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Thomas W. Brown
Chitlins and Lemonade: The Impact
of the Word “Nigger” on College
Educated Men in the
African Diaspora

ABSTRACT

The study is an exploration of the impact the term “nigger” has on college educated men in the African Diaspora. The semi-structured, open-ended questions focus on the manner in which a racial derogatory term (the N-word) remains volatile even when attempted to be used positively by the oppressed. Twelve to 15 college educated men in the African Diaspora were interviewed to discover whether the term is endearing or endangering to the identity of men in the African Diaspora. Overall the study showed that the N-word promotes negative cultural concepts largely propagated through mass media that results in debilitated progress for growth and development of men in the African Diaspora.

Chitlins and Lemonade: The Impact of the Word “Nigger” on College Educated Men in the African Diaspora

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2014

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First off I'd like to thank my life-long therapeutic social worker Beatrice Brown, love you ma. I'd also like to thank Hachely, a.k.a. "Lady", for your understanding, patience and love, as I grow from a negro to a master. Also to my brother Thaddeus, all love Brack Man. Smith College School for Social Work - I didn't just go back to school, I got an education. Also I would like to thank everyone who I have crossed paths with throughout this journey. Much love and gratitude.

"A slave is one who recognizes and accepts their status,
A real slave needs no chains"-unknown

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

There continue to be instances where race, particularly the N word, plays a major role in the determining factor of how individuals treat each other. Examples are the case of NFL wide receiver Riley Cooper whose use of the racial term “nigger” shocked the media and immediately prompted a negative reaction from his African-American teammates. Also, within the barbaric culture of the NFL, it teaches others that to believe in violence over intellectual “fair one”. Such is the case for the Miami Dolphins offensive line man Jonathan Martin. This situation speaks volumes to the messages missed from those that survived and came before us. So, like the righteous men before him have done, Martin walked away from a situation. With at the aptitude to do so, he then redeveloped a movement that had been started so long ago, the fight for civility. Another example is the situation of TV chef personality, Paula Deen. In this case, a released copy of the comments she made during a deposition before the courts noted that she openly admitted to using the term “nigger” and made inappropriate racial jokes about the African-American community.

Lastly is the example of Trayvon Martin. In this case there were themes that are similar to Emmet Till. In the Martin case, Trayvon was profiled because of the color of his skin and his manner of dress. The end result of this was that he was shot and killed. As a result of the trial, the perpetrator was found not guilty by the court, citing that the death was an act of self-defense under the Florida law. This case is reflective of the some of the negative effects of the term “nigger” because it has the interpretive quality to show that young men in the African Diaspora are treated as threat in the mainstream society.

Because of the perception by mainstream society to perceive young men of color as suppose “thugs” or “hoodlums”, these concepts stem from the idea of what the term “nigger” represented in the historical sense and in some fashion the contemporary context. However the term will be viewed in the manner in which incidents such as the Martin case is a reminder where a youth can be killed and the initially the justice system takes no immediate action against the perpetrator, and the message to men of color it that our status in society is still that of a “nigger”,

The purpose of this exploratory study was to gather narrative data about the impact of the word “nigger” has on 12 to 15 college educated men of the African Diaspora. When referring to the word “nigger”, the term embodies all forms of the word in contemporary form and historical context. For purposes of the study, the word “nigger” may have varied in the manner in which the participants interpret the term. The definition of African Diaspora refers to those participants who identify as having African descent and slavery in their family history. Participants in this study were also college educated, meaning that they had attained a minimum of a bachelors degree. The term, *impact*, refers to the thoughts and feelings that occur for the men upon hearing the term “nigger”.

The objective of this study was to interview college educated men in the African Diaspora about their experience involving a term that has deeply seated roots in their personal and professional history. These participants were from the Massachusetts area and were men who identified as being part of the African Diaspora and who also had graduated college with a Bachelors degree. Most of these men were former college associates as well as some men who were known through personal networking.

The audience for this study will be members of the social work community who most likely work with members of the African-American community, particularly men of the African Diaspora. Hopefully, the findings of this study will shed light on the impact that the term “nigger” has on African-American males’ sense of identity, self-perception and overall feelings of worth in the American Society.

So this study has importance, because although “nigger” is a term that is used all throughout society, whether in a jovial manner or to degrade, it impacts members of the African Diaspora. The findings from the study will contribute to the field of Social Work because it will add insight to the complex nature of understanding the diverse aspects of another culture.

The truth often is hard to swallow, so we hide the truth between lies and injustice. Then we tell those who seek it, endure the battle, because to have the truth is to bear the burden of knowledge. This thesis will embody the harsh reality that psychologically the term “nigger” is damaging to the African Diaspora’s culture. In the current socio-economic culture the African Diaspora has a richness that can only be measured by the ability to overcome the most insurmountable odds, the false sense of self.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Within the literature, there is no information on the use of the term “nigger” and its’ mental effects as it is currently used as a common term in a contemporary context. Therefore within the literature review, the term “nigger” is reviewed in its historical context to show the origin and derogatory perspective of the term and its inability to be transformed throughout the decades.

The other manner in which the term “nigger” was examined was through the use of Ebonics or Black slang. The literature did not directly address the use of the term “nigger” and Ebonics. Through inference, the literature review will present information about the historical form of the origin of the term “nigger”: and demonstrates its derogatory intent. Within the historical context the literature will show how the term “nigger” has evolved to its more contemporary use. The previous literature also shows how, within American society, members of the African Diaspora were relegated to second class citizenship. This second class citizenship was shown to have legal precedent where legally, people of color, or “colored” people are to be considered 3/5 human. Within this second class citizenship role, the literature describes 1) how whites maintained a relationship with the “niggers” and; 2) how members in the African Diaspora were stigmatized and seen as negative or detrimental to the American society, however through intellectual research the opposite appears to be true.

After describing this negative quality that the term “nigger” cast upon the members of the African Diaspora, the next section of the literature review describes the counter culture that was created around the term “nigger” to become juxtaposed to the

“pure” white mainstream society. Following the presentation of transformative phases of the term “nigger”, information is presented about the split in the African Diaspora between its members and their relationship to the term “nigger”. This split in the African-American community is shown through language. The first form of language that is examined is *Ebonics*, a form of language used in many African Diaspora inner city communities. The other form of language that is used in these communities is the standards English form, the form of language used in the educational institutions situated in the inner city communities. This split in language use in the African Diaspora communities will help the reader to understand the multiple identities of the term “nigger”.

From the Bowels of Slavery to Attempts at Civility

1700’s- 1800’s

The roots of the word nigger based on the accounts of *The N-Word* (2006), was a term originated from Spanish term for black, *Negra*, and the Dutch term *Negar*. Through the slave trade commerce between Africa and the American and European countries, these terms were used to describe the African slave cargo. Rahman (2012), researched that, “the racist contemporary form consist of the same phonetic sequences as the original neutral use of nigger: since the early for *nigger* and the contemporary racist form are homographic”. The two terms, the Spanish *Negra* and Dutch *Negar*, became the common words used to describe the African, The words went through various spelling changes when being transcribed into print. When printed material began to circulate in the slave trading venues, the term “nigger” was recorded as *Negor*’s, *Neggar*; and, until in 1779, the term “nigger” appeared in print consistently as *Niggers*.

Initially the word was used to describe the African slaves as mere commodities. However, both the term and use of the term soon became associated with further demeaning and degrading intentions. There were significant attempts by various rebellious slaves to recapture their freedom by either resistance to doing slave labor as a form of liberation. The term “nigger” began to embody more negative characteristics.

Turner (2004) explains that, during this period of slavery, propaganda was circulated characterizing black slaves, particularly African American men. Mass literature reported the dangers of male African-Americans and their proclivity for defiance against their owners. The more prevalent tale of the African-American male slave was their abundant nature for violence, sexual yearning and misconduct with white women. Propaganda became a way to further demean African-American slaves and justify white oppression and maltreatment of the chattel.

During this era, the overall moral and mental climate was the equivalent of such general ideas as the *Willie Lynch Letter: The Making of a Slave* (FinalCall.com, 2009). This document described a “scientific” method to break the mentality of a slave in order to maintain the power dynamic between the master and the oppressed. The first order that the slave masters undertook was to ensure that the African American people were to not be seen as human beings by attributing to them the likeness of common animals. Such is the case wherein the *Willie Lynch Letter: The Making of a Slave* (FinalCall.com, 2009) stated, “. . .both the horse and the nigger must be broken; that is, break them from one form of mental life to another- -keep the body and take the mind. In other words, break the will to resist.” (p.14). Throughout the intense period of slavery, spanning from the 1700’s to late 1800’ or even until the emancipation proclamation of 1863, “nigger” was

the key term used to embody all that the African-American existence meant to a majority of the white masses.

After the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and the ratifications that followed to outlaw slavery throughout the United States and its territories, changes occurred to the word “nigger” and the meaning and intentions it had towards African-Americans. The most compelling period of change occurred during the Civil Rights era of the 1960’s.

The 1960’s

The major civil rights movement of the 1960’s attempted to quash the overall belittling and negative connotations the term “nigger” contained. The civil rights movement also sought to erode the effects that the slave trade had on the African-American community that equated their human existence to being 3/5ths of the white peoples’ existence. During the 1960’s , the civil rights movement also attempted to change the white public discourse from using the term “nigger” to describe African-American people. The result was much success in attempting to get equal rights in the United States for African-Americans, however in the overall process that this would take there was no guarantee. So now without the time guarantee to commit to this process, there was little in the way white-Americans treating people of the African Diaspora like “niggers”.

At the same time, the upper class white folks, such as the politicians, began to diverge away from using the word “nigger” in public to describe African-Americans and began to refer to African-American people as Negroes or Colored’s. However, the majority of middle-working class and lower class whites still referred to African-

Americans as “niggers” (Williams, 2004). Not only did their reference for African-Americans remain the same, but their racist and discriminatory methods kept the African-American population in a status of less than equal to their white counterparts, Therefore, while the whites with a majority of the financial commerce controlled the labor and land, the equal plane that the whites once held with each other on a topical level started to dissipate as there became competition for property.

During this period of time of civil unrest in America and civil disobedience among the black population, the country underwent major changes when the country became involved in The Vietnam War. During this time, the African-American population was afforded the opportunity to navigate the otherwise insurmountable economic roadblock to financial gains because they were able to work the jobs that whites had to leave in order to serve in the war(Kennedy, 2002). The African-American population experienced a growth in the black community’s ability to expand to the middle-class ranks in American society. This expansion of the socioeconomic status in the African-American community and the migration of some African-American community members to housing in middle-class suburban areas of the country, afforded some African-American parents the opportunity to send their children to, what would be seen as, better educational opportunities (Anderson, 2012).

This transition by some African-Americans to middle-class suburbia in some manner contributed to what can be seen as a dichotomy within the black community. This dichotomy can be broken down into two populations. One population that arose from this split is the middle-class suburban blacks. The other group is the inner-city black population (Anderson, 2012; Rahman, 2012). Within this split in the African-American

community, two underlying ideologies emerged that seemed to create differences amongst the African-American populace. During the civil disobedience period of the 1960's, the African-American community was torn between *assimilation* into the dominant white culture, through involvement in education and economic growth, or *separation* through remaining in the inner city. Thus, there was a choice within the African-American community to become a part of "mainstream" society or to remain outside its constructs (Boyd, 2002).

Although this split was happening within the African-American community, there remained ongoing struggles, overall, against the dominant and oppressive white American community. Even though this intergroup dynamic change was occurring, the entire African-American community continued to be subjugated and discriminated against through racist practices and policies (Kennedy, 2002). The continued suppression of African-Americans to second class citizenry led to the sprouting up of major and social and political figures that were catalysts in provoking change. During this time, various African-American leaders such as Baynard Rustin, John Lewis and Whitney Young and organizations such as SNCC, CORE and SCLC, came to the forefront and expressed their defiance and demonstrated rebellious actions against the current conditions that oppressed the African-American population. As a result of the efforts put forth by the various leadership organizations in the African-American community, changes in American policies occurred such as the Civil Rights Act. With this Act, the American government signed into its political practice the theoretical ending of discriminatory and racist policies in the American system. (www.ifklibrary.org, www.naacp.org).

Legislation was in place to prevent *overt* forms of discrimination in the American system. However, many white-Americans remained resistant to the law's push for equality (Anderson,2012; Kennedy 200; Williams,2004). Examples of continued racial discrimination and oppression are the resistance to school integration and the treatment by police of African-Americans (Myers, 1991). The actions and beliefs of many school administrators and police officials transgressed the rules of law and continued the oppressive, discriminatory, and unfair treatment of African-Americans in the educational and public sectors.

Even though many members of the white population were resistant to the acceptance and equality of the African-American population, there were a minority of whites that were accepting of the African-American population. Those white-Americans that claimed acceptance of the African-American population as equal operated under a colorblind ideology (Anderson, 2012; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson & Casas, 2007). As Ryan et al. (2007) explained, the colorblind ideology was the focus of the 1960's where all people were judged as individuals. This practice was an effort to judge people on their work ethic and morals as opposed to their race. At the time, this social sentiment was an effort to allow for the white and African-Americans to cross the color-line in order to do collective work in society.

The Media

Movies

With this social change occurring in America in the 1960's, the mass continued to portray African-Americans, particularly African-American males, from a negative perspective. In the era of the 1700's through the 1800's the media portrayed African-

Americans as savage individuals who, if given the opportunity, would become rebellious and dangerous individuals. In the 1970's with the advent of "blaxploitation" films, the media echoed the same message. Turner (2004) shared in his dissertation:

The 1970's were the first time in movie history that major studios produced films that [were] geared specifically for African-American movie going audience. This explosion ushered in what Bogle identifies as "the age of the buck", namely, "a period where a band of aggressive, pistol packing, sexually-charged urban cowboys set off on a heady rampage, out to topple the system and to right past wrongs (p. 200).

This portrayal of African-Americans was produced for mass consumption and promoted long held stereotypes and misconceptions of African-Americans. However, these films also catered to the members of the inner city African-American community who were resistant to assimilating or acculturating into the white-American mainstream culture (Anderson, 2012; Forsyth & Carter, 2012; Kennedy 2002)

At the same time, the comedian, Richard Pryor, brought into the mainstream the use of the word "nigger" as a slang term used in the African-American vernacular (Rahman, 2012; Williams, 2004). The mass production of stereotypical perspectives of African-Americans as well as the continued denial by the majority of white-Americans to treat African-Americans as equals, continued to produce obstacles for African-Americans. The burgeoning numbers of African-Americans attempting gain upward mobility in the American system continued to be met with resistance by white-Americans (Anderson, 2012; Kennedy, 2002) Although there were no legal grounds to overtly deny access to African-Americans, the ingrained systematic discriminatory practices that were still strongly held by a majority of whites, continued to covertly influence racist practices (Kennedy, 2002; Williams, 2004).

Through struggle and persistent effort, many African-Americans pushed for integration and ending of desegregation of public and private spaces (Kennedy, 2002; Myers, 1991) There was also the effort by many African-Americans to prove oneself as being equal and to combat the stereotypical perspectives that white-Americans held about the African-American community (Anderson, 2012; Billings, 2005; Dulin-Keita, Hannon Lii, Fernandez & Cockerham, 2011; Gray & Rios, 2012,; Marsh, Chaney, Jones., 2012) Even though the passing of the Civil Rights Act pushed for integration of once segregated spaces, the racial and stereotypical misperceptions that whites had of African-Americans and the skepticism that African-Americans were able to perform task that were previously dominated by whites continued to permeate the social atmosphere (Kennedy, 2002).

Hip-Hop

During the period of 1960's and 70's the African-American community functioned between the two dichotomies of the budding minority middle-class African American community and the disenfranchised majority lower-class African-American community (Anderson, 2012; Kennedy, 2002) As the time period progressed towards the 1980's and 1990's, more stereotypical presentations of African-Americans in the mass media were being portrayed with fewer positive black images being represented in the pop culture of movies, television shows, or other forms of entertainment. Although there were positive African-American stories within the television culture, shows such as, *Amen*, *The Jefferson's*, *Good Times*, and the *Bill Cosby Show*. The positivity that was generated from those shows had sparse resemblance to the communities a majority of the African-American population resided in. However during the late 1980's and early

1990's with the birth of Hip-Hop, a voice was given to the African-American population that publicized the dilemma experienced by the majority lower class African-American community (Williams, 2004)

During the beginning of the Hip-hop era, the initial messages within the music remarked on the plight of the inner-city community. However, Hip-hop also gave a social voice to the entire African-American community. As the new form of music for the African-American community took form, Hip-hop began to spread across the nation and became a part of the mainstream pop culture. During this mass movement, the foundation and structure of the music, now viewed as the voice of the African-American inner city community, began to take on a variety of issues within the African-American cultural identity. As Hip-hop became more widespread, the music became a form of expression for the maltreatment, frustration, and overall anger that the African-American community as a whole was experiencing while attempting to survive and navigate within the American society (LaGrone, 2000; Rahman; 2012; Williams, 2004).

The Hip-Hop rap group of the early 1990's, N.W.A. (Niggaz with Attitude), was one of many groups that expressed the overall disgust and animosity with the American system. As Hip-hop music progressed within the mainstream, the recording industry began backing newer music artists and financially supported those artists that were seen as providing the same angry rhetoric to the mainstream American society (Rahmaan, 2012). As Hip-hop rap music grew, so did the stereotypes held by white-Americans that African-Americans were prone to violence, and rebellious behavior (Williams, 2004). Thus, the downside for the minority middle-class African-Americans along with the

growing effort to combat the stereotypical perspectives and prove competency and equality in the integrated spaces remained (Britt&Griffin, 2007; Young, 2007).

With the growing popularity of Hip-Hop rap music and the continuing negative stereotypes portrayed in mass media of African-Americans, the white-Americans continued scrutiny of the African-American middle-class in the integrated spaces persisted. The white-Americans continued to call into question the Civil Rights Act and whether the African-Americans who occupied the previously white-dominated spaces were qualified to do so (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Forsyth& Carter; 2012; Marsh et al., 2012)

Ebonics

“Everybody wanna be a nigga, but don’t nobody wanna be a nigga”:

-Paul Mooney

As the Hip-Hop rap culture began to grow in the mainstream, the propensity to use “slang” or Ebonics more openly began to take hold in American society as well (Kennedy, 2002; Rahman, 2012; Williams, 2004). There is a backdrop that was occurring along with this social movement of the African-American community bringing expressive forms of music into the mainstream society.

Within the use of “slang”, Ebonics, Black-English, or African-American English, the term “nigger” is still used by many races. However, it seems that the N-word has become an accepted part of African-Americans’ vocabulary (Williams, 2004). The dichotomy within the African-American community remains where, due to significant struggles to obtain social and economic advancement, there is also the underlying struggle to show group solidarity (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Gray & Rios, 2012; Motley &

Henderson, 2007; Ogbu, 1999; Rahman, 2012; Young, 2005). One of the ways in which an African-American person can show group solidarity is through the use of language or dialect (Ogbu, 1999). Ebonics is a pervasive use of dialect within the African-American community. A group member's use of Ebonics often acts as an identifier that this particular individual recognizes himself as a member of the African-American population – no matter how socially or economically distant from another group member they are (Billings, 2005; Ogbu, 1999; Ortiz, 1999; Rahman, 2012; Young, 2007). However, the use of the slang term “nigger”, within the African-American community calls into question the extent to how strong the solidarity is (Kennedy, 2002; Rahman, 2012; Williams, 2004).

Code-switching

The historical context in which African-Americans perceive themselves as citizens of American society is based on a viewpoint of the continued struggle to fight against stereotypical racist beliefs (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Castle et al., 2011; Kennedy, 2002; Ogbu, 1999; Rahman, 2012). Therefore, the strive to gain access to previously unavailable positions or status that further dismantles the status quo, requires African-Americans to develop skills to navigate the American system (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Ogbu, 1999; Young, 2007). One of the skills required to enable a person's upward mobility in the African-American community lies in the ability to code switch (Ogbu 1999; White, et al., 1998; Young, 2007). *Code switch*, as interpreted by Ogbu (1999), means the ability to change a person's speech patterns and voice inflection to that of the desired audience. With this ability, African-Americans that are in positions where they are the minority, have the added duty of defending themselves against stereotypes or

preventing misconceptions that their position was acquired by policies and not by their abilities (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Gray & Rios, 2012; White, et al., 1998; Young, 2007) So, code switching, or speaking standard English rather than Ebonics, is necessary when working in the white domain in order to combat stereotypical perspectives within mainstream white society about manner in which members of the Black-American community speak.

Ebonics versus Standard English

One segregation barrier that was broken down through civil rights struggle and legal action was the segregation of schools. African-American children could now, in theory, obtain the same education as white people and therefore allow for a better opportunity for achieving socially acceptable means of success (Kennedy, 2002). Methods of teaching in the American schools system does not allow, outside of foreign language classes, divergence from the standard forms of English taught in textbooks and written throughout all learning materials in classrooms. However, Standard English, in many African-American homes and communities, does not align with the dialect or forms of speech that are spoken (Ogbu, 1999; Young, 2007). Ogbu's (1999) study examined the sentiments that parents and students had about speaking Standard English in school, speaking "slang" at home, and ability to do both. Ogbu's (1999) findings showed that parents understood the teaching of the standard form of English was beneficial in order for their children to have better access to jobs and achievements in mainstream society. However, most parents in this sample preferred that in the home setting their children speak slang or Ebonics.

The overall consensus of the parents was that the schools were not adapting to the children, but rather assimilating the children into their ideal dominant culture (Jenkins, 2006; Kennedy, 2002; Ng, 2007; Ogbu, 1999; White, et al., 1998). The children in the study also agreed that learning the standard form of English was necessary for school success; but they preferred to speak and use the language that they learned since birth and were more comfortable with, Ebonics (White, et al., 1998).

Also based in a historical context, the Africans that were brought to America were forced to abandon their native language from their native home in Africa and made to learn English (Kennedy, 2002; Ogbu, 1999; Williams, 2004). Given this understanding of the historical context of language, many African-American community members are less apt and/or willing to communicate in Standard English. Therefore, many feel that it is only it necessary to speak Standard English in settings attributed to the dominant culture (Billings, 2005; Britt & Griffin, 2007).

The use of “slang” or Ebonics in their community offers African-Americans a place where they can speak freely and with the mother tongue (Billings, 2005; Ogbu, 1999). When using “slang”, some members of the community use the word “nigga”, a derivative of the historical term “nigger”, as a term of endearment and comradery (Motley & Henderson, 2007; Williams, 2004). The double-bind in this use of the word “nigga” is that, for some African-Americans who have functioned or are functioning on a regular basis in predominantly white spaces, a mental conundrum emerges that is complex (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Castle, et al., 2011; Ogbu, 1999; Gray & Rios, 2012; Guerin, 2003; Ng, 2007).

Existing in Two Worlds

African-American students

To examine the issues having to do with the use of the N-word in light of the sample for this study, articles were reviewed that focused on African-American students and middle working class individuals who struggle to maintain membership or status in both the African-American communities and within the white-mainstream society. Such is the case for African-American students who attend predominantly white institutions.

Britt & Griffin (2007) examined the struggles that African-American college students experienced at the white institutions. For these scholars, it was found that in the predominantly white institutions, the sample felt constantly challenged by their white cohort and professors. Nearly all participants in the study stated they felt they had to prove to their white classmates and professors that they belonged in the institution based on their abilities and not based on “quotas” or policies. Some African-American students stated they felt added pressure and isolation because there were limited or no African-American professors teaching at these institutions (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Marsh, et al., 2012; Young, 2007).

One factor that the African-American students identified as a helpful resource was that they were able to rely on the African-American community to feel a sense of belonging and solidarity (Britt & Griffin, 2007). Findings of some studies showed that the students sought out these communities for grounding. These communities were organizations on campus for the students of color, their churches and friendships with other students of color (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Marsh, et al., 2012; Ogbu, 1999; Young, 2007).

Some of the African-American students who did seek out the organizations on campus for the students of color, occasionally reported differences such as socioeconomic status, between themselves and other students (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Marsh, et al., 2012; Young, 2007). Other African-American students, similar to the Ogbu (1999) study, challenged the students' "blackness" because they aspired to become high achieving in the white institution (Britt & Griffin, 2007; Gray & Rios, 2012; Marsh, et al., 2012; Young, 2007). However, this challenge to their commitment or connection to the African-American community was adroitly curtailed. African-Americans quashed the challenge in some instances by "code switching" or using slang in these environments. This method made it easier to show that they belong in the African-American community as opposed to the constant buttressing effort it takes the African-American students to demonstrate to their white cohort they belong (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Gray & Rios, 2012; White, et al., 1998; Young, 2007).

African-American middle working class

For some African-Americans, this constant struggle to code switch does not end after leaving the world of academia nor is it an issue that is specific to educational institutions. For working class African-Americans, this clash of remaining solidified with the African-American community as well as maneuvering through a predominantly white system, produces the same juxtaposition (Anderson, 2012; Nelson, et al., 2010; Schneider, et al., 2000; Ryan, et al., 2007; Young, 2007). Thompson's (1995) study on working middle-class African-Americans examined their ability to function in the two realms: the white mainstream and the African-American community. Thompson's

findings showed that in order to maintain sustainability in their functioning, there appeared to be a polarization of the African-American person's identities. For the African-Americans who are working middle-class, there was a constant sense that they perpetually had to prove their worth. What follows are two anecdotes of working middle class individuals. This first excerpt discusses how within the working class Black community there is the rift between what is "maintaining blackness" and colluding white supremacy.

Ms.A, a 40-year-old professional Black woman was describing her boss in one session. The boss was a Black woman. The patient stated that some of the other Black co-workers did not perceive this boss as supportive of them because she did not join them in the corridors speaking loudly and cracking jokes. This woman had been described as outside the group because she did not "act Black". When questioned about the "Blackness of this behavior," the patient stated empathically that to not gather and speak loud was to accept the White demand of Black invisibility through silence (Thompson, 1995, p.535).

In the next anecdote, Thompson (1995) provides an example of how some working middle class Blacks deal with splits in identity in their attempts to navigate various settings.

Ms. H, a 41-year-old professional Black woman, addresses the issue of achievement by keeping each aspect of her life completely separated. She describes her work personality as "cutthroat", seeing herself as a "pitbull". She feels that as the only Black person in her department, it is her responsibility to take every challenge presented to her and attack it head on. She has no contact with anyone from her job when she is not at work. Her social life consists of hanging out in a series of neighborhood bars. The people in the bars know her to be fun-loving and hard-drinking. She has not allowed any of the people that she spends time in the bars with to visit her home, to know what kind of work she does, or even to know where she works. Her family is aware of her job and her work location, but they have no idea how successful she really is. She has felt that to tell them will be to lose the contact with her family she currently maintains. Her family frequently seeks her out when there is a need for money or a need to negotiate some social institutions they experience her as better able to do. Her feeling about the family is that she would be completely rejected different from the she actually is. She is the first person in her family to complete a college education. (1995, p.539)

As Thompson (1995) noted, there was never a converging of her different frames of self. In each environment, this participant kept her identity in the other setting separate and did not choose to intermingle the settings. Although this is a deviation from some of the more standard practices of a majority of African-Americans, in a broad interpretation, this example represents the main ideology behind how many African-Americans in predominantly white spaces operate. A speculative reason for this functioning is that African-Americans that have, in some form, managed to alleviate the stereotypical perspective of their white cohorts do not have to risk their community identity (Anderson, 2012; Billings, 2005; Brett & Griffin, 2007; Forysth & Carter, 2012; Gray & Rios, 2012; Marsh, et al., 2012; Motley & Henderson, 2007; Ogbu, 1999; Williams, 2004; Young, 2007). This is in contrast however to the manner in which some lower-class African-Americans view their role when in mainstream society.

African-American lower working class

For some lower working class African-Americans, the way in which they believe mainstream white-Americans perceive them may be very different. Similar to the historical context built up around the ideas of race, overturning these white perspectives are not a concern to some African-Americans in regards to their ability to function in society (Dulin-Keita, et al., 2011; Holmes & Smith, 2012; Kinloch, 2010; Ogbu, 1999; Ortiz, 1999; Rogers, et al. 2012; Thompson, 1995; White, et al., 1998). This particular stance emerged in research pertaining to youth (Dulin-Keita, et al., 2011; Forsyth & Carter, 2012; Harwood, et al., 2012; Holmes & Smith, 2012; Martin, et al., 2010). Researchers have explored the pervasive stereotypes in mainstream society regarding the African-American population and the effects it has on the behavior and functioning of

African-American youth (Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Dulin-Keita, et al., 2011; Kinloch, 2010; Martin, et al., 2010; Rogers, et al., 2012; Ryan, et al., 2007).

In the Dulin-Keita et al., (2011) study, findings showed that if African-American youth were being treated as the stereotypical representation by the majority mainstream media and news outlets, youth embody this likeness. The youth exhibit the stereotypical behavior that is shamed in the larger society as being associated with being a “nigger”. Therefore if the child is led to the belief by an “authority” figure, that their behavior is “bad”, and the media outlets portray images of the same race as the child in negative context, then the child begins to internalize this perception. In the internalization of these perceptions, Dulin-Keita et al. (2011) suggest that the child will continue to exhibit such stereotypical behavior.

As viewed from a historical lens, western society has maintained a perception of African-Americans as a people who embody negative attributes solely because of the hue of their skin. Even in this contemporary society, some believe, this dark skin renders African-Americans as inferior to whites. This perception has, in one form or another, been carried to the present day. The slang term “nigga” used in the African-American communities helps to remind the mainstream society of that truth (Clarke, 2004; Forsyth & Carter., 2012; Harwood, et al., 2012; Martin, et al., 2011; Nelson, et al., 2010; Niven & Zilber, 2000; Saucier, et al., 2008; Thompson, 1995).

“The more things change the more they stay the same.”

As time progresses the manner in which constructs manifest themselves evolves. Although there has been progress in race relations in American society, there still remain large fragments of an unjust, discriminatory and racist social system. From the time they

are young, African-American children receive messages regarding their race and perceived role in society (Ashmore, 2007; Dulin-Keita, et al., 2012; Guerin, 2003; Rogers, et al., 2012; Rudman & Ryan, et al., 2007). There has been a constant message, within mainstream white society, that being African-American is naturally negative (Anderson, 2012; Britt & Griffin, 2007; Castle, et al., 2011; Dulin-Keita, et al., 2011). Racist speech is rarely outwardly spewed in contemporary American society primarily due to the current negative perceptions against racism (Leets, 2003). Even though it is not popular in mainstream culture to show vulnerability as strength, it does symbolize the misunderstanding that vocalizes the disposition of African-Americans. In a sense, the use of the N-Word in the African-American community has uttered the overall meaning of how mainstream society continues to treat the African-American community. Meanwhile the larger society values prosperity over humanity. Within the African-American community, some community members have taken the most dominant term (the N word) used to describe our wretchedness and in various ways attempted to master its dominance.

As the term “nigger” traveled through time in its description of Africans in America, it also traveled to common use from one tongue to another. The term “nigger” when used by whites was seen as, and meant to be, derogatory and demeaning in nature. Under white common use, the term “nigger” in public discourse transitioned from nigger, to Negro, to colored, to black, to the current politically correct term - African-American or even Black- American, because there is no recollection of the cultural lineage connecting back to people in Africa. For the African-American population the terms used amongst community members to describe the African-American were: Negro, colored,

black, African-American, and currently some community members use the term “nigger” (Randall, 2002; Williams, 2004).

This trend of the using the term “nigger” by the African-American community emerged publicly during the 1960’s and 70’s in films and other forms of media. The use of the term was used in predominantly African-American subculture (Kennedy, 2002; Williams, 2004). During the 1990’s the use of the term “nigger” grew with the rise of the Hip-Hop rap culture (Williams, 2004). As the term grew in popularity within the African-American community, so too did the debate over the meaning of the term and use of the term.

Summary

Summing up the material, there was found to be strong ties to the historical form of the term, “nigger” even in contemporary use. This ongoing historical aspect of the term will continue to bind the term with negative connotations. There is also the understanding that the media, in particular hip-hop, has had an influence in attempting to readjust the N-word to have identity transforming traits. However, through gravitating towards the negative aspects of the term through propaganda like glorification, the transformation didn’t blossom fully.

The other part of the material that was recognized through the literature and inferred through the interviews was the balancing of Ebonics with standard American English. The participants did state the use of the term “nigger” could imply that there were other forms of Ebonics used. This could also imply that there was code-switching that occurs in the persons navigating social circles. The last aspect discussed is the psychological detriment that the term has taken on the identity of men of color in the

African Diaspora. The literature does not discuss this, but the participants in the survey acknowledge this aspect of the terms power.

In the end, the previous literature laid a path that would show that the term “nigger” does have a stronghold in the American lexicon. The historical form of the word led men to construct a belief system based on the color of one’s epidermis. The history of the N-word still maintains power - enough power spoken - it still draws visceral reactions from some. After the term “nigger” infiltrated and erased a culture, the attempt to rebuild that culture began with attempts to form a new identity. With the forming of this new identity, the new generation that sprung up from their parents’ years of struggle set forth to build a better identity than the one that was built for them. In this new identity the younger generation developed a new style based on struggle and triumph.

The new culture was identified in the literature as the Hip-Hop culture. In the Hip-Hop culture the form that seemed most marketable in the new science of mass media production, the music, rap music, began to be the voice of the up and coming generation. In the music as popularity grew some of the message became concentrated to express the wretched conditions experienced by people of color. During the time that the music grew in popularity, the music industry began to form contracts with Hip Hop artists. In these contracts artist were obligated to make a certain number of records. The artists felt that the music business was attempting to purchase the artist image, or personality, and re-brand the original message of overcoming through hard work to one of complacency through fatigue, got intertwined with the music. Out of this trickery that seemed to occur throughout history for people within the African Diaspora, feeling duped, artists within

the African Diaspora started to feel their method of overcoming through social movement was futile.

In this hopeless mental state, music artists turned to using the term “nigger” to show their socio-economic privilege held little power in a system set on unbalancing equality. With this inequality being previously based on race, the current roadblock to receiving equality was now adding into the mix, economic prowess.

When people in the African Diaspora showed creativity and intellect in the arts, as a manner to gain financial equality, there was the understanding and belief that America was transforming into the land of Opportunity for All. When within the African-American culture, members begin to show indifference to, for lack of better terms, “if you can’t beat the, join them”. With this mentality taking the day, members of the African-American media industry begin to refer to themselves and community members as “niggers”. The literature does not interpret the use of the term “nigger” as an internal struggle with struggles of identity. Instead that literature discusses the aftermath of what a history of fighting for equality has amounted to feelings of inferiority.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The question for this study was: How does the term “nigger” impact college educated men in the African Diaspora? A qualitative exploratory method was used to gather information for the study. The rationale for using qualitative method is that it is the best way to gather relevant data from participants by allowing them to provide their in-depth perspective on the topic. A qualitative method of research allows “research procedures to evolve as more observations are gathered, and that typically permit the use of subjectivity to generate deeper understanding of the meaning of human experience (Rubin & Babbie, 2010, p.34). The research design was exploratory in that the topic area “is relatively new and unstudied” and the research topic “seeks to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study or wants to develop the methods to be used in a more careful study” (Rubin & Babbie, 2010, p.41).

The in-person and telephone interviews consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions. The participants had the opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts to provide very detailed, descriptive, narrative data. The semi-structured style of questioning allowed the participants the flexibility to respond to the questions and also provide feedback about the depth of their experience.

Sample

The sampling method used was a “snowball sampling” method. This method was used in order to connect myself, the researcher, with qualified participants. The sample was not randomized and participants were selected based on qualifying criteria. This non-random sample allowed for the opportunity to connect with a target group and from that

target group, there were connections made to other individuals who matched the inclusion criteria for qualified participation. This method of sampling is also preferable for qualitative research.

The participants in this study were college educated men in the African Diaspora. Through snowballing methods, the researcher connected with former college peers from and current professional associates. From these connections, individuals connected me with other qualified participants. The reason for seeking college educated men in the African Diaspora was because the topic is specifically researching how the term “nigger” specifically impacts this group. The purpose for excluding other races or sexes or more diversity in the study is because it would be too costly and time consuming.

The initial method that was used to connect with former college peers and affiliates was through the social networking site facebook.com. Through this initial connection, the plan was that these former peers would link the researcher to other qualified participants. Since the required population for the study was 12 to 15 participants, this method of using facebook.com to link the researcher to the desired number of participants was the most feasible.

Since the qualifications for the participation in the study were specific, there was not any racial diversity within the sample. However attempts were made to have a variation in age, sexual preference, and occupation. Although this was not part of the qualification criterion, this was taken into consideration before connecting with qualified participants.

Ethics and Safeguards

Protection of confidentiality

The data was organized into major categories then into subset categories. First the transcripts will be numerically coded so that the participants' identification was kept confidential. Then, once the transcripts were numerically coded, the data were categorized in order of most similar and divergent responses. This method only showed the how the many times a response was given and did not show from whom the response was received.

Risks

First, the questions asked may have elicited memories of situations or encounters that may have made a participant uncomfortable in regard to issues of race or ethnicity. Second, the questions may have invoked feelings of anger or sadness. Outside of these low to mild foreseeable risks, there is no known major risk that for participating in the study. Referral resources were given to each participant at the end of the interview (see attached: appendix C).

Benefits

The benefit of participation is that the men in the sample had the opportunity to voice their experience and had the opportunity to discuss an important issue. Some interviewees might have felt that they are a part of an underlying dilemma in the American culture and participating in this study might have allowed them to feel that they had the opportunity to voice their thoughts and sentiments about what the term "nigger" meant to them. Thus, the benefit might have been the chance to give added perspective to the dynamics that the term "nigger" has in contemporary American culture.

Withdrawal from participation in the study

The decision to participate in this study was entirely up to the participant. They could refuse to take part in the study at *any time* without affecting the relationship with the researcher or Smith College. Their decision to refuse would not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which they are otherwise entitled. The participant had the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely at any point during the study. If the participant chose to withdraw, the interview tape, transcript and all other material was destroyed. The participant had to give notification of a decision to withdraw by email or phone by September 30, 2013.

Informed Consent Procedures

Study materials (tapes and transcripts) will be kept strictly confidential as they will be kept in a locked file. The tapes and transcripts will be numerically coded and secured using a password protected file. These coded materials will be available to the researcher and the research advisor. Once the audio recordings have been coded and transcribed into written form, the audio recordings will be erased from the audio recording device. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you. The data will be kept for at least three years according to Federal regulations. They may be kept longer if still needed for research. After the three years, or whatever the data are no longer being used, all data will be destroyed. Participants will be requested to sign a copy of the consent form release during in person interviews. For phone interviews, potential volunteers for the survey portion of the thesis will be mailed via regular postal mail the consent form. In the mail they will receive two copies of the consent form, one for

their record and one consent form to be mailed back. Postage and return envelope will be provided for participants to return signed consent forms.

Data Collection

The data from the interviews were collected via audio recording and handwritten notes. This information was collected during the interviewing process and participant had full knowledge that their responses were recorded. The reason for the use of the audio recording device and handwritten notes was so that during the recollection and data analysis process the information was accurate and useful information from the interview could be cited verbatim.

The interview guide that was created consisted of seven questions that are directly related to the term “nigger” and the thoughts and feelings college educated men in the African Diaspora have in regards to the meaning this word has to them. The questions asked during the interview process elicited responses that showed negative or positive effects that the term had on the navigation and overall functioning in response to the N word. An example of the type of questions the participants were asked is; Why do you think people of color use the term “nigger”? This question asks specifically for the participant to critically weigh in on their own thoughts about why they feel members in their cultural or ethnic group use the term. Therefore the questions asked to the participants allowed the individual to give their critical feedback on the term “nigger” as well as voice their own thoughts and perspectives on what the term meant specifically to them. The responses to these questions might have shown that the term used in contemporary context is still derogatory and inflammatory or that the term “nigger” is less volatile than the historical context in which it started.

Data Analysis

After participants' transcripts have been coded, the information will be sorted into major categories. The first major category was age. In this category the age of the participant will be analyzed to ascertain whether there was an age difference in response to the questions. If differences in the responses are noted then there will be analysis to determine if there are any other factors that determine possibilities for variations in responses and a sub category under the age category was developed. For example, if under the age category there was a difference in responses where men in the age group of 25 had a different response based on income, then there would be a subcategory under age showing the variation in response based on income.

The initial categories were broken down into four groups: age, income, sexual orientation, and educational level (i.e. bachelor's degree, master's degree, Ph.D, etc.), then a search for patterns in the responses was performed. The patterns searched for were the frequency of responses that showed how the term "nigger" affects the participant. Another pattern is the consequence of the term "nigger" on the overall African Diaspora feelings in regards to self-esteem, identity and narcissistic self.

After the categorizing and pattern seeking, the data will be mapped out and compared with the literature in the Discussion chapter to follow. Links will be made to show the effects that the term "nigger" has on college educated men in the African Diaspora. The data might show whether the term "nigger" maintains its historical negative roots or whether in contemporary context it holds a more positive form. Data analysis might show the role that the term "nigger" has played in the lives of college

educated men of color and how the term's shadowing effect impacted their navigation through social and educational structures.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the results of interviews conducted in regards to the term “nigger” Interviews were conducted with sixteen African-American males. Due to inaudible sound and a nonqualified participant, data from fourteen of the sixteen interviews are reported. Prior to the interviews the gentlemen were informed of the definition of the term “nigger.” The questions were semi-structured and open-ended so that the participants were allowed to answer the questions broadly or specifically depending on their comfort level. All participants identified as men in the African American Diaspora. Although some participants identified their background as biracial, all expressed experiences with the mental and sometimes emotional navigation of the term “nigger” in regards to their personal life experience.

The demographic questions were framed so that the respondents could speak to their specific experience or insight into their feelings about the dynamics of the term “nigger”. There were several questions that provoked the men to critically engage in the manner in which the term has been seen by them as a positive or a negative. Overall a majority of the responses seem to lead to the rationale that the term, “nigger,” is negative in all regards.

The interview process took an average of twelve minutes with the longest interview going a little over twenty minutes. With the exception of two in-person interviews, all the interviews were done over the phone. Obtaining data via the telephone may have hindered the ability for the individual to give a more detailed feedback due to

the impersonal nature of a phone interview . The phone interviewing style may have also affected the responses because about a third of the men were pressed for time or coming off a day of work. In comparison to the in-person interviews, the lower engagement level of the participants was noticeable, however judgment of the level of engagement cannot be observed.

Participant Demographics

The total amount of individuals interviewees were sixteen, however only fourteen interviews were admissible. Two interviews were exempted from the data collection because one participant did not meet the study criteria and the other interview that was excluded from the study was due to inaudible sound during the phone interview process. Therefore the total number of men included in the study was fourteen (n=14). The age ranges of the participants were: 21-25(n=2), age 26-30 (n=1), age 31-35(n=1), age 36-40 (n=3), age 41-45(n=3), age 51-55 (n=1), age 56-60 (n=1), age 61-65 (n=1), age 61-75 (n=1). The level of education of the participants ranged from college graduate (n=3), master's degree (n=7) and doctoral/Ph.D. (n=3). The marital status of the respondents was single (n=7), married (n=4), and divorced (n=1). The range for income level of the participants was: 10K-20K (n=1), 20-30K (n=3), 40K-50K (n=3), 50K plus (n=6).

The final demographic question for the respondents was the most difficult one to answer for all the gentlemen. Some interviewees identified the reason for this difficulty was that there is no solid family lineage because that they did not have the ability to link to when their first ancestors set foot on American soil. Lack of documentation was due to slavery or untraceable family history. That said, the participants did attempt to give guesstimates as to what generation they believed to be in America. 3rd generation (n=2),

5th generation (n=3), 6th generation (n=2), 7th generation (n=1), 8th generation (n=1), 9th generation (n=1), and unknown (n=2).

Although there was strong consensus within the responses showing that a majority of the men in the survey identify the term “nigger” as being predominantly negative, there were major variances in terms of how participants felt the term personally affected them. There were specific points, within the responses, that showed overall mutuality around the feelings or thoughts surrounding the term.

Although there were unique answers given, there were specific underlying meanings and key terms that showed a common thread throughout the responses. The answers reported reflect the general ideas that were found to be similar among three or more of the participants. Some of the responses where two respondents provided the same answer were included if there were strong ties to the overall idea or consensus to a majority of the answers.

Question 1: Why do you think people of color use the term “nigger”?

The responses to this question showed that although there were aspects that appeared to be positive in the use of the term among people of color, the overall consensus showed that the use of the term “nigger” among people of color ultimately has no positive value. Although there were a variety of ways in which the participants responded, there were common remarks or threads among the participants.

For this question, respondents (n=2) stated that the reason people of color used the term “nigger” was because of internalized racism. There were also respondents (n=2) that stated people of color use the term because of ignorance. A few participants (n=3)

stated was a reason for the use of the term “nigger” among people of color was because it was learned. One participant offered this insight,

Initially, it comes from, I think being conditioned and accepting the term that was put on them by slave masters slash oppressors. And, if you called nigger long enough, then that becomes sort of an acceptable delineation of your place in things and then after a while you start to use it towards yourself and others” (participant #3).

Another purpose the gentlemen (n=3) stated people of color use the term “nigger” is because it is unifying. Interviewees (n=5) responded also identified the term as a term of endearment. Participant #9 explained , “I think it’s a slang term that people use it as a way to, kind of be like part of the in-group, you know when you’re among people and you feel close to them, you use it as slang”. Although the term is seen as having somewhat positive attributes, some participants noted that the term could be seen as generational (n=4) and has strong ties to the hip- hop community (n=5). Even with this understanding it was noted that there are still negative connotations (n=3) to the use of the term. Two participants stated,

...white or black can be a nigger, so. And then today I feel like it’s part of the culture. So hip-hop, I think really pushes it. So I think it’s like main stream media that reinforces it and that’s why it’s still around. So like the meaning is kind of lost it’s, but yea I think, I think it’s just been kind of carried from generation to generation, you know, but I think you know it’s been made by the white man.. (Participant # 1).

And Participant #7 concurs by stating,

I think some people do that intentionally and are aware of the historical context of that, I think others just do it because it’s popular vernacular and they may not be as familiar or connected to the historical contexts of how loaded the word is. So they hear their peers use it, they hear artist use it, they see it on T.V. and they feel like it’s just a word that you’re supposed to use if you’re a part of a particular community, because that’s how black people talk.

Along with recognizing the use of the term among people of color as identified with the hip-hop community, some interviewees (n=4) saw the use of the term as an attempt at destigmatizing “nigger.” Similarly, some interviewees (n=3) saw the use of the term as attempts of gaining power from using the N-word..

Question 2: How do you feel when another person of color refers to him/herself or another person of color as a “nigger”?

In response to this question the overall consensus was that there weren’t any positive notions when a person refers to himself, herself or another person of color as a “nigger” .Some participants (n=3) stated that they have no feelings towards people of colors’ use of the word in reference to themselves. Participants (n=3) also responded that the context of the term determined their feelings. Some of the gentlemen stated that the use of the term by a person of color makes them feel sad (n=3) and confused (n=4).

Participant #8 responded, “...you know I do my best to do what I can in those moments to say something if I can, if not, you know it’s just, it’s more troublesome than anything you know. It makes me feel disheartened, you know what I mean and just confused so much.” The individuals also showed some agreement that by hearing another person of color refer to themselves as “nigger”, made them feel that there is no positive value (n=3). Three respondents “don’t like it” (n=3) and it also “makes them angry” (n=3).

This sentiment was represented in Participant #1’s response where he states,

...I don’t really, it’s not something that I support, because of the history of the word. You know so I’m usually upset, and you know to me, to me to use the word is a lack of pride...

About a third of the interviewees (n=5) reported that they had feelings of discomfort whenever the term “nigger” was used. As Participant #13 noted,

It makes me uncomfortable, usually in cases where, I, you know I've heard it used in, if I hear, if it is possible, in the most positive way, I tend to wonder sometimes why, you know we continue to use it at, at all, because it does have that historical context to it, of being derogatory, degrading and those kind of things."

Question 3: In what settings has the term "nigger" been used in your earshot?

The responses about the setting in which the term "nigger" is used were more similar in the overall answers given. A couple of participants (n=2) specifically stated that they hear the term "nigger" on the basketball courts. In a broader respect, participants also stated that the term "nigger" could be heard among young men of color (n=3) in inner city or urban settings (n=4). Participant #5 stated,

And I think again, speaking to you know the younger generations, yea earshot meaning, you know in the urban environment or so, you know with young men or so you'll kind of hear it there, so, so you know I think I've probably minimize how often I hear it because it's become almost common language for some people and stuff...

A majority of the participants (n=5) responded to this question by stating they hear they term "nigger" in all settings. "All settings, I don't think that like, I don't think it's been confined to specific places or specific people or cultures."(Participant # 1).

Question 4: Upon hearing the term what were your initial thoughts or feelings?

The answers to this question yielded a variety of answers where participants replied as follows: feeling shameful (n=1), feeling curious about why some would use the term (n=1) and feeling as though the person using the term takes the meaning as a joke (n=1). Others replied that they: wanted to respond to the use of the term (n=1) thought about how they don't like the term (n=1), and thought about how the term is colluding white power (n=1). A couple of the interviewees (n=2) replied that they don't have any initial thoughts or feelings about the use of the term, offering "...I probably didn't really pay much attention to it, nowadays when I hear it, it really just feels like

another word that people use...”(Participant#12). Some of the respondents (n=3) answered that when they first heard the term as a child it held negative connotations,

But, when, when I heard the word nigger as a, as a child, as a very young child - it was nothing positive about it what so ever. And at that time, as I recall black people did not refer to themselves as Nigger, because it was always the white man the referred to you as nigger. (Participant #4).

A few participants (n=3) thought about the context that the term was being used.

However the responses that showed the most congruence were the feelings of discomfort (n=4) and feelings of disappointment (n=3). Participant #14 replied,

You know that’s, that’s, I felt stung by that. When I’ve heard, you know like young men of color using it, young black men using it I felt just disappointed. When I’ve heard people of other races using it, in terms, in reference to each other it’s made me feel confused and disappointed. So it wanes at the most.

A few participants (n=3) stated that their initial thoughts went to the historical aspect of the term, and a couple of participants (n=2) said that their thoughts went to the role that media plays in purporting the term “nigger”.

Question 5: If another person of color was to identify you as a “nigger” how would/do you feel?

There was little agreement in response to this question. Some participants stated that it depended on the context (n=4) and the relationship (n=3) . Two men responded as follows:

Again context is everything, if it’s my brother or my best friend my feelings would be laughter, because it probably is being used in the context of humor. If it was like someone I didn’t know, I would be offended and be like, you know, and tell them not to refer to me that way.” (Participant#9)

It’s either just like, ignore it and keep it moving, but if it’s somebody that I’m close to, like I hang with or frequent with, I’ll let them know that’s not really a term that I use. And I would appreciate it if, you know, you don’t call me by that or you could use whatever word you want that’s fine, that’s on you, but I’d appreciate it if you don’t use that word towards me. (*Participant # 1*).

Some of the individuals (n=5) answered that they would redirect the person and ask to be referred to as something else. Others (n=4) said that if the person using the term towards them[was black] they would be okay with the use; however, if the person was white then they would take issue with the use of the term. Such is the example from *Participant #4*,

A black person that I know well, personally, very connected with that individual, they can say it and it's like 'yea', you know, "yea bro what's going on, what's happening', you know move on from there. Some non-black that say it, I usually straighten them out on that. It's not acceptable. Not acceptable whatsoever. It's a black thin that allowed that to be somewhat acceptable.

Question 6: When people not of African-American descent use the term “nigger” how do you feel?

When responding to how they feel when people not of African-American descent use the term “nigger”, most of the men had negative feelings towards the use of the N-word by a non African-American. The responses ranged from feeling okay (n=1) about the use of the term to individuals feeling the need to respond with violence (n=2). One gentleman stated that he doesn't like when people not of African-American descent use the term (n=1) and another individual stated that it shows a level of ignorance when a person of non African-American descent use the term (n=1). A couple of participants (n=2) said that they would correct the person's use of the term, "...insulted, and I don't accept it, I correct it, I correct it" (Participant#1). A majority of the participants (n=4) responded to the question answering that they would be offended, "I feel offended at times and then sometimes I wonder, what makes them feel like they can say it? You know sometimes I wonder if I will confront them or not." (Participant # 2). Another set of the participants (n=4) felt that it was absolutely inappropriate for people not of African-American descent to use the term at all,

I think it's absolutely inappropriate. I know a recent event that happened, Riley Cooper of the Eagles used the N word, and angry or drunk or whatever the case may be, and you know my reaction is I was just like you know, how could you? You know what I mean, like I know white people, you know, created the term and created the meaning for the term back in the day, but I just feel like that's extremely inappropriate. (Participant#11)

A couple of the gentlemen (n=2) responded that the term's use by people not of African-American descent made them feel dirty. A few of the respondents (n=3) stated that they would feel angered if the term was used by people not of African-American descent,

Oh I'd be heated, I'd be livid. I'd be ready to like, I think first and foremost, I think my reaction, you know is anger and wanting to, usually it's not positive. It's usually anger, which I think quickly ignites me wanting to have a physical reaction to it."(Participant#1)

Question 7: In what ways has the term “nigger” impacted your thoughts or feelings about yourself as a man in the African Diaspora given your educational background or current occupation?

Two men (n=2) acknowledged that there was a love/hate relationship with the term,

I feel as though, the work that I'm committed to doing is so caught in the middle of what folks who are educated, within the community or within the African Diaspora, how they, how there's a, almost equal consensus as to using it or not using it." (Participant#8)

Participant#10 was in agreement by stating, "It's been a, a love hate thing, because like I said you know it started as like a, like I said a term of endearment to lessen the word".

Other participants (n=2) stated that using the term was an attempt at de-empowerment, however the use does not maintain the same deconstructive value,

You know does it, yea so in other words does it, yea I think it has power in the sense of attempting to establish power, you know what I mean. But in and of itself does, does that term or any other term in and of itself have power, no it's an expression of power, you know what I mean. And so it in that sense, most people who have a sense of power over me or my life as a professional, I don't think

necessarily would use the term to establish that power relationship”(Participant#9).

Some participants (n=4) felt that the term had no power,

I mean me personally, it really doesn't affect me one way or the other in terms of what I think of myself, because I know who I am. I know what my purpose here on this earth is and I know what that word means, and like I said I'm better, I'm bigger and better than that word. So it really doesn't affect me in that way.”(Participant #11).

Although they said the term had no power, some participants (n=4) felt that it was their responsibility to educate others who feel that they are an extension of the word. This idea is stated in Participant#13's response,

Well, that, the word itself, I mean I grew up in, in the black community pretty much, and it was racially and, you know, class mixed, kind of. And my upbringing, you know, always taught me to, you know, respect myself in a lot of ways and that one of those ways is not to be seen as or think of myself as a nigger...I'm pretty familiar with that in terms of what it meant, so being that early on, sort of set the tone, as I, you know, got olde3r in my, my adult life as a point I try to send out to other young men and women of color, you know, might need to hear that same message as well.

Two participants (n=2) stated they felt the term was a motivator to drive them to be successful and surmount the negativity the term has. Overwhelmingly, about half of the participants (n=7) responded to this question by stating it was a psychological trap:

Well, it one of those, sort of psychological unconscious traps. You know I, I, when you, when you trying to trap an animal and you lay a pathway into the trap and they walk in. Then suddenly it springs and you got them. It's that way, it operates psychological I think and we trap ourselves without even giving it a thought. And it's one thing to be in an adversarial relationship with somebody who you know means you ill, wants to hurt you, doesn't respect you, wants you not to succeed, want you to fail. If that's the case, okay, but for you, for it to get tricked around in your mind, so that you use it against yourself and your brethren, shows the level of lack of consciousness, I won't say ignorance, I'll say lack of consciousness that exist to widely in our community and is impeding our progress as a people” (Participant#1).

In this, a couple of the men (n=2) felt that this term is a small fraction of bigger issues or inequalities facing men in the community of color:

...I'm going to go ahead and say that the term alone has, has not caused me any issue or, and has not, I haven't wasted too much time on the word alone, but rather the term can be a place holder for the structural inequality that has existed since slavery in this country and that continues to oppress black, brown folks and marginalizes us in ghetto, barrios and you know with lack of access to quality education and healthcare etcetera is the bigger problem and the term has little bearing at all to do with what we're really confronted against with right now.(Participant #6)

Overall the central idea in participants' responses is that the term "nigger" has more aspects of negativity rather than positivity. Through the interview process, the participants acknowledged that the term "nigger" is used within the African-American dialogue. Although there were statements saying that using the term was seen as an attempt at reclaiming identity, the irony is that this "reclaiming" is claiming of an identity that was forced upon our ancestors. Therefore, it would seem that there is claiming of a the historical identity of what a being a "nigger" meant. Thus, it is important to remember that you can't change history by holding on to it; you can change history by changing the future.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

In the discussion section there will be linkage between the existing literature in the field of social work and the current findings of this study. The findings for the research question show that the term “nigger” has an impact on the thoughts and feelings of college educated men in the African Diaspora. Some previous literature explored the dynamics of the N-word (Kennedy, 2002; Rahman, 2012). This study investigated several situations where the N-word is used and the impact that this had on the thoughts and feelings of a sub-section of the black community, college educated men in the African Diaspora.

The majority of the literature reviewed coincided with the narrative responses gathered from the participants in the survey. There were four primary areas that the gentlemen specifically addressed. The first two sections of this chapter have to do with the historical aspect of the term “nigger” and the influence the media has with the term “nigger”. The next section has to do with the literature and narrative data on speaking Ebonics or slang versus speaking Standard forms of English followed by the act of code-switching between the two forms of speech. The last section covers those responses that the previous literature did not address. No studies were found that examined the psychological effects of the term “nigger” on the African Diaspora community or the relationship of identity and the term “nigger”.

History

In the literature there was strong iteration of the historical bond that the current form of the term “nigger” had roots to (Turner, 2004). In the literature, the historical form of the word extrapolated on the most negative aspects of what the term “nigger” meant. As noticed in the literature, the same idea was found in the responses of the participants in the research. As Rahman (2012) states, “The racist form nigger is one of two contemporary forms that developed from the early use of nigger, which was at one time relatively neutral as a referential term employed by whites”. It was discussed that during the childhood years, the term “nigger” was expressed to the participants as a negative term, and also as a term that had no indication of what the men should uphold in a positive manner. In combining the historical perspective of the literature and the same negative perspective the survey participants also discussed, the term “nigger” continues to have some rooted form in the thought of being something negative. With this historical perception of what it means to be a part of the African Diaspora, the message that continued to be repeated is:

Being an African American represents identification with an ethnic group that has more negative variables attributed to it than most other ethnic groups. Even attributes that could be seen as positive have high negative valence. For example, when African Americans are congratulated for the success that is experienced in athletics, the unspoken element is that sports are mindless activities, and therefore achievement in this area confirms the limited cognitive ability of Black people (Thompson, 1995).

The responses indicate that too often in the African Diaspora not enough is being done to show that *accomplishing* while being a person of color is not a badge of disgrace. This indignity means holding on to the trauma of believing that whatever you accomplish

through work is seen as being a “nigger”, or someone who is only working to maintain a system that does not look to favor the African Diaspora culture.

The Media

The previous research confirmed the notion of the media playing a role in the disseminating or re-disseminating of the term “nigger” to mainstream society (LaGrone, 2000; Rahman, 2012; Saucier, Hockett, Wallenberg, 2008). As in the previous research, the findings of this study show that the participants linked part of the usage of the term “nigger” to its abundant use in the Hip-Hop community. The purpose for this usage is illustrated by LaGrone (2000), “...prominent in the media were images of vocal and angry militant black men. They populated the downtrodden ghetto. Often, their fists were raised and they seemed ready for violence. Yet, they called for Black Power, Black Unity, Black Brotherhood, etc.” This portrayal of men of color led to the re-branding of how the term “nigger” could be re-appropriated for oppressive purposes, “If the role of the rapper and street poet was to educate Black America, the role of the gangsta rapper seemed to be to entertain white America (LaGrone, 2000). Responding to the term’s usage in communities of color, the participants attributed the use of the term “nigger” within the African Diaspora community to the culture’s gravitation towards the attempt to squelch the word of destructive and demeaning properties. However with the term’s journey into the mainstream, this effort was lost. The literature and participants recognize that, in this form of rebranding the term, there was an undermining effect that occurred where the historical emotional value of the term could not be overcome. Through capitalization and popularity, the term reinforced those negative stereotypes the historical form of the term “nigger” held.

Ebonics (BAE v. SAE)

Particular instances of using Ebonics versus the use of standard American English were not directly mentioned in the participants' responses. The implied indication is that Ebonics use at certain points in their speech meant that they used the term "nigger". The assumption is when using the term, there was heavy usage of Ebonics in order to help circumvent and navigate circles within the community of color. Ogbu (1999) demonstrates aspects of the view that there is some degree of "code-switching" within the African Diaspora community;

According to them, White people went to school and learned to talk proper when Black people were slaves and could not go to school. White people, thus, had the opportunity first to be educated and then to learn to talk proper. In those days, talking proper was a symbol of being educated and knowledgeable. Eventually, talking proper became the White way of talking or their natural talk; proper English became their mother tongue. Under this circumstance, White Americans began to feel that they were superior to and better than Black people who were not educated and could not talk proper. Because Blacks lacked these two attributes, White Americans concluded that Black Americans were inferior and ignorant....People are opposed to talking proper in the community because the speaker is suspected of thinking like white people that her or she is superior to or better than other Blacks...According to [parents], talking proper is the clearest evidence of acting White, which is not approved by the community. (p.??)

There is no specific consideration for the widespread use of the use of Ebonics at every socio-economic level within the African Diaspora. Using Ebonics at every level in the African-American community was assumed to help maintain a sense of endearment and empathy towards members and allow for unity around a verbal bond such as the using the term "nigger" as a term of affection.

The use of Ebonics and standards American English in the African Diaspora lexicon was also seldom addressed in the literature and in the narrative responses. Because of the lack of in-depth information, the advantage for code-switching between

the two communities to bridge the intersectional qualities from both environments could not be elaborated. Therefore, to further discuss the transformative thoughts or feelings that college educated men in the African-Diaspora experience around code-switching and melding the two identities can only be inferred. The information received may allow one to hypothesize that, “the social construction of ethnicity, in particular, might influence the meaning of ethnic identity” (Rogers, Halim, Ruble, Hughes, Zosuls, Fuligni, 2012). No direct comments were made by the participants that addressed whether their dialogue changed in different settings. From the manner in which the participants recognized their identity as being a part of the African-American Diaspora, psychologically, even when certified to be adept, to be relegated to a culture that is deeply stigmatized as purely negative, the idea of a person of color feeling that they are less than amounts to enduring skin complexion trauma, or the need to find ways to disassociate from your own skin.

So as research has demonstrated (Anderson, 2012; Ogbu, 1999; Rahman, 2012; Young, 2007), the manner in which communities are made has led to forming communities around speaking the same language. Although something as genius as language was developed to form bonds, the catalyst that formed the new culture was muted by voicing a vitriolic term to describe ourselves, “niggers”.

Psychological Trap

One finding that the literature lacked is the psychological effects of the term “nigger”. Some of the responses gathered through the interview process showed that a portion of the participants stated that the term “nigger” had psychologically damaging properties. Specifically, the participants identified the term “nigger” as a psychological trap that appears to mentally enslave some youth. Alternatively, it was also stated that

surmounting the term by attempting to eradicate N-word from their own dialogue in some manner helped alleviate the negative thoughts and impact of the term.

The functionality of the term “nigger” on the psyche of the African American male population

Another idea that emerged from the findings is the propensity for the term to be a functioning mechanism that describes the identity of men of color in the African Diaspora. The N-word was viewed among the participants as an interpersonal obstacle that had the ability to diminish a positive sense of ones' self. Throughout life there are elements of society that play a role in the perception of an individual's identity. Continuing research may add more insight into how maintaining the glorification of historical negatives may be overall self subjugating.

Summary

In the end, the overall literature showed that the term “nigger” does have a stronghold in the American lexicon. The historical roots of the word led white men to create a belief system based on the color of one's epidermis. The historical form still maintains power, enough power that when the term is heard it still draws visceral reactions for many. After the term “nigger” infiltrated and erased the African culture, an attempt was made to rebuild that culture in order to form a new identity. With the forming of this new identity, the new generation that sprung up from their parents' years of struggle set forth to build a better identity than the one that was built for them. In this new identity the younger generation developed a new style based on struggle and triumph.

The new culture was identified in the literature as the Hip-Hop culture. In the Hip-Hop culture the form that seemed most marketable in the new science of mass media

production, the music, rap music, began to be the voice of the up and coming generation. As the music grew in popularity, some of the message focused on expressing the wretched conditions people of color resided in. During this time that the music grew in popularity, the music industry began to form contracts with the Hip-Hop artists. In these contracts, the artists were obligated to make a certain amount of records. The artists felt that the music business was attempting to purchase the artists' image, or personality, and re-brand the original message of overcoming through hard work to one of complacency through fatigue . Out of this trickery (that seemed to occur throughout history for people within the African Diaspora), the artists, feeling duped, started to feel their method of overcoming through social movement was futile.

In this hopeless mental state, music artists turned to using the term “nigger” to show that their socio-economic privilege held little power in a system set on imbalancing equality. This inequality being previously based on race, the current roadblock to receiving equality was now adding into the mix - economic prowess.

When people in the African Diaspora showed creativity and intellect in the arts, as a manner to gain financial equality, there was the understanding and belief that America was transforming into the land of Opportunity for All. When within the African-American culture, members begin to show indifference to, for lack of a better term, “if you can't beat the, join them”. With this mentality taking the day, members of the African-American media industry begin to refer to themselves and community members as “niggers”. The literature does not interpret the use of the term “nigger” as an internal struggle of identity. Instead the literature discusses the aftermath of what a history of fighting for equality has amounted to - feelings of inferiority.

“A slave is one who recognizes and accepts their status, a real slave needs no chains”-unknown

Implications for Social Work

The implications the findings of this study have for the field of social work is the need for clinicians to have a deeper insight into an underlying issue facing many members in the African-American Diaspora. On a macro-level, it is the issue of identity when popular societal perspectives could have detrimental effects on the development of identity in the youth. On a micro-level, the need is for social workers to encourage young men within the African Diaspora to independently challenge the negative dynamics of the term “nigger”. For social workers working within communities of color, it would be potentially beneficial to encourage the youth within the community to remove the term from their lexicon, or linguistic practice.

A basic value of social work is to help improve humanity. There is the idea of feeling human; to feel human means that there are minimal social or emotional dividing factors that separate individuals. However, in this idealistic belief there is reality - the reality that the term “nigger” is a form of racism and internalized racism. Social work is dedicated to combating racism. Therefore the insight that internalized racism exists within a community might promote more effort towards erasing this epidemic. Helping the African Diaspora in combating this epidemic would also fortify social work’s code of ethics and mission to further cultural competency.

Limitations and Biases

One limitation of the study was there were no female participants. A second limitation was that the participants in the study were college educated, which eliminated a

majority of the male members in the African Diaspora. Thirdly the participants are people of color which is not inclusionary to white people. The purpose for such a small sample size was due to time and budget restraints. The findings of this study has some generalizability based on some of the insight that's gained from the interviews, However more research is necessary in order to obtain more substantial information in regards to the effects of racism.

The bias present in the study is that the assumption is that the term “nigger” is only detrimental to people of color also the sample within this study t are male. The bias, therefore, is problematic in that it is patriarchal in its approach to the term “nigger”, in that it specifically focuses in on the term from a masculine perspective. The other bias that the research specifically focuses on is that the term is only derogatory and impactful to people of color. The term may also have significance to members outside the group of people of color.

Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendation for the research would be to examine the dynamics and impact of the term “nigger” and its’ effect on lower-working class and poor working class individuals. Since the sample was confined to a specific population within the African Diaspora, there is a need to expand the research to other members within the African Diaspora community. It may also be helpful to examine what effects would occur if the term “nigger” was removed from attempts at positive usage within the African Diaspora.

Another recommendation would be to further explore the psychological trap that lies within the N-word. Since “psychological trap” was recognized by a majority of the participants, it might be warranted to study how psychologically the term interferes with a person’s functioning. The N-word could also be examined in terms of its affects on adolescence during the periods of identity development.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College • Northampton, MA**

.....
Title of Study: The Impact of the word Nigger on College Educated Men in African
Diaspora

Investigator(s): Thomas W. Brown Cell#: xxx-xxx-xxxx
(List Name, Department, Telephone number for each Researcher)

.....
Introduction

You are being asked to be in a research study to investigate the term “nigger” and the impact the word has on you personally. You were selected as a possible participant because you have been identified as a male college graduate of the African Diaspora. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of the term” nigger” and the effect this term has on the perception of how college educated men in the African Diaspora identity with the term. To clarify, the researcher will investigate how college educated men in the African Diaspora feel when the term “nigger” is used towards or around them. Basically the research will gather information if the term evokes negative feelings or thoughts in the participants or whether the term has lost its negative connotations. I also hope to investigate possible detriments the term may have in contemporary society. The study is being conducted as a thesis requirement for my master’s in social work degree. Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

Description of the Study Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: participate an in person interview that will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length. The location will be mutually agreed upon. . There will be only one interview. I will ask you a series of questions about your experiences with the term, “nigger.”

Risks/Discomforts of being in this Study

First, the questions asked may elicit memories of situations or encounters that may make you uncomfortable in regard to issues of race or ethnicity. Second, the questions may invoke feelings of anger or sadness. Outside of these low to mild foreseeable risks, there is no known major risk that you are likely to experience by participating in the study. I have included some referral resources (see attached) should the need arise). To assess the need the researcher will ask the participants before the interview has concluded whether they would like the referral sources. Also if the participants state concerns for mental or emotional affects from the interview questions or process, they will be provided with the referral sources.

Benefits of Being in the Study

The benefit of participation is that you will have the opportunity to voice your experience and have the opportunity to discuss an important issue. You might feel that you are a part of an underlying dilemma in the American culture and this may allow the you to feel that you are given the opportunity to voice your thoughts and sentiments about what the term “nigger” means to you. The benefit may be the chance to give added perspective to the dynamics that the term “nigger” has in contemporary American culture.

Confidentiality

Study materials (tapes and transcripts) will be kept strictly confidential. as they will be kept in a locked file. The tapes and transcripts will be numerically coded and secured using a password protected file. These coded materials will be available to the researcher and the research advisor. Once the audio recordings have been coded and transcribed into written form, the audio recordings will be erased from the audio recording device. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you. The data will be kept for at least three years according to Federal regulations. They may be kept longer if still needed for research. After the three years, or whatever the data are no longer being used, all data will be destroyed.

Payments

You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at *any time* without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely at any point during the study. If you choose to withdraw, I will not use any of your information collected for this study. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by September 30, 2013. After that date, your information will be part of the thesis.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Thomas Brown at thomasebrown23@gmail.com or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. You will be responsible for stating that you would like a copy of the completed study and a hard copy would be mailed via postal services. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problem as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at 413.585.7974.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed copy and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study researcher.

.....

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

[if using audio or video recording, use next section for signatures:]

1. I agree to be [audio] taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Guide (or Instrument)

Interview Guide

Part A:

What is your Age?

What region of Massachusetts are you from?

What is your highest level of education?

What was your college major?

What is your marital status?

What is your sexual orientation?

What is your income level- A)10K – 20K

B)20K – 30K

C)30K - 40K

D)40K – 50K

E)50K+

What generation are you in your family ancestry in America?

Part B:

- 1.) Why do you think people of color use the term “nigger”?
- 2.) How do you feel when another person of color refers to him/herself or another person of color as a “nigger”?
- 3.) In what settings has the term “nigger” been used in your earshot?
- 4.) Upon hearing the term what were your initial thoughts or feelings?
- 5.) If another person of color was to identify you as a “nigger” how would/do you feel?
- 6.) When people not of African-American descent use the term “nigger” how do you feel?
- 7.) In what ways has the term “nigger” impacted your thoughts or feelings about yourself as a man in the African Diaspora given your educational background or current occupation?

Appendix C
Referral Sources

Links:

<http://www.aapc.org/quick-links/find-a-counselor.aspx>

<http://www.goodtherapy.org/therapy-for-multicultural-concerns.html>

<http://www.amhca.org/>

Links to Anti-Racism or Multicultural Organizations

<http://communitychangeinc.org/>

<http://www.centerhealingracism.org/home0.aspx>

<http://www.heartsandminds.org/links/racelinks.htm>