs (2009) also exclaims "the Reagan Administration was too lax in preventing the effects of a weak labor market from compounding the situation for African Americans" (p. 129). Even more jarring is the fact that these effects on Black America most starkly harmed Black men. "During the Reagan years however, pay rates for African Americans, especially young African-American men, deteriorated dramatically compared to Whites at the same level of education: this was especially true for blacks with a college education" (Spriggs, 2009, p. 128). Even the acquisition of higher learning degrees could not lift Blacks from poverty across American Society.

### **The 1990s: Mass Incarceration**

Despite the initial creation of the "War on Drugs" and movements to privatize corrections gaining momentum in the 1980s, The United States witnessed an unprecedented growth in the prison population during the 1990s. Aided by neo-liberal legislation like The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the rise in the incarcerated population affected all demographics but had a uniquely pronounced effect on Black men. As Thurston (1994) passionately notes:

"The Clinton administration and Congress have preached loud and often about 'sending a message' about tolerance for crime. Even if we were to accept the false notion that the death penalty deters crime, that it is in any way a proper, fair, and human response to violence, what message is being sent by the refusal to eliminate the racist use of the death penalty" (p. 8)?

Thurston calls for a close examination of the lens by which crime legislation is produced—through the prism of race, class, and gender. As the data illustrate in the following analysis, Black men have been the group most negatively affected by such legislation. Thurston (1994) also questions, "What message is being sent to African Americans and other people of color about the justice system when executions based on race are tolerated by the courts and the Congress? What message is being sent when members of the U.S. Senate and House comfortably admit that infusing a little racial justice in the death penalty would probably end its use" (p. 8)? The lack of protection for ethnic minorities is of particular salience since politicians struck a key provision from the bill during implementation.

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 originally included what was known as the "Racial Justice Act" (RJA). The act cemented "a capital defendant would be allowed to present statistics from unrelated cases to suggest that race was a factor in the decision to seek or to impose the death sentence" (Lungren & Krotoski, 1995, p.655). Without delving into the lengthy details as to why RJA failed implementation in The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Crime Bill), it is important to understand its contentiousness. The RJA within the Crime Bill primarily was not adopted because critics believed that using statistical evidence rather than specific case-based facts would raise more questions than answers. Furthermore, opponents claimed that the use of methods from the social science field would be inappropriate to utilize in a court of law (Lungren & Krotoski, 1995, p. 663).

Despite the fact that the RJA was first proposed in the late 1980s and continued to resurface through the 1990s, the efforts of the act were never able to take footing in the legislature. Furthermore, despite the contentiousness of the specific legalities and nuances of the bill, it is important to consider the "spirit" of the law. The RJA happened because lawmakers and

community stakeholders spoke out on the level of discrimination that takes place within law enforcement and the corrections system. Thus, The Federal Government clearly and precisely realized that racism and targeted law enforcement against Blacks were real, salient, and pervasive. Furthermore, The RJA was proposed to mitigate some of the effects of racism in sentencing for Blacks. However, although aspects of The RJA were unacceptable to lawmakers, those in opposition did not propose counter bills/acts. One could argue that when an entity has knowledge of a problem and the ability to address it and yet fails to do so, then that group is sanctioning those outcomes.

The longitudinal effects of policy have completely decimated entire communities and generations of Black men. By 1999, 30% of Black men were incarcerated at some point in their lives while those who dropped out of high school were met with 60% odds of being incarcerated. Between 1979 and 1999 risk of imprisonment doubled for Black men, while the risk of imprisonment was 6 to 8 times greater than young White men (Pettit & Western, 2004, p. 164).

### **The 2000s & 2010s: The Housing Collapse and The Great Recession**

The stark realities of great hardship faced by American families from the housing collapse and recession are a direct result of movements from the 1980s and 1990s of the United States government to deregulate markets and sectors within industries. When assessing the impact of the housing collapse on Black men in The United States, it is still important to take into account the previous discussion on the criminal justice system and increased incarceration rates in the Black community. In previous generations, many young Black men would seek the economic and social safety net of joining the armed services. However, as Pettit and Western (2004) note, "For black men in their mid-thirties at the end of the 1990s, prison records were nearly twice as common as bachelor's degrees. In this same birth cohort of non-college black

men, imprisonment was more than twice as common as military service" (p. 164). Therefore, lacking the resources to escape their plight, many Black men fall victim to their community and become unable to secure opportunities necessary to live freely.

Given that Blacks have always been more economically and socially depressed as compared to their White counterparts, the 2008 housing crash had a particularly remarkable effect on Black workers—especially considering the drop in enrollment in the armed services and the increase in the prison population. As Verick and Islam (2010) illustrate, several disturbing aspects of the global society were key components as to why the 2008 crash caused such a significant degree of destruction and suffering. Most notably, the world population suffered through jobless growth, sluggish real wages, and the food and energy crisis. Again, with a historic reality of low unemployment and income, the detrimental economic and social realities for Black families were only exacerbated. Verick and Islam (2010) also exclaim:

"The main risks to the recovery relate to the premature withdrawal of the stimulus packages, the continuing and emerging imbalances (both globally and domestically) and the challenge of setting an appropriate level of regulation for the financial sector to avoid some of the mistakes that were made leading up to the start of the crisis in 2007. The path to recovery will be protracted and uncertain, and ultimately, will hinge on whether China (and to some extent, India) can continue to drive global growth" (p. 56).

Given the issues outlined since the 1960s and the particular effects on the Black community (and in light of the recent recession and barriers to a full recovery), the college degree attainment rate among Black men and women has substantially widened during this period. In assessing the proportion of 22-28 year-olds that are completing college by race and gender, some startling realities arise. As McDaniel et al. (2011) illustrate, "At no point from 1940 to 2000 did a larger proportion of black men complete college than black women...By 2000, approximately 10% of black men and 15% of black women aged 22-28 completed college" (p. 892). McDaniel et al. also note that college completion rates for Blacks (but especially Black

men) likely stifle by a lack of resources and access to education and funding. The research most strikingly illustrates that Black women have historically worked more than White women because Black families had lower incomes. However, Goldin (1977) found that Black women worked more than any other group (in the aggregate) because Black men faced greater discrimination in the workforce.

**Racism in The “Justice” System.** It is paramount to understand that throughout this analysis the literature has assessed how Black men and communities are “*killed*” socially and economically. However, Black men and Black women are being unjustly and unlawfully murdered with few if any consequences for the police officers responsible for the abuse of power (KRS-One, 2015). The advent and growth of cell phone cameras and social media platforms have presented citizens with the unprecedented opportunity to raise awareness and capture instances of police violence. Nevertheless, one could even equate savage, aggressive, and criminal police actions as police brutality or police violence. However, these behaviors are antithetical to the definition of a police officer. The police take an oath to serve and protect; doctors make a pledge to do no harm; however, police have been committing beatings and murders of unarmed, unthreatening, and unimposing Black men. Hip-Hop artist and activist KRS-One stated in a video interview:

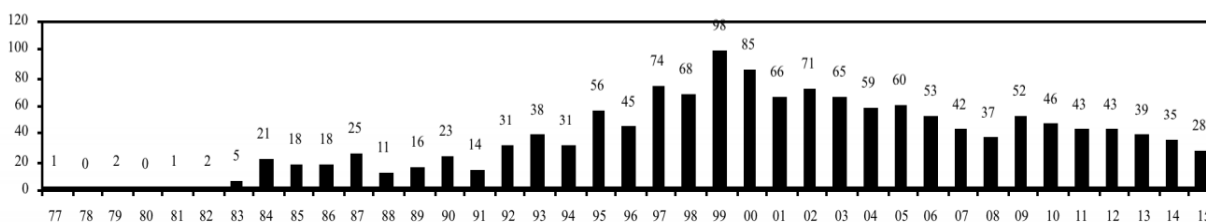
“Racism in The United States is overflowing. This is the problem in The United States; there’s no leadership. A leader would say, ‘Police brutality is an oxymoron; there are no brutal police. The minute you become brutal, you are no longer the police.’ So what we’re dealing with out here, we’re not dealing with police. We’re dealing with a *federally authorized gang*” (KRS-One, 2015).

Lawson (2015) accounts, "Racial bias in police shootings—that is, police shooting unarmed Black men at a significantly higher rate than Whites—has been well documented. For example, an analysis of federally collected data on police shootings shows young Black males were twenty-one times more likely of being shot dead by police than their White counterparts" (p. 359). Those in opposition to the notion that American infrastructure and systems create the plight of Black men suggest that Black men behave in a way that produces outcomes deemed to be a result of racism. However, it is important to not confuse targeted racism for events that occur due to happenstance. The unlikely impossibility of these realities naturally surfacing is tangibly critical—especially when one accounts for the vast discrepancies and disparities regarding sentencing (especially when accounting for the race of the prosecutor and defender).



Total number of executions since the 1976 reinstatement of capital punishment:

**1422**



### Race of defendants executed

total number 1422

White	788	(55.41%)
Black	494	(34.74%)
Latino/a	117	(8.23%)
Native American	16	(1.13%)
Asian	7	(0.49%)

### Race of victims

total number 2090

White	1579	(75.55%)
Black	323	(15.45%)
Latin	143	(6.84%)
Native American	5	(0.24%)
Asian	40	(1.91%)

### Gender of defendants executed

Female	16	(1.13%)
Male	1406	(98.87%)

### Gender of victims

Female	1023	(48.95%)
Male	1067	(51.05%)

### Defendant-victim racial combinations

	White Victim		Black Victim		Latino/a Victim		Asian Victim		Native American Victim	
White Defendant	730	51.34%	20	1.41%	17	1.20%	6	0.42%	0	0%
Black Defendant	280	19.69%	167	11.74%	20	1.41%	15	1.05%	0	0%
Latino/a Defendant	50	3.52%	3	0.21%	56	3.94%	2	0.14%	0	0%
Asian Defendant	2	0.14%	0	0%	0	0%	5	0.35%	0	0%
Native Amer. Def.	14	.98%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.14%
TOTAL:	1076	75.67%	190	13.36%	93	6.54%	28	1.97%	2	0.14%

Note: In addition, there were 33 defendants executed for the murders of multiple victims of different races. Of those, 17 defendants were white, 10 black and 6 Latino. (2.32%)

(Criminal Justice Project, 2016)

## Chapter 1 Synopsis

Each decade discussed contains policies and examples that are detrimental to life outcomes for Black males. Additionally, it is interesting to note how earlier forms of action against Black people were physical in nature; yet, later efforts changed from the 1970s onward to a more covert "assault" on the economic power, political power, and autonomy of the Black community— particularly Black males. However, this historical recollection lays a fertile ground to begin to assess how contemporary research addresses poor graduation rates for Black men and the disparate gap between them and Black women. As a means to delimit this study and analysis, only the past sixty years were assessed. However, the support structure of these contemporary manifestations of purposeful segregation policy has its roots in over 400 years of Western history. The legacy of the American Slavery Trade of Africans and Jim Crow laws thereafter are the direct antecedents of modern attempts to purposefully dismantle Black life—particularly the lives of Black men—or ignore the realities of their plight and fail to craft policy to eliminate suffering. As will be continuously argued, a failure to enact counteractive policy for detrimental realities is a sanctioned policy decision to continue those realities. As the adage states, "A failure to plan is a plan to fail;" knowing a problem and refusing to address it is, in reality, a vote to maintain the very system that supports it.

## CHAPTER 2 A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Context

The depth and breadth of contemporary research that chronicles and assesses the potential educational attainment for Black men can essentially codify into four tiered categories—family, community, societal expectations, and schooling. Each type lists in order from what the author argues as the greatest sphere of influence to its smallest—family being the first and most significant and school being the last and least important. In regards to a student's family life, the following are assessed to project or account for the educational attainment of Black boys: income, parental education level, race/ethnicity, and educational support. Second, the researchers analyze community dynamics by looking at criminal activity, cultural capital, and the job market and economy of the area. Third, societal expectations play a unique and crucial role in educational attainment for Black men. Lastly, K-12 schooling is consistently critiqued based on the composition of students from particular backgrounds (race and ethnicity), students in poverty, teacher effectiveness, and the type of school governance within a district/school (charter vs. public vs. private, etc.). Furthermore, resources and the level and types of accountability for educators and municipalities are noted as well. Moreover, post-secondary institutional research on graduation rates for students (particularly Black men) assesses access to financial aid, the campus climate, and the level of diversity and inclusiveness of the institution.

For the sake of this research to be comprehensive in nature, it is quite important to note the relationship between K12 and post-secondary education. Conceptualizing the degree attainment gap in college is paramount in recalling the mitigating factors throughout the life course. Given that assertion, contemporary research has generally analyzed the following aspects of a student's life in regards to educational performance and degree attainment: the influence of

single-parent homes; poverty; crime; early childhood education (particularly vocabulary acquisition); the overrepresentation of Black males in special education and disciplinary punishment; the school-to-prison pipeline; unemployment; underemployment; college access; and institutional climate at the post-secondary level. In taking into account the nature of this study, several questions can arise as to why the degree attainment gap is so large between Black men and Black women. Primarily, one may wish to determine if there are fundamental differences between Black men and women that yield such results. One may believe that some aspect of "Black Masculine Ideology" accounts for the degree attainment gap.

The foundations of Chapter 1 of this study outline the hypothesized differences generated by racist, hegemonic, and purposeful policies that mitigate positive life outcomes for Black men. Nevertheless, conducting a unique analysis of Black men must occur given the specificity of the research. Despite conceptually addressing this study under the umbrella of Critical Race Theory<sup>6</sup>, a more pointed and deliberate assessment of Black men and their life realities will take place under a relatively new and developing theoretical framework.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To fully conceptualize the impacts of how policy purposefully segregates Black men throughout society, the theoretical underpinning of this research utilizes African-American Male Theory (AAMT). Created by Lawson V. Bush and Edward C. Bush, AAMT "is a theoretical framework that can be used to articulate the position and trajectory of African American boys

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<sup>6</sup> "The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power...Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightened rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001)

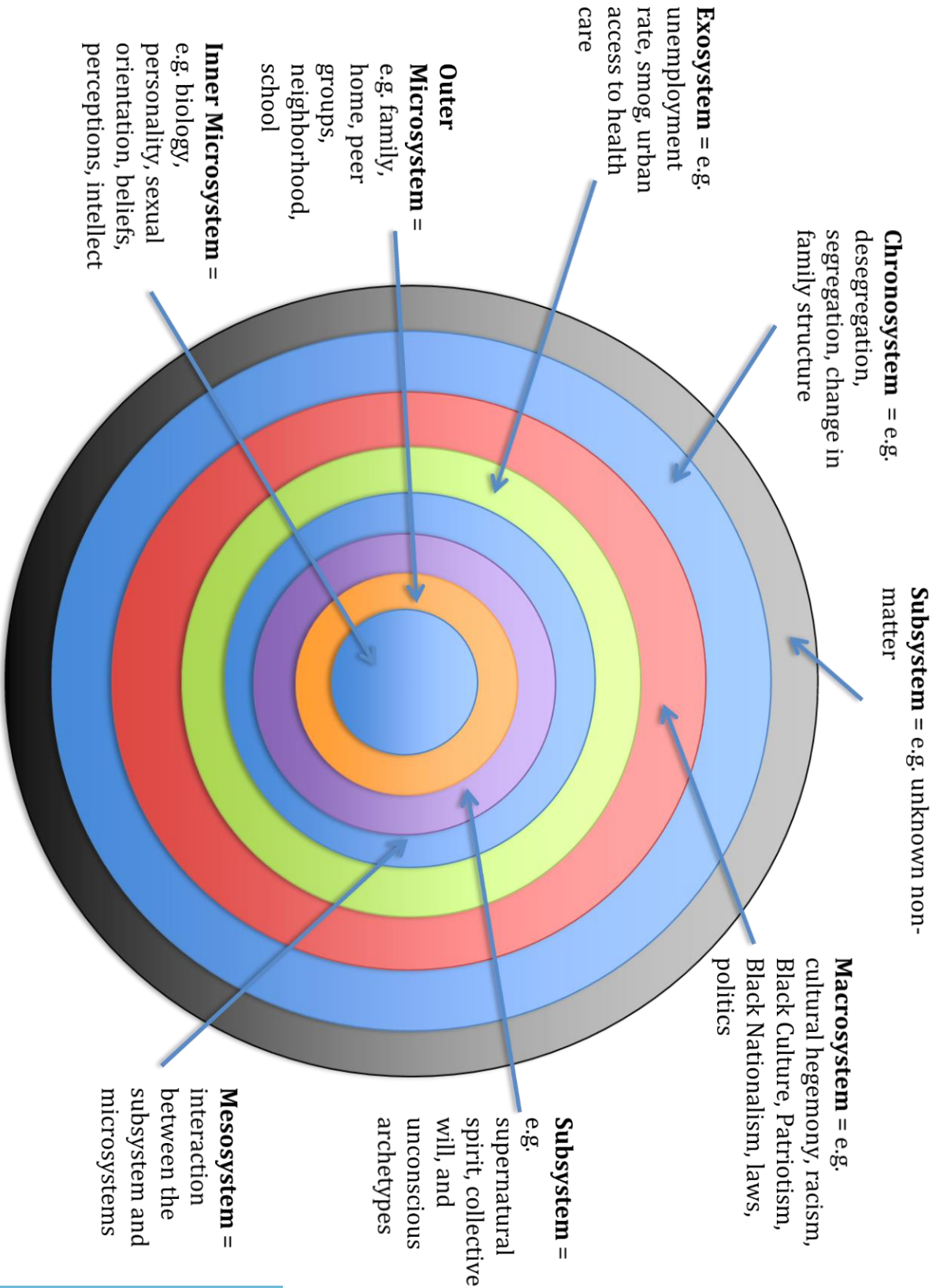
and men in society by drawing on and accounting for pre- and post-enslavement experiences while capturing their spiritual, psychological, social, and educational development and station" (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 6). AAMT is a multi- and trans-disciplinary approach theorizing the experiences of Black boys and men (see Figure 1). The theory aims to serve practitioners in academia, communities, and institutions in a way that guides policies and programming to improve the lives of Black males (Bush & Bush, 2013).

AAMT comprises six tenets regarding the lives of Black boys and men:

- “1) The individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American boys and men’s lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach.
- 2) There is something unique about being male and of African descent.
- 3) There is a continuity of continuation of African culture, consciousness, and biology that influence the experiences of African American boys and men.
- 4) African American boys and men are resilient and resistant.
- 5) Race and racism coupled with classism and sexism have a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of African American boys and men.
- 6) The focus and purpose of study and programs concerning African American boys and men should be the pursuit of social justice” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 7-12).

This research endeavored to examine, explore, and expand upon AAMT. The author expands upon the research in suggesting that *Black boys and men uniquely adapt to environments politically shaped in purposeful ways to disrupt their success and social viability*. This assertion is paramount to note given that Bush & Bush (2013) illustrate the layers at which Black men are affected in their ability to function within society—the spheres of influence—the ecological systems model for African American Male Theory.

**Ecological Systems Model for African American Male Theory (Bush & Bush, 2013)**



First, individuals are affected by the subsystem—an unknown non-matter. However, the next layer is the chronosystem that entails the segregation or desegregation within the family structure. Third, the macrosystems illustrate the cultural hegemony and indoctrination one faces and exudes—racism, patriotism, Black Nationalism, and laws and policies. Fourth, the exosystems layer involves community factors like the unemployment rate, environmental dangers (e.g., smog, lead in water, etc.), urban vs. rural, and access to healthcare. Fifth, the mesosystem encompasses the interactions between the subsystem, the inner microsystem, and the outer microsystem. Next, there is a secondary subsystem that entails the spirituality, collective will, and the unconscious archetypes of the individual. Following the secondary subsystem is the outer microsystem that involves influences regarding family, extended family, home, peer groups, neighborhood and community institutions like church and school. Lastly, the inner microsystem accounts for biology, one's Black Masculine Ideology, sexual orientation, and the beliefs and perceptions of one's intellect. The inner microsystem is the juncture at which it is most fitting to assess this framework in context with the epistemology of the field.

### **Family Influences**

The family is essentially the first teaching institution for a child. Furthermore, the nuclear family is most responsible for the level of vocabulary a child has in his or her early life. Frankly, vocabulary acquisition remains one of the most significant predictors of educational success for a child. Thus, the years from birth to preschool play a crucial role in the development of oral vocabulary language (Farkas & Baren, 2003). As Farkas & Baren (2003) reveal, "at 36 months of age, the oral vocabulary of the typical African-American infant in our data was more than one year behind that of the typical White infant...This large race gap in vocabulary knowledge reaches its peak during the preschool years, and ceases to widen thereafter, suggesting that, at

least on this measure, inequality in cognitive performance between African-Americans and Whites is attributable to family differences between groups, rather than to processes that occur in school" (p. 492).

Similarly, vocabulary acquisition can be directly correlated with the socioeconomic status of the family as well. As referenced in Christ & Wang (2010), Hart & Risley (1995) found that three-year-old children that lived in low-income households knew 600 fewer words than children of the same age from upper incomes; the gap widens to 4,000 words by the second grade! In light of the upcoming discussion regarding this study's statistics in this chapter, Black families on average have significantly less income than their White counterparts. Therefore, vocabulary and income gaps compound and conflate disparities as they relate to the educational attainment for Blacks regarding race and family revenue.

Beyond vocabulary acquisition, the wealth and education level of parents are most predictive of the school success of the child when assessing traditionally studied variables from the research field. Cameron and Heckman (2001) concisely illustrate the relationship between family income and the educational level of the parent—particularly noting the impact through the life course of the child up until age 14. The amount of money and education doesn't change the outcomes of the student by relieving the financial burden of school. As their research indicates, "Family income matters, but it has its greatest influence on forming the ability and college readiness of children and not in financing college education. Family income is more important in explaining earlier grade transitions than later ones, suggesting that money spent on tuition policy aimed at high school graduates does not target the right population" (Cameron & Heckman, 2001, p. 492).



The most significant insight from this study supports the assertion of Cameron and Heckman's research. When Cameron and Heckman (2001) controlled for family background (income and parental education), minorities are more likely than Whites to graduate high school and attend college. Given that Black males on average have more income and social barriers to overcome than other demographics, it lends support to the author's assertion that *Black boys and men uniquely adapt to environments politically shaped in purposeful ways to disrupt their success and social viability*. Cameron and Heckman (2001) also note that interventions to improve educational outcomes for minorities must take place early on in the life of a child and throughout their adolescence. Late short-term interventions like Pell Grants do little to curb the barriers that mitigate college graduation rates for minority students.

Despite the fact that Cameron and Heckman (2001) suggest that “policy should focus on ensuring that more students graduate from high school and obtain the skills and motivation required to perform successful college work” (p. 492), *This work asserts that the real intervention must take place with a strong emphasis during early childhood*. As Farkas and Baren (2003) and Christ and Wang (2010) note, language skills and vocabulary acquisition from birth to age 3 provide significant insight into the potential educational success of a child. Furthermore, this assertion is corroborated by the findings of the Perry Preschool Study—an ongoing longitudinal study that has proven to reap benefits in regards to educational outcomes, economic performance, crime prevention, and the viability of health/family/children (Schweinhart et. al., 2005).

As one could then reasonably surmise, the standard of educational support received from a child's family predicated his or her vocabulary level. Weiss et al. (2009) assert that bolstering educational extracurricular activities and support improves academic performance within the

classroom. Furthermore, the research suggests that working to make this the reality on a local level and within the family can then allow the federal government to more adequately ensure that all children (especially those from economically and otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds) have these opportunities for after-school learning—including but not limited to summer learning and family support that improves chances for school success. Despite all of the factors involved surrounding the makeup of family influence, several works focused on the impact of race in predicting academic success.

For example, Steele-Johnson and Leas (2013) reveal [as cited by Bali & Alvarez (2003)] that African American and Hispanic students consistently perform more poorly than White students across all levels of education. Hence, these individuals are less likely to graduate from college and subsequently earn post-bachelor degrees associated with better life outcomes. More specifically, immediate college enrollment (directly from high school graduation) for Whites is 71%, whereas direct Black enrollment is at 63%. The numbers shock when assessing the percentage of those who enroll and graduate—60% for Whites and 40% for Blacks within six years (Aud & Hannes, 2011).

### **K12 School Community Influences**

Outside of the family structure, the school community is the second entity of the closest influence on a young person. In some cases, one can argue that the school community has the greatest impact on the future potential of a child's educational success. In regards to Black males, there are three extremely salient detractors to their educational success throughout their K-16 education and life course. First, Black men are much more likely to be sent to receive special education services. In fact, The National Education Association's (2011) "Race Against Time: Educating Black Boys" report illustrates that 42% of Black boys attend schools that are under-

resourced or underperforming and that Black boys are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school in comparison to their White counterparts. As a result, Black male students on average miss a considerable amount of instructional time from the classroom and can experience uniquely destructive psychosocial effects as a result.

The rate of suspensions and expulsions are so significant that Black boys make up 48% of all preschool children in the United States that receive more than one out-of-school suspension. With Black students comprising only 16% of enrollment, in PK-12 education they represent 32% of in-school suspended students, 33% of out-of-school suspended students, 42% of multiple out-of-school suspensions, and 34% of expulsions. Moreover, students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended or expelled versus general population student; when coupled with arrests and referrals to law enforcement, these negative realities grow exponentially. Twenty-seven percent of students referred to law enforcement are Black as well as 31% of those arrested in school-related incidents. With all of these aspects of school discipline, Black males are twice as likely to be suspended, expelled, or arrested than Black females (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

Second, the NEA report also reveals the nature of how school communities within the national context devalue the intellect of Black men from an early age. Black and Hispanic males make up roughly 80 percent of all students in special education programs. Third, even if young Black male students illustrate exceptional academic performance, they are 2.5 times less likely to be deemed as gifted students. The statistics mentioned above are particularly disturbing and explain systemic issues of negative attitudes toward Black males due to the stark disproportion of Black men sent to receive these services.

Considering that Black males only make up 9 percent of the population, it is quite staggering that they would not only constitute the majority of the special education population but that they would also form 20 percent of all of the students labeled as mentally retarded in the entire United States.

The other major findings of The NEA's report illustrate that on average 28% of core teachers are under certified in schools with high concentrations of minority students. Furthermore, when one assesses the progression of Black boys throughout the educational pipeline, less than half of Black male students graduate from high school on time. Moreover, in accounting for academic performance in post-secondary institutions, 4.6 million Black men had attended college, but only half graduated. In the aggregate, only 11% of Black men end up earning a bachelor's degree in their lifetime.

Some of the most salient factors that contribute to the educational success of Black men are created by the school context in which they enroll. These factors include the status of teachers and their environment, as well as the type of school governance and some resource and accountability structures of those schools and their districts. For example, Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2011) reveal two significant findings: one, schools with a lower proportion of students eligible for subsidized lunch demonstrate strong teacher-reported working conditions; two, the greater the percentage of Black or Hispanic students at a school, the lower the average ratings are of working conditions across the six factors (reported in their study).

### **Experiences in Higher Education Institutions**

Despite the fact that early childhood and middle school experiences most accurately predict college degree attainment, there are still very influential factors at the post-secondary level. Scholars usually focus on the amount of financial aid a student receives, the school climate

in which the student enrolls, the standard of peer and institutional support, and the degree of diversity and inclusiveness initiatives at the institution. As one could imagine, the financial aspect of attending college is a burden for many students. DesJardins and McCall (2010) illustrate that institutional policy can reduce student stopout (stopping for periods and then re-enrolling—which correlates with a greater likelihood of completely dropping out of school) and improve reenrollment and graduation through the strategic use of financial aid. The research found that when institutions utilized "The Princeton Strategy" (providing significant amounts of funding spread evenly over the semesters of the student's time at their university) increases graduation chances, decreases stopouts and the first spells of non-enrollment—which are shown to have a strong negative effect on graduation rates. Issues of a cost of attendance exacerbate in typically economically disenfranchised groups like Black men.

Despite the shocking realities of how money functions into the equation of college graduation, the climate of the institution plays a significant role in the likelihood of a Black man graduating from college. Harper (2010) illustrates that Black undergraduate men (particularly at predominantly White institutions) frequently encounter racist stereotypes and microaggressions that pose a detrimental effect on achievement and a sense of belonging at the school. These realities contribute to some tertiary aspects of Black men's responses to the environment. Harper, Carini, Bridges, and Hayek (2004) find that as compared to their same-race female counterparts, Black men are less engaged in their studies. They take fewer notes, spend less time completing assignments, have lower grades, and participate less in campus activities and leadership positions as a function of their feelings of acceptance at their respective institutions.

## Community Influences

The next sphere of influence to discuss is the community in which the family resides—particularly the community and environment of the student before enrolling in higher education. A great deal of the epistemology of the field has focused on aspects of the community including the level of crime, cultural capital, the local economy, and the job market of the area in question. In assessing these aspects of community that impact a child's academic preparation, it is important to understand the nature of how these variables are interlinked and compounded. A city with a weak job market typically has lower incomes and higher concentrations of poverty. Furthermore, communities with higher concentrations of poverty on average have excessive levels of crime and poor educational attainment. In assessing community factors that impact educational performance for Black males, it is important to evaluate research that takes into account the confluence of the previously mentioned variables. Hannon and DeFina (2005) found that reductions in poverty yielded a linear decrease in violent crime for a community despite race and ethnicity. However, the research does not illustrate the disproportionate number of Blacks that are subject to poverty and communities with high crime rates.

Quillian (2012) notes that Black and Hispanic citizens are 50% more likely to be in poverty than other racial groups (p. 375). “In effect, blacks and Hispanics are segregated from higher-income members of other ethnic groups. It is thus more accurate to describe concentrated poverty in minority communities as resulting from three segregations: racial segregation, poverty-status segregation within race, and segregation from high- and middle-income members of other racial groups” (Quillian, 2012, p. 375). Quillian (2012) ultimately argues and illustrates that the unique segregation of Black and Hispanic populations are the direct culprit of extreme

and intergenerational poverty within these groups. Quillian suggests that a reduction in segregation would result in increasing incomes for these marginalized communities.

In contextualizing community effects on the individual in regards to educational outcomes, the epistemology also addresses cultural capital and job/labor market statuses and forces to predict and account for academic performance and level of education.

### **Societal Expectations and Biases**

In accounting for cultural capital and labor force in regards to how Black men experience second-class citizenship, this treatment is a result of implicit biases on behalf of society. Furthermore, these biases manifest as reduced expectations of the behaviors and potential life outcomes for Black men. While one could harken back to the days of American Slavery to begin to understand the historical trends of poor expectations and biases, contemporary US media outlets are partly responsible for continuing the legacy of racism and how it festers in the minds of US citizens. Oliver (2003) outlines three major tenets of how the media perpetuates stereotyping against Black men.

“First, media images of race and crime (and particularly in news and reality programming) systematically over-represent African Americans as criminal; portray black men as particularly dangerous, and present information about black suspects that assumes their guilt. Second, even when crime featuring black and white criminal suspects is presented in equitable ways in the media, viewers' existing stereotypes can result in biased interpretations that may serve to maintain racial stereotypes nevertheless. Finally, the systematic ways in which viewers remember crime information implies effects that go beyond viewers' perceptions of media content per se” (Oliver, 2003, p. 15).

Dr. Oliver notes that the evidence is hugely concerning because it sets the stage where any Black man can be viewed and identified as criminals. While her research calls for great responsibility and accountability by the media and viewers' biases, she calls for researchers to address stereotyping and improve media literacy. Although these interventions are arguably necessary, one cannot underestimate the importance of crafting targeted policy to address these

issues. This study seeks to illustrate that bias cannot be legislated; however, the constructs that fuel and enable that bias most certainly can. In harkening back to an aforementioned notion, the refusal of American policy makers to address racism within the collective American Consciousness is a policy decision in and of itself—a policy decision that undergirds and bolsters issues of inequity and racism. Nevertheless, as destructive as nationwide biased media coverage may be, it is perhaps more disturbing to see how American citizens choose to self-segregate beyond the societal constructs that facilitate social, racial, and class stratification.

As a means to contextualize this premise with a real life microcosmic situation, the research addresses the most segregated metropolis—Detroit, Michigan (Krysan & Bader, 2007). Granted, Detroit is a unique metropolis in that it is America's most segregated, yet it provides a backdrop of the devastating effects of segregation. Krysan and Bader's (2007) research illustrates that on average Black families prefer to live in more racially diverse neighborhoods, whereas Whites prefer to live in communities of which constitute a greater majority of White people. In unpacking the realities of their findings, it is best to review the direct words of the researchers.

“We find modest racial agreement about which communities would be ‘seriously considered’ and ‘never considered’ as a place to live, but by and large perceptions of the metropolis are racialized. Whites are influenced by the percentage white in a community (net of the community’s social class characteristics) and very unlikely to consider communities where they are anything but the strong majority. African Americans are also influenced by race, but in different ways and less fundamentally: 1.) Communities with high percentages of African Americans are among those most likely to be ‘seriously considered,’ but so are communities with just a handful of African Americans; 2.) African Americans are less likely to ‘never consider’ all communities, and more likely than whites to consider both communities where they are in the majority and in the minority; 3.) African Americans are unaffected by a community’s percent white net of community social class characteristics. We place these results in the context of the debate about racial residential preferences, arguing for the importance of grounding our understanding – and measures– of racial residential preferences in the context of real urban landscapes” (Krysan & Bader, 2007, pg. 699).



Although Krysan and Bader (2007) note that both Whites and Blacks equally shy away from poorer communities (that are typically overwhelmingly consisted of Black people), Whites in particular still shy away from communities like Southfield (at the time of the research had a slight majority of Black residents—yet are middle and upper-class neighborhoods). Although this study is not representative of all of America, it does raise some serious questions around how other metropolises would survey—particularly in The South and rural areas. In undertaking any responsible, comprehensive assessment of how segregation manifests itself in American Society, it is crucial to address the interplay between past policies that encourage segregation and the individual preferences of residents in regards to whom they would associate as a neighbor in their community.

### **Intraracial Mindsets of Black Men**

In assessing the effect of the various policies on Black Men and the biases and expectations of society, it is then important to understand and determine Black men's reactions to the realities that different policies create. As one's reality solidifies from policy, one will have tangible transmogrifications of his mental outlook on life expectations and potential outcomes. Dr. John Ogbu has been instrumental in studying, assessing, and analyzing the identity of Black people—particularly Black men—and their relationship to their educational experiences. A great deal of his research views Black behavior and attitudes through the prism of being oppositional to their White counterparts. Ogbu addresses individual Black identity by utilizing Racial Identity as measured by racial attitudes and Underclass Oppositional Identity (as presented by Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999, p. 29-30) (Ogbu, 2008).

Furthermore, Ogbu assesses how individual identity forms to understand the collective identity of Black people in America. As Ogbu synthesizes, “Collective identity usually develops

because of people's collective experience or series of collective experiences. Warfare, conquest, colonization, forced labor, mass emigration, imposition of an outcast status and enslavement are examples of the collective identity" (Castile & Kushner, 1981; Spicer, 1967). He argues that usually the collective identity of an oppressed group is spawned and maintained by status problems and the response of the minorities to those problems. Ogbu concisely reveals that one of the major Black responses to oppression has been denouncing the culture of the oppressor. However, part of that culture involves the culture of education—particularly efforts around literacy, language, and academic achievement. To put this discussion in context, Ogbu has arguably been the most influential researcher in regards to the notion of some Black students seeing participating in the process of schooling as being pejoratively deemed as "Acting White." Ogbu notes that some Black responses are a result of the aforementioned collective experience as a consequence of the following:

- 1) Involuntary incorporation into society (being forced into minority status against their will by conquest, colonization, enslavement, etc.)
- 2) Instrumental discrimination (denial of equal access to good jobs, education, housing, political participation, etc.)
- 3) Social subordination (residential and social segregation, hostility and violence, prohibition of intermarriage, requirement of the offspring of intergroup mating to affiliate with one group with no choice.) Ogbu further notes, "In some cases oppressed minorities are forced against their will to assimilate into the dominant group, although this assimilation usually results in marginalization" (Ogbu, 2004, p. 4).

While many Blacks see "Acting White" as a means of social mobility and success, for many, "Acting White" presents serious repercussions when it comes to social sanctions and peer

pressure. DeVos (1967) illustrates that many individuals that choose to "Act White" face severe psychological stress. DeVos characterizes this as affective dissonance—meaning that some Blacks would be pressured to feel that he or she is abandoning their people by "Acting White"—that they are "joining the enemy." Among being a pariah within one's own racial and ethnic community, the fear of being labeled an "Uncle Tom" (disloyalty to Black causes), losing friends and community, and identity frustration, has led some to suffer from self-doubts, guilt, alienation, paranoia, and committing suicide (Luster, 1992).

Although, it is important to note the overwhelming burdens of "Acting White," Ogbu illustrates that students are in actuality rejecting "White Attitudes" and behaviors conducive to making good grades (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). For example, speaking Standard English, enrolling in Honors and AP classes, being 'too smart' in lessons, and having too many White friends are all indicative of how failing to adopt 'White Attitudes' contribute to the detriment of Black people in regards to "Acting White." Moreover, an extension of the difficulties faced in "Acting White" manifests itself in economic pressures that mount as a detriment to Black students. For example, many feel the pressure to work to contribute to one's family or to maintain certain lifestyles. These pressures can then serve as a distraction from school and a means to lessen the priority of school (Ogbu, 2004).

### **Epistemological Indicators, Predictors, and Factors Leading to College Graduation**

The College & Career Readiness & Success Center's (2013) study illustrates a myriad of indicators, predictors, and factors across the course of students' educational careers that lead to post-secondary success and bachelor degree attainment. The study defines indicators as "instruments with an established threshold. Students who perform at or above the threshold are more likely to be prepared for their college and career pursuits"—like grade point average. They

also define predictors as “measures that are strongly correlated with improved postsecondary outcomes but for which a numeric threshold has not been established.” Lastly, factors are defined as “skills and attributes that have been identified as important to students’ success and are driven by sound theoretical arguments but for which reliable metrics have not yet been developed or tested independently of other factors” (p. 2).

### Early Childhood Indicators, Predictors, and Factors

Early Childhood		
Indicator	Predictor	Other Potential Factor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participation in child care and early education<sup>a</sup></li> <li>■ Early approaches to learning<sup>b</sup></li> <li>■ Positive “school readiness risk profile”<sup>c</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cognitive understanding and cognitive control<sup>d</sup></li> <li>■ Positive play interaction behaviors at home and school<sup>e</sup></li> <li>■ Emergent literacy<sup>f</sup></li> <li>■ Working memory skills<sup>g</sup></li> <li>■ Social-emotional learning<sup>h</sup></li> <li>■ Attention span persistence<sup>i</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>Magnuson, Meyers, Rhum, & Waldfogel, 2004; <sup>b</sup>Li-Grining et al., 2010; <sup>c</sup>Hair et al., 2006; <sup>d</sup>Leerkes, Paradise, O’Brien, Calkins, & Lange, 2008; <sup>e</sup>Coolahan et al., 2000; Dilalla et al., 2004; Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2002; <sup>f</sup>Doctoroff, Greer, & Arnold, 2006; <sup>g</sup>Gathercole et al., 2003; <sup>h</sup>Denham & Brown, 2010; <sup>i</sup>McClelland et al., 2012

As outlined in this chapter, family and community influences will impact the predictors and factors listed in this table. Family and school dynamics shape early learning and early experiences in a way that directly affect academic preparedness that leads to postsecondary success.

In regards to elementary school indicators, predictors, and factors, the study found the following:

Elementary School		
Indicator	Predictor	Other Potential Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reading by the third grade<sup>a</sup></li> <li>■ &lt; 10 percent absenteeism in elementary school<sup>b</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Being rated highly by teachers on attention span and classroom participation<sup>c</sup></li> <li>■ High scores on the Social Skills Rating System<sup>d</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social competence<sup>e</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010; Hernandez, 2012; <sup>b</sup>Chang & Mariajose, 2008; <sup>c</sup>Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993; <sup>d</sup>Malecki & Elliot, 2002; <sup>e</sup>Weish, Parke, Widaman, & O'Neill, 2001

The findings listed in this table connect directly to the commentary mentioned above in this review of the literature. The review of the literature reveals the importance of early childhood literacy and vocabulary acquisition, while this table illustrates a link between social skills, attendance, and literacy. One could argue that a child that is attentive, present, and behaves well socially would be engaged well enough to focus on reading and literacy. Hence, the findings of middle school indicators, predictors, and factors are very intuitive and logical when projecting elementary success to middle school achievement. The research found the following correlates for middle school:

Middle Grades		
Indicator	Predictor	Other Potential Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ &lt; 20 percent absenteeism in the middle grades<sup>a</sup></li> <li>■ Remaining at the same school through the middle grades<sup>b</sup></li> <li>■ Receiving no unsatisfactory behavior grades in sixth grade<sup>c</sup></li> <li>■ Passing all ELA and mathematics courses and meeting benchmarks on state exams<sup>d</sup></li> <li>■ Passing Algebra I in the eighth grade<sup>e</sup></li> <li>■ NAEP mathematics score of &gt; 292 in eighth grade<sup>f</sup></li> <li>■ Meeting the following benchmarks on college preparatory exams: ACT EXPLORE test scores of English 13, mathematics 17, science 20 and reading 15<sup>g</sup>; SAT-9 score &gt; 50th percentile<sup>h</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Taking rigorous coursework in the middle grades<sup>i</sup></li> <li>■ High scores on the Grit-S and Grit-O scales<sup>j</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social-emotional and decision-making skills<sup>k</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>Balfanz, 2009; Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; <sup>b</sup>Mac Iver, Durham, Plank, Farley-Ripple, & Balfanz, 2008; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; <sup>c</sup>Balfanz et al., 2007; <sup>d</sup>Balfanz et al., 2007; Cumpton, Schexnayder, & King, (2012); <sup>e</sup>Kurlaender, Reardon, & Jackson, 2008; Wimberly & Noeth, 2005; <sup>f</sup>Lee, 2013; <sup>g</sup>ACT, 2008; <sup>h</sup>Silver & Saunders, 2008; <sup>i</sup>Atanda, 1999; Wimberly & Noeth, 2005; <sup>j</sup>Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; <sup>k</sup>Fleming et al., 2005

One of the biggest differences in the indicators and predictors from middle school versus early childhood or elementary school is the focus on academic achievement in the form of standardized assessments. Absenteeism and remaining in the same school speak to matters of transience and attrition in regards to the status of one's neighborhood and school community. Considering the research study at hand will assess the impact of racial segregation and isolation for Black men, it is noteworthy that middle school indicators and predictors primarily focus on family and school factors outside of academic performance.

Astonishingly, high school correlates of secondary and post-secondary success mirror that of middle school in many ways with their emphasis on standardized testing and community factors (particularly dealing with transience). Some of the psychosocial aspects of high school correlates harken back to the research of John Ogbu and his study of individual ecology and its mindsets toward academics, schooling, and learning:

High School and Career and Technical Education		
Indicator	Predictor	Other Potential Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ &lt; 10 percent absences<sup>a</sup></li> <li>▪ No more than one failure of ninth-grade subjects<sup>b</sup></li> <li>▪ Completing the following mathematics sequence: Algebra II (ninth grade), geometry (10th grade), Algebra III and trigonometry or higher (11th grade), precalculus or calculus (12th grade)<sup>c</sup></li> <li>▪ 3.0+ HS GPA<sup>d</sup></li> <li>▪ AP Exam: 3 or higher; IB Exam: 4 or higher<sup>e</sup></li> <li>▪ Dual enrollment participation<sup>f</sup></li> <li>▪ Passing state exams<sup>g</sup></li> <li>▪ FAFSA completion<sup>h</sup></li> <li>▪ Meeting the following benchmarks on national assessments: 10th grade NELS<sup>6</sup> Scale Score &gt; 54; 12th grade NAEP Score &gt; 320; 12th grade ECLS<sup>7</sup> Score &gt; 141<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Meeting the following benchmarks on college preparatory exams: SAT &gt; 1550<sup>8</sup>; PLAN<sup>9</sup> test scores: English 15, reading 17, mathematics 19, and science 21; ACT scores: English 18, mathematics 22, reading 21, and science 24<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Participation in the following: summer bridge programs, school year transition programs, senior year transition courses, and early assessment and intervention programs</li> <li>▪ College Knowledge target outreach programs such as: multiyear college-readiness programs, embedded college counselling, and college-readiness lessons<sup>k</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Few school transfers between grades<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Early Assessment Program (EAP) and Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) completion<sup>m</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in SEL Intervention<sup>n</sup></li> <li>▪ Meeting with academic advisor<sup>o</sup></li> <li>▪ ACT Work Keys<sup>p</sup>, NWRC based on Equipped for the Future standards, and the CASAS Workforce</li> <li>▪ Skills Certification System<sup>q</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>Allensworth & Easton, 2007; <sup>b</sup>Kemple, Segeritz, & Stevenson, 2013; <sup>c</sup>Klepfer & Hull, 2012; <sup>d</sup>Mishook et al., 2012; <sup>e</sup>Nagaoka et al., 2009; Wiley et al., 2010; <sup>f</sup>Karp et al., 2007; <sup>g</sup>Cumpton et al., 2012; <sup>h</sup>Nagaoka et al., 2009; <sup>i</sup>Lee, 2012, 2013; <sup>j</sup>ACT, 2012; <sup>k</sup>Barnett et al., 2012; Mishook et al., 2012; <sup>l</sup>Rumberger & Larson, 1998; <sup>m</sup>Mishook et al., 2012; <sup>n</sup>Taylor & Dymnicki, 2007; <sup>o</sup>Klepfer & Hull, 2012; <sup>p</sup>Bragg & Ruud, 2007; <sup>q</sup>Darce & Stern, 2013

<sup>6</sup> The National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)

<sup>7</sup> The Early Childhood Longitudinal Program (ECLS)

<sup>8</sup> SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark retrieved from <http://press.collegeboard.org/sat/sat-college-and-career-readiness-benchmark>

<sup>9</sup> The PLAN is a 10th-grade assessment developed by ACT that measures progress at the secondary level in the four core subject areas of mathematics, English, reading, and science.



In mentioning Ogbu's work, his findings on student attitudes about education closely link to whether or not a student would participate in transition and intervention programs and meet with advisors—regarding the results in this table. Nevertheless, like the middle school findings, absenteeism and school transfers are negatively correlated with academic success. These factors closely link to the analysis of family/community factors and segregation/isolation. Absenteeism is a function of a myriad of factors including the physical, mental, emotional, and financial health of the family, access to transportation, and availability of a student's family to support their educational endeavors. Similarly, the necessity of transferring schools would potentially be the function of these factors as well. Furthermore, school transfers, transience, and attrition could result from escaping a community due to a lack of jobs, housing, security, adequate schools, etc. While these indicators and predictors could involve several other aspects and factors, they all mostly derive from family resources within the context of their community—resources that are shaped and often defined by its racial composition as has been explored throughout this analysis (and will be expounded upon in Chapters 3 and 4).

Lastly, postsecondary correlates (while a student enrolls in a college or a university) are particularly interesting as well:

Postsecondary and Beyond		
Indicator	Predictor	Other Potential Factor
<b>Two- and Four-Year Institutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of mathematics and English gateway courses and career exploration course<sup>a</sup></li> <li>15 credits per quarter<sup>b</sup></li> <li>Experience and orientation program</li> <li>&gt; 3.0 GPA<sup>c</sup></li> </ul> <b>Adult Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GED; &lt; 256 on mathematics, reading, and listening on CASAS<sup>d</sup></li> </ul>	<b>Two- and Four-Year Institutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment in a baccalaureate transfer program<sup>e</sup></li> <li>Immediate enrollment after high school graduation</li> <li>Working less than 15 hours per week</li> <li>Participation in extracurricular activities; high educational expectations for self<sup>f</sup></li> </ul>	<b>Adult Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational Intent<sup>g</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>Moore & Shulock, 2009; <sup>b</sup>Leinbach & Jenkins, 2008; <sup>c</sup>Moore & Shulock, 2009; <sup>d</sup>Wachen et al., 2010; <sup>e</sup>Leinbach & Jenkins, 2008; <sup>f</sup>Aud et al., 2011; <sup>g</sup>Conley, 2007

The findings illustrated in this table continue the trend of presenting a relationship between academic performance and community factors that can stem from segregation, isolation, and homogenous racial composition. The metrics from this table that are not academically based are credit load, program experiences, immediate enrollment after high school graduation, workload, vocational intent, and one's self-expectations. In focusing on those indicators, predictors, and factors that could connect to segregation and isolation, a student would be more likely to be able to take on a greater credit load with a reduced work schedule. Furthermore, if they come from more integrated communities less plagued by issues of poverty and scarce job opportunities, it would set the stage for that student to be able to focus more of their attention on academics. Additionally, it could be argued, hypothesized, and postulated that a student would have greater expectations for themselves and a stronger vocational intent if they come from communities that foster such notions. Arguably, a racially homogenous community with few job and income prospects would not serve as an environment promoting high expectations or hope for career prospects.

Ultimately, the findings presented from these previous tables chronicling the indicators, predictors, and factors across the K-16 pipeline leading to college degree attainment can be broken down into two categories—academic preparedness/success and segregation (psychosocial factors that can be a function of segregation, isolation, and racially homogenous communities). The outlined psychological traits are important to contextualize in consideration of the physical and mental health expectancies for Black peoples.

### **Black Life Expectancy and Intergenerational Trauma**

In thoroughly and comprehensively overviewing these psychosocial aspects as they manifest regarding college degree attainment, it is critical to assess how these elements negatively impact the physical and mental well-being of Black men from a policy standpoint—particularly under the umbrella of segregation and isolation. As Carenthon (2007) found, life expectancy is lowest for Black men amongst all of the demographic groups. In simple comparison to Black women and White men and women, the life expectancy of Black men is only 69.8 years—compared to 75.7 for Caucasian men, 76.5 for Black women, and 80.8 years for Caucasian women.

Dr. Carenthon (2007) explicitly states from her research:

“...Unequal opportunity and treatment in our country has a long history that was not completely eliminated with the abolition of slavery or the civil rights movement. Tentacles of our history reach into the 20<sup>th</sup> century influencing not only blacks, but other minority groups, women, and those with lower socioeconomic status. Those factors most salient to the disparity in life expectancy include socioeconomic constraints on education and economic opportunity, the health care environment, and housing disparities experienced by black residents. Each of these factors is intertwined and contributes directly to the mortality experience in black men” (p. 148).

Because the suggested new definition of genocide still includes physical death (particularly premature), it is of import to include this most fundamental analysis of life expectancy for Black men. These assertions also explicitly discuss quality of life in regards to

barriers faced throughout life—other factors that "kill" Black men socially and economically. Given that premise, it is also of significance to analyze the psychological forms of oppression that result from policies, segregation, and isolation. Nevertheless, it is paramount to consider these psychological and emotional traumas as they have persisted over time like the various studies and policies chronicled in this study. Therefore, for the sake of being robust, factors that journey back to the inception of American Slavery are pertinent.

Although it is impossible to actively research former Black American Slaves and each subsequent generation from a physiological standpoint involving brain tissue analysis, Yehuda et al. (2016) found that physiological changes in the brain due to trauma have the ability to pass down between generations. In studying the survivors of The Holocaust and their descendants, Yehuda et al.'s (2006) research found "an intergenerational epigenetic priming of the physiological response to stress in offspring in highly traumatized individuals...From a biological perspective, accommodation to multiple environmental influences at distinct and potentially redundant sites on genes central to stress regulation would facilitate maximal stress responsivity and adaptation" (p. 379).

Considering the myriad adverse health effects from the physiological response to stress and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), one could extrapolate the findings of this research and project them to those subject to American Slavery and their descendants (Black Americans). Nevertheless, Yehuda et al. (2016) found that the physiological changes in the body found in Holocaust survivors and their offspring closely mirror the physiological changes observed in the survivors of physical and sexual abuse from inner city children. This finding presents an important distinction considering that physical and sexual abuse have been potent weapons against Black people from the inception of American Slavery through Jim Crow and beyond.

Hence, the multitude of destructive policies against Blacks throughout history has created conditions to affect them physiologically and epigenetically across each subsequent generation. This potential link could have significant implications for how society handicaps Black people on many levels involving their ability to cope and overcome federally sanctioned segregation and oppression.

### **Epistemology Synopsis**

One of the biggest considerations regarding college graduation rates for Black men is to assess the nature of the K12 pipeline in conjunction with the research and researchers previously mentioned in this review of the literature. Many educational researchers argue that outside of family and community factors, teacher effectiveness is the most significant factor in improving the academic performance of students. Interestingly, Ronfeld, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2012) found that teacher turnover is the worst in majority-minority schools. Furthermore, they found that the distribution of teacher experience is most inadequate in these districts as well—meaning that younger and more inexperienced teachers make up a greater percentage of the teacher workforce in minority communities. Furthermore, the field of educational research reveals several stark realities about districts that predominantly service minority students. As Allensworth, Ponisciale, and Mazzeo (2009) found, teacher mobility (transience and attrition) are strongly correlated to the racial makeup of the school. Thus, they found that teachers are most transient in areas that have greater numbers of minority students and that have more inexperienced teachers. Hence, this harkens back to Ronfeld, Loeb, and Wycloff's research that found that teacher turnover is the worst in majority-minority districts and schools.

Contemporary legislative conservative and neo-liberal discourse advocate for moving away from the traditional public school model and advocate for private systems within public

schooling and school of choice models. Lubienski, Gulosino, and Weitzel (2009) found that districts that open themselves to be school of choice overwhelmingly and consistently seek out the advantaged students to enter their district. School choice does little to serve the overall needs of students from struggling communities when only the highest performing students from those struggling districts are accepted. Furthermore, these choice models are often profit-based/influenced. The areas allowing students to enter have considerations regarding their test scores and the funding the school receives based on those metrics. Thus, due to the possibly of lost funding, school of choice districts disavow the moral and ethical imperative to provide a high-quality education for all by choosing to put profit over the wellbeing of students—particularly those that tend to be of a lower socioeconomic status, traditionally educationally disadvantaged, and minorities.

Additionally, a great deal of contemporary policy enacted arguably leans toward conservative and neo-liberal philosophies. As more majority-minority districts adopt choice models, emergency managers, and charter schools, a troubling phenomenon occurs. As Arsen and Mason (2013) found, emergency management and charter schools diminish the democratic accountability of the communities within school districts. Moreover, their research indicates that these movements are *at the core financial decisions* and not ones based on improving the academic performance of students. Rather, the study illustrates a trend of districts working to privatize its services to cut costs. Unfortunately, this leads to the reduction in salaries for educators. As Apple (2007) notes, the political climate, following the inception and implementation of The No Child Left Behind Bill (NCLB) at the turn of the century has pushed an agenda crafting public services as being "bad" and private services as being "good."

Unfortunately, even school administrators in minority districts have been unable to be the mitigating buffer that ensures school success amongst the privatization, emergency management, and charter school movements in legislation and the pressures teachers face at the classroom level. Boyd et al. (2011) reveal that school administrators in minority districts consistently rank as being poor. They found that the greater percentage of students that are minorities and receive subsidized lunch in a school, the worse teachers rate the school and the administration. However, one cannot fairly argue that administrators are simply worse in minority and poorer districts. Nevertheless, since teachers consistently rate the schools and administrators worse in poor and minority communities, these teachers more actively and consistently leave those schools and districts. Ultimately, this creates an environment of upheaval and uncertainty in poor and minority districts when teacher retention can be so poor. Unfortunately, the epistemology reveals that districts serving a large percentage of minority students tend to have the worst teacher retention, the lowest salaries, the least amount of teacher experience, a significantly greater number of charter schools, and a great need for choice models. Unfortunately, they fail (write large) to sufficiently serve the needs of minority students.

From a higher education standpoint, there are a few clear indications as to why students do not persist and ultimately graduate with a bachelor's degree. Tinto (2003) illustrates that students must integrate into the formal and informal social systems within an institution. These formal and informal systems include academic performance, faculty/staff interactions, and extracurricular activities. He notes that students often drop out or leave an institution because they struggle academically, do not resolve educational and occupational goals, and fail to be incorporated into the intellectual and social life of the institution—*essentially they experience a form of segregation and isolation.*

Harper (2012) supports these findings in noting that Black men, in particular, must be integrated and engaged within their institution. He notes that they must resolve masculine identity conflicts, negotiate peer support for achievement, develop political acumen for success in settings in which they are underrepresented, develop strong Black identities that incite productive activism (especially on predominantly White campuses), acquire social capital and access to resources (especially exclusive networks), craft productive responses to racism, and overcome previous educational and socioeconomic disadvantage.

### **Society and Policy Synopsis**

American Society poses a myriad of significant threats to the lives and livelihoods of Black men. In conceptualizing the previous content, it is important to understand that American society "segregates" Black men uniquely as compared to other groups—a segregation that does not always naturally fall in line by race. As previously outlined, Black boys are separated from the general school population in regards to discipline and special education at dangerously high levels of disproportion and disparity. The criminal justice system disproportionately targets Black men concerning shootings, arrests, and even capital punishment. These realities leave these individuals with records (of activity with law enforcement) and few life options if they return to society—few chances to gain employment, vote, or have access to some of the necessities provided while incarcerated. Furthermore, society functions in a way that leaves these citizens racially and economically segregated; with a lack of adequate employment, productive participation in society becomes quite difficult.

Because several disciplines note poor life outcomes for Black males in regards to income, employment, health disparities, education, incarceration, death rates, etc., it is vital to assess the lack of policies to ameliorate these issues writ large. While the Department of Justice (DOJ)



announced it *plans* to end the use of private prisons, it has not yet been implemented. Furthermore, it is only a small piece that can work toward creating a positive environment for Black men and boys (considering this is only for federal prisons that house a small percentage of the entire incarcerated community). However, The Office of the Inspector General completed a report noting, "Contract prisons incurred more safety and security incidents per capita than comparable [Bureau of Prisons'] institutions" (Office of the Inspector General, 2016). Unfortunately, this rhetoric is centered only on the safety of the sites and does not consider the mechanisms that encouraged incarcerating those inmates in the first place. As one reviews the relationship between the levels of segregation, stratification, and isolation that Black men experience in society, it is important to keep in mind how that segregation then manifests itself in the educational attainment of that group—particularly noting the great divide in college degree attainment rates between Black men and Black women.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Restatement of the Problem

As previously outlined, a significant college degree attainment gap exists between Black men and Black women. The author hypothesized that Black men do not earn college degrees in the same numbers or rates as Black women due to the unique segregation, stratification, and isolation that Black boys and men face in The United States. As the previous analysis outlined, these overt forms of segregation assert themselves more significantly in environments where the majority of the people are minorities, school funding is lower, job opportunities are scarcer, proper housing access is poor, and communities' incomes are lower. These types of homogenous environments are the kind of circumstances in which many Black children find themselves. As societal expectations can place a "ceiling" on the potential success of Black life, institutions begin to behave in ways that are hegemonic toward Black males—regardless of whether or not policies support those behaviors. Nevertheless, as again argued, in knowing adverse outcomes for a group without policies to ameliorate those issues, it is then a firm policy decision that sanctions those outcomes. Hence, because these realities manifest themselves in homogenous communities, the study will assess the graduation outcomes for Black males as a function of the level of racial segregation in their childhood neighborhoods. Thus, the study was designed to answer two research questions:

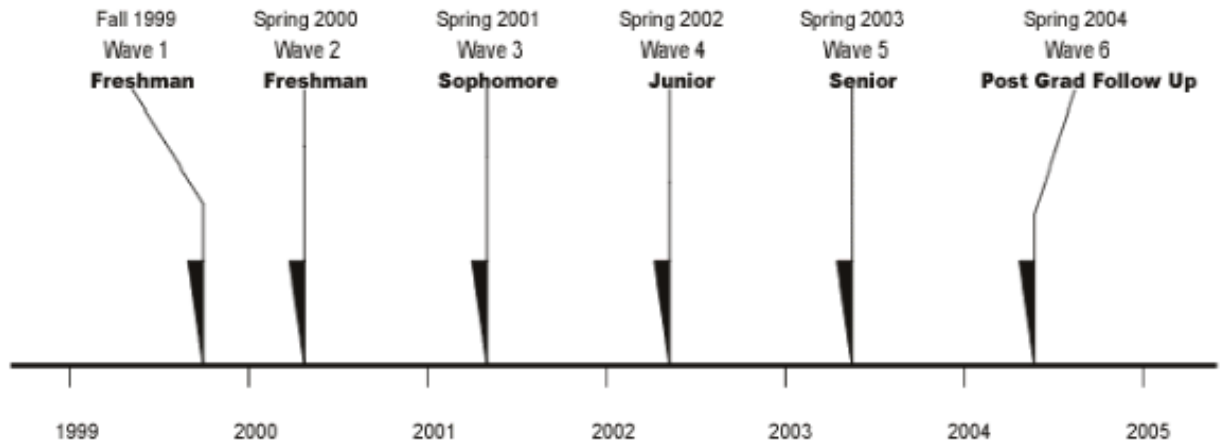
- 1) What 4-year university graduation attainment rates are yielded for Black males (compared to Black women) when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood compared to those who grow up in a more diverse community?
- 2) Do Black males reduce the degree attainment gap between Black men and women when accounting for 6-year graduation rates as a function of neighborhood racial diversity/segregation?

## Research Design

The research study utilized The Princeton Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen; this survey and accompanying data set were initiated to test theoretical explanations for minority underachievement in higher education and were funded by The Mellon Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The researchers behind the survey wanted to produce a broad database that was able to test a myriad of conceptual models, assess their explanatory power, and specify the circumstances under which the models apply. The NLSF sought to measure the academic and social progress of college students regularly and then capture the aggregated data annually to assess changes in the students' psychological processes. To accurately capture this data, the researchers designed the study with equal-sized samples of White, Black, Asian, and Latino freshmen entering selective colleges and universities (NLSF, 2005).

The baseline survey consisted of face-to-face interviews asking for comprehensive information about the neighborhood, family, and educational environments of the students before their college enrollment. Moreover, the NLSF follow-up interviews were via telephone during the spring of each academic year to recount the evolving social, psychological, and educational experiences of those same students on their respective campuses. Since the survey asked the participants questions regarding their childhood, the database accounts for data stretching from childhood through college graduation. Therefore, the design of the study, survey, and database links pre-college experiences to those in college to understand the causality between determinants and outcomes. Fortunately, the study followed, interviewed, and retained those who dropped out of college or changed institutions to avoid infusing selection biases into the sample (NLSF, 2005).

The NLSF is a public dataset that captures the survey responses in five waves:



Wave 1 is the baseline survey that includes extensive information on students' background (e.g., family structure, neighborhood, and school characteristics at age 6, 12, and the year before enrolling in college). Additionally, the data accounts for the students' college preparation, peer networks, and attitudes regarding race and ethnicity. Lastly, the data also includes summary variables about the participants' household and a roster containing information about each member of that household.

Second, Wave 2 provides detailed information regarding the courses taken, grades, social networks, time management, living arrangements, finances, relationships, and perceptions of prejudice on the campuses of the respondents. Third, Wave 3 includes the previous information from the first two waves and includes factors of the students' college choices, their entrance exam scores (SAT), majors chosen, career paths, and employment while enrolled in college.

Fourth, Wave 4 contains the participants' expected degree, the mentoring they received, extracurricular involvement, and their health and emotional wellbeing/issues. Fifth, the dataset surveys the respondents about terms in which they studied abroad, college debts, plans for employment, career, and future education, as well as their perception of their own racial and ethnic groups—in regards to the ideology of their identity, incidents of discrimination and

prejudice, and other opinions and behavior. Ultimately, the data also includes the important points in capturing whether or not the respondents graduated within 4 or 6 years of freshman enrollment—with an additional summary measure of the paths taken in the students' pursuit of their bachelor's degrees (NLSF, 2005).

This research used a descriptive, cross-sectional and correlational design study that examined the self-reported levels of neighborhood segregation of the research subjects' childhood and the graduation rates associated with varying levels of racial segregation. Utilizing the Princeton Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), the data analysis employed the responses of Black men and women attending 4-year institutions. The graduation rates of Black males from segregated or more diverse neighborhoods were compared to the answers of their Black women counterparts. Therefore, one can assess how graduation rates differ between Black men and women when they come from communities of similar racial compositions. Lastly, as a means to determine if the four-year graduation structure hinders a thorough investigation of graduation rates for Black males, the study determined if the gap in degree attainment between Black men and women diminishes when accounting for six-year college enrollment.

### **Population and Sample**

The NLSF followed the institutional sampling model of Bowen and Bok (1998) from the College and Beyond Survey. The NLSF also added The University of California Berkley. Considering that UC Berkley had abandoned affirmative action enrollment, the researchers decided to include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the sample population. Thirty-five schools were asked to participate in the study. The sample sizes were stratified by the relative size of the Black student population at each institution. Those with Black student populations that exceeded 1000 students were assigned a target sample size of 280

respondents (70 for each racial/ethnic group). Those with Black student populations of 500-1000 received a target size of 200 respondents (20 for each racial/ethnic group). Additionally, those with fewer than 100 Black students were assigned a goal of 40 interviews (or 10 for each group). Lastly, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) had a target of 70 interviews per institution (NLSF, 2005)

The NLSF researchers noted that despite institutions' enthusiasm in participating in the study, five schools declined participation (Duke, Vanderbilt, Wellesley, Hamilton and Xavier). Furthermore, although 5 HBCUs were asked to take part in the study, only Howard followed through with the request (leaving Howard alone to represent all of the HBCUs). Despite the Presidents of Morehouse and Spelman agreeing to participate, the Registrar Offices at these institutions were unable to provide a list of freshmen to determine a sample for the study (NLSF, 2005).

Ultimately, the final institutional participation rate was 80%. Seven institutions were lost in the analysis out of the 35, which reduced the expected sample size of 4,160 students. In actuality, only 3,550 students were surveyed. To make up for the unexpected loss, the researchers increased the number of interviews conducted at the other institutions. Of the 4,573 students approached across 28 institutions (9 Liberal Arts Colleges, 14 private research universities, 4 public research universities, and 1 Historically Black College), 3,924 respondents completed the survey—for a response rate of 86%. Moreover, the respondents' interviews were 2-hour face-to-face sessions, and the respondents received a small token payment of \$15 for participating. Ultimately, the final sample included 959 Asians, 998 Whites, 1,051 Blacks, and 916 Latinos. As of particular salience, the participants had to be enrolled at their respective

institutions as a "First time in any college" (FTIAC) freshman and be a United States citizen or resident alien; foreign and returning students were not included in the sample (NLSF, 2005).

<b>Baseline Survey</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Black</b>					
Number Selected	4,573	1,202	1,118	1,071	1,182					
Completed Interviews	3,924	86%	998	83%	959	86%	916	86%	1,051	89%
<b>Follow-Up Surveys</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Black</b>					
Number in Baseline	3,924	998	959	916	1,051					
Freshman (Wave 2)	3,728	95%	935	94%	920	96%	864	94%	1,009	96%
Sophomore (Wave 3)	3,475	89%	877	88%	856	89%	810	88%	932	89%
Junior (Wave 4)	3,280	84%	842	84%	821	86%	765	84%	852	81%
Senior (Wave 5)	3,098	79%	814	82%	765	80%	721	79%	798	76%

(NLSF, 2005)

### **Link Between Theoretical Concepts and Empirical Indicators**

A substruction of the concepts from AAMT used as the conceptual framework for this study [as well as the empirical indicators (instruments) for each of the concepts of this study] show in the table below.

<b>Conceptual Level</b>	<b>Chronosystem</b>	<b>Outer Microsystem</b>	<b>Inner Microsystem</b>
<i>Theoretical Level</i>	Racial Segregation	Educational Attainment of Student's Parents	College Degree Attainment for Black Men
<i>Empirical Level (NLSF Variables)</i>	Racial and ethnic neighborhood composition of the respondents * Percentage of Black students in their school * Percentage of Black residents in their neighborhood	*Highest education attained for mother or woman guarding *Highest education attained for father or man guardian *Senior year household income	"Gradtime" (4-year Graduation) "Overallg" (6-Year Graduation)

In linking the empirical indicators to the theoretical concept of the Ecological Systems approach from AAMT, one can understand how the macro level effects of the chronosystem pose salient repercussions for outcomes in the inner microsystem—particularly whether or not one graduates with a bachelor's degree in either 4 or 6 years. Essentially, ecological systems on the exterior of the model can create the environments that produce the conditions at the most inner levels of the diagram.

### **Method of Analysis**

The archived survey data from the NLSF database was assessed to answer the research questions. Therefore, the responses of Black men and women provided data for the analysis (N=1051). The two primary outcome variables (dependent variables) relate to whether or not the participant graduated—"Gradtime" (which is if the student graduated in 4 years) and "Overallg" (if the student graduated within six years). Both are binary variables in which "0" represents not



graduating (either in 4 years or 6 years depending on if referencing "Gradtime" or "Overallg") and "1" represents graduating. In completing a thorough analysis of how racial segregation influences college degree attainment, the racial and ethnic neighborhood composition of the respondents when they were 6 years old was assessed (due to it being of the greatest significance when compared to neighborhood and school racial compositions at age 6, 13, and last year of high school as well):

*W1q12a = percentage of Black residents in their neighborhood (Age 6)*

As previously outlined in this research, the educational attainment of a student's parents and their income are highly correlative in predicting college graduation based on the canonized body of literature in the field. Therefore, these variables provided the data to support the epistemology based on school and neighborhood segregation. Thus, the following variables were included in the analysis:

*W1q151 = highest education attained for mother or woman guarding*

*W1q179 = senior year household income*

As often utilized in educational research, the highest education of the mother will solely be used (not including the education of the father) to serve as a proxy for the community and household effects that are found to be predictive of academic preparation and college graduation.

### **Variable Transformation: Household Income**

Considering that the reported household income of the study participants was self-reported as income ranges coded as ranks in the database, it was necessary to dummy code the ranges into a three-tiered system. The salary ranges from \$0 – \$24,999 were coded as a new variable named "Poverty." Second, income ranges from \$25,000 – \$49,000 were coded as "LowIncome." Lastly, incomes \$50,000 and greater were coded as "MiddleHighIncome." The

income thresholds were established based on the National Center for Children in Poverty's (2015) study entitled "Basic Facts about Low-Income Children."

### **Variable Transformation: Education Level of the Mother**

Considering the database codes highest education earned from grade school up to graduate/professional degree, it was deemed essential to establish a cutoff as a means to create a binary variable from this scaled variable. Therefore, education levels below having earned a college degree were coded as "0." Therefore, all values representing a bachelor's degree or higher were coded as "1." The rationale behind this cutoff was to account for the environment of the home in regards to the educational richness of the household. Furthermore, considering that higher education levels associate with greater levels of income, it was important not to confound the two. Ultimately, a home could potentially have lower income and a mother with a degree—particularly if the mother works in an industry catering to teaching, the humanities, social work, etc. Coding the variable as having a college degree or higher serves the purpose of potentially capturing the academic richness of the household that possibly illustrates an environment conducive to learning—and perhaps the school preparation of the student.

### **Variable Transformation: Neighborhood Racial Composition (Age 6)**

Because this study's aim is to determine the effects of segregation on Black students and their ability to graduate from college, it was important to codify a threshold of Black racial composition saturation. Therefore, a binary dummy variable was created in its stead representing a neighborhood that is majority Black. However, a simple majority of 51% was not deemed great enough to represent an actual saturation of Black residents. Hence, the binary variable "NHoodMajorityBlack" was created by which values from 0-69% are coded as "0" (not majority Black) and values 70-100% are coded as "1" (majority Black). The rationale behind these values

lies in creating a racial saturation level possibly deemed as segregation, while also having a sample population sufficient enough (of those noting their neighborhood to be 0-69% Black) for an equal sample size for statistical computation.

### Statistical Modeling

Considering the interrelated connection between the outcome (graduation) variables and the segregation variables (community racial composition, income, & maternal education), it is paramount to run a correlation analysis between these variables to determine collinearity or confounding factors. Hence, Spearman's Rho formula was utilized for both the 4-year graduation outcome variable and the 6-year graduation outcome variable—as the outcome variables are binary and non-parametric in nature. For all of the statistical computation, IBM's statistical analysis software SPSS was utilized (IBM Corp., 2016).

The aforementioned variables employed for regression analyses were assessed in the following equation for both the 4 and 6-year graduation outcome variables:

$$\ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$$

In moving forward into Chapter 4, prior to the binary statistical analysis, a series of descriptive statistical analyses were performed to obtain several pieces of critical data. The data included the mean, standard deviation, variance, median, and mode for the variables representing graduation outcomes (4 and 6 year): neighborhood racial composition; maternal education; and household income to place the data in context for analysis—as well as the correlations amongst the variables utilized in the study.

## CHAPTER 4 STUDY RESULTS

### Sample Description

As rendered by the data analysis, 69% of all of the students (all races) in the aggregate graduate in 4 years, whereas 87% of all participants graduated in 6 years. Again, in regards to looking at all students from every demographic, the schools and neighborhoods of the respondents were (on average) comprised of 32% Black students and 31% Black residents respectfully. These averages differed by the race of the student. However, for the actual statistical analysis, a database of only Black students was utilized in conjunction with two independent databases performing computations with one comprising Black men only and the other Black women only. For the aggregated database of only Black students, n=1051. This database of Black students is composed only of 368 Black men and 683 Black women. Furthermore, the other two databases utilized were one comprised of only the 368 Black men and the other consisting of only the 683 Black women. As taken from the NLSF study data, 48.1% of Black men that enroll in college graduate in 4 years. On the other hand, 72.8% of Black men that enroll in college graduate within six years. When we assess these same trends for Black women, the picture is much different (women coded as "0 and men coded as "1"). Thus, the graduation rates and the racial composition of the Black respondents painted a much different picture as compared to the entire sample population.

<b>Black Students Surveyed and Utilized in the Analysis</b>	
"SexGender" Variable (N= 1051)	
MEN	WOMEN
368	683

### Variable Types of Variables Utilized in Analysis

<b>Variable Name</b> * = Original variable name	<b>Original Variable Type</b>	<b>Original Variable Coding</b>	<b>Variable Type Used in Analysis</b>	<b>Variable Coding Used in Analysis</b>	<b>Variable Coding Used in Analysis</b>
Sex* <i>SexGender</i>	Nominal	F & M	Nominal	0 & 1	0 = <i>Women</i> 1 = <i>Men</i>
W1q151* <i>MomCollegeDegree</i>	Ordinal	1 = Grade School 2 = Some High School 3 = High School Graduate 4 = Some College 5 = College Graduate 6 = Some Post-Graduate 7 = Graduate or Professional Degree	Nominal	0 & 1	0 = <i>Less than a College Degree</i> 1 = <i>College Degree or Higher</i>
W1q11a* <i>NHoodMajorityBlack</i>	Interval	0 - 100	Nominal	0 & 1	0 = <i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i> 1 = <i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>

"Household Income"	Ordinal	Nominal	0 & 1	
<i>Poverty</i>		1 = <\$3000		<i>Poverty</i> = 1
<i>LowIncome</i>		2 =\$3000 - \$3,999		when income is between \$0 & \$24,999
<i>MiddleHighIncome</i>		3 =\$4,000 - \$4,999		<i>LowIncome</i> = 1 when income is between \$25,000 & \$49,999
		4 =\$5,000 - \$5,999		
		5 =\$6,000 - \$6,999		
		6 =\$7,000 - \$7,999		
		7 =\$8,000 - \$8, 9999		
		8 =\$9,000 - \$14,999		
		9 =\$15,000 - \$19,999		
		10 =\$20,000 - \$24,999		
		11 =\$25,000 - \$34,999		
		12 =\$35,000 - \$49,999		
		13 =\$50,000 - \$74,999		
		14 = >\$75,000		

The table above illustrates the manner in which each of the variables included in the analysis was initially expressed versus the manner in which they were transformed and shown for the sake of this research study. The rationale behind only utilizing binary nominal variables in the analysis was to hone the data to assess the nature of "either or" relationships regarding the status of the variable in question. The utilization of binary variables eliminates the possibility of outliers and reduces the amount of possible data variance.

Upon establishing the nature of the variables in the equation, a comprehensive overview of the frequencies, sums, means, standard error, standard deviation, variance, and skewness is important. A summary of the findings are found below in the descriptive statistics table:

### Descriptive Statistics of the “Black Only” Subsample

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	
							Std. Error	
Graduation within 4 Years	1051	605.00	.5756	.01525	.49448	.245	-.307	.075
Graduation within 6 Years	1051	834.00	.7935	.01249	.40496	.164	-1.452	.075
SexGender	1051	368.00	.3501	.01472	.47724	.228	.629	.075
MomCollegeDegree	1042	582.00	.5585	.01539	.49680	.247	-.236	.076
NHoodMajorityBlack	988	448.00	.4534	.01585	.49808	.248	.187	.078
Poverty	1005	154.00	.1532	.01137	.36039	.130	1.928	.077
LowIncome	1005	259.00	.2577	.01380	.43759	.191	1.110	.077
MiddleHighIncome	1005	592.00	.5891	.01553	.49225	.242	-.363	.077
Valid N (listwise)	944							

As found in the table above, 57% of those in the study graduated in 4 years, whereas 79% of those in the study graduated in 6 years (only assessing the Black students). Furthermore, 35% of participants were Black men—65% being Black women. In regards to the educational level of the mother, 55% of the study participants had a mother that had at least a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, 45% of the students in the survey came from neighborhoods that were majority Black (having at least 70% Black people in their neighborhood). Lastly, in regards to household income, 15% came from poverty, 25% were low income, and 58% had incomes greater than low income (a middle to high income).



Following a rendering of the descriptive statistics data, undertaking an analysis of the variable correlations was important to determine variable relationships before running the regression analysis. Furthermore, a comprehensive overview of the correlative effects between variables set the stage for a discussion of the interaction effects to determine the effect size of variable pairings.

**Spearman's Rho Non-Parametric Correlations**

	Graduation within 4 Years	Graduation within 6 Years	SexGender	MomCollege Degree	NHoodMajority Black	Poverty	LowIncome	MiddleHigh Income	
Graduation within 4 Years	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.594**	-.141**	.066*	-.089**	-.060	-.033	.073*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.034	.005	.058	.293	.020
Graduation within 6 Years	Correlation Coefficient	.594**	1.000	-.118**	.091**	-.088**	-.028	-.008	.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.003	.005	.373	.804	.425
SexGender	Correlation Coefficient	-.141**	-.118**	1.000	.054	-.063*	.025	-.106**	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.083	.872	.045	.000	.000
MomCollegeDegree	Correlation Coefficient	.066*	.091**	.054	1.000	-.142**	-.225**	-.106**	.259**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.003	.083	.	.000	.000	.001	.000
NHoodMajorityBlack	Correlation Coefficient	-.089**	-.088**	.005	-.142**	1.000	.161**	.083*	-.192**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.005	.872	.000	.	.000	.011	.000
Poverty	Correlation Coefficient	-.060	-.028	-.063*	-.225**	.161**	1.000	-.251**	-.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058	.373	.045	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
LowIncome	Correlation Coefficient	-.033	-.008	.025	-.106**	.083*	-.251**	1.000	-.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.293	.804	.425	.001	.011	.000	.	.000
MiddleHighIncome	Correlation Coefficient	.073*	.028	.024	.259**	-.192**	-.509**	-.705**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.383	.448	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	1005	1005	1005	999	950	1005	1005	1005	1005

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Correlation Analysis

The variable "SexGender" exists as a binary variable (with men coded as "1" and women coded as "0"). Thus, the affirmative "1" illustrates the influence of being a Black man (vs. a Black woman) as it relates to the other variables and the overall correlate and regression outcomes. However, prior to viewing the significance of the target variables, it is important to illustrate the correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

As revealed by the findings in the correlation table, all of the independent variables in the table (save "SexGender") correlated with each other significantly. To determine the strength of the relationships between the variables, an overview of the effect size through interaction effects is noteworthy.

As seen in the interaction effects (tests of between-subjects effects) table below, the only significant interaction variable is the intersection of neighborhood racial composition (NHoodMajorityBlack) and coming from a low-income household (LowIncome) at a significance value of 05. Therefore, when computing these two variables concurrently and measuring their combined predictive power, neighborhood racial composition and low income status possess a statistically significant and strong observed power in anticipating graduation likelihood.

## Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: graduation within 4 years

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree	.654	1	.654	2.754	.097	.003	2.754	.381
NHoodMajorityBlack * Poverty	.102	1	.102	.429	.512	.000	.429	.100
NHoodMajorityBlack * LowIncome	.917	1	.917	3.863	.050	.004	3.863	.501
MomCollegeDegree * Poverty	.043	1	.043	.183	.669	.000	.183	.071
MomCollegeDegree * LowIncome	.048	1	.048	.204	.652	.000	.204	.074
SexGender * NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree	7.192E-5	1	7.192E-5	.000	.986	.000	.000	.050
SexGender * NHoodMajorityBlack * Poverty	.353	1	.353	1.487	.223	.002	1.487	.230
SexGender * NHoodMajorityBlack * LowIncome	.289	1	.289	1.218	.270	.001	1.218	.197
SexGender * MomCollegeDegree * Poverty	.063	1	.063	.264	.607	.000	.264	.081
SexGender * MomCollegeDegree * LowIncome	.088	1	.088	.369	.544	.000	.369	.093
NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree * Poverty	.367	1	.367	1.543	.214	.002	1.543	.237
NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree * LowIncome	.350	1	.350	1.474	.225	.002	1.474	.228
SexGender * NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree * Poverty	.039	1	.039	.165	.685	.000	.165	.069
SexGender * NHoodMajorityBlack * MomCollegeDegree * LowIncome	.084	1	.084	.354	.552	.000	.354	.091

b. Computed using alpha = .05

### Analysis of Variance: 4-Year Graduation

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years * LowIncome	Between (Combined) Groups	1.121	1	1.121	4.601	.032
	Within Groups	244.306	1003	.244		
	Total	245.427	1004			

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years * NHoodMajorityBlack	Between (Combined) Groups	1.897	1	1.897	7.810	.005
	Within Groups	239.560	986	.243		
	Total	241.457	987			

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years * SexGender	Between (Combined) Groups	5.075	1	5.075	21.152	.000
	Within Groups	251.662	1049	.240		
	Total	256.736	1050			

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years * Poverty	Between (Combined) Groups	.258	1	.258	1.054	.305
	Within Groups	256.479	1049	.244		
	Total	256.736	1050			

### Analysis of Variance: 4-Year Graduation (continued)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years *	Between (Combined) Groups	1.093	1	1.093	4.491	.034
MomCollegeDegree	Within Groups	253.110	1040	.243		
	Total	254.203	1041			

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Graduation within 4 Years * MiddleHigh	Between (Combined) Groups	.271	1	.271	1.108	.293
	Within Groups	245.156	1003	.244		
	Total	245.427	1004			

	Eta	Eta Squared
Graduation within 4 Years * MomCollegeDegree	.066	.004
Graduation within 4 Years * LowIncome	.068	.005
Graduation within 4 Years * NHoodMajorityBlack	.089	.008
Graduation within 4 Years * SexGender	.141	.020
Graduation within 4 Years * MiddleHigh	.033	.001
Graduation within 4 Years * Poverty	.032	.001

### Binary Logistic Regression Model: 4-Year Graduation (Addressing Research Question 1)

When running a binary logistic regression model with both Black men and women represented as a binary variable along with the variable representing living in a majority Black community, both variables are statistically significant (being a Black man being significant at the .01 level and neighborhood racial composition at the .05 level). In fact, the “Exp(B)” column [the odds ratio] illustrates that Black men are 54.2% less likely to graduate than Black women and that Black students are 74.1% less likely to graduate when growing up in a majority Black community [see regression table below].

*\*In all of the following regression tables, the MiddleHighIncome variable is omitted to prevent data redundancy, since all three income variables derive from the same single household income variable.*

### Binary Logistic Regression (Outcome: 4 Year Graduation)

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
SexGender	-.613	.140	19.207	1	.000	.542	.412	.713
MomCollegeDegree	.136	.141	.939	1	.332	1.146	.870	1.510
NHoodMajorityBlack	-.300	.137	4.769	1	.029	.741	.566	.970
Poverty	-.258	.200	1.669	1	.196	.773	.522	1.143
LowIncome	-.193	.160	1.456	1	.228	.824	.602	1.128
Constant	.683	.150	20.730	1	.000	1.980		

### 4 Year: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	29.609	5	.000
	Block	29.609	5	.000
	Model	29.609	5	.000

### 4 Year: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1257.001 <sup>a</sup>	.031	.041

### 4 Year: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

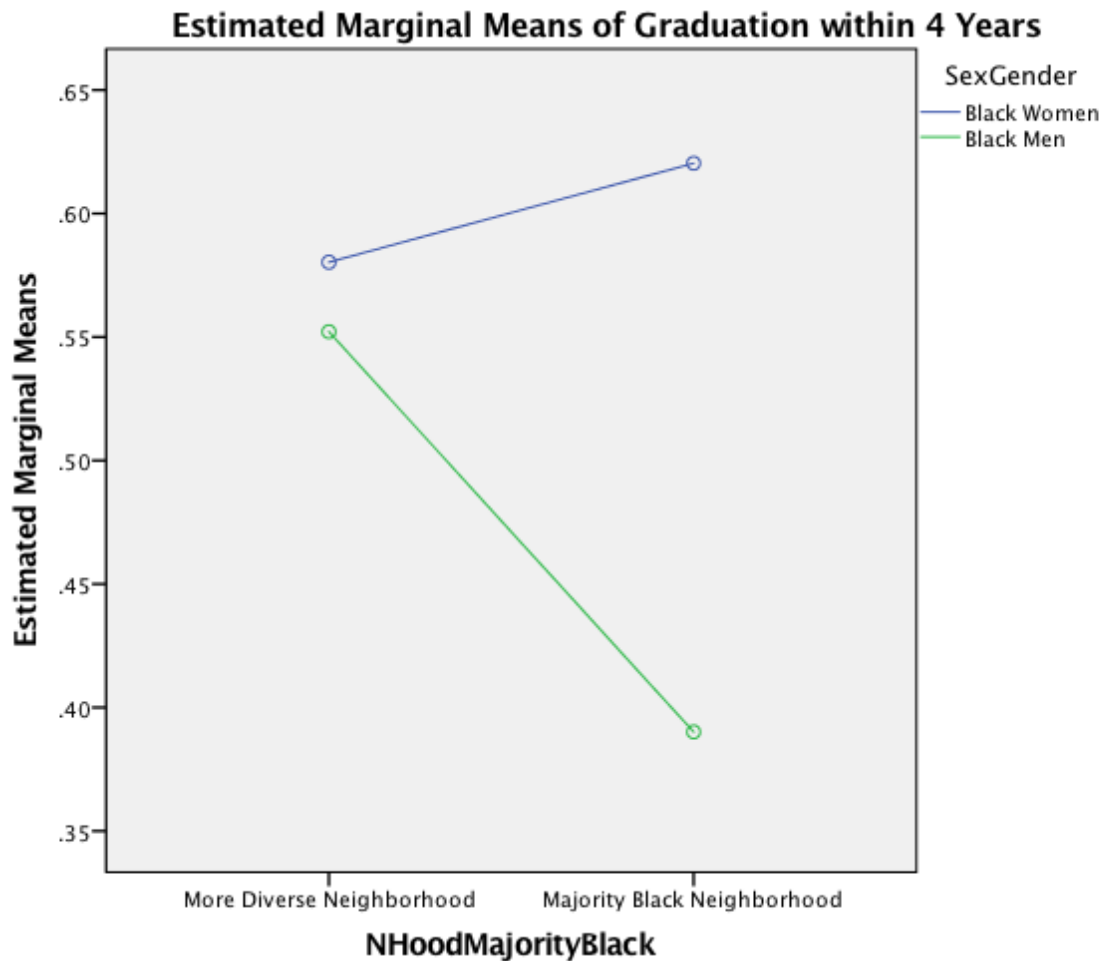
Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	4.973	7	.663

This regression model presents itself as being a good-fitting model, despite the fact that the model does not explain the level of variances between variables beyond a few percentage points. The model accounts for roughly 3-4% (Cox & Snell R Square = 3.1% and Nagelkerke R Square = 4.1%) of the overall variance amongst the variables (as above in the model summary). The model is inherently unable to predict a large amount of variance because the variables are all binary. Therefore, the only variance that is possible with each variable is an interval of one—being that the outcome values are either 0 or 1. Nevertheless, the omnibus test of model coefficients illustrates an equal chi-square between the step, block, and model instances with a significance of .000.

Considering that there is an unequal sampling of Black men and women (35% men and 65% women), the predictive properties of being a Black male and obtaining a college degree change considerably when accounting for these difference in the sample sizes. In fact, the estimated marginal means reveal that there are clear differences in college degree attainment when comparing Black men and women who grew up communities that were majority Black or more diverse. The estimated marginal means plot (seen below) indicates that Black men's mean (average) likelihood of graduating in 4 years significantly and negatively dips when growing up



in a majority Black community (much more significantly impacted than Black women). In the plot (seen below) the green line represents Black men, whereas the blue line represents Black women.



An assessment of the estimated marginal means leads to the important step of utilizing the odds ratios [Exp(B)] to determine the actual probabilities of graduating with a 4-year degree depending on sex and the racial composition of one's neighborhood.

$$P = \text{Odds} / \text{Odds} + 1$$

Therefore, the probability of graduating in 4 years is the following depending on sex and neighborhood composition (for Black people in the aggregate).

### Probability of Graduating in 4 Years

<i>Black Men</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>
P = 35.15%	P = 51.76%	P = 42.56%	P = 59.47%

The narrative surrounding 4-year graduation probabilities becomes much more nuanced when the regression models run with Black men only and Black women only. The odds ratios (for graduating when growing up in a majority Black community) produce interesting probabilities. For Black men, the odds of graduating and coming from a majority Black community are .506, and for a more diverse community, they are .661. Thus, Black men have a probability of 33.59% of graduating in 4 years coming from a majority Black community and a probability of 39.79% of graduating in 4 years when coming from a more diverse community.

### 4 Year Regression Model for Black Men

	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
MomCollegeDegree	.239	.035	1	.851	.956	.599	1.526
NHoodMajorityBlack	.229	8.853	1	.003	.506	.323	.793
Poverty	.373	.394	1	.530	.791	.381	1.643
LowIncome	.266	.138	1	.710	1.104	.655	1.860
Constant	.243	1.209	1	.271	1.307		

### Probability of Black Men Graduating in 4 Years

<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	P = 33.59%
<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>	P = 38.79%

On the contrary, the odds ratios and probabilities yielded are much different for Black women when running the regression model with only Black women as the participants. The odds of graduating in 4 years when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood were .937 and 1.6369 when growing up in a more diverse area for Black women. Consequently, Black women have a probability of 48.37% of graduating in 4 years from a majority Black community and a probability of 62.07% when coming from a more diverse community.

### 4 Year Regression Model for Black Women

	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
MomCollegeDegree	.177	2.409	1	.121	1.315	.930	1.860
NHoodMajorityBlack	.174	.141	1	.707	.937	.667	1.316
Poverty	.240	1.332	1	.249	.758	.473	1.214
LowIncome	.201	3.846	1	.050	.674	.454	1.000
Constant	.175	10.132	1	.001	1.747		

### Probability of Black Women Graduating in 4 Years

<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	P = 48.37%
<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>	P = 62.07%

### Binary Logistic Regression Model: 6-Year Graduation (Addressing Research Question 2)

The results yielded from running the regression model with 6-year graduation (including both Black men and women) still illustrate statistically significant negative influences of both being a Black man and growing up in a majority Black neighborhood.

### Binary Logistic Regression Model (Outcome: 6 Year Graduation)

	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
SexGender	.166	14.707	1	.000	.530	.383	.733
MomCollegeDegree	.170	7.217	1	.007	1.579	1.131	2.203
NHoodMajorityBlack	.166	4.763	1	.029	.696	.502	.964
Poverty	.237	.012	1	.911	.974	.612	1.549
LowIncome	.196	.178	1	.673	1.086	.740	1.594
Constant	.181	67.853	1	.000	4.455		

With diminished odds of graduating in 6 years for both sex (being a Black man) and growing up in a majority Black community (.530 and .696 respectively), the probabilities of graduating in 6 years based on being a Black man or woman and whether or not one grew up in a majority Black neighborhood produce similar findings as those found when calculating the values discovered in the 4-year graduation regression model.

### Probability of Graduating in 6 Years

<i>Black Men</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>
P = 34.64%	P = 70.23%	P = 41.04%	P = 75.61%

Again, similarly to the 4-year regression model, a significantly large gap exists between Black men and women. However, a more substantial revelation stems from these findings. The probability of Black men graduating in 6 years doesn't even change a full percentage point (35.15% compared to 34.64%). Black women see a significant increase in the probability of a graduating in 6 years over graduating in 4 years from 51.76% to 70.23% respectively. Nevertheless, it is important to parse out the nuances of these numbers since Black women skew the data as compared to Black men. With Black women's larger sample size and significantly higher probability of graduating, they make it appear as if graduation likelihood is much higher for all Black people (men and women) within the aggregated model. At this point, it is critical to determine the validity of the data and reliability of the model with a goodness-of-fit assessment.

### 6 Year: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	27.235	5	.000
	Block	27.235	5	.000
	Model	27.235	5	.000

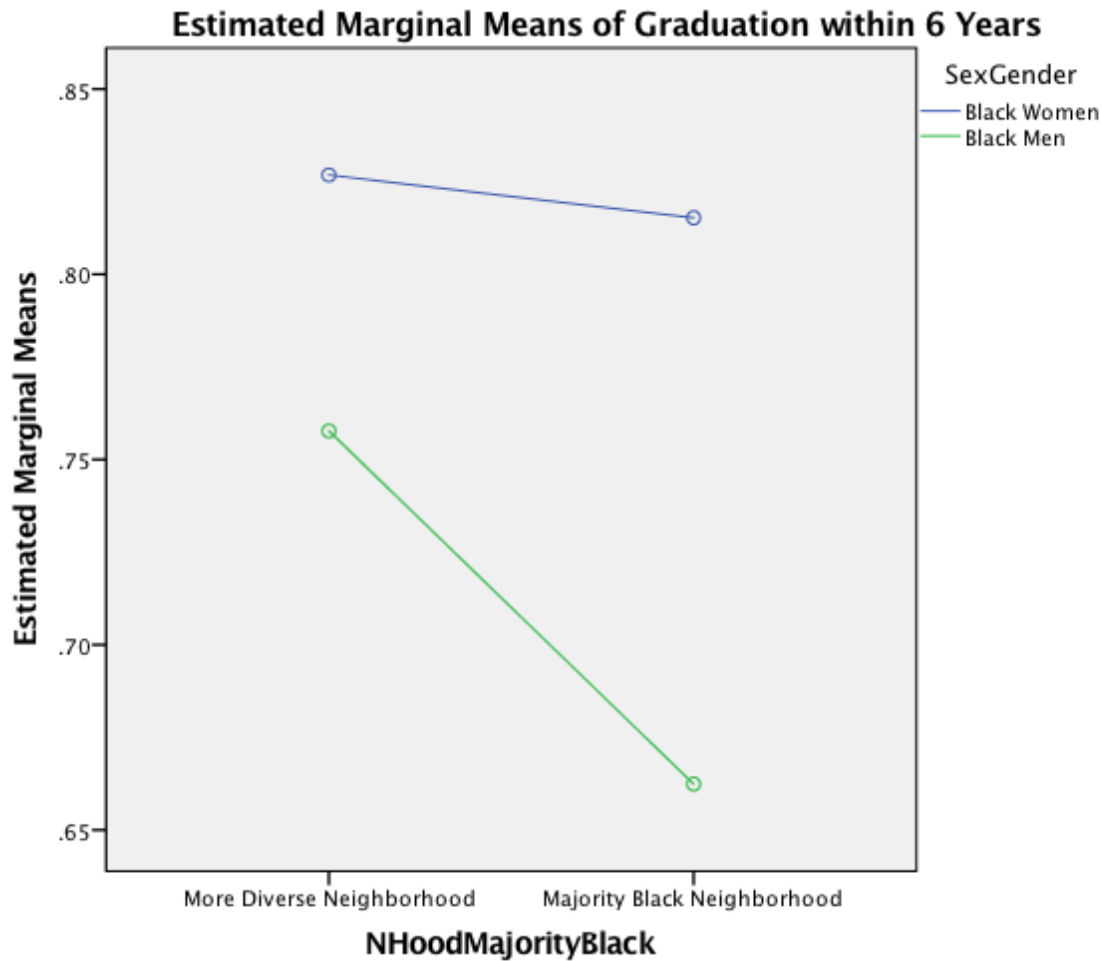
### 6 Year: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	942.479 <sup>a</sup>	.028	.044

### 6 Year: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	7.102	7	.418

Similar to the 4-year regression, the r-squared values explain a very small percentage of the variance (Cox & Snell = .028 or Nagelkerke = .044). However, the omnibus test of coefficients illustrate a significant chi-square at each iteration, and the estimated marginal means reveal that the model clearly demonstrates a distinctive difference in the ability of Black men and women to graduate when growing up in a majority Black community (see below) [green representing Black men and blue representing Black women].



Even in light of the continued advantage that Black women have over Black men in graduating in 6 years, it is important to assess the graduation probabilities with the regression model run separately for both Black men and Black women.

### 6 Year Regression Model for Black Men

	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
MomCollegeDegree	.264	10.065	1	.002	2.312	1.378	3.879
NHoodMajorityBlack	.257	3.082	1	.079	.637	.385	1.054
Poverty	.390	.275	1	.600	.815	.379	1.751
LowIncome	.307	1.179	1	.278	1.396	.765	2.547
Constant	.262	6.170	1	.013	1.919		

### 6 Year Regression Model for Black Women

	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
MomCollegeDegree	.224	.944	1	.331	1.244	.801	1.930
NHoodMajorityBlack	.220	1.949	1	.163	.736	.478	1.132
Poverty	.304	.000	1	.983	1.006	.554	1.827
LowIncome	.256	.047	1	.828	.946	.572	1.563
Constant	.224	51.487	1	.000	4.984		

#### Probability of Black Men Graduating in 6 Years

<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	P = 39.91%
<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>	P = 55.00%

#### Probability of Black Women Graduating in 6 Years

<i>Majority Black Neighborhood</i>	P = 42.39%
<i>More Diverse Neighborhood</i>	P = 78.57%

### 4-Year Graduation & 6-Year Graduation Sum

#### Report

graduation within 4 years

Men	Mean	N	Sum
.00	.6266	683	428.00
1.00	.4810	368	177.00
Total	.5756	1051	605.00

#### Report

graduation within 6 years

Men	Mean	N	Sum
.00	.8287	683	566.00
1.00	.7283	368	268.00
Total	.7935	1051	834.00

As realized from the participants in the study, the first table illustrates that 62.66% of Black women graduated in 4 years whereas 48.10% of Black men did the same. On the other hand, 82.87% of Black women graduated within six years whereas 72.83% of Black men did the same.



## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Research Overview and Summary

This research has endeavored to 1) assess the college degree attainment gap between Black men and women using a longitudinal national database of Black college attendees, and 2) determine the effect of neighborhood segregation on the graduation rates of Black males. Considering that the college graduation rate of Black males, is the largest attainment gap (compared to their within race female counterpart) amongst all demographic groups in The United States, the large disparity can potentially reap devastating consequences for Black families and Black communities. Because the research has illustrated a myriad of ways in which Black men's lives are devastated by various policies throughout different sectors of society, it is important to determine what could potentially be the largest determinant/predictor of college degree attainment outside of academic preparation for Black men. As indicated in the review of the literature, Black men are overrepresented in regards to receiving discipline and special education services throughout their K12 education. Furthermore, Black men are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and significantly underrepresented in gifted education programs.

Since Black men also experience poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and premature death quite frequently in America, it appears entirely possible that societal mechanisms are working in a manner that purposefully disrupt Black male life. In determining what could be responsible for such destructive forces that contribute to poor life outcomes and academic performance, it was hypothesized that neighborhood racial segregation and isolation/ostracization are primary factors contributing to these deleterious consequences for Black men.

Thus, the following research questions were posed:

- 1) What 4-year university graduation attainment rates are yielded for Black males (compared to Black women) when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood compared to those who grow up in a more diverse community?
- 2) Do Black males reduce the degree attainment gap between Black men and women when accounting for 6-year graduation rates as a function of neighborhood racial diversity/segregation?

This study tested the research questions using The Princeton Longitudinal Survey of Freshman. The self-reported data from the college students surveyed in the study was assessed based on their responses regarding the level of racial segregation within their neighborhood where they lived at age 6. Logistic regression models with 4-year graduation and 6-year graduation as the dependent variables were utilized to determine if neighborhood racial composition significantly impacted college degree attainment within four years and six years. The study revealed that neighborhood segregation was the most significant predictor (outside of being a Black man) of college graduation amongst household income and the highest education level earned by the mother.

Prior to assessing the extent to which Black men narrow the college bachelor's degree attainment gap, it is important to note the percentages of Black men and women that even enroll in college. In looking at the recent past, in 2014 12.5% of college-aged Black men enrolled in post-secondary education, while 16% of Black women from the same group enrolled in post-secondary education (NCES, 2016). These findings are paramount to understand because when assessing the two groups initially a greater percentage of Black women are entering college than Black men. The results relate back to the various issues that Black men face. These issues involved the number of Black men that don't complete high school, complete high school and decide not to enter college, die prematurely, choose not to enroll, become employed without continuing their education, or fall victim to being processed into the criminal justice system.

### Research Question 1 Discussion of Findings

1) What 4-year university graduation attainment rates are yielded for Black males (compared to Black women) when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood compared to those who grow up in a more diverse community?

First, the findings illustrate that the hypotheses/arguments of this research study are substantial in regards to their profundity and validity of their theoretical underpinnings. Segregation from a racial standpoint significantly impacts the educational outcomes and opportunities in regards to college degree attainment. Second, the fact that being a Black man is highly predictive of rather or not someone will graduate is incredibly profound. In fact, it validates the unique perspective of Bush's & Bush's (2013) African American Male Theory model that asserts that being both Black and male is a unique phenomenon that results in an identity ideology, unlike any other demographic subset. Considering the findings illustrate that being a Black man itself is predictive of college success, they potentially account for the myriad ways in which Black males are uniquely mistreated and isolated within American Society—particularly the factors and experiences outlined in chapters one and two.

When Black people grow up in majority Black neighborhoods, Black men are 15% less likely to graduate college in 4 years—Black men are 33.59% probable to graduate, whereas Black women are 48.37% probable to graduate. When growing up in more diverse communities, Black women are a staggering 23% more likely to graduate college in 4 years—Black men are 39.79% probable to graduate, whereas Black women are 62.07% probable to graduate. This gap illustrates that even when Black men grow up in more diverse communities, some intangibles of being a Black man still pose adverse effects on his ability to graduate college in 4 years. While the 4-year regression model that includes both college-enrolled Black men and women illustrates that Black women are 16% more probable to graduate without considering any predictors, Black

women are still more likely to graduate (regardless of the conditions) when reviewed in an independent regression model. Mainly, growing up in a majority Black (more homogenized) community presents a more deleterious impact on the ability of Black men to graduate in 4 years than it does for Black women.

### **Research Question 2 Discussion of Findings**

2) Do Black males reduce the degree attainment gap between Black men and women when accounting for 6-year graduation rates as a function of neighborhood racial diversity/segregation?

Although Black men make a considerable leap in the probability of graduating in 6 years when they grow up in more diverse communities, they are still unable to overcome the pace of Black women's ability to graduate in the same period. Black women are 3% more likely to graduate in 6 years when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood and 23% more likely to graduate in 6 years when growing up in a more diverse community. Although, the probability gap greatly reduces when comparing the 6-year aggregated regression model and the individual 6-year regression model for each sex. Therefore, Black men *can* significantly reduce the probability gap. Without considering any factors, Black women are 36% more likely to graduate in 6 years. However, when comparing the types of neighborhoods from which they come, the gaps are substantially smaller (3% gap for growing up in a segregated community and a 23% difference when growing up in a more diverse community).

Despite Black men not being able to outpace Black women in regards to the probability of graduating in 6 years, it is still valuable to note (that given six years to graduate) Black men dramatically increase the likelihood of graduating.

## Discussion of Overall Study Findings

The regression analyses mentioned above yielded results that support the initial hypothesis that segregation is a significant/leading predictor of bachelor degree attainment apart from academic preparation. In fact, the data revealed that neighborhood segregation in first grade most highly correlated with college degree attainment along with the sex of the student (yielding a correlation coefficient of  $-.089$  for graduation in 4 years and  $-.088$  for graduation in 6 years—both values being statistically significant at the  $.01$  level). Based on the indicators, predictors, and factors correlated with college degree attainment from the review of the literature, the results suggest that larger societal (Chronosystem in the AAMT) factors could potentially be significant predictors of college degree attainment outside of academic preparation (Inner Microsystem in the AAMT). These societal factors can encapsulate issues stemming from segregation, isolation, and the homogenization of racial composition in neighborhoods and communities. Therefore, in light of the statistical significance at the  $.01$  level amongst neighborhood racial composition, income, and the highest education level of the mother:

*Neighborhood segregation as a single measurable variable may potentially be employed as a proxy for neighborhood and family factors in predicting college attainment including household income and the highest education level of the mother.*

It is quite profound that the data also illustrated that simply being a Black man was of greater significance than segregation itself. As has been postulated, the unique nexus of segregation and being a Black man can produce phenomenal nuances. Essentially, segregation and isolation uniquely impact Black men in a manner that is far more destructive than it is to Black women. Thus, the findings support Bush's & Bush's (2013) African American Male Theory theoretical framework suggesting that *there is something unique about being male and of*

*African descent*. As a follow-up to this revelation, this research contributed to this tenet in stating that, *Black boys and men uniquely adapt to environments politically shaped in purposeful ways to disrupt their success and social viability*. Considering the many ways in which Black men are slighted by early childhood experiences in school systems, media portrayal, health disparities, anemic economic opportunity, and misbehavior of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, research and policy aimed at producing solutions to these issues of stemming from segregation could potentially enhance positive life outcomes for Black men.

As the research title notes, these forms of oppression throughout the lives of Black men function as genocide in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Western perspective within a capitalistic governance structure; therefore, the manner in which we define genocide in this context must change. As a recap, this research has called for a redefinition of genocide as *efforts that systematically disenfranchise a group by stripping its autonomy, power, and ability to contribute within society in a way that ensures its health, vitality, education, livelihood and ability to maintain its population of those with active citizenry status (being free from jail, prison, the inability to vote, or premature death)*. Given this redefinition, it then reshapes the manner in which society should address Black males in improving outcomes for this group.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Due to the range of policies outlined in this research, policy interventions must occur throughout the life course to reap positive results for Black men throughout their educational careers and lives. However, particular attention must be given to the myriad ways in which Black people (and Black men in particular) are segregated in society. As found in the study findings from the correlation matrix, income was not a statistically significant factor in regards to college graduation. Whether or not the students were a Black male and if the mother earned at least a

college degree were significant—along with the greatest factor of significance (outside of being a Black man) neighborhood racial composition. The findings suggest that a mother that has earned at least a college degree can create an environment conducive or college degree attainment, although income unexpectedly bears no significance. It also illustrates that simply being a Black male bears the greatest significance. Essentially, the other two significant factors don't account for as much of the predictive weight in the regression model. Therefore, the findings suggest that Black males face challenges and biases that mitigate positive life outcomes and academic achievement. Thus, policy should perhaps be implemented to reduce issues of racism, biases, and the historical impact of White Supremacy. The first recommendation attempts to address this concern:

- 1) *Diversity/Inclusion training should perhaps be made mandatory as ongoing forms of education through American Institutions—particularly in schools where Black boys face overrepresentation regarding discipline, enrolling in special education services, and being deemed mentally retarded. Furthermore, Black males are considerably less likely to be deemed as gifted students when academic performance is equivalent to White students.*
  - a. *Perhaps the American Media should partake in providing this education as well through accountability measures enacted by The Federal Communications Commission (FCC)*
  - b. *The FCC should maybe set standards for the manner of content and ratio of positive to negative portrayals of Black men [based on Oliver's (2003) research].*

Recommendation 1 aims to address the heart of the issue of racism and biases (linked to Tenet 5 of AAMT). However, considering racism itself cannot be legislated out of the hearts and minds of people, diversity training can attempt to mitigate some of the issues stemming from racism, bias, and prejudice. As the study findings illustrate, the educational attainment of the mother proves significant. The results suggest that a mom who has earned a college degree potentially provides a more academically rich environment for their student (child). Given that premise, targeted capital reallocation must occur to shift resources to Black families. This type of

reparations package would be in line with historical examples of reparations to other groups throughout time—including Japanese Americans, Eskimos, Native Americans, and Holocaust survivors (Benton-Lewis, 1996). Therefore, the following policy recommendation could potentially improve the educational opportunities for Black people and Black mothers:

- 2) *The funding structure for American Public Schools should differ in disenfranchised communities (particularly those serving a significant number of Black students) in a way that provides greater funding to address issues of inequality in regards to the quality of schools. This links to the literature review of this study that illustrates the proclivity of under-resourced schools when those schools serve a population of majority Black students. As also indicated by the examination of the literature, early childhood literacy most accurately predicts future academic success; so, a significant emphasis of this funding should be set aside to improve vocabulary acquisition and early childhood literacy.*

Furthermore, as the research study revealed, neighborhood racial composition/segregation was the second most significant factor outside of being a Black man. Hence, targeted interventions should perhaps be instituted to provide access to more diverse communities for Black families. This type of access would be facilitated by providing the resources necessary for Black families to be able to purchase homes and move into those kinds of neighborhoods. Thus, the following reparations package would perhaps be of great utility in integrating more neighborhoods:

- 3) *Capital investments from federal and state agencies in communities serving a significant number of Black residents might need to be instituted and utilized to enhance community infrastructure, public goods and services, and incentivize businesses to be housed in those communities and employ the Black residents within them.*

Substantive change to capital investment structures in society would potentially fail without accountability measures regarding implementation to mitigate bias. Therefore, the following policy implementation is recommended based on the review of the literature:



- 4) *Government branches at every level should perhaps institute accountability measures throughout society (public and private institutions) to ensure that race is not a factor in regards to citizens receiving loans, seeking employment, obtaining any insurance, purchasing homes, or seeking any service that relates to (but not limited to) employment, income, and housing.*

The listed recommendations aim to address the significant factors found in this study regarding bias against Black men, parental education, and the level of racial segregation in communities based on the study outcomes, review of the literature, and the theoretical underpinnings of this research.

### **Recommendations for Educational Practitioners**

In accepting that Black boys and men are hampered in many respects across the life course, there are many instances in which educators and practitioners can begin to improve the lives of Black boys and men. *First*, in regards to early and elementary education, a targeted and consistent commitment should perhaps be made in improving literacy, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition in every subject matter throughout the school day. *Second*, educators should maybe make the commitment to understand how bias can play a role in addressing Black males and create interventions to mitigate instances in which bias can harm positive outcomes for Black males. *Third*, school learning environments should perhaps be transformed throughout the educational life course of Black males to integrate them into other groups to limit the effects of segregation and isolation from other groups and populations. Identifying situations and environments to capitalize upon diversity could potentially yield positive outcomes for Black boys and men.

Although, the research indicates that interventions at the college level do little to curb the adverse effects of childhood neighborhood segregation, [based on Harper's (2010) previously mentioned research] higher education practitioners could still potentially:

- 1) *Create and implement curriculum for all colleges and departments in which all students are instructed on issues of racism and microaggressions and receive training to eliminate those constructs from their paradigms and behaviors.*
- 2) *Black students should be invited by faculty, staff, and administration to be active participants in both the formal and informal processes of the campus.*

### **Research Limitations**

Despite the inclusion of policies from various sectors of society, some limitations present themselves in this research study. In particular, three limitations must be highlighted: limited scope of the problem assessed; a self-reported and a limited data set; and delimited use of predictor variables regarding graduation rates for Black males. First, in regards to the historical analysis, chronicling events and policies prior to the 1950s would have been significant to the research—particularly beginning with the advent of The American Enslavement of Africans in The United States. Additionally, there are enumerable sets of policies across all sectors of society that could have been assessed as well. However, for the sake of this research, it was a conscience decision to delimit the study in that regard.

Nevertheless, the greatest limitations of the research were the inability to fully or wholly capture accurate data from the longitudinal survey; the survey data was all self-reported from the students. So, the racial composition of their schools and neighborhoods (as well as household income) were all "best guesses" and approximations of the actual figures. Future data has the potential to be much richer if studies could obtain exact numbers for these very sensitive pieces of information. Additionally, the participants had to recall information from different stages of their lives; over time, information is much harder to remember accurately. Lastly, since only a handful of schools participated, the data lack a richness that could be achieved by having a greater number of participating schools of varying types across the country. Additionally, the

influence of college type (and the cost associated with attendance) was not assessed in this research study.

Ultimately, the psychosocial concepts (e.g. “Acting White” and one’s personal sense of “Black Masculine Ideology”) that were previously discussed were not captured in this research study—nor were previous academic performance and preparation. Although a comprehensive analysis of the students’ psychosocial status and academic performance correlated with neighborhood segregation and college graduation would be valuable, the scope of such research was beyond the aim of this study. Although the utilization of neighborhood segregation at age 6 served as a suitable proxy for these psychosocial factors, future research should consider assessing these other factors and predictors.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

As the impact of segregation and isolation for Black students is studied in future research, it will be important to capture a clear sense of how segregation affects Black men and women on a very nuanced and personal level. As communities continue to be stratified along the lines of race and class, important revelations are to be discovered (particularly for trends regarding Black Masculine Ideology and Black Feminine Ideology). Some very intriguing phenomena must be occurring within the culture of Black communities (outside of societal and policy influences) that perhaps change the way in which Black men and women (or the Black Community as a whole) uniquely respond to the challenges of segregation and oppression. It would be important for future research to undertake a large-scale longitudinal study that captures in-depth qualitative and quantitative data regarding notions of masculinity and femininity and how the respondents came to formulate their personal identities within the context of segregation and isolation. The findings of such research could provide new insights into how gender identity development

within The Black Community can have certain predictive properties regarding the future likelihood of Black males obtaining a college degree.

### **Conclusions**

Despite the fact that American History has been rife with bias and the horrific exploitation of many demographic groups, an incredible opportunity exists today to heal some of those wounds. The purposeful reshaping of the nation's cities (with emphasis on segregated Black neighborhoods) can indeed begin to bring about substantive change. Twentieth-century rights legislation dealt a great impact on segregation with educational desegregation laws; however, the country failed at completely bringing about neighborhood integration. The fact that communities continue to be significantly segregated along the lines of income and race, people miss out on the opportunity to deeply connect with different types of individuals in a way that disarms feelings of fear and mistrust. There is a genuine opportunity for redemption in educating the American Citizenry—in saving it from its ignorance by redefining genocide. As narratives of threats from "different" groups flood our media, corporate interests override the universal public good and lead our society to misdiagnose its troubles and their points of genesis—unchecked capitalism, racism, and White Supremacy.

The unchecked excesses of capitalistic greed have divided people and have made them unable to realize and appreciate their common struggle. Untethered capitalism and perverse racism have perpetuated neighborhood segregation. When the majority of Americans understand their mutual trials in The American Human Experience and fight for the rights of disenfranchised groups (e.g. Black citizens from segregated neighborhoods), a New America can and will be realized. A New America would redefine genocide as *efforts that systematically disenfranchise a group by stripping its autonomy, power, and ability to contribute within society*. It is a moral,

economic, and ethical imperative that the atrocities that stem from segregation and the resulting discrimination are "educated out" and "integrated out" of our future generations. The state of the country and the world depend on a transmogrification of the manner in which the prosperity of all people is secured firmly and indefinitely. All people deserve to be free, and that freedom will be earned when society but simply demands it.

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**ABSTRACT****BLACK MALE GENOCIDE: SANCTIONED SEGREGATION IN AMERICAN POLICY**

by

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College degree attainment for Black Americans has significantly fallen their majority counterparts. While educational attainment for this minority demographic has been less than average, a secondary trend emerges. Despite the rises in graduation rates, Black males consistently earn a smaller percentage of the degrees garnered by Black students. Furthermore, policies throughout sectors of American society produce segregation that manifests as genocidal realities in the lives of Black men—including college graduation. Thus, the purpose of this research was to determine the effect of neighborhood segregation on Black men and women's 4 and 6-year graduation probability and determine if Black men reduce the gap when given 6 years to graduate. The theoretical framework of African American Male Theory guided this study. Utilizing the Princeton Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), the research utilized binary logistic regression to analyze the effect of 3 independent variables (household income, maternal education level, and neighborhood segregation) on dependent variables (4-year graduation and 6-year graduation).

A purposeful sample 1051 Black students (368 men and 683 women) from the NLSF were used in the analysis. The majority of study participants (55%) had a mother that had at least a bachelor's degree; 45% of the students came from neighborhoods that were majority Black (having at least 70% Black people in their neighborhood), and 15% came from poverty, 25% were low income, and 58% had incomes greater than low income. The logistic regression analysis found that for Black men, the odds of graduating and coming from a majority Black community are .506, and from a more diverse community, they are .661. For Black women, the odds of graduating in 4 years when growing up in a majority Black neighborhood were .937 and 1.6369 when growing up in a more diverse area.

The study determined racial segregation more adversely impacts Black men's ability to graduate with a bachelor's degree than it does for Black women. Even in desegregated (diverse) neighborhoods, Black men were unable to reduce the degree attainment gap given 4 or 6 years to graduate. The regression analyses yielded results that support the initial hypothesis that segregation is a significant predictor of bachelor degree attainment apart from academic preparation. Based on the indicators, predictors, and factors correlated with college degree attainment from the review of the literature, the results suggest that larger societal factors could potentially be significant predictors of college degree attainment outside of academic preparation. The findings argue for targeted interventions at the local, state, and federal levels to life course barriers imposed on Black males.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

ALTON JAMES

The trajectory of my educational career was set by the unique set of aspects of my identity, upbringing, and background. Being born and raised as a Black American Male on the Eastside of Detroit, I was surrounded by an atmosphere plagued by the atrocities outlined in my research regarding the realities of living as a Black man in The United States. However, my experience was specially nuanced given that my sister and I had both of our parents raising us, while sacrificing economic security to send us to private schools outside of the city for both our K12 and high school schooling. Thus, my educational experience was diversified in a way unlike that of the experiences of others growing up in my community.

Therefore, I was fortunate enough to go on to study at The University of Michigan Ann Arbor for both my bachelor's (2008) and master's degrees (2010). During my undergraduate studies, I majored in English (BA) and double minored in African American Studies and Music. Following my bachelor's degree, I earned a master's (MA) in Educational Administration and Policy. I followed these studies by teaching middle and high school English, Choir, and College Readiness in Detroit. During my 4-year teaching tenure, I made the decision to return to graduate studies. I completed an Education Specialist's Certificate (Ed.S) at Wayne State University in 2013 en route to completing my PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies with a focus in Higher Education Administration.

Upon the completion of the Ed.S, I began my work in higher education through advising, running a retention program for underrepresented students, and managing centralized recruitment initiatives, scholarship awards, and corporate partnerships. I plan to continue researching aspects of society and policy that impact the lives of minority citizens and their ability to successfully participate in society. Furthermore, other than being an instructor and potentially a professor, I envision creating and facilitating programs within higher education institutions to ensure success for underrepresented and disenfranchised demographic groups—particularly for Black men.