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Deconstructing Negative Stereotypes, Myths And Microaggressions About Black Women: Reconstructing Black Women's Narrative, Identity And The Empowering Nature Of Ethnic Identity

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NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

DECONSTRUCTING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES, MYTHS AND MICROAGGRESSIONS ABOUT BLACK WOMEN: RECONSTRUCTING BLACK WOMEN'S NARRATIVE, IDENTITY, AND THE EMPOWERING NATURE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

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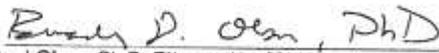
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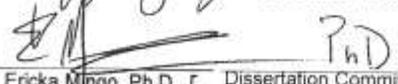
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Abstract

This research study retraces the lives of Black women in America through a microscope that emphasize the historical formulation of Black women's identity and how the distorted figures of stereotypes have emerged and manifested into contemporary macroaggressions. The work explores two central inquiries: The first, quantitative study, examines slavery as the malignant marker that has shaped Black women's identity, socioeconomic status, educational progress and political frameworks. The study theorizes that macroaggressions towards Black women pose serious harm to their overall psychological sense of self-efficacy and empowerment. However, ethnic identity has within it the resource to combat microaggressive attitudes. The second, qualitative study, examines deeper issues related to black women empowerment and attempts to further theory building through narratives of black women participants and their narratives and views on a variety of issues.

Keywords: black women, microaggressions, ethnic identity, psychological empowerment, sexual exploitation, negative stereotypes (slave-era narratives, U.S. slavery, dehumanization, racism, oppression, empowerment

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DECONSTRUCTING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES, MYTHS AND MICROAGGRESSIONS ABOUT BLACK WOMEN: RECONSTRUCTING BLACK WOMEN'S NARRATIVE, IDENTITY, AND THE EMPOWERING NATURE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

"But what of black women? . . . I most sincerely doubt if any other race of women could have brought its fineness up through so devilish a fire?" W. E. B. Du Bois

Despite remarkable progress, racism and the stereotypes that stems from it remain malignant markers in the socioeconomic, political and psychological body of Black women's lives. Seminal research by scholars throughout the social sciences and cultures show that Black peoples legacy, resulting from over 350 years of ancestral enslavement, institutionalized exploitation, and being subjected to persistent adverse physical and psychological conditioning, still affects blacks today (Du Bois, 1903).

Notably, some researchers and scholars dispute racism as too complicated an issue to assess with any degree of accuracy, particularly around the extent to which it exists (Williams, 2000). However, extensive empirical data supports the assertion that Black people, as a group, continue to struggle for equality and human rights over a century after slavery was abolished (Du Bois, 1903; Swanson & Martins, 2018). One race analyst conceives that Black people remain the most vilified of all racial groups and continue to face problems that no other ethnic group encounters (Small, 1994). Similarly, others have called racial discrimination and oppression of Black people a core systematic function entrenched in the United States from the beginning of this country, for centuries, and to present time (Avakian, 2007, 1989).

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The fact that Blacks were perceived as inferior, archaic and apelike during America's slave era cannot be disputed. But perhaps most troubling are recent findings that similar ideologies about Blacks are still commonly held more than previously realized (Plous. S, Williams, Tyrone, 1995). Data from the 1990 General Social Survey (GSS) provides compelling evidence that racial biases remain entrenched in the American psyche. Research findings reveal that 29% of Whites perceive Blacks as unintelligent, 44% views blacks as lazy, 56% regard most blacks as preferring to live off public aid, and 51% believe that blacks are prone to violence (Williams, Williams-Morris, 2000). In another seminal and more recent study, a team of Harvard scholars finds that destructive racist stigmas have remained part of Black peoples lived experiences to the extent that they are still fighting to be perceived as fully human (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams & Jackson, 2008; Yancy, Singer, 2015). The researchers believe that old racial prejudices have transformed into subtle, modern-day biases that project a false notion that society has moved beyond race issues.

Consequently, Black women, particularly have continued to be profoundly impacted by the trauma resulting from negative stereotypes and exploitations that slave women endured – and which have been passed down through generations (Collins & Sue 1993; Broussard, 2013). The effects are far-reaching and have adversely impacted many crucial aspects of Black women's lives that prevents them from healing from slave-era abuses. In examining contemporary Black women's struggles with racial oppressions against the backdrop of history, America's past and present ideologies appears to have

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converged within the same systematic structures that both perpetuated and preserved race, class and gender biases.

Extensive research indicates that Black women remains disproportionately disadvantaged across their life spectrum compared to other groups. The grim outcomes are a result of enduring racial discrimination and America's failure to address the intersectional struggles around race, class and gender issues that are unique to Black women. In a study on the adverse effects of racism, one scholar conceives that the pervasiveness with which many Blacks confront racial discrimination can create feelings of powerlessness and depression that comes from a lack of overall self-confidence to manage life challenges (Williams, 2017, 2000).

Additionally, the study imagines that racism can create feelings that may lead to serious emotional and psychological harm. Indeed, the emotional factors may be a result of higher levels of poverty and unemployment, but all in all, these factors are likely part of a mutual cycle. Others have added to the discourse to include identity crises and low self-esteem as adverse consequences of persistent confrontation with racial biases (Guerra, 2013).

The effects of racism can have a widespread negative impact across many areas of an individual's life and their ethnic group membership. Case in point, throughout America's history, Blacks have been among the poorest, most economically disadvantaged, and oppressed population. This fact, many research finds has rendered a large segment of the Black population greatest at risk in a plethora of ways – including

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crucial life areas such as illnesses and recovery, socio-economic hardships, educational struggles and lack of political representation.

When it comes to health, Black people die at a higher rate than whites, are diagnosed later and suffer in greater degree from similar illnesses (Mohammed, 2013). Taking this point further – one study notes that Black women and their infants are doubly more likely to die from pregnancy and child-birth related complications compared to white women and their babies. Placed in perspective, the current racial disparity is comparative to the 1850s – before slavery ended –when medical resources were few and at a time when society regarded slave women as chattel (Villarosa, 2018).

Similarly, when it comes to socio-economic solvency, studies show that historically, most of America's wealth has, and remains predominantly in the hands of the white ruling class (Daly & Hobijin, 2017). In fact, one report finds that the top 10% of America's wealth is owned by White families (Bruenig, 2014). The many contributing factors that marginalize Black women make it unlikely that these grim disparities will change any time soon. Even though Black women have made tremendous stride over the last decade, the high cost of education, lack of financial support from family and the significant pay gap makes it difficult for them to escape poverty and advance beyond the confines of the current systematic construct. As well, the deficit in political representation for Black women issues denotes that Black women's struggle for equality remains an uphill climb. As a group, only 3% hold state legislative seats, and even fewer hold congressional seats (Campbell; Themba & Williams-skinner, 2014). With such a sparse

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political representation to advocate for policies and reforms that address the distinct

socio-political and systematic inequities that Black women routinely confront, issues

relating to racial inequity, pay, gender problems and growing poverty – the systematic

convergence of past and present ideologies appears perfectly aligned to preserve the race,

class and gender biases on which this country was constructed. As such, in exploring the

historical aspects of slavery alongside the socio-economic and political struggles that

Blacks face today, this research ascertains that racial discrimination remains a dangerous

problem, particularly for Black women, going back to the slave-era.

   To the extent that slavery brutalized enslaved men, it was, at least in many ways,

by far more devastating for women. Among the many inhumane crimes of slavery, the

barbaric sexual exploitation of enslaved women is entrenched in the framework of the

American legacy. One prominent lawyer and reproductive rights advocate postulates that

American slavery was a gendered experience for Black women from the inception of this

country (Bridgewater, 2001). The argument remains uncontested by those who have

researched the sexual exploitation of slave women. Others in the field posit that

systematic sexual exploitation of slave women was a crucial part of the political slave

economy (Broussard, 2013). Yet, in historical accounts, there is sparse mention of the

degree in which forced sexual labor and forced prostitution of enslaved women

contributed to the economy. Instead, their lives have been practically erased or selectively

omitted from American history (Pinderhughes, 2003). Fewer than one-tenth of a

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percentage of the existing literature on African American women mentions enslaved women's experiences during the slave period (Bridgewater, 2005).

To explain the tragic continuity of oppressive, exploitative conditions against Black women in contemporary times, this set of studies begins by examining the slave era as the malignant marker from which negative stereotypes, microaggressions, and myths stem, and how they have become deeply rooted in American establishment as factual (White, 1985; Morton, 1991). Today those stereotypes remain intact and are often manifested as microaggressions, a theory defined as the everyday intentional or unintentional verbal, nonverbal, and environmental insults that are demeaning to persons or specific groups (Sue, 2010).

The combined adverse impact around race, class and gender issues on crucial aspects of Black women's lives is dismal. While the current literature has significantly influenced the progress made thus far, as previously indicated, Black women are a long way from achieving equal rights, dignity, and the variety of protections that are their rights under the constitution and international law. Indeed, many studies have examined modern-era racism as isolated from the slave-era. Others have centered on the progression or lack of socioeconomic, educational and political disparities between Black and White women as the focal point on which to develop initiatives. This work adds to the discourse by formulating persistent racism around the intersection of past and present stereotypes about Black women as a single train of thought rooted in the same slave era narrative. As such, this study argues that racism and the discrimination that stems from it

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are too complicated an issue to be addressed from a micro-level perspective and propose that any adequate attention to the modern-day subjugation of Black women requires a macro level, socioeconomic, and political focus. The discourse around the formulation of destructive stereotypes, and how those stereotypes have endured and are manifested in microaggressions today are particularly relevant.

With this conceptual understanding in mind, this study postulates that many Black women lack awareness about their self-identity and remain trapped in some of the same oppressive mindset whose roots can be found in false slave era narratives. Correspondingly, too many lack the awareness about the degree of contribution that they have made in the building and success of America – yet, this knowledge is vital in breaking the centuries and generations of oppression. As such, this research also argues for education and Black consciousness about the lived experiences of enslaved women from the 1600's antebellum era, throughout the 1877- 1954 Jim Crow period and the 1960s Women's movement to determine how dominant negative past and present ideologies have converged to shape Black women's marginalized status and influence their modern-day struggles. A comprehensive historical exploration into the formulation of the perpetually disempowering archetype of Black women is studied to deconstruct the harmful stereotypes.

There is an attempt here to use mixed methods research to develop the theoretical model for programs that are essential to guard against microaggressive attitudes and rewrite Black women's narrative from oppression to empowerment.

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This study hypothesizes that a significant relationship exists between ethnic identity, microaggressions and psychological empowerment that is crucial in formulating a set of long-term solutions. Specifically, the study posits that a foundationally strong ethnic identity in Black women plays a critical role in providing a protective shield against the adverse effects of microaggressions by eliminating or decreasing the ability of microaggressive attitudes to cause severe physical and psychological harm. Building on this framework, this study asks a guiding question, who is the Black Woman and what is her story? To answer the question, this research expands on the theories of some of America's prominent literary figures, activists, and feminist scholars' ideologies, focused on the notion that Black people cannot move ahead until they understand their history and who they are (West, 2012). Problems concerning humanity must be analyzed from the perspective of time (Fanon, 1952), and that approach to history is foundational to the formulation of our fundamental principles, actions, goals, and identity (Baldwin, 1965).

The study examines four dominant factors: 1) The correlation between negative stereotypes and microaggressions towards Black women: 2) Persistent microaggressions and the effect on Black women's psychological empowerment, i.e. (self-efficacy, self-acceptance, and identity); 3) Ethnic identity as the principal defense against persistent microaggressive attitudes; 4) that Ethnic identity is the framework on which to reconstruct Black women's identity. The term Black, as used in this study, exemplifies the "one-drop formula" that identifies anyone with a single drop of "black blood" as

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Black. For this study, Black women and men refer to those who are of African heritage and who live in the United States, irrespective of nationality.

Slavery: An Institution of Profit, Power and Black Lives from the 1600s to 1865

The Transatlantic slave trade is widely regarded as having been a crime against humanity (Love, 2016). As history has proven, the institution of slavery legalized the act of barbarity that was dependent on the physical and psychological destruction of an entire population of Black people. The question as to why Blacks were enslaved is both simple and complex. The Transatlantic slave trade was a global organization from which many nations profited economically and politically despite the sacrifice of Black lives. Slavery is described as a system of dehumanization, domination, degradation, and subordination, which was deemed acceptable to strip other human beings of their rights and render them property. The dehumanizing treatment inflicted on slaves was undoubtedly a significant aspect of slavery. This study applies the definition of dehumanization as a psychological process in which one group diminishes their enemy, seeing them as less than human and unworthy of humane treatment (Maiese, 2003). The outcome can contribute to increased violence, war crimes, genocide against the dehumanized group, and other human rights violations.

Dehumanizing slaves and stripping them of their identity and humanity were enforced soon after capture. Upwards of forty-percent of captive slaves died en route to the Atlantic seacoast where they were sold to white slave dealers. Once on board, slave men were chained together in two, and secured with iron cuffs around their necks, legs,

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and hands. In some cases, one slave would be tied to the limb of another slave to restrain their movement (Muhammad, 2003). The women and young girls were placed unbound in a separate compartment below deck, where the crew captains and crewmen routinely raped and otherwise sexually assaulted them (Falconbridge, 1973).

Historians and scholars estimate that the Atlantic Slave trade, that transported African slaves from the West African coast, across the Atlantic to America, can be traced back to 1518 and lasted up until the 1870's. An estimated 11-13 million slaves arrived in America. However, untold millions more died. Today, the death toll remains unknown and may stay that way. Even though the Du Bois Institute database documented more than 27,000 voyages, only about 5,000 recorded the mortality rate aboard the voyages (Klein; Engerman; Haines & Shlomowitz, 2001). Not surprisingly, the number varies depending on how comprehensive the study. Most reports estimate the death toll ranges anywhere from 17-150 million. What is not disputed is the fact that the Middle Passage, to date, remains one of the costliest in human lives among global migrations. The Atlantic Slave Trade is estimated to have wiped out entire generations of Black families, resulting in lasting economic, emotional and psychological destitution to the Black population. The effects are felt well into contemporary times.

Slaves on voyages died from a variety of conditions, including diseases resulting from the inhumane conditions aboard the ship. One historian described the state of travel as an 'abomination which decries the depths of human misery... men and women packed in the stinking hulls shamed the most hard-hearted, even among those who defended

slavery (Berlin, 2002). Some were killed and thrown overboard by the captains and crew

members of the ship, especially those who rebelled. An estimated two-thirds died from

"mortal melancholy," a condition described as suicide resulting from depression, causing

many to jump overboard to their deaths (Muhammad, 2003).

Those who survived the voyage were considered 'commodities' or 'things' and

were stripped of their fundamental human rights. Upon arriving at the port where they

were sold, slaves were forced to strip naked and stand on auction blocks while slave

traders inspected their bodies and oftentimes branded them as the property of the slave

owners who purchased them. Some scholars conceive that the dehumanizing practice

demonstrated how slavery propertied slave bodies (Lahore, 2013; Hal lam, 2004).

Enslaved men and women were subjected to a lifetime of dehumanizing cruelty.

They were routinely kept in chains, beaten, raped and forced into hard physical field

labor every day from sunup to sundown mostly without pay (Robinson, 2000). It was

standard practice for slave owners to mutilate, torture and kill enslaved men and women

to force them into submission (Norris, 2004). They were denied food, prohibited from

seeking an education, and were psychologically conditioned to believe that they were

nonhuman. Family bonds were destroyed, children were routinely taken from their

mothers and sold into slavery as were husbands and wives routinely torn apart and sold

(Williams, 2012). Separating children from their mothers was often used as a control

method designed to prevent enslaved women from developing bonds with their children,

and prevent those children from strengthening family bonds, loyalty, culture, and identity

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(Douglas, 1845). The inhumane treatment of slaves continued until their death and for many generations after.

One prohibitionist points out the irony of subjugating enslaved men and women to a state of 'mental darkness by stripping them of their humanity.' He conceives that dehumanizing slaves created monsters of slave owners who by process of dehumanizing others, dehumanized themselves (Douglass, 1845). Simply put, to create a savage; one becomes a savage. And, to justify enslaving and dehumanizing Blacks for over 250 years, slave owners arguably, created racist stereotypes that stigmatized Blacks as dim-witted, savages, dangerous, and hypersexual, requiring hegemony to keep them under control.

Empirical studies indicate that the most brutal forms of savagery against slaves, including lynching, the desecration and erasure of enslaved women's womanhood, rape, and other heinous forms of sexual violence was being committed by slave owners simultaneously with the creation and dissemination of false narratives that marked Black men as savages and rapists of white women. As well, slave women who were the victims of slave owners' incessant rape, forced sexual labor and forced prostitution were stigmatized as Jezebels (known otherwise as harlots).

Some researchers have constructed their argument against the enduring, destructive stereotypes that have shadowed Black people for centuries on the fact that slaves had no warrant in the writing of American history and lacked sufficient resources to challenge the historical accuracy of these labels. And even though these stereotypes lacked factual basis, considering that they were created and disseminated by the same

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white abusers who profited from slavery - these narratives, to the extent in which they were prevalent - became ingrained in America's psyche as facts. It is on some of these fabrications that the American judicial system used to justify and legalize slavery (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008).

In this racial climate, it is not surprising that Black men were stigmatized as savage, non-human, rapists, and Black women were deemed morally corrupt, nonhumans, and sexually perverse. And neither is the practical erasure of Black women from American history and their role in advancing America's success. Indeed, one can argue that the practical erasure of enslaved women from American history is a deliberate act by slave owners to protect their self-interest. That slave-owners subjected slave women to forced sexual labor, prostitution, rape and others forms of sexual abuses diminished in favor of the version of history that white oppressors chose to disseminate.

The ideologies of Blacks as inferior was so prevalent among the 18th and 19th century European and U.S. populace that the 1884 ninth version of the Encyclopedia Britannica recorded the Black race as more depressed on the evolutionary scale (Plous & Williams, 1995). White slave owners, philosophers of the time, adjudicators, and even presidents of this country, some themselves owning slaves, took part in oppressing, exploiting and perpetuating slavery for economic solvency. Many past presidents, including Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Johnson and Theodore Roosevelt are documented making racist disparaging remarks about Black people. Overt racist expressions were common even among those who claimed to have hated slavery (Plous & Williams, 1995).

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President Lincoln is renowned as the emancipator of slavery, but one notable scholar conceives that Lincoln is unworthy of the title, calling his legacy as the Emancipator of slavery "A century of lies" (Bennett, 2000). Lincoln's racist views are indisputable. He spoke publicly about his belief in white superiority during the fourth debate with Fredrick Douglas in Charleston, Illinois 1858: saying...

> *I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in anyway the social and political equality of the white and black races. I am not, nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And since they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.*

Despite the Transatlantic slave trade having been ruled a crime against humanity, the abuse inflicted against Blacks had long remained unaddressed by the ruling class, and their descendants, many believe that the same ones are still in power.

Enslaved Women: Rape, Sexual Productivity, and Reproduction. Sexual violence and exploitation have, to a great extent, shaped Black women's lives both in the stereotypes through which society defines them, and in their perception of self. Many of the challenges that Black women face today are rooted in systematic racial trauma. Indeed,

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negative stereotypes, microaggressions, identity conflicts and their marginalized status in America—can be traced back to the slave-era. While is it true that slavery subjected both men and women to hard labor, subjugation, emotional and psychological brutality—similar in degree—the persistent, brutal rape, sexual violence, prostitution and forced breeding of slave women and girls to fuel and sustain a profitable economic system, was an aspect of slavery that was by most account, unique to Black women. Even though competitive comparisons can be more dividing than helpful, in certain ways, this quintessential fact differentiated the experiences of male and female slaves (Hallam, 2004).

From the beginning of the slave era, the rape of enslaved women was used as a weapon of terror, dominance, disgrace and profit. Captured slave women and girls were routinely raped by slave traders and crewmen of the slave ships even before their arrival on American soil. In historical accounts, girls, even those younger than ten years old were sexually assaulted and persistently raped (Falconbridge, 1973). The fact that pregnant slave women were valuable to both slave traders and owners may have heightened the degree of sexual assaults against them. Pregnant slave women represented increased wealth for both the slave-trader and the slave-owner. Slave-traders could negotiate a higher buying price for pregnant slave women on the basis that her child - who under most slave codes would be born a slave. And as property, the slave-owner would profit in variety of ways from the child including selling or raising the child to become part of the slave owners' workforce.

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Indeed, American slavery functioned as system of gender supremacy that was a critical aspect of the institution that served to advance economic profitability and psychological slavery (Nelson, 2006; Davis, 2003 & Roberts, 1997). One researcher believes that slave women were purposely bought and sold to be sexually violated, prostituted and utilized for forced breeding (Wagner; McCann, 2017). And as one scholar puts it, slave women suffered the brunt of white men's sexual assault and exploitation (Nakao, 2004).

The persistent rape of Black women was so widespread and barbaric that one abolitionist leader described slave women's bodies as at the mercy of the fathers, sons, brothers, and acquaintances of their master's perverse sexual appetites (Douglass, 1968). And because slave women were considered 'property,' and 'nonhuman' they had no recourse from which to seek help. Under most slave laws, the rape and sexual assault of slave women by slave owners – and even slave men were considered a non-criminal offense (Barak, Flavin, & Leighton, 2001). As such, slave owners perpetually raped the wives and daughters of slave men, often in their presence, rendering husbands helpless to protect their wives and daughters. Some researchers conceive that the rape of slave women and the helplessness of slave men to stop the abuse was a power play by slave owners to exercise power, pleasure, and submission that was meant to destroy the social structure of the slave community (Hopkins, 1900).

The degree of sexual abuse inflicted against slave women extended far beyond economic profitability. One law professor called the institution 'sexual and political

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slavery' (Davis, 2013). In fact, Davis added politics to the structure of slave labor and exploitation as another market from which the commoditized slave sex profited. In another seminal Harvard study, the researcher conceives that not only were all facets of slavery sexualized; he posits that evidence of the deeply rooted sexually exploitative era remains intact in current times (Owens, 2015). He points to the lives of 19th-century labors of "fancy maids", brothel laborers, placeés, and concubines as evidence of slavery's enduring sex market. Sexual labor became especially crucial to slave owners in 1801 when Congress prohibited the importation of African slaves in the United States (Johnson, 1995). This created a greater need for bodies and heightened sexual abuse against slave women. Some researchers have argued that without America's sexually exploitative institution, the construct of slavery would not have been sustainable (Bensonsmith, 2008). Consequently, some legal scholars of contemporary times have criticized slave era historians and academicians of failing to adequately document and analyze the convergence of systematic sexual exploitation against slave women and its crucial function within the political economy (Broussard, 2013).

The failure to document slave women's experiences, and their practical erasure from history, is not without severe consequences in contemporary times. The Black family structure is severely impacted. Blacks lack citizenship in a country built by their ancestors and carry on their shoulders a legacy of oppression and disempowerment. Furthermore, enslaved women's devalued self-perceptions and social understandings have endured into current times.

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Despite the slave era being deeply rooted in sexual exploitation of slave women, only in recent years have scholars, feminists and activists expanded on the intersectional barbarities that slave women endured. As well, the research community has just begun to scratch the surface of how extensive and far-reaching the damaging effects of slavery have impacted Black people's lives. In fact, an exploration of the exploding sex trafficking epidemic of minors shows a strong relationship between sexual abuse against slave women and many sex-trafficking victims today. Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) shows that over 50% of prostitution arrests in America are Black minors (Nelson-Butler, 2015). One assistant Law professor believes that this is a consequence of America's history of sexual exploitation of slave women (Nelson-Butler, 2015).

The view is widely supported by other studies that show a high correlation between sex-trafficking and the false derogatory slave-era stereotypes that have marked Black women as sexually promiscuous, depraved and immoral for centuries. That these negative stereotypes were legally supported and accepted as justification for the pervasive rape and sexual assaults against enslaved women throughout the antebellum period has, arguably influenced young girls' self-perception and perpetuate risky sexual behaviors. The problem is compounded by enduring, ingrained societal ideologies that views Black women as sexually and morally corrupt. These myths have had great potential in preventing policymakers from creating the strong laws needed that would

adequately identify and protect adolescent girls who are sex-trafficking victims (Butler, 2015).

Extensive studies have argued that modern-day sex trafficking is not new, but rather, an enduring practice that is as old as America. Similar to Owen's (2015) views that the slave-era sex market remains, other scholars have added to the discourse that the 'Fancy Girl' domestic slave and today's sex-trafficking market provides compelling evidence that the commercialized sex market has endured centuries (Wagner & McCann, 2017).

The 'Fancy- Girl' market was established for the principal reason of selling enslaved women of mixed-raced into prostitution, and in some cases, to serve as the sexual "concubines" to one man (Gordon, 2015). The commercialized sex market was especially dominant in the South where young, mixed-raced girls were often sold at higher prices than skilled male slaves (Fogel, & Engerman, 2008). One prominent abolitionist, who himself was biracial, in a speech described the sex-trafficking of mixed-raced women as "...youth and elegance, beauty and innocence, are exposed for sale upon the auction block; while villainous monsters stand around, with pockets lined with gold, gazing with lustful eyes upon their prospective victims (Douglas, 1850, Kumar 1993).

Despite the sparsely documented life of enslaved women in history, the connection between past and present sexual exploitation is strong, especially when placed in the context of what is now known about slavery's widespread structure of sexual abuse. Indeed, a compelling argument can be made that the effects of slavery remain

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unconfronted and unresolved. Had researchers of the slave era collected, analyzed and documented the prevalence of commoditized sexual exploitation against slave women—adding reproductive exploitation via forced sex and forced reproduction to forced labor as a protected aspect of slavery—there could have resulted some implementation of policies that protected contemporary Black women against enduring manifestations of sexual, economic, emotional and psychological forms of slave-era related abuse (Bridgewater, 2001).

Conversely, Black women today have never been credited for the productivity, wealth and success of America that was produced by their ancestors. What they have carried throughout centuries and generations are the slave-era stigmas of abuse and negative stereotypes. Some researchers contend that in the minds of society, Black women are still perceived as 'marked bodies' (Hopkins, Putzi, 2006)—that they carry within them the depths of degradation (Beal, 1969). Another prominent race activist and feminist observes that Black women emerge from slavery in company with the interlocking stereotypical mental imagery of her identity, as a "natural and permanent slave woman" (Morton, 1991, Kowalski, 2009). Despite evidence of the horrors committed against slave women, America has yet to set the record straight about the centuries of lies – even though contemporary Black women still carry the false stigmas that have marked them as perpetually dis-empowered, doomed and mythical characters and keeps them trapped in a system that continues to exploit them.

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Stereotypes and Microaggressions. One scholar defines stereotypes as the 'cognitive structures' that contain one's knowledge, beliefs and expectations about human groups (Peffley, 1997). And that the beliefs evolve out of a kernel of truth and then become distorted into "facts" (Green, 1998).

Throughout American history, Black women have been portrayed as inherently flawed, possessing bad attitudes, harsh, loud, sexually perverse and lacking in moral character (Kowalski, 2009). This narrative has been revised and retold many times, and in the scope of the American legacy, the Black woman prototype remains a despondent,

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immoral and corrupt character. These stereotypes have been cultivated, perpetuated and sustained in films and literature to portray whatever narrative best represents Black women as an underclass. Additionally, these stereotypes have led to class, race and gender issues that render Black women in a proverbial state of marginalized oppression. Today, many of the same stereotypes have been internalized by a large segment of the population and they play a significant role in the persistent microaggressions expressed towards Black women. These everyday confrontations with racial biases can create a pervasive sense of powerlessness that may undermine many Black women's overall confidence to manage life's challenges, causing them to feel helpless and depressed. (Williams & Williams Morris, 2000). The damaging effects may be felt on multiple fronts and may even create a distorted internalized self-perception in many. As previously stated, these emotional factors may be a result of higher levels of poverty and unemployment, or these economic factors may affect emotions resulting in poor physical and mental health, but they are likely part of a mutual cycle.

Microaggressions are defined as the intentional or unintentional everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental disregard, rebuff or insults that convey hostility, derogatory or negative attitudes towards target persons or groups based on their marginalized status. Microaggressions often communicate to the person or group a message that the target is inferior. These attitudes are also often expressed in threats and intimidation (Sue, 2010).

To demonstrate how negative stereotypes have trapped Black women in centuries of oppression, it is essential to understand the larger narratives that have shaped their

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lives and identity. The slave-era asexual mammy stereotype has been transformed into the contemporary Aunt Jemima. The Black Jezebel is still a tragic modern-day prostitute, the Sapphire has morphed into today's angry Black woman, and the child-bearers of slavery are now characterized as Welfare Queens. Additionally, the Black woman is perpetually marked as unattractive, uneducated and so flawed she is manless. Table 1 shows the evolution of Black women's stereotypes from the slave-era to current times.

Table 1

Parallel Correlation between slave-era and contemporary stereotypes

THE MAMMY	AUNT JEMIMA
JEZEBEL	MODERN-DAY PROSTITUTE
SAPPHIRE	ANGRY BLACK WOMAN
BREEDERS OF SLAVERY	THE WELFARE QUEEN

The Mammy and Aunt Jemima. For decades, visual and print media portrayed the mammy as a docile, ever smiling, obese, extremely dark-skinned, middle-aged, stocky black woman possessing characteristics that deviate towards the masculine and lacking any intimation of sex appeal was adapted into the population for centuries. A prominent race theorist describes the mammy's representation of Black women as the antithesis of American and European beauty, femininity and womanhood (Jewel, 1963). Similarly, another scholar referred to the mammy image as a 'masculine subhuman creature' (Hooks, 1981).

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Researchers have widely questioned the existence of the mammy on a fundamental basis. Some have pointed out that during the 1800s, the times that popularized the Mammy, house slaves were more likely to be young, slender, light-skinned, and deemed pretty by European standards. On the other hand, the masculinized mammy would have more likely been a field slave. Not surprisingly, the basis of the Mammy construct has caused many researchers to investigate the strange characteristics of the sizeable man-like mammy, and the peculiar machinations under which the figure was portrayed as happy and eager to serve her slave owner during one of the most oppressive and dehumanizing experience in Black history (Jewell, 1993; Kowalski, 2009).

The controversy around the mammy archetype varies, but most have conceived the mammy as a mythical figure created to serve slave owners' interests. Some believe that the mammy was created as a smokescreen to contradict the restraints of enslavement and to distort the oppressive struggle of slavery (Kowalski, 2009). One sociology professor opines that the mammy was manufactured to serve the political, social and economic interests of mainstream white America as evidence that slavery was humane (Jewell 1993; Pilgrim, 2000). Also, to justify and perpetuate institutional racism (Jewell, 1993). As well, others believe that the character evolved from a need to divert attention from the sexual relations between slave women and slave owners (Jewell, 1993).

The Mammy caricature is not as dominant as it once was during slavery and the Jim Crow era, but there is still some semblance left in the ads we see today. Some have

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argued that *The-Pine Sol* Lady we see in advertisements and Tyler Perry's, *Medea* character had preserved a trace of the timeless figure. To this day, the mythical mammy has remained a mystery, and a point of discussion in the lived experiences of slave women.

The Jezebel and Prostitute. The traditional Jezebel, also known as 'the harlot' and the 'bad black girl', like the mammy, were equally well conceived by self-serving slave owners, and have, for centuries, been tailored to fit the interests of those in power. Unlike the asexual Mammy, Aunt Jemima, and Sapphire stereotypes, the Jezebel was portrayed as having a sexual attraction to white males.

The Black Jezebel is described as a mulatto, slender, light-skinned with long straight hair and a thin nose (Jewell, 1993). Even though the Black Jezebel stereotype counters the asexual depiction of the Mammy, the representation remains equally destructive to the way society views Black women. Indeed, there is a consistent thread between past and present stereotypes of Black women compared to White women. The depiction of Black women's sexuality, compared to their white counterpart, throughout history, has always been starkly different. While the Black Jezebel stereotype epitomized slave owners sexually perverse views of Black women as promiscuous, sinful, salacious in nature, predatory, morally corrupt and seductive with a voracious sexual appetite – White women were portrayed as the symbol of 'True Womanhood', with principles of respectability, modesty and sexual purity (Pilgrim, 2002). Even among the highest office of the time, perverse associations to Black women's sexuality was widespread. Thomas

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Jefferson suggested that Black women mated with orangutans and that the animals preferred Black women to their species (Gray-White, 1985).

The impetus behind the formulation of the Black Jezebel is a significant aspect of the highly profitable commercialized sex market in which mixed raced slaves, otherwise known as mulattoes were widely sold into prostitution. Studies reveal that bi-racial slaves – many of whom were born out of slave owners raping slave women, were particularly sexually brutalized due to their close resemblance to the mainstream definition of female sexual attractiveness. In some instances, bi-racial and Black women with light-skin who were not born into slavery would formally agree to provide long-term sexual and reproductive services in exchange for financial support (Pilgrim, 2002).

The distorted sexual imagery of the Black Jezebel has endured for centuries and today exemplifies why many whites still perceive Black women as loose, sinful and oversexed. In fact, the Jezebel stereotype remains a pervasive figure in modern-times – one that is perpetuated in movies, music videos and throughout mass media as overly sexualized, and morally corrupt. A dominant representation of Black women in film today is one in which they are either strung out on drugs or confined to playing roles of the perpetual whore who is willing to do anything to fulfill men's sexual desires (Pilgrim, 2002).

Sapphire and the Angry Black Woman. Consistent in some ways with other stereotypes is the sapphire archetype. Here, Black women became a pillar in American history simultaneously with the mammy and Jezebel, and all bore underpinnings of the

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Angry Black Woman in various degrees (Gray-White, 1985). Not dissimilar to the

morally corrupt representation of the Jezebel, the Sapphire caricature portrays Black

women as rude, loud, malicious, abusive and overbearing (Pilgrim 2008). Other

disparaging descriptions attached to the Sapphire include evil, bitchy, stubborn and

hateful (Yarbrough, Bennett, 2000). This stereotype emasculates, and demeans Black

men using the same destructive stereotypes imposed upon them by a dominant society –

including that they are lazy, shift-less and do not take care of their children. Not only is

the Sapphire portrayed as supporting white society's perceived value of Black men – this

debased narrative paint her as lacking the ability or will to improve her life – thus, she is

rendered a bitter, hateful character who blame others for her unhappiness. Consequently,

Black men also adapted white society's negative portrayal of Black women as bitter,

hateful and angry figures – creating a division between Black men and women and

significantly weakening the intimate and familial relationship not just within the Black

family structure, but the collective mindset necessary to end America's oppression of

Black people.

Not surprising, the evolution of the Sapphire caricature into today's contemporary

Black woman is perhaps one of the most overt and widely perceived characteristic that

society holds of Black women. This enduring stigma have been successful in

diminishing Black women's socio-economic and political status to the extent that they are

rendered practically invisible in the spaces that white America dominates no matter their

expertise or credentials. Arguably, when Black women speak out against personal, social

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and political issues that adversely impact their lives, they are discredited and perceived as

angry. Yet, in the context of American history, a strong argument can be made that no

other group have a right to be angry about America's treatment of them more than Black

women.

The Child bearer and The Welfare Mother. The state of welfare system following the

1960s and early 1970s civil rights conflicts was contentious. Many researchers point to

this time as when the Welfare Queen was formulated and became ingrained in American

society. The welfare archetype of the Black female is portrayed as lazy, jobless – one

who does not want to work and have multiple children to get more money from the

government. Some race theorists have called the overgeneralization of Black women as

Welfare Queens racist and lack foundational basis. Still, the label remains among one of

the most pervasive stereotypes about Black women in America today. Some have argued

that the Welfare Queen stereotype is a political ruse orchestrated to distract the public

away from engaging in meaningful conversations about poverty and inequality

(Gustafson, 2011). One writer and producer called the labeling of Black women as

'Welfare Queen' a political lie that has continued to shape politics and stigmatize Black

women as leeches of the system (Blake, 2012). This argument is widely supported by

those who believe that then, former president Ronald Reagan in his 1976 presidential bid,

created the Welfare Queen stereotype of Black women to capitalize on the white

majority's concern over the expansion of social welfare (Gilliam, 1999). During

Reagan's time on the campaign trail, he persistently criticized the welfare system, going

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so far as to build an argument around a Chicago woman whom he claimed had 80 different names, 30 addresses, and 12 Social Security cards (Gilliam Jr. 1999). Reagan also claimed that she was on Medicaid, collects food stamps, drives a pink Cadillac and clears over $150,000 in cash-free income alone.

Reporters who investigated the story have opined that the abuses in Reagan's reports were wildly exaggerated and that three individuals – not one person – was involved in committing the abuses that Reagan claimed. In fact, of the two women whom Reagan denounced as welfare queens, one collected $377, 458 in welfare benefits within a seven-year period, lived in a house with a swimming pool, drove a Cadillac, a Rolls Royce and Mercedes Benz (Gustafson, 2011). However, Reagan combined the identities of the three women to exaggerate the abuses and created a false impression that these were common ways in which Black women used the welfare system (Gustafson, 2011).

This distorted representation is referred to as a 'narrative script' that one social psychologist described as "a coherent sequence of events expected by the individual, involving him either as a participant or as an observer (Gilliam, 1999). Expanding on the explanation, Gilliam further notes that the Welfare Queen narrative script had two components: (1) that welfare beneficiaries are disproportionately women; and (2) they are disproportionately Black women. White people's beliefs in those scripts have resulted in reduced backing for some much-needed welfare programs that may benefit black people. They also influenced increased stereotyping of Blacks, and reinforced traditional gender roles (Gilliam, 1999). Adding to the discourse, one writer and producer explained

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Reagan's perception of the Welfare Queen as having all the elements of a good story with villains and heroes that aligns with societal knowledge of the real world. In this conception of the Welfare Queen, Reagan gave society their villain in Black women who he regarded as taking advantage of the system (Blake, 2012).

Over forty years after Reagan stereotyped Black women as Welfare Queens, the stigma persists among conservatives and politicians. Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum, and Mitt Romney have all been documented making racially charged comments about Black people as the primary recipients of the welfare system. Santorum, while on the campaign trail inferred that he did not want to give Black people someone else's money to make their lives better and later attempted to self-correct stating that he meant to say 'people' instead of black people' (Mejia-Cuellar, 2012). Along the same line, Romney has consistently remarked that former President Obama's goal was to change America into an "entitlement society". Newt Gingrich has called Obama a food-stamp president (Luhby, 2012). Gingrich blamed poverty on lack of work ethics and expressed that poor people should want paychecks, not handouts (Mejia-Cuellar, 2012).

However, studies find that among those who qualify for food vouchers, more whites than Blacks collect food stamps (Gibson, 2015). The Nutrition Assistance Program 2013 Report Series estimates that 34% of White households with at least one child receive SNAP benefits (food stamps) and other forms of assisted living. In contrast, Black people only make up 23% of welfare recipients with at least one child in the household.

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Taking this point further, one can make a compelling argument that the stigmatize welfare Queen stereotype of Black women, not unlike the version of history most commonly known, lacks factual basis. Black women throughout history, have always contributed to the workforce during slavery and in current times. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor 2016 report shows that Black women are more likely to participate in the workforce than any other group. Six in 10 Black women currently hold jobs or are on the job market (Farrelly-Harrigan, 2016). The problem is not that Black women do not want to work, the problem is that they earn close to 20 percent less than White women and upwards of 40 percent less than white men (Farrelly-Harrigan, 2016).

Black Women's Identity. One renown developmental theorist defines the concept of 'identity' and identity development as the process in which one organizes their collective experiences within their environment (Erikson, 1959). Additionally, Erickson imagines that *Identity* give individuals a sense of permanence – social uniformity that connects the child to the person she becomes – and unifies a person's self-perception how they are perceived within the construct of their community.

In recent years, the issue of Black identity has been widely examined as a social concept to self-development and self-efficacy and to gain understanding of Blacks struggle with identity conflicts. Indeed, Blacks struggle with personal and social identity is a particularly critical aspect of their lived experience considering that throughout American history, they have been vilified, almost universally, as savages—morally corrupt, intellectually inferior, and spiritually bankrupt—against glorified images of

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white people. One feminist posit that not only have Black women endured America's contempt more than any other group – to the extent that some believe their identity has been socialized out of existence (Hooks, 1991). Expanding on the issue, a notable race activist observes that exploring Black women's lives in America is like crashing into a fortress of blatant lies, misrepresentations and self-justifying arrogance (Beal, 1969). One well-known controversial activist referenced Black women struggles in America. He conceives that Black women are the most disrespected, unprotected and neglected group in America (Matthew, 2016) Malcolm X - 1962 Speech.

 To understand the extent to which Blacks as a group – and Black women especially, have struggled to secure a sense of identity in America, the expansiveness of their struggles is perhaps best reflected in Sojourner Truth's 1858 speech at the women's convention in Akron, Ohio. Having faced vast disparities between the way enslaved women were perceived and treated compared to their white counterparts, Truth asked in her speech "Aren't I a woman?" Today, slave-era stereotypes and racial stigmas about Black women's physical attractiveness are perceived in various degrees of overly masculine, hyper-sexual, and even asexual. Research shows that these ideologies about Black women's appearance can induce physical and psychological harm. The assault on Black Women's sense of self in which they have been judged, convicted and subjected to unparalleled microaggressions based on a fabricated legacy steeped in destructive stereotypes have lasted for centuries and generations.

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Understanding the concept behind the destruction of Black women's identity is critical to understanding the psychological and social paradigms on which Black women's sense of identity was formed. Empirical studies have argued that the formulation of Black women's identity can be found in the destructive narratives that has been told, retold and revised throughout American history. And which, in every version, they have been portrayed as inherently flawed, physically, psychologically and lacking in moral character to the extent that they remain in society's view - perpetually, dis-empowered figures (Kowalski, 2009). Conversely, some researchers believe that having been stigmatized as characteristically repugnant and marginalized has adversely influenced both society's view of Black women and their perception of self (Collins, 2000, Jewell, 1993). This framework can be used as a basis for understanding Du Bois (1903) theory on Double Consciousness in which he attempts to explain Black people's struggle for identity.

Double consciousness is described as the conscious breaking apart of one's inner self to shape into a mainstream character that society deems acceptable. He further conceived double consciousness as a 'sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of another.' Du Bois' theory as it pertains to Black women in this study is expressed as the merging of African experiences and American characteristics to create a stronger more unified self than the individual experience. An important text from W.E. Du Bois' (1903) examination of Black identity reads, '*this double-consciousness... measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity... this twoness, —*

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an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring

ideals in one dark body,"

Other race theorists and scholars support du Bois' double consciousness theory that injuries resulting from slavery have manifested in various forms of identity crises and self-hatred. Persistent confrontation with racial discrimination in Black women's everyday lives further adds to the confusion surrounding their identity. For example, Black women are being pressured to assimilate into white culture in various ways, including skin-bleaching and straightening their hair to fit into societal defined acceptance of beauty. Consequently, they are being led further away from their individuality.

Not surprisingly, the methodical destruction of a slaves' identity and sense of belonging was a fundamental strategy that slave-owners used to disempower them. The objective was accomplished through a process known as 'seasoning' that includes persistent physical abuse and negative psychological conditioning aimed at making slaves believe that they were non-human, and to break their spirit and free will. The seasoning process was implemented soon after capture and remained almost constant throughout the enslaved lives. Aspects of *seasoning* involved: (1) stripping the person of a name (identity, connection to self); (2) Restricting access to education (independent, informed thought); (3) Separating families, sold husbands, wives, children (removal of support, anchor); (4) Branding and raping (ownership); and (5) Defaming, ridiculing, and caricaturizing black women's image (self-esteem, feminine).

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With a historical construct of self and identity steeped in negative imagery and destructive, psychological conditioning - one can postulate that Blacks emerged from slavery challenged in any aspect of self-concept, dignity or identity on which they might recover from the effects of slavery. And since their individual and collective environmental experiences bind a person's identity—and from which they derive a sense of permanence that determines whom they become—Black women's unique experiences undoubtedly necessitates a more in-depth exploration to understand the complexities that formulate their identity. Arguably, many Blacks in America lack the foundational concept on which to build a social, cultural, personal and community membership that is necessary, particularly for Black women to be able to answer the fundamental questions, who is the Black woman and what is her story?

For many Black women, asking profound, thoughtful, and self-revealing questions may elicit intense adverse reactions resulting from a history of Black enslavement. As well, they may feel discomfort from other personal struggles such as poverty, unemployment, and a maelstrom of other challenges. However, these questions are necessary for Black women to reconstruct their identities from false slave-era narratives and microaggressions.

Even though Blacks collectively possess basic knowledge of who they are and where they are from – on a large scale, the population remains unaware of how slave era stereotypes have shaped their past and present identity. For example, generations of Blacks, despite the history of brutality and oppression in America, still think of Africa as

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the "Dark Continent," and that America provides a better way of life. The depressive depictions of Africa are not unlike the images of Blacks that American history portrays them. Indeed, the oppressed and hopeless imagery most commonly depicted of Africa shares a view similar to the disempowering prototype of Black women. Both have faced unique challenges, yet little is known about them other than the selective and omitted versions perpetuated throughout generations. What is not commonly known about the continent of Africa is that it is the second-largest in the world - size and population wise, with abundant resources. Many of the most oppressed, and poverty-stricken areas of the continent can be traced to slave era crimes that were committed by factions of the same group that kidnapped, enslaved, raped and killed millions of its people and erased entire generations of Black families. This limited understanding of the historical foundation that shapes the current reality of their homeland has resulted into many Blacks having a micro-level awareness of their heritage, culture and themselves that is essential to the formation of one's identity.

The Jim crow Era - (1877-1954). The emancipation of slavery was undoubtedly a turning point in American history. The term Jim Crow was a derogatory slang for 'negro' and was a systematically accepted caste system that symbolized the racial subjugation of Blacks as second-class citizens. Jim Crow laws were widespread in southern and border states between the end of the 1877 Civil War to the mid-1960s. However, the laws were not confined to the southern states (Pilgrim, 2000).

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The period of the Jim Crow era follows Abraham Lincoln's January 1, 1863, Emancipation Proclamation that declared all persons held as slaves to be freed. Despite Lincoln's executive order, slave owners in the Confederate States kept slaves until 1865 when the South conceded to Union forces (Pilgrim, 2000).

Today, America designates the Emancipation Act as a holiday that is widely celebrated. And in social, political, and professional settings nationally, the Jim Crow era is discussed in ways that suggest that this country has reached a point of civility and acceptance that all men are equal and are afforded the same equal right. However, there remains a vast difference between Blacks and Whites as to what it means to live free from and liberated of destructive stereotypes and microaggressions. The disparities in treatment and ideologies between Blacks and Whites extend across the spectrum. One researcher posits that the version of the Jim Crow era, similar to the version of American history embodies propaganda, myth and selective omissions (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

Closer examination of the period reveals an ominous and less known version of freed slaves following the emancipation. One historian explains that millions of free slaves died of starvation and disease after the emancipation (Downs, 2012). He referred to the death toll as the most extensive 19th-century biological crises – one that resulted from various factors, including neglect by union soldiers, living in contraband and refugee camps, some of which were once used as slave pens. The conditions were unsanitary, food supply was short, and health care was sparse for those who needed

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medical attention. Blacks were routinely lynched in public, sometimes with the assistance of police (Raper, 1933). Ironically, the conditions under which Blacks emerged out of slavery bear a stark similarity to the transatlantic slave era and the importation of slaves to the United States.

The Jim Crow period is relevant to this study beyond gaining a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of freed slaves. Despite the proclamation of freedom, and the legal acknowledgment that Blacks are human beings, they emerged from slavery into the Jim Crow era still perceived negatively, and to a vast degree, were still treated like animals. Black codes were created to restrict Black people from the right to vote, own weapons, drink from the same water fountain, eat in the same restaurant, share a bathroom, or attend the same school as whites. They were restricted from educational achievement and viable employment opportunities. Those who violated a Black code could face death or imprisonment (Landberg, 1974, 1998, 2001 and 2007).

In recent years, more researchers have begun exploring the Jim Crow era as a fundamental aspect of understanding enduring racism and its manifestation into microaggressions. Since it was the period that followed the Emancipation of slavery, and during the period best known for legitimizing racism by perpetuating beliefs of Blacks as inferior and promoting segregation, it provides crucial insight into the potency of systemic racism to cultivate and influence enduring mindsets that are passed down from one generation to the next. Today, the same old, destructive ideologies have resulted in widespread microaggressions towards Blacks to the extent that some race theorists have

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argued that racism remains as prevalent today as it were during the slave and Jim Crow era. Instead, racism is merely expressed in less overt ways. In recent years, the research field has categorized microaggressions as *explicit* and *implicit* racism. *Explicit racism* is defined as overt and intentional expressions of bigotry by individuals and institutions towards racial groups. Those who express overtly racist beliefs embrace prejudicial beliefs that specific groups of people are inferior (Canada, 2017). *Implicit racism* is broadly defined. However, the term is best understood as unconscious negative expressions, reactions, and judgments towards persons or groups from different racial and ethnic groups (Canada, 2017).

The Feminist Movement 1960's. The history and the evolution of women's rights is a complex issue that has been debated throughout American history. To place the lived experiences of Black women to White women in a comparative context, many researchers reflect on the construct of the 1960's feminist movement. Across ethnic lines, some critics have argued that 'all women' are still fighting for equal rights in many areas of their lives. While this assertion may be true to a large extent, data suggest that the cultural oppression of women in America are not the universal experience of all women. Even though Black women encounter sexism similar to their white counterparts, a compelling argument can be made that the feminist landscape was built on the expressed needs and desires of white women. Consequently, during the women's movement, when White women raised their voices against sexist oppression and demanded liberation from sexist roles, social inequality, voting rights, equally political, educational and

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employment opportunities, Black women were mostly silent, and the ones that spoke out were barely discernible or just ignored. In fact, Black women were expected to keep silent about their oppression to support the uprising of Black men (Hooks, 1981). It was not from a lack of having something to say that most Black women remained silent, Instead, it was from being resigned to the persistent oppressive conditions brought about by circumstances that had marked their lives for generations (Hooks, 1981). Arguably, Black women during the women's movement did not feel that they could join the fight for women's rights, because they did not see 'womanhood' as an important aspect of their identity' (Hooks, 1981). As such, the feminist movement, though it addressed specific similar needs for both Black and White women, the intersectional hardships that were unique to Black women, and which has had severe consequences in shaping many aspects of their lives were not politically or theoretically addressed during the movement.

The claim that Black women's unique needs were not adequately, systematically addressed is not without merit. As previously stated in this study and which the data validates, Black women overwhelmingly fares worse in most major crucial life areas than any other ethnic group of women, including gender wage gap, poverty, underemployment, unemployment, social status, homelessness, violence against women, higher rates of health problems, physical, mental, emotional abuse, and poor self-image. These disparities are a result of various intersectional racial discrimination factors.

Intersectionality theory was coined by Crenshaw in 1989 and was initially used to address anti-discrimination laws when applied to the issues of Black feminism. Crenshaw

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had observed that discrimination against Black women does not fit within the legal classification of either "racism" or "sexism"— but rather, as an amalgamation of both racial discrimination and sexism. Simply stated, the law considers sexism as an injustice that affects all women (including white women). Racism, on the other hand, refers to the discrimination faced by Black people (including male) and other people of color. Additionally, Crenshaw's research suggests that cultural forms of oppression are interconnected and influenced by the intersectional systems of society. Contributing factors of intersectionality include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity. Minority groups, particularly Black women, experience double-discrimination based on race and sex (Crenshaw, 1989).

The intersectional theory provides one explanation as to why Black women and other minority groups are not afforded the same equal rights and opportunities, at least to the extent that white women have been able to advance in American society. At no time was this more evident than during the period of the women's movement—that the fight for equal rights was not the same for Black and White women. Crenshaw believes that while white women encounter sexism, Black women suffered oppression from racism and classism. Consequently, many race theorists and activists have argued that Black women's experiences extend the general categories addressed in the discourse on discrimination.

The role that Black women played in the movement has received heightened attention in recent years. One notable figure of the movement credits Black women for

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forging the movement (Steinem; Fessler, 2015). As well, Steinem acknowledged that she learned feminism disproportionately from Black women who supported feminist issues more than White women. However, the white middle-class part of the movement got reported more and took precedence over issues concerning Black women.

Today's research shows that systematic racial discrimination still oppressed Black women into silence. They remain underrepresented across discipline and are still not perceived as deserving of equal rights to the extent that white women have advanced. Consequently, the effects on their quality of life across the spectrum have been devastating. Most contemporary Black women are excluded from positions of authority and leadership positions in universities, professional associations, publishing concerns, broadcast media, and other social institutions (Collins, 2000). These disparities have resulted in the continued advancement and preservation of the white-dominated power structure. To this end, Black women's ideas and interests have been rendered silent, and the historical dehumanizing stereotypical images through which society defines and marginalized them is preserved (Collins, 2000).

Study 1: Research Hypothesis, Questions and Quantitative Study

Research question one examines the dominant stereotypes that Black women confront today to determine their causal effect and how to eliminate and or best develop ways to decrease them. Research question two examines the extent to which negative stereotypes influence microaggressions towards Black women and explore the physical and psychological effects. Research question three examines what relational factors that

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exist between the degree to which microaggression affects Black women's psychological empowerment and self-efficacy, and how these variables relate to ethnic identity. This study hypothesizes the following:

Research Hypothesis

1. Microaggressions towards Black women are a direct result of ingrained, negative stereotypes held over time.

2. Microaggressions adversely impact Black women's sense of psychological empowerment resulting in damaging internalized perceptions of self that create identity crises.

3. Ethnic identity is foundational, culturally, and grounded in self-efficacy, shielding black women against microaggressions.

Research Questions

1: To what extent do ingrained negative stereotypes influence microaggression towards Black women?

2: To what extent do persistent microaggressions affect Black Women's internalized physical and psychological sense of self-efficacy and identity?

3: To what extent does strong ethnic identity influence Black women's internalized physical and psychological sense of self-efficacy and identity against microaggressions?

Study 1: Methods (Quantitative)

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The methods section provides an overview of the research design, description and rationale, data collection, and analysis. The study employed a mixed research methodology: Phase 1 quantitative (Thesis) and a Phase 2 qualitative (Dissertation), which interrogates the deeper narratives to be identified as constructs behind negative stereotypes about Black women. The significance of the research is also studied, along with a summary of the methods and the determinant factors related to the analysis. Phases 1 and 2 were submitted for approval and implementation of human subjects by the Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois.

Participants. The target populations to participate in the study were Black women living in the United States, irrespective of their nationality. The respondents include 78 Black women from ages 18 to 75. Participants were recruited to ensure that the data collected was culturally applicable for Black women. The participants were informed that, by completing the questionnaire, they were providing consent for the study. They were also told that a commitment of approximately 10 minutes was required to complete the questionnaire(s). The confidentiality statement was also included with the informed consent, stating that all data collected on the survey would be recorded anonymously and that the research would be reported as cumulative data. The solicitation for participation included corresponding contact information for the researcher and faculty advisors.

Recruitment and Data Collection. Before collecting the data, a request to conduct the study was approved by the Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) at National

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Louis University. Once the study was approved, the researcher posted a solicitation announcement survey (see Appendix A) and protocol for participants on the researcher's Facebook and LinkedIn social media platforms. Close contacts with the researcher were also invited to post the announcement on their social media sites. Additionally, the researcher reached out to acquaintances, those known through her educational and professional connections, and extended social circle. For example,

those who participated in the study were asked to pass the survey link to other Black women who fit the criteria and who may like to participate.

Procedures. The quantitative measures were collected in an online survey created in Survey Monkey. Participants were asked to complete a demographic form (see Appendix B), including but not limited to identifying their gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, occupation, educational level, geographic location, title, salary, employment, marital and parental status. This information was used in conjunction with questions from four instruments: (1) The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992); (2) The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS; Lewis & Neville, 2015); (3) Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) were combined to provide a broad view of the different forms of microaggressions that Black women encounter; and (4) Psychological Empowerment scale developed by (Spreitzer, 1995). The measures included were consistent with study aims to expand our understanding of how negative stereotypes continue to impact Black Women's lives across disciplines

adversely. Three principal components are measured and analyzed. They are: Ethnic Identity, Microaggressions and Black Women's Psychological

Empowerment. Both independent and dependent variables utilized reliable and valid self-reporting appraisal tools. The results were applied to understand the connection between negative stereotypes, Black women's identity and self-efficacy and microaggressions. Additionally, the scales were analyzed to determine Black women's internalized self-perception and identity. The MEIN has an established corresponding reliability alphas coefficient of .86, .93, and .88.

Ethnic Identity. The dependent variable, Ethnic identity variable was measured using The Multigroup Ethnic Identity scale (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The MEIM refers to a person's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership, and in which one claims individual heritage (Phinney, 1996). Additionally, Phinney conceives that ethnic identity is different from personal identity. However, one or both may influence each other. Ethnic Identity has four primary components: (1) Ethnic awareness, is based on understanding one's group and the group of others; (2) Ethnic self-identification, is recognized as the labels used by one's own group; (3) Ethnic attitudes, represents feelings about one's group and the group of others; and (4) Ethnic behaviors, refers to behavior patterns that are specific to an ethnic group.

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity scale has been revised several times. The current scale consists of 12-items and measures three components of ethnic identity 1)

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affirmation and belonging, 2) ethnic identity achievement, and 3) ethnic behaviors (Phinney, 1992).

Microaggressions. The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) and Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS) were combined to determine the degree to which microaggressions are expressed toward Black women. The GRMS is a 25-item self-reporting instrument designed to assess the frequency and stress appraisal of Black women's persistent confrontation with gendered microaggressions. It is described as "subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersection of one's race (Lewis, 2013). The GRMS is designed to evaluate Black women's experience across four domains: a) Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification; (b) Silenced and Marginalized; (c) Strong Black Woman Stereotype; and (d) Angry Black Woman Stereotype.

The REMS is a 45-item scale consisting of statements involving experiences with racial and ethnic microaggressions. REMS provide a broader framework to assess the different intersectional forms of microaggressions that Black women encounter in their lives. REMS explore six domains a) Assumptions of Inferiority, b) Second-Class Citizen and Assumption of Criminality, c) Micro invalidations, d) Eroticization and Assumptions of Similarity, e) Environmental Microaggressions, and f) Workplace and School Microaggressions. REMS provide a broader framework to assess the different intersectional forms of microaggressions that Black women encounter in their lives.

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For both GRMS and REMS, the participants were instructed to report the frequency in which they had experienced forms of racial microaggressions within the last six months. Using a 5-point Linkert scale: 1 = Very frequently and 5 = Never

Psychological Empowerment. The Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES) developed by (Spritzer, 1995) measures the four dimensions of psychological empowerment. They are, (a) meaning, (b) competence (c) self-determination, and (d) impact. All four dimensions are necessary for psychological empowerment to occur. The scale contains three items for each of the four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment. For example, (a) meaning: 'The work I do is meaningful to me' (b) competence: 'I have mastered the skills necessary for my job' (c) self-determination: I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my job' and (d) impact: 'I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department'.

The objective of designing a Black Women's Psychological Empowerment scale is to help Black women become economically and socially strong by way of (1) Increasing access to the job market; (2) Improve entrepreneurship; (3) Increase of average household income; (4) Increase Social awareness; (5) improve feelings of self-worth and value; and (6) Feel empowered. The data will be analyzed and utilized for the overall empowerment of Black women in areas of personal, educational, economic, social, psychological and political empowerment. The means and standard deviations of the four domains of psychological empowerment were calculated as: meaning (M = 6.08, SD = .85), competence (M = 5.77, SD = .96), self-determination (M = 5.33, SD = 1.22),

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and impact (M = 4.20, SD = 1.53). Using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Study 1: Result

This research study examines the extent to which negative stereotypes about Black women have endured into contemporary times, the extent to which those stereotypes influence societal views of Back women and have manifested into microaggressions. Additionally, an analysis into the effects of microaggressions on Black women's internalized self-perception and identity is explored to gain a macro-level perspective and understanding about the lives of Black women throughout history into current times to determine how dominant negative past and present ideologies have converged to shape Black women's marginalized status and their struggles today. This study hypothesizes that a viable correlation exists between ethnic identity and psychological empowerment in Black women. As such, a predictive outcome is made that a foundationally strong ethnic identity acts as a protective shield against Microaggressions by eliminating or decreasing its ability to cause severe physical and psychological harm.

A Cronbach analysis was conducted to establish the statistical reliability of the three dependent variables: Ethnic identity, Microaggression, and Black Women's Psychological Empowerment Scale to determine if statistical associating reliability exists between them. Specifically, Ethnic identity and Microaggressions are observed to

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determine their reliability significance on Black Women's Psychological Empowerment. The standard ($p = < .05$) alpha level was used in the analysis.

Cronbach Alpha (a), also referred to as (coefficient alpha) was developed in (1951) by Lee Cronbach. The scale is most commonly used to measure statistical scale reliability and consistency (Ritter, 2010). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha Ethnic Identity reliability scale reports a significance reliability index of (.867). The result indicates that the 15-item scale shares a quantifiable significant association to Black Women's Psychological Empowerment. Thus, the study retains the null hypothesis. The Ethnic Identity and microaggression reliability index are particularly significant to this study. Specifically, both findings support the predictive research null hypothesis that those who have a strong Ethnic Identity, who are foundationally and culturally grounded are more psychologically empowered. As such, it is predicted that Ethnic Identity creates a critical buffer against harmful microaggressions. Table 2 shows a summary of the regression model.

Table 2

Ethnic Identity Reliability Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	15

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The Cronbach Alpha Microaggression scale reports a significance reliability index of (.947). This data indicates that the 26-item scale shares measurable, significant association reliability to Black Women's Psychological empowerment. The result shows that persistent confrontation with Microaggression attitudes decreases Black women's psychological empowerment. Table 3 shows the summary findings.

Table 3

Microaggressions Reliability Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.947	26

The Cronbach Alpha for Black Women's Psychological Empowerment scale reports a significance reliability index of (.892). This data indicates that the 12-item scale shares significant association reliability with Ethnic Identity and Microaggressions. The result indicates that persistent confrontation with Microaggression attitudes decreases Black women's sense of psychological empowerment. Table 4 reports the findings.

Table 4

Black Women Psychological Empowerment

Reliability Statistics	

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Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.892	12

A frequency descriptive analysis of the participants' demographic characteristics was conducted. The descriptive data included participants' personal information including age, gender, income, marital status, children, education, job title, and employment. The three dependent variables applied are, 1) Ethnic Identity 2) Macroaggression and 3) Psychological empowerment.

A second linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the degree in which associating commonalities existed between three groups and one dependent variable. The composite group includes, *Emotional Connection MEIM, Active Microaggression, and Ethnic Group Sense of Belonging.* The Black women's psychological scale was applied as the dependent variable.

Data Analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics methodologies were employed to calculate the demographic variables, and frequencies. The demographic questionnaire consists of three instruments totaling 70 questions. The data were analyzed to determine the reliability of the instruments. The completed questionnaires were examined for errors, coded, and organized for analysis using SPSS. Incomplete questions were removed from the data before running the analysis. The descriptive statistics also computed the means and standard deviations on interval data. The three principal components measured and

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analyzed are ethnic identity, microaggressions, and psychological empowerment. The

MEIN has an established reliability alpha coefficient of .86, .93 and .88 correspondingly.

Description of the participants. A descriptive demographic of the participants shows

the break-down of the participants. All the participants are Black women (See Table 5)

for the descriptive demographic summary.

Table 5
Summary Descriptive Characteristics of the participants

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Microaggressions	108	250.31	2.3177	.70854
Psychological Empowerment	110	372.08	3.4774	.50425
Ethnic identity	110	363.76	3.3061	.41563
Income	110	340	3.09	1.500
Relationship	110	262	2.38	1.740
Children	110	132	1.20	.402
Education	110	469	4.26	1.831
Valid N (Listwise)	106			

The median age was 35 to 44 years (30.92%) were between the ages of 35 to 44,

(20.9%) were 55 to 64, (20.0%) were between the age 25 to 34, (16.4%) were between 45

to 55. The remaining (2.7%) were between 18 to 24. (See table 6)

Table 6

Reported Age of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

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Valid				
18-24	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
25 to 34	22	20	20.0	22.7
35 to 44	34	30.9	30.9	53.6
45 to 54	18	16.4	16.4	70.0
55 to 64	23	20.9	20.9	90.9
65 to 74	10	9.1	9.1	100.0

The sample shows a high percentage of college degree earners. A strong number

(37.3%) have advanced degrees. They include (9.1%) Ph.D., law or medical degree

earners and (28.2%) master's degree. Post graduates accounts for (8.2%), bachelor's

degree (20%), associates (8.2%), some college (21.8%) and some high school (4.5%).

(See table 7).

Table 7

Reported Educational Status of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Some High School	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Some College	24	21.8	21.8	26.4
Associate	9	8.2	8.2	34.5
Bachelor's	22	20.0	20.0	54.5
Some post graduate	9	8.2	8.2	62.7
Master's	31	28.2	28.2	90.9
Ph.D., law or medical	10	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

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In the employment category, the data analysis reports a high employment rate of

(79.1%). Most of the respondents work for wages, (66.4%). Those who are self-employed

makes up (12.7%), unemployed and looking for work are reported at (.9%). (See Table 8)

Table 8
Reported Employment Status of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Employed for wages	73	66.4	66.4	66.4
Self-Employed	14	12.7	12.7	79.1
Unemployed/looking for work	3	2.7	2.7	81.8
Unemployed/not looking for work	1	.9	.9	82.7
Homemaker	3	2.7	2.7	81.8
Student	4	3.6	3.6	89.1
Retired	12	10.9	10.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

In the annual earnings category, the data analysis shows a high employment rate

among the participants of (79.1%). Among the annual earnings, (15%) report earnings

exceeding $100,000, (29.2%) report earnings between $60,000 to $89,999 (30%) earns

between 30,000 to 59,999, (11.5%) makes between $10,000 to 29,999, and (6.9%) reports

marking under $10,000. (See Table 9).

Table 9
Reported Annual Income of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	11	8.5	8.5
Under 10,000	9	6.9	6.9	15.4
10,000 to 29,999	15	11.5	11.5	26.9

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30,000 to 59,999	39	30.0	30.0	56.9
60,000 to 89,999	38	29.2	29.2	86.2
Over, 100,000	15	11.5	11.5	97.7
Other (please verify)	3	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The marital status category reports that 41.8% were married and living together,

30.9% were single and never married, 4.5% were married and separated, 6.4% were

unmarried and living together, 2.7% were widowed and 13.6% were divorced. (See Table

10)

Table 10

Reported Relationship Status of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Married	46	41.8	41.8	41.8
Single/Never Married	34	30.9	30.9	72.7
Married/Separated	5	4.5	4.5	77.3
Unmarried/Living together	7	6.4	6.4	83.6
Widowed	3	2.7	2.7	86.4
Divorced	15	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Additionally, most women surveyed have children (80%). A significant number

(78.5%) comes from the Midwest region, Southeast (16.9%). Northeast, (3.1%) and from

the Southwest and west region (.8%) for both.

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Linear Regression Group Analysis. A second linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the degree in which associating commonalities existed between three groups and one dependent variable. Linear regression is described as an approach that models relational factors between dependent and independent variables. Linear regressions are widely utilized in practical applications that include outcome predictions, forecasting, error reduction, identify specific associations and determine the relationship values between variables (Yin, 2009).

The composite group includes, *Emotional Connection MEIM, Active Microaggression and Ethnic Group Sense of Belonging.* The Black Women's Psychological empowerment scale was applied as the dependent variable. Because commonalities may exist between *Emotional Connection, Active Presence, Ethnic Group Sense of Belonging,* all of which may be impacted by microaggression, it was essential to utilize statistical regression to isolate each variable and determine their roles independent of the other. The approach helped to determine relational effects of the independent variables (predictors) and the degree in which their unique characteristics are associated with the dependent or outcome variable, Black women's psychological empowerment.

The standard ($p = < .05$) risk level was used in the analysis. The model summary shows the independent and dependent variables applied in the study and provided an estimated reliability significance of (.112). Table 11 shows the regression findings.

Table 11
Regression Model Summary

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Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.381ª	.145	112	.47582

a. **Predictors: (constant)**

Microaggression
Ethnic_Group_Belonging_MEIM_1
Presence_MEIM_3
Emotional Connection_MEIM_2

The regression Beta coefficients showing associations between the predictors (*Emotional Connection* MEIM, *Active presence*, *Microaggression*, and E*thnic Group Sense of Belonging*) and the outcome of Black Woman Empowerment were examined. The results provide valuable mathematical insight into the relational factor between each independent (*microaggression, Ethnic Group, Emotional Connection*) and the dependent variable (*Black Women Psychological Empowermen*t). All variables were tested at the (p < .05) level. The results indicate that the regression coefficient is significant for all groups based on predictability outcomes. *Ethnic Group Sense of Belonging* predictability shows a significance of (.047), *Emotional connection* (.550), *Active presence* (.873) and *microaggression* (.031). Table 12 shows the variables entered and removed.

Table 12

Variables Entered/Removed

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Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Methods
1	Microaggression Ethnic Group Belonging_MEIM 1 Active presence_MEIM_3 Emotional Connection_MEIM_2b		Enter

    a. Dependent variable: Psych Empowerment
    b. All Requested variables entered

The reported findings for the linear regression to determine the strength and predictive relationship values between independent variables, age, education and income, and three variables: Ethnic identity, microaggressions and Black Women's Psychological Empowerment scales indicated that age (-.027) shows null associating significance on the dependent variables. Microaggressions experienced in the past were also statistical reliable (marginally) with a negative significance of (-.184), suggesting the more past microaggressions experienced, the less psychological empowerment. Table 13 shows a summary of the findings. While age education was not significant, (0.44) income reported a statistical significance of (.213) and Ethnic Identity (.318). These findings suggest that a statistically significant relationship exists and may act as buffers to the negative impact of microaggressions on psychological empowerment.

Table 13
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Std. Error	t Beta	Sig		
1	(Constant)	2.269	.482			4.703	.000
	Age	-010	.035	-.027		-282	.779

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Education	.012	.026	.044	.471	.639
Income	.072	.032	.213	2.248	.027
Ethnic identity	.384	.112	.318	3.439	.001
Microaggressions	-.130	.067	-.184	-1.939	.055

a. Dependent variable: Black women's Psychological Empowerment

Study 1: Discussion

The purpose of the first study was to examine the significant associations between enduring microaggressions and Black female empowerment, along with the role of ethnic identity. Societal perceptions and Black women's internalized self-efficacy and identity crises were also examined in the attempt to develop a theoretical framework on which to cultivate practical, long-term solutions to help Black women reclaim their identity and move towards an empowering future. Black women's lived experiences must also be examined from a macro-level perspective to determine how dominant negative past and present ideologies have converged to shape their marginalized status and influence the struggles that they face today toward more free and empowered identities.

The study hypothesized that a significant viable relationship exists between ethnic identity and psychological empowerment in Black women that is crucial to the formulation of a long-term solution. As such, the researcher posits that a foundationally strong ethnic identity in Black women plays a crucial role in providing a protective shield against the adverse effects of microaggressions by eliminating or decreasing microaggressive attitudes and their ability to cause severe physical and psychological harm. An extensive body of work in the social sciences, and psychology in particular,

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shows that microaggressive attitudes are highly damaging to those targeted. As many studies have shown and previously mentioned in this study, microaggressions can cause

severe psychological harm to targeted persons and groups resulting in depression, low self-esteem, and negative self-image. However, the findings also reveal that those who possess a strong sense of ethnic identity and psychological empowerment are less impacted by microaggressive attitudes. Thus, ethnic identity is a crucial element against microaggressions, and further examination is necessary to determine the extent to which Black women with a strong ethnic identity about their value and owned space in American society. This awareness is vital to break centuries of generational oppression. Conversely, it is necessary to deconstruct the fabricated slave-era narratives to strengthen Black women's sense of ethnic identity. Doing so will result in Black women having the ability to rewrite their narrative from oppression to empowerment.

It is equally important to examine the extent to which positive-focus self-perceptions of ethnic self - forms Black women's archetype (in contrast to negative stereotypes), and thus, the reconstruction of their identity must be analyzed from a historical perspective. The fabricated and destructive slave-era ideologies and stereotypes have transformed through centuries creating the disempowering archetype of Black women that shapes not only societal perceptions but Black women's internalized perception of self-today.

Study 2: Qualitative

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Phase 2 study attempts to expand on Phase 1 finding that provides evidence that strong ethnic identity serves as a buffer against the negative influence of microaggressions on Black women's empowerment. To better understand these relationships, a phenomenological approach to qualitative interviews was used – one that includes in-depth story-based interviews with 8 Black women, essentially to gain insight about their observations, perceptions and lived experiences with Microaggressions, ethnic identity, and psychological empowerment.

Theoretical Framework. Several dominant factors have emerged as contributing factors to enduring racism. Among them include: 1) Inadequate representation and understanding of Black women's experiences from a historical context and how past ideologies effects present outcome (Burton, 1992). In fact, research shows that fewer than one-tenth of a percentage of the existing literature mentions slave women's experiences during the slave era (Bridgewater, 2005). 2) There is a lack of policies and resources to address Black women's unique intersectional challenges with racial discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). 3) Hierarchy, domination and oppression based on race, class, gender and sexual orientation are ingrained systematic functions of society (Zinn & Dill, 1996).

However, racial discrimination, being a complicated issue requires an extensive, macro-level examination in the lived experiences of Black women and their evolution throughout American history is necessary to fully understand the maelstrom of intersectional factors related to identity today. In this study, the researcher uses the conceptual framework of depth psychology and W.E.B. Du Bois' Double Consciousness

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Theory (1903) to analyze the complexity of Black women's struggles with identity in contemporary America. W.E.B. Du Bois' Double consciousness theory conceives that Black identity is split between different realities that make it difficult, and even impossible for a Black person to have a defined 'self' specifically relating to issues of race in the United States.

In fact, Du Bois uses a folklore concept of the 'seventh son' to describe Blacks in American society. The seventh son ideology is best understood that a son who is born of a seventh son is gifted with immense powers. This concept makes Du Bois' comparative analogy of Blacks as a seventh son particularly important given Blacks' marginalized status and persistent struggles for equality. Building on this concept, Du Bois' theory explained that Blacks are born with a veil that gives them a second-sight within the systematic construct of American life– a world that does not allow him to be or even discover his true self. Rather, he is confined to assimilating to American ideals of him. As such, Du Bois conceives that Blacks perceive themselves through the distorted views of their oppressors while struggling to maintain their ethnic pride.

Du Bois' double consciousness theory aligns with seminal studies by prominent academicians who conceive that a person's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior is based on their ethnic group membership and claim to individual and collective heritage (Phinney, 1996). Additionally, that identity formation is the 'challenge of preserving one's sense of personal continuity over time and establishing a sense of sameness of

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oneself, despite the necessary changes that one must undergo regarding redefining the self" (Harter, 1990).

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this qualitative research study explores 8 Black women's lived experience, observations and perceptions of racism and microaggressions to understand their unique challenges. It additionally explores ethnic identity as a buffer against microaggressive attitudes. Despite notable progress, racism and the stereotypes, myths, and microaggressions remain malignant markers in Black women's lives. They are adversely impacted socioeconomically, politically and psychologically. To fully understand and adequately address the effect of microaggression against Black women today, the problem requires a macro-level examination and dissection of the formulated problem. This qualitative study enables Black women to share their personal stories, observations, and perspectives about the unique intersectional challenges they face with microaggressive attitudes. The narrative approach provides a practical framework on which to understand the struggles that Black women face in American society and to develop the necessary programs and policies that are essential for sustainable change to take place towards an empowering future.

Archetype: Renown Swiss psychologist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who pioneered analytical psychology is highly regarded among his peer for his work on unconscious theories. Jung's unconscious theory believes that the past is the nexus from which the human mind formulates and influence present human behavior. As well, that the mind is

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composite of both separate and intersecting systems involving the ego, personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious.

This study applied Jung's personality formulation theory in which he imagines archetypes as an active network of reactions that defines and determines a person's life in ways that are not visible (Jung, 1970). Moreover, Jung observes that our past shapes the foundational construct of the psyche and is responsible for directing and influencing current human behavior. Among the many archetypes identified in Jung's unconscious theory, he focused on four that he believes are fundamental in influencing individual thought, action, and outcomes. 1) The persona is explained as the image of ourselves that we project to the world 2) The shadow archetype is believed to have hidden anxieties and repressed thoughts 3) Personal unconscious is a composite of our memories and ideas 4) collective unconscious is understood as a set of shared collective ancestral memories and ideas. This study combined Jung's personality concept with narratives of Black women's lived experiences, observations, and perceptions for dominant archetypes that shape Black women's identity.

Study 2: Methods

The methods section provides an overview of the research design, a description, rationale, data collection, and analysis. Phase 2 of the study employed an in-depth qualitative examination into the construct behind negative stereotypes, myths and microaggressions about Black women. And as well - explores the empowering nature of ethnic identity as a buffer against destructive attitudes. The significance of the research is

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also examined along with the summary of the methods and the determinant factors. The interview questions were submitted for approval and implementation of human subjects by the Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois.

Participants. The target population for participation was Black women living in the United States irrespective of their nationality. The study employed set criteria and strategic recruitment that specifically sought Black women participants to ensure that the data collected was culturally applicable. The study was open to Black women ages 18 to 65. However, the participants interviewed for the study ranged in age from 29 to 65. The participants were informed that by completing the qualitative, story-based interview, they were giving consent to participate in the study that would require a commitment time of approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete the interview. A confidentiality statement was also included with the informed consent stating that the interview details would be reported anonymously, and the research will be reported as cumulative data. Six of the respondents were born and raised in the United States. Of the two remaining, one is Jamaican and the other is Nigerian.

Recruitment and Data collection. Before collecting the data, the researcher submitted a request to the Institutional Research Board at National Louis University to conduct a qualitative study comprised of Black women. Upon approval of the IRB ensuring the protection of the human subjects, the researcher proceeded with the data collection. Purposive sampling was implemented with the help of the researcher's connections

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known through her educational, professional and extended social circle both in-person and through online connections. Those who took part in the interview were asked to pass along the information about the study and recommend others who might share an interest in participating. One-on-one interviews were conducted in meeting rooms at various libraries throughout Chicagoland and via remote GoToMeetings.

Procedures. Participants were handed or emailed the consent forms with stated disclosures and details about the research purpose, procedure, risks, benefits, confidentiality and participants' rights. All interviews were recorded. The average interview lasted between 60 and 1:15 minutes. The interview protocol began with the demographic questions including age, education, marital status, children, and annual income. Open-ended questions followed the demographic questions. The researcher asked probing questions for clarity. The information collected was used in conjunction with the story-base, qualitative interview to gain insight into the extent to which Black women encounter microaggressions and the impact on their psychological well-being.

Instruments. The researcher conducted a story-based interview that included 11 questions with 8 Black women participants living in the United States. The study examined Black women's lived experiences, observations and feelings of racial discrimination and microaggressions through an in-depth, open-ended interview based on their unique skills. The study aims to expand our understanding of the adverse effects of negative stereotypes, myths, and microaggressions on their lives and explore how Black Women's Ethnic Identity can serve as a buffer against microaggessive attitudes.

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The interview questions were organized into sections based on Life Story chapters, Key scenes, turning point, highs and lows, strengths/barriers/needs and ideal life scenarios. The interview questions include: Childhood narrative, Conversations about race, Realization of Blackness, Perception of dominant stereotypes about Black women, Experiences with racism, Perception and observations of the Black family structure, strengths/challenges and needs, Happiness and fulfillment life experience, Perception Self-esteem and identity Influential role models, Black women's empowerment and Perceived ideal world scenario.

Data Analysis Procedures. This analysis used both deductive and inductive approaches to examine the observations, perceptions and lived experiences of Black women's confrontation with racial discrimination and microaggressive attitudes. The deductive research method was applied to test Phase 1 hypothesis that Black women's degree of ethnic identity positively influences their psychological empowerment. Thus, it is assumed that ethnic identity acts as a power source against microaggressions.

The inductive approach is described as the process from which reasoning is formulated from specific observations and expands to include more general principles (Page, 2014). This method starts with specific subject elements and expands into a macro-level view of the subject. Furthermore, the approach focuses on specific factors of an issue and follows an integrated process that combines into a cohesive statement (Elo, Satu & Kyngas, Helvi, 2008).

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The qualitative content analysis process. For Phase 2 study, the grounded theory inductive method was applied to test new relational factors that provide a theoretical basis for better understanding the lived experiences, observations and perceptions between Black women's psychological empowerment, ethnic identity, and the effect of microaggressions. Following the one-on-one interviews with the participants, each interview was summarized and categorized for open coding that allows for a more thorough examination. The different categories provided a firm basis to develop a framework to address the unique intersectional factors that are specific to Black women.

As previously mentioned, several dominant factors were identified as contributing factors to enduring racism that includes: 1) Inadequate representation and understanding of Black women's experiences from a historical context and how past and present ideologies effects present outcome (Burton, 1992). In fact, research shows that fewer than one-tenth of a percentage of the existing literature mentions slave women's experiences during the slave era (Bridgewater, 2005); 2) Lack of policies and resources to address Black women's unique intersectional challenges with racial discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989); and 3) Hierarchy, domination and oppression based on race, class, gender and sexual orientation are ingrained systematic functions of society (Zinn, & Dill, Thorton, 1996). With a firm conceptual understanding to start, two central Archetypes of Black women emerged from their individual and collective stories that provide an important view of many Black women's personality and identity formation. The two central Black Women archetypes identified are 1) The Empowered Black Woman and 2) The warrior.

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Within both The Empowered Black woman and the Warrior archetype. Figure 1 shows the two Black women archetypes.

Figure 1: Black Women Archetypes

The Black Woman Empowered Archetype

The Black Woman Warrior Archetype
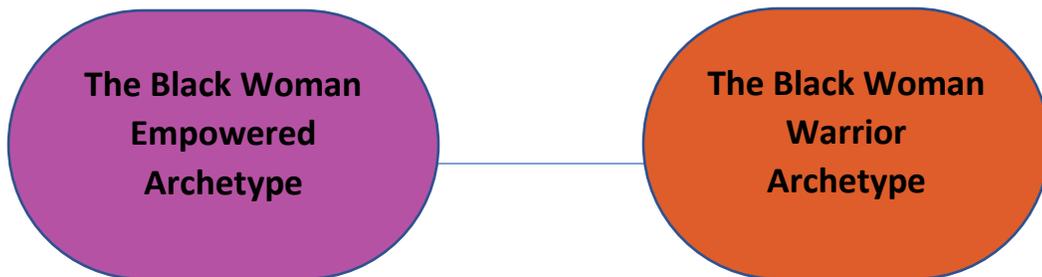
Summary of the participants

Sophia. She is a forty-seven-year, business owner and Jamaican-born immigrant. When asked about her childhood, she recalled it as a happy time and described days at the beach and playing with friends. Sophia does not have any children but is an involved aunt of three teenage girls. She observes that they have a negative self-view which concerns her and which she does her best influence. Sophia expressed being happily married to a White man for over twenty years. This aspect of her life provides a critical view into some of the racial challenges that Black women face in interracial relationships today particularly with White men. The widely documented centuries of rape, sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse against enslaved women, arguably, has left many Black women with a deep psychological distrust of white men. Among the personal stories she shared, one involved an incident in which a family member told her now

husband not to marry and have children with her. Sophia believes that racial bias influenced the ill-advice to her husband.

Olivia – is twenty-nine years old, American born – she is a doctoral student and history teacher. She described her childhood and the environment in which she was raised as 'full of violence, drugs, and crimes'. She spoke of her experiences and observations growing up in an environment that she observed the element of race were always present. Olivia's story provides valuable insight into how she and the other Black women in the study used their oppressive conditions as a springboard to fuel their ambitions and evolution into empowerment.

Evelyn. Thirty-seven-year-old, Evelyn is a wife, mother and teacher. She was born and raised in the Chicagoland area. Evelyn talks about loving her life, family and job and owning her space as a Black woman – and of her journey to self-love, acceptance and pride in her Black skin. Evelyn recalled being teased and tormented about her deep, Black skin tone by other Black children. Tears rolled down her face as she spoke about these traumatic childhood experience and how she went home crying every day. Like the other women who participated in the study, areas of Evelyn's life narrative highlights the depth to which ingrained racial discrimination runs foundationally through Black lives. Arguably, both *'Inter'* racism, a term used for the purpose of this study as widely held racist ideologies by Whites against Blacks and '*Intra'* racism, refers to Black-on-Black racism or colorism are prevalent and equally problematic.

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Angela: A native of Atlanta Georgia, 45-year-old Angela, is a single mother of two. She owned and operated a successful business for many years. When asked about her childhood, she described her family as embracing their Blackness and instilling a strong sense of ethnic pride. Angela described herself as a military dependent whose parents lived and travelled throughout the United States. She described the environment in which she was raised as on the 'cusp of integration.' Despite having a strong back-drop of Black history, Angela maintained a sense of neutrality about racial issues. However, this sense of neutrality was shattered when as a freshman, she attended a Martin Luther King parade and the KKK showed up. Angela expressed that the neutrality with which she viewed race up to that point was shattered. Angela's story, among the many other facets that make up Black women's experiences, provides a critical view of the various dimension of the diverse dimensions of many contemporary Black women's lived experiences.

Ava: Recently married, Ava was born in America. However, her Nigerian parents moved back to Nigeria when she was two and returned to the U.S when she was around seven-years old. She described a happy childhood in Nigeria where she played with friends and had a strong family support. She shared that life was simpler in Nigeria than in the U.S. There was an incident as a child in which she was spat on by a white neighbor girl, but most of the problems she faced was in the U.S where she felt targeted by other, mostly Black children. She lived in an ethnically diverse community and went to an ethnically diverse school. She observed that Blacks were treated differently. Despite her

experiences with both inter and intra racism, Ava maintained a solid sense of self. It was not until high school and college years that Ava identified the treatment she received as racism –Ava adds a unique perspective to the study as a Nigerian-American both in her observations on racism and her response.

Lily. Thirty- year-old, Lily is a married mother of two. She recalled her childhood as a happy time – and described playing with her adopted siblings. Lily is bi-racial and thinks that society places far too much interest on race. As a bi-racial woman, Lily's lived experiences, observations, and perspective in a society that labels her Black, yet not black enough in some cases, and at the same time she can never claim her white heritage adds complexities to her life. She acknowledges that being of lighter skin tone may give them some advantages. Lilly shared being called the N-word by KKK members where she went to college, yet barely qualifies for Black in her hometown. This complex space that many bi-racial Blacks occupy in America adds to the diverse and expansive dimensions of Black women's experiences. Even though Lily rejects racial definitions, she observes that friends of hers who are bi-racial have expressed that they would rather be Black than having to deal with the complexities of not belonging to either group.

Paula. Forty-three-year-old Paula is a mother of two who is currently engaged. She described her childhood as happy and loving with siblings and two parents in the home. Unlike most of the other respondents who grew up in predominantly Black environments, Paula's parents moved out of the segregated Black neighborhood where she was born when she was very young and moved to a White neighborhood in one of Chicago's

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suburbs, where at the time, they were the only Black family. As such, all that she knew

and did outside of her home was among whites – whom she perceived as friendly and

accepting of their family. However, Paula expressed that living in an all-white

neighborhood combined with living in a home with family members that did not discuss

race-related issues gave her false sense of her Blackness that she was in an environment

with people who like her did not see color. In fact, Paula shared that she did know that

she was Black and suffered a severe identity crisis and went through an emotionally

difficult time in the 5th grade when she realized that she was Black and that her white

peer viewed her differently as a result.

Paula's story provides a valuable lens through which to view Blacks who grew up

in environments that do not allow them to develop an ethnic identity and personal cultural

and group membership that Phinney conceives is an essential aspect of identity

development. Considering that all the participants have experienced racial discrimination

many times over in all aspect of their lives irrespective of where they grew up, indicates

that those without at a strong ethnic identity is at a disadvantage and potentially harmful

emotional and psychological harm compared to those who were raised within an

environment where ethnic identity was cultivated.

Mary – is the sixty-five years old, author, married, has two children and several

grandchildren. She describes a happy childhood growing up in a segregated community

with her mother and extended family. The oldest of the participants, Mary's experiences,

similar in degree to the other participants points to the timeless struggle against racism.

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Mary expressed that the problem that Black women and Black people collectively face is so large in scope that she advocates, especially for battered women wherever and whenever she can – but understands that there is only so much that a person can do with a problem so extensive and deep rooted. Figure 1: shows background details of the participants.

Figure 2

Demographic of the participants

Participants	age	Educational	Marital status	children	Annual Income
Sophia	46	Trade school	Married	No	$75,000
Olivia	29	Masters/Ph.D. student	Single	No	$70.000
Evelyn	37	Masters	Married	Yes/ 1	$87,000
Angela	47	Masters	Single	Yes/2	$62,000
Ava	37	Masters	Married	No	$50,000
Lily	30	Bachelors	Married	Yes/2	$55,000
Paula	43 (DC)	Bachelors	Engaged	Yes/2	$65,000
Mary	65	Masters	Married	Yes/2	Retired

Study 2: Result

Empowerment. Rappaport (1981,1984) defines empowerment as a construct that links the strength of individuals, competencies, healthy systematic functions and proactive

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behaviors to social policy and change. In most psychology research, three central factors guide empowerment approaches. They include one's perception of themselves as having control of their environment and others. Another crucial factor is established on one's belief that they possess both the skills and self-confidence necessary to manage challenging life situations (Menon, 2001). Although these constructs can be applied to the unique struggles that Black women face, they are not comprehensive enough to understand the complex nexus of intersectional issues that make up the Black woman's true composite.

Feminist activists and researchers have long argued that Black women's unique challenges extend beyond established socio-political constructs of race and gender and must be examined from the Black women's point of view (Elkholy, 2012). Expanding on that thought process, empowerment becomes a far more complicated issue for Black women whose skin-tone throughout the antebellum period to current times have marked them as marginalized, disempowered figures. Indeed, those historical and enduring factors of enslavement, oppression, racial inequality, and multiple layers of interconnected struggles have shaped Black women's individual and intra-collective definition of self and empowerment. Building on the need for a more focused based approach to understanding Black women's unique needs, this study created the space for them to self-define what empowers them.
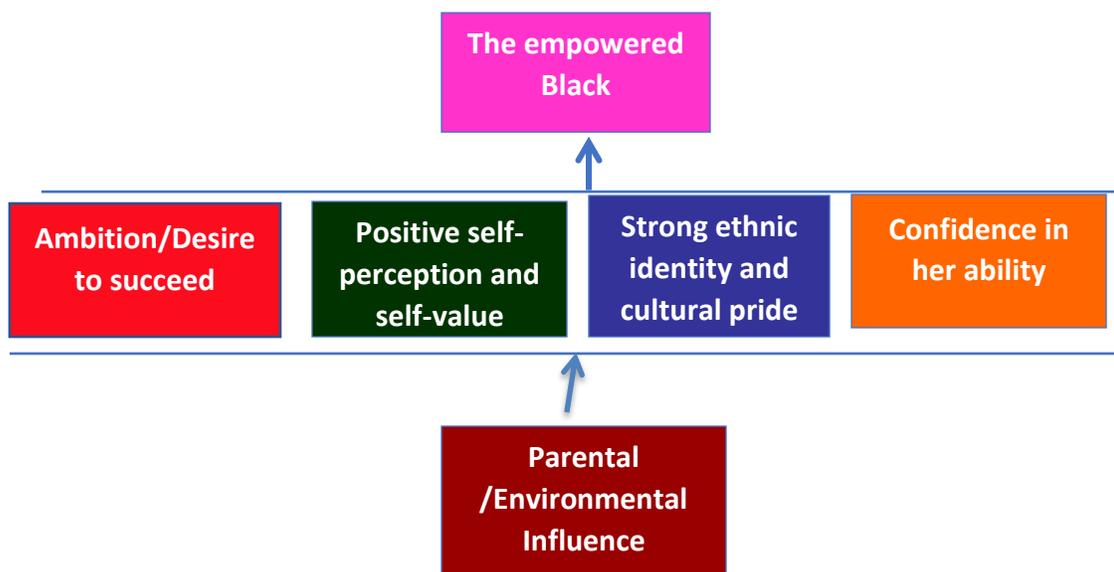
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Archetype 1

The Empowered Black Woman and *the Warrior archetype* emerged from the interviewees life stories as parallel underlying themes. These archetypes and their formulation also support Jung's personality construction theory that one's past shapes the foundational construct of their psyche and is responsible for directing and influencing human behavior. Additionally, the research analysis explored what relational factors play a significant role in influencing the archetypes that are specific to Black women.

The complex intersectional factors from which Black women's archetypes are forged indicates that they alone can truly define what makes them empowered. The Empowered Black woman archetype is supported by five dimensions comprising of 1) Ambition/Desire to succeed 2) positive self-perception and value 3) strong ethnic identity and group membership 4) Confidence in their ability to effectively navigate a hostile racial environment, and 5) parental and environmental influence. Figure 3 shows the dimensions of the Empowered Black woman.

Figure 3: The Black Woman Empowered Archetype and Dimensions

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Evelyn, a thirty-seven-year-old, wife, and mother of a seven-year-old daughter describes her experience of being the only Black female teacher in the prestigious middle school where she works. She shares that it was difficult to adapt to a predominantly white work environment, particularly coming from a school where 95% of the staff and students were Black – explaining that it was easy to have conversations with cultural undertones and not worry about perception. She compares the experience to Zora Neale Hurston's, quote, 'I feel more colored when I am thrust against a white background.' She expressed being aware that many whites perceive Black women as loud and angry, as result, she thought more about not just what she said, but her tone of voice to avoid perpetuating the negative stereotypes that Black women and loud and aggressive. Despite the adaptations, Evelyn feels that her work and contribution is valued and respected. She explained being prideful of her accomplishments and asserted feeling deserving of the position she holds in the highly regarded institution. When asked if she felt empowered and perceive other women as empowered, she gave a resounding yes. Expanding on her answer, Evelyn explained that she perceives empowerment as a self-created concept.

> **Evelyn**: I think that we have to create our own empowerment.
> Being the only Black woman in the room at my job is a space
> that I have created. The most empowering thing to me right now
> is watching Black women take ownership of their space on the
> world stage right now. And we are unapologetic.

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Jamaican immigrant and business owner, Olivier shared a similar thought process on empowerment.

> **Olivia:** First and foremost, I am me. I love everything about me, and I feel empowered all the time. I think that Black women's struggles are empowering. And as a group, we have more power now more than ever. Dominant figures have emerged on a national stage that positively represents Black women. We are bursting through the stereotypes. It's happening slowly, but we are bursting through them.

However, Olivia expressed concern about her three nieces, ages 14, 15 and 17 who she describes as having negative, internalized views that are limiting and destructive. Olivia having been in a long, fulfilling interracial marriage is concerned that her three nieces believe that they should only date Black men because white men do not want Black women.

> **Olivia**: I try to teach them not to choose a man because of color But to view people as people. I let them know that they do not need to stay in a box and should not think poorly of themselves. But the narrative that is most dominant in their lives is that they are not good enough.

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Sophia, a history teacher, spoke candidly about growing up poor in an environment where people lived every day to survive oppressive conditions. Now a Ph.D. student, Sophia contributes her awareness and struggles with racism and oppression as contributing factors of not just her empowerment but, Black women as a group.

> **Sophia**: I am empowered. Black women are everything.
> We are the heart and soul of society. We are at the forefront of Black movements. We work, raise children, struggle against destructive stereotypes and keep moving. We are multi-faceted. It is our love that drives society and through which our strengths are highlighted. We empower. Period.

Angela, who described herself as a military dependent lived and traveled throughout the United States growing up. She had a strong extended family and even though she referred to the environment in which she grew up as 'on the cusp of integration' and had a neutral take on race-relations. Her parents made sure that she was educated about Black history. In fact, she described her mother as being very proud of her blackness. Angela asserts that she has high self-esteem, and love everything about being a Black woman. Her views on empowerment was consistent with the other contributors to the study.

> **Angela:** Yes, I feel empowered. We are a generation of power.
> We have broken and will continue to break glass ceilings. I admire people like Oprah who influence and admire change.

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Ava spent most of the earlier part of her childhood in Nigeria. Her parents moved back to the U. S when she was around age 7. She expressed never having any doubt about her self-value. Despite having been subjected to overt microaggressions, she was not impacted by it because she knew that the negative stereotypes about Black women were false. She shared an incident in which she was spat on by a white neighbor, but mostly she struggled to fit in with Black Americans who teased and called her names, like "African booty scratcher." On the empowerment question, she was also clear about her empowerment and the population of Black women.

> **Ava**: Yes, I am empowered. I think Black women, are empowered because of our struggle. The fact that we have survived all the that we have - and are still full of hope and reaching for the stars is a testament of our empowerment.

The other three participants, Lily, Paula, and Mary, similarly described themselves as empowered and believe that Black women as a group are moving in the right direction and are taking control of their lives. They believed that education provided the opportunity to escape poverty. In fact, all eight participants believe that their struggles against racial discrimination and oppressive systematic conditions have played a significant role in forging their desire to succeed. However, positive self-perception, strong ethnic identity, ethnic group membership and confidence in their ability to control their lives were also a crucial aspect of their journey to becoming empowered. In fact, the degree of ethnic identity that a person possesses is based on the extent to which they

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identify with their ethnic group. A strong ethnic connection helps develop a person's sense of belonging, their thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior. It is how individuals embrace their heritage (Phinney, 1996). Even though ethnic identity is not the same as personal identity, Phinney, believes that there is a strong relational significance between the two. This study's findings align with Phinney's definition of ethnic identity that families and environment play a role in ethnic identity development. And in particular - their daughters. The research findings suggest that Black families can positively influence their children's sense of ethnic identity, cultural pride and psychological empowerment by instilling in them positive self-value and affirmations about their ethnic group membership and social identity. Adversely, if the narrative about self, ethnic membership and social identity is negative this decreases and may even fail to develop one's sense of self and ethnic pride (Phenice & Griffore, 2000).

Four of the participants in this study, Evelyn, Olivia Angela and Mary had parents who spoke with them about race relations in the United States and affirm ethnic pride, self-value, even though they experienced racial discrimination they were less affected by it.

Additionally, the study conceives that the environment in which one is raised – even without discussions and affirmations from parents are an essential factor. For example, Oliva (Jamaican) and Ava (Nigerian) did not have discussions about race in their homes. Still, their expressed ethnic identity, perceived self-value and ability to take control of their lives was stable. This may be a result of the fact that they grew up in

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environments that were comprised mainly of Blacks. Whereas those who were born and raised in the United States, despite growing up in predominantly, segregated black neighborhoods, not only are they a minority regarding population size, the elements of enduring racial conflicts and systematic injustices were always present. Both Paula and Lily expressed that their parents did not speak with them about racism and felt that they would have been better prepared to deal the microaggressions that they routinely encountered. Ava did not tell her parents about the difficulties that she was encountering with racism.

> **Ava:** They are the kind of parents who thought, we are
>
> Paying for tuition, the school will take care of you. I think if they
>
> knew what was going on, they would have had a conversation
>
> among themselves to figure out how to deal with the situation.
>
> I remember telling my mom a couple things and she said, 'not
>
> everyone is going to like you' so I stopped talking. Because she
>
> was right.

Olivia recalled one conversation with her mother about race when she was in her 20s and started dating a white man.

> **Olivia:** Come to think of it, my mom did talk to me about race
>
> when I was in my 20s and I started dating a white man. She did
>
> not want me dating a white man. Working in hotels, she heard
>
> all kinds of horror stories. She told me that she knew of a

> woman who went to visit a white man and he locked her up
>
> in the house and turned her into a sex slave.

Of the participants, Paula is the only participant who spent a significant part of her childhood in a predominantly white neighborhood where her family moved when she was seven years old. Her story necessitates a more in-depth exploration into the disadvantages of raising Black children in all white neighborhoods that do not connect them to their ethnic identity or community membership. Paula expressed having an identity crisis in the fifth or sixth grader when she realized that she was Black.

> **Paula**: My brother came home and told my parents that his
>
> teacher told them that Black people ate out of the garbage.
>
> My parents went to the school and wanted to get the teacher
>
> fired. That same year, there was a dance for 5th and 6th graders.
>
> I wanted to go to the dance with a white boy name Kurt.
>
> And one of my friends told me that I should go to the dance
>
> with a boy name Stephen. I asked, "why would I go to the dance
>
> with Stephen?" And my friend said, "because he's Black."
>
> That's when I knew that they saw me differently and I saw
>
> myself differently too. At the time, I didn't have any Black
>
> friends. When other Black kids moved into the neighborhood,
>
> I was picked on and teased. They called me 'white-washed'

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> and 'Oreo.' They said that I wasn't Black enough. It was around that
>
> time when I accepted that I was Black. It was a very difficult time
>
> because I had to internalize and acknowledge something that I did not
>
> accept at that time. I was like, wow, I'm different. I'm Black and people
>
> see me differently,"

The results indicate that participants whose parents spoke with them about racial issues and instilled a strong sense of ethnic pride, versus those whose parents did not discuss racial issues, shows a difference in the degree of harm the participants experienced when faced with microaggressions. All the participants agree that their parents have directly and indirectly influenced not just their perception of self and ethnic pride, but how they responded and internalized microaggressions and should speak to their Black children about racism in a positive way that instills in them a strong believe in self and cultural pride and ethnic group membership.

Archetype 2

The Warrior. The warrior archetype emerged from Black women's persistent struggles against negative historical racial stigmas that have endured throughout the centuries and which have marked them as perpetually disempowered. They have been marked both strong yet helpless, capable yet hopeless effeminate yet exotically sexually appealing, lazy yet they contribute to the workforce more than, or at least as much as any other group and remain among the lowest wage earners. They have been seen angry and overly aggressive, yet on a broad scale, they are the caretakers of America's young, sick

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and the old. They have been marginalized into silence, yet they are America's untold success story.

To this end, the concept of *The Warrior* being carved from despair is not new. Traumatic experiences resulting from racial discrimination and microaggression were a consistent thread that ran throughout the narratives of the participants. This is not surprising. With slavery and subjugation as the marked foundation of Black legacy, and to a great degree, the current struggles for many, Black literature, art, and music are infused with tales of triumph and tragedy. Indeed, many prominent figures of past and present generations have also attributed their strength, resilience and even success as having been carved from their prevailing struggles against oppressive racist conditions. One renowned author, educator and civil rights activist work permeate with inspirational messages of triumphs over despair with such lyrics from (Angelou's, 1978) poem:

> You may write me down in history
> With your bitter, twisted lies,
> You may trod me in the dirt
> But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Five dimensions emerged from the Warrior archetype. They include 1) adaptability 2) Resilience 3) Strength 4) Courage and 5) determination. Figure 4 shows the warrior archetype and supporting dimensions.

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Figure 4: The Black Woman Warrior Archetype and Dimensions
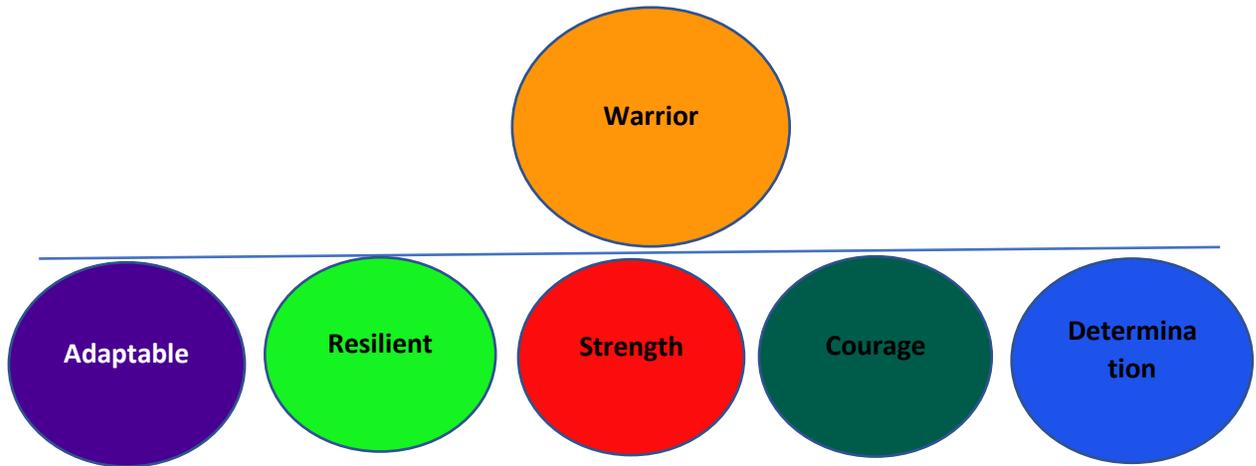
In interviewing the participants, it was not surprising that The Warrior emerged as a dominant archetype that provides crucial insight into the formulation of Black women's personalities and gets us closer to answering the fundamental questions, who is the Black woman and what is her story? Black women can only answer these questions. Sophia's story reflects many inner-city Blacks who were raised in a cycle of harsh systematic conditions that made them vulnerable. She grew up in a racially segregated community with limited resources and where most lived below the poverty line that qualified them for Section-8 housing. Her mother had an 8th-grade education and was always working and struggling to make ends meet.

> **Sophia**: I witnessed a lot of violence, drugs, and crime. The race
> element was always present. I became aware of police brutality at
> a young age. At 6-year-old, I knew that race impacted the way

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Black people were treated. I attended a school that was diverse and

was aware that testing performance was slanted. Most of us Black

kids were routinely in detention or on disciplinary plans. As a Black

person, I remembered wondering, what's wrong with me?

When asked what her experiences as a 77Black woman in America have been. She

explains:

Sophia: I've always been aware that my Blackness makes me a

target for certain treatment. A good question is when is being Black,

not an issue? As a Black woman, I have experienced being viewed

as a sexual object. In one incident that comes to mind, I was in a bar,

and a white guy came up to me and was talking a lot about sex, and

he asked me, "how are you in bed?" I don't think that he would have

gone up to a white woman he barely knows and starts that kind of

conversation with her. I see this as part of the oversexualization

ideology that other ethnic groups hold of Black women. I have met

many situations that remind me that I am a Black woman.

Olivia shared several traumatic experiences similar to those which in recent months, have

made national news, that shows white privilege are used against Blacks. Two recent ones

involved two Black males getting arrested in Starbucks because they did not make a

purchase. In another situation, a white student called the police on a Black student who

had fallen asleep in a shared dorm area. Olivia described a situation in which a white

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person called the police and reported that she was kidnapping a white child – this when she was hired by a wealthy white family as a nanny to care for their child. The family lived in upper-class, predominant white neighborhood where Blacks were seldom seen.

> **Olivia:** I went out for a bike ride around the neighborhood with
>
> the white child in my care. The neighborhood was exceptionally affluent
>
> and had no diversity. And because I'm Black, someone assumed that
>
> I was kidnapping the child and called the police. I found myself
>
> surrounded by squad cars. The experience was humiliating. After the
>
> incident, my employer told me not to leave the house to avoid such
>
> mistakes from recurring."

In a separate incident, but in the same household, Olivia described how the head cook, who was an older Black woman, restricted the Black staff from eating until the white family had finished their meal.

> **Olivia:** She said that she did not know what or how much of the
>
> meal the 'master' would eat. And we were to have the leftovers.
>
> She made me feel horrible as if I were inferior. She said that's the way it's
>
> always been. When I think about it now, I realize that she meant no harm.
>
> That's all she knew.

Olivia shared many instances in which she encountered microaggressions including business meetings. Being a co-owner of a business with husband, who is white,

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Olivia observes that they are meeting with white clients and when she speaks, she is often ignored, and the clients would look to her husband for an answer.

> **Olivia:** The first time it happened, I had to remind myself that
>
> I am in America. But as long as they are paying me, I don't care.
>
> I still take their money.

Angela's story perhaps best reflects many who hold an unrealistic view of racism only to come face to face with the stark reality of it. Angela, despite being raised by strong Black family who ensured that she was educated about race issues kept a neural outlook on race-related issues throughout her childhood and teenage years. However, over the course of her life, several race-related incidents have forced her to acknowledge that racism was alive and with our current President in office, Angela's views on racism and discrimination have changed. She described one incident in high school that challenged her views on neutrality when it comes to racism.

> **Angela:** When I was in high school, the bus that I was on stopped
>
> at a Hardee's restaurant and a bunch of white boys surrounded us
>
> and kept calling us niggers. I remember another incident- I was in
>
> California and a white boy spat in my hair. I felt that these experiences
>
> were unreal.

Still, the experience with racism that was most impactful for her came when she was a freshman at Spelman:

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> **Angela**: I went to a Martin Luther King parade, and the KKK
>
> was there. The experience was so traumatic it shattered the
>
> neutrality that I had about racial discrimination. The experience
>
> made me forced me to acknowledge that racism was alive and that
>
> I had to be stronger in my thought. I believed that after civil rights
>
> movement more people were like me - but now I'm thinking differently.
>
> I don't believe that much has changed for us historically.

Lily also had a memorable experience involving the KKK when she was in college in Missouri – She believes that Missouri lacks diversity. And that less than 10 percent of Blacks makes up the student population.

> **Lily:** When I was in college, the KKK would come up to the
>
> school and they shouted all kind of things at us. I was called the
>
> 'N' word in Missouri and I barely qualify as Black where I live.

The impact of intra racism, otherwise referred to colorism is often overlooked in the discourse on race. Yet, the root of colorism stems from the same racist ideologies on which a person's value is judged. This has created class issues even among the Black population in which lighter skin-stone Blacks are perceived as more valued than those with darker skin tone. Both Ava's and Evelyn's stories bring into focus the damaging impact of colorism and, that the issue necessitates a more in-depth exploration and broader discourse particularly among Blacks. Ava shared having a difficult time with intra-racism when her family migrated back to the U.S when she was seven. She

expressed, feeling targeted by other Black kids because of her darker skin tone and her

Nigerian accent.

> **Ava**: "I was called, 'African booty scratcher,' and was told,
>
> 'you can't play with us.' Mostly by other Black kids. When
>
> the neighbor kid spat on me, just like any child, I wondered
>
> why? I didn't understand. I think I may have blocked it out because
>
> I didn't really think about it again until I was in high school and
>
> college. I never told my parents about it - because I had so many
>
> problems with Black kids, I tried very hard to make Black friends,
>
> and it helped me understand more about their attitudes. For example,
>
> many were from broken homes, poverty, and had some difficulties.
>
> But I also interacted with a lot of wealthy families. If someone spate
>
> on me now, I would attack them physically because spit carry disease
>
> and spit can kill someone. But my fighting back is being smart and
>
> being successful.

Similarly, Evelyn was also teased mercifully about her dark skin-tone particularly in her

early school years by other Black kids. Evelyn shares that being the self-accepting, a self-

loving Black woman that she has become who thinks of herself as beautiful and proud of

her ethnic culture was not easy. She attributes her high self-esteem to her mother's

consistent affirmation that her Blackness was beautiful and that she should be prideful of

it. Still, Evelyn broke down in tears when she described those early years.

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> **Evelyn:** I learned early that my dark-skin tone was problematic.
>
> The other Black kids teased me. They called me all kinds of
>
> names. But I love my mom. Every day she would reaffirm my
>
> beauty in the world and that my skin-tone was beautiful. And I
>
> knew that, but the teasing was tough. I can't believe that the
>
> thought of it still affects me. I know that skin-tone continues
>
> to be a problem because when we create the space where the lighter
>
> tone is smarter and when we create the space where lighter
>
> more put together it creates separatism even among the Black
>
> population. I only experienced racism in elementary school and
>
> it became less so, as I got older. I don't recall dealing with racial
>
> issues much when I was in high school and in college. This makes
>
> me wonder, if I was being overly sensitive. That might have been
>
> a phase that we especially Blacks go through when we are figuring
>
> out our identity. I think that the world sees us as we are. I felt that
>
> I was different because of my skin-tone. And I knew that I was not
>
> valued because of it – but I was valued in my family. I think that the
>
> world sees us as we are – as we see ourselves.

The women's stories we were unique based on their different backgrounds and experiences, degree or limited exposure to their ethnic culture. Yet they are all bound by their Blackness and no matter their diverse experiences, their struggles against racism

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was a common thread that ran throughout their lives.   Mary's perception of self-value exemplifies the empowering nature of ethnic identity against microaggressions. She expressed how she protects the space that she claims.

> **Mary**: No one can make me feel bad about myself because I know who I am. It is not that I am unaware of racist views and attitudes when they are directed at me. But I am beyond it.

Paula who struggled with her identity the most, perhaps resulting from spending most young years from age 7 through high school in a predominantly white environment except for her family – describes herself as "Black accepting, and proud" But she does not deny her struggles to with her identity when she realized that she was Black. The people she was around saw her differently, and she saw herself differently as well.

> **Paula:** "I remember calling a facility to schedule my son's birthday 2nd birthday party. I went in to view the facility and when I got there, the lady told me that they were booked. I had just called. I felt that she was saying, 'I don't want your money'. We don't want you here. I was livid. I felt that it was because I'm Black. So, I had my mom call. She sounds just like me – you can't tell that she is Black over the phone, and the woman told her that they had availability for the same day and time that she told me that they were booked. So, we took our asses and marched

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> right back up there. And she had to look us in the face and show us
>
> around. I reported the issue to the BBB. I was so angry, I was shaking.
>
> I thought that what she did was total racism.

The research indicates that because of these experiences and many others, Black women have developed a specific set of skills that have contributed to their evolving into a warrior archetype. For example, they have established a refined ability to adapt to America's hostile racial environment. In this study, adaptability is defined as a personality trait that allows an individual to adapt to their environment even under stressful conditions to be able to function effectively. The degree of adaptation may be physical or psychological. As well, adaptation can be negative, positive or neutral depending on the situation, (Rettew; Lopez, 2009). Whether Black women's ability to adapt to unfavorable societal conditions is a combination of enduring historical oppressions that forces them to exist within the limited constraints that society provides them - they have found a way to survive and are advancing – particularly in the area of educational achievement despite the maelstrom of inimical systematic functions and ingrained societal perceptions that can hinder him.   As previously stated, research shows that Black women are among, if not the most educated group in America today even as they remain the most disenfranchised. A key point here is that because of their marginalized status, many contemporary Black women understand the advantages of adhering to dominant societal constructs and the confines in which they are forced to exist. Not dissimilar to America's false portrayal that it has created space for them, Black

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women have also created a perception that they have assimilated into the dominant construct. For example, many are aware that America's perception and standard of acceptability disqualify them from many positions of governance. As Black women's ethnic image remains perpetually under assault –arguably, many have found it advantageous to infiltrate areas of America's systems that exclude them by modifying their appearance - particularly their hair – to align with America's European standards of beauty and acceptability.

Not surprisingly, many race theorists have argued against Blacks having to conform to white society's way of seeing, being and doing as problematic to the extent that it weakens many Blacks ethnic group membership and ethnic self-identity. The argument is compelling – it is one contributing factor that Du Bois and other race theorists imagine disconnect Blacks from their ethnic selves. In fact, Du Bois' double consciousness theory is constructed around the fundamental concept that he describes as 'this twoness - two realities - two split identities that Blacks have developed resulting from having to both assimilate into America's systematic construct while maintaining their ethnic identity.

There were no identifiable indicators in this study that any of the participants lacked ethnic group membership or self-identity even though all eight participants to some degree, admitted to adjusting their behaviors and attitudes to fit what they perceive are acceptable standard by white America. Case in point – seven of the eight women interviewed, at the time of the interview did not wear their hair natural. However, this

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study did not consider Black women with natural hair as an indicator of self-love, self-identity and cultural pride.

Fundamentally, what emerged is that the Black women interviewed used their awareness of America's system of exclusion and their marginalized status to navigate practically unseen into positions of empowerment. However, this study being a small sample, a deeper exploration is necessary to make a reliable determination in this regard. As well, a larger sample size of Black women with similar attributes could help establish the accuracy of the result.

Resilience also emerged as another crucial element to the warrior archetype. This is not surprising considering that Black women's ability to adapt to a hostile, racist environment meant that they also need a heightened state of resilience necessary to support how effective and efficiently they adapt to their conditions and keep moving towards their desired goals. Similarly, courage, determination and strength converged into important dimensions of the Black Woman *Warrior* archetype.

Notably, the Angry Black Woman and The Strong Black Woman prototypes emerged as the two most prevalent descriptive about contemporary Black women by the participants. In fact, the angry Black woman stigma is so prevalent that the participants expressed feeling discredited as soon as they voice a thought or express an opinion about issues that are important to them. The consequence of this stigma has rendered many Black women invisible – and which some researchers conceives makes them less likely

to be heard when they speak and are even less likely to be remembered - particularly in predominantly white groups.

If Black women are angry – they are justified and have every right – unapologetically so – to voice their opinions about the plethora of racially motivated social issues that adversely impact their lives. Acknowledging Black women's anger and their reasons will lead to a more extensive discourse around the social challenges and better understanding on ways to eradicate some of these damaging stereotypes. Conversely, there is a failure in the discourse around the angry and strong Black woman prototypes as well as the other stigmas assigned them.

Conclusion

The Black woman archetypes and the dimensions that embody their lived experiences is matched only by the depth of their struggles. Indeed, Black women are among the most misunderstood and misrepresented figures in American history. They have been marked as strong yet hopeless, capable yet helpless, effeminate yet exotically, sexually appealing. They have been branded lazy, yet they contribute to the workforce more than, have been branded lazy, yet they contribute to the workforce more than, or least as much as any other group. They are marked as angry, and overly-aggressive, yet on a broad scale, Black women are the caretakers and nurturers of America's young, sick and the old. They are among the most marginalized group today, but they are also among the most educated. They are the least paid wage earners, but they are significant

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contributors to the workforce. They have the least representation in government – but they rank among one of the highest voting groups. Black women have been marginalized into silence, yet they are America's untold success story.

Until their lived experiences are examined in their absolute – they could remain among the most marginalized and invisible group for decades to come. But the Black women who participated in this study did not share that somber outlook. Despite the vast disparities and the struggles against microaggression that many face in their everyday lives, the participants had an optimistic view of their ability, and the collective Black women's ability to carve out a space that will allow them to live empowered lives.

They are, in many ways, adversely impacted by enduring racial stigmas and microaggressive attitudes, but they do not subscribe to America's false, negative stereotypes. As well, the Black women in the study do not allow themselves to be defined or be disempowered by slave-era racial stigmas. In fact, they attribute their struggles against racism with providing them with the cloak of invisibility with which they have utilized to infiltrate and navigate the areas of societal construct that exclude, marginalize and oppress them. Many contemporary Black women may not be outspoken in ways that society attributes to one having a voice – but many are asserting their relevance in less overt ways and directing their narrative from disempowered to empowered.

As such, a determination is drawn that even though the participants are shaped by their struggles, they are far from the tragic disempowered prototypes that society has made them. On the contrary, the characteristics that emerged as fundamental composites

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include such qualities as high achievers, innovators, freedom fighters, community organizers, educators, authors, leaders, care-takers, strength, courage, resilience, beauty, grace, and survivors of some of the most brutal acts committed against humanity. It is in these attributes that we can begin to find answers to the seminal questions, who is the Black woman, and what is her story?

The research assumes that the expressed, empowering mindset that emerged from study 1 and study 2 is a result of the participants' strong ethnic identity. Both indicate that all-in-all, the Black women who participated are strong in their ethnic development, possesses a strong sense of sel*f* - and are prideful in their blackness. There is a shared bond in the struggles and triumphs among Black women who have journeyed to a space where they are self-loving, self-accepting and prideful.

There is power in being an unapologetically Black woman. However, to openly assert oneself as such within the construct of white America has its risks. Black women are expected to remain silent and conform. Thus, one who is outspoken and not afraid to challenge the dominant construct around racial injustice – may encounter various forms of retaliation that targets crucial aspects of their lives including employment outlook, attack on their credibility and a maelstrom of other abuses that can result in further marginalization. Case in point, my personal story includes filing a racial discrimination complaint against a mega corporation when a co-worker used a 'monkey see, monkey do' remark about Black football players kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial discrimination and police brutality against Black people. As well, I filed a second

complaint upon learning that another employee had referred to me as a 'dumb nigger bitch'. The two male employees who made the racial discriminatory remarks kept their jobs - mine was terminated.

Limitations and Strength of the Study

This study has limitations. The sampling for study 2 which comprised of 8 Black women is too small for a statistically reliable determination to be made regarding the degree to which Black women are empowered on a large scale. Additionally, the small sample of participants alone does not provide a statistical reliability of the extent to which Black women fit within the Empowered and the Warrior archetypes. Thus, a more extensive study comprising of a larger demographic sample of different ages, socio-economic background, level of education, employment and earned annual income status may produce a different result.

However, Study 1, quantitative methodology comprises of 78 participants also shows statistical significance reliability that ethnic identity positively influences Black women's psychological empowerment and serves as a buffer against microaggressions. Combined, study 1 and study 2 show conclusively that the Black women in this study identifies strongly with their ethnic identity and ethnic group membership. As such, this study assumes that a strong ethnic identity in Black women influences positive psychological empowerment and acts as buffer against microaggressions.

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Additionally, the researcher, being a Black woman may have unknown biases about the topic and the outcome of this study. However, that fact was considered when the examining the data to ensure that personal biases were not a factor in analyzing the results. And in fact, the researcher's assumptions that most Black women lack ethnic identity and hold a distorted self-perception was not supported with participants in this study.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Patricia Luckoo, Candidate for Doctorate of Community Psychology at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. The study is entitled, "Negative Representations and the Prevalence of Stereotypes: Dehumanization of Black Women and the Creation of Identity Crisis." The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which negative stereotypes influences the lived experiences of black women in America. The data will be used to confront the racial discriminations that are unique to black women in America. Participants for this study will include 10 black women from the Chicago land area. The women ranged from 20-65 years old and are from various socio-economic backgrounds. Participants are recruited through the researcher's social network as well as acquaintances known through professional and educational connections. Using the Standardized, open-ended interview approach, all 10 interviewees will be asked the same 12 questions. Criteria for project participation include black women living in America. Interviews will be conducted via phone call as well as in-person. Participants will be asked to self-identify their race, age, and profession to select the appropriate scale.

With your consent, you will be interviewed for about 30-45 minutes with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 30 minutes. Upon request, you will receive a copy of your transcribed interview at which time you may clarify information. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your identity will be kept confidential by the researcher and will not be attached to the data. Only the researcher will have access to all transcripts, taped recordings, and field notes from the interview(s). Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the prevalence of negative racial

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stereotypes about Black women in America and the adverse effects on their social, professional, personal identity and other aspect of their so that we may develop and implement social programs designed for the socio-economic advancement, positive representation and empowerment of black women.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed.

In the event you have questions or require additional information you may contact the researcher: Patricia Luckoo, National Louis University, 122 S Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60603, (888) 658-8632, pdavies1@my.nl.edu.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Patricia Luckoo, Dr.Pluckoo@outlook.com, 708-830-0986: Bradley Olson, Bradley.olson@nlu.edu, the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: Shaunti Knauth: email: shaunti.knauth@nl.edu; phone 312-261-3526; or Wendy Gardiner; email: wendy.gardiner@nl.edu; phone: 312-261-3112. Co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60603.

Thank you for your consideration.

_____

Participant Name (Print)

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

_____

Researcher (Print)

_____   _____

Researcher Signature   Date

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If more than one researcher, leave enough lines for each signature. Only include researcher signature if you plan to copy the form and give it to the participant.

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire by Patricia Luckoo

1: Where in the Chicagoland area do you live?

- City
- Suburbs

2: What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

3: What is your age?

- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- Age 65 or older

4: What Is Your Ethnicity?

- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White

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5: What is your marital status?

- Single (never married)

- Married

- Separated

- Widowed

- Divorced

6: How many children do you have?

- 1-2

- 3-5

- More than 5?

7: What is your education level?
- Completed some high school

- High school graduate

- Completed some college

- Associate degree

- Bachelor's degree

- Completed some postgraduate

- Master's degree

- Ph.D., law or medical degree

- Other advanced degree beyond a Master's degree

8: Which of the following most closely matches your job title?

- Employed

- Unemployed

- Intern

- Entry Level

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- Analyst/Associate
- Manager
- Senior Manger
- Director
- Vice President
- Senior Vice President
- C level executive
- President or CEO
- Owner

6: What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

- Less than $25,000
- $25,000 to $34,999
- $35,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $74,999
- $75,000 to $99,999
- $100,000 to $149,999
- $150,000 or more

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Appendix C

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The measure is based on elements of ethnic identity that are common across groups from junior high school through adulthood.

Directions:

Enclosed are some statements concerning your beliefs about Ethnic Identity. Read the following statements carefully and using the below scale, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements:

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   4=Disagree   5=Strongly Disagree

1. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

2. I feel a strong attachment toward my ethnic group.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

3. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

4. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

5. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

6. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.

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☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

7. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

8. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic background.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

9. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

10. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

11. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

12. I really have not spent much time trying to learn about the culture and history of my ethnic group.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Neither agree or disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

13. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

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14. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

15. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

16. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

17. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

18. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together.

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

19. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

20. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership

☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

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Appendix D

The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) was developed by (Lewis & Neville, 2015) is a self-report instrument designed to assess Black women's perceptions of gendered microaggressions. The Gendered Racial Microaggressions includes a 25-items scale and measures the frequency and stress appraisal of perceived gendered racial microaggressions. Four factors are studied (a) Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification Factor (b) Silenced and Marginalized Factor (c) Strong Black Woman Stereotype Factor (d) Angry Black Woman Stereotype.

Directions:

Enclosed are some statements concerning society's behaviors towards Black Women in America. Read each statement carefully and indicate the extent to which you have experienced microaggressions. Using the following five-point Linkert scale, please answer the frequency in which you have experienced microagression within the past 6 months:

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

In the past six months:

Factor A: Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification

1. Unattractive because of size of butt.

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

2. Negative comments about size of facial features

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

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3. Imitated the way they think Black women speak

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

4. Someone made me feel unattractive

1 = Very frequently- 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

5. Negative comment about skin tone

1 = Very frequently - 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

6. Someone assumed I speak a certain way

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

7. Objectified me based on physical features

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

8. Someone assumed I have a certain body type (stress only)

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

9. Made a sexually inappropriate comment.

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

10. Negative comments about my hair when natural

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

11. Assumed I was sexually promiscuous (frequency only

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

12. I have felt unheard

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1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

13. My comments have been ignored

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

14. Someone challenged my authority

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

15. I have been disrespected in workplace

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

16. Someo1ne has tried to "put me in my place"

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

17. Felt excluded from networking opportunities

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

18. Assumed I did not have much to contribute to the conversation

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

19. Someone assumed I was sassy and straightforward (stress only)

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

20. I have been told that I am too independent

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

21. Someone made me feel exotic as a Black woman (stress only)

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally   4= Very Rarely 5= Never

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22. I have been told that I am too assertive

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

23. Assumed to be a strong Black woman

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

Factor D: Angry Black Woman Stereotype

24. Someone has told me to calm down.

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

25. Perceived to be "angry Black woman"

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

26. Someone accused me of being angry when speaking calm

1 = Very frequently 2 = Frequently 3= Occasionally 4= Very Rarely 5= Never

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Appendix E

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) by (Nadal, 2011) is a 45-item scale. The scale consists of statements involving one's experiences with racial and ethnic microaggressions. Participants used a five-point Linkert scale to report the extent to which they had experienced a list of microaggressions within the last 6 months.

Directions:

Enclosed are some statements concerning society's behaviors towards Black Women in America. Read each statement carefully and indicate the extent to which you have experienced microaggressions. Using the following six-point Linkert scale, please answer the frequency in which you perceived microaggression against you within the past 6 months:

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.
1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.
1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.
1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

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4. I was told that I should not complain about race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

7. Someone told me that she or he was colorblind.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

10. I was told that I complain about race too much.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

22. Someone told me that I was "articulate" after she/he assumed I wouldn't be.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

25. An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

27. Someone told me that they "don't see color."

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my "native language."

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

30. Someone told me that they do not see race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.

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1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

44. An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

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45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

1 = none of the time, 2 = a little bit of the time, 3 = some of the time, 4 = a good bit of the time, 5 = most of the time, 6 = all of the time

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Appendix F

Psychological Empowerment (PEQ) scale developed by Dr. Gretchen Spreitzer (1995) is a 12-item scale. Participants used a Linkert seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to report the extent to which they agreed with each statement.

Directions:

Enclosed are some statements concerning beliefs regarding your work life. Read each statement and use the below Linkert scale to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagreement with the following statements:

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= neither agree or disagree

1. I am confident about my ability to do my job.
1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= neither agree or disagree

2. The work that I do is important to me.
1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= Somewhat disagree   5= strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

3. I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.
1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= neither agree or disagree

4. My impact on what happens in my department is large.

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1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= Somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

5. My job activities are personally meaningful to me.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= Somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

6. I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

7. I can decide on my own how to go about doing my own work.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= Somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

8. I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in

how I do my job.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

9. I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= Somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

10. The work I do is meaningful to me.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

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11. I have significant influence over what happens in my department.

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=Somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= neither agree or disagree

12. I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work

1=Strongly Agree   2=Agree   3=somewhat agree   4= somewhat disagree   5= Strongly disagree 6= Disagree   7= Neither agree or disagree

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Appendix G

Qualitative Interview by Patricia Luckoo

Interview Protocol

Interview Tips

☐ Probe when necessary

☐ Inform interviewees that they are not required to answer any questions and can ignore some if they want

☐ Be comfortable with uncomfortable questions-allow pauses (long pauses)

☐ Schedule enough time to conduct the interviews (must record)

Thank you for taking part in this interview. As a reminder, the determination of this meeting is to evaluate the extent to which negative stereotypes influence the lived experiences of black women in America. As a black woman in America, I am interested in learning about your personal experiences with racial discrimination, your observations, and thoughts on the effects of stereotypes on black women in America.

I am going to ask you to take me through your life story as if you were narrating your life in a book or play. I will ask about the high and low points of your life as well as the defining moments that shaped you as a black woman growing up in America from childhood to current times.

Do you have any questions?

1.	Childhood: Looking back to when you were a child, how would you describe your childhood? What kind of neighborhood did you live in? Was it diverse or segregated? Who were your friends? How did you view race?

2.	Conversation with parents about race: What did your parents teach you about growing up black? How did you feel about what you were taught? In what ways did your parent's teachings influenced you then and now? What questions did you have as a child

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about race if any? Do you have children? If yes, what do you tell them about growing up black in America?

3.   Realization of being black: In looking back on your life, can you identify a moment when you thought of yourself as not just a woman, but a black woman? What brought about that thought process? Where and when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling during that time? Would you describe this event as a significant period in your life? Explain in detail why or why not? How has this experience shaped who you are today?

4.   Angry Black Woman and other Stereotype: One common belief is that black women are angry. What are your thoughts on the subject? Can you think of a time when you, your family or friends were referred as an angry black woman? If so, describe what happened. Where and when did the incident or incidents take place? Who was involved? Are you an angry black woman? Why do you think that black women are often referred to as angry? If many black women are indeed angry, do you feel that they have a right to be? Please explain why you feel the way you do.

Probe: How do you feel about some of the other common stereotypes about black women? For example, Aunt Jemima, Black prostitutes, welfare mothers, the workhorse, the ugly, and physically unattractive black woman, and the man-less black woman. In your view, how common are these stereotypes and in what ways, negative or positive do you believe they affect black women? What role do you think the media (Movies, music/music videos, reality shows) play in perpetuating stereotypes about black women? Where were you? Who else was involved? How do you feel the situation was handled? What was the outcome?

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5.   Racist experience: Can you think of a time when you have encountered attitudes that you would link to race discrimination? If yes, take me through one or two of those experiences. Describe in detail what happened. Where and when did the first incident happen? Where and when did the second event take place? Were there others involved? In what ways do the experiences impact you?

Probe: In looking back on your life, can you speak about different instances where you or someone you know was denied service, passed over for a promotion, left feeling embarrassed, rejected and inadequate because you're black? How does that affect you emotionally and mentally? Describe how you feel when situations like that arise?

Do you believe that society treats black women differently than white women? If yes, in what ways? Describe one or two examples that helped you reach that conclusion.

6.   Black women, wife, mother, and black men: Speak to me about your experience as a woman and a mother. What have been your experience dating black men? Have you experienced disrespect from black men? How would you describe your overall experiences and observations? Have you ever dated outside of your race? If yes, describe the experience in detail. How would you characterize your overall experiences and observations dating outside of your race?

7.   Happiness and fulfillment: Describe a time in your life when you were happiest and fulfilled. When, where and what transpired during that period? Who else was involved? How did you feel then? How were you and your family impacted long term?

8.   Self-esteem and Identity: How would you describe your self-esteem? In what ways if any, do you feel that racism affects black women's self-esteem and identity? Explain why or why not? Do you wear weaves or straighten your hair? If yes, do you feel more attractive with chemically straightened hair or weave than you do your natural hair? Do you wear your hair natural? Are you treated differently by your peers/ employers

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when you wear your natural hair vs. when you don't? If yes, describe in what ways? Do you feel that black women are expected to modify their physical appearance to assimilate better into white culture? Probe: What are your thoughts about some of the common stereotypes that exist about black women today? Do you feel that white women are more physically beautiful than black women? Are you happy with your physical body?

9. Intelligence: Another widespread stereotypical belief about Black women is that they are not equally intelligent as women of another cultural group. What are your thoughts on this controversial subject? Do you feel that being black makes you intellectually inferior to white people? Have you had any experience that made you feel that your intelligence was in question because you're black? If so, what happened? When and where did the situation take place? Who was involved? Do you believe that you are less intelligent and capable than women of other ethnic groups? Do you feel that black women have to work harder than others to be taken seriously?

10. Positive Role Models: Do you have black women role models that you admire? If yes, who are they? What are some of the qualities that you admire about them? Describe in detail the ways in which they have influenced your life?

11. Empowerment: What are some of the ways you feel that black women are empowered in society if any? Do you feel empowered as a black woman? If yes, how would you describe your empowerment? Was there a particular moment that made you feel empowered? If so could you describe what happened? Where were you then? How did you feel? If no, what are some of the fundamental problems that you face that prohibits you from feeling as if you are empowered?

12. The Ideal World Scenario: If you could create the perfect world for you and your family in which racism didn't exist, and you could be and do whatever you wanted, what

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would that world look like for you and your family? Where would you like to live? What would be your dream job/profession? Describe in detail the aspirations that you would have for you and your family.

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Appendix H: Collage of Black Women's Experiences

As Black women, we have to watch how and what we say in many social and professional situations. And Black women do have a right to be angry. We have done more and be more in every life situation.

"When I'm in a business meeting with my husband who is white, and I speak, Clients look at my husband as if what I have to say is of no importance. The first time it happened, I had to remind myself that I am in America."

"In Freshman year, I went to a Martin Luther King parade. The KKK was there. My neutral views on racial discrimination was shattered. The experience made me realize and forced me to acknowledge that racism was alive and that I had to be stronger in her thought."

When I was working as a nanny, the head cook who was an older Black woman expected the Black staff to eat ONLY after the white family finished eating. She said that they did not know what or how much the 'master' would eat and were to have the leftovers. She made me feel horrible. As if I were inferior. She said that's the way it's always been. I realize that she did not know any better,"

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"While I was working as a nanny in Miami, I went out for a bike ride around the neighborhood with the white child in my care. The neighborhood being extremely affluent had no diversity. Someone assumed that I was kidnapping the child and called the police. I found myself surrounded by squad cars. It was one of the most humiliating moments of my life. After the incident, my employer told me not to leave the house to avoid such mistakes from recurring.

"I witnessed a lot violence, drugs and crime. The race element was always present. I became aware of police brutality at a young age. At 6-year-old, I knew that race impacted the way Black people were treated."

"I've always been aware that my Blackness makes me a target for certain treatment. A good question is when is being Black not an issue? As a Black woman, I have experienced being viewed as a sexual object. In one of these instances, I was in a bar and a white guy came up to me and was talking a lot about sex and he asked me "how are you in bed?" I don't think that he would have gone up to a white woman he barely knows and start that kind of conversation with her. I see this as part of the oversexualization ideology that other ethnic groups hold of Black women. I have met many situations that reminds me that I am a Black woman,"

"One of my husband's sister told him not to marry and have children with me when we first met."

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"We, Black women are viewed as aggressive, angry, drugged out… I worked, at a company where we did diversity training. The company brought people from different departments to talk about their stereotypes. All the stereotypes about Black women were negative. One man thought that Black people have tails.

I realize that White people actually have ingrained stereotypes that are dangerous for Black people. When he said that, I thought, 'What makes you think that I am not human?' I was alarmed that someone actually felt that way."

"…when I go to work –I have to prove that I should be there. I work 10 times harder than everyone else."

"One teacher moved all the Black kids from their math class and placed them in a computer class without telling their parents. The computer class was meant to help them with their reading. But I was advanced in reading and writing – in the 5th grade, I was reading and writing at an 8th grade level. So, she took me out of Math and had me practice reading and writing but did not help develop my skills in math. That's something that my friends and I later discussed. I realize that she set me back in math. When I went to high school, my fundamentals in math were not strong. And I've had issues with math ever since,"

"On a high school field trip, the bus stopped at a Hardee's and we were surrounded by a bunch of white boys who kept calling us niggers. One white boys spat in my hair in California. There are times when I have questioned what my parents told me that I was capable of anything. I believed that after Civil Rights more people were like me - but now I'm thinking differently. I don't believe that much have changed"

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"A student came to me because she was concerned about her grade and she expressed that her parents would be upset if she did not get a higher grade. I spoke with a colleague and she expressed that she was aware of the parent and that I was going to have a tough time at the parent/teachers' meeting and then she said, 'but maybe you won't because she's also Black,'

It felt strange to me, and it remained unsettled. I spoke with some of my Black peer and they advised that I addressed it because it was microaggression and because it made me unsettled, it's worth having a conversation. I eventually brought it to my co-worker and she made a lot excuses, that she did not mean anything. It felt that when I went back later, there was a sense of defensiveness about the situation. I wished that I knew how to address something like that in the moment."

"My experiences with racism has made me stronger. I had to fight for everything. I had to fight for my real friends. I was called, 'African booty scratcher,' and was told, "you can't play with us." Mostly by other Black kids."

"I learned that my dark-skin tone was problematic. The other Black kids teased me. They called me all kinds of names. But I love my mom. Every day she would reaffirm my beauty in the world and that my skin-tone was beautiful. I knew that, but the teasing was tough.

I can't believe that the thought of it still affects me. I know that this continues to be a problem. When we create the space where lighter tone is smarter and more put together it creates separatism even among the Black population."

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"I was taught to dream big."

"My three nieces, ages 14, 15 and 17 are limited in their thinking. They think that they should only date Black men because white men do not want them. I try to teach them not to choose a man because of color, but to view people as people. I let them know that they do not need to stay in a box and not to think poorly of themselves. But the narrative that they hear most is that they are not good enough,"

"In 5th grace, I experienced an identity crisis when I realized that I was Black. My brother came home and told my parents that his teacher told them that Black people ate out of the garbage. My parents went to the school and wanted to get the teacher fired.

That same year, there was a dance for 5th and 6th graders. I wanted to go to the dance with a white boy name Kurt. And one of my friends told me that I should go to the dance with a boy name Stephen. I asked, why would I go to the dance with Stephen? And she said, 'because he's Black'. That's when I knew that they saw me differently and I saw myself differently too. I didn't have any Black friends. It was a very hard time.

When Black kids moved into the neighborhood, I was picked on and teased. They called me white-washed and Oreo. They said that I wasn't Black enough. It was around that time when I accepted that I was Black. But that age – that 5th grade year was difficult because I had to internalized and acknowledge something that I did not accept at that time. I was like, wow, I'm different. People see me differently."

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"I went to Spelman –and they spend a lot of time teaching Black history and real issues… that it imposes and provide self- awareness and self-pride. I was always told that I could be anything I wanted to be, and I was given the tools. At Spelman – everyone was Black and ethnic identity was the cornerstone of what Spelman thought…. I remember in one African American history class; a professor challenged my perception of good hair. He had soft wavy hair and I complimented on his 'good' hair. He asked me, 'what is 'good hair?'"

"I was working downtown at a high-end restaurant making money and flying to Florida every weekend. I was living it up. I was doing everything I had dreamed of doing. I had money. I was taking care of myself and I could travel. I had a realization one day that I was living my best life and that my dream of the life I wanted to live was realized."

"It would be nice for everyone to know the strength that runs in our bloods Be present in who we are at all levels. Be more supportive of each other."

"I have not let my race define who I am."

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"…I feel empowered all the time. I think that Black women's struggles are empowering. As a group we have more power now more than ever. Dominant figures have emerged on a national stage that represents Black women in positive way. We are bursting through the stereotypes. Slowly. But we are bursting through."

"Graduating high school was the happiest most fulfilling moment of my life because I was told that I would never live long enough to graduate high school. I lost a lot of friends to gun violence. Death was a reality from kids growing up in my neighborhood and the inner-city. When I graduated, I felt that if I made it through high school there is a chance that I could make it to college.

"I have very strong self-esteem. I love everything about being a woman."

"I was working as a software engineer and could go to any store and buy anything I wanted. My business was grossing half a million dollars in And I was helping a lot of people. That's when I felt that I was on my way to living my dreams,"
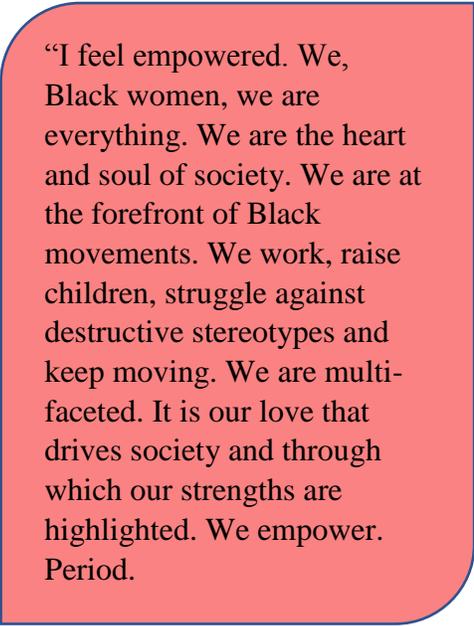
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"I don't think that there's an aggressiveness about us, it's ownership of who we are."
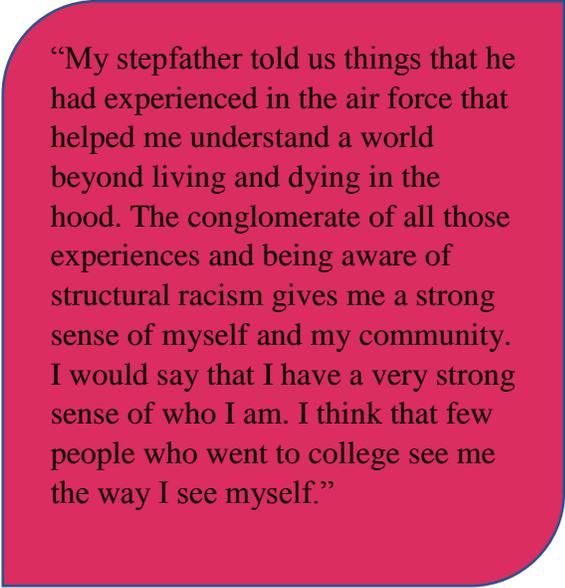
"My stepfather told us things that he had experienced in the air force that helped me understand a world beyond living and dying in the hood. The conglomerate of all those experiences and being aware of structural racism gives me a strong sense of myself and my community. I would say that I have a very strong sense of who I am. I think that few people who went to college see me the way I see myself."

"I feel empowered. We, Black women, we are everything. We are the heart and soul of society. We are at the forefront of Black movements. We work, raise children, struggle against destructive stereotypes and keep moving. We are multi-faceted. It is our love that drives society and through which our strengths are highlighted. We empower. Period.

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We were the first Black family in the predominantly white neighborhood where my parents moved when I was young. I felt accepted. I was popular. At the time I did not know what race was. My parent did not talk about race. In 5th grace, I experienced an identity crisis when I realized that I was Black. …"

"…As Black women, we have to create our own empowerment. Being the only Black woman in the room at my job is a space that I have created. The most empowering thing to me right now is the space that Black women owns. We are at a good space on the world stage right now. And we are unapologetic."

"My mom is my role model. She has inspired me to be better because of how hard she worked to take care of us. I remember her having to borrow money just to feed us…It breaks my heart when I think of hard she worked to take care of us. I never want to have to work so hard."

"…If we have a voice and share our perspective, we're viewed as angry and having a negative energy and bad attitude. I've been in situations where I've had to moderate what I say and my tone to ensure that I am perceived as angry even when I'm just expressing my opinion,"

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"If we could see that we are all connected spiritually, we would realize that we have no need for racism and a separate construct. We can all live self-actualized lives and I hope that we can come together and help each other. In this society, people are overlooked and under examined. My ideal world scenario would be for us to have spent time learning about and healing from each other. If we can do that we would not have a need to base our value on ideals such as the color of one's skin. We would be beyond that.

"My parents, grandparents and extended family– worked hard, sacrificed and made a way for me to dream big."

"Being a Black wife and mother of a daughter, I have a very strong family structure… My husband, (a black man) and I accept each other as we are…My parents have been married 45 years. We need to tell another narrative of the Black family structure. It seems that every news story we see, it's about murder and drugs and jail. I think mine and my husband's, my mom and my dad's relationship is more a reflection of a typical Black family. But when all that is being shown on TV are negative depictions of Black people – kids have nothing to aspire to. They think, this is my life."

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"I have dated both Black and White men and they are not different. They're men."

"Racism is in everything and it's everywhere. I don't see a world without it. In a perfect world, people would treat each other like people. No one would be judged on the

"At 6-year-old, I knew that race impacted the way Black people were treated."

"My parents made sure that I was aware of Black history. Mother was very proud of her blackness."

"My mom was not very vocal about racial ideologies. Maybe because she was always working. She had a 8th/9th grade education."

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"…by speaking to us about race, my step-father gave me a strong sense of identity as a Black person that has helped me deal with the negative effects of microaggressions."

"I was called the 'N' word in Missouri where I went to college and I barely qualify as Black where I live."

"…I identify the strong Black woman stereotype with my mom, who tolerated all kinds of abuses but never said anything. And I find that this one is particularly damaging to us. We are strong because we've had to be, but the perception that we have it all together and can handle any situation makes us vulnerable because we do not ask for help when we need it."

" I love my culture and my people, and I am very proud to be Black. Even with all our struggles, I wouldn't change who I am. I know that I am not the stereotypes that exists about us, that empowers me. And I am very proud off all that I have accomplished."

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"Many Black men are deeply wounded from racial historical trauma and most are not aware of the trauma. I am conflicted because I understand the challenges they face, and I am trying to understand aspect of value, engagement and how we can help each other as a community."

"Prior to being WOKE, I never dated Black men. I internalized all the negative stereotypes about them,"

"My family struggled in all aspect of their lives and the struggle was collective. My mother is my role model. But I would not call her a 'positive' role model in the way the word is best understood. The outcome of her struggles resulted in a positive outcome for me."

"Black women are empowered because of our struggle. The fact that we have survived all the that we have and are still full of hope and reaching for the stars is testament of our empowerment."