"THERE'S NO STRUGGLE LIKE A BLACK GIRL STRUGGLE":

BLACK COLLEGE WOMEN AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH

GENDERED RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS AT A PREDOMINATELY

WHITE INSTITUTION

by

D'Janna Hamilton

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

Spring 2016

ProQuest Number: 10156567

ProQuest 10156567

"THERE'S NO STRUGGLE LIKE A BLACK GIRL STRUGGLE":

BLACK COLLEGE WOMEN AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH

GENDERED RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS AT A PREDOMINATELY

WHITE INSTITUTION

by

D'Janna Hamilton

Approved: _____
Asia Friedman, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Kirk Williams, Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice

Approved: _____
George Watson, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Approved: _____
Ann L. Ardis, Ph.D.
Senior Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix

ABSTRACT

This research illuminates how racism and sexism intersect and influence Black women's college experiences at a predominately white university. Peers and faculty members can make Black women feel inferior or out of place in predominately white spaces through the use of microaggressions, which are offensive and often subtle actions or comments directed at a member of a marginalized group that unconsciously reinforce stereotypes. By utilizing 19 in-depth interviews with Black female undergraduates at a large public university in the Mid-Atlantic region, I find that Black women at this institution are experiencing microaggressions in multiple spaces on their college campus. The respondents experienced *gendered racial microaggressions* in the classroom and in predominately white social spaces. Intraracial interactions between Black women and Black men resulted in *gender microaggressions* and gendered interactions in a same race context.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Black women's unique lived experience is created through the way that their race and gender identities are treated and perceived in society (Donovan, Galban, Bennett, & Felicie, 2012; Collins, 2000). Situated in a space where two systems of oppression, race and gender, come together ("Patricia Hill Collins," n.d.) Black women's experiences cannot be fully captured by assessing race and gender separately (Crenshaw, 1991). While the ideas that undergird the concept of intersectionality existed in the 60s and 70s, Crenshaw introduced the term "intersectionality" in the late 1980s to explain the ways that Black women embody multiple subordinate categories (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1991). My research investigates the way that the simultaneous experience of sexism and racism, also referred to as gendered racism (Essed, 1991), and intersectionality, affect Black women in higher education through their experiences with microaggressions at predominately white institutions. Black women are experiencing gender racial microaggressions in multiple spaces on predominately white college campuses: on the campus as a whole, in the classroom, and in predominately white social spaces. Intraracial relations also cause them to realize the impact that their race/gender identities have on interaction.

Microaggressions are offensive, often subtle actions or comments directed at a member of a marginalized group that unconsciously reinforces stereotypes ("Microaggression," 2016). More specifically, gendered racial microaggressions are everyday, subtle behavioral, environmental, and verbal expressions of oppression that

are based on the intersection of an individual's race and gender (Lewis & Neville, 2015). Microaggressions can appear in many different forms, whether through the use of code words such as 'affirmative action,' through certain looks and averted gazes, or they may surface when people use what they believe to be compliments that end up offending the individual they were referring to (McCabe, 2009).

In the last decade, more studies have emerged that focus on the way that Black women experience microaggressions based on their simultaneous identities. Unlike studies that have used quantitative methods (Donovan, Galban, Bennett, & Felicie, 2012), focused on levels of stress and coping strategies (Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Huntt, 2012; Lewis & Neville, 2015), and provided information about Black women in their undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees (Lewis et al., 2012), this present study focuses on undergraduate Black women between the ages of 18-22, uses qualitative methods, and explains the way that Black women on the ground are actually experiencing gendered racial microaggressions. Through the use of 19 in-depth interviews with Black women who were enrolled as undergraduate students at a large, predominately white, public university, the following questions were examined: 1. In what ways do Black women experience gendered racial microaggressions at a predominately white institution of higher education? 2. How do these instances of gendered racial microaggressions shape Black women's college experience?

This study goes beyond existing studies of intersectional experience by providing information regarding intraracial interactions between Black women and Black men on predominately white college campuses as well as Black women's understandings of inclusion and exclusion in relation to Black men. I believe that the type of microaggressions that Black women face (whether they are gendered racial,

gender, and racial) at a predominately white institution vary depending on the space that they are occupying.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the progress that society has made in regards to race and gender, such as the election of President Barack Obama, the prevalence of women in higher education (Guo, 2014), and other advancements, some may believe that we live in a post-racial as well as a non-sexist society. However, other evidence suggests that racism has not disappeared but rather, the expression of overt racism has transformed into something more indirect that is operating below the level of conscious awareness (Sue, 2010:8). Similar to expressions of racism, sexism may appear to be on the decline but in actuality is becoming more ambiguous and subtle (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2013). Colorblindness, which explains race inequality as unrelated to racial dynamics (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), and gender-blindness which is any instance where there is failure to acknowledge difference on the basis of gender when it is significant (Nobelius, 2004), create more stress and tension for those simultaneously affected by racism and sexism. The forms of microaggressions that Black women deal with are unique to being simultaneously female and Black, and communicate messages of inferiority, stereotypes, and abnormal cultural values (Williams and Nichols, 2012).

Kimberle Crenshaw notes that because race and gender are often considered mutually exclusive the multidimensionality of Black women's experiences can be ignored (Crenshaw, 1989). Whereas a white woman may deal with microaggressions that question her competency based on gender alone, Black women can be perceived

incompetent due to their gender as well as their race. Sue, who does extensive work on microaggressions defines them as:

> the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group
>
> <div align="right">(Sue, 2010:5)</div>

Microaggressions used against Black women point out their Blackness and womanhood simultaneously in a derogatory way and are referred to as gendered racial microaggressions. Gendered racial microaggressions are subtle expressions of oppression that are based on the intersection of an individual's race and gender (Lewis and Neville, 2015). Lewis and Neville created a Gendered Racial Microaggressions scale, which was developed to assess the frequency of microaggressions that Black women encounter (Lewis and Neville, 2015). Using Likert-type response survey data of 259 Black women ranging in age from 16-77 years old, Lewis and Neville found that microaggressions that Black women faced fell into 4 categories: silenced and marginalized (91% of the sample), Strong Black woman stereotype (87% of the sample), Angry Black woman stereotype (90% of sample), and assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification (92% of the sample) (2015). Using an intersectional analytic framework and quantitative methods, this study provided me with the definition of gendered racial microaggressions that framed my study as well as an understanding of the way that gendered racial microaggressions are heavily impacted by stereotypes about Black women.

Gendered Racial Experiences in Higher Education

Black women represent the largest non-white college enrolled population in higher education (Harper, 2007) and also account for over 67% of degrees earned in the African American population (Harper, 2007). Black women are participating in higher education in large numbers, however their presence on predominately white campuses seems to not change their experiences with feelings of isolation as well as covert and overt racism and sexism while attending college. Since post Civil Rights integration Black women have had unique experiences in college due to their intersecting identities, specifically at predominately white universities.

Through the use of in depth interviews and questionnaires Higginbotham (2001) found that Black women who integrated institutions of higher education in the 1950s and 1960s had to adjust to being the only people of color in classes of 150-200 and had to juggle academic struggles as well as unique social adjustments due to their race and gender identities (Higginbotham, 2001). Higginbotham provided insight into the experiences of 56 Black women who graduated from predominately white universities with undergraduate degrees from 1968-1970. Follow up surveys were conducted 6-8 years after graduation and in depth interviews with 12 of the 56 women resulted in findings that detailed accounts that are very similar to the experiences that Black women have at predominately white institutions in the present. It is quite common for Black women students to feel pressure to avoid fulfilling stereotypes (Higginbotham, 2001; Dorvil, 2011) they report instances of being questioned about how or why they got into the university (Higginbotham, 2001; Banks, 2009), and also find it hard to adjust socially on a predominately white campus (Higginbotham, 2001; Green, 2015).

Comparative studies of predominately white colleges and historically Black colleges/universities can provide insight into the way that Black women experience the intersection of their identities, even when they are surrounded by people who identify racially the same way that they do. Overall, students at historically Black colleges/universities feel a greater connection to their school than Black students at predominately white universities and experience greater personal and social benefits, such as becoming more culturally aware and opportunities to create networks through support outlets on campus (Fleming, 1984; Harper, Carini, Bridges, & Hayek, 2004; Van Camp, Barden, & Sloan, 2010). In the past, Black women at historically Black colleges faced issues that were quite similar to Black women at predominately white colleges (Fleming, 1984). Patriarchal environments on the campuses of historically Black colleges/universities nurtured male dominance while creating a discouraging environment for female students (Fleming, 1984). In order to expand on previous studies and gain an understanding of gender differences at historically Black colleges and universities, Harper et al (2004) conducted a quantitative study of 1,167 Black students at 12 historically Black colleges/universities. The sample was made up of 248 men and 919 women. The authors found that since the 1980s Black women on historically Black campuses have perceived their campuses to be as supportive of them as the men in the sample, and the dominance previously mentioned seems to be subsiding according to the study (Harper et al., 2004). This study did not focus on microaggressions that Black women may have endured on historically Black campuses, however, it did detail the way that they experience being a Black woman in a space where they are the racial majority.

Black women are often the most isolated on predominately white college campuses (Felming, 1983; Shavers & Moore, 2014) Research indicates that social interactions can become more difficult on larger campuses because it is harder to meet people when surrounded by large numbers of students (Green, 2015). Challenges connecting with people who share the same race and/or gender identity as well as being in the minority may result in the isolation that Black women on predominately white college campuses are experiencing. Due to their race and gender identities, Black women may feel lonely or have problems getting acclimated to all white campus environments (Shabazz, 2015). As Black women, there are consistent reminders that predominately white institutions are catering to the majority through the prevalence of white spaces on college campuses (Cabrera, 2014). Such spaces, which are areas where marginalized groups have difficulty finding cultural ownership (Cabrera, 2014), can create a sense of isolation and alienation because Black female students may not feel they have the freedom to be themselves and express their cultural differences. In trying to navigate white spaces Black women face challenges when balancing their race and gender in the college environment on predominately white campuses (Tyson, 2010).

Isolation is not the only problem that Black women are encountering on predominately white campuses. Data that utilized surveys "with space for respondents to provide commentary" (Rankin & Reason, 2005:11) detailed the experiences of 7,347 under-represented and under-served undergraduate students at 10 college campuses across the United States (2 private universities and 6 public universities). Through the use of statistical techniques, the authors found that Black women experience and observe harassment more than white men, Black men, and white

women at predominately white institutions (Rankin & Reason, 2005). While dealing with harassment based on their race and gender identities, Black women are also being sent mixed messages about their place on predominately white campuses. Winkle-Wagner conducted a study that focused on 30 Black women who were undergraduates at the time of interview at a public university in the Midwest. Through the use of "sister circles" (focus groups) Winkle-Wagner found that Black women in the sample simultaneously felt invisible and hypervisible (Winkle-Wagner, 2009). The Black women interviewed felt as if they were invisible to their classmates and professors because of their race and gender, but when put in certain situations they had to speak for all Black students (Winkle-Wagner, 2009), which made them feel as if they were placed under a spotlight or were the spokesperson for all Black people/Black women.

Within the microaggression literature, the focus is on Black students in general attending college rather than Black women specifically. One exception to this is studies that examine the experiences of Black women faculty at predominately white institutions (Pittman, 2010; Edward, Berry, &Snow, 2011). While Black women faculty and Black women students may experience similar issues in the academy (isolation, marginalization, questioning of their abilities (Edwards, Beverly, and Snow 2011)), Black women students currently enrolled in college are likely experiencing these issues in a different way. They are fully immersed in the predominately white institutions where they go to school, especially if they live on campus. They may not have the same routes of "escape" as Black women faculty, who have homes and lives outside of the college campuses where they teach. Black women faculty members are also in a position of relative power compared to Black women students. Literature on Black women who are faculty is important for this research because it explains that

gender racial microaggressions occur in the lives of all Black women, even if they are in positions of perceived power.

<center>Intraracial Interactions on Predominately White College Campuses</center>

As exemplified by the research above, studies on experiences of Black students on predominately white college campuses have focused mostly on interracial interactions. However, the research that is available on intraracial interactions in higher education highlight the way that Black students create communities on predominately white college campuses. Smith and Moore (2000) surveyed Black undergraduates at a predominately white, private university through the use questionnaires (2000). The sample included 102 of the 134 Black undergraduates who were attending the school and respondents participated in closed ended mail in or phone questionnaires. In depth interviews with 30 of the respondents followed the questionnaires. The authors found that while Black students create their own communities in these white spaces, there is variation in how close they feel to other Black students related to their heterogenous backgrounds (Smith and Moore, 2000). The data from the in depth interviews provides evidence that Black students' feelings of closeness or distance from other Black students is based on the "extent to which they perceive themselves to be different from the majority of Black students on campus," the difference being based on socioeconomic status and ethnic/racial identification (Smith & Moore, 2000:34). This illustrates that while the students may have the same racial identity, Black students from different backgrounds may not necessarily develop close social networks with each other despite racial identity.

Lewis and McKissic (2010) used two cases from a larger qualitative study that detailed the experiences of a Black male and Black female student at a predominately

<center>10</center>

white liberal arts college in the Northeast in order to examine the role that the Black community plays on majority white campuses. For those who felt closeness within the Black community, Lewis and McKissic found that the Black community enabled Black students to persist in college and provided a supportive space for Black students to express their feelings, fears, and opinions about their white counterparts (Lewis and McKissic, 2010). These positive intraracial interactions through Black communities fostered racial identity development for Black college students at predominately white universities (Yip, Seaton, and Sellers, 2010; Tatum, 2004).

Through intragroup dialogue, 31 students of color underwent changes related to the way that they viewed race (Ford & Malaney, 2012). Using a pre-dialogue and post-dialogue assignment, Ford and Malaney (2012) assessed the way that racial dialogue affected the opinions that students at a small liberal arts college had of racism and racial identities. After participating in the dialogue Ford and Malaney noted changes related to a shift in overall consciousness of their racial identities, the meaning and saliency of their racial identity, understanding of individual biases and prejudices, and the complexity of racial identity development (Ford & Malaney, 2012), all of which were viewed as positive benefits by those in the study.

While intraracial relations can have positive outcomes for Black students in predominately white institutions, Black women's racialized and gendered identities may play a role in the way they perceive Black men and the way that they think Black men perceive them. Due to gender differences, microaggressions affect Black women and Black men quite differently. Black women deal with "Black misogynistic microaggressions" (Smith, Hung, and Franklin, 2011) within their communities that

11

cause them to have different experiences than Black men when it comes to microaggressive comments and interactions.

In sum, the literature suggests that Black women on college campuses are navigating a space in which their perception and treatment are impacted by their simultaneous social identities. The literature review above came from many different disciplines, but a majority of them were found in psychology and education. There was a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods used to investigate Black women's intersectional experiences with microaggressions. Within recent years, research done about Black women and gendered racial microaggressions have utilized scale measures and statistical analysis while focusing on coping strategies and stress related to these microaggressions. It is important to be able to measure the experiences that Black women are having with gendered racial microaggressions while in predominately white spaces, however getting narratives through intensive interviews allows for the stories to be heard in the words of the respondents. Recent studies on gendered racial microaggressions have also used a broader range of respondents for their studies, looking into the experiences of Black women between the ages of 18-77 who are getting degrees ranging from undergraduate to professional (Lewis et al., 2012; Lewis & Neville, 2015). The study that I am conducting has a specific focus on Black women between the ages of 18-22 who are at the undergraduate level. Also, my choice to use qualitative methods was influenced by the fact that no recent qualitative analysis exists that is illuminating these narratives.

While the extant literature indicates that a large majority of Black students, particularly Black women, still perceive themselves as subjected to stereotypical and prejudicial attitudes, we still know very little about the nature of these perceptions.

Moreover, it is not clear how the effects of these microaggressions are affected by relationships between Black men and Black women. Using intensive interviews with a sample of Black women attending a predominately white institution, the primary goal of this research is to examine the way that gendered racial microaggressions occur in multiple spaces across predominately white college campuses using an intersectional lens. The intersectional lens will also be beneficial in providing a gendered analysis of intraracial relations between Black women and Black men on predominately white campuses. The larger goal of this research is to understand how the dual identities that Black women have impact their college experiences.

Chapter 3

METHODS

This research is based on in-depth interviews with 19 Black female undergraduates from a predominately white research university in the mid-Atlantic region. The interview questions addressed the respondents' experiences with sexism, racism, and microaggressions, as well as their intraracial and interracial interactions on campus (see Appendix B for interview guide). Each interview was about 1 to 1½ hours long, and was preceded by a brief demographic survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to reach a diverse set of participants, I recruited in several ways. I initially utilized face-to-face and email recruitment of women I saw or knew of who fit the criteria. In order to be eligible for the study, participants needed to be Black women between the ages of 18-22 who were currently enrolled as undergraduate students at the time of the interview. After conducting a few interviews I noticed that my sample was primarily composed of junior and senior students. In order to increase the diversity, I created fliers to aid my recruitment. Using the flier I introduced my research to a Sociology class consisting of about 30 students and also contacted a center on campus that houses organizations geared towards Black students and had my information sent to those in their email listserv. After my flier was circulated I received numerous emails from women in all stages of the undergraduate degrees that were interested in talking to me about their experiences. The 19 participants were

made up of three freshman, two sophomores, five juniors, and nine seniors. The sample included variation in major field of study, with respondents coming from the social sciences, STEM, and business (See Appendix A). Interviews took place in the conference room in a neutral building on campus, chosen to help ensure that respondents felt comfortable. Their names have been changed in order to ensure confidentiality.

The demographic survey (see Appendix C) included 23 questions covering year of study, age, and where they grew up. There were also questions about the way that the respondent and their parent(s) and/or caregivers identified both racially and ethnically. In order to gain an understanding of the way that respondents understood their race and gender it was important to me to understand their background and the way that the people closest to them identified. Other questions included in the survey asked about their campus experience pertaining to their membership in clubs and organizations. For Black women who were more aligned with historically black organizations (sororities) or organizations related to the Black experience at a predominately white school I believed that they would have more of an understanding of microaggressions and the ways that race has an effect on the way that they experience the campus.

The interviews were semi structured, with each respondent largely being asked the same questions in the same order, but allowing for variation depending on the respondent's answers. I did not begin the interview asking questions about racial or gendered comments that the respondents had experienced while in college. To first gain rapport with the respondents, I asked them about their experiences in middle school as well as high school, with a focus on both the academic and social. I followed

by asking about their social and academic experiences in college. By the time I asked them about experiences when "they had felt uncomfortable," most respondents had already told me at least one instance where they experienced the intersection of their race and gender through interactions with other students and/or faculty members. I came in with certain ideas about what I would find while conducting this research, but different topics and themes emerged organically from the research.

During each interview I took extensive notes about the respondent's answers. I kept track of phrases that I felt would give the most insight into the experiences that the respondents were having on a predominately white college campus. I recorded and transcribed each interview and used Nvivo in order to begin the analysis process. I went into the process planning to use thematic analysis. Thematic analysis consists of reviewing data and making notes in order to sort it categorically ("Thematic analysis," 2008). Using thematic analysis allowed me to begin the process of open coding, in which I developed codes that labeled certain sections of data ("Thematic analysis," 2008). Through the coding process I found themes present in my interviews that were also in the literature such as stereotype threat (Higginbotham, 2001; Banks, 2009; Dorvil, 2011; Jones, n.d.) and perceived incompetence (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000:76; Ford and Malaney, 2012). I also found themes that emerged on their own in the interviews, specifically the inclusion and exclusion theme and the intraracial relations theme. I identified general themes from the interviews through Nvivo, such as demographics of the respondents and then began to loosely code around ideas of general experiences of microaggressions, isolation, stereotyping, interactions in the classroom, and interactions in the residence halls. I began a more detailed second round of coding that produced the themes I present in my findings: Aspects of

microaggressions, racialized gender hierarchies, experiences in the classroom, inclusion/exclusion, and intraracial relations.

Reflexivity

Since I am a Black woman I made it a point to ask respondents about the way that they viewed me and whether they felt I influenced their responses. Many of the women said that I did not affect their responses in negative ways; rather, they felt more comfortable telling me their stories. They felt that I understood their experiences and may be able to relate to them, which allowed them to speak more freely. One respondent in particular told me, "I feel more comfortable with you from the get go because the Black woman thing. Whereas it might have taken me a little longer to open up if a white woman were interviewing me or I may not have wanted to tell as many stories." It was important to me for the women to feel comfortable while sharing their experiences, but I was also sure to have them clarify their perceptions and experiences during the interviews. The comfort level they perceived may have led them to assume that I automatically understood their ideas and meanings, so I made sure they provided me with detailed accounts of their experiences.

I wanted to understand the experiences and perceptions of these women so I chose intensive interviews as my method of choice. Most importantly, because I did come into the research with my own experiences and perceptions of racism at predominately white institutions, I had to be cautious while interacting with the respondents during interviews. I would often ask them to elaborate when I noticed myself creating assumptions based on the stories that they shared so that I could truly understand from their perspective how they interpreted their interactions with their peers and faculty members. I tried to achieve this by asking for detailed accounts from

the respondents to make sure that I was capturing their ideas and perspectives as accurately as possible. While analyzing the interview narratives, I was also cautious about keeping my own perceptions of reality in check. Fortunately, the respondents were very willing to talk about their experiences in detail, which I think helped me to, although not completely, keep my own perspectives from clouding the narratives of the respondents. They were descriptive in talking about their experiences and exactly how those experiences impacted them and their feelings, so I was not left to infer how they felt about their interactions.

As someone who has been educated in this space at the undergraduate level as well as the graduate level, I tried to be aware of the ways that my own experiences may affect what stands out to me in the data. Because I have ties to the community that I interviewed, certain things that were said in the interviews were familiar to me. There may have been aspects of the data that would stand out more to someone who was not part of this community because they would not have the familiarity that I do with the people and the space. Having had previous but brief interactions with eight out of the nineteen respondents in the sample I had to be critical of the way that I understood their narratives. Questions I asked myself while coding and analyzing were: "Am I less critical of their commentary because I have had previous interactions?" and "Am I more accepting of their commentary as fact?"

When using direct quotes from transcripts, I listened to the recordings multiple times in order to hear the narrative in the context of what was said before and after the quote to make sure that I was representing it accurately. To separate myself from the narratives, I compared the respondents themes to those that I found in the literature. This allowed me to take my assumptions out of the analysis process to the best of the

ability by comparing the respondents' experiences to those in studies in different locations and in different settings. I was also sure to spend extra time looking for encounters within the interviews that were inconsistent with what I found in the literature as well as what I was hearing from other respondents. Even in interviews where the respondent shared interactions that aligned exactly with the literature and my thoughts, I pushed myself to think about aspects of that particular respondent's experience that could cause them to have a difference in interactions, such as their appearance, previous knowledge of subjects, or their understanding of my study prior to interviewing. In the analysis that follows, I use the respondents' narratives to provide validity checks to all of my interpretations and generalizations.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The findings from this study aligned with those of previous research on Black women's experiences on predominately white college campuses. I will begin by highlighting these themes, all of which concern interracial relations between Black and white students (or Black students and white faculty), in the narratives of my respondents. After reviewing these similarities to the existing literature, I present suggestive data pointing to a potential new direction for research: intraracial interactions between Black men and Black women as well as notions regarding inclusion and exclusion based on gender in contexts of racial and gender microaggressions in predominately white spaces. This is not a topic of focus in prior research and was not expected to be a focus of this analysis, but emerged organically as a theme during the interviews.

Aspects of Microaggressions

Virtually all of the respondents discussed a time in which they experienced microaggressions. In some of the interviews, the respondents explicitly stated that they encountered microaggressions. In other instances I was able to identify stories in which the respondents were victims of microaggressions based on the definition present in the literature. As defined in the literature, microaggressions are offensive, often subtle actions or comments directed at a member of a marginalized group that unconsciously reinforces stereotypes ("Microaggression," 2016). Among the women

that I studied, four directly used the term 'microaggressions' to explain interactions and comments made against them by their white counterparts. Tyra, a freshman Biology student, went to predominately white middle and high schools and did not have as rough of a transition to campus as others because she was used to being in majority white settings. Being used to the setting, however, did not make her any more comfortable with microaggressions, including comments from white men that they assumed she would take as compliments.

> Well it's weird. Because white guys will flirt with me like 'Oh you're pretty for a Black girl.' Especially here, oh my Gosh. And I have a friend from high school and recently he was like 'You're pretty for a Black girl but I wouldn't be able to date you because my parents won't let me.' I was like 'Okay, cool.' …This guy came up to me, and said, 'Can you be my first chocolate girl?' and he wouldn't stop following me around the entire time so I just left. And that was the last one [white fraternity party] I went to.

This type of statement is meant to be a compliment, but in actuality it is a "watered-down" insult that serves "to mask the not quite obsolete racist sentiment" (Sharp-Grier, 2015:31). The "pretty for a Black girl" rhetoric reflects societal ideas that describe Black women as unattractive. Beauty ideals are ingrained into societal culture and the more ones appearance deviates from the standard, the less attractive they are considered (Bryant, 2013). Black women are affected by beauty standards due to the fact that the standards are based on European characteristics that emphasize hair types and complexions that exclude Black women (Bryant, 2013). These stereotypes about attractiveness are at the intersection of racism and sexism, and reinforce the notion that Black women are less attractive or not attractive at all. In calling Tyra "pretty for a Black girl," her white peer invoked the stereotypes related to Black women and attractiveness in a way that he thought would be complimentary. In

21

actuality, his comment was a statement that was not only offensive to Tyra, but also put down those who share her race and gender identity.

Microaggressions are not always presented as "compliments" as in the quote above. Sometimes they are framed as curiosity on the part of the offender. Sade, a senior student studying Criminal Justice and Political Science recalled comments from white floor mates in her dormitory her freshman year when she changed her hairstyle: "How did your hair grow so fast over night?," "What kind of weave is that?," and "How come you don't wash your hair everyday?" Sade is of Caribbean descent and would often bring cultural dishes back to school after visiting her parents. When eating her food among her floor mates she would be asked, "Why does your food smell so weird?" Sade's differences were pointed out because she was culturally different than the white women on her floor. Her floormates saw her as a cultural outsider (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996), and potentially viewed her presence as a disruption to the "natural" state of the campus as being a place of homogeneity as it related to whiteness (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, &Solorzano, 2009). The questioning that Sade endured was representative of her white floormates not seeing her as having legitimate cultural citizenship in the predominately white space (Feagin et al., 1996). According to Rosaldo (n.d.), cultural citizenship is defined as being culturally different, yet having the right to be considered a first-class citizen. Cultural citizenship "asserts that even in contexts of inequality peoples have a right to their distinctive heritage" (Rosald: n.p., n.d.). Sade was not allowed to have full cultural citizenship, because she constantly had people calling attention to her differences based on her gender, race, and culture. The experience that Sade had is also representative of one-way assimilation. Higginbotham (2001) discusses one-way assimilation, which, for

Black students at majority white schools, means that they are changing themselves and potentially stifling aspects of their culture in order to fit in with no work done on the part of their white peers to understand cultural differences. The questions asked of Sade are representative of this term because her floormates called attention to her not assimilating by asking offensive questions about her hair and culture instead of showing genuine interest.

Calling attention to cultural differences in an offensive way resulted in microaggressions that created feelings of exclusion for Black women in "white" or unmarked but implicitly white spaces. In particular, the respondents did not want their race to be ignored but also did not want others to bring it to the attention of those around them in ways that were belittling. In an interaction at a white fraternity party, Sade's race and gender were emphasized in a way that caused her to feel discomfort:

> One time I went to a frat party with one of my white friends. I could literally hear a girl across the room, she said: 'Oh my God you have a big butt! Can you twerk? Can you teach me?' And I'm the only Black person in the room, so you already assume that I twerk because of my race? I'm here enjoying the party like you.

In this anecdote Sade only referenced her race, but it is clear that both her race and gender played a role in the questions she was asked by the white woman at the party. Representation of Black women that sexualize their bodies (Emerson, 2002) and stereotypes related to their hypersexualization (Hill Collins, 1991) in media and music videos (Emerson, 2002) came together to create the perception that the white woman at the party had of Sade. Tyra, whose story was discussed previously, also had issues at a white fraternity party where she was followed by and hit on by white men. After telling her story she stated: "I don't think Black men experience things like that." Repeatedly talking about the way that she felt fetishized by the white men because of

her race and gender, Tyra called attention to that intersection and how it caused her discomfort when in a situation where she was in a majority white space. She became so uncomfortable that she left the party. These examples are important because they provide examples of microaggressions that are unique to Black women. The stereotypes that were assumed were directly related to Black womanhood and ideas of attractiveness as well as the hypersexualized body of Black women.

Microassaults, defined as "explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue et al., 2007), are a form of microaggressions that are more overt. Four of the respondents outlined instances where they were the victims of microassaults and these instances speak to the racial climate of the campus. While three out of the four respondents told stories that involved the use of racial epithets, one experienced a multitude of issues that she felt were personal attacks due to her race. Tiana, a senior Environmental Science major recounted the following story:

> Before I came to college only twice in my life was I ever called the n word. Since being in college, I've only been here 4 years, I've lost count of how many times I've been called the n word. When I got here in the first week, I was called the n word. We were walking to the gym. And you know they're always bold from a moving vehicle. And they yelled it at us as we were walking down the street. Whether it's walking on main street, cars going by out in a big group. Or on social media or whatever.

Expletives being shouted from a moving car were also brought up by another student in her senior year.

> I was called the "N" word the first weekend I got to school…My first football game freshman year I was walking, crossing the street, there was a group of us. And this red Honda, 1990 something janky car full

of frat bros. We were crossing the street and they just yelled 'move niggers.'

Kenya did not attend a coeducational high school and she followed that story by stating: "Yeah that was my first experience interacting with white males outside of class or the dorm setting." Her understanding of white men in a social setting was affected by that overtly racist interaction that she had her first year of college. Racist experiences seemed to occur often for senior resident assistant Asha, who recalled numerous incidents that she felt could only be happening to her because of her race.

> I'm an RA. I've had residents scratch my name off on duty sheets throughout the building. I've had people vandalize my floor. I've had students who I've told they were loud and need to be quieter go into the elevator and say 'oh is she black?' and then say 'I can't stand the black bitches here.' And then the elevator door shuts and I can't do anything about it. An incident that happened recently, they baked the cake or maybe the cake was bad I don't know but they left a whole cake broken up in front of my door with ripped down posters and fliers and door dec[orations]. Just sitting there. So like in all of those situations I just felt targeted. I've had residents ask me if I smoke weed because I'm Black.

Asha felt personally attacked due to her race because of some of the experiences she had with other students on campus. Even if the attacks were due to reasons other than her race, her being able to readily believe they were racially motivated speaks to the racial climate of the university. Another student experienced blatant racism, and although it was not directed towards her, she was left feeling very uncomfortable. Amber, a freshman Neuroscience major and the only Black girl on her floor, was placed in an uncomfortable situation while in a room full of her floor mates.

> One time on my floor like two weeks ago they were on Omegle. It's like a video chat site where you video chat random people. Everyone else in the room was white and a Black person came up on the screen and one of the guys, he called him the "N" word. And one of the other

> white guys, he's a part of SAE and you remember how they got in
> trouble for that chant? He started saying the chant. I went into shock
> and I just got up and I left. I couldn't believe they were so comfortable
> to say that in front of me.

For Amber even though the racist remarks were not addressed to her, she still felt

extremely uncomfortable while watching the encounter. This can become somewhat of

a balancing act for Black women at predominately white universities when they have

to decide whether or not it is worth it to address racial comments or if the emotional

toll of getting into these conversations is too great. The overt racism that these four

respondents experienced is evidence that racism has not disappeared. Although racism

is becoming more covert through the use of microaggressions, the respondents relayed

encounters that show racist experiences are still prevalent on predominately white

college campuses as microassaults.

Racialized Gender Hierarchies on Campus

> As Black women first of all, this is like the hierarchy: There's men at
> the top then you have white men, black men. Then you have women
> and then Black women. So basically we're at like the bottom…In terms
> of discrimination and stuff. There's no struggle like a Black girl
> struggle.

In the quote above, Mignon, a freshman Neuroscience student explained the hierarchy

that she perceived on the campus. Black women felt that there was a racial gender

pyramid that they were at the bottom of due to their position at the intersection of

Blackness and womanhood. Mignon identified an important theme that outlined her

and other respondents' understandings of racialized gender relationships on campus:

men have a higher status than women although within each status those who are white

are situated at the top. Mignon is not alone in this narrative. Hazel, a Black American

Studies and Political Science student in her junior year stated:

There's a hierarchy. White women, everyone else, then Black women.
Black women are always at the bottom.

Both of these respondents used the word "hierarchy" when defining the way that race and gender situate people on their campus. This enforces their understanding of the power and respect that comes with certain identities, but not with others. Black women in this study seemed to also be experiencing this racialized gendered order through the way that people valued, or did not value, their opinions. Mya, a senior student in Marketing and Management Information Systems alluded to this when she said, "There's a totem pole. White women, their opinion is taken as less but they'll take it more than my opinion. And this isn't everybody, but it's the vast majority." The value placed on opinion was Mya's way of understanding her own and other Black women's place on the campus. The analogous totem pole also plays a role in the interracial interactions that Black men and Black women have. Black women and Black men share the same race identity but different gender identities and therefore, have different experiences on predominately white college campuses. This idea of interracial relations affected by gender will be explored more fully in a later section.

While the respondents believed that Black women fell at the bottom of the racialized gender rankings, they perceived a certain *type* of Black woman to have the lowest status. Loud, low income, unrefined Black women stereotypes seemed to fall into the bottom area, and the women in the study encountering the threat of that stereotype felt they had to take certain precautions so that they were not aligned with it. "You kind of feel like you have to restrict yourself in certain ways. Like 'Oh I'm not going to talk about that, because they're going to think I'm from the hood.'" In talking about the racialized gender rankings I found that the respondents participated in slight distancing from the stereotypes that they considered to be at the bottom of the

27

gender racial hierarchy. In order to not be viewed as a negative Black woman stereotype, Raven, an English major, said she was conscious of other Black women she chose to associate with so that they would not reflect badly on her. Raven felt that if she were to befriend Black women on campus who fit certain stereotypes (too loud, "ghetto," urban) those around her would also view her in a negative light based on association.

> It's also who you're seen with [that] plays a big part because I think everybody: white, black, whatever you are, you don't wanna be seen with something that doesn't reflect well on you. So I think it [stereotypes] makes you conscious. Because I'm not gonna be seen with ratchet girls, because that's not me. If we're in the middle of the student center and girls are acting ratchet, it just makes me conscious of who I hang out with. I think looks are important. How you present yourself is important because people judge. I judge. You judge. We all do, so I think stereotypes on college campuses play a lot more into it. I think about like, 'How is this going to reflect on me? How do I look?'

The threat of stereotype was so present in Raven's experiences that she felt association with "ratchet" Black women would tarnish her image. In this way, Raven is showing that perceptions of Black women can be so negative that they can cause evaluation of many different aspects, in this instance friendship with other Black women. In a way, the women who are attempting to avoid stereotype threat use distancing and othering as forms of agency against the hierarchy and negative definitions of Black womanhood. It seems that the respondents othered themselves as different from the "ratchet" Black women and/or they behaved in ways that did not align with the negative categorization. Not only did the respondents identify this hierarchy, but I also found that they defined themselves in comparison to the negative controlling image of Black femininity, which is directly juxtaposed against white images of femininity.

A majority of the respondents felt that Black women were at the bottom of this power struggle, but there were a few who believed that Black men had it worse and were viewed as receiving the lowest levels of respect. Amber, a freshman student stated:

> We both have it bad because our dark skin is viewed as intimidating, but Black men get it more. They're men and are viewed as more violent than Black women. Being a Black man is hard in America. There's police brutality and they're viewed as threatening.

The other respondents that brought up this point shared similar sentiments about the reasoning behind why Black men "have it worse" than Black women. Ideas related to criminality fueled the explanations for why Black men are in a worse position than Black women are on the campus. The respondents that mentioned this discussed Black men on campus and their interactions with the campus police as well as police outside of the campus setting. The narrative of a violent, dangerous man influenced the respondents' beliefs that Black men were worse off. The aspect of fear, criminality, and police brutality led a few of the respondents to believe that they were not receiving the worst kind of discrimination. Rather, due to the cultural stereotype of Black masculinity and violence, Black men on their campus were having worse experiences.

In the Classroom: Experiences with Faculty and Students

The respondents told many stories reflecting their discomfort with faculty members and other students because of the intersection of their race and gender. For those who were in majors that were made up of mostly white men, such as STEM and business fields, they noted being made to feel inferior because of the racial make up of

their classes. Being outnumbered reflects notions of invisibility that Black women feel on predominately white college campuses (Shabazz, 2015). Shabazz presents the invisibility that Black women feel on predominately white campuses in two ways: I don't see me and they don't see me (Shabazz, 2015). The classroom is a combination of both with Black women not seeing themselves in classes where they are one of a few Black students (I don't see me) and also through interactions in which their white counterparts convey dismissal of their intelligence and experiences (they don't see me). In some cases they believed that they were perceived as incompetent before even speaking or giving their opinions in class because of their race and gender. This perceived incompetence had an effect on the way that the women understood their place in certain courses. Mya, a Management Information Systems and Marketing double major, was often in courses comprised mostly of white male students. Her experiences were as follows:

> So especially in those classes until the midterm I'll raise my hand or in group projects I'll say 'Let's do this, let's do that' and they don't want to take my opinion. Because they're like: 'She's black and she's a female, she obviously doesn't know anything.' I'm not sure if it's just a male complex on top of a white complex. It's just: 'I'm a white male and I'm not gonna take anything especially from this Black female. She obviously doesn't know anything about this so I don't know how she got in this class.' But it's just typical.

Although Mya did not refer to it as such, she was experiencing academic stereotyping at the hands of her white classmates. Academic stereotyping occurs when a student is seen as less competent due to their membership in a certain group, and is enacted by white students that "seemed to convey that they 'knew something' about them or could ascertain something about their academic abilities…"(Lewis et al., 2000:76) based on their affiliation in certain racial/gender groups. Mya went on to explain that

she felt that she had a different experience than Black men did in her classes. She and

other respondents felt that white men were likely to be more welcoming to the idea of

Black men being in their groups and taking their opinions more seriously.

> However the [white] guys will garner more towards picking the guys,
> even if he's a Black man, before coming towards us [Black women].
> [Black men are] still slightly higher on the totem pole; their opinion has
> a little bit more weight.

This relates to the hierarchy previously mentioned. Black men may be viewed

differently because of their race, but due to the racialized gender hierarchy their

thoughts and opinions have higher value than those of Black women. This ranking

affects interracial as well as intraracial interactions on the predominately white college

campus.

Other respondents shared similar feelings of perceived incompetence that they

felt from white students and faculty members. Some described feeling they could not

speak in certain classes because other students did not think they deserved to be there.

It seems that rhetoric of 'you did not make it here on your own' is prevalent in the

lives of the respondents. Malika, an International Relations major, shared her

experience with that feeling:

> The whole 'You didn't make it here on your own.' No one has said it to me
> straight up, I saw it on YikYak [social media website] and internalized it.
> Although it wasn't said to me, after that I think is when I really started to
> notice and I felt like people around me … I wasn't seen as being worthy of
> being here. It seems to be an opinion a lot of white people have [on this
> campus]. Like, 'You just got in because you're Black.'

This questioning of how a Black female student gained acceptance into college can

lead Black female students to feel that they are not viewed as full members of their

campus community (Lewis et al., 2000). This is a tactic that is described in the racial

microaggressions literature (Sue, 2010) in which some white students believe that Black female students were getting into the school because of their race and not of their own merit (Higginbotham, 2001; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Lewis et al., 2011). In this type of environment it was easy for the respondents to begin to second-guess themselves as well. Some described feeling initially shocked due to being the only Black woman in a class, and questioning why or how they even ended up in certain courses. Others pointed out that the reason why they felt incompetent is because they have been socialized by societal ideas that led them to view themselves as beneath others in intelligence and education.

Feelings of inferiority, perceived incompetence, and alienation combined in majors dominated by white men were intensified when they were put in the position to pick groups and complete assignments. Picking groups for class seems to be a simple task, but for the respondents it reiterated the way that people view them in a negative light. Kristina, a senior Finance major, shared her experience with picking groups:

> When we're told to get into groups I'm almost always the only one without a group. It's awkward. No one wants to accept me. It's almost like it's portraying that I'm not accepted in society. Once I had a Black professor who told us to get into groups and then she saw how people reacted to me. One on one after class she apologized because of putting me in that awkward situation.

For Kristina, something that seemed simple to most other students was quite uncomfortable and triggering for her. In another story she relayed being in a class where students sat at tables of two. The professor, who was a white woman, told each student to turn to the person at their table and discuss the assignment they were working on in class that day. Kristina was sitting next to a white man in this class, who turned to look at her, then looked away and began working with a white

classmate at a different table. The professor saw this encounter and then talked to Kristina about her answers for the assignment. From that point on, the professor no longer asked students to work in pairs for that class. After relaying that story Kristina stated, "I don't think most white professors understand the importance of assigning groups for us." Something that seems miniscule has a large impact on women who already feel like outsiders on their college campuses. The respondents that mentioned picking groups as something they were uncomfortable with had to deal with that emotion on their own, because in many cases they were the only Black women in their classes and others could not relate to those feelings. Because this is something that could be considered minor to others, Black women in this sample may have also felt that people would dismiss or minimalize the emotional toll that went along with picking groups. This dismissal is an example of microaggressions.

This dismissal is an example microaggressive theme referred to as colorblindness (Sue, 2010). Porsha, a sophomore Communications student, had an encounter with white male students while in a group in an English class that left her with feelings of uneasiness based on the dismissal of her experiences that she felt.

> I'm writing my paper on the racial injustices on campus and how you can bridge the gap. My thesis was asking if having a mandatory African American studies class and everyone had to attend would help. I had to sit in a group – it was all white guys – and I had to have them read over the paper and discuss their views on the topic. I was just very uncomfortable with doing that. Some of them were like 'Ok yeah I get it. I'm for equal rights.' The others were kind of like 'I don't really see a race thing on campus. I don't believe that races are different.' The one kid said that having a class would make a bigger racial gap. The other kid said that he had already learned about African American history in history and he didn't have to learn anymore.

Porsha's interaction with the white males in her group exemplifies Black women on majority white campuses being silenced and dismissed when trying to talk about their

experiences with race. The silencing comes in different forms, as outlined through Porsha's story. Some may dismiss the discussion of race by saying there is no problem, and others dismiss the topic of race by saying the problem is no longer relevant. By dismissing her paper topic in multiple ways, the white men in Porsha's group denied her a chance to talk about the experiences of people like her. They also inadvertently told her that her experience as a Black person was not something that they were interested in and did not want to acknowledge, talk, or learn about and minimalized the experiential reality of Black women's interactions in predominately white spaces (Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, &Torino, 2008). These kinds of responses may stop some Black women from having discussions about race altogether, which can result in a cycle of silencing. The level of discomfort Porsha recounted explains the way that the respondents felt when talking about racial issues to their peers. Sade also spoke to this idea, noting that when Black women do talk about race in class they receive dirty looks.

Another form of microaggressions experienced in the classroom is the "assumed universality of the Black experience" (Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015). Sara, a senior International Relations student, recalled an interaction with a professor in front of her entire class that caused hypervisibility. This resulted in discomfort and confusion regarding how to feel about the interaction.

> Somehow she [the professor] put me in a stereotypical box of my home life and what I do for the holidays like for Christmas and things like that. And I had to break it to her that just because my skin is dark doesn't mean I celebrate the same way every Black person celebrates. So I said 'I celebrate Christmas the way many others celebrate Christmas. I don't celebrate Kwanzaa. Just because I'm Black doesn't mean that I'm eating collard greens, macaroni and cheese, and sweet potato pie at dinner. There may very well be a sweet potato pie there, but there's also ox tail and other cultural foods too.

These types of microaggressions frame Black people as being part of a monolithic group (Holder et al., 2015). When talking about this comment, Sara noted that she felt she could not properly express the way she felt about being asked questions that placed her as a spokesperson for all people of color. Juxtaposed against invisibility, this was a situation of hypervisibility in which Sara's race was made the center of conversation. Although the situation was bothersome, in the moment Sara was more upset that she could not express herself due to worries about being viewed as an 'angry Black woman' than she was about being asked about stereotypical Black celebrations. In another interaction with the same professor, Sara was offended by a comment that she felt referred to Black people and their class/financial status in a negative way.

> Another time where I felt uncomfortable I think was really in my fashion merchandising class and this same teacher was asking us to bring in counterfeit or knockoff handbags. We were doing a section on authenticity. She was like 'How many of you have fake handbags?' So she kept asking and then looked in my direction and said 'Sara, you don't have any counterfeit handbags?' and I'm just like I don't know why she would think I have fake handbags. Like how do you just assume? Does anything about me scream 'Hey! I carry fake handbags' other than the fact that I'm black?

Due to stereotypes in the media, such as television news, newspapers, magazines, and other media outlets, Black people of low socioeconomic status have come to dominate images of poverty (Gilens, 1996). The poor in America are portrayed as substantially more Black than is actually the case (Gilens, 1996). This stereotype of Black people as having low socioeconomic status may have played a role in the questioning that Sara received from her professor. She felt offended because it seemed as if her professor was assuming that she could not afford designer bags and therefore had to buy counterfeit bags because of the financial stereotypes surrounding Blackness.

Mignon, a freshman neuroscience student, had an interaction with a white female professor that left her feeling uncomfortable due to questions about her appearance.

> I don't really like my biology teacher. When I went to see her in office hours she was asking me questions about my hair. She was just like 'How did you pick that color? What's next, blue or green?' And I said 'No I try not to stand out too much.' Then she was like 'Is it all yours?' I wasn't really offended I was just like why are we talking about this.

Although Mignon said she did not feel offended, the attention her professor paid to her hair as well as the questions asked were invasive in a way that could have caused discomfort to other Black women in that same predicament. There also had to be some level of uneasiness, since she noted that she "does not like" her teacher and wondered why the questions were even being asked. Asking about hair may seem like something harmless, but hair in the Black community and specifically Black women's hair has the power to dictate how Black women are treated and perceived by others (Thompson, 2009). The professor's comments on Mignon's hair were directly related to her race and gender, because Mignon had a protective style that is used specifically on Black women's hair. The professor may have honestly been curious about Black women's hair because she has not had personal experience with it, however, expecting a Black woman to educate you on their experience at any given moment can be a draining emotional experience for them. Also, asking Mignon if her hair was real is a question that evokes stereotypes about Black hair. It relays European beauty standards that Black women deviate from due to the fact that they may not have fair skin and specifically in this instance, straight and/or long hair (Bryant, 2013). Since enslavement, natural Black hair has been described as "kinky," "nappy," and other derogatory terms that reinforced the fact that Black women are different than white

women (Bryant, 2013). Mignon's hair at the time of the interaction was in a braided style that came to the middle of her back, and asking Mignon if her hair was real reinforced the belief that Black women's hair can only grow so much. If it is a certain length it must not be theirs but rather, they achieved the style through use of extensions.

Although the respondents did experience feelings of inferiority and the pressures of stereotype threat in some instances dealing with these feelings allowed them to become more aware of and find happiness in their Blackness, which caused them to mitigate the negative experiences they had due to their identity. Porsha dealt with these feelings of inferiority but they also pushed her to find herself while in college. She expressed feelings of wanting to embrace herself: "I know that like me and a few of my friends once we hit college we started going natural and doing things like that." Despite being in a place where she is a minority, Porsha had the desire to embrace her Blackness and natural self through her physical representation. Black women also perceived themselves as facing negative stereotypes and agitated glances, but they tolerated these things for a higher goal. Sade, a senior student with a double major in Criminal Justice and Political Science attributed her tolerance to something meaningful: "My purpose here is larger…it's on a larger scale. I'm representing for people who couldn't come here because of racial discrimination." This thinking helped her to be able to endure the covert racism that she encountered on campus.

In the classroom the respondents are having interactions with students and faculty that leave them feeling uncomfortable. The respondents believe that they are viewed as incompetent, dismissed from group interactions, and also are experiencing hypervisibility through situations that place them as the spokesperson for Black

culture/womanhood. It is important to note that this is happening on predominately white campuses because it gives insight into the fact that times have changed, but notions of racism and sexism have not. The women in this study do not have a means of escape from these subtle yet offensive interactions because they are experiencing them from other students as well as faculty, who are supposed to be authority figures that make students feel comfortable. The respondents stated that (when possible, due to the racial make up of their classes) in the classroom they would make a point to interact with other Black female students because there was a level of comfort ability and understanding that they shared similar feelings about being the "only one" in their classes. It was a way for them to find consolation when in environments where they did not feel understood or welcome.

Inclusion and Exclusion in Predominately White Social Spaces

For the respondents in this study, there were several differences perceived between their experiences as Black women on a predominately white campus compared to their Black male counterparts. A theme of inclusion and exclusion emerged, with Black women feeling that Black men were more likely to be included in white spaces than they were. These notions of inclusion and exclusion were present in the classroom, similar to when Black women felt Black men were more likely to get picked for groups, and these themes were also present in social spaces, exemplified by the following quote.

> It's different as far as our experiences. I'll use the example of [Black] sports players. They can literally roam anywhere and probably feel comfortable…White people love them, especially the Black men. White girls love them. Black women have the three: the mammy the jezebel, the angry one, the strong Black woman. Meanwhile the Black man is the most sought after. Black men have negative stereotypes as

well but I feel like white communities will accept the Black male because has the male aspect which gives him a little more than the Black woman. And white women again love Black men and white men want to be friends with Black men because they think it'll make them cool.

Isis, a sophomore Political Science major, explained something that a majority of the respondents brought up during their interviews. On their college campus they felt that white students were more likely to accept Black men than Black women. Research done about high school aged Black students being bussed to suburban schools yielded similar results. According to the study, "Males are able to gain social status at the school through their participation in athletics and their physical embodiment of the urban "hip-hop star" …In contrast, females do not have access to similar avenues for social status (Holland, 2012; Ipsa-Landa, 2013). It seems that these results apply to the college level as well. Many of the interviews touched on this belief of Black male acceptance over Black female acceptance. Because of gender, it seems to the respondents that Black men have more access to inclusion.

> As black women we feel more comfortable within our own. We retreat back to us and our own […]. But black men have the opportunity to branch out in other areas. They may not take people up on it but they have it more.

Jessica, a senior Criminal Justice major, echoed this idea of "retreating back to our own" in the following quote:

> White girls don't want to talk to Black girls because they don't think we're approachable. It's hard for Black girls to fit in, besides our own people. If you're not a Black female athlete you don't hang out with many white people around here, and even the Black female athletes are usually only around other Black female athletes.

In these instances of "retreating back" to the Black community, Mya and Jessica were specifically speaking about Black women finding solace with other Black women. There was a belief among the respondents that Black men have the option to participate in the majority community and/or the Black community and Black women do not, the notion of "retreating back" does not include back men because Black men are included in the majority community.

Most of the respondents noted that white men and women were nicer to and more accepting of Black men in their observations of interracial interactions. Many of the respondents felt that Black men were celebrated and praised by white women and viewed as exotic by white female and white male students. They thought it was more likely for white students to view Black male students as better able to fit in at the university. One respondent detailed an encounter where a white female student who she was in a group with was rude to her, but was charming and accommodating to the Black man who was also in the group with them. This illustrates the belief that was shared by many of the respondents that white women and white men look down on Black women while interacting positively with Black men.

Virtually all of the respondents felt that people in general are more critical of Black women and that Black women stereotypes result in more negative treatment of Black women. Kenya expressed that being a Black woman meant dealing with people believing you to always have a bad attitude. "When I'm angry I'm not a human that has emotions and that is angry. I'm a Black woman that is angry." Other respondents shared the feeling that they were negatively viewed due to the stereotype of Black women having negative attitudes and being angry. This aligns with Lewis and Neville's research (2015) which points to the way that Black women experience

microaggressions at the intersection of gendered and racial identities. The Angry Black woman trope is a stereotype used to enact microaggressions against Black women and the respondents here believed that it affected the way they were viewed, ultimately affecting their inclusion in white spaces.

> [In regards to stereotypes] Black women are angry at the world. Black men get stereotypes related to masculinity and being strong and in charge. People can understand Black guys a little easier. Black men are 'thugs' and white people want to be thugs.

Many respondents reiterated the idea that Black men had characteristics that were viewed positively by white men and women. If Black women fit into certain stereotypes they wereviewed as negative, but if Black men fit into certain stereotypes their friendship was highly coveted by white students. The respondents speculated that acceptance and non-acceptance may be related to stereotypes of Black men as 'cool' and stereotypes of Black women as 'ghetto.' Similarly, work about high school aged students echoes the difference in these stereotypes and the impact that they have on interracial interactions. Boys in the study were able to gain status due to their emulation of rap/hip-hop lifestyle, which intrigued the suburban (white) boys (Holland, 2012). While the Black high school aged girls were seen as obnoxious, hostile, and other negative characteristics that were associated with Black female stereotypes (Holland, 2012). Drawing on ideas of Black masculinity seemed to gain status for Black men, while drawing on ideas of Black femininity further ostracized Black women. Some Black women in this study specifically strayed from societal ideas of Black womanhood so as to not be stereotyped negatively, whereas they felt

Black men did not have to stray from stereotypes about athletes and a tough lifestyle in order to be included in white social spaces.

Three of the respondents explained inclusion and exclusion by the amount of Black students and white students that they would see in groups of friends. Specifically, those respondents noted that it was more likely to see a group of men who were majority white with one Black man in the group than it was to see a group of women who were majority white with one Black woman in the group. The respondents discussed other gendered stereotype differences between Black men and Back women. Malika, a senior International Relations major, highlighted asymmetrical application of stereotypes when she stated:

> The difference between Black men and Black women's experiences is sexism. Black men are seen as strong and unbreakable. Black women are seen as oversexualized.

Other respondents specifically mentioned the issue of gender differences. Mainly, they pointed out that due to their gender they experience a 'double whammy' of Blackness and womanhood. These perceptions of the 'double whammy' or 'double edged sword' that Black women encounter due to their race and gender identities (Pittman, 2010; Harnois Ifatunji, 2011; Shavers & Moore, 2014) shapes their interactions on a predominately white campus.

Intraracial Relations

Despite their expectations that there would be intraracial solidarity the respondents reported encounters with Black men in which they felt stereotyped and invisible. All of the respondents believed that there were definitely similarities

between the experiences that Black women and Black men have on a predominately white campus. A majority of them noted their Blackness as the thing that united Black men and Black women across the campus. Racially, respondents believed that they dealt with the same microaggressions as Black male college students For example, they perceived that Black women and Black men equally experienced feeling outnumbered and feelings of being looked down on by their white counterparts. However, some of the respondents felt that as males, Black men also participated in perpetuating negative stereotypes about Black women. The respondents' understandings of their interactions with Black men on campus were discussed in two ways: the perceptions of their treatment by Black men and the response to their treatment.

Black women face microaggressions and stereotype threats that are on an intersectional level because of their race and their gender. Several of the respondents reported their Black male counterparts to participate in making misogynistic comments. The respondents discussed times when they heard Black men reference negative stereotypes about Black women's attitudes and personality traits. Kenya described feeling as if some men on the campus "forgot that they came from Black women." Leah, a senior Food Science student, stated: "There is no unity between Black women and Black men on this campus." A few of the respondents noted that Black men participated in the negative talk surrounding Black women when as Black students at a predominately white school Black men should join Black women together as a force to stop the stereotypes. Hazel emphasized this point, talking about the way the hypersexualized stereotypes of Black women caused Black men to view her in a negative light.

The hypersexual stereotypes of Black women caused me to get certain comments from Black men about my friendships with people of the opposite sex. It's like Black guys think that Black women are doing nothing at all or sleeping around. My freshman year I was out and about and was involved, Black men implied that I was messing around. When I stayed in more my sophomore year the comments and rumors about me went away. It's like as long as you aren't out and around then you aren't doing anything. When you are, people in the Black community think you're messing around.

Similar to Hazel's story, the Black women respondents felt that Black men perpetuated these hypersexual stereotypes similarly to the way that white students did. Along with supporting negative stereotypes, some of the respondents brought up experiences with Black men on their floor who treated them as if they were invisible.

My first semester of my freshman year I lived on a floor with [Black] basketball players, yet none of them talked to me. They talked to my Spanish roommate and my white roommate. They talked to them. I didn't want to be with you but you could say hi.

Not only are Black women feeling that they are invisible to the white students on campus, they are also feeling that some Black men on campus treat them in a similar manner. The respondents in this study do not see themselves on their campus and are also feeling as if white students as well as Black male students do not see them either (Shabazz, 2015). The invisibility that they felt affected the comfort level associated with Black men that the respondents had. These feelings of disunity mentioned by Leah as well as the belief that Black men perpetuate negative stereotypes about Black women that other respondents discussed explained why the respondents felt the need to "retreat back to their own," as mentioned by Mya and Jessica in the previous section. In many instances Black women on predominately white campuses have had to create their own communities in order for them to make it through their college experience (Higginbotham, 2001) A majority of the respondents did not feel that they

shared the exact same experience as Black men on campus, so they found support through other Black women. Although Black students are in the minority on predominately white campuses, Black male college students and the Black female respondents in this study are having different experiences.

The respondents in this study felt that they were experiencing stereotype threat from those outside of as well as inside of the Black community. They felt pressure to not conform to stereotypes in order to not reflect badly on the community as a whole.

> If a Black woman comes off in a way that affirms negative stereotypes then she is left to herself and her community. Black women have to be reserved. We're not allowed to act out of character at a PWI because it draws attention and we don't want to draw attention. One slip-up causes the generalization of the whole Black community here.

This belief of Black women's behavior reflecting on the entire Black community was also brought up by other respondents. This pressure to conform to certain standards even within their own communities seems to be creating a schism between Black men and Black women on the campus. Black women are feeling pressure from Black men as well to project a certain example of Black womanhood so that they are not judged individually and do not cause the whole Black community to "look bad." In controlling the way that those in and outside of their community view them, in a way the respondents are managing their visibility. In most cases, the respondents are invisible to those around them due to their race and gender identity, however if they were to act in a way that is viewed negatively, they would become visible. Steering clear of stereotype threat allowed the respondents to control their visibility.

Sara expressed that the difference between her experience at a predominately white school and a Black male's experience at a predominately white school is that "Black men are not used to sacrificing themselves for the greater good." Other

45

respondents echoed this notion, feeling that some Black men "forget about their race" and "don't entertain Black women" (by entertain the respondent meant to communicate with or interact with) as a result of being on a majority white campus. Instead of interacting with Black women, the Black men are opting to be present in the majority community and ignore their connection with Black women in the opinion of the respondents. Once again, this represents notions of inclusion and exclusion that are based on gender identity. Black women and Black men on the predominately white campus shared a racial identity, but the gender difference allowed for Black men to be viewed by their white counterparts in a way that the respondents felt was more positive than the way that Black women were viewed. This allowed for Black men to be able to negotiate the majority spaces in a way that the respondents could not.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined the way that Black women experience microaggressions in multiple spaces on a predominately white campus. Based on these findings, I find that the Black women in this study experienced microaggressions that varied depending on the space that they were occupying. The respondents experienced *gendered racial microaggressions* in the classroom and in predominately white social spaces, and when in intraracial interactions the respondents experienced *gender microaggressions* and gendered interactions in a same race context. When in predominately white spaces both the women's race and gender played a role in their interactions but when they were in intraracial spaces they note that their gender specifically affected their treatment and interactions. It also seems that the setting dictated the type of gender racial microaggressions that the women faced. In the classroom they experienced gendered racial microaggressions that came from notions of Black women as academically and intellectually inferior. In white social settings, the women encountered gendered racial microaggressions that were a product of negative stereotypes related to Black womanhood, specifically in this study, stereotypes related to the hypersexuality of Black women. In both the classroom and white social settings, the respondents faced gendered racial microaggressions that placed them as the spokesperson for Black culture/Black womanhood and assumed there is universality in the Black experience. This study has provided important insight

into how the Black women in this sample perceive, experience, and navigates the predominately white college that they attend.

Aligning with previous studies, this study also showed that Black women do indeed encounter gendered racial micraggressions and deal with stereotype threat at the hands of their white counterparts, although the racism and sexism are not as direct as they have been in the past (Higginbotham, 2001; Banks, 2009; Dorvil, 2011; Jones, n.d.). A new finding from this research is the intraracial dynamics that are at play between Black women and Black men on the predominately white campus that I studied. Studies that focus on Black student experiences on predominately white campuses mostly address interracial interactions and the effects of being the minority on Black students in general. This study provides insight into the way that Black women view Black men when they are a small percentage of students on a college campus, and the way that they believe Black men view them.

Based on this study as well as the literature, while intraracial interactions can be helpful on college campuses (Lewis and McKissic, 2011), they can also reinforce the gendered racial hierarchies that Black women experience in society. Many of the respondents note that Black men on their campus participate in perpetuating stereotypes about Black women and in some cases treat Black women on the campus as if they are invisible. Previous studies that focus on Black students in general ignore the ways that gender may affect inclusion. The overarching belief that Black men are more likely to be accepted by white students was shared by most of the respondents. This intraracial tension that seems to be present between Black women and Black men on predominately white campus could be having an effect on the solace that Black students, particularly Black female students, may find with one another on

predominately white campuses. Even with people who share their racial identity, the women in this study are experiencing negative and dismissive treatment, reinforcing the idea that being Black and being a woman situates them at a place completely different than males who share their race identity and women who share their gender identity.

With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge ways that predominately white colleges should support this population in order for them to feel welcome on campus. Fixing the problems of gendered racial microaggressions and negative interactions that Black women face will be complicated because these situations can be very complex. However, based on the narratives that the respondents present I feel that the way to go about fixing the issues surrounding gendered racial microaggressions begins with educating students about microaggressions, intersectionality, and the lives of those with different experiences. The respondents in this study told stories in which ignorance was at the root of many of the microaggressive comments they encountered. Education and awareness are only the first step in the process, but if executed thoroughly and thoughtfully they could potentially cause white students to evaluate situations in which they have offended Black women and not realized it. Possible next steps could include hiring Black women faculty and staff, as many of the respondents' negative experiences were related to being the minority in multiple spaces on campus.
Increasing numbers of Black women faculty could provide advisors who would be willing to implement and head programs where Black women on the campus could share their stories with other Black women. Most importantly, the respondents in this study want their experiences to be heard. Creating ways for them to voice their

concerns to people in power on college campuses who will address diversity issues could aid in ending the cycle of silencing in regards to Black women's experiences with racism and sexism on the campus.

Chapter 6

LIMITATIONS

In all research based on interviews, the way questions are asked will inevitably alter the answers obtained. Changing the order of my questions or using different wording while interviewing could provide an understanding of whether the way I asked the questions were causing answers focused on race, or if it is harder for women of certain groups to see their experiences as gendered because of their racial identities. It could be beneficial to ask questions about gender first so that I can separate the experiences and have the focal point of the responses be on the way that Black women understand their gender experience. The question that I asked about Black women's experiences in relation to women of other races and in relation to Black men's experiences did provide some insight into the ways that Black women saw the intersection of their race and gender. When asking questions directly related to Black women's experiences with race *and* gender, the answers prioritized race over gender. I would have to probe to get more information about their gender identity, and would often get answers such as "I've never felt uncomfortable because of my gender." In attempting to get them to look at the intersection of both identities I noticed that race was in the forefront of their responses to my questions.

In some ways their answers were racialized, but I could see components of the intersection of identities in their experiences. Potentially, Black women may be taught to prioritize race over their gender, which then resulted in answers to my questions that did the same. Bettie also puts forth the idea that although scholars see a need to

frame discussions of multiple identities as even, people actually facing multiple identities in everyday life may not be experiencing them evenly (2000). The respondents may be having experiences similar to what Bettie points out that are not necessarily evenly reflecting both of their identities.

In doing this research I only account for intersectionality between race and gender, when there are other identities that may affect how a Black woman perceives her interactions with people in college. I did not directly ask questions about class, but some of the respondents alluded to their socioeconomic class and in the demographic survey I asked about parent(s) education level and occupation in order to gauge the respondents' social class. Class identity could be playing a role in the way that the respondents understand these interactions as well. One respondent brought up the relationship between Black students who identify as Black American/African American and those who identify as African or Caribbean and while it was not discussed enough to be part of the findings, a Black woman's ethnic identity can also intersect with her race and gender to impact how she understands her experiences. This was also a question that I asked in the demographic survey, but did not directly pay attention to in the interview. Virtually all of the respondents ethnically and racially defined as Black, but if I interviewed women who identified ethnically with a Caribbean or African identity that would have made my data richer as well as given me insight into the way that ethnicity may shape understandings of microaggressions.

Other limitations include my sample size (19), which is a small number relative to the number of Black women who attend the institution. Moreover, because my sample was selected from one university and not random, the perceptions and experiences of my sample respondents may not be generalizable to the entire

52

population of Black women who attend this institution, nor of Black female college

students in general.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

While Black women represent diversity at institutions of higher education, they are not experiencing inclusion or equity. The findings from this study contribute to knowledge about integration in higher education in this contemporary moment, and the way that the experiences Black women are having in college are similar to and different from what was found by Higginbotham following the Civil Rights Movement. Through this research I am building on what Higginbotham has already provided as far as insight into the Black female college experience and helping people to understand the struggles that Black women in higher education face as students in the 21st century. The literature on this topic has spanned decades; however, Black women still feel uncomfortable when attending these institutions. Racial and gender bias still affect Black women even in a time where people believe that both have subsided. While expanding on previous literature regarding Black women's experiences on predominately white college campuses by presenting new information about the intraracial interactions between Black women and Black men, this study provides insight into the way that Black women understand themselves and their place at a predominately white school.

This research reiterated and advanced what is known about Black women's experiences in majority white spaces. Future research could focus on these intraracial interactions specifically, and the ways that Black women possibly understand their exclusion through the inclusion of Black men in predominately white spaces.

REFERENCES

Banks, C. A. (2009). *Black women undergraduates, cultural capital, and college success*. Peter Lang.

Basford, T. E., Offerman, L. R., & Behrend, T. S. (2013). Do you see what I see? Perceptions of gender microaggressions in the workplace. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *38*(3), 340-349.

bell hooks. (1986). *Ain't I a woman?: Black women and feminism*. Pluto Press.

Bettie, J. (2000). Women without class: *Chicas, Cholas*, trash and the presence/absence of class identity. *Signs*, *26*(1), 1-35.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Colorblind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States* (2nd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Bryant, S. L. (2013). The beauty ideal: The Effects of European standards of beauty on Black women. *Columbia Social Work Review*, *4*, 80-91.

Cabrera, N. L. (2014). But we're not laughing: White male college students' racial joking and what this says about "Post-Racial" discourse. *Journal of College Student Development*, *55*(1),1-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2014.0007

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black

      feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist

      politics. *U. Chi. Legal F.*, 139.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and

      violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241-1299.

DeAngelis, T. (2009). Unmasking 'racial micro aggressions'. *American Psychological*

Association, *40*(2), 42.

Donovan, R. A., Galban, D. J., Bennett, J. K., & Felicie, S. Z. (2012). Impact of racial

      macro- and microaggressions in Black women's lives: A preliminary analysis.

      Journal of Black Psychology, 185-196.

Dorvil, C. (2011). *Stereotype threat and minority students' academic achievement*

      (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Philadelphia College of Osteopathic

      Medicine.

Edwards, N. N., Berry, M. G., & Alexander-Snow, M. (2011). Troubling success:

      Interviews with Black female faculty. *Florida Journal of Educational*

      Administration Policy, *5*(1), 14-27.

Emerson, R. A. (2002). "Where my girls at?": Negotiating Black womanhood in

      music videos. *Gender & Society*, *16*(1), 115-135.

Essed, P. (1991). Understanding everyday racism: an interdisciplinary theory.

      Thousand Oaks: Sage

Feagin, J. R., Rivera, H., & Imani, N. (2014). *The agony of education: Black students*

      at white colleges and universities. Routledge.

Fleming, J. (1984). *Blacks in college: A comparative study of students' success in Black and in White institutions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ford, K. A., & Malaney, V. K. (2012). "I now harbor more pride in my race": The educational benefits of inter- and intraracial dialogues on the experiences of students of color and multiracial students. Equity and Excellence in Education, 45(1), 14-35.

Gilens, M. (1996). Race and poverty in America: public misperceptions and the American news media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *60*(4), 515-541.

Green, A. (2015). *Experiences of African American female first generation college students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Western Michigan University.

Greenberg, J. (2015, February 23). 7 reasons why 'colorblindness' contributes to racism instead of solves it. Retrieved from http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/02/colorblindness-adds-to-racism/

Guo, J. (2014, December 11). Women are dominating men at college. Blame sexism. Retrieved from The Washington Post website: http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/storyline/wp/2014/12/11/women-are-dominating-men-at-college-blame-sexism/

Harnois, C. E., & Ifatunji, M. (2011). Gendered measures, gendered models: Toward an intersectional analysis of interpersonal racial discrimination. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(6), 1006-1028.

Harper, Brian. (2007). African American access to higher education: the evolving role of historically black colleges and universities. *American Academic*. 109-28.

Harper, S. R., Carini, R. M., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2004). Gender differences in student engagement among African American undergraduates at historically Black colleges and universities. *Journal of College Student Development*, *45*(3), 271-284.

Higginbotham, E. (2001). *Too much to ask: Black women in the era of integration*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Holder, A. M. B., Jackson, M. A., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2015). Racial microaggression experiences and coping strategies of Black women in corporate leadership. *Qualitative Psychology*, *2*(2), 164-180.

Holland, M. M. (2012). Only here for the day: The social integration of minority students at a majority white high school. *Sociology of Education*, *85*(2), 101-120.

Ispa-Landa, S. (2013). Gender, race, and justifications for group exclusion: Urban Black students bussed to affluent suburban schools. *Sociology of Education*, *86*(3), 218-233.

Jones, V. N. (n.d.). *Black women matter: Measuring multiple minority stress and intersectionality among African American women* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Tennessee.

Leemaster, P., Strough, J., Stoiko, R., & DiDonato, L. (2014). To have and to do: Masculine facets of gender predict men's and women's attitudes about gender equality among college students. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 1-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0036429

Lewis, A. E., Chesler, M., & Forman, T. A. (2000). The impact of "colorblind"

    ideologies on students of color: Intergroup relations at a predominantly white

    university. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 74-91.

Lewis, J. A., Mendenhall, R., Harwood, S. A., & Huntt, M. B. (2012). Coping with

    gendered racial microaggressions among Black women college students.

    Journal of African American Studies, *17*(1), 51-73.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12111-012-9219-0

Lewis, J. A., & Neville, H. A. (2015). Construction and initial validation of the

    gendered racial microaggressions scale for Black women. *Journal of*

    Counseling Psychology, *62*(2), 289-302.

Lewis, K. S., & McKissic, S. C. (2010). Drawing sustenance at the source: African

    American students' participation in the Black campus community as an act of

    resistance. *Journal of Black Studies*, 264-280.

McCabe, J. (2009). Racial and gender microaggressions on predominately white

    college campuses: Experiences of Black, Latino and white undergraduates.

    Race, Gender, and Class, *16*, 133-151.

McGill, A. (2015, November 23). The missing Black students at elite American

    universities. Retrieved from

    http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/black-college-student-

    body/417189/

Microaggression. (2016). In *Dictionary*. Retrieved from

    http://www.dictionary.com/browse/microaggression

Nadal, K. L., Davidoff, K. C., Davis, L. S., Wong, Y., Marshall, D., & McKenzie, V.

  (2015). A qualitative approach to intersectional microaggressions:

  Understanding influences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion.

  Qualitative Psychology, *2*(2), 147-163.

Nobelius, A.-M. (2004, June 23). Gender-blindness. Retrieved from Monash

  University: Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences website:

  http://www.med.monash.edu.au/gendermed/blindness.html

Patricia Hill Collins: Intersecting oppressions. (n.d.). *SAGE*, 1-11.

Pittman, C. T. (2010). Race and gender oppression in the classroom: The experiences

  of women faculty of color with white male students. *American Sociological*

  Association, *38*(3), 183-196. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0092055X10370120

Rankin, S., & Reason, R. (2005). Differing Perceptions: How students of color and

  White students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. Journal

  of College Student Development, 46(1), 43-61.

Samuels, G. M., & Ross-Sheriff, F. (2008). Identity, oppression, and power:

  Feminisms and intersectionality theory. *Journal of Women and Social Work*,

  23(1), 5-9.

Shabazz, K. A. (2015). *Black women, white campus: Students living through*

  invisibility (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Indiana University.

Sharp-Grier, M. L. (2015). "She was more intelligent that I thought she would be!" :

  Status, stigma, and microaggressions in the academy. In J. L. Martin (Ed.),

Racial battle fatigue: Insights from the front lines of social justice advocacy (pp. 29-44). Praeger.

Shavers, M. C., & Moore, J. L., III. (2014). The Double-edged sword: Coping and resiliency strategies of African American women enrolled in doctoral programs at predominately white institutions. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *35*(3), 15-38.

Smith, M. D. (2015, March 26). White millennials are products of a failed lesson in colorblindness. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/white-millennials-products-failed-lesson-colorblindness/

Smith, S. S., & Moore, M. R. (2000). Intraracial diversity and relations among African-Americans: Closeness among Black students at a predominantly white university. *American Journal of Sociology*, *106*(1), 1-39.

Smith, W. A., Hung, M., & Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial battle fatigue and the miseducation of Black men: Racial microaggressions, societal problems, and environmental stress. *Journal of Negro Education*, *80*(1), 63-82.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.

Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(5), 797-811.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B.,

      Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday

      life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, *62*(4), 271-

      286.

Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microagressions in everyday life: race, gender, and sexual*

      orientation.   Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Tatum, B. D. (2004). Family life and school experience: Factors in the racial identity

      development of Black youth in White communities. Journal of Social Issues,

      60, 117-135.

Thematic analysis. (2008). Retrieved from

      http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=qualitative&pageid=icb.page34

      0897

Thompson, C. (2009). Black women and identity: What's hair got to do with it?

      Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.ark5583.0022.105

Tyson, W. (2010). [Review of *The Unchosen Me: Race, Gender, and Identity among*

      Black Women in College]. *American Journal of Sociology*, *116*(3), 1035–

      1037. http://doi.org/10.1086/657394

Van Camp, D., Barden, J., & Sloan, L. R. (2010). Predictors of Black students' race-

      related reasons for choosing an HBCU and intentions to engage in racial

      identity-relevant behaviors. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *36*(2), 226-250.

Williams, J. L., & Nichols, T. M. (2012). Black women's experiences with racial

    microaggressions in college: Making meaning at the crossroads of race and

    gender. *Diversity in Higher Education*, *12*, 75-95

Winkle-Wagner, R. (2009). *The unchosen me: Race, gender, and identity among*

    Black women in college. The Johns Hopkins Press.

Yip, T., Seaton, E. K., & Sellers, R. M. (2010). Interracial and intraracial contact,

    school-level diversity, and change in racial identity status among African

    American adolescents. *Society for Research in Child Development*, *81*(5),

    1431-1444.

Yosso, T. J., Smith, W. A., Ceja, M., & Solorzano, D. G. (2009). Critical race theory,

    racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o

    undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(4), 659-690.

Appendix A

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Age	Classification	Major
Mignon	18	Freshman	Biology
Amber	19	Freshman	Neuroscience
Tyra	19	Freshman	Neuroscience
Porsha	19	Sophomore	Communications
Isis	19	Sophomore	Political Science
Cayla	20	Junior	Cognitive Science
Raven	20	Junior	English
Sage	20	Junior	Health Behavior Science
Sara	20	Junior	International Relations
Hazel	20	Junior	Political Science and Black American Studies
Asha	21	Senior	Black American Studies and Sociology
Kenya	21	Senior	Economics
Tiana	21	Senior	Environmental Studies
Sade	21	Senior	Political Science and Criminal Justice
Leah	21	Senior	Food Science
Mya	21	Senior	Management Information Systems and Marketing
Jessica	22	Senior	Criminal Justice
Kristina	22	Senior	Finance
Malika	22	Senior	International Relations and Asian Studies

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me a little bit about what your middle school and high school experiences were like.
   a. What were the most positive experiences you can think of? How about any negative experiences? *Probe more with: Socially? Academically? Did you participate in any extra curricular activities in high school?*
2. Tell me about your closest friends in high school (the people you talked with the most). *If they don't offer this information, probe with: What were their racial identities? Were they black, white?*
3. What other colleges were you considering during the application process? What influenced your decision to attend the University of Delaware?
4. Tell me about your closest friends in college (people you talk to the most). *If they don't offer this information, probe with: What were their racial identities? Were they black, white?*
5. Describe your academic experiences on campus.
6. Describe your social experiences on campus.
7. How do you think your experiences are similar to other Black women on campus?
8. How do you think your experiences are different than other Black women's experiences on campus?
9. How do you think your experiences are similar to women of other races/ethnicities on campus?
   a. Different?
10. How do you think your experiences are similar to Black men's experiences on campus?
    a. Different?
11. How do you think your experiences are similar to other college students in general?
    a. Different?
12. Has there been a time when you've felt uncomfortable because of your race and/or gender while in college? If so, tell me about that time.
13. From your perspective, what could be done to make you feel more comfortable in those situations? On this campus?
14. Research shows that Black women and Black men face different stereotypes. What do you think about that?

a. What do you think about that in the context of a predominately white student body?
15. How do you think these differing stereotypes affect the experiences of Black men and women? Specifically, on a campus like [] that has predominately white students.
16. How do you view me? Do you think I have influenced your responses in any way?
17. Are there any topics I haven't covered? Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences here at []?

Appendix C

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Age

Year| *Freshman || Sophomore || Junior || Senior |*
   Do you live on campus? | *Yes || No |*
Are you a member of any student organizations? | *Yes || No |*
If so, what organization(s) are you a member of?

Where were you born?

Where did you grow up?

How do you identify racially?

How do you identify ethnically?

Who are your primary caregivers?
| *Biological mother || Biological father || Stepmother || Stepfather || Legal guardian || Grandparent(s) || Other |*

What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?
| *Did not complete high school || High school/GED || Some college || Bachelor's degree || Master's/Advanced graduate degree || Not sure |*

What is the highest level of education completed by your father?
| *Did not complete high school || High school/GED || Some college || Bachelor's degree || Master's/Advanced graduate degree || Not sure |*

What is the highest level of education completed by any other primary caregiver?
| *Did not complete high school || High school/GED || Some college || Bachelor's degree || Master's/Advanced graduate degree || Not sure |*

What is your biological mother's racial identification?

What is your biological father's racial identification?

What is the racial identity of any other primary caregiver?

What is your mother's occupation?

What is your father's occupation?

What is the occupation of any other primary caregiver?

What is your biological father's ethnic identification?

What is your biological mother's ethnic identification?

What is the ethnic identity of any other primary caregiver?

How did you hear about this project?

Appendix D

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE   **RESEARCH OFFICE**

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: January 11, 2016

TO: D'Janna Hamilton
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [832184-1] Black Women and Gendered Racism: Microaggressions at
                               Predominately White Institutions

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: January 11, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: January 10, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # *(6,7)*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of
Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit
ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in
accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and
insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must
continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal
regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to
initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the
appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be
followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

- 1 -   Generated on IRBNet

69

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.