Abstract

Title of Thesis: INTERSECTIONAL EXPLORATION OF BLACK MEN'S GENDER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND EXPRESSIONS

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Gender identities and expressions of men from minoritized racial and ethnic backgrounds often differ from those outlined in Traditional Masculinity Ideologies (TMI). These differences have been highlighted by scholars who have advocated for intersectional approaches to exploring masculinities. Recent intersectional inquiries into Black masculinity and Black manhood have provided insights into the unique expression of masculinity Black men have developed. This study sought to extend the understanding of existing intersectional explorations of Black manhood and Black masculinity through qualitative inquiry. Additionally, it attended to the impact of religion, spirituality, and sexual orientation in its analysis of Black men's intersectional identity development and expression. Findings indicated that Black men often described their experiences in terms of either race or gender, but rarely in terms of intersectional identity. A theory of racialized gender identity development and expression for Black men is posited based on the integration of extant theories of racial and gender identity development, ego identity development, as well as intersectional approaches to stereotyping and prejudice. Implications for research and practice are provided.

INTERSECTIONAL EXPLORATION OF BLACK MEN'S GENDER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND EXPRESSIONS

by

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Intersectional Exploration of Black Men's Gender Identity Development and Expressions

Research has historically framed Black masculinity in terms of conformity or a lack thereof to Eurocentric masculine norms (Brassel et al., 2020; Franklin, 1994; Griffith & Cornish, 2018; Pleck, 1995; Rogers et al., 2015). It was thought that due to their history of racial oppression, Black men were often unable to meet the expectations of traditional and hegemonic masculinities. Research on Black men often focused on the negatives of their experiences (e.g., incarceration rates, elevated levels of poverty, absentee fatherism, and rates of HIV among the gay and bisexual Black male population; Bowleg et al., 2017; Franklin, 1994; Mosley et al., 2017; Schwing et al., 2013; Shrider et al., 2021). In response to research that focused on negative aspects of Black masculinity, others began to focus on positive aspects of Black masculinity. Consistent with positive psychology and constructivist approaches to Black psychology, some researchers have begun to focus on articulating and understanding the masculinities that Black men construct for themselves (Cokley & Garba, 2008; Hammond & Mattis 2005). Their findings suggested that although Black men may often hold TMI in high regard, they also recognized the struggle to enact TMI due to structural oppressive factors (Brassel et al., 2020; Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Hunter & Davis 1992; Rogers et al., 2015). Additionally, Black men also exhibited a tendency to redefine masculinity in ways that were more achievable and were distinct to their cultural background (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015).

In addition to the assumptions about the applicability of Eurocentric masculinity to Black men, there are several assumptions about gender in the extant literature on masculinity. It may be helpful to take a step back to provide some clarity around what gender is and is not, and how gender is related to masculinity. The constructs of sex and gender have been commonly conflated in psychological literature across time (Bussey, 2011), with some inconsistency in the

conceptualization of gender as either biological or socially constructed. In the social sciences, something of a compromise has been struck positioning sex as biological, whereas gender as socially constructed (Morrow, 2006; Udry, 1994). Historically, scholars articulated both sex and gender from a binary, with male or female being the designations for sex, and masculine or feminine the designations for gender (Bussey, 2011; Matthews, 2014; Udry, 1994). "Gender refers to the behavioral, cultural, and psychological characteristics that are socially constructed to express" a relationship with one's sex (Morrow, 2006, p. 8). Gender is an important categorical factor around which much of society is framed (Bussey, 2011). It provides a framework for how individuals interact with the world and it, in turn, interacts with individuals. Gender identity refers to an individual's sense of connection or fit with one or some combinations of genders (Morrow, 2006). Gender expression, then, is how one reflects their gender identity outward. While these terms can be defined separately, the distinction between them is often ignored in social science research, because it is difficult to discuss gender expression without considering the gender identity being expressed. Gender expression is, in essence, the external display of the internal meaning making of a construct (gender identity) with far-reaching social impact.

Literature Review

If the assumed gender identity of males has been men, then masculinity is the socially constructed set of norms, roles, and expectations that describes what men should and should not do (Spence, 1984). An outline of how masculinity has been studied in the U.S. is presented first in the section that follows. Then an exploration of how American masculinity has been applied to Black men, before reviewing empirical and theoretical support to suggest that this application provides an incomplete picture. Next, is a review of newer studies on Black masculinity. These studies provide a more comprehensive framing of Black men's identity development at the

intersection of race and gender, by incorporating the influences of mainstream American masculinity and that of Black men's cultures of heritage. Finally, the study of intersecting identities and intersectionality are connected, with examples of how intersectionality can show up for Black men.

The ideologies of masculinity are "socially constructed ideas and beliefs about what it means to be a man" (Thompson & Bennett, 2017, p.47). Extant research on masculinity has often been unidimensional. It has focused on masculinity as a function of gender. However, gender is a social construct that does not exist outside of a cultural context. To that end, research on gender has always held cultural assumptions, even when they were not explicitly stated. The general understanding of masculinity in the United States has been built on the culture of those in power, European Americans. Eurocentric masculinity in the United States has been built on Brannon's (1976) Traditional Masculinity Ideologies (TMI). These ideologies inform men of the behaviors that are and are not socially acceptable. TMI defines masculinity across four dimensions (a) avoiding femininity and homosexuality, (b) taking risks, (c) being able to provide for self and others, as well as (d) always being in control of one's emotions.

Around the same time Joseph Pleck (1976) highlighted the potential harm that men (in general) experience, by trying to live out these ideologies. Several scholars have built measures to examine men's adherence or conformity to TMI (Levant et al., 1992; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil et al., 1986; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Despite being developed from the perspective of the dominant culture in the U.S., TMI has been assumed to apply across groups. TMI-based scales have been demonstrated to effectively measure attitudes and beliefs related to TMI, even across racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, age, and SES (Brassel et al., 2020; Franklin, 1994 ; Griffith & Cornish, 2018; Levant et al., 2010; Parent & Moradi, 2009; Pleck,

1995; Rogers et al., 2015). However, because TMI leans heavily on a Western, Eurocentric framing of masculine norms it may overlook the unique within and between-group differences in the construction and expression of masculinities. Masculinities exhibited by men of minoritized racial and ethnic backgrounds often differ from those outlined in TMI, as has been highlighted by scholars who have advocated for intersectional approaches to exploring masculinities (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Liu & Iwamoto, 2006).

Franklin's (1994) Triangle of Socialization theory provided an early attempt at explaining Black men's experiences of masculinity. The Triangle of Socialization asserts that Black men receive socialization from three sources: (a) their primary group - families and caregivers, (b) their peer group, and (c) mainstream society. This theory posited that Black men experience challenges enacting TMI, because of the systemic oppression they experience. Black men's primary group is comprised of their caregivers and families. Black American families often extend beyond the traditional nuclear family, to include grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and sometimes even fictive kin. These individuals provide some sense of what is culturally relevant and appropriate for Black men in their early development. Therefore, primary groups provide socialization around racial and ethnic identity development and navigating the intersection of gender and ethnic identity.

Black men's peer group socialization begins as they start school, daycare, and other peer engagement outside the home (Franklin, 1994). In alignment with other developmental theories on the influence of peers, this peer socialization increases in importance to Black boys as they enter adolescence. Peer socialization gives Black boys a broader view of Black masculinity: offering them windows into what others have been taught Black masculinity is and the expectations others might hold of them as Black men. The socialization Black men get from

mainstream society carries ideas about what it means to be a man broadly. It also provides insight into what others think about and expect of Black men. This might include stereotypical representations of Black men in the media. Media representation might also convey ideas about what types of Black men should be celebrated (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr. over Malcolm X), subtly conveying values around whether and how Black men can respond to the oppression they face.

These three forms of socialization may present conflicting ideas about how to be a Black man (Franklin, 1994). Choices Black men make about how much to adhere to the expectations of their different socialization sources are not without consequence: each source conveys expectations and meters out repercussions for non-adherence. This leaves them responsible for making meaning of the socialization they receive across the three sources and determining how they display that meaning to the world.

Self-reliance, provision, and protection are characteristics of TMI that are also endorsed in Black masculinity (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Mincey et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2015). These studies have recognized the impact of structural racism as well as stereotypes about Black people and Black men specifically. Black men often report working to avoid reifying those stereotypes in the ways they express their masculinities (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Mincey et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2015). There is a wealth of studies that speak to the stereotypes that are applied to Black men, the effect these stereotypes have on them, and the ways that Black Men develop and display resilience and resistance against them (Franklin 1994; McGuire et al., 2014; Mosley et al., 2017; Schwing et al., 2013; Smith & Patton, 2016; Wesley, 2015).

Franklin does not seem to explicitly address the influence of the heritage cultures of Black Americans (Franklin, 1994). Other research suggests that in addition to systemic oppression impeding Black men's ability to embody TMI, Black masculinity carries influences from the cultural heritage of Black men's primary groups (Bowleg, 2013; Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Mincey et al, 2013; Rogers et al., 2015). Black cultures tend to be more collectivistic and spiritual than European cultures. Black masculinity is more relational and places importance on Black men's relationship with their community. Black men are expected to contribute to their communities, either by being role models or leaders. Additionally, Black men regularly reported the importance of relationships within their homes (e.g., romantic, parental). Black men also often report religious or spiritual beliefs as influences on their masculinity.

Research on Black masculinity has also provided developmental progression from masculinity to manhood (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005). Black masculinity is precarious and requires Black men to perform in certain ways to manage how others perceive them. Black manhood focuses on an internal value system. Similarly, expectations of Black men's sexual relationships with women shifted from an abundance of sex with different partners in masculinity, to faithful marriages and procreation in manhood (Ford, 2011). Additionally, religiosity and spirituality were often reported as guiding forces for Black men, particularly in manhood (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005).

Research on Black masculinity has evolved from simply expecting TMI to apply to Black men (Franklin, 1994), to understanding that Black masculinity in the US is an infusion of values from Black men's heritage cultures and mainstream (Eurocentric) masculinity (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). As mentioned earlier, Black Americans tend to be more religious or spiritual than their European American peers (Griffith & Cornish, 2018;

Pew Research Center, 2021; Smallwood et al., 2017; Woodyard et al., 2000). The majority of Black Americans belong to Abrahamic religions, which sometimes have homonegative rhetoric. Even when Black Americans do not adhere to these specific belief systems, their rhetoric often influences cultural norms (Duran & Garcia, 2023; Fields et al., 2015; Garret-Walker & Torres, 2017; Means, 2017; Quinn & Dickson-Gomez, 2016). Therefore, the socialization that Black men receive about homosexuality may involve a high magnitude of negativity because of cultural and gender norms regarding sexuality. In this way, Black masculinity is often homonegative, rather than just heteronormative. This rejection of homosexuality in Black masculinity is more than just a carry-over from TMI but appears to be culturally normative. Therefore, the intersection of identities for sexual minority, Black men results in complex and particularly negative social standing. Intersectionality's primary argument is that people hold more than one identity, each of which experiences power or privilege in society (Bowleg, 2023; Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw, 1991). At the intersection of these identities the systems of power and oppression at play for each overlap, creating a unique experience. Intersectionality was developed through the work of Black feminist scholars who noticed that Black women's experiences of discrimination were often not centered in the spaces that worked toward women's or Black people's civil rights. These scholars pointed out that Black women hold at least two marginalized identities (Black and woman), and the discrimination that they faced was different from that of the dominant group (i.e. White women or Black men) in either women's or Black spaces, respectively. The intersectionality of Black men's identities is often not discussed. Because Black men, broadly, live at the intersection of one privileged identity (man) and at least one minoritized identity (Black). This one privileged – (at least) one minoritized identity intersection is different from the original case (two minoritized identities) for which

intersectionality was coined. Intersectionality rose to popularity as a way of explaining the gendered racism that Black women face. Black women's identities have been explored from that same gendered racial framework (Williams and Lewis, 2021). This differs from how Franklin (1994) framed Black men's experiences. His triangle of socialization suggested applying a racial lens to Black men's gender. In this way, the intersectionality of their identities requires different approaches to exploring the identities of Black American men and women. Looking at Black men's intersectionality as race applied to gender accounts for the ways that their race (and the oppression that comes with it) influences their capacity to fully enact their gender (and the privileges associated with it). In articulating Black masculinity this way, Franklin conveys the logic behind the historic use of TMI-based scales of masculinity with Black and other racial and ethnic minorities. However, we can now acknowledge that this historic practice may not have been entirely accurate to the experiences of these ethnic and racial minority men.

The framing of Black American masculinity as applying a racial lens on men's gender identities helps to understand the intersectionality of queer Black American men as well. Gender socialization starts at birth (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). So, Black men are navigating masculinity and its expectations before sexuality becomes a subject in the socialization process. Black Americans are widely religious or spiritual, often belonging to belief systems that have homonegative rhetoric. When these cultural values are overlaid on TMI's anti-homosexual stance, the oppression of queer Black American men is amplified. This can be seen in the discrimination queer Black American men experience (e.g., racism in gay spaces and society broadly, homonegativity in Black spaces) as well as the intersectional stereotypes they face (e.g., expectations to be dominant, masculine, hypersexual, penetrative lovers). This oppression is also apparent in Black American queer men's reports of attempting to conceal or compensate for their

sexualities to maintain connections with their families, friends, and communities. In these ways, queer Black American men's experiences differ from their peers, both White American (queer and heterosexual) and heterosexual Black American men.

Taken all together, Black men's experiences of masculinity seem to differ from their White peers, qualitatively. Extant literature on adult Black men provides some insight into the differences between TMI and Black masculinity. It also highlights the meaning Black men make of their masculinities and manhood. This study aims to extend that work by framing this meaning-making as identity development. Additionally, it frames this development as intersectional and uses intersectionality to attempt to better understand the process and its impact on Black men's gender expressions.

One framing of gender identity is based on ideas or ideologies of what it means to belong to that gender. So, for masculinity, ideologies of masculinity would be "socially constructed ideas and beliefs about what it means to be a man" (Thompson & Bennett, 2017, p.47). Several theories of masculinity have been developed on the foundation of Traditional Masculinity Ideologies (TMI) as outlined by Robert Brannon (1976). These ideologies include dimensions such as avoiding femininity and homosexuality, taking risks, being able to provide for self and others, as well as always being in control of one's emotions. Around the same time Joseph Pleck (1976) highlighted the potential harm that men, and those around them can experience, by trying to live out these ideologies. Several scholars have built measures to examine men's adherence or conformity to TMI (Levant et al., 1992; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil et al., 1986; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Measures of TMI seem to effectively measure attitudes and beliefs related to TMI, even across racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, age, SES (Levant et al., 2010; Parent & Moradi, 2009). However, TMI leans heavily on a Western, Eurocentric framing of masculine

norms which may result in overlooking the unique within and between group differences in the construction and expression masculinities. Masculinities exhibited by men of minoritized racial and ethnic background often differ from those outlined in TMI and may be viewed as non-traditional from the TMI frame as has been highlighted by scholars who have advocated for intersectional approaches to exploring masculinities (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Liu & Iwamoto, 2006).

In alignment with the scholars who call for an intersectional look at gender identity development and expression, the researcher examined the extant literature on Black masculinity and developed this study as a way of contributing to its reconceptualization through a more critical and contemporary lens. Black men have been plagued with negative stereotypes like being seen as violent or criminal, (Franklin 1994; Mosley et al., 2017; Schwing et al., 2013; Smith & Patton, 2016). These stereotypes can drive people to act in prejudicial ways that negatively impact Black men (Franklin, 1994; Schwing et al., 2013; Mosley et al., 2017). Black men experience a broad spectrum of oppressive experiences from microaggressions to the systemic oppression of higher unemployment rates, increased encounters with police, higher rates of incarceration, and fear of losing their lives in encounters with the police (Franklin 1994; Mosley et al., 2017). As Franklin points out, Black men didn't have the same legal rights and privileges as White men until codified into law by the Civil Rights movement. On the other hand, ties to racial and ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations, may reinforce new patterns of resistance and resilience in Black men (McGuire et al, 2014; Wesley, 2015).

These explorations of Black masculinity and manhood have been enlightening but have not been without their limitations. In the last few decades, researchers have increasingly attended to intersectionality when exploring Black masculinity and Black manhood (Bowleg, 2013;

Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Hunter & Davis 1992; Rogers et al., 2015). In some earlier research, sexual orientation was not reported at all (Hunter & Davis, 1992). Later, sexual orientation was reported, but often studies were skewed toward samples with few or no sexual minority participants or exclusively non-heterosexual participants (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). While a more nuanced understanding can be achieved by narrowing the focus in sampling, such specific results limit the capacity to assess which aspects of gender identity development and expression are similar across sexual orientations. Careful consideration in sampling could account for the tendency for marginalized voices and experiences to be minimized when not specifically centered. Furthermore, qualitative studies present the opportunity to highlight uncommon narratives. Bowleg and colleagues (2015) did so by spotlighting the participant describing his HIV-positive partner's unwillingness to budge on requiring the use of condoms when many participants suggested that their women partners did not care about condom use. Given the history of religion and spirituality's influence on Black America and the belief system to which they commonly subscribe (Griffith & Cornish, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2021; Smallwood et al., 2017; Woodyard, et al., 2000), it is surprising that studies like Rogers et al. (2015) would have a sample of seventeen with only two non-Christian participants.

Theoretical Frameworks

Four theoretical frameworks were chosen to guide this study: (a) Cross' Nigrescence Theory - for the focus on racial and ethnic identity development, (b) intersectionality, (c) Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation, and (d) Marcia's Ego Identity Development. The section that follows will expound upon each and how they apply to this study.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development. Race and ethnicity are social constructions that are often central in conversations about identity. Thus, several theories on racial and ethnic identity have been developed (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 1996; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1989; Quintana, 2007). Race and ethnicity can represent dimensions upon which culture is passed down from one generation to the next (Quintana, 2007). Cross Nigrescence Theory (1971) underscores the socio-political and economic power dynamics of Black and White Americans in his era. The Nigrescence theory asserts that Eurocentric or White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant ideals are set forth as the default American values. This framing sometimes results in Black people devaluing their own features and the values of their heritage cultures. Nigrescence theory outlines four to five stages (i.e., pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, internalization-commitment) through which Black Americans develop their racial identities. These stages represent a progression from an unconscious complicity in valuing White culture and devaluing cultures of Black heritage, to having a non-romanticized appreciation of Black and White cultures (Cross, 1971; Cross & Vandiver, 2001).

The dehumanization of Black Americans through racism, how that racism has changed over time, and the effects racism has on their lives has been widely studied (Sue et al, 2008). Since race has such an impact on the lived experiences of Black Americans, it seems imperative to consider the impact of race on Black men's gender identity development and expression. This study explores how participant responses might represent location along the Nigrescence trajectory. Additionally, location along this developmental process may provide context for participants' understanding of their gender identities and expressions. Cross' Nigrescence model was operationalized by the Cross Racial Identity Scale (Vandiver et al., 200`) and the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (RIAS-B; Parham & Helms, 1981). The RIAS-B has been used to

examine students' racial preference for a counselor (Parham & Helms, 1981), as well as with relationship to Black women's self-esteem (Poindexter-Cameron & Robinson, 1997) and Gender Role Conflict for Black men (Wade, 1996).

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is a framework developed within Black Feminist scholarship that, in its original form, outlined the unique experiences of gendered racism that Black women face because of the interlocking systems of social-structural oppression at work as a result of the intersection of their identities (Bowleg, 2023; Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw 1991). Intersectionality addresses intersecting identities, but more than that it also calls for researchers to focus on the power structure that might be informing the specific experiences people are having because of their identities (Bowleg, 2008; Bowleg, 2017; Bowleg et al., 2017; Bowleg et al., 2022; Bowleg, 2023). Many existing theories of masculinity are derived from TMI, which are steeped in western, Eurocentric, heterosexual norms (Abreu et al., 2000; Thompson & Bennett, 2017). However, only viewing gender identity development and expression for minoritized men from TMI frame has the potential to obscure within-group and between-group differences in their construction and display patterns. That outcome is one of the disadvantages of intersectional invisibility outlined in Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach (2008). This is why some scholars have advocated for intersectional approaches to exploring gender identities and expressions of minoritized racial and ethnic groups (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Liu & Iwamoto, 2006; Rogers et al., 2015; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach (2008) provide the model of intersectional invisibility, which suggests that sexual minority Black men would be particularly disadvantaged in paradigms like TMI because they are likely to render their experiences invisible. Petsko's (2022) Lens Framework asserting that they can be viewed through the lens of Black, men, or their intersectional identities also provides a helpful way of

conceptualizing the aspects of their identities that become the focus of how Black men come to see and understand themselves. Petsko and colleagues suggest that the lens applied when addressing someone's intersectional identity depends on the accessibility of that lens, the distinctiveness of that identity, their goals for applying the lens, and how well the lens fits.

Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation. Bussey and Bandura (1999) outline the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation as an integration of disparate theories of gender identity development across the social sciences. Social cognitive theory of gender positions gender roles as a social construct, driven more by cultural and societal norms than biological differences. Framing gender as a social construct is consistent with the growing body of literature on the subject (Frühauf et al., 2022; Morrow, 2006; Udry, 1994; Shakya et al., 2022). Gender development is promoted through three modes of influence (i.e., modeling, enactive experience, and direct tuition) and how the information these modes of influence provide is processed by an individual. Social cognitive theory of gender also asserts that gender identity development is a lifelong process, in which individuals negotiate their identity in a never-ending series of cyclical interactions. Individuals receive information about gender norms and roles, they encode that information, act out their gender, process others' reactions to their actions, and use this data to decide how to continue to understand and display their gender. As was consistent with the context (i.e., time and Western cultural frame in which the theory was developed) the theory was developed to describe a gender binary.

Parents, peers, and the media provide models of gender roles and norms (Bussey and Bandura, 1999). Models show individuals what it means to exist in the world as one gender or the other, the behaviors expected of someone possessing a specific gender identity, and the consequences for (non)adherence to these norms. Learning from modeling is influenced by

attention, retention, production, and motivation processes. Variations in these domains can affect what individuals learn about gender and how they are likely to enact gender. For example, children tend to be more attentive to same-gender models, but the social power an opposite-gender model has might motivate them to enact behaviors consistent with the power-wielding model.

Enactive experience refers to the consequences individuals notice as a result of their gender-linked behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). People respond differently to behaviors. Yet the rewards and punishments an individual receives for their gender-linked behavior create a feedback loop, which then helps individuals determine whether to continue, increase, or decrease this and similar gender-linked behavior. As the diversity of sources for feedback grows, so does the potential for variety in the outcomes of gender-linked behavior. Stated differently, when individuals are provided with data about gender-appropriate behavior that varies widely, they take a more active role in determining what that data means and how they might adjust based on that understanding.

Direct tuition is explicit and intentional messaging individuals receive about gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Additionally, direct tuition is most effective when there is consistency between what is taught and what is observed. This is often not the case.

After receiving messages about gender-linked behavior, individuals engage in processes to help self-regulate their gender-linked behavior (Bussey & Bandara, 1999). Self-regulation is informed by both social- and self-sanctions. Social sanctions are the consequences individuals receive from others that communicate the appropriateness of the individual's gender-linked behaviors. Whereas self-sanctions refer to self-talk that helps an individual ensure that their

gender-linked behavior meets their personal standards (those intrinsic values regarding the importance of adherence to gender roles and norms).

Differentiation between the genders appears to be largely driven by social processes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). While there are biological differences between the sexes, those are small and do not account for differentiation nearly as much as socialization into gender does. For example, differences in math performance, pursuit of math-based and careers, more fully explained by self-efficacy expectations and stereotype threat than biological differences between men and women. Similarly, cultural differences in emotional expressiveness (e.g., Middle Eastern men being more emotionally expressive, whereas Western women are often thought to be more emotionally expressive) among the genders convey a larger influence of social context over biological differences.

Parents socialize children into gender from birth, if not earlier, through modeling, tutoring, and the environments they create for their children (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Further, parents model gender-linked behavior as well as react to other's gender linked behaviors in ways that reinforce or discourage their children's engagement in those behaviors. Children often notice gender-linked behaviors but don't always enact them. This again, speaks to the idea that the acquisition of and display of gender-linked behaviors are a series of multifaceted processes that frequently inform one another. Part of the historical insistence on biological essentialism of gender differences may be the oversight of how early gender socialization starts and how embedded culture is in these socialization processes.

Grounded in the understanding that culture is central to the establishment and communication of gender roles and norms, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that studies of masculinity are based on culturally appropriate definitions and expressions of

masculinity. Social cognitive theory of gender provides a frame for contextualizing the study of Black men's gender identity: attending to gender roles, norms, and consequences for (non)adherence consistent with Black American culture. Viewing gender roles, norms, and expressions as social constructs is consistent with the evolution of the study of gender in extant social science literature (Frühauf et al., 2022; Morrow, 2006; Udry, 1994; Shakya et al., 2022). Beaman et al. (2011) outlined the modeling and enactive experience components of the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender through the outcomes of Indian girls and their parents when they were able to see women in leadership. Similarly, all three learning components of the Social Cognitive Theory of gender appear to be at play in Bandura and colleagues' (2003) findings that parents' perceived efficacy and career aspirations affected those of their children.

Ego Identity Development. Marcia (1966; 1980) positioned identity as a way of organizing oneself, motivations, abilities, thoughts, and values. Marcia offered a two-axis model for identity development that examined an individual's exploration of their identity on one axis and their commitment to that identity on another. This yields four identity statuses: foreclosure (represented by a high level of commitment with little to no exploration), diffusion, (represented by a low level of commitment and little to no exploration), moratorium (represented by a high level of exploration, but no commitment), and identity achievement (where an individual has explored their options and committed to an identity). Marcia's identity status model has been applied to identity dimensions like gender (Wade, 1998) and sexual orientation (Worthington et al., 2002). Kroger's (1997) investigation into gender differences in the use of relationships in identity formation found that identity status influenced relationship use more than gender. A study exploring intimacy across sexes examined its relationship with the stages of identity development (Schiedel & Marcia, 1985). The current study applied this theoretical framework in

analyzing participant interview responses, by considering the degree to which participants have explored and committed to their intersectional gender identity.

Statement of the Problem

Prior to the 1990s the extant literature on Black men's masculinity centered White men by describing their masculinity as adhering to or struggling to adhere to traditional masculine ideologies (Franklin, 1994). In the early 2000s scholars began publishing studies on Black masculinity as defined by Black men, but these studies inadequately attended to intersections of identity such as sexual orientation and religion/spirituality, as well as other factors that might influence Black men's intersectional identity development and expression (e.g., sexual orientation and religion/spirituality; Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Additionally, the term masculinity has connotations rooted in gender binaries and conveys assumptions about gender normative behavior and expectations. These factors present challenges to conceptualizing how Black men develop their gender identities and how they decide to express them.

Franklin (1994) proposed an early model of socialization into Black men's gender identities and expressions. That model focused on factors (e.g., racism and stereotypes) that inhibited Black men from enacting masculinity in the same ways that White men do. More recent studies have advanced Franklin's work by aiming to articulate Black men's gender expressions in their own words (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Though these studies introduce the exploration of intersecting identities as influences on gender expression, they either fail to include or exclusively focus on subpopulations of Black men. The exclusion of non-Christian and same gender loving men in some samples generates intracommunity marginalization duplicating the systemic challenges those groups regularly face

and limiting the capacity to glean insight from their specific experiences of gender identity development and gender expression. Similarly, studies that have focused exclusively on same-gender loving Black men provide rich narratives about their experiences, yet prevent the possibility of evaluating whether sexual orientation necessitates new gender expressions (i.e., are there unique gender expressions for queer Black men).

Religion and spirituality are other important aspects of identity that can inform Black men's intersectional gender identity development and expression. With so many Black Americans finding importance in religiosity and spirituality, as well as religiosity and spirituality surfacing as influential themes in the extant literature on Black men's masculinity, these factors were included in this study it seems pertinent for future work in this area to employ purposive sampling to explore its influence (Griffith et al., 2021; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015).

In keeping with trends in recent research on BIPOC individuals, this study acknowledges Black men's active roles in constructing their gender identities and expressions rather than those expressions existing entirely as a dimension of conformity or lack thereof to traditionally White conceptualizations of masculinity (Charleston, 2014; Franklin, 1994; Hammond & Mattis 2005; Mosley et al., 2017). The current study explored how Black men are developing their gender identities and the potential associations with sexual orientation and religiosity/spirituality on their gender expressions, addressing the following question: how do Black men develop an understanding of their intersectional identities and gender expressions, with specific attention to how they associate their religious/spiritual backgrounds, and sexual orientations to these concepts?

Method

This study employed grounded theory because it aimed to explore how participants came to understand their gender identities and expressions, not just the meanings they make of being Black men (Strandmark, 2015; Urcia, 2021). This study used an evolved grounded theory approach to exploring how Black men develop their gender identities and come to express them. Evolved grounded theory, more than classic or traditional grounded theory, provides space to attend to the meaning participants make of their experiences (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Classic or Traditional grounded theory is more structured and attempts to provide an objective, positivist approach, that which is typical of quantitative research. Constructivist grounded theory exists on the other end of the spectrum from classic grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory asserts that the researcher influences the participants and consequently the research process and results. Grounded theory studies can vary in the number of participants required to reach saturation (Carter & Morrow, 2007). Studies employing this methodology typically have between 20 and 60 participants (Creswell, 2007; Sandelowski, 1995). Within the Journal of Counseling Psychology, studies have reported as few participants as eight (Polkinghorne, 1994; Watson & Rennie, 1994) or as many as 50 (Inman et al., 2015). The aim of this study was to explore how participants understood their development, rather than to change that understanding by guiding them to answer questions in a specific way. Evolved grounded theory fits better to achieve that goal than the constructivist approach. Additionally, gender identity is a broader concept, which encompasses “manhood” and “masculinity”, the terms historically used in the extant literature on Black men’s gender identity development. Studying this broader concept further justifies the use of an exploratory framework like grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Participants

Participants in this study were individuals who were 18-25 years of age, identified as Black and men, who were born in the United States as well as their parents, and were in the United States at the time of the interview. For this study the aim was to recruit twenty-five participants, with the understanding that constant comparative analysis would guide continued recruitment until saturation was reached. Participants were interviewed, and selective sampling and constant comparative analysis was used, to determine whether similar or different identity constellations were necessary to reach saturation.

Eighty-six individuals completed the screener indicated that they met the inclusion criteria of the study (Appendix B). Thirty-six of these respondents were invited to interview, six never responded to the invitation, seven failed to show for their interviews, one asked to be removed from the study, and two were removed after responses during their interview that would have resulted in them being excluded had they been provided on the screener. Through constant comparative analysis, selective sampling, and theoretical sampling the researcher determined that saturation was reached after 21 interviews. Based on the demographic questionnaire, the mean age for the 21 Black men interviewed was 23.1 (SD = 1.22), approximately 60% were heterosexual and the remainder were gay, bi, or asexual. Similarly, about 65% were Christian or Catholic, and 35% did not indicate a specific religious or spiritual background.

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was developed for use in this study. The semi-structured interview was the sole source of data collection. The interview protocol appears in Appendix A. Some interview questions were drawn from extant literature on the exploration of Black masculinity (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Others were

adapted from studies on gendered racism faced by Black women (Williams & Lewis, 2021). Questions three through seven were developed by the researcher to address the specific focus on this study.

The interview questions were developed through an iterative process. The interview began with questions about what it means to be a Black man, drawn and adapted from extant literature on Black masculinity and manhood (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Because participants frequently responded in terms of their gender or race exclusively, a question about when they became aware of their intersectional identity was added, adopted from Williams & Lewis's (2021) work on Black women's gendered racial identity development. In their work awareness of their intersectional identity was theorized to be an important part of Black women's identity development. Participants were then asked about their perceptions of what others expected of them, their expectations of themselves as Black men, and their expectations of other Black men. Participants were also asked about their gender expressions. The wording of these questions evolved from questions about how participants show up in the world, to what an observer might notice about them if observing their everyday activities. This shift helped to clarify the intent of the question and resulted in answers more consistent with descriptions of expressions of masculinity and manhood in extant literature (e.g., Cool Pose, John Henryism). Questions were also developed to explore how participant religious and spiritual backgrounds (or the lack thereof), as well as sexual orientation, might inform the development of their racialized gender identity and its expression.

Procedure

Participants were recruited via social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn,) using snowball sampling (Sharma, 2017). Several participants shared the recruitment materials

with their friends as well. Participants lived in Arizona, California, Georgia, Kansas, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington state. Requirement materials included a flyer (Appendix C) and social media post, which outlined the inclusion criteria, and provided the researcher's contact information, as well as a link to complete a screener and subsequently the demographics questionnaire via Qualtrics. Information submitted in response to recruitment material was reviewed to confirm that participants met the inclusion criteria. Selective sampling and constant comparative analysis were used to select participants based on demographic dimensions (e.g., sexual orientation, religious and spiritual background, ethnicity, and generation status). Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to protect their confidentiality. Interviews lasted between 18 and 50 minutes and were conducted by the researcher via Zoom. Interviews were all recorded for transcription. Eligible participants who completed the interview were compensated with a $25 Amazon e-gift card as an incentive for their participation.

Positionality

In his editorial address for the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Liu and colleagues (2024) addressed the historic importance of positionality in qualitative research as well as the power of positionality statements for contextualizing research in general. He outlined positionality as an acknowledgment of how researchers' identities relate to the populations they research, as well as how their roles are connected to cultural and institutional power and oppression. This framing of positionality is similar to personal reflexivity (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). The first author is a Black, bisexual, cis-gender Christian man, and doctoral student. He grew up in the southeastern United States and was raised in the church. Much of his lived experiences provided a window into the othering of those who were not exclusively heterosexual

or whose expressions of masculinity were non-traditional. These experiences as well as their common reproduction in extant literature contributed to his desire for this study to be more inclusive. To address this, participants were selectively sampled based on sexual orientation, and religious and spiritual background. Constant comparative analysis indicated where it would be helpful to include more individuals of a specific demographic. Memoing was used throughout the interview and data analysis processes to ensure that his reactions to participant responses, as well as his analysis of the research findings, were not skewed by his perspectives. His advisor, a mixed-methods research scholar with over two decades of experience researching identity development, served as an auditor through the coding process to provide additional perspective.

Trustworthiness

Review of the existing literature on Black masculinity, Black manhood, and conversations between the lead researcher and his advisor informed the development of the interview protocol, selection of theoretical frameworks, and ultimately the interpretation of the data collected in this study. These conversations aimed to assist in bracketing his preconceived notions about what might be going on for Black men as they develop their intersectional identities. Additionally, the conversations included things like how terms that are readily used in academe (e.g., gender expression and gender identity) might best translated into other spaces, as well as the pros and cons of framing the focus of this inquiry as masculinity or gender identity.

Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Participants were provided the opportunity to review their transcripts before coding for accuracy. Upon receiving participant approval of the transcripts, each was coded line by line. Codes were generated for each question, using the explicit language of the participants. Through the process of constant comparative analysis, the

lead researcher assessed who else might need to be included in the study and what perspectives may be needed to reach saturation. Despite a wide span of individual experiences, there was a lot of overlap in the meanings that participants made of their gender identities and their expressions. Most participants were Christian and identified as heterosexual. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of sexual and religious and spiritual minority men's experiences were elevated. It was determined that saturation had been reached when the inclusion of individuals from these sub-populations resulted in consistent responses that added no new themes to the codes. Memoing was used throughout the coding process: noting commonalities and discrepancies in participant responses, as well as commonalities across different questions. This led to axial coding where the researcher combined similar codes between interviews and across questions (e.g. references to Black people and skin color became one category, and references to discrimination and reactions to racial stereotyping became another). Codes from the axial coding stage informed the selective coding stage, whether the research began developing a theory regarding how the participants were coming to understand, articulate, and express their intersectional identities.

Several frameworks were used to analyze the data. The focus of the study was on the development of Black men's intersectional identity; however, attention to power and privilege is essential to any investigation of intersectional identity development. In alignment with the steps of evolved grounded theory outlined by Chun Tie et al. (2019) attention was paid to themes that were common, which participants communicated these themes, and how these expressions might be experienced by others. Multiply marginalized individuals and their experiences are often not included, or get overlooked, in studies that also include those of dominant identities. To address this, the experiences of Black sexual minority men were spotlighted, even if they were in the

minority (Bowleg, 2013). Similarly, analysis was provided for why some of the more privileged participants might have shared the sentiments they did and connected them with the impact that marginalized participants acknowledged experiencing because of these dominant attitudes.

Results

This section provides the findings of the study, summarized in the sections that follow. Quotes from the participants provide documentation of our findings regarding how Black men come to understand their intersectional identities and gender expressions, as well as how they associate their religions and spiritual beliefs, and sexual orientations to them. The major themes are (1) intersectional identity development, (2) gender expression, and (3) the meanings participants made of their identities. The subthemes of the latter were (a) strength, (b) pride, and (c) community. The themes and subthemes are described in detail, providing the framework for the major components of the grounded theoretical model.

Accessibility or Distinctiveness of Intersectional Identity

Petsko and colleagues' (2022) lens framework established *distinctiveness*, *accessibility*, *fit*, and *motivation* as the dimensions that determine whether an intersectional or individual identity lens gets used when applying a stereotype. Applying the lens framework to participants' responses, the consistency with which Black men described their experiences of race might suggest that the intersection of *Black* and *man* was not distinct enough, was inaccessible, or was not a good fit for participants to apply an intersectional lens. Participants also could have been insufficiently motivated to apply an intersectional lens to their experiences. Critical to this finding, it is important to recognize that the Black men in this study were specifically asked to reflect on and respond to questions about their *intersectional* identities.

When responding to the question of how and when they became aware that they were Black men, thirteen participants' of 21 participants responses focused on experiences of

becoming aware of their race. Respondents often referred to expectations of themselves as Black rather than Black men specifically: this was also true when discussing their expectations of themselves, others, and other's expectations of them. For example, William indicated that he became aware that he was a Black man at 21 because of a racist encounter in a hospital. William expressed

> …I went to hospital to seek therapy... there was a lot of folks in the hospital… They decided to take to attend to the White person first, before me, despite the fact that I was before the White person… I wasn't happy with it. So, I would say discrimination is the major thing that I face as a Black man.

Similarly, Emmanuel recounts a time at 17 in which

> … I saw… a young guy at my age, a White guy, trying to bully a fellow Black man… I thought my teacher would, like, settle everything in unity and peace, because the teacher was a White man. And actually, the teacher supported the White [student] and I felt bad. And actually, the Black guy was innocent, but he was being suspended from school for a crime he did not commit, and this is like actually racism. And it's clearly racism.

Some participants, (n = 10), indicated socialization into awareness around their racial identities and their meaning by conversations with their parents, community cultural events, familial celebrations, and lessons and organized cultural education in their schools. Instances of parental and community socialization were often, but not always preceded by experiences that could be classified as encounters in Cross's Nigrescence model. That fact is consistent with the ages at which this awareness began to develop for those who could identify a beginning point

ranging from 4 to 21. Eric's is an example of a participant who's experiences was consistent with Cross' encounter stage. He recalls a time when he was about 10 years old and

> some of the White folks actually didn't want to associate with me because I was a Black person. I was sad. I was kind of little at the time. I didn't really know why they did not want to have to associate with me. So, getting home, my parents actually enlightened me and told me that these kids didn't want to relate with me because of my skin color. So that kind of gave me the mentality, that hey my skin color can actually make others hate me for no reason.

Jason's, however, did not report anything as distinct as an encounter experience. Rather he described his experience as "a process of self-awareness." He expressed being

> …like 10 and then I got to know that, yeah, I'm a Black person. Especially when I found myself [in] school and then I found out that, yeah, I'm a Black person. My color is Black. I have a Black skin color and I have other people who are White skin colors. And at least the difference is clear. All the difference has been clear. They are White and they are Black. It was a process of self-awareness, and it also inspired a lot of questions from me to my parents about who I am. So, they told me outrightly that you are a Black person. You have African origin, and this is who you are, and you tend to learn more about you, when you grow up.

However, when a participant did apply an intersectional lens, their insight was illuminating. Rich is a unique example of a participant who was specifically socialized on his intersectional identity. While he too had an experience of racism that led to a parental lesson on his identity from his parents. His case focused on his identity at the intersection of both race and gender. In recounting one of his experiences, Rich provides a vivid example of a respondent

encountering racism and then receiving some socialization around their identity from their parents. Rich stated:

> [being] a 10-year-old kid, you know, frisked by the police, … They searched my dad, and they searched me…. I kept crying because I never expected the police to be there, you know, to stoop so low, you know, start searching a 10-year-old kid. You know what I'm saying? I got home and I started crying. My dad said it was one of the many things that was gonna happen to me in the future. So, I can, kind of like, I had to brace myself for things. That way, if it's gonna happen, I didn't wanna be caught off guard…

Rich articulating his understanding of his identity in this way might suggest that the intersectional identity is distinctive enough for Black men to view themselves this way. This begs the question, what else might be contributing to Rich viewing his identity through an intersectional lens, when so many others did through a race or gender only lens. It is possible that, when Black men are provided intentional socialization into their intersectional identity, it becomes more accessible, and they are more motivated to articulate and understand their experiences as being influenced uniquely by their intersectional identity.

Gender Expression

The dearth of participants' focus on intersectional identity was amplified in the discussion of their gender identities. Very few participants provided explicit characteristics to describe their gender expressions. However, addressing other interview questions (e.g. differences between their gender expressions and those of other Black men, their expectations of other Black men, and people's expectations of them as Black men), respondents provided context from which their gender expressions could be derived. Additionally, some participants

spoke to the influence of religion and spirituality, as well as sexual orientation on gender expressions.

Only six respondents answered the question of how they show up in the world, or what an observer would notice about them interacting with others, with explicit traits and characteristics Trevor describes himself as confident. He indicated that

> [his parents] used to tell me since I was five. You have to be yourself. Be honest because you are Black. So, anywhere I go, anywhere I find myself, I have to remind myself you have to be confident you have to be honest because I'm Black. So, since that time till now, I'm still telling myself that.

Isaac states that "my connections will not really be that deep. I'll just be communicating almost like on a raw surface… not going into the details, so that maybe… one…day have something to use against me." Dennis shared "I will stand strong no matter in the situation that comes my way…. I see different potential in me. Yeah... I could do great things tough…".

These descriptions are not unlike those described in extant literature regarding Black men (e.g., John Henryism, Cool Pose). Participants overwhelmingly shared the sentiment that racism is a barrier that they will face as Black men and that it is their responsibility to overcome this and any other barrier they may face, consistent with John Henryism (Mattews et al., 2013). When asked what it meant to be a Black man, Jeremiah stated it meant being "not easily defeated by situations." Similarly, in responding to how he shows up in the world, Dennis expressed "…no matter what I face in this life I will always remain a Black man. You know, I will stand strong no matter in the situation that comes my way."

Cool Pose is another common expression of Black masculinity characterized by a lack of emotional volatility, as well as toughness, and a distinctive style and self-expression, which participant responses exemplified (Langley, 1994). For example, Eric mentioned being "…willing to die for my fellow Black man." When asked what someone might learn about him, as a Black man, if they were to observe him Russell stated,

> You would observe that we are more cultured because we come from the background of culture. There are certain kind of differences in the way we act, the way we respond to situations are really different from the White people…

Russell's statement seems to be in line with the distinctive style of expression component of Cool Pose. Additionally, Jeremiah highlighted a toughness that aligned with both John Henryism and Cool Pose, stating "I would say seeing myself [as] someone that is tough, so that is a hard... someone that could go through any situation."

In response to a question about how his gender expression might differ from other Black men around him, Robert elevates the importance of Black men recognizing the diversity within the Black male community expressing. He states

> The things [I expect] from other Black men … to understand where they come from, understand that we've got a lot of races out there and a lot of gender [non-]confirming people out there… most times you know [people] have trouble being able to so express themselves, even being around all the Black men as well…

Robert seems to allude to trouble that some Black men, maybe even himself, may have expressed themselves even around other Black men. Another participant, Issac, expressed how facing adversity helped build his confidence. He stated, "I

expect these things to be like this, discrimination to be happening almost every day, so… I think it really helped me to be more courageous and bolder."

Ten participants indicated that religion and spirituality played a crucial role in their gender expressions. Jeremiah highlights that he believes Christianity influences Black people to be "humble… And we tend to forgive quickly and leave vengeance to God." Similarly, Emmanuel expressed that his Catholic beliefs indicate that

> … when God created the world, he created man in his own image. He never discriminated … He tells us that if we love him, we have to love our brothers and our sisters. So, I can just say that my color, being a Black man, means I cannot discriminate [against] others because if I discriminate others, that means I don't love God…

Seven respondents indicated that religion and spirituality had little to no impact on how they showed up in the world as Black men.

Similarly, four heterosexual participants and one bisexual indicated that their sexual orientation had minimal influence on their gender expression or understanding of what it means to be a Black man. Four heterosexual participants indicated that their sexuality provides the capacity to procreate and thus pass Black culture on to future generations. Five heterosexual participants indicated that their heterosexuality resulted in less discrimination, aided in their ability to relate to others, or was culturally or religiously appropriate. Two participants indicated a different sexual orientation on the demographics questionnaire than they expressed during the interview. One indicated being asexual on the questionnaire and the other gay, but both expressed their sexual orientation as heterosexual during the interview. Another sexual minority participant declined to respond to questions about how their sexual orientation informed their

gender identity and expression. Jason indicated that “the prevalence of this diversity in sexuality is minimal… So that also represents my cultural background… I am a heterosexual… shows that… I'm still sticking with the values of with the original values of the African, African American Society.” This thought might be further supported by a comment from Jay who expressed, “this issue of gay practice has really... been a problem to me. And when I see a Black man involve himself in such. I'm so angry. It frustrates me a lot.” Sentiments like Jay’s and observations like Jason’s help to explain why some participants reported different sexual orientations or declined to respond when asked about their sexuality during the interview. However, two respondents did speak positively of the influence of their gay identities on their gender expression. One of whom was Shaun who stated, “I see a lot of same gender... LGBT people… so it's not really hard for me to say gay.”

In observing themes within their explicit responses about gender expressions, as well as articulations about what is expected of them and their expectations of other Black men, it would seem much of how the Black men express their gender is in response to racism. All (n=21) participants expressed something that was a response to racism: from being resilient in the face of racism, to not wanting to be viewed as Black because of racism or fear of racism, to avoiding the appearance of fitting negative stereotypes of Black people. For all the participants, it was important to react to the racism they had encountered (or expected to encounter).

Descriptions of Meaning-Making

Participants overwhelmingly described the meaning they made of their intersectional identities in terms of strength (n=10), pride (n=12), and responsibility to the Black community (n=10). Some participants spoke to each in their responses, while a minority (n=2) provided responses that continuously included the phrase “regardless of your [race or skin color].”

Strength

Where respondents' descriptions of what it meant for them to be Black men included strength, they spoke about both physical and emotional strength. For example, Darrell says

> as a Black man that I am very… very, very strong. I have this… I have this I believe I … as a Black man, I believe that even looking at me physically, you will know that I'm strong. I'm strong in whatever I do. I have this heart: a very good heart, that I believe that I can accommodate as much as everybody, everyone that comes my way.

Similarly, Michael states that "being Black… you should have this God-given strength and athletic prowess." He also indicated that

> …being Black we tend to have this resilience… We tend to face and overcome challenges, including those related to racism… striving for personal and professional achievements despite stereotyping and gender biasing and sharing race biasing…

Still, others refer to the achievements and resilience of historical figures as sources of inspiration for them to continue to persevere. For example, Eric said, "I have learned, so far from, men like Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela, despite the obstacles they have faced due to their skin color, they still triumphed, and they became men that history will never forget." The concept of strength came up consistently as a character trait that respondents felt they possessed, believed others expected of them, and that they expected other Black men to possess.

Pride

Respondents also regularly referenced pride in their Black identities. Some expressed having pride in their racial identities because of the strength displayed by historical figures as

addressed above. Then others like Jay indicated just how inspired he was in development toward leadership by former president Barack Obama. He stated

> …so much respect [for that] man, Barack Obama… so much respect… We should always look forward to that moment where we can stand and say yes, we are proud as Black people. We are proud [that] we can change the world.

Then there is Shaun, who expressed "…I feel like I have a purpose. I have things to do being Black in my society… Black guys... I feel like we are different. You know the way we do things are totally different." While he does not articulate specifically how Black guys are different other respondents provide ideas from the way Black men speak, to the way we think and act. Still others suggest that Black people, especially in the Black church are more welcoming and forgiving. Darrell synthesized the idea of pride quite well in his response "…because as a Black person, we have this prestige. You know us that we were born for greatness, we were born to win, we're born to rule; so, being a Black man means everything to me." The respondents were also careful to acknowledge the challenges that come along with being Black men, and that those challenges will not deter them or diminish their sense of pride in who they are. For example, Dennis stated, "when I see all the things that my dad went through, that motivated me that, being a Black man is a good thing." He went on later in the interview to say

> if I were to come back to this world like the next life…I would still wanna remain being a Black man, because it takes everything to be a Black man, you know? Potential, your ability to handle situation no matter, makes you strong Black, right?

Responsibility to the Black Community

When respondents spoke of being a Black man meaning that they have a responsibility to the Black community that responsibility included being a good role model within the community, taking care of the community, building a sense of unity in the community and helping those outside of it to see the value of the Black community. In his response about what he expects of other Black men, Emmanuel spoke to a few of these points. He said

> what I expect of other Black men, is to show a good example to other Black men. Like we should not have discrimination among ourselves. We should come as one, as one unity, one love… show an example to their fellow Black men.

Others indicated the importance of being a good role model to the youth within the community and discussed mentorship or sponsorship to help keep the youth out of trouble. This focus on avoiding trouble, or reifying stereotypes held regarding Black men and the Black community was also popular. In talking about what it meant to be a Black man, Nick raised some challenges that he faced because of his skin color. His response to these challenges was to

> always try to prove them wrong, by making sure I do my best and I always give out my best to make them believe that not every Black person is bad: just like the White people, not all are also good or bad too.

Tre spoke to a similar level work that he expects of himself and other Black men. He said that he is expected to be "law-abiding citizen, always [making] sure [to] do the right thing at the right time, … [avoiding] crime at all costs… and an ambassador of the Black race." These are also things that expects of other Black men as well,

> …because as we all know in this part of the world there are people of other races that do hate on the black race simply because of the color of our skin and not because of our ability or what we can do.

Similarly, Jeremiah stated that "… [Black people] … should try as much as you can to paint a good picture and not just for yourself, but for the Black community."

Where respondents' descriptions of what it meant for them to be Black men included strength, they spoke about both physical and emotional strength. For example, Darrell says "as a Black man, I believe that even looking at me physically, you will know that I'm strong. I'm strong in whatever I do. I … a very good heart." Similarly, Michael states that "being Black… you should have this God-given strength and athletic prowess." He also indicated that

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Discussion

This study builds on earlier research with Black men regarding masculinity, gender identity, and expression. The data from this study generated a theoretical model that was helpful in understanding racialized gender identity development among Black men.

The most interesting finding is that participant responses to interview questions about awareness of their racial gender identities trending toward a strictly racial lens rather than an intersectional one could be explained in a few ways. First, in their model of intersectional

invisibility, Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach (2008) explain androcentrism, ethnocentrism, and heterocentrism are at play in broader society. Androcentrism is the tendency to see men as prototypical of most racial or ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to see one's ethnicity as the norm. In the case of American society, though, this would be the tendency to view White American ethnicities as prototypical of American people. Heterocentrism is the belief that heterosexuality is prototypical. Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach (2008) have suggested that androcentrism may prompt men to view themselves as prototypical of their racial and ethnic groups, such that Black men may view intersectional gender experiences as normative of their race rather than uniquely intersectional. This is distinct from Black women's experiences of gendered racism, which is defined by their intersectional identities and feel different because that intersection is not prototypical of either woman or Black. However, Black men's experiences are shaped by the intersection of their identities. It is the racialization of their gender that thwarts Black men's attempts to embody TMI, both because of systemic oppression and cultural influences that make Black masculinity more relational.

Another theoretical framework that might be helpful for understanding this phenomenon is the Lens Framework which asserts that people are capable of looking at intersectional identities from the lens of one identity, the other, or with an intersectional lens depending on the context (Petsko et al., 2022). In the context of a study focusing on Black men, where men are primed to think about their intersectional identities, taking the work of Purdie & Eibach (2008) into account, it might be understandable that the participants focused more on the Black lens than the male lens, especially when recalling experiences of discrimination. If their male identity would typically award them privilege and their race is expected to result in some sort of social devaluation, it is reasonable that they would associate their maltreatment to their race rather than

potentially an intersectional identity like a racial gender identity. It would seem that only in instances like Rich's where individuals are helped to contextualize their experience as intersectional might they have reason to do so. Rich is a good example for other reasons as well, he articulated that his identity as a gay man makes him more open minded, but also necessitates that he be more careful because his actions are seen as representations of more than just Black men. But even in this recognition because he is primed with the intersection of Black men, he refers to the groups he represents through the singular identity lens of representing Black people and representing gay people, rather than seeing himself as representing Black gay men specifically.

Another way of viewing the tendency of participants to refer to Black people broadly when asked about Black men through Marcia's Ego Identity framework (1966). With this framework one could argue that most Black men in this study had foreclosed on their racial gender identities. These men articulated a level of commitment to both their race and gender by agreeing to participate in the study. But there was very little sense of exploration regarding their intersectional identity. The seeming difficulty to focus on and answer questions about their intersectional identities, even when prompted might suggest a lack of awareness, and consequently a lack of exploration.

I propose a third option more akin to something a participant stated. As Jason stated when speaking of his sexual orientation "I'm still sticking with the values of with the original values of the African, African American Society." It is possible that rather than lacking awareness or adequate exploration to suggest an achieved intersectional identity, the Black men in this study are in fact adhering to their cultural values when seeing themselves as essentially men who happen to be Black people. This perspective is strengths based and avoids looking at Black men

from a traditionally White frame, which is more in line with the purpose of this study. As addressed in the results section, Jason's observation was supported by other participant responses about how being heterosexual allows them to be confident because they will not be discriminated against for being gay. Though this quote above may seem heterosexist, it embodies the mixture of heteronormativity and homonegativity that may be culturally normative. This cultural norm may have contributed to inconsistencies between sexual orientations reported on the demographic questionnaire and those reported in the interview for two participants, as well as the participant who declined to answer the interview question about his sexual orientation. Yet, as Robert highlighted, there is diversity within the Black male community and the few gay participants shared about the similarities and differences in their racial gender identity development, as well as the development of their gender expressions.

It is also important to highlight that this study's results partially supported existing theories regarding Black masculinity. Consistent with the extant literature, participants often spoke about the importance of community, unity, brotherhood, and supporting one another (Bowleg, 2013; Hammond and Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). They referenced the need to represent the community well, to be a good role model to others in the community and to be an example to those outside of the community of the excellence, purpose, and capacity for success and contribution to society of Black men.

Participants highlighted the necessity of Black men to society, at large, as well as the frequency with which Black men persevere through a myriad of challenges to reach their goals, which is reminiscent of John Henryism (Matthews et al., 2013). They spoke to the work ethic of Black men, and the consistent challenges that they face to care for their families and communities. Extant literature often references the imperative of Black men providing for and

protecting their families and communities. While participants in this study framed it as taking care of their families (even when the participants were not living with said families), defending the Black community from those who would look down on Black people, or coming together as a community pay the hospital bills of those who are unable to do so, this framing seems consistent with these provision and protection (Hammond and Mattis,2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Participants also expressed sentiments like "not giving a rat's ass" (Rich) and needing to keep a cool head in all situations, which align with Cool Pose as a gender expression (Harris et al., 2011; hooks, 2004).

Additionally, participants' responses about how they became aware of their identities as Black men were often reminiscent of the encounter stage of Cross' theory of Nigrescence (1971). Moreover, the way participants talked about their both their Black peers and White counterparts also gave support to the immersion-emersion stage and some pre-encounter attitudes as well. Some participants articulated some internalized racism, with statements like "most mafia and gangsters are Black" (Rich). Others elevated ideas regarding Black people that romanticized us as idyllic and without flaw, with one participant asserting that Black people are perfect and another suggesting that Black people have a distinct way of speaking, dressing, and acting. Still, others were able to articulate that there are a variety of ways of being Black men. Robert best articulated the tension between his stage of racial identity development and the stage of those he encounters, when he discussed the difficulty Black men can have expressing themselves, even around other Black men.

Another theory on Black masculinity supported by this study's results was Franklin's Triangle of Socialization (1994). Participants expressed being providing guidance on how to be Black men by their parents and communities, by their peers, and by mainstream society, the three

sources of socialization outlined in his theory. Though some participants articulated not knowing or caring about what others expected of them, many still expressed a desire to represent the Black community well and not reify stereotypes and stigmas placed on Black men and Black people, generally. Franklin's theory also suggested that one force of socialization may be more influential than another at different stages of life. This was at least partially supported via participant responses. For example, younger participants often went back to their parents or community to make sense of the encounters they had had with mainstream society. This might suggest that for young Black men, their parents and communities are more influential at that stage than their peers or mainstream society.

Black Men's Racialized Gender Identity Development

Through analyzing the data from participant interviews and integrating existing theories, I have come to a theory of *Black men's racialized gender identity development*. Below I infuse the analysis of participant responses first with theories on Black masculinity and Cross' Nigrescence theory. Then I revisit intersectionality and other theories based on intersectionality to provide context to participant responses about race, religion and spirituality, as well as sexual orientation. I follow that with an exploration of how these things impacted the participants' gender expressions. Lastly, I outline the theory more explicitly and walk through the developmental process using two participants as examples.

Black men seem to express their identities in ways that portray their gender as normative (majoritarian) and their race as the most salient aspect of being both Black and men. Messages about what it means to be Black men are fed to them from their primary group, peer group, and mainstream society (Franklin, 1994). Throughout this socialization, Black men are making meaning of the messages they receive about their intersectional identities, whether consciously

or not. As outlined in Nigrescence, most either encounter racism or come to expect to counter racism and develop an identity and expression that responds to this experience (Cross, 1976; Franklin, 1994, Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). These responses might include developing resilience and persevering through challenges associated with racism, embracing their race or cultural heritage, rejecting racialization, and developing gender expressions that are more consistent with their collectivistic culture (e.g., focusing on being a community leader or role model, rather than the breadwinner), and attempting to avoid reifying stereotypes against Black men and the Black community more broadly. Where Black men are not intentionally socialized into viewing their experiences as intersectional, they may have difficulty understanding and articulating the development of identities that way. As we see in this study they clearly describe their understanding of both their gender and race but often only label their experiences by one or the other. Extant literature suggests that when primed to think of their identities as intersectional, they are more likely to highlight the difference between their gender and race socialization, as well as what they have learned about their intersectional identities (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015).

Typical conceptualizations of TMI are Eurocentric. The data in this study supports Black men's desire to embody TMI, consistent with the results of Parent and Moradi (2009). Additionally, their attempts to do so are frustrated by experiences of racism, consistent with the work of Franklin (1994). Moreover, extant literature suggests that Black masculinity incorporates this frustrated masculinity, as well as elements of Black men's heritage cultures (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). The Lens Framework of Petsko and colleagues (2022) suggests that the intersectional lens may be less accessible, the perceiver goals don't align with applying an intersectional lens, and the intersectional identity may not be as

distinct or as good of a fit as either the race or gender lens. The fact that 20 men's responses to questions specifically asking about their intersectional identity were explicitly addressed in terms of being Black or about Black people more broadly. As discussed in Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach's (2008) theory of Intersectional Invisibility, American society's androcentric and ethnocentric nature normalizes men being seen as prototypical of their race. This framing helps to understand why participants focused on their race to the exclusion of gender in their descriptions of what it means to be a Black man.

Religion and spirituality, as well as sexual orientation help to add important nuance to Black men's sense of gender expression in particular ways. Participants highlighted the influence of each, though religion and spirituality were indicated more frequently than sexuality. As addressed throughout, religion and spirituality have had a profound impact on Black American culture (Pew Research Institute, 2021) and are featured in Black masculinity, particularly Black manhood (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Rogers et al., 2015). Participants in this study discussed varying degrees of influence of religion and spirituality on their personal identity development journeys. A few participants addressed how their religious and spiritual upbringings informed who and how men should be. Some others addressed that they were not spiritual or religious, or that they believed their spirituality did not influence how they understood or expressed their masculinity. However, given the degree to which religion and spirituality have been infused into Black American culture, their influence might be masked to Black men as cultural norms. That is not to say that religion and spirituality don't inform the unique experience of Black men's intersectional identity. One sign that religion and spirituality inform Black men's intersectional identity development is that they tend to come up in Black manhood (Ford, 2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005).

As alluded to throughout this manuscript, the spillover of religion and spirituality into Black American culture includes elements of homonegativity (Garrett-Walker & Torres, 2017). While about a quarter of participants indicated sexuality having little influence on their identity development and expression, another fifth addressed that their heterosexuality aided in their capacity to procreate and propagate Black culture to future generations. Two of the five participants who identified as sexual minorities on the demographics questionnaire reported being heterosexual during their interviews. One declined to respond to questions about sexuality during the interview: the remaining two articulated different journeys with their sexuality. The diversity of experiences with sexuality and their impact on participants' intersectional identity development and expression underscores the potential for intersectional invisibility. The results of the current study suggest that despite the negative effects often reported in studies of sexual minority Black men, there are not always differences in the way these men express their masculinity and specifically understand Black masculinity. The story is more nuanced than studies that fail to include sexual minority Black men might have us believe. But it is clear that sexuality informs many Black men's intersectional identity development whether through less perceived challenges to align with norms and expectations for heterosexual men, or more perceived challenges for many same gender loving men. Like the impact of religion and spirituality, sexuality informs identity development at an intersectional level regardless of whether participants articulated it that way.

Despite the frequent conflation of gender expression with sexuality, the present study's results suggest that Black men's gender expressions do not necessarily correlate with sexuality (American Psychological Association, 2024). There were not qualitative differences between the heterosexual and queer identified men's reported gender expressions. This may be consistent

with the reports of other Black men in the extent literature that queer Black men often conceal, or attempt to compensate for, their sexuality by engaging in hyper-masculine behavior (Ford, 2011; Garret-Walker & Torres, 2017; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013; Wilson et al., 2010). As with articulating intersectional identity, participants did not name explicitly intersectional gender expressions (e.g., John Henryism and Cool Pose), but they expressed sentiments that aligned with them. Participants named expectations of themselves and other Black men to overcome the obstacles and adversities that racism might present to achieve their goals. They also indicated that Black men have a specific way of speaking, engaging with others, and even dressing that is unique to the Black culture. Lastly, they highlighted a need to remain in control of their emotions, often in service of overcoming obstacles. Despite either viewing their gender expressions in terms of being Black or men, largely, participants outlined their experiences in ways that were consistent with longstanding gender expressions unique to and popular among Black men.

Combining a few of the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier, we can start to make sense of the infrequency of the Black men in this study's description of their experiences in terms of their intersectional identities. Intersectionality highlights that the intersections of multiple identities results in a unique social positionality, thus impacting the power and oppression those who hold these identities experience. Because the study of intersectionality developed out of the experiences of Black women, it is important to take into account the makeup of this intersection of identities. In American society both women and Black people hold minoritized identities. This is supported by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach's Intersectional Invisibility article (2008) which outlined that America is: (1) ethnocentric, with the dominant race being White, (2) androcentric, the prototypical person of a race or ethnicity being male, and

(3) heterocentric, with the prototypical person being heterosexual. The article goes on to highlight that when an individual holds one marginalized identity, they are likely to see themselves more from the perspective of their marginalized identity. Borrowing from Petsko's lens framework (2022), the marginalized identity is the most distinctive, and the experience of marginalization may increase their motivation to view themselves in this way. The gendered racism that Black women often face, would be a good example of both the unique experience outlined in intersectionality and the intersectional invisibility that inspired the study of intersectionality (Williams and Lewis, 2021). Other scholars have discussed Black women's experiences in term of their racialized gender, but still frame them similarly to gender racial identity and gendered racism (Cassese et al., 2015; Lucas & Wade, 2023). Black men, however, hold one marginalized and one privileged identity. So, intersectionality for them looks different. Because Black men, in contrast to Black women, are experiencing the intersection of one marginalized identity (Black) and one majoritized identity (man), they may be less motivated to use the gender lens, referring back to Petsko's framework (2022). In addition, because (as men) they are viewed as prototypical of Black people, they may not focus on race as defining their manhood (especially when interacting with the Black community). Finally, the intersectional lens may become prominent primarily when both race and gender are salient, particularly when they are primed or socialized to consider both (e.g., Hammond and Mattis' 2005 study, Rogers et al.'s 2015 study, or Rich's socialization by his father). Franklin (1994) essentially describes the overlay of race on masculinity – without saying it explicitly, he highlights that Black men are experiencing a racialization of their gender. In this way, their gender takes a back seat to Black men's race, whereas for Black women it is their gender that drives the shift from prototypical Black experiences.

Framing Black men's intersectional identity as racialized gender identity allows for greater clarity around the common focus on race. It also gives some context to why some Black men prefer to be seen by their gender rather than their race. This is likely a response to being racialized rather than a rejection of their racial identity. The negative impacts of racism can be particularly upsetting for some. Clinging to the privileged identity of man and shedding the negative stereotypes and discrimination that come with being racialized is a reasonable response, that may help some to maintain a positive self-image (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It is also likely that whether an individual's identity development continues on the path of an intersectional (or racialized gender), racial, or gender focus, is influenced by how they are socialized. As Franklin (1994) points out, Black men are socialized at the primary group, peer group, and mainstream society levels. The degree to which each of these focuses on race, gender, or racialized identity, will inform how Black men (1) internalized, and (2) make meaning of their identities. The combination of the meanings they make, and the focus of their identities then inform their gender expressions. Gender expressions are how people show their gender identities to the world (American Psychological Association, 2024). This process of racialized gender identity development is depicted in Figure 1 (see Appendix E).

Below we walk through the developmental process outlined in the theory with two participants, Rockmon and Rich. Rockmon indicated having seen his father arrested at a young age and seeing racism in a variety of ways throughout his life. What he learned about Black men through mainstream socialization and internalized was that Black people often face adversity because of their skin color. Although he eventually learned that this does not always have to be the case and he is proud to be Black, he prefers to be seen as a man rather than a Black man. This preference extends to gender expression both through his hard work, and his efforts to avoid

fulfilling the stereotype of Black men as criminals. Rich describes being explicitly socialized to see his identity as intersectional, that is racialized gender, by his dad. Rich's dad taught him to expect certain discrimination and prejudice because of his identity as a Black man. Rich expressed receiving socialization messages from his mom and mainstream society as well. Rich internalized these messages as requiring him to represent the Black community well. Unlike Rockmon though, Rich did not reject racialization. In seeing his race and gender as inextricable from one another, Rich embraced the responsibility to represent the Black community well, believing that he was well equipped and suited for it. Rich expressed believing that his identity as a gay man, also came with it a responsibility to represent the LGBT+ community well. These responsibilities and the racialized gender identity focus informed Rich's expression to be a bit more serious and mature for him to be nineteen.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study provides a host of insights and entry points for future inquiry with Black men on racialized gender identity development and expression. One such insight is that it may be helpful to approach research on gender identity development for Black men by using focus groups. Doing so may provide participants with the opportunity to hear how others are processing the questions. This could lead to the co-creation of new ways to process them (e.g., recognizing that there are aspects of Black men's experiences that are unique to the intersection of being Black and man, which requires seeing oneself as a gendered being). Additionally, this research suggests that a plethora of gender expressions may exist for Black men, although it may be difficult to have them articulated by self-report. Future research may consider field observation followed by qualitative inquiry to better understand the motivations for the behaviors observed. Additionally, given the support for extant literature on Black masculinity, which has

indicated that masculinity for Black men may differ from TMI, researchers may be well served to use measures of Black men's adherence to masculinities that are defined from Black men's frame of reference. Lastly, outside of their families growing up, and some indicating a desire for brotherhood in which they could uplift one another, participants rarely spoke about their sources of support. As identity development is a lifelong journey and awareness of their racial gender identity happened in emerging adulthood for several participants, it may be interesting to know on whom Black men lean and from whom they can glean new information about their intersectional identities.

This research suggests that in clinical practice it may be helpful for clinicians to assess the racial and gender identity development when working with clients who are Black men. Clinicians should also assess these clients' awareness of their intersectional identity. Clinical discretion should be used on when and how it is most appropriate to share these assessments. But, having them could prove informative in understanding how and why clients are making sense of their experiences as they are. This could inform whether it is necessary to provide clients with psychoeducation about gender identity and expression, to help Black men understand themselves better and contextualize their experiences as racial and gendered. Further, it may also be helpful to utilize theoretical frameworks that emphasize contextualizing environmental factors and naming systems at work, to help draw Black men's attention to the influence of these factors in their lives. Lastly, clinicians may be well served by exploring their awareness of the diversity of Black men's experiences and approaching identity-related issues with cultural humility.

Limitations

Though selective sampling for religious and sexual minorities was employed, one limitation was the low response rate of those who met the inclusion criteria. Even when sexual minorities did meet the inclusion criteria some preferred not to speak on their sexuality or reported a different sexuality during the interview than on the demographic survey. This change could have been due to the lead researcher and interviewer not disclosing his sexuality. Given the high rates of homonegativity in the Black community sexual minority participants may have been less comfortable speaking about their sexuality with someone they presumed to be outside the LGBTQIA+ community. Recruiting from specific religious and spiritual organizations, as well as LGBTQIA+ spaces may have helped increase the response rate of these subpopulations. Similarly, disclosing the researcher's sexuality may have been helpful with sexual minority participants. Another limitation would be not considering SES in the sampling or analysis of the data, as SES has been shown to be associated with differences in gender expression (Sanchez et al., 2009). Additionally, the combination of generational status and ethnicity may yield even more nuanced impacts in both the development of racialized gender identity and expression, which were not assessed in this study. Another limitation of this study was the omission of identity salience and centrality measures. The salience and centrality of either race, gender, or racial gender identity being extreme may explain the striking differences between the one participant who articulated an intersectional identity, explicitly, and the twenty that did not. The emerging adult age range is a time when many are achieving milestones, such as having children and forming long-term relationships. This study did not account for these milestones in the sampling or analysis. Extant literature on Black masculinity does suggest that these factors can be influential in how Black men make meaning of their intersectional identities. These factors

have may influenced the developmental trajectory of racialized gender identity as well as gender expression of participants in ways unaccounted for in the analysis. Despite these limitations, this study does provide support to existing theories of Black men's racial gender identity development and provides insight into their racial gender expressions.

Conclusion

The Black men of this study shared descriptions of the meanings they made of being Black men that centered on pride, strength, and a responsibility to the Black community. They articulated varying levels of awareness regarding their racialized gender identities. While most were aware of their racial identity, only one articulated an awareness of his racialized gender identity with intentional socialization into that awareness. More research is needed to conclude if intentional socialization is necessary for Black men to develop racialized gendered identities. Where it can be tempting to view this as a foreclosure of identity, it may be most prudent to view their identity development and expression as consistent with their cultural values.

Similarly, participants rarely explicitly articulated their gender expressions in terms of characteristics. However, through their descriptions of their gender expressions, what they perceived to be expected of them, and what they expected of other Black men, participants often described gender expressions that were consistent with those outlined in extant literature on Black masculinity. Most of these expressions indicated some sort of response to racism, whether experienced or anticipated, with multiple participants suggesting that these actions were intended to help society see the value in Black men.

This study arrives at a theory integrating several extant theories of social identity, Black masculinity, and Black manhood partially supported its results. By combining theories on racial identity development, gender identity development, intersectionality, and the like one can understand how intentional socialization may be key to Black men understanding and

articulating their racialized gender identities in intersectional terms and contextualizing why such socialization may not be common. This study frames the importance of viewing the intersectionality of Black men's gender identity experiences as racialized gender identity development. Consistent with intersectionality theory's assertion that intersections of identities produce unique experiences, this study highlights that the intersectionality of Black men's experiences looks different from that of Black women, and consequently must be studied differently. Black men's gender identity development is intersectional, even if they are not able to articulate it as such. The rare case of intentional socialization into this intersectional framing provides hope that intentional socialization would be sufficient for others to use an intersectional lens as well. Absent of that this study's integration of extant theories still provides a new and meaningful way of looking at Black men's experiences of gender identity development and expression. Additionally, the selective sampling of this study and inclusion of the rare case of intentional socialization to racialized gender identity serves to reduce intersectional invisibility of religious and sexual minority Black men in studies of Black men broadly.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. What does it mean, to you, to be a Black man?
    a. What are some things that are expected of you as a Black man?
    b. What are some things you might expect of other Black men?
    c. What are some things that you expect of yourself?
2. How did you become aware that you were a Black man?
3. Has your view of what it means to be a Black man changed over time?
    a. If so, were there specific events in life that informed what it means to be a Black man?
    b. Were the particular people that influenced your understanding of who you are as a Black man?
        i. Who were they?
        ii. What about them or your relationship with them contributed to their impact on your understanding of what it means to be a Black man?
4. How do you show up in the world as a Black man?
    a. How might that look different from other Black men around you?
    b. How might it align (or not) with what others expect of you?
    c. How might it align with what you expect of others? Or of yourself?
5. Has this changed over the course of your life?
    a. If so, how?
    b. Why has it changed?
6. Research suggests that religion and spirituality are influential in the identity development process of Black Americans.

   a. What, if any, influence do you think your religious or spiritual beliefs have had on your understanding of what it means to be a Black man?
   b. What about how you show up in the world?

7. Gender and sexuality are related but different constructs that are often discussed together, if not interchangeably.
   a. What impact do you believe your sexual orientation has had on your understanding of what it means to be a Black man?
   b. What about how you show up in the world?
8. Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know about you as a Black man?

Potential Additional Probes

1. The expectations, behaviors, and even the way we talk about gender have shifted in the last couple of decades.
   a. What reactions do you have, if any, toward these shifts?
   b. Do you hold any particular thoughts or feelings about:
      i. Black men who are non-binary, trans, or gender non-conforming?
      ii. Black men who identify with the sex, consequent gender assigned to them at birth?
2. Have there been any relationships in your life that have informed your understanding of your manhood?
   a. If so, could you tell me a little more about that relationship and what it taught you?
3. What role, if any, do you think your SES might have played in this understanding of your manhood (e.g., pursuits of higher education, you and/or your family's income level, your chosen line of work and the rationale for choosing it)?

a. If your or your family's income has changed dramatically, has this impacted your view of your manhood?

Participant check

1. Were there any questions that I asked that made you feel uncomfortable?
2. Was there any point in the interview where you felt that you could not reveal your true self?
3. Is there any way that our prior relationship influenced your participation in their interview?

Appendix B

Demographics Questionnaire

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q31 Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study about your gender identity development and gender expression. We will start by asking you some demographic questions. Please select the most appropriate answer to each question and answer all the questions. Please note that if you do not answer "Yes" to all of the screening items, you will be deemed ineligible for this study.

Q32 Do you identify as Black?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you identify as Black? = No

Q33 Do you identify as a man?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you identify as a man? = No

Q34 Were you and your parents born in the US?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Were you and your parents born in the US? = No

Q35 Are you 18-25?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you 18-25? = No

Q36 Are you currently in the United States?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently in the United States? = No

Q25 Informed consent

Project Title: Intersectional Exploration of Emerging Adult Black Men's Gender Identity Development and Expressions

Purpose of the Study: This research is being conducted by Daniel K. Moore at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have indicated that you identify as Black Man. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about the process by which emerging adult Black men in the U.S. develop their gendered racial identities, as well as how these men choose to enact these identities.

Procedures: As a part of this project, you will be asked to complete a brief demographics questionnaire and, if eligible, you may be selected for a follow-up interview, via Zoom.

To determine your eligibility to participate in this project, you will be invited to complete a brief demographics questionnaire (no more than 15 minutes). Once you have completed the questionnaire, eligible participants will be asked for their name and email address. These will be

used for the investigator to contact you to schedule a ~45-minute interview or to notify you that you were not selected to complete an interview. After your interview is scheduled, the investigator will provide you with a unique, password protected link to a Zoom meeting for your interview.

At the scheduled time, you will sign into the Zoom link provided for your interview. The investigator will briefly review this consent form with you, providing you with the space to ask questions and obtain verbal consent to video record the interview. Recording is not required to participate, if you would prefer the interview not be recorded, the investigator will request your verbal consent to take notes.

Some example questions are "What does it mean to you to be a Black man?", and "Were there specific events in your life that informed what it means to be a Black man?". While the hope is that you can answer all the questions, we encourage you to skip questions for which it is uncomfortable to answer.

After the interview the investigator will provide you with a transcript of your interview (for recorded interviews) and ask that you respond with any changes you find necessary to ensure the accuracy of your responses.

Potential Risks and Discomforts: The only known risk is a risk of breach of confidentiality and efforts to mitigate this risk are described in the Confidentiality section below.

Potential Benefits: There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, possible benefits include opportunities to reflect on your own gendered racial identity development, as well as for the researcher to better understand what that process looks like for Black men. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of gendered racial identity development for Black men, which can help

inform future health interventions.

Confidentiality: Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a Box folder that is password protected and only the investigator can access.

1. Interviews will be held in individual password protected zoom links with a waiting room. So, you will have to be admitted.

2. Only investigator will have access to the demographic's questionnaire in Qualtrics, or the recordings;

3. Once your data is collected, it will be de-identified (i.e., all names and contact information will be removed from the demographics information and replaced with a pseudonym).

4. Using the pseudonym, the investigator will be able to link your interview responses and demographic information.

5. Only the investigator will have access to the list of pseudonyms. This list, as well as the recordings and demographics information will be destroyed three years after the research is completed.

If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

Compensation: Eligible participants who complete the interview will be provided $25.00 Amazon gift cards. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on the compensation.

If you will earn $100 or more as a research participant in this study, you must provide your name, address and SSN to receive compensation.

If you do not earn over $100 only your name and address will be collected to receive

compensation.

Right to Withdraw and Questions: Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:

Daniel K. Moore

3228 Benjamin Building

University of Maryland, College Park

Dmoore32@umd.edu

(301) 405-2858

Participant Rights: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

University of Maryland College Park

Institutional Review Board Office

1204 Marie Mount Hall

College Park, Maryland, 20742

E-mail: irb@umd.edu

Telephone: 301-405-0678

IRB NET ID: 2110878-1

For more information regarding participant rights, please visit:

https://research.umd.edu/research-resources/research-compliance/institutional-review-board-

irb/research-participants

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Consent: Checking the box to consent below indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You may download a copy of your responses to retain a copy of the consent form.

Q26 Please check the box below indicating whether you agree to the consent to participate. Agreeing to consent indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this checked consent form. The data for those who do not consent or are not eligible for participation will be destroyed during data at the completion of data analysis.

- ○ I agree (1)
- ○ I do not agree (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Please check the box below indicating whether you agree to the consent to participate. Agreeing t... != I agree

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Cultural Influences

Q1 Other than Black, with which other racial background do you identify (check all that apply)?

- [ ] Asian (1)
- [ ] White (3)
- [ ] Bi/multiracial (4)
- [ ] Other: Please indicate the Racial Background with which you identify. (5)

_____

- [ ] None (7)
- [ ] Prefer not to respond (6)

Q2 How would you describe your ethnicity?

- [ ] Afro. Latino (1)
- [ ] Afro. Caribbean (2)
- [ ] Afro. European (4)
- [ ] Afro. Asian (5)
- [ ] African American (6)
- [ ] Middle Eastern/North African (3)
- [ ] East African (7)
- [ ] West African (8)
- [ ] South African (9)
- [ ] Other (10) _____
- [ ] Prefer not to respond (11)

Q3 Where did you grow up?

- ○ In the US (1)
- ○ Outside the US: Please indicate where. (2)

  _____

- ○ Prefer not to respond (3)

Display This Question:

If Where did you grow up? = In the US

Q4 In what region of the US did you primarily grow up?

- Alaska (1)
- Midwest (2)
- Northwest (3)
- Pacific Islands (4)
- Southwest (5)
- South (6)
- Mid-Atlantic (7)
- New England (8)
- Prefer not to respond (9)

Q5 What is your generation status?

- First Generation (born outside of the US) (1)
- Second Generation (one or both parents born outside of the US) (2)
- Third Generation (one or more grandparents born outside of the US) (3)
- Fourth Generation+ (4)
- Prefer not to respond (5)

End of Block: Cultural Influences

Start of Block: Gender

Q7 Which of the following best describes your current gender identity?

- [ ] Gender non-conforming (1)
- [ ] Man (2)
- [ ] Woman (4)
- [ ] Agender (7)
- [ ] Genderfluid (8)
- [ ] I describe my gender as (5)

_____

- [ ] Prefer not to respond (6)

Q8 Do you identify as trans?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Not listed (please specify) (4) _____
- ○ Prefer not to respond (3)

End of Block: Gender

Start of Block: Sexual Orientation

Q9 How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- Asexual (1)
- Bisexual (2)
- Heterosexual/Straight (3)
- Lesbian (4)
- Gay (5)
- Pan-sexual (6)
- Same gender loving (7)
- Queer (8)
- Questioning (9)
- I would describe my sexual orientation as: (10) _____
- Prefer not to respond (11)

End of Block: Sexual Orientation

Start of Block: Religion/Spirituality

Q37 Please indicate the degree to which you identify as religious and/or spiritual.

	Not at all (1)	Somewhat (2)	Very (3)	Prefer not to respond (4)
Religious (1)	○	○	○	○
Spiritual (2)	○	○	○	○

Q11 With what religion(s) or spiritual belief system(s) do you identify?

_____

End of Block: Religion/Spirituality

Start of Block: Age

Q14 How old are you?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 (2)
- 19 (3)
- 20 (4)
- 21 (5)
- 22 (6)
- 23 (7)
- 24 (8)
- 25 (9)
- Over 25 (10)
- Prefer not to respond (11)

End of Block: Age

Start of Block: SES

Q15 What is your current employment status?

- Student (8)
- Part-Time (9)
- Full-time (10)
- Retired (11)
- Unemployed (12)
- Homemaker (13)
- Other (14)
- Prefer not to respond (15)

Display This Question:

If What is your current employment status? = Student

Q16 As a student, please indicate the extent to which you are also employed.

- ○ Part-time (1)
- ○ Full-time (2)
- ○ Unemployed (3)
- ○ Other (4) _____
- ○ Prefer not to respond (5)

Q17 What is your family's total gross (before taxes) annual income?

- under $10,000 (1)
- $10,000-$14,999 (2)
- $15,000-$24,999 (3)
- $25,000-$34,999 (4)
- $35,000-$49,999 (5)
- $50,000-$74,999 (6)
- $75,000-$99,999 (7)
- $100,000 or more (8)
- Unsure (9)
- Prefer not to respond (10)

Q18 What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- ○ High school diploma/equivalent (1)
- ○ Some college (2)
- ○ College degree (3)
- ○ Professional or Graduate degree (4)
- ○ Other (5) _____
- ○ Prefer not to respond (6)

End of Block: SES

Start of Block: Relational Influence

Q19 Have you ever been married?

- Yes, I am currently Married (1)
- Yes, but I am divorced (2)
- Yes, but we are currently separated (3)
- Yes, but my spouse has passed (4)
- No, I've never been married (5)
- Prefer not to respond (6)

Display This Question:

If have you ever been married? != Yes, I am currently Marrie Q20 What is your current relationship status?

- Single, not dating or interested in dating (1)
- Single and interested, but not currently dating (2)
- Dating Casually (3)
- In a committed relationship (4)
- Engaged (5)
- Prefer not to respond (6)

Q21 How long was your longest romantic relationship?

- I've never been in a romantic relationship (1)
- Less than 6 months (2)
- 6 months to one year (3)
- 1-3 years (4)
- Longer than 4 years (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)

Q22, Do you have any children?

- Yes, but I am not and have never wanted to be active in their lives (1)
- Yes, and I have wanted to be active in their lives, but have faced challenges to doing so (2)
- Yes, and I am active in their lives (3)
- Yes, but they have passed (4)
- No, I have never had children (5)

End of Block: Relational Influence

Start of Block: Block 8

Q29 Below please provide your contact information, so that an interview can be scheduled. Your contact information will be removed from your response and replaced with ID number to connect your demographic information to your interview.

Q27 Please provide your name.

_____

Q28 Please provide your email address.

_____

End of Block: Block 8

Appendix C

Recruitment Material

Figure 1.

Recruitment Flyer



Figure 2.

Social Media Post

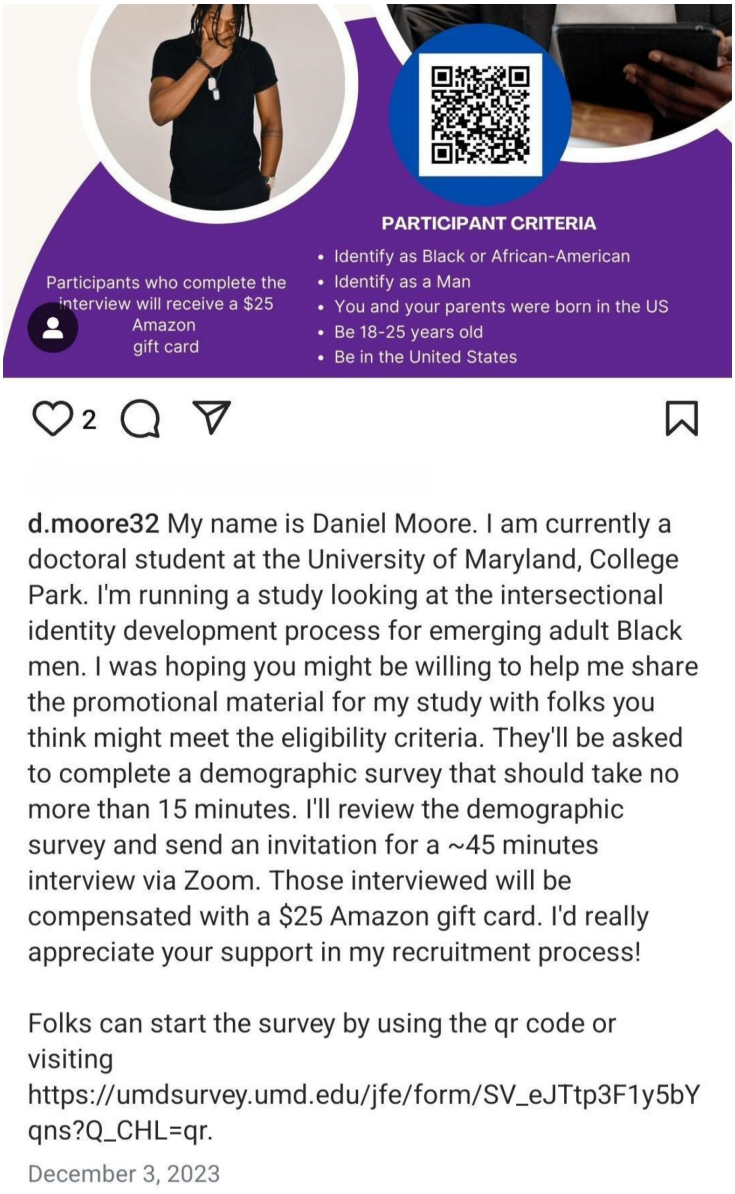


Figure 2 is a screenshot of the recruitment material posted on Instagram. The post contained the caption above as well as the recruitment flyer (Figure 1). The same content was posted on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Appendix D

Extended Literature Review

Gender Identity and Expression

"Gender refers to the behavioral, cultural, and psychological characteristics that are socially constructed to express" a relationship with one's sex (Morrow, 2006, p. 8). Gender is an important categorical factor around which much of society is framed (Bussey, 2011). It provides a framework for how we interact with the world and it, in turn, interacts with us. Gender identity refers to an individual's sense of connection or fit with one or some combinations of genders (Morrow, 2006). Gender expression, then, would be how one reflects their gender identity outward. While these terms can be defined separately, the distinction between them often has little use in social science research. It is difficult to discuss gender expression without considering the gender identity being expressed. It is the external display of the internal meaning-making of a construct with far-reaching social impact - from the types of work and leisure activities in which we are inclined to engage to the roles we tend to perform in our relationships. Despite the importance of gender in everyday functioning, there does not seem to be a consensus on the most useful approach to understanding gender (Bussey, 2011; Matthews, 2014; Udry, 1994). Arguments have been made for biological as well as social approaches. Below we explore the merits of each.

Gender as Hormones – A Biological Theory of Gender

Discussion of the influence of the biological differences between men and women and the effects of those differences on our behavior can be traced, in scientific discourse, to the Enlightenment period (Matthews, 2014). A biological explanation for behavioral differences hinges on sex dimorphism – the idea that behavior is determined by hormones (Udry, 1994; Matthews, 2014). Both authors highlight the oversimplification that is tempting when looking to

apply this biological frame to social science research. They underscore that it is not as simple as 'humans are different from other species of animals, so their behavior can be examined by different means,' nor testosterone equates to masculine behavior and estrogen to feminine. Sex dimorphism is a concept that applies across species in biology, with the understanding that the implications may look different in each species (Udry, 1994). Similarly, hormones that we have historically views as male and female exists in in both sexes, (Hoberman, 2005). Using a similar logic to that which underlies social theories of gender – the same functions that explain across-gender differences can explain within-gender differences. Udry also provides empirical support for a biological foundation for gender (1994). They reinforce that social and biological changes can happen simultaneously, and the argument that gender having biological foundations does not equate to biological determinism.

The biological paradigm is not without merit, yet in the realm of social science, it might apply similarly to heredity – in the sense that it explains the potential for a predisposition that may or may not be realized based on exposure to specific social factors. To this end, the biological paradigm could explain some variation in within and between gender differences, but it would rarely, if ever, explain more than would social factors. Parsimony might suggest focusing on the social factors that help understand gender as the most useful paradigm, even if some combination might prove more accurate.

Social Cognitive Theory on Gender Identity – A Social Theory of Gender

From the vantage point of social cognitive theory, one can view gender identity as "part of a person's broader concept of [their] personal identity… [the formation of which] is an ongoing process that transforms over the life course," (Bussey, 2011 pp. 603-604). In this way we understand gender identity to be something an individual makes sense of from both internal and

external influences: one's interactions with others inform the ways in which they understand their gender identity and, consequently their understanding of their gender identity informs how one interact with others. This framing of gender identity is consistent with constructivist approaches to Black psychology, Black feminism, and Black manhood/masculinity in the extant literature (Bowleg, 2013; Cokley & Garba, 2018; Franklin, 1994; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; hooks, 2004).

Theories of Masculinities

Below several theories of masculinity are discussed. Each can be viewed from the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory of Gender. Those listed here represent a few of the more popular theories applied in social science research as evidenced in the journals Psychology of Men and Masculinities, and Men and Masculinities. The researcher outlines how these theories define masculinity, highlights measures that have been developed based on that definition, as well as how they have been used and provides some critical reflection on the usefulness of these theoretical approaches for Black Men.

Traditional Masculinity Ideology. Masculinity ideologies are, "socially constructed ideas and beliefs about what it means to be a man" (Thompson & Bennett, 2017, p.47). Brannon (1976) provided a four-dimension conceptualization of masculinity ideology: (a) No Sissy Stuff (avoiding femininity, including emotional expressiveness, and sometimes extended to avoiding homosexuality), (b) The Big Wheel (being respected, successful and being a provider), (c) The Sturdy Oak (appearing confident, tough and being self-sufficient as a problem solver), and (d) Give 'Em Hell (being adventurous and taking risks, including behaving violently where appropriate). These four dimensions have become the foundation of Traditional Masculinity

Ideology (TMI) which continues to be a dominant framework for social science research on masculinity (Thompson & Bennet, 2017).

Strict adherence to these ideologies and norms often has negative consequences for the men enacting them and those around them (Pleck, 1976). Many quantitative measures regarding masculinity involve measuring people's attitudes toward TMI ideology or experiences attempting to adhere to masculine gender norms (Abreu et al., 2000; Thompson & Bennett, 2017). A few examples discussed below include the Male Role Norms Scale, Gender Role Conflict Scale, Male Role Norms Inventory, and Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Levant et al., 1992; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil et al., 1986; Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Measures of TMI seem to be effective in measuring attitudes and beliefs related to TMI, across racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, age, SES, etc. (Levant et al., 2010; Parent & Moradi, 2009). However, TMI leans heavily on a Western, Eurocentric framing of masculine norms. The masculinities of minoritized ethnicities may be viewed as non-traditional in a TMI frame, which could result in overlooking the unique within and between group differences in their construction and expression. This has been one of the arguments of the scholars who have advocated for intersectional approaches to exploring masculinities (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Liu & Iwamoto, 2006).

Male Role Norms Scale. Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS) is a 26-item measure with three subscales: status, toughness, and anti-femininity (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). MRNS has been used to examine the relationship between conformity to traditional masculinity ideologies and interpersonal competence in romantic and work relationships (Lease et al., 2010). In their study, Lease and colleagues found that the relationships between specific norms and interpersonal competencies were different for White and African American Men.

Gender Role Conflict Scale. O'Neil and colleagues connect the Gender Role Strain Paradigm to six patterns of conflict "(a) restrictive emotionality, (b) homophobia, (c) socialized control, power, and competition, (d) restrictive sexual and affectional behavior, (e) obsession with achievement and success, and (f) health care problems," in the development of the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; Pleck, 1981; O'Neil et al, 1986, p. 337). Over the years the scale has been adapted down to a short form, with four subscales: (a) restrictive emotionality, (b) success, power, and competition, (c) restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and (d) conflict between work and family relations (Hammer et al., 2018; Wester et al., 2012).

Male Role Norms Inventory (MNRI). MRNI was originally developed in 1992(Levant et al., 1992). It was comprised of 58 items across seven subscales: Avoidance of Femininity, Homophobia, Self-Reliance, Aggression, Achievement/Status, Attitudes toward sex, and restrictive emotionality. In 2007 the MRNI was revised to 53 items with more reliable subscales on a sample of 170 students, with an almost even split of European American and POC participants (Levant et al., 2007). The factor and content validity of the revised version was evaluated in 2010, and the inventory was reduced to 46 items (Levant et al., 2010).

Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI). CMNI was developed in 2008 as a 94-item inventory with 11 factors (winning, emotional control, risk-taking, violence, dominance, playboy, self-reliance, the primacy of work, power over women, disdain for homosexuals, and pursuit of status) and an 82% White, 96% heterosexual, all student sample (Mahalik et al., 2003). It has been used to draw connections between conformity and relationship satisfaction; coping styles, Asian values, and depression; various aspects of religiousness; (Burn & Ward, 2005; Iwamoto et al., 2010; Ward & Cook, 2011). The first factor analysis of the CMNI since its

development remove several items and found support the retention of all the original factors, except dominance and pursuit of status (Parent & Moradi, 2009).

Hypermasculinity. Mosher and Sirkin (1984) characterize hypermasculinity as a collection of personality traits men can possess that include sexist attitudes toward women, view violence as ideal masculine behavior, and being thrilled by danger. They Developed a 30-item Hypermasculinity Inventory to assess for hypermasculinity in men. Another hypermasculinity measure is the Auburn Differential Masculinity Inventory (ADMI; Burk et al., 2004. The ADMI is a 60-item inventory with five scales: hypermasculinity, sexual identity, dominance and aggression, conservative masculinity, and devaluation of emotion. Other studies have shown that hypermasculinity has been associated with prejudice toward gay men and heightened aggression toward women (Barron et al., 2008; Parrot & Zeichner, 2003).

Male Reference Group Identity Dependence. Male reference group identity dependence incorporates both reference group theory and ego identity development theory (Wade, 1998). Reference group identity dependence focuses on whether and to what extent an individual needs to refer to a group for their own self-concept. Ego identity development refers to the extent to which an individual has explored, on one spectrum, and committed to, on another, their identity. Taken together and applied to male reference group identity, male reference group identity dependence would be the extent to which an individual is able to explore and commit to their identity as a man, being limited by how much they are able to relate to other men. Wade and Gelso (1998) developed the Reference-Group Identity Dependence. It was adapted and applied to African American men in 2008 with a focus on health behaviors (Wade, 2008). The adaptation resulted in the removal of some items but does not seem to clearly define the reference group as African American men, or men more broadly.

Hegemonic Masculinity. Though there has been some variation in its definition in its nearly 50 years of use, hegemonic masculinity "definitions [typically] emphasize six personal qualities: aggressiveness, competitiveness, physical strength, toughness/invulnerability, emotional, coolness or control, and being heterosexual (Wedgwood et al., 2023, p.87)." It necessitates a recognition that other masculinities exist, as it rests atop the hierarchy of masculinities, and focuses on a specific way of being masculine that is most socially acceptable and serves to justify patriarchy. Despite the recognition of hegemonic masculinity as positioned atop a hierarchy of masculinities, research using the term has not consistently focused on the system factors that entrench it in our social norms. The term's use in the extant literature does, however, speak to the problems that men who enact hegemonic masculinity may encounter. This connects hegemonic masculinity with other concepts in the literature base like Gender Role Conflict and Gender Role Strain.

Progressive Masculinities. Progressive masculinities are those that do not deny the essence of masculinity while actively working against being entrenched in structural oppression (Kia-Keating et al., 2005; McGuire et al., 2014; Mutua, 2006). Kia-Keating and colleagues (2005) frame their take on progressive masculinity as a masculinity focused on resistance. This study highlights the intentional efforts, of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, to avoid traditional masculine roles that might result in them recreating the abuse they experienced in childhood.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

The term race refers to the grouping we have socially constructed, around phenotypical differences between groups of people (e.g., Black, White, Asian; Quintana, 2007). Ethnicity, however, refers to groups with shared cultural experiences, often connected to a specific

geographic region (though these similarities may cross national and racial boundaries). Race and ethnicity are social constructs that are often central in conversations about identity; so much so that many theorists like Cross, Helms, and Phinney, have outlined processes by which one can begin to understand the development of racial and ethnic identities (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 1996; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1989; Quintana, 2007). Again, leaning on social cognitive theory, individuals develop an understanding of themselves because of their interactions with others and their internal responses to these interactions. Below several models of racial/ethnic identity are discussed.

Black Racial Identity Development - Cross Nigrescence's Model

In 1971, William E. Cross presented a five-stage model of Nigrescence- the process of becoming Black as a framework for Black Liberation (Cross, 1971). To that end, the developmental theory holds that one goes from a state of unawareness of, or apathy to, the oppressive experiences of Black people, to a heightened sense of consciousness about the social factors at play, the beauty and excellence of Black culture, and a more realistic perspective on both Blackness and Whiteness. Cross's five stages in his original theory were pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment. Each is explained below.

The first of Cross's stages was pre-encounter (Cross, 1971). In this stage individuals' world views are Eurocentric, and they are not likely to be able to recognize or name that the dominant view of what it means to be American is consistent with Eurocentric or White-Anglos Saxon-Protestant values. Consequently, these individuals often hold a pro-White, anti-Black stance: though it may look different across social classes, the common theme is the rejection of the essence of Blackness.

The second stage an individual would progress through was the encounter stage (Cross, 1971). Something, whether an event, information, or an experience, increases the individual's receptiveness to another perspective. Whatever it is, it awakens the individual to the idea that there is something in the Eurocentric view of American society that negatively impacts or misrepresents Black people and Blackness. This realization is often accompanied by guilt for not recognizing their Blackness, and rage at the White dominant society for its oppressive impact on Blackness.

Following the encounter stage was the immersion/emersion stage (Cross, 1971). Here, individuals immerse themselves in Blackness. Individuals in this stage are likely to see everything that is Black as good and may withdraw from anything that represents the White world. This stage is also often characterized by a host of strong, negatively valanced emotions (e.g., guilt and outrage). In the latter half of this stage, individuals are thought to emerge from the oversimplified view of the world as either pro-Black and anti-White, or pro-White and anti-Black. Where there was once guilt and anger, those in the latter half of immersion/emersion begin to exhibit pride, awareness, and control.

Cross' fourth stage was internalization (Cross, 1971). In the internalization stage the individual incorporates those experiences from immersion/emersion into their understanding of themselves. But it is also possible for one's development to stop there; in which case, the individual has undergone immense change, yet somehow their views do not seem that different. Cross (1971) provides an example of high school students who have gone through Nigrescence yet expressing that they do not need to study the Black experience because they are Black. The final stage of Cross' original model was internalization-commitment. The internalization-commitment stage is marked by involvement in the Black community, activism, less hostility

toward White people, less concern about how others perceive one's Blackness, and more grace for others going through the process of Nigrescence.

Expanded Model of Nigrescence. Cross's model was expanded through a continued review of the literature (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). In this revised model the view of the pre-encounter stage progressed from one simply having pro-White & anti-Black attitudes, to a more nuanced understanding where pre-encounter identities might belong to one of two clusters (assimilation or anti-Black). For those holding assimilation identities, being American was central to their identities, where race was not particularly salient. Whereas anti-Black identities were more in line with the Cross's original description of pre-encounter identities. Another update to the model was the separation of immersion and emersion into distinct stages. In the original description of his model, Cross articulated the immersion/emersion stage as having two halves (Cross, 1971). The revised model appears to have more clearly differentiated these two, as well as distinguishing emersion from the internalization stage (Vandiver et al., 2001).

Yet another update in the revised model was the combination of internalization and internalization-commitment into one stage, internalization, (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). In this new conceptualization there was more room for different levels of acceptance of those of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, it was no longer assumed that displaying attitudes consistent with internalization ensured improved psychological functioning. Generally, internalization resulted in a security in one's racial identity that neither required unfounded pro-Blackness nor unwarranted anti-Whiteness. Vandiver and colleagues (2001) highlight Black Nationalism, Biculturalism, and Multiculturalism as three distinct ideologies that could all be characterized as internalized identities.

Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity

Robert Sellers and colleagues (1998) proposed the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) as another way of looking at racial identity for African Americans. Based on Phinney's model of ethnic identity development, the MMRI focuses on a specific ethnic group's (i.e., African American) experience of race in the context of the United States. As an attempted improvement over existing racial identity frameworks for African Americans, MMRI provided a testable model built on four assumptions.

The first assumption of MMRI is that identity has both stable and dynamic components (Sellers et al., 1998). The dynamic components are influenced by the stable components as well as driven by the context of specific situations. In this way the enduring sense of how one understands themselves and the situation in which they find themselves feeds back into who they are and how they wish to act in that moment. The stable components are not static: they may develop over time and are not prone to drastic changes in short time periods outside of intense situations. An encounter experience from Cross' Nigrescence theory would be an example of such an intense situation.

A second assumption of MMRI is that people have more than one identity and they internally organize these identities hierarchically (Sellers et al., 1998). The rank and individual assigns these identities may have implications for the influence of that identity on their behavior. For example, Black men who rank their race as more important than their gender may behave in ways that are most consistent with their race in situations where the norms of race and gender may differ (e.g., allowing for a more egalitarian household rather than needing to be the breadwinner).

Another assumption of MMRI is that the most valid indicator of someone's racial identity is their own perception of it (Sellers et al., 1998). The model recognizes the importance of behavioral outcomes but asserts that situational context can assert undue influence on behavior that might belie the individual's actual self-concept. Included in the self-perception is the meaning an individual makes of their race. The model does not make an argument for what constitutes a healthy racial identity, rather it highlights that context determines the adaptiveness of an identity.

Lastly, the model focuses on status rather than development (Sellers et al., 1998). Many other models of racial identity suggest a progression through specific stages (Cross, 1976; Helms, 1991). Such a framing would be inconsistent with the nonjudgement stance of MMRI: there is no such thing as an objectively good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, racial identity (Sellers et al., 1998). This status approach also helps to support the idea that situational context influences how one makes meaning of their racial identity. An individual's racial identity might appear differently in a context that is hostile to that identity than one that is not. This model allows for this adjustment rather than assuming that the individual's identity should be the same in every space and consequently their behavior should be consistent regardless of context. Such an adjustment might look like a regression in a developmental model and could engender negative connotations, whereas in MMRI the adjustment could just be adaptive given the environmental context.

MMRI positions racial identity as being composed of multiple dimensions (i.e., racial salience, racial centrality, racial regard, and racial ideologies; Sellers et al., 1998). Racial salience refers to the degree to which an individual's race matters to them in a given context. For example, race may matter a lot when in a setting where one is the only member of their race, but

less in a setting where the focus is on an academic subject rather than the people in the room. Racial centrality, though, is a more static concept: how inextricable, or central, an individual's race is to their sense of self. Racial regard can be broken down into two components: private and public regard. Private regard is the degree to which an individual feels positively or negatively about their race. Public regard is the degree to which an individual believes others feel positively or negatively about their race. An individual's racial identity status depends on their perception of both private and public regard. The last dimension of the model is racial ideology. Racial ideology refers to the beliefs an individual holds about the behaviors they expect of members of their race. This model posits four racial ideologies: (a) nationalist – which focuses on what makes Back people unique, (b) assimilationist – which encourages trying to fit into mainstream society, (c) minority – which prioritizes solidarity among the oppressed, and (d) humanist – which focuses on the similarities of all humans rather than racial differences.

MMRI provides a path model by which aspects of the theory can be empirically tested (Sellers et al., 1998). It suggests that racial centrality and situational clues can influence racial salience in a specific situation. In turn, racial salience can influence both racial ideology and racial regard: both of which influence how an individual understands the situation as well as how they behave. The MIBI was then developed to measure the dimensions of the MMRI. It is comprised of three scales to measure racial centrality, racial ideology, and racial regard. Because salience is so context specific, it was excluded from the inventory in favor of experimental manipulation to assess for it in context.

Given the focus on race rather than ethnicity in context of the United States, the high correlation between the two, and the mixed use of the two terms even in census categories, it is understandable why the terms might often be interchanged. However, this theory follows the

traditions of Phinney toward ethnic identity development and then labels itself as a theory on racial identity (Sellers et al, 1998). Additionally, one of the assumptions of the theory regards the centrality of race over ethnicity for African Americans. Framing African American as an ethnicity would be more consistent with the definitions of race and ethnicity, would place ethnicity as central rather than race, would allow the theory to apply to other ethnicities within the race, and centrality of ethnicity would then be more consistent with the experiences of other Black and non-Black ethnic groups within the U.S. context (Abi & Rivas-Drake, 2021). Lastly, the authors explicitly state that MMRI does not allow for an explanation of the developmental process for racial identity, rather it reports one's current racial identity status (Sellers et al, 1998).

Ethnic Identity Development

Phinney looked to create an ethnic identity model that accounted for similarities across ethnic backgrounds (1989). To accomplish that goal, Marcia's (1966) Ego Identity Development model was applied to analyze nearly 100 interviews with Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian American high school students. Through this analysis, it was concluded that despite facing different specific issues, students in each of the minority groups went through a similar identity development process (Phinney, 1989). About 33% of students failed to explore their ethnicities, about 25% were in the processes of exploring their ethnicities, and about another 25% had explored and committed to their ethnic identity.

Phinney went on to develop a 20-item measure, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), to assess Ethnic Identity development in a study with 417 high school students and 137 college students across five and six ethnic backgrounds, respectively (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM assessed (a) positive ethnic attitudes and a sense of belonging, (b) ethnic identity achievement, and (c) ethnic behaviors and practices on a 4-point scale from strongly agree to

strongly disagree. This measure proved useful in allowing for comparing correlations between self-esteem and ethnic identity across ethnic groups. For example, in studying ethnic identity, acculturation, and emotional wellbeing in Asian American and Asian international students, researchers found no significant difference in their self-reported emotional wellbeing, despite Asian American students reporting higher levels of acculturation and ethnic identity (Yasuda & Duan, 2002). Additionally, another study focused on loneliness, ethnic identity, and suicide risk for Latino college students, found that ethnic identity predicted a significant amount of suicide risk in one factor (hopelessness or suicidal behaviors) but only some facets predicted both at a level of significance (Chang et al., 2017).

White Racial Identity Development

Janet Helms (1990) outlines a two-phase model of White Racial Identity Development, in the context of the United States, which involves abandoning racism and developing a non-racist White identity, with each phase having three stages. In the first phase, White folks move from contact to disintegration and then reintegration. Contact is the stage where White people begin to recognize that non-White people exist, but folks in this stage struggle to see themselves as members of a dominant group within a society with social stratification based on race. In the disintegration stage, White people's consciousness begins to increase. Additionally, they begin to experience dissonance as they struggle between in-group loyalty and recognition that, morally, the treatment of White and Black people is not consistent with what is stated in the U.S. Constitution. The next stage is reintegration, where the dissonance felt in the disintegration stage starts to subside and systems justifying beliefs help White people to more consciously support the status quo (more consciously accepting the superiority of Whites over racial and ethnic minorities).

The second phase of Helm's model focuses on White people developing a non-racist racial identity (Helms, 1990). Here the three stages are pseudo-independence, immersion-emersion, and autonomy. In pseudo-independence White people are often responding to a jarring event that makes staying in the reintegration stage too difficult, and they work to more cognitively understand racial issues. Immersion-emersion is the next stage of Helm's model in which White people begin to develop a personal meaning of their racial identities. It is often characterized by the recognition that they have benefited from the privilege of existing as White people in American society and attempts to confront one's own biases. The final stage of the model is autonomy, in which White people experience less guilt for the privileges from which they have benefitted. Additionally, in the autonomy stage, White people are typically better able to recognize and are more willing to deal with the realities of race.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework that has developed within Black Feminist scholarship. In its original form, intersectionality outlined the unique experiences of gendered racism faced by Black women because of the interlocking systems of social-structural oppression at work at the intersection of their identities (Bowleg, 2023; Crenshaw 1989; Crenshaw 1991). Through her work as a critical legal scholar, Kimberle Crenshaw synthesized the scholarship of a host of Black feminist scholars before her and was credited with coining the term intersectionality (Bowleg, 2017, Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality aptly draws attention to the ways that political movements like women's rights and anti-racism, often centered White women and Black men, respectively, and left Black women in the margins. Furthermore, this marginalization highlighted the distinct ways that Black women could be targeted and affected by these interlocking systems of oppression, specifically because they are Black and women.

One part of intersectionality highlights the idea that people's identities are multidimensional. Viewing individuals along only one dimension of their identity obscures other factors that contribute to their lived experiences (Cho et al., 2013). Cho and colleagues(2013) position intersectionality as "a gathering place for open-ended investigations of the overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, and other inequalities," rather than a preoccupation with categorical, special, and temporal differences (p. 788). Beyond the intersections of people's identities, intersectionality calls for researchers to focus on the power structure that might be impacting their experience (Bowleg, 2008; Bowleg, 2017; Bowleg et al., 2017; Bowleg et al., 2022; Bowleg, 2023). Mosely and colleagues (2017) provide an excellent example of this by contextualizing what might be viewed as paranoia in Black men. In their study over 100 Black men who were not clinically diagnosed with Paranoia completed a scale to measure clinical levels of paranoia, and then reported why they had endorsed certain items. In their responses, the Black male participants outlined a myriad of experiences that had made them distrustful, as well as strategies they had developed to cope.

In his study exploring racial identity, male norms, gender role conflict, and prejudicial attitudes, William Liu (2002) articulated that Asian American men are often searching for alternative definitions of masculinity from White masculine norms. Liu contextualized his findings of gender role conflict in Asian American men with the juxtaposition of their need to find success in their current environment and the inconsistencies between what that requires and their racial/ethnic gender identity norms. In another study looking at the intersection of sexual orientation and traditional masculine ideals, gay men reported difficulty being emotional and affectionate, as well as being pressured to appear masculine (Sanchez et al., 2009). This

underscores the perceived necessity of gay men to express their gender identities in specific ways to avoid maltreatment.

These studies which focused on minoritized men's experiences, highlight the disadvantages of intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In their work on intersectional invisibility, Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach explain why non-prototypical (or minoritized) identities might become the focus when an individual's intersectional identity contains one or more. They highlight three systems of social inequality (i.e., androcentrism, ethnocentrism, and heterocentrism) at play in society and how they overlap in their Model of Intersectional Invisibility. Androcentrism is the ideology that focuses on men as prototypical of humanity. By this token, if looking at a male and a female, who are otherwise equal in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation, the focus might be most drawn to the female because of her minoritized gender. Similarly, ethnocentrism is the tendency to see one's social group, standards, and norms as universal. Within Western society, what is prototypical is usually Whiteness. Then heterocentrism is the tendency toward heteronormativity, within society. In their model, Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach posit that aspects of the identity and experiences of multiply minoritized individuals may be ignored, which they term intersectional invisibility. They go on to suggest that there may be advantages (e.g. avoiding active forms of oppression) and disadvantages (e.g. having contributions and experiences overlooked) to intersectional invisibility.

In research on stereotyping, conflicting findings necessitated a new framework for understanding how stereotypes were applied to individuals' intersecting identities, Petsko, et al., 2022). They posited, tested, and found support for a Lens Framework in which either the lens of one group or an intersectional lens is activated when stereotypes are applied, but which lens gets applied depends on four factors (i.e., accessibility, fit, perceiver goals, and distinctiveness). Lens

accessibility refers to how easily the individual applying the stereotype can access the lens in their memory. Lens fit refers to the capacity of the lens to explain the pattern of intergroup relations in the specific context in which the stereotype is being applied. Perceiver goals are the motivations of the individual applying the stereotype to use one lens over another. Distinctiveness addresses which identity best grabs the attention of the individual applying the stereotype. For example, a Black man may be stereotyped according to their race and gender, until his sexual orientation is made relevant. Then, in the same context, he might be stereotyped completely differently. This could be because his sexual orientation is a more distinct identity when it becomes relevant, or its relevance shifts the perceiver's goals. One or both could be sufficient to apply a different lens when stereotyping him.

Black Masculinity

Black men weren't considered men until the Civil Rights movement (Franklin, 1994). Consequently, research has historically framed Black masculinity in terms of conformity or a lack thereof to (white) masculine norms (Brassel et al., 2020; Griffith & Cornish, 2018; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Pleck, 1995; Rogers et al., 2015). It was assumed that due to their history of racial oppression, Black men were often unable to meet the expectations of traditional and hegemonic masculinities. Research on Black men often focused on the negatives of their experiences (e.g., incarceration rates, elevated levels of poverty, absentee fatherism, and rates of HIV among the gay and bisexual Black male population; Bowleg et al., 2017; Franklin, 1994; Mosley et al., 2017; Schwing et al., 2013; Shrider et al., 2021). In response to research that focused on negative aspects of Black masculinity, others began to focus on more positive aspects. This shift toward strengths-based studies with Black men led to an understanding that Black men were constructing their own masculinities (Allen, 2016; Bowleg et al., 2011; Ford,

2011; Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Mincey et al., 2014; Rogers et al., 2015; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly, 2013). These studies report findings that suggest exploring Black masculinity, as a separate entity rather than as a conformity or lack of conformity to traditional, or white, masculinity, may be warranted. Below is a review of studies that have explored Black masculinity broadly, with almost exclusively heterosexual samples and with exclusively LGBT samples. Within the LGBT studies, special attention is given to articles that address the influence of religion and spirituality on how Black masculinity is experienced and expressed for men with same-sex attractions.

Clyde Franklin (1994) offers a theory on the development of, or socialization into, Black masculinity rather than defining it. The theory suggests that Black boys and men are socialized into masculinity from three sources: primary group – family and community, peers, and mainstream society. Franklin clarifies that the primary group socialization typically looks very similar to that of mainstream society but is viewed from the Black perspective. He addressed how Black men's understanding of American masculinity had grown out of the "patriarchal slave-master system (Franklin, 1994, p.5)." So, their performance of masculinity resembled that of their masters (e.g., men provided, were strong, were protectors). Those Black men who were able to develop these and other traits consistent with hegemonic masculinity were celebrated. Yet, socioeconomic barriers like unemployment, unequal wages, and high incarceration rates hindered many Black men's ability to act out mainstream masculinity: to the point of being dubbed 'frustrated masculinity (Franklin, 1994, p.6)'.

Peer group socialization was important in late adolescence to early adulthood when Black men are starting to become more autonomous (Franklin, 1994). As they start defining themselves more, they may look to their peers more to see how others are navigating similar challenges.

Lastly, Franklin's outline of mainstream society socialization focuses on the ways that Black men are cyclically seen as uneducated and/or criminal – from the overuse of discipline in the K-12 system to the overpopulation of the prison system and high levels of unemployment. More than three decades later, this mainstream conceptualization of blackness and Black men in particular is still negative. Mosely et al. (2018) address the strong association of blackness and crime, as well as the fact that in 2014 Black men were represented in the prison system at a rate almost six times their representation in the U.S. population.

Franklin's theory provides some guidance on how Black men come to understand themselves, in context. It is rooted more in observation than empirically derived. It is however empirically supported by the findings of later studies (Fields et al., 2015; Jourian & McCloud, 2020; Mincey et al., 2014; Watts & Bentley, 2023). The theory also neglects mechanisms that might influence the degree to which the types of socialization might be differentially impactful for individuals. Its focus on sexuality is limited to the influence of Black men's peers on the masculinities that they develop, whereas more recent literature suggests that each of these sources of socialization impacts the development of both Black men's gender identities and expressions (Ford, 2011; LaSala, & Frierson, 2012; Mincey et al., 2014; Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly 2013).

Hammond and Mattis (2005) conducted a content analysis of the written responses of 152 African American men, ages 17 to 79, to prompts about what manhood means to them. This study yielded fifteen categories, which included responsibility, autonomy, spirituality/religiosity, family-centeredness, leadership/guidance, surviving/overcoming, and emotional connectedness. This study suggested that manhood for African American men was highly relational. Manhood being relational for African American men is a shift from the individualistic, competitive nature

of Traditional Masculinity Ideologies. This may be consistent with the relative collectivistic nature of African American culture, to the individualistic culture of European Americans. Additionally, Hammond and Mattis (2005) found that African American men expressed manhood containing a responsibility for themselves as well as to one's community. Participants expressed an expectation that African American men provide and protect for their homes and communities, uplifting one another, and living as role models or leaders within the community. Lastly, the study conveyed the importance of strength and resilience in African American men's concept of manhood. Participants described this characteristic in terms of overcoming adversities or having the capacity to manage one's emotions well enough to work toward solutions to life's challenges.

In the studies addressed in this literature review, this is one of the earliest that tells the story of manhood from the perspective of African American men. It does not juxtapose traditional masculinity ideologies against African American men's experiences. Yet, it provides empirical evidence to support differences. This article seems to equate masculinity and manhood for African American men in ways that Ford (2011) does not. However, participant responses do seem to be more consistent with Ford's framing of manhood than masculinity. This begs the question of whether participants see a difference, which could not be addressed by Hammond and Mattis's research questions. Further, the broad range of ages in the sample, with a mean participant age of 30, may skew toward men actively operating out of manhood more than masculinity according to Ford's framing. So, there is room to explore the developmental process: what is masculinity for African American men, what is manhood, and how does one develop from one to the other. Additionally, this study raises the importance of religion and spirituality

but does not account for the religious or spiritual beliefs of the participants. Lastly, sexual orientation is not reported for the participants of this study.

Rogers et al. (2015) extend Hammond and Mattis' work by conducting a modified grounded theory in exploring African American men's concept of masculinity from an intersectional perspective. In this study 17 African American male participants, 18 to 57 years of age, were asked to define masculinity and separately what it meant to be an African American man. In their responses, most participants articulated masculinity in terms consistent with European American masculinity norms. However, when asked about African American masculinity, participants highlighted leadership expectations (e.g., role model, protector, provider), experiences with structural oppression, values specific to the African American community (e.g., religion and spirituality, awareness of cultural heritage), and their role within the family (e.g., relationships with women and fatherhood). This study also provided demographics related to participants' level of education, sexual orientation, relationship status, and religious or spiritual belief system. Of the 17 participants, one was gay and two were not Christian.

This study's findings provide support for the findings of Hammond and Mattis, as well as providing some insight as to why there may be differences in what masculinity looks like for African American men. Similar to the assertion of Franklin (1994), the participants of this study suggest that structural oppression impedes their ability to carry out TMI, at times. It also suggests that beyond TMI, there are other values that inform masculinity for African American men. Additionally, the relative homogeneity of this study's sample leaves room to explore the potential impact of sexual orientation and religious or spiritual background on the meanings African American men make of their masculinities. Though participants allude to aspects of

gender expression in their response, the study does not do much to shed light on different expressions of African American masculinity that might exist.

In a study of 29 Black undergraduate men at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) Ford (2011) explored participants' constructions of masculinity. The intention of the study was to provide voice to upwardly mobile Black emerging adult men, who are often not the target sample for studies on Black men. The study found that participants often described Black masculinity as heteronormative, and a performative exercise in impression management, focusing on physical strength, sexual prowess and material possession. They then juxtaposed masculinity with manhood, which was more concerned with spirituality, responsibility, and family as well as being personally congruent. Participants expressed not being able to exhibit manhood, while still being students. However, manhood served as a guide for what they aspired to and a barometer for where they were in their current lives. Participants also outlined that there were often steep costs for not performing Black masculinity. Those who did not perform Black masculinity were thought to be gay, could lose elements of masculine privilege, and could be socially isolated. Further, for many participants, it resulted in cognitive dissonance, internalized homophobia, internalization of negative stereotypes about Black men, as well as stress and mood disturbances. Participants also discussed the hope that Black manhood represented for them to exist in spaces that would be designed around and accepting of their authentic selves.

Unlike a lot of other studies on Black men, this study included both heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants, as well as a few participants who were not from Christian backgrounds. It also provided a highly specific definition of Black masculinity, characterized it as performative, and spoke to the costs that Black men often pay or contend with when negotiating their gender expressions. The article presents participants' expressions of the ideal

Black masculinity as the image of a thug. This is supported by the idea that gaining the material means necessary to carry out 'ideal Black masculinity' through corporate work is seen as less Black. First, it is unclear if this is related more to classism within the Black community or specific to Black masculinity. Second, this framing could contribute to the negative stereotypes that participants addressed internalizing. While it is important to acknowledge the presence and prevalence of such thinking, it is probably more important to address the harm that such a narrow scope for masculinity causes for Black men.

Exclusively Heterosexual Studies

In a study on the effects of masculinity ideologies on HIV risk for heterosexual men, Bowleg and colleagues (2011) conducted six focus groups with 41 men ages 19 to 51. The study found two explicit and two implicit masculinity ideologies to influence participants' sexual risk behaviors. The explicit ideologies being: Black men should only be having sex with women, and they should be having sex with multiple women (often at the same time). Participants shared beliefs that most Black men aim to get as much heterosexual sex as they can and will step outside of a monogamous relationship to do so. Participants also conveyed messages that amounted to men who have sex with other men not being real men, as well as carrying diseases. Further, those who also have sex with women are thought to be transmitting those diseases to the heterosexual population. The implicit ideologies found indicated that men have difficulty declining sex, even when it is risky, and that they tend to depend on women to initiate a conversation about condom use. In the latter case, participants highlighted how infrequently there is a conversation about condom use and communicated that their inclination to do so could be swayed by their intended partner's input.

This study supports other findings about Black masculinity including stereotypes about hypersexuality and the unacceptability of same-sex relations in Black men. This article also supports the idea that Black masculinity is relational, these men appear to be highly focused on how they appear to others: sleeping with another man would result in one being perceived as less than a man. A similar risk accompanies forgoing an offer of heterosexual sex because one might be perceived as gay. Additionally, this finding seems to suggest that Black men don't have the discipline to go without sex, even when having it would be inconsistent with their personal values. It also suggested that women are more powerful than men. This study doesn't appear to address the inconsistency with traditional masculinity ideologies around strength and the assertion that women are more powerful. This could be due to its focus on risky sexual behaviors. It is possible that the authors were more concerned with the implications of this finding for health risk than how the participants made sense of it.

Mincey and colleagues (2014) conducted a thematic analysis of how Black male undergraduate students defined masculinity. The authors engaged in focus groups and individual interviews with 46 undergraduate Black men, at both PWIs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This study found distinctions between what it meant to be a man and what it meant to be a Black man for these participants. Participants indicated being a man as a process that develops over time, culminating with the capacity to be a provider, and self-sufficient). Similarly, participants expressed that being a Black man meant having something to prove; carrying out responsibility (for family, community, and self); a sense of power and honor; and being strong (both in terms of physical strength and emotional resilience). Another finding was that participants' meaning-making was influenced differently by each parent, and sometimes

by them jointly. Additionally, participants' peers and situations the participants encountered in life also influenced the meanings they made of being men and Black men, in particular.

This study provides empirical support for Franklin's Triangle of Socialization for Black men (Mincey et al., 2014). Participants speak to the influence of their primary group, peers and mainstream society in their narratives about the meanings they make of Black masculinity and manhood. Through descriptions of their experiences (for participants at PWIs) and perceptions of what those experiences might be of they had attended a PWI (for participants at HBCUs), participants articulated their understanding of mainstream society's expectations of Black men. These descriptions highlighted participant's awareness, not only of stereotypes of Black men, but also of the effects of racism.

The study failed to provide any demographic information about the sexual orientations of their participants. This contributes to the absence of clear examples of definitions and experiences of Black masculinity by queer Black men. The study's design is unclear. The authors address the study as qualitative, passively mention thematic analysis, and employ analysis techniques common to grounded theory.

In a different study, Allen (2016) explored racial and gender socialization between Black fathers and sons. This study was part of a larger study exploring the schooling of Black male youths and families from middle-class and higher backgrounds. The study on racial and gender socialization was comprised of six families with residential fathers, who were all married, heterosexual, and middle class. Data was collected through two semi-structured interviews: one focused on race, manhood, and masculinity and the other was a photo elicitation interview. Modified analytic induction was used to interpret the data.

The study found that Black men hold some traditional views of manhood: highlighting the importance of responsibility, provision, spiritual leadership, and independence. Participants addressed the importance of models in developing their own manhood and the challenges often faced by those without a proper model (ideally one's father). The study also focused on the role of fathers in socializing their sons regarding race, the racism that sons might experience as Black males, and the importance of self-determination in developing resilience to combat those experiences.

Who exactly participated in which interviews is not clear. Responses from the fathers appear to have been analyzed separately from, as well as in conjunction with responses from their sons. It is possible that the focus on residential fathers was an intentional decision to tell a different story not often told about Black fathers. This study highlights the importance of active fathers in the socialization of young Black men. However, excluding non-residential fathers could reinforce the stereotype that nonresidential fathers are not active.

Black Masculinity for Gender and Sexual Minorities

As can be seen in the previous section, sexual and gender minority Black men are often minimally included in studies about Black men, if not excluded altogether. The following section includes studies where men who have sex with men, and other sexual and gender minorities within the Black community. As will be addressed in these studies, the Black community can appear quite homonegative, to this end terms that focus on non-heterosexual action, (e.g. men who have sex with men) rather than identity are sometimes used to more accurately recruit and illuminate the experiences of this population. Consistent with that notion the umbrella term queer which may be used in other spaces is not used here, except to preserve the language used to describe participant samples in specific articles. Additionally, some studies above have

emphasized the importance of spirituality and religion for Black masculinity. That influence exists for sexual and gender minority Black men as well; however, the impact tends to be more negative than positive. There is a subsection here that illuminates this impact on both the conceptions of gender identity and expressions for this population.

In an ethnographic study, Hunter (2010) sought to understand with whom 50 Black gay men most identified and how these men negotiated their stigmatized identities. Participants expressed understanding their identities as (a) interlocking (24%), (b) up-down (50%), or (c) public-versus-private (26%). Participants endorsing an interlocking identities view of themselves articulated their identities consistent with intersectionality, addressing the ways that their individual identities influenced one another in the context of "larger power structures," (p. 86). In the up-down identities model, participants expressed seeing themselves as Black first, then gay, or vice versa. More often it was the former, with many participants stating that their Black identity was more visible. They indicated that this visibility contributed to how others perceived them, the stigmas they faced as a result, and, in turn, how they came to understand themselves. They believed that because their gay identity is often invisible, it is irrelevant until attention is brought to it. Participants who saw themselves as gay first either believed that others perceived them as gay or sought to draw attention to an aspect of their identity that might be rendered invisible otherwise. Others viewed themselves from a public-private model, which centered on the sphere of participants' lives that is most impacted by their identity. Many participants saw their race as impacting their public sphere and viewed their sexuality as related to their personal matters.

This study provides insight into how and when Black gay men may use a racial, sexual orientation, or intersectional lens to understand and express their identities. The use of different

lenses could indicate differences in the process of identity development for gay Black men. The findings support the idea that the lens through which gay Black men view their gender identity might also influence their gender expressions. The article doesn't outright state that identities are intersectional, rather it focuses on how the participants view their identities. The taxonomy created in this study provides a way of describing how gay Black men understand themselves. However, it does little to explain the socialization process that led to these understandings or to inform how that process might be adjusted to the benefit of these men. For example, what are the impacts of applying one lens over another on the psychological functioning and identity formation for gay Black men? Might there be benefits to encouraging the use of a particular lens, or awareness that there are other lenses that could be used?

Wilson and colleagues (2010) sought "to explore the relationship between HIV risk behaviors and ethnic, sexual, and masculine gender identity development among 14–22-year-old GBQ African American, Latino, and European American adolescent males," as a part of a larger study (p.172). The data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach and it was found that participants often learned hegemonic masculinity from their families (mainly their male family members), peers, and the media. Some of the messages embedded in this socialization included: men should be hypersexual, emotionally unattached, and view sex as a conquest; homosexuals are not considered men; as well as social pressures about what toys are appropriate to play with; and how, if at all, emotions could be expressed. Participants reported that sometimes even in same-sex interactions sexual roles, like top or bottom, were associated with masculine and feminine expectations, respectively. Another key finding was the influence of the intersection of race, or ethnicity, and gender. Latino participants indicated an inseparable intersectional lens approach to their gender and ethnicity, whereas for African Americans the primary lens seemed

to be their race or ethnicity, and a separate gender lens was added. European American participants rarely seemed to connect their ethnicities and sexualities. Additionally, participants appeared to advocate for the acceptance of multiple masculinities by articulating the idea that there are many ways that males can express themselves that should still allow them to be considered men. However, they often still described non-traditional expressions of masculinity as feminine, falling short of truly accepting multiple masculinities. Some participants spoke to the importance of negotiating their identities: balancing the effeminate and masculine in their presentation, or concealing their sexuality to avoid violence, as well as social isolation. Still, others opted for a framing of identity that focused on their personhood. These participants preferred to center their identities on activities that felt congruent or made them good and successful people, rather than on the prescriptions and proscriptions of gender.

This study provides support for studying the intersection of sexuality, gender, and ethnicity (or race). The differential findings regarding the influence of ethnicity on participant understanding of gender and sexuality, reinforce the idea that gender is a social construct that is influenced by culture. It is possible that the gendered nature of languages used in Latinx culture contributed to participants' inability to extract their sexuality from their gender and ethnicity, in comparison to the other two racial groups. This finding might indicate that these identities develop in an intersectional manner. It may also suggest a difference in attention to intersectional identity between the three cultures (Latino, African American, and European American). Participant responses to traditional masculinity ideologies, and the identity negotiation they reported, support the idea that traditional masculinity may not be the most accurate depiction of masculinity for men of color. While informative, the abundance of studies on HIV risk for sexual minorities can contribute to the stigma surrounding HIV and the queer community. It is

understandable that much of the available funding for research on sexual minorities lies in this area. Yet, as this article does to an extent, it is important to emphasize the environmental factors that contribute to the risks that this population faces and to encourage system-level changes to mitigate these risks.

LaSala & Frierson (2012) applied a mix of grounded theory and narrative approaches to studying masculinity in the families of Black gay youths. Focusing on a sub-sample (seven African American) of a larger study (65 African American, Latino, and White families). This study found that families often saw homosexuality as one more form of oppression that their sons would have to face. African American families were less likely to see their sons' sexuality as a loss of a normal life, than White families. Black fathers expressed having to restructure their view of masculinity, as well as their responses to their sons' masculinity. Many African American fathers expressed having held similar negative beliefs about homosexuals as their peers. Additionally, male family members often reported difficulty defending their gay family members without having their own sexuality called into question. This heterosexism, combined with experiences of racism, made identifying as gay isolating for young African American males.

This study depicts a very narrow definition of masculinity for African American men. Additionally, it highlights the harms that gay African American boys and men often experience due to the expectations of such a narrow framing of masculinity. This study highlights the paradigm shift that is often necessary for African American families to support their gay sons to have a positive self-image and self-worth. The discussion places Black fathers as central to the socialization of African American youths into masculinity. Further it argues for the inclusion of

African American fathers in interventions aiming to meet the needs of gay African American youths.

Bowleg (2013) embarked on a qualitative exploration of the descriptions and experiences of 12 Black gay and bisexual men's intersectionality. This study shed light on the different ways in which these gay and bisexual men saw themselves. Some participants found it hard to separate their sexual identity from their racial and gendered identities, whereas others saw themselves as primarily Black or Black men, specifically. Most participants addressed the challenges of navigating negative stereotypes within the LGBTQ community, heterosexism in the Black community, and racism in the broader mainstream community. Despite these challenges, they also indicated the benefits of their sexual identities (e.g., freedom from restrictive gender norms, getting to know themselves better, and appreciating themselves more).

As is often the case, the more specific focus on gay and bisexual Black men resulted in rich nuanced narratives about their experiences. It is important for people to know and understand the mixture of oppressive experiences that this population faces, how they are impacted, and how they resist. This study does not provide insight into the developmental process for its participants. Nor does it allow for insight into potential overlaps and divergences in the developmental process across sexual orientations. The study provides some description of gender expressions for gay and bisexual men but does not do much to help the reader understand how participants arrive at those expressions.

Strayhorn and Tillman-Kelly (2013), as a part of a larger study, take a constructivist approach to exploring how masculinity is constructed and experienced by Black gay male undergraduates at PWIs. Interviews with 29 gay Black male undergrads revealed that social factors and spaces influenced the masculinities in which the participants engaged (i.e., whether

they accepted and engaged in traditional masculine norms or challenged hegemonic ideals). Most participants reported adhering to traditional Black masculine norms (e.g., athletic, tough, economically well-off). Additionally, participants indicated that these beliefs influenced their willingness to be open about their sexual orientation, or encouraged them to attempt to compensate, in some way, for not enacting the expectations of Black masculinity. While others opted to challenge this view of masculinity by pursuing majors or co-curricular activities that were traditionally seen as less masculine. This choice may have limited their ability to connect with other men who had sex with men but were not out, or heterosexual men, with whom they were assumed to have nothing in common. Participants also indicated religion as a contributor to their understanding of what it meant to be a Black man.

This study suggested gay Black undergraduates were largely internalizing traditional ideas of what it meant to be a Black man. Consequently, these undergraduates reported frequently concealing or compensating for their sexuality. The study also positions the options as (a) rejection of same-sex attraction and gender expressions that might belie that attraction or (b) an extreme rejection of traditional masculine norms. This false dichotomy may be what a lot of participants feel, but the discussion and implications may have done well to articulate what could be done to help men who have sex with men negotiate their intersectional identities in ways that are most congruent. The expectation would not be a one-size-fits-all model, but the influence of Ford's (2011) juxtaposition of masculinity and manhood comes to mind. In Ford's model manhood provides hope for a more congruent experience to those who are developing toward it. Could there be value to encouraging undergraduates to focus on the hope of congruence that manhood has to offer, rather than living in the fear of being ostracized should their sexuality discovered?

Fields and colleagues (2015) conducted a secondary analysis of 35 interviews with Black emerging adult men who have sex with men (MSM). These interviews "covered masculinity, sexual identity, homosexuality, sexual risk, masculine socialization, the social context of sexual risk, family, race, and religion," (p. 123). The major finding of this study was that conflict between homosexuality and gender role expectations resulted in psychological strain for participants. This strain was broken down into trauma strain (e.g., guilt and shame for not conforming to gender role norms; homonegativity communicated in traditional masculine norms), discrepancy strain (e.g., loss of social status for being gay), and dysfunction strain (e.g., hypervigilance, compensating for one's sexual orientation). Participants also described a distinct homonegativity, within the Black community, which communicated a fundamental incongruence between homosexuality and Black masculinity. They also articulated the perception that there were less restrictive expectations of masculinity for White men. Additionally, participants indicated that the strains contributed to their HIV risk-taking behaviors.

This study paints a vivid picture of the messages young Black MSM receive about Black masculinity, the consequences of not conforming to its expectations, and how negotiating their identities in this context often results in behaviors with higher risks for HIV. Though not a causal study, the meanings the participants make of their experiences draw lines from the different forms of gender role strain to risk behaviors. Studies on HIV risk behavior for MSM contribute to the can stigma of HIV as a gay disease. Still, this study focuses on environmental factors that might contribute to risk for Black MSM: contextualizing how Black masculinity and gender role strain may be factors in the risk behaviors of young Black MSM.

Jourian and McCloud (2020) used Quare Theory - a Black-centric Queer Theory- and Black trans feminist thought to provide secondary analysis of how four Black trans masculine college

students built, break down, and rebuilt Black masculinity for themselves. Some of the major findings of this study addressed that participants needed to break down some of the existing norms and conceptualizations of Black masculinity, as well as how these norms could be (and often were) reconstructed by Black trans-masculine folks. The participants highlighted essentialist views of Black manhood and masculinity that left little room for their experiences. Consequently, participants often balanced advocating for themselves to be seen and heard with their desires of physical and psychological safety. Participants reported experiencing anti-Blackness in and outside of queer and trans spaces, as well as the impact these experiences had on their understanding and expression of Black masculinity. Given the disparities between their experiences and the expectations of Black masculinity, the participants also indicated redefining masculinity in ways that fit better for them. This included participants leaning on examples of progressive masculinities exhibited by their fathers, or about which they had learned in books, as well as attempts to compensate for less- or non-masculine traits. Many participants lauded Black women's support in reconstructing Black masculinity for Black trans-masculine folks.

This study emphasized how, within the Black community, the power dynamics of White-cis-het-male privilege and the oppression that increases the further one gets from this "ideal" existence are often reproduced. It also provides support for the sources of socialization in Franklin's theory (Franklin, 1994). Lastly this study reinforces the idea that focusing on a nuanced sample of a population can provide rich data that are often missed when exploring the experiences of the population more broadly. These findings support the idea of exploring the development of gender and racial identity, intersectionally. Masculinity may be exhibited by several genders within the Black community. This study highlights the way it is expressed, and its impact may be different for each of those genders.

In a 29-participant constructivist grounded theory, Winer (2022), explores how men who are not heterosexual experience masculinity. These participants indicate there is the recreation of a social hierarchy in which there is an " idealized masculinity among non-heterosexual men [that] is often downwardly and upwardly bound" (p.19). These boundaries communicate a skepticism of those who are too masculine or appear out of touch with gay pop culture, and reify the devaluation of those who are too effeminate, which occurs for feminine presenting men in mainstream society. This frames the ideal queer man as White, young, fit, masculine men who hold the penetrative role in sex. In particular, Black and Asian men were lowest in this hierarchy with Black men being stereotyped to be hyper-masculine tops (who were still devalued because of their race), and Asian men as feminine and submissive bottoms.

This study seems to convey the precarious nature of masculinity, spotlighting how what is ideal seems to be a moving target. While being a White, cisgender, heterosexual male is ideal, it is possible to compensate and work toward the privilege associated with that identity. But, overcompensate or fail to adequately compensate, and one may still find themselves in the margins, even within the queer community.

Winer (2022) addressed the limits of the sample only including one Black-identified participant. The intention was to ensure a representative sample. However, research suggests that representative samples can obscure the nuance of multiply marginalized populations (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). This study provides an opaque idea of how queer Black men might be experiencing masculinity: implicating stereotypes about sexual roles and racism as potential points of inquiry for queer Black men.

Duran and Garcia (2023) conducted a constructivist grounded theory with 9 queer men of color members of culture-based fraternities. In this study, participants were interviewed twice

after they graduated to allow for reflection on periods before induction, participation while in undergrad, and engagement after graduation. Participants reported that, before undergrad, their parents and peers were important influences on their constructions of masculinity. For many, masculinity was externally defined based on normalized gender roles and heteronormative beliefs (including the concept that men are responsible, they can't show weakness, masculine is opposite and exclusive of feminine). Sometimes it was difficult for participants to tease out the influence of race/ethnicity, and religion: they combined to form cultural homonegativity. Negative responses to coming out influence some of their willingness to be open about their sexuality with others later in life. While in undergrad participants reported an abundance of experiences that reified hegemonic masculinity, (e.g., disparaging comments about potential members who are flamboyant, objectifying women). After college, participants reported engaging with their fraternities in ways that were more internally congruent. This included avoiding spaces and people that further hegemonic ideologies, using their positions of power and relationships to challenge marginalization, and connecting with other queer men of color.

Watts and Bentley (2023) engaged in a phenomenological study of 17 gay Black men to understand how they define, make sense of, and experience their masculinities, as well as how these factors might be related to their well-being. Participants overwhelmingly expressed viewing masculinity as a social construct that provided them privileges but could also be quite restricting, which significantly impacted their mental health. Participants characterized masculinity as having positive ideals (e.g., strength, creating legacy, achievement, independence, self-efficacy, and respect) and negative restrictions (e.g., toxic, oppressive, competitive, narrowly pre-and pro-scribed behaviors). They also expressed not always agreeing with every component of this social construction. They also indicated receiving messages about what it

meant to be a Black man at all three levels of socialization in Franklin's theory. Moreover, they indicated believing that there was much less connection between White men's self-expression and their sexual orientation. Participants also expressed that the Black church could be a place of support, while also being somewhere that strongly enforced conforming to heteronormative masculinity. Just as participants recognized the privileges and restrictions that masculinity afforded them as gay Black men, they also noticed how masculinity might help them develop healthy ways of coping (e.g., self-reliance and independence as protective factors) as well as how they experienced a great deal of stress and anxiety having to perform the masculinity that those around them expected.

This study provides a clear sense of what the participants view masculinity to be and how it impacts them. What seems less clear though is when and for whom these impacts apply. Their work provides the groundwork for additional research on whether a gay Black man's view of masculinity as negative or positive would influence the directionality of its impact on his mental health. Similarly, when so many gay Black men are reporting heteronormative messaging and expectations from the Black church, how are Black men still finding the Black church to be a source of support.

Religion and Spirituality for Gender and Sexual Minority Black Men. Religion and spirituality have been incredibly influential in the Black community in the United States (Pew Research, 2021). The Black American population is largely Christian, and predominantly Black places of worship have contributed much to provide support to Black Americans as they navigate the challenges of structural racism in this country. Collectively referred to as the Black Church, religious and spiritual centers of the Black community have spawned leadership for the Civil Rights movement, as well as provided formative information about who and how Black people

should be. As will be addressed in the following studies, the influence of the messages of the Black Church often spillover into Black culture broadly. This spillover has implications for gender identity and expression development for Black men. Those implications may be most explicit for gender and sexual minority men, where this pillar of support and coping often becomes another potential source of rejection (Garret-Walker & Torres, 2017; Means, 2017; Quinn & Dickson-Gomez, 2016).

Using principles of grounded theory Quinn and Dickson-Gomez (2016) explored 30 young Black MSM experiences of homonegativity in the Black church. Several participants claimed not to have had experiences with homonegativity, despite sharing that they had been told that they need to hide their sexuality or having heard disparaging remarks about their sexuality from friends, family members, the broader community, or the church. Many participants expressed experiences of faith-based homonegativity: from explicit sermons referring to homosexuality as an abomination to similar sentiments being shared by loved ones beyond the church walls. These negative messages often had negative psychological and social consequences. They even occasionally resulted in sexual risk-taking behaviors. Participants often reported not disclosing their sexuality in religious spaces, as well as fear that doing so might result in ostracization and isolation. When participants were not out, many indicated a perceived incompatibility between their sexuality and masculinity. Similar to extant literature, this study found that young Black MSM who faced stigma for their sexuality, displayed resilience, gained confidence overtime, and developed support systems through engaging with people and organizations that were more affirming (often in queer spaces).

This article provides additional support for the central role of religion, often Christianity, in the Black community. It shows how homonegativity in the Black church permeates into the

broader community, and results in the sentiment that homosexuality is incompatible with Black masculinity. This was evidenced by many participants choosing not to disclose their identities to maintain relationships, while those who did displayed resilience and developed support from non-Black or nonreligious spaces.

Garrett-Walker and Torres (2017) provided a thematic analysis of how language regarding sexuality affected the ways 20 Black queer men navigated their lives and negotiated their identities. Participants overwhelmingly reported experiences with negative religious rhetoric, essentially condemning same-sex behavior. Many participants reported experiences of exploitation (where their talents might be welcome, but not their full person) and isolation as a result. Some participants worked to suppress their same sex attractions or adjust their presentation to appear more masculine. Some participants expressed a belief that the church contributed to stigma, and possibly justification for violence, toward queer populations. Several participants indicated these negative messages pushing them to study more and deepen their personal relationships with God. For some this alleviated the need for the approval of others.

This article provides additional support for the far-reaching impact of religious homonegativity on queer Black men. It highlights how one aspect of queer Black men's identities could potentially result in the loss of a powerful and prevalent source of support for Black people. That loss could be magnified when, as extant literature suggests happens often, this rhetoric spills over into the broader community. Thus, it seems logical that queer black men work to suppress, compensate for, or conceal their sexual identities, or seek support in other communities as they lean into their sexual identities.

Means (2017) applies Quare Theory - a Black-centric Queer Theory- to a qualitative study of nine Black gay and bisexual college students to provide counter-stories regarding their

spiritual practices and spaces. In this study, Means interviewed (60-90 minutes) participants, had them engage in photovoice, observed them in their religious spaces and practices. Participants reported experiences of racism in wealthy Caucasian congregations and homonegativity in Black churches. These participants were often not in financial positions where they could afford to leave these less than affirming spaces. Some participants expressed having internalized homophobia: including attempts to pray that God would take away their same sex attraction. Other participants described reclaiming their spirituality by internally or externally interrogating spiritual messages embedded with homophobia, embracing both of their identities and rejecting dualistic messages about them, developing personal relationships with a higher power and leaving organized spiritual spaces, as well as developing spiritual counter spaces.

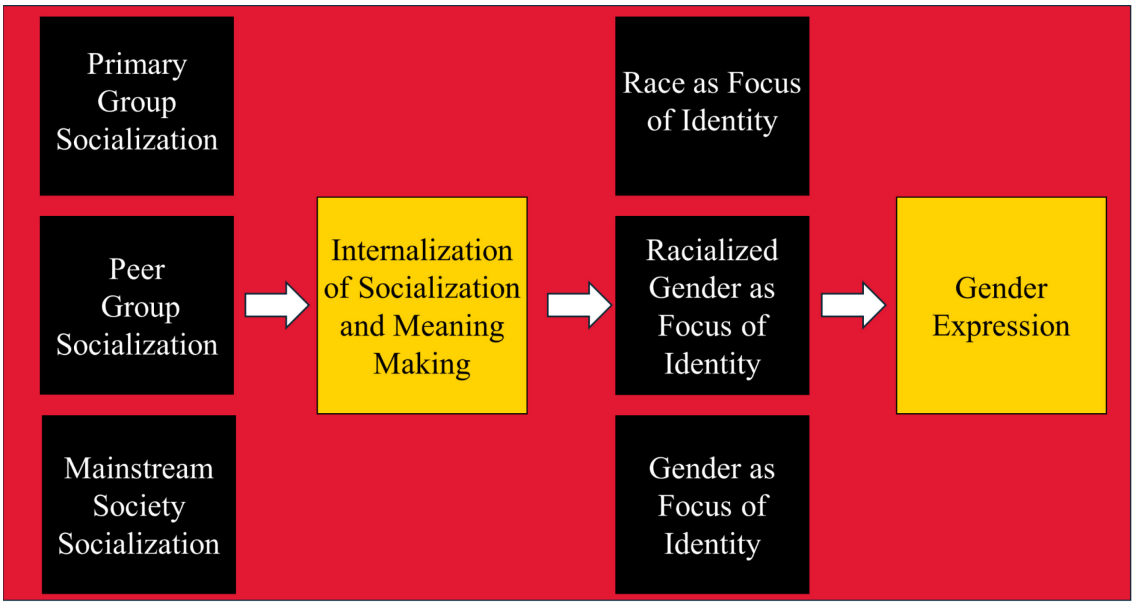
Throughout their developmental journeys participants indicated hearing a lot of homonegative messages that amounted to the incompatibility of Black masculinity with homosexuality. Additionally, they also appear to have experienced racism in non-Black spaces and heterosexism in Black spaces. Scholarship on intersectionality suggests that this is common among multiply marginalized populations. It may be important to note that their sexual identity seems to reduce or eliminate the privilege that their gender identity might otherwise produce, in some contexts. All of this appears to influence how these queer Black men navigate and negotiate their identities: with some opting to reject negative messages and others masking their identities in the hopes of maintaining relationships with their loved ones and communities of origin.

Appendix E

Theory Visual

Figure 3.

Theory of Black Men's Racialized Gender Identity Development and Gender Expression



Note: Figure 1 provides a visual outline of the theory of Black men's racialized gender identity development and gender expression developed from the results of this study and integration of existing theories. It depicts how Black men are socialized by various groups (e.g., primary, peer, and mainstream society) into Black masculinity and Black manhood. How these Black men internalize and make meaning of their socialization can inform whether their identity development takes a racial, gender, or racialized gender (i.e. intersectional) focus. All these components, then inform their gender expression.

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