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GENDER ROLE CONFLICT AMONG FORMERLY INCARCERATED AND
COLLEGE BLACK MALES:
THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF RACIAL IDENTITY ON
PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology
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Abstract

GENDER ROLE CONFLICT AMONG FORMERLY INCARCERATED AND
COLLEGE BLACK MALES

Research on men's gender roles over the last twenty-seven years has found a significant relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress. Furthermore, this body of research has explored between group differences, in which racial identity was found to have mediating effects on gender role conflict and psychological distress. Nevertheless, research exploring African American male group differences, in terms of these three variables, are non-existent. The purpose of this investigation is to examine the extent to which racial identity statuses mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress among Black college and formerly incarcerated men. Accordingly, these variables were explored using a sample of 81 participants consisting of Black college male and formerly incarcerated Black male participants. In general, findings from this study indicates that there are small differences between men that have served time and college males on masculinity, racial identity, and psychological distress variables.

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Dedication

To everyone that believes that obstacles are only seen when you take your eyes off your goals.

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| I | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | Gender Role Conflict and Psychological Distress..... | 2 |
| | Masculinity among African American Men..... | 4 |
| | Gender Role Conflict and Racial Identity..... | 5 |
| | Mediating Effects of Racial Identity..... | 6 |
| | Effect of Incarceration on Masculinity..... | 7 |
| | Statement of the Problem..... | 8 |
| | Significance of Study..... | 9 |
| | Definition of Terms..... | 11 |
| | Research Questions..... | 12 |
| | Hypotheses..... | 12 |
| II | LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 14 |
| | History of Gender Role Conflict as a Construct..... | 14 |
| | Gender Role Conflict..... | 16 |
| | Gender Role Conflict and Psychological Distress..... | 18 |
| | Masculinity Among African American Males..... | 21 |
| | Gender Role Conflict and African American Men..... | 25 |
| | Racial Identity..... | 26 |
| | Mediating Effects of Racial Identity..... | 28 |
| | The Formerly Incarcerated..... | 31 |
| | Unemployment Concerns for Formerly Incarcerated Black Males..... | 32 |
| | Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated Black Males..... | 33 |
| | Substance Abuse and Crime..... | 33 |
| | Summary..... | 35 |
| III | METHODOLOGY..... | 36 |
| | Participants..... | 36 |
| | Method and Procedure..... | 36 |
| | Measures..... | 39 |
| | Study Design..... | 44 |
| | Power Analysis and Sample Size..... | 46 |
| IV | RESULTS..... | 48 |

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| | Demographics..... | 48 |
| | Descriptive Statistics..... | 50 |
| | Study Hypotheses..... | 51 |
| | Supplemental Analyses..... | 54 |
| V | DISCUSSION..... | 56 |
| | Study Hypotheses and Supplemental Analysis..... | 56 |
| | Limitations..... | 62 |
| | Recommendations for Future Research and Conclusion..... | 64 |
| | References | 67 |
| | Appendix A..... | 79 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Demographic Characteristics Aggregated by Group..... | 49 |
| Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Results Aggregated by Group..... | 50 |
| Table 3. Intercorrelations Among Primary Study Variables..... | 52 |
| Table 4. Regression Analysis Summary for the Independent and Mediator Variables in the Prediction of Psychological Distress..... | 54 |

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Factors affecting the psychological well-being of men within the United States have received considerable attention by researchers over the years (O'Neil, 2008; O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). In particular, male gender role conflict has been highlighted as a salient predictor of psychological distress in men. However, researchers have primarily examined these variables among White educated males, thus limiting the generalization of their findings. This introductory chapter will highlight the limitations of existing research and review the relationship between gender role conflict, racial identity, and psychological distress among African American men. Later sections will focus on the importance of extending current research.

Over the past 30 years, empirical research on men's problems has grown considerably. This area of interest has gone from producing little information about men's gender roles to highlighting masculinity as a complex and problematic construct (O'Neil, et al., 1995). One gender role variable that has received considerable attention by researchers is masculine gender role conflict. Gender role conflict refers to rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles that result in the personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self (O'Neil, 1981a). O'Neil (1981a) theorized that traditional male role socialization leads to fear of femininity; therefore, men are thought to reject feminine

roles by engaging in gender role conflict patterns that restrict their roles and behavior to stereotypically masculine ones.

In an attempt to define the negative consequences of the male gender role conflict, O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, and Wrightsman (1986) developed the Gender Role Conflict Scale-I (GRCS-I), which was found to have the following four factors: (a) Success, Power, and Competition; (b) Restrictive Emotionality; (c) Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men; and (d) Conflict Between Work and Family Relations. The Success, Power, and Competition factor reflects a man's rigid enactment of needing to be successful, powerful, and viewed as a winner. These men are seen as being highly motivated toward moving up the career ladder and strive to be smarter and physically stronger than other men (O'Neil et al., 1986). Restrictive Emotionality occurs when men experience difficulty with expressing their own emotions and discomfort with the emotional expressiveness of others. Men who restrict their emotions are believed to do so in an effort to protect themselves from feminine feelings and expression of vulnerable emotions. The third gender role conflict factor, Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men, indicates a man's discomfort with expressions of caring between men. A man may restrict affectionate behavior between men in order to avoid being confused or to keep others from thinking they are homosexual. Conflict Between Work and Family Relations, the fourth and final gender role conflict factor, measures the level of distress experienced by a man as a result of the demands of work or school on personal and family life (O'Neil et al., 1986).

Gender Role Conflict and Psychological Distress

O'Neil et al. (1995) summarized findings from several studies conducted over a 15-year period using the GRCS-I and concluded that gender role conflict has detrimental effects on the psychological well-being of men (e.g., Good & Mintz, 1990; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991). Specifically, there was considerable evidence that GRCS total scores positively related to several indexes of psychological maladjustment, such as anxiety, depression, and sexual aggression (O'Neil, et al., 1995). Subsequent research continued to support the theoretical notion that strict adherence to masculine gender roles produces psychological distress (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Shepard, 2002).

Cournoyer and Mahalik (1995) found that men who reported less Restrictive Emotionality on the GRCS also reported less depression and anxiety and greater degrees of intimacy and self-esteem. Shepard (2002) investigated whether gender role conflict was associated with specific patterns of depressive symptoms and found that feelings associated with negative attitudes were correlated with higher levels of GRCS Restrictive Emotionality. Findings from this study lend support to prior research suggesting that Restrictive Emotionality, in particular, is a salient predictor of psychological distress (Cournoyer & Mahalik; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991). Hayes and Mahalik (2000) found that Success, Power, and Competition were related to hostility; Conflict Between Work and Family were also associated with hostility, social discomfort, and obsessive compulsiveness; and Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men was linked with social discomfort.

Considerable attention has been given to the negative psychological and relational effects of male gender role conflict; however, early research failed to extend this

construct among diverse populations. In fact, much of the previous research was conducted on college-age White male samples (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Good & Mintz, 1990; Good et al., 1995; Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Shepard, 2002), despite theoretical notions indicating differences in cultural conceptions of masculinity (Kimmel & Messner, 1992; Majors & Billson, 1992). O'Neil et al. (1995) noted that factors such as race, sexual orientation, age, and ethnic differences significantly impact the experience of gender role conflict.

Masculinity among African American Men

According to the model of social constructionism, the meaning of masculinity varies from race to race and from culture to culture (Kimmel & Messner, 1992) and can be modified over time. Through interactions and conversations with his culture, a man operationalizes gender role norms (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Certain attitudes and behaviors are valued and expected among members of different ethnic groups, which can serve as protection against inferior status and feelings of oppression (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Among African American men such attitudes and behaviors have been defined as “cool pose,” a carefully crafted persona created in an attempt to present a controlled and collected self-image rather than true feelings (Majors & Billson, 1992). This façade is believed to develop as a way of surviving in a restrictive society where deep feelings of hatred, anger, and inner turmoil must be suppressed in order to avoid punishment from the majority. In particular, racism has been highlighted as having specific psychological consequences for the masculine identity of African American men (e.g., Cazenave, 1984; Majors & Billson, 1992). Cool pose is viewed as a way of countering the detrimental effects of racism and preserving a sense of pride and masculinity.

Gender Role Conflict and Racial Identity

Researchers who have ventured beyond the use of White male samples have made noteworthy contributions to the area of gender role conflict and psychological distress research (e.g. Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991; Wade, 1996) by increasing the generalizability of the GRCS and providing a basis for understanding how gender role conflict operates within African American men. A study conducted by Wade (1996) was one of the first studies to look at GRCS among African American men, which discovered that it was not race per se that accounted for gender role difficulties but rather racial identity. Wade examined the relationship between racial identity attitudes using the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (RIAS-B; Parham & Helms, 1981) and gender role conflict using the GRCS (O'Neil et al., 1986) among fraternity and non-fraternity African American males. Wade found that externally, dominant-culture defined racial identity (i.e. Preencounter, Encounter, and Immersion/Emersion statuses) were related to patterns of gender role conflict. However, internally defined racial identity (i.e. Internalization) had no relationship to gender role conflict. This particular finding may be attributed to the fact that internalization attitudes represent a Black identity that is internally defined. In other words, Blacks in this stage refer to their own racial group, but are open to the strengths of White culture also. Therefore, men who subscribe to an internalized attitude may also have internally defined masculinity and openness to the strengths of what are considered stereotypically feminine gender role traits. This study's overall finding supports the idea that African American men's experience of gender role conflict is dependent on the degree to which they identify with the masculine norms of the dominant cultural group.

Mediating Effects of Racial Identity

Wade (1996) challenged future researchers to further investigate how racial identity attitudes and gender role conflict relate to psychological functioning in African American men. Heppner (1995) also challenged future researchers to examine “more complex relationships between gender role conflict and psychological maladjustment by investigating moderating and mediating relationships and by using structural path analyses, especially with longitudinal designs” (p. 20). Wester, Vogel, Wei, and McLain (2006) directly responded to these challenges by exploring the links between male gender role conflict, racial identity, and psychological distress. The purpose of their study was to examine how racial identity mediates the association between African American men’s GRC and psychological distress. Using a sample of Black college men, their results indicated that racial identity partially mediated, or significantly diminished, the effects of GRC on psychological distress. Specifically,

African American men who internalized a racist understanding of themselves as men of color suffered more from their attempts to navigate the male gender role than did men who internalize a racial identity based on an appreciation of their own African American heritage. (Wester et al., 2006; p. 425)

In a similar study conducted by Carter, Williams, Juby, and Buckley (2005), using a college sample of Black college males, full mediation was found. In other words, the effect of the gender role conflict (independent variable) on severity of psychological symptoms (dependent variables) in their sample of Black college men vanished (full mediation), rather than significantly diminished (partial mediation) as was found in Wester et al. (2006).

The Effect of Incarceration on Masculinity

Because of the disproportionate numbers of African American men in the prison system, it is essential to understand the impact of incarceration on psychological variables with this population. In the United States, it is estimated that 1 in every 32 adults are either incarcerated or on probation (Glaze & Palla, 2004), with the majority of prisoners coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and a disproportionate number of persons being Black males. Specifically, there are over 800,000 African American men currently incarcerated in the United States. Researchers have recognized the mental health issues facing this segment of our society (Ditton, 1999; Kupers, 2001); however, few have explored masculinity among Black incarcerated males (Nandi, 2002). By focusing on the needs and dynamics of a particular sample of men new insights can be gained about the manifestation of masculinities in a concrete setting (i.e., correctional facilities) (Kupers, 2005).

Kupers (2005) suggested that prison settings foster what he defines as *toxic masculinity*, or the “constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence” (p. 714). Although this type of masculinity has gone relatively unexplored among prisoners, the phenomenon of prison rape, assaults on correction officers, and other hypercompetitive interactions illustrates that toxic masculinity may be more pronounced in a prison setting. Prisons are often brutal environments where presenting a tough exterior is essential to one’s survival; therefore, it is not surprising to see men who were not particularly aggressive and misogynistic upon entering prison develop a hypermasculine posture and violence as a means of staying safe or even alive during their incarceration (Kupers,

2005). Unfortunately, the toxic masculinity or hypermasculinity developed while serving time is often not addressed prior to their release, resulting in the spread of these masculinities beyond prison walls. Research addressing the psychological effects of toxic masculinity or hypermasculinity among formerly incarcerated Black men is yet to be explored.

The following sections of this chapter will address the following areas: statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of variables, research questions and hypothesis of this study, and the potential limitations of this research.

Statement of the Problem

To date, research examining the relationship between gender role conflict, racial identity, and psychological distress among Black males has primarily focused on college samples (e.g., Carter et al., 2005; Wade, 1996; Wester et al., 2006), making generalizations to non-college populations problematic. The school to prison pipeline continues to significantly grow for Black males, resulting in these individuals being more likely involved in the penal system rather than higher education (Kunjufu, 2005). Black male offenders are a rapidly expanding segment of Black males that remains to be examined and may potentially render significantly different empirical findings when compared to college males.

African Americans comprise approximately 13 percent of the United States population but are disproportionately represented within the penal system rather than in higher education (Kunjufu, 2005; Majors & Billson, 1992). According to a study from the Justice Policy Institute (2002), in 2000 there were 791,600 Black males in prison versus 603,032 enrolled in college. These numbers are even more startling when considering

that in 1980 there were 143,000 black men in prison and 463,700 enrolled in college (Schiraldi, Holman, & Beatty, 2002). Although such alarming statistics have reverberated throughout scholarly reports over the years, scientific research has neglected to explore personality variables (e.g., gender role conflict and racial identity) and psychological distress among Black male offenders. According to Kupers (2005) one possibility for limited research in this population, is the difficulty faced in “gaining entry into the prisons to interview prisoners” (p. 714). Additionally, gaining access to the formerly incarcerated can be an even more arduous task due to their reluctance to associate with people who have been in prison or discuss their experience behind bars after they are released (Kupers, 1999). The obstacles mentioned contribute to the scarcity of information known about masculinity, racial identity, and psychological distress among offenders, either during or after their incarceration.

By focusing on the dynamics of an under-studied sample of Black men who have been less successful in their lives than the average college student, new insights can be gained about the expression of gender roles, racial identity, and psychological distress. In an effort to extend the current body of research concerning these variables, as well as to further identify ways in which existing research may be limited, the present study will compare these variables in samples of both Black college and formerly incarcerated males.

Significance of the Study

For the first time in United States history, more than 1 in 100 American adults are incarcerated (Liptak, 2008). Moreover, the incarceration rate for Black males is the highest of all racial groups, with 1 in 9 Black men between the ages of 20 and 34

currently serving time (Liptak, 2008). The majority of these individuals reenter their communities as formerly incarcerated; faced with the challenge of integrating back into society. Prior findings estimate that over 12 million Americans have prior felony convictions (Pager, 2006), an estimated number that far exceeds the prison population. Particular problems, such as high unemployment rates, found among formerly incarcerated are well known to academics and policymakers (Pager, 2006). However, there is much that remains to be investigated among this rapidly growing population.

O'Neil et al. (1995) mentioned that since the development of the GRCS-I, numerous studies have assessed college-age men's gender role conflict. Since that time, researchers have continued to primarily examine gender role conflict among that particular population (e.g. Carter et al, 2005; Wade, 1996; Wester et al., 2006) The amalgamation of research spanning the last 27 years has found a significant relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress (e.g. Good & Mintz, 1990; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991). Furthermore, this body of research has explored between group differences, in which racial identity was found to have mediating effects on gender role conflict and psychological distress (Carter et al., 2005; Wester et al., 2006). Nevertheless, research exploring within group differences, in terms of these three variables, is non-existent. Investigating gender role conflict among Black males who have been involved with the criminal justice system may further extend the generalizability of previous findings and provide insight into masculinity issues among Black men with a criminal history.

Definition of Terms

The following are conceptual and theoretical definitions of the variables in this study. Operational definitions for each variable are also presented.

Black: Black is defined as a person who identifies as either a Black American or person of African descent, which includes African and Afro-Caribbean individuals. Black will be operationally defined as a person's selection of "Black" or "African American" on the demographic form.

Gender Role Conflict: Gender role conflict is a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative effects on the person or others. Gender role conflict occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of other or self (O'Neil et al., 1995). Gender role conflict will be operationally defined as a high score on the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil et al., 1986), which indicates a greater degree of conflict resulting from an over-adherence to a specific aspect of the male role.

Racial Identity: Racial identity is defined as a social identity that matures through a developmental progression in comparison with one's reference group (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Racial identity is also defined as a collective identity of any group of people socialized to think of themselves as a racial group (Helms & Cook, 1999). Racial identity will be operationally defined as high scores on the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross, 2000) subscales. This instrument provides six individual subscale scores, which are evaluated separately.

Psychological Distress: Psychological distress is defined as patterns of psychological symptoms (e.g., depression and anxiety) that cause an individual

discomfort (Derogatis, 2001). Psychological distress is operationally defined by high scores on specific subscales of the BSI-18 (Derogatis, 2001). Subscale item responses are summed so that higher scores indicate greater levels of psychological distress.

Formerly incarcerated: For the purpose of this study, formerly incarcerated is defined as individuals who identify as having been previously incarcerated due to the conviction of a criminal offense.

Research Questions

I sought to answer the following questions:

1. Do formerly incarcerated Black males tend to report more psychological symptoms than Black college males?
2. Do formerly incarcerated Black males report higher levels of gender role conflict than Black college males?
3. Are specific gender role conflict patterns (e.g., Restrictive Emotionality) significantly related to psychological distress in a sample of formerly incarcerated Black males and Black college males?
4. How does racial identity affect the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress in formerly incarcerated Black males versus Black college males?

Hypotheses

1. It is hypothesized that formerly incarcerated Black males will report higher scores on all dimensions of psychological distress than Black college males.

2. Having been a part of the hypermasculine and emotionally restrictive prison environment, it is hypothesized that formerly incarcerated Black males will report higher levels on all dimensions of gender role conflict than Black college males.

3. Due to previous research indicating high levels of GRC Restrictive Emotionality as a salient predictor of psychological distress, it is hypothesized that formerly incarcerated Black males and Black college males reporting higher levels of Restrictive Emotionality will also report higher levels of psychological distress.

4. It is hypothesized that for both formerly incarcerated and college Black males

(a) GRC is related to severity of psychological distress

(b) Racial identity is related to GRC

(c) and GRC will affect psychological distress after controlling for racial identity statuses.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews research related to all the variables of interest in the current study. The overall purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the definitions and discussion presented in Chapter I in order to provide a more in depth empirical rationale for the current study. This chapter is comprised of the following eight sections: (a) a discussion on the history of gender role conflict, (b) the development of the gender role conflict scale, (c) the significant correlation between gender conflict and psychological distress, (d) the presentation of masculinity among African American men, (e) gender role conflict among African American men, (f) an overview of racial identity, (g) the mediating effects of racial identity in gender role conflict research, and (h) the significance of looking beyond college samples and concentrating on criminal populations.

History of Gender Role Conflict as a Construct

During the 1970s, the idea that traditional and socialized gender roles may result in certain negative consequences began to receive considerable attention by scholars interested in the psychology of gender. During that time, the women's movement was a major revolutionary group in the United States, helping to increase the awareness of irrational demands placed on women through the traditional female role (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991). Feminist scholars, throughout the 1970s, argued for a gender specific approach rather than having men represent humanity as a whole in psychological research

(Levant, 1996). As a result, significant attention was given to the female role during that time. It was not until the latter part of the decade that male gender role became an area of interest. Scholars interested in men's studies began to examine masculinity not as a normative referent, but instead as a complex and problematic construct (e.g., Garnets & O'Neil, 1981a; Pleck, 1979; Pleck, 1981). This conceptualization provided a framework for a psychological approach to masculinity that questioned the traditional male role (e.g., toughness, emotional detachment) and considered specific negative male problems (e.g., aggression and violence, devaluation of women) as predictable outcomes of the male socialization process (Levant, 1996). Specifically, Garnets and Pleck's (1979) sex role strain analysis emerged from such conceptualizations, providing the field with a new perspective on masculinity.

Garnets and Pleck (1979) theorized that sex role strain arises when individuals internalize stereotyped societal norms around gender ideals that are often inconsistent and unattainable. Furthermore, the violation of such ideals is believed to lead to negative psychological consequences for many people. For example, a man may struggle to balance the traditional male role of breadwinner with actively involved father or husband. In other words, the traditional role expectations may foster a commitment to paid work at the expense of marriage and family. In response to conflicts resulting from such traditional male role expectations, some men may experience sex role strain when they deviate from or violate traditional masculine gender role norms (Pleck, 1981). Similarly, O'Neil's (1981b) view of sex role strain analysis viewed sex role strain as an intrapsychic process that leads to poor psychological adjustment, particularly low self-esteem. Sex role strain, in other words, implied that the violation of normative gender roles ultimately

leads to detrimental psychological consequences. This concept was a major contribution to the psychology of gender roles. However, the analysis did not identify precise patterns of sex role conflicts that develop when an inconsistency between an individual's real self and ideal self concept occurred (Good et al., 1995). Operational definitions of sex role conflicts were also absent, an important factor needed in empirical research to verify the strain and conflict hypotheses created by Garnets and Pleck (Good et al., 1995).

In 1981, Pleck provided the field with a comprehensive foundation for the gender role strain paradigm in *The Myth of Masculinity*. The ideas presented in that book became the forerunner in modern critical thinking about masculinity (Levant, 1996). Pleck (1981) extended the earlier sex role strain analysis (Garnets & Pleck, 1979) by specifying ten propositions for the gender role strain paradigm. These propositions stated that (a) gender roles are operationally defined by gender role stereotypes, (b) gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent, (c) a significant proportion of individuals violate gender role, (d) the violation of gender roles can result in social condemnation, (e) the violation of gender role norms leads to negative psychological consequences, (f) real or imagined violation of gender role norms leads individuals to overconform to them, (g) the violation of gender role norms has more severe consequences for men than for women, (h) certain gender role traits are psychologically dysfunctional, (i) both sexes experience sex role strain in occupational and family roles, and (j) historical and societal change causes sex role strain (Pleck, 1981).

Gender Role Conflict

While Pleck focused on developing the gender role paradigm, O'Neil (1981a, 1981b) was simultaneously creating a theoretical summary of men's gender role conflicts

and evaluating the complex factors affecting men's socialization. During that time, O'Neil also defined gender role conflict as a psychological state that "occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self" (O'Neil, et al., p. 167). O'Neil (1981a, 1981b, 1982) theorized that men's socialization produces the fear of femininity in a man's life. He proposed that the fear of femininity originally produced six patterns of gender role conflict. The patterns consisted of the following: restrictive emotionality; socialized control, power, and competition; homophobia; restrictive sexual and affectionate behavior; obsession with achievement and success; and health care problems (O'Neil, 1981b, 1982). In comparison to Pleck's (1981) gender role strain, O'Neil's work focused on the outcome of gender role strain when an individual either adheres to gender roles or violates them (O'Neil et al., 1995). As previously mentioned, scholars were able to theorize and formally conceptualize gender role strain and gender role conflict; however, it was not until 1986 that measures were created to scientifically test gender role conflict.

What emanated from the theoretical propositions mentioned above were two scales, the Gender Role Conflict Scale I (GRCS-I; O'Neil et al., 1986) and the Gender Role Conflict Scale II (GRCS-II; O'Neil et al., 1986). The GRCS-I evaluates men's personal gender role attitudes, behaviors, and conflicts. This scale was used in the current study and will be elaborated on further in Chapter III.

The GRCS-II was created to assess men's degree of comfort or conflict and individual experiences in specific gender role conflict situations (O'Neil et al., 1986).

The following is an example of an item included in this scale:

“There’s a guy you’ve idolized since grade school. He’s three years older than you are. In high school he was the star quarterback, valedictorian, and very active in the Young Methodist Fellowship. Last year, he graduated from college. You have just learned he is a homosexual. How much conflict do you feel between your admiration for this person and the fact that he is a homosexual?”

This 16-item measure asks respondents to rate their degree of comfort or conflict, using a four-point Likert scale ranging from “very much conflict-very uncomfortable” (4) to “not conflict-very comfortable” (1). High scores indicate an expression of gender role conflict.

Gender Role Conflict and Psychological Distress

Over the past 25 years, numerous gender role conflict studies, using primarily the GRCS-I, have examined the correlates of psychological distress. Specifically, the variables in these studies have included self-esteem; intimacy; depression; anxiety; personal strain, distress, and stress; and attitudes toward help-seeking (O’Neil, 2008). Findings have consistently indicated that gender role conflict has detrimental effects on the psychological well-being of men (e.g., Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Good & Mintz, 1990; Good et al., 1995; Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Shepard, 2002). The following is a summary of the results of several of these studies.

In 1990, Good and Mintz investigated the relationship between aspects of the traditional male role and depression among 401 White undergraduate male students. Specifically, the four gender role conflict factors and attitudes toward the male role were examined for their relationship with depression. The results of this study indicated that there were positive significant relationships between depression and all four factors of

gender role conflict (success, power, and competition; restrictive emotionality; restrictive affectionate behavior between men; and conflicts between work and family relations).

Sharpe and Heppner (1991) examined the relationships between the male gender role, gender role conflict, and psychological well-being using 190 male college volunteers, whose race was not identified. Psychological well-being variables included depression, self-esteem, anxiety, relationship satisfaction, and intimacy. Their results revealed that gender role conflict was negatively correlated to all measures of psychological well-being except relationship satisfaction which was not significantly correlated with any other measure (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991).

In a study that broadened this work beyond a college student population, Cournoyer and Mahalik (1995) looked at the relationship among masculine gender role conflict, psychological well-being, and age. These variables were examined among a majority White male sample of 88 college-aged men who averaged 19.81 years of age and 89 middle-aged men who averaged 40.96 years of age. Findings from this study indicated that gender role factors, especially Restrictive Emotionality, were predictive of psychological health among middle-aged and younger men. In particular, men who experienced less conflict surrounding emotional expression reported less anxiety and depression and greater degrees of self-esteem and intimacy. In 1995, Good et al. also examined gender role conflict and psychological distress, but in a clinical sample of mostly White university counseling center clients. As was found in Cournoyer and Mahalik's (1995) research, the GRCS factor of Restrictive Emotionality was significantly predictive of psychological distress level.

Research conducted by Hayes and Mahalik (2000) examined the relationship between gender role conflict factors and psychological distress in a sample of 99 predominantly (89%) White male students seeking services from a university counseling center. Structural equation modeling suggested that gender role conflict predicted psychological distress. Specifically, gender role conflict factors significantly predicted hostility, social discomfort, and obsessive-compulsiveness. However, contrary to previous findings, Hayes and Mahalik found that Restrictive Emotionality was not related to any of the measures of psychological distress in their sample.

Additional research conducted by Shepard (2002) investigated the relationship between patterns of depressive symptoms and gender role conflict factors in a sample of 111 college men, whose race was not identified. Findings from this study indicated that a connection exists between a specific gender role conflict factor and a pattern of depressive symptoms characterized by a negative state of mind. Specifically, Restrictive Emotionality was the only predictive GRCS factor to emerge from the correlation analysis. Three factors were identified through a factor analysis of the Beck Depression Inventory: Negative Attitudes, Performance Difficulties, and Physiological Symptoms. The Negative Attitudes factor, which is characterized by symptoms such as self-dislike, feelings of failure, guilt, and pessimism, was significantly related to Restrictive Emotionality. Shepard's findings lends further support to prior research suggesting that Restrictive Emotionality is the most salient gender role conflict predictor of psychological distress for men in both clinical and nonclinical samples.

The overall results of the studies presented above indicate that GRC and psychological distress have received considerable empirical attention; however,

researchers have primarily assessed these variables among White young adult men in college. Additionally, patterns of GRC have almost always significantly correlated with variables such as depression, anxiety, and self-esteem, with Restrictive Emotionality being the most consistent predictor. At this time, limited evidence exists to suggest that this finding will extend beyond a non-college primarily White sample. The present study will explore GRC patterns among Black male formerly incarcerated as compared to a college sample of Black men.

Masculinity Among African American Males

Male gender roles vary among racial and cultural groups (Kimmel & Messner, 1992). Much of what accounts for this variation are differences in cultural norms, which affect how a man comes to know his particular role in society (Lazur & Majors, 1995). A man typically learns the expectations placed on him by society through interactions with his environment and either adopts or modifies those expectations to himself (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Such socializing influences lead a man to project an image of self to society. Society, in return, typically responds to the projected image and offers feedback (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Lazur (1995) defines this interaction as a conversation, which involves a reciprocal exchange between an individual and his environment. These interactions are ultimately influenced by societal norms, governing what is tolerable and what is not. It is these norms that become integrated into the individual, thus influencing their culture (Lazur & Majors, 1995).

The conversation between African American men and the United States, in particular, has greatly contributed to the way these men operationalize gender role norms and perceive masculinity. For African American men, defining their own gender role

involves the incorporation of the dominant culture's restrictions or experiences of racism and discrimination. Having to measure themselves against the standard that dictates the male gender role for the dominant culture, yet denies the same access to the opportunities that sustain that standard have evoked feelings of frustration, alienation, bitterness, and rage among many individuals from this group (Franklin, 1999; Lazur & Majors, 1995).

According to Franklin (1999), repeated encounters with societal adversities, such as prejudice and racism, create what he refers to as an invisibility syndrome for Black men. Invisibility is considered "an inner struggle with the feeling that one's talents, abilities, personality, and worth are not valued or even recognized because of prejudice and racism" (p. 761). Exposure to others' prejudgmental views based solely on skin color can undermine a man's genuine character and make him feel invisible. Franklin (2004) proposed an invisibility syndrome paradigm as a conceptual model used to explain the intrapsychic struggle for personal identity by Black men during specific encounters with racism. This paradigm explains that as a result of cumulative encounters with racism and prejudice, African American men develop seven dynamic elements, with positive counterweights providing the dynamics of visibility.

Franklin's paradigm (2004) begins with *recognition* or feeling that one is being acknowledged by others as the first element. Black men often have experiences in which they feel overlooked during encounters with the majority or even during interactions with their own family members. Recognition can come in the form of being heard during a business meeting rather than overlooked as having nothing valuable to contribute. This element is considered to be a fundamental need for Black men; therefore, if they do not receive that acknowledgement in certain places (i.e., work) they create environments (i.e.,

barbershops and street corners) that provide a sense of recognition. The second element is *satisfaction* or feeling rewarded for what one does. Black men can often times feel a lack of gratification from the work they do, because of the limited acknowledgement of their talents in environments such as the workplace. Gathering together in places like barbershops and churches often produces the satisfaction they miss in other environments (i.e. work). *Legitimacy* is the third element, which is when Black men feel self-doubt about whether or not they belong in certain environments such as majority White universities or workplaces. Such places can lead Black men to raise questions like “am I in the right place” or “should I be here?” due to their sense of not belonging. Franklin believes that being around like-minded men of African descent may legitimize Black men or being embraced by individuals whose authority and influence they respect.

The fourth element is *validation* or the feeling that others share one’s views and values. When Black men do not have people in their lives that can corroborate the reality of being a Black man, they can become uncertain of themselves and even confused and disoriented regarding nature of their encounters with racism. *Respect* is the fifth element, which is the feeling that Black men have when they are being treated as a person of value and worth. Feeling disrespected is often the result of previous elements and is linked to subsequent elements of the invisibility syndrome paradigm. The sixth element is *dignity* or feeling valued and seen as person of worth. This sense of pride is not broad and inclusive, but rather can be defined differently among Black men. For example, one Black man may find his dignity in having a solid reputation for being a diligent worker, while another may take pride in having the latest car. Franklin (2004) believes that dignity can not be present without self-respect. Furthermore, this element can not be

gained unless the other elements are working together to support pride in the person. The seventh, and final, element is *identity* or a Black man feeling comfortable with the way he is and who he is. A Black man's basic identity can be shaken and even uprooted through racist encounters.

In response to dealing with innumerable acts of racism that creates a feeling of invisibility; many African American men have embraced a unique coping strategy which Majors and Billson (1992) have described as cool pose. This strategy is an adoption of a "ritualized form of masculinity that entails behaviors, scripts, physical posturing, impression management, and carefully crafted performances that deliver a single, critical message: pride, strength, and control" (p. 4). This façade is believed to develop as a way of surviving in a restrictive society where deep feelings of hatred, anger, and internal unrest must be suppressed in order to avoid reprimand from the majority. Furthermore, the ironclad façade of cool pose is considered to help the Black male get and stay in control over his psychological and social space (Majors & Billson, 1992).

Playing it cool can enhance a Black man's self-esteem in the face of societal adversities. However, one's preoccupation with maintaining a cool façade in order to prove his manhood can also be problematic. Some Black males are prone to restricting their deepest feelings in relationships they consider meaningful, such as with wives, girlfriends, children, and close friends (Majors & Billson, 1992). Although the restricting of emotions is common among many men, the restriction found among African American men, in particular, is often related to the protection of his identity against the dominant society (Lazur & Majors, 1995). Unfortunately, the stresses associated with constant

maintaining of cool pose and simultaneous emotional detachment from relationships may lead to acts of aggression and psychological distress.

Gender Role Conflict and African American Men

Despite the differences in theoretical conceptualization of masculinity, that masculinity among African American men is conceptualized differently from that of the majority and other minority cultures, a preponderance of the research on GRC and psychological distress seems to overlook this fact by focusing primarily on White male samples. The few researchers who have ventured beyond the use of White male samples have made noteworthy contributions to the area of gender role conflict and psychological distress research (Carter et al., 2005; Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991; Wade, 1996; Wester et al., 2006) by increasing the generalizability of the GRCS and providing a basis for understanding how gender role conflict operates within minority men. Specifically, college age and adult African American men's experiences of GRC have been studied by researchers and found to be significantly correlated with psychological distress (Carter et al., 2005; Stillson et al., 1991; Wester et al., 2006).

In 1991, Stillson, O'Neil, and Owen became among the first researchers to recognize that research on GRC was disproportionately conducted on White, middle-class men with a college education. Therefore, they incorporated race and class into their research by assessing the ways in which 13 demographic, psychological, and strain variables related to or predicted four patterns of GRC among 134 men from three age groups (22-27 years; 28-32 years; 33-39 years). The 13 predictor variables consisted of White ethnicity, Black ethnicity, Hispanic ethnicity, Asian ethnicity, class (socioeconomic status), employment status, vocational strain, psychological strain,

interpersonal strain, physical strain, masculinity (instrumentality), and femininity (expressiveness). The racial makeup of their sample was 47.7% White, 34.1% Black, 15.9% Hispanic, and 2.3% Asian.

A canonical correlation analysis was used to assess the relationships between the predictor variables and the GRCS subscores. One major finding from this analysis related to physical strain and three patterns of GRC. Complaints about physical illness or poor self-care habits were positively related to GRC patterns of Success, Power, and Competition; Restrictive Emotionality; and Conflict Between Work and Family Relations issues among White, Black, and Hispanic adult men. An additional finding from this study related to only Black men. Lower-class Black men who were instrumental and inexpressive and who had low psychological strain had conflicts around success, power, and competition issues. Furthermore, lower-class Black men who were instrumental, inexpressive, and who had low psychological strain did not have conflicts around restrictive emotionality or conflict between work and family relations issues. Stillson et al. recognized the complexity of interpreting such findings; however, providing the following rationale: "It may be that low psychological strain minimizes problems with restrictive emotionality or that limited value placed on expressiveness decreases conflicts around emotions" (p. 462). The overall findings from this study indicate that African American adult men's GRC is complex and is related to multiple variables, including class.

Racial Identity

Racial identity, as discussed by Helms and Cook (1999), refers to the social identity of a group of people socialized to think of themselves as a racial group. An

additional definition by Cross and Vandiver (2001), states that racial identity is a social identity and matures via developmental progression in comparison with one's reference group. The first scale created to measure racial identity was the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Parham & Helms, 1981), which operationalized the racial identity attitudes proposed by Cross's (1971) model of psychological nigrescence. Cokley interpreted Cross's model which describes the psychological process of reaching a self-actualized state of being Black under the challenging conditions of racial oppression and denigration (Cokley, 2007). The RIAS measures the following four stages of Cross's nigrescence model: (a) preencounter, (b) encounter, (c) immersion-emersion, and (d) internalization. The preencounter stage is characterized by the idealization of Whites and White culture and the deprecation of Blacks and Black culture. Encounter represents marked feelings toward a shocking personal or social event that causes the individual to question her or his identity. Immersion-Emersion denotes attitudes that reflect a high degree of Black pride and idealization of Black culture and negative views of the dominant culture. The fourth and final stage of the RIAS is internalization, which refers to the attitudes that reflect an inner pride of one's racial group without the need to denigrate other racial/ethnic groups.

Over the past 25 years, the RIAS has received extensive usage by researchers despite its questionable reliability by several researchers (Cokley, 2007). Cokley stated that "discrepant reliability coefficients, consistent findings of a three-factor solution, low item-endorsement, and evidence of social desirability bias have resulted in calls for the development of new racial identity instruments." (p. 230). In 2002, Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, and Fhagen-Smith developed a very promising measure of racial identity called

the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS). Its authors stated that this instrument's promise is attributed to the scale's systematic, multiyear process of development (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002). Furthermore, there is considerable information on the reliability and validity of the CRIS (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross, 2000; Worrell, Vandiver, William, & Fhagen-Smith, 2004). In three independent samples using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the six-factor structure has been supported with item coefficients on factors in the .5 to .9 range (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, Fhagen-Smith, 2002). Additionally, CRIS is based on Cross's 1991 and 1995 nigrescence model rather than his dated 1971 model. The original model contained a pejorative description of Black nationalism, which is not included in the revised model. The revised model also includes three distinct identity clusters for the pre-encounter stage (pre-encounter assimilation, pre-encounter miseducation, and self-hatred) and two identities for the internalization stage (Black nationalism and multiculturalist inclusive). The CRIS will be used in the current study and elaborated on further in Chapter III.

Mediating Effects of Racial Identity

Racial identity as it relates to GRC has been explored by researchers and, and it has been found to be a salient variable (Carter et al., 2005; Wade, 1996; Wester et al., 2006). Wade (1996) was one of the first researchers to examine the relationship between GRC and racial identity attitudes among African American men, which discovered that it was not race per se that accounts for gender role difficulties but rather specific racial identity attitudes. Wade measured racial identity attitudes using the Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (RIAS-B; Parham & Helms, 1981) and gender role conflict using the GRCS (O'Neil et al., 1986) among 95 fraternity and non-fraternity African American

males. Fraternity participants ranged in age from 30 to 80 years and non-fraternity participants from 23 to 68 years. Findings from this study indicated that externally, dominant-culture defined racial identity (i.e. Preencounter, Encounter, and Immersion/Emersion statuses) was positively related to patterns of gender role conflict. However, internally defined racial identity (i.e. Internalization) had no relationship to gender role conflict. This finding supports the idea that African American men's experience of gender role conflict is dependent on the degree to which they identify with the masculine norms of the dominant cultural group. Wade challenged future researchers to further investigate how racial identity attitudes and gender role conflict relate to psychological functioning in African American men.

Carter et al. (2005) and Wester et al. (2006) both accepted Wade's challenge by exploring the relationship between racial identity and GRC, and both researchers found that the two variables are significantly related. Carter's investigation examined the extent to which racial identity attitudes mediated the relationship between GRC and psychological symptoms using a sample of 52 Black college men. Findings from this study suggest that higher GRC significantly correlates with preencounter states of racial identity, defined as the idealization of the majority culture and the denigration of Blacks and Black culture (Carter, 2005). Additionally, full mediation was found. In other words, the effects of the gender role conflict (independent variable) on severity of psychological symptoms (dependent variables) in their sample of Black college men vanished (full mediation) when racial identity attitudes (mediator) were controlled. A hierarchical regression was used to control for the effects of the racial identity attitudes.

In 2006, Wester et al. explored the intersection of male GRC, racial identity, and psychological distress. Specifically, they investigated which aspects of racial identity mediated the relationship between GRC and psychological distress using a sample of 130 African American male participants. They hypothesized “that the association between GRC and psychological distress would be mediated by the different stages of racial identity; certain aspects of racial identity either serve as conduits through which the internalized sexism of GRC affects psychological functioning or serve to buffer the individual against the combined effects of sexism and racism” (p. 421). Wester et al. found that Black men’s internalized racism or self-hatred partially mediates the relationship between GRC and psychological distress, suggesting that African American men who internalized a racist attitude of themselves as men of color suffered more from their attempts to navigate the male gender role than did men who internalized a positive outlook of their own heritage. These findings were similar to those of Carter et al. (2005), who found that racial identity attitudes fully mediated the relationship between African American’s GRC scores and their experienced psychological distress.

In considering the external validity of both studies, it seems that previous findings could be generalized to Black college males; however, they can not be extended to individuals who have not been afforded the opportunity to pursue a higher education. The school to prison pipeline continues to significantly grow for Black males within the United States, which has resulted in these individuals being more likely involved in the penal system rather than higher education. Black male offenders are a rapidly expanding segment of Black males (Mauer & King, 2007) that remains to be examined and may potentially render significantly different empirical findings when compared to college

males. The present study will specifically examine GRC, racial identity attitudes, and psychological distress among a diverse sample of Black men comprised of formerly incarcerated and college students in an effort to further extend the generalizability of previous findings and provide insight on masculinity issues among Black men with a criminal history.

The Formerly Incarcerated

Since the early 1970s there has been an exponential increase in the United States prison and jail population (Mauer & King, 2007). A 500% rise in the number of people incarcerated throughout the nation has resulted in a total of 2.2 million or one in 100 American adults behind bars (Liptak, 2008; Mauer & King, 2007). The overall incarceration rates are at record highs; however, more alarming is the disproportionate incarceration rates of African American men. According to Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007), one in nine (11.7%) African American males between the age of 25 and 29 are currently serving time in prison or jail. Furthermore, if current trends continue, it is expected that one in three black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime (Mauer & King, 2007).

As the prison population continues to grow, the number of individuals reintegrating back into society post incarceration also significantly increases. Prior findings estimate that over 12 million Americans have prior felony convictions (Pager, 2006), an estimated number that far exceeds the prison population. Countless formerly incarcerated individuals reenter their communities faced with the challenge of integrating back into an often unwelcoming society. Many are faced with challenges such as paying down debt or back child support, finishing their education, finding stable housing, and

emotionally and financially supporting their families (Watts & Nightingale, 1996).

Central among the several stressful factors that make reintegration challenging for formerly incarcerated are barriers to gaining employment (Pager, 2006; Pager & Quillian, 2005; Petersilia, 2003).

Unemployment Concerns for Formerly Incarcerated Black Males

Eckholm (2006) reported the stark unemployment reality for Black male high school drop outs was at 72 percent in 2004. Surprisingly, more than half of Black male high school graduates in their twenties were also jobless in 2004. Overall, these figures highlight the fact that Black males face significant challenges to gaining employment with or without a high school education. These alarming findings can be further confounded by having a criminal record (Pager, 2006; Pager & Quillian, 2005). Formerly incarcerated Black males are confronted with a double jeopardy, in which they are often discriminated against by prospective employers not only based on their race, but also due to their criminal history (Pager, 2006; Pager & Quillian, 2005). Many individuals from that population may be released from prison with substantial pressures to gain income in order to financially support themselves and their families; however, simple things such as not having a permanent address or telephone number from which to receive call backs from prospective employers often impede men who are formerly incarcerated from finding meaningful employment (Cooke, 2005). Challenges to gaining employment may leave these individuals feeling less of a man, negligent fathers, or even inadequate husbands (Dyer, 2005). Furthermore, unemployment raises concern regarding their access to health benefits. The lack of insurance benefits has been linked to economic and emotional distress and poor health outcomes among this group (Cooke, 2005).

Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated Black Males

The complicating aspect of not being able to generate income significantly contributes to high rates of homelessness among the formerly incarcerated (Cooke, 2004). Although definitive statistics are not available on the rate of homelessness among formerly incarcerated Black men, what is known is that homelessness disproportionately affects people of color, with African American men facing this unfortunate reality more than White men (Hopper, 2003; North & Smith, 1994). Furthermore, homelessness is seen as a salient factor in incarceration, with approximately 54% of homeless people being incarcerated at some time (Cooke, 2004). Carlisle (1996) and Petersilia (2001) have also recognized the connection between homelessness and incarceration, in which they believe that the general level of housing assistance that prisoners typically receive is inadequate and that lack of housing is a major factor related to prison recidivism.

Substance Abuse and Crime

The connection between substance abuse and crime have been documented among arrestees and inmates over the years (Belenko, 2006; Bradford, Greenberg, & Motayne, 1992). One study in particular (Kouri, Pope, Powell, & Oliva, 1997) investigated the relationship between substance abuse and crime among 133 male prisoners. Their sample was comprised of 67 (50%) Whites, 31 (23%) Blacks, and 27 (20%) Hispanics. Using the Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM-III-R, they found that 95% of their subjects were dependent on one or more substances. Moreover, 58% of participants reported that they were intoxicated with one or more substances at the time they

committed the crime. This study supports earlier research findings which also reported high incidence rates of substance dependence among inmates (Bradford & Motayne, 1992; Peter & Kearns, 1992).

Although research has assessed the prevalence of substance abuse in the prison population and found a significant positive correlation, few have explored the prevalence of drug abuse among the formerly incarcerated. The lack of research attention given to this population is particularly surprising given that some two thirds of parolees have a history of illegal drug use, including 31% admitting to crack or cocaine use (Mumola, 1998). Within 3 years, approximately 95% of formerly incarcerated individuals with drug use histories eventually revert back to drug use (Martin, Butzin, Saum, & Inciardi, 1999), 68% recidivate, 47% are reconvicted, and 25% are sentenced to prison for a new crime (Langan & Levin, 2002). Some have contributed such disturbing statistics to the limited availability of postrelease substance abuse programs (Belenko, 2006; Butzin, Martin, & Inciardi, 2005). The available data on inmate substance abuse treatment suggests that reductions in postrelease relapse and recidivism are dependent upon connecting the offenders to continuing care following their release (Belenko, 2006).

Researchers have recognized the particular problems (i.e. unemployment, homelessness, and substance abuse) faced by this population (Day, Acock, Bahr, & Arditti, 2005; Pager, 2006); however, there is limited research on the formerly incarcerated experiences of psychological distress (Kenemore & Roldan, 2006). According to Kupers (1999) nearly 90% of the formerly incarcerated will be released from prison with little or no discharge planning, regardless of their psychological well-being. Furthermore, they are usually released with limited support or access to resources

that could provide assistance with staying drug free, out of serious trouble, and successfully adjusting to the outside world (Kupers, 1999). Again, sparse research exists on psychological problems that result from such realities. Additionally, an understanding of how this group experiences masculinity and their racial identity remains undeveloped.

Summary

Over the past 25 years, researchers have studied college age and adult African American men's GRC (O'Neil, 2008). However, focusing on such a limited group does not provide a comprehensive picture of how diverse men experience their gender roles (O'Neil, 2008). Despite this limitation, the amalgamation of research spanning the last twenty-seven years have found a significant relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress (e.g. Good & Mintz, 1990; O'Neil, 2008; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991). Furthermore, this body of research has explored between group differences, in which racial identity was found to have mediating effects on gender role conflict and psychological distress (Carter et al., 2005; Wester et al., 2006). Nevertheless, research exploring within group differences, in terms of these three variables, is non-existent. The present study will examine the mentioned variables among a sample of Black college males and Black formerly incarcerated in an effort to extend the generalizability of previous findings and provide insight on masculinity issues among these groups.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodology for the current study. Specifically, Chapter III provides the following information: selection of participants, a description of instruments, study design, the statistical analysis used to test each hypothesis, and power analyses.

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 81 participants Black college male and formerly incarcerated Black male participants. Forty-two college participants were recruited through the department of Africana Studies at a private university in the northeast. Thirty-nine formerly incarcerated males were recruited from the alumni association of a private correctional facility in an urban community about 15 miles away from the university campus. Chapter IV contains a complete review of demographic data.

Method and Procedure

For college male participants, permission was obtained through the chair of department of Africana Studies. So that potential subjects did not lose the benefit of their class time, I recruited volunteers at the end of their class. I clearly explained the purpose and nature of the study by reading the consent form. Students were encouraged to ask any clarifying questions after each section of the letter, which was done in effort to further help participants to understand the content of the study. Volunteers were informed of their voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. Research packets where

distributed to all students, which served to protect the anonymity of participants from the researcher and from their peers as well. Participants completed the following form and scales: a demographic questionnaire, Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS), Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS), and Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI 18). Students were given the option to fill out an alternative questionnaire if they chose not to participate in the study; therefore, all students were engaged in writing (i.e. completing the alternative questionnaire). That action made it less obvious to others who chose to participate in the study. Participants were instructed to place all completed measures back into the manila envelope and return to me in a room adjacent to the classroom. I then left the classroom in order for participants to complete the measures. In the adjacent room, I collected the participant's consent form first, placing it face down in a non-transparent envelope so that other participants entering the room could not see the names of volunteers. Participants were asked to enter the adjacent room individually in order for me to scan the measures for completeness and to see if participants strongly endorsed (i.e. marked a 3 = quite a bit or 4 = extremely) question 17 on the BSI-18, which asks "How much were you distressed by thoughts of ending your life." None of the participants strongly endorsed that item. All students were debriefed and provided with information on how to contact Counseling Services.

For the formerly incarcerated male participants, the director of the formerly incarcerated alumni association granted permission for recruitment. I attended regularly scheduled alumni meetings held in a designated area in the Community Education Centers (CEC) facility. So that potential subjects did not lose the benefit of their meeting, potential participants were recruited at the end of the meeting. I explained the purpose

and nature of the study by reading the consent form. Potential participants were encouraged to ask any clarifying questions after each section of the letter, which served to help participant's further understand the content of the study. I clearly explained that their decision not to participate would not result in any consequences (i.e. information shared with parole officers, CEC staff, employers, etc.). Additionally, I explained that no participant-identifying information was to be placed on the measures. Research packets were then distributed to all attendees, which served to protect the anonymity of participants from their peers. Participants were asked to complete the following form and scales: a demographic questionnaire, Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS), Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS), and Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI 18). The assembled group was given the option to fill out the enclosed sports questionnaire if they opted not to participate in the study; therefore, all men were engaged in writing (i.e. completing the alternative questionnaire). As previously mentioned, that action would make it less obvious to others who elected to participate in the study; however, all participants elected to complete the study packet. Before they began, participants were encouraged to inquire with regard to the clarification of any question on any of the instruments. Participants were instructed to place all completed measures back into the manila envelope and return to me in a room adjacent to the alumni meeting room. I then left the alumni meeting room in order for participants to complete the measures. In the adjacent room, I collected the participant's consent form first, placing it face down and in a non-transparent envelope so that other participants entering the room could not see the names of volunteers. Participants were asked to enter the adjacent room individually in order for me to scan the questionnaires for completeness and to see if participants strongly endorsed (i.e.

marked a 3 = quite a bit or 4 = extremely) question #17 on the BSI-18, which ask “How much were you distressed by thoughts of ending your life”. None of the participants strongly endorsed that item. The provider list was distributed to all participants after the debriefing.

The measures administered to participants are described below, along with their psychometric properties.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. There were two forms of the demographic questionnaire. The college male version included questions pertaining to age, race, academic year, as well as, whether or not they have been incarcerated. The formerly incarcerated version included questions related to age, ethnicity, and criminal history. Appendix A provides each of these questionnaires.

Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS-I; O'Neil, et al., 1986). The level of gender role conflict (GRC) experienced by participants was measured using the GRCS, which assesses tension or conflict between traditionally socialized male gender roles and situational demands. The GRC is a 37-item questionnaire divided into four subscales: (a) Success, Power, and Competition (SPC = 13 items); (b) Restrictive Emotionality (RE = 10 items); (c) Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABBM = 8 items); and (d) Conflict Between Work and Family Relations (CBWFR = 6 items). Sample items include “I worry about failing and how it affects my doing well as a man” (SPC), “I have difficulty expressing my tender feelings” (RE), “Affection with other men makes me tense” (RABBM), and “My work or school often disrupts other parts of my life: home, health, or leisure” (CBWFR). Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 6-

point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 6 = strongly disagree). This scale is reverse scored, with lower scores indicating higher levels of conflict resulting from an over-adherence to that specific aspect of the male role.

According to O'Neil (2008) several studies have used confirmatory factor analyses to verify the four-factor structure. Overall, strong support was found for the structural validity of the GRCS. Furthermore, findings from the confirmatory factor analyses support the four-factor model as initially hypothesized.

O'Neil (2008) also states that the internal consistency reliabilities of the four subscales of the GRCS for college students have ranged from .70 to .89. The internal consistency for diverse groups such as African American, Asian American, and Hispanic men have also demonstrated to be good, ranging between .71 to .91 for the four factors (O'Neil, 2008). For the college sample used in this study, the SPC subscale had a Cronbach's alphas of .67, the RE subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .85, the RABBM subscale had a Cronbach's alphas of .80, and the subscale CBWFR had a Cronbach's alphas of .65. For the formerly incarcerated men used in this study, the SPC subscale had a Cronbach's alphas of .73, the RE subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .67, the RABBM subscale had a Cronbach's alphas of .68, and the subscale CBWFR had a Cronbach's alphas of .72.

The convergent validity of the GRCS has been studied using the following measures of masculinity: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), Brannon Masculinity Scale (BMS; Brannon & Juni, 1984) Masculine Role Norm Inventory (MRNI; Levant et al., 1992), Conformity to Masculine Norm Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik, Locke, et al., 2003), and Reference Group Identity

Dependence Scale (RGIDS; Wade & Gelso, 1998). GRCS has been found to be significantly correlated to with all masculinity measures with median r s ranging between .32 and .49. According to O'Neil (2008) such findings indicate that GRCS is related to other masculinity scales, but the low to moderate correlations suggest that the GRCS measures a different construct. The divergent validity of the GRCS has also been examined by correlating the GRCS with sex role egalitarianism and homophobia measures. The SPC, RE, AND RABBM subscales of the GRCS negatively correlated with sex role egalitarianism (Englar-Carlson & Vandiver, 2002), and SPC, RE, or RABBM were significantly related with homophobia (Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005; Tokar & Jome, 1998; Walker, Tokar, & Fischer, 2000).

Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver, et al., 2000). The racial identity of participants was assessed using the Cross Racial Identity Scale, which is a measure of Black racial identity attitudes based on Cross's revised nigrescence theory (1991, 1995). This scale consists of 30 items. Exploratory factor analysis conducted during the initial scale validation indicated that the CRIS consists of six factors, related to the six subscales which encompass four stages of racial identity. The six subscales are the following: Pre-Encounter Assimilation (PA), Pre-Encounter Miseducation (PM), Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred (PSH), Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW), Internalization Afrocentricity (IA), and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI). Each of the six attitudes is measured by five items, which are randomly distributed among the 40 items. Sample items include "I think of myself primarily as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group" (PA), "Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work" (PM), "I sometimes have negative feeling about being Black" (PSH), "I have a

strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people ” (IEAW), “I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective” (IA), and “As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays, lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.)” (IMCI).

Respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Subscale scores are obtained by adding scores on the five items that comprise each subscale and dividing the result by five, which results in total average scores ranging from one to seven. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsements of attitudes named by the subscales.

There is considerable scientific information to support the reliability and validity of the CRIS (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross, 2000; Worrell, Vandiver, Cross, Fhagen-Smith, 2000). In three independent samples using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the six-factor structure has been supported with item coefficients on factors in the .5 to .9 range (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, Fhagen-Smith, 2002). Scores from the CRIS have been shown to be independent of social desirability and the big five personality factors (Vandiver et al., 2002). Scores on the six subscales have low intercorrelations, with the median $r = .16$, and moderate to high internal consistency coefficients, with alpha coefficients ranging from .78 to .90 (Vandiver et al.).

Convergent validity with multidimensional inventory of Black identity (MIBI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) also indicated construct validity support for CRIS scores (Worrell et al., 2000). Specifically, PA scores were positively correlated with the humanist scores on the MIBI and negatively correlated with centrality and nationalist scores. IEAW and IA scores were found to positively correlate with

MIBI's nationalist scores, and IMCI scores had positive correlations with the humanist and oppressed minority subscales on the MIBI (Worrell et al., 2004).

Internal consistency and structural validity of scores on the CRIS have also been examined (Worrell et al., 2004). Reliability estimates for CRIS scores were in the moderate to high range and a six-factor structure, as found by Vandiver et al. (2002). Furthermore, subscale intercorrelations measure in the low range, indicating that the subscales measure the identity constructs relatively independently. For the college sample used within this study, the Cronbach alphas for PA, PM, PSH, IEAW, IA, IMCI were .42, .72, .65, .93, .61, and .76, respectively. For the formerly incarcerated sample used within this study, the Cronbach alphas for PA, PM, PSH, IEAW, IA, IMCI were .67, .75, .50, .78, .74, and .69, respectively.

Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI 18; Derogatis, 2001). The psychological distress of participants was measured using the BSI 18, which was originally designed to screen for psychological distress and psychiatric disorders but has also been validated with non-clinical samples, as described below. It is an 18-item self-report inventory upon which respondents rate their level of distress during the past week on 18 symptoms using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). The BSI 18 assesses three symptom dimensions: Somatization (6 items), Depression (6 items), and Anxiety (6 items), as well as a Global Severity Index (GSI) based on all 18 items. The scale is scored by summing the raw scores of the item responses within a symptom domain. Raw scores are converted to standardized *T* scores using a norm table. Normative information is provided for two separate samples: an adult nonclient community sample; and an adult nonclient oncology sample. The community sample was comprised of 1,134 (605 men

and 517 women) employees from an unspecified U.S. corporation. The oncology sample consisted of 1,543 (802 men and 741 women) adult patients at a cancer center. Both the community and oncology norms are gender-keyed.

According to Derogatis (1993) the BSI 18 has very acceptable alpha coefficients for each domain, which are .74 (Somatization), .84 (Depression), .79 (Anxiety), and .89 (GSI). For the college sample used in this study, the Somatization subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .83, the Depression subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .86, the Anxiety subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .85, and the GSI had a Cronbach's alpha of .85. For the formerly incarcerated sample used in this study, the Somatization subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .77, the Depression subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .77, the Anxiety subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .85, and the GSI had a Cronbach's alpha of .80. The BSI 18 is reduced version of the 53-item Brief Symptoms Inventory (BSI; Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983) that was developed from the Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90; Derogatis, Rickels, & Rock, 1976). The construct validity of the BSI 18 has been assessed by correlating the three symptom dimension scores and GSI with the corresponding scores on the SCL-90-R. All correlations were in a high range from .91 on Somatization dimension to .96 on Anxiety. Depression and GSI were both .93, which suggest that little information was lost due to the reduction of items (Derogatis, 1993).

Study Design

The current study was a non-experimental research design that utilized a survey methodology to understand the variables being studied. Collected data was aggregated by group (formerly incarcerated versus college student). All variables were analyzed statistically using Statistical Software for the Social Sciences, Version 16 for Windows

(SPSS). The following specific statistical procedures were used to analyze each hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 stated that formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher scores on all dimensions of psychological distress than Black college males. For this analysis, a MANOVA was employed that entered incarcerated vs. non-incarcerated males as the independent variable and the four dimensions of the BSI as the dependent variables.

Hypothesis 2 stated that formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher levels on all dimensions of gender role conflict than Black college males. A MANOVA was employed to test this hypothesis with incarcerated vs. non-incarcerated males entered as the independent variable and the 4 sub-domains of the GRCS entered as the dependent variables.

Hypothesis 3 stated that formerly incarcerated Black males and Black college males reporting higher levels of Restrictive Emotionality would also report higher levels of psychological distress. This hypothesis utilized bi-variate correlations to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between individual BSI subscales and the Restrictive Emotionality subscale.

Hypothesis 4 stated that for both formerly incarcerated and college Black males (a) GRCS is related to severity of psychological distress, (b) racial identity will affect psychological distress, and (c) GRCS will affect psychological distress. Specifically, it was expected that the domains of gender role conflict would be significantly related to psychological distress. Further, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between individuals with advanced racial identity (i.e., Afrocentricity or

Multiculturalist Inclusive) and psychological distress, thereby mediating the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress. Finally, it was expected that the mediating relationship would be more relevant (i.e. greater percentage of variance explained, r^2) for college participants than formerly incarcerated black males.

In accordance with Baron and Kenny's (1986) method, this hypothesis was examined using a three step procedure in which the following relationships were expected: (a) GRC would be related to severity of psychological distress, (b) racial identity would be related to GRC, and (c) GRC will affect psychological distress after controlling for racial identity statuses.

In order to understand if the mediating relationship occurs both within a formerly incarcerated group and the control group, two standard regression analyses (one for formerly incarcerated and one for Black college males) were conducted. As a further examination the standard regressions were also conducted between GRC and PD, with racial identity entered initially as a block to control the variance associated with this construct.

Power Analysis and Sample Size

In order to identify the sample size needed for this study and to reduce the likelihood of Type II error, power analyses were conducted for each of the study hypotheses using the computer program G*Power Windows based version. For Hypothesis 1, for which a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with 1 independent variable (incarcerated vs. non-incarcerated), and 4 dependent variables (3 BSI scales and 1 global scale), a sample size of 126 was required, assuming, alpha of 0.05, a medium effect size (0.15) and power of 0.80.

For Hypothesis 2, for which a MANOVA was conducted with 1 independent variable (incarcerated vs. non-incarcerated) and 4 dependent variables (4 GRCS dimensions), a sample size of 126 was required, assuming, alpha of 0.05, a medium effect size (0.15) and power of 0.80.

For Hypothesis 3, for which a bivariate correlation was used to examine the relationship between the 4 BSI subscales and the one GRCS Restrictive Emotionality subscale, a sample size of 126 was needed, assuming alpha of 0.05, a medium effect size (0.15) and power of 0.80.

For the fourth hypothesis, for which a series of bi-variate correlations and a multiple regression with 5 independent variables was used to test each of three arms of the hypothesis, a total sample size of 96 was required, assuming alpha of 0.05, medium effect size (0.15) and power of 0.80. The overall power analysis, indicated that the ideal number of participants in order to have minimum sufficient power to test all four study hypotheses was 126.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of the statistical analyses of the current study. The demographics, descriptive statistics, tests of hypotheses, and summary of findings are presented.

Demographics

The present study recruited 81 Black college male and formerly incarcerated Black male participants. As discussed in Chapter III, college participants ($n = 42$, 51.9%) were recruited through the department of Africana Studies at a private university in the northeast, and formerly incarcerated males ($n = 39$, 48.1%) were recruited from the alumni association of a private correctional facility in an urban community. Table 1 presents demographic data aggregated by the two groups.

Black college male participants ranged between the ages of 18 – 27 ($M = 20.6$, $SD = 2.0$). As shown in Table 1, A majority of Black college males were African American (83.3%), while 7.1% were West Indian, 4.8% African, 2.4% Biracial, and 2.4% identified as “other”. Most Black college males were in their freshman year of college ($n = 18$, 45.0%), enrolled at full-time status ($n = 32$, 78.0%), and employed less than part-time ($n = 18$, 45.0%). A majority of Black college males were not a part of a fraternity ($n = 35$, 85.4%). Half of all Black college males had been convicted of a crime ($n = 21$, 50.0%); of these, two thirds had been convicted of a non-violent crime ($n = 14$, 66.7%).

A majority of the Black formerly incarcerated male participants were African American ($n = 38$, 97.4%), while 1 participant was West Indian (2.6%) (see Table 1). They ranged between the ages of 22 – 49 ($M = 33.77$, $SD = 8.18$). Most participants from

this group had been convicted of a non-violent crime ($n = 29, 78.4\%$), and most were currently unemployed ($n = 33, 84.6\%$). The majority of formerly incarcerated male participants completed high school ($n = 24, 70.6\%$), while 11.8% had less than an 8th grade education, 14.7% had some college education, and 2.9% were college graduates. Most were single ($n = 27, 69.2\%$).

Chi-square and t-test procedures were used to examine demographic characteristics, which revealed a significant differences within Black college males and Black formerly incarcerated males. The t-test revealed that the formerly incarcerated group ($M = 33.8, SD = 8.2$) was significantly older than the college male group ($M = 20.6, SD = 2.0$), $F(1,77) = 98.2, p < .001$.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics Aggregated by Group

| Demographic | Formerly Incarcerated ($n = 39$) <i>f</i> (%) | College ($n=42$) <i>f</i> (%) |
|---------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Ethnicity | | |
| African American | 38 (97.4) | 35 (83.3) |
| West Indian | 1 (2.6) | 3 (7.1) |
| African | - | 2 (4.8) |
| Biracial | - | 1 (2.4) |
| Employment Status | | |
| Full time | 3 (7.7) | 8 (20.0) |
| Part time | 2 (5.1) | 14 (35.0) |
| Less than part time | - | 18 (45.0) |
| Unemployed | 33 (84.6) | - |
| Self-employed | 1 (2.6) | - |
| Criminal Conviction | | |
| Violent crime | 8 (21.6) | 7 (33.3) |
| Non-violent crime | 29 (78.4) | 14 (66.7) |

Notes. Values are frequency (%).

Descriptive Statistics

Prior to analysis, all variables were examined through SPSS programs for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and normality and linearity. Inspection of the data indicates that all variables were appropriate for multivariate analysis. Prior to testing study hypotheses descriptive statistics in the form of means and standard deviations were calculated and are presented as Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Results Aggregated by Group

| | Formerly Incarcerated (n = 39) | College (n=42) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Gender Role Conflict Scale | | |
| Success, power, competition | 50.67 (10.51) | 56.74 (9.32) |
| Restrictive Emotionality | 28.15 (9.08) | 32.64 (10.97) |
| RABBM | 26.79 (8.32) | 28.83 (9.68) |
| Conflict work & family | 18.28 (6.78) | 19.83 (6.52) |
| Cross Racial Identity Scale | | |
| Pre-encounter assimilation | 17.23 (7.48) | 17.31 (5.69) |
| Pre-encounter miseducation | 21.03 (7.22) | 19.45 (6.89) |
| Pre-encounter self-hatred | 9.36 (4.46) | 11.57 (5.97) |
| Immersion-emersion anti-white | 10.79 (6.61) | 13.62 (9.65) |
| Internalization afrocentricity | 17.82 (6.57) | 16.57 (5.80) |
| Internalization multiculturalist | 23.87 (6.79) | 21.60 (7.76) |
| Brief Symptom Inventory – 18 | | |
| Somatization | 1.69 (3.44) | 2.45 (3.47) |
| Depression | 3.38 (4.51) | 3.33 (4.64) |
| Anxiety | 2.79 (4.66) | 2.88 (3.82) |
| GSI | 7.87 (11.08) | 8.67 (11.10) |

Note. Values are means (SD)

Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 examined whether or not there was a greater prevalence of psychological distress among formerly incarcerated Black men versus Black college males. Specifically, it was predicted that formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher scores on all dimensions of psychological distress than Black college males. A MANOVA was used to test this hypothesis, in which incarceration status (formerly incarcerated vs. college males) was entered as the independent variable and the four dimensions of the BSI as the dependent variables. This hypothesis was not supported in that there was no significant difference by group, Wilks's Lambda = $F(3, 77) = 0.697, p = .56$, suggesting that in this sample, psychological distress was not more prevalent among Black formerly incarcerated men than Black college males. Thus, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher levels on all dimensions of gender role conflict than Black college males. To evaluate how gender role conflict may vary by group, a MANOVA was conducted. Incarceration status was entered as the independent variable and the 4 sub-domains of the GRCS entered as the dependent variables. Results from the MANOVA analysis indicated that the overall model was not statistically significant, Wilks's Lambda = $F(4, 76) = 2.40, p = .057$. However, univariate analysis revealed significant differences in two subscales of the GRCS, Success, Power, and Competition and Restrictive Emotionality. College males were found to be higher on both SPC and RE. Although differences were found on some dimensions of GRC, this hypothesis was not fully supported in that Black formerly incarcerated men were not high on all dimensions of GRC.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported. This hypothesis stated that formerly incarcerated Black males and Black college males reporting higher levels of Restrictive Emotionality would also report higher levels of psychological distress. It was expected, therefore, that in the formerly incarcerated group, psychological distress would be more prevalent. This hypothesis utilized bi-variate correlations to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between individual BSI subscales and the Restrictive Emotionality subscale. The results are summarized in Table 3 which presents the significant relationship between RE and psychological distress among both groups; however, a significant relationship among just the formerly incarcerated group was not found.

Table 3

Intercorrelations Among Primary Study Variables (n = 81)

| Outcome Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1. Somatization | 1.00 | .709** | .633** | .848** | .222* |
| 2. Depression | | 1.00 | .797** | .939** | .220* |
| 3. Anxiety | | | 1.00 | .909** | .161 |
| 4. GSI | | | | 1.00 | .222* |
| 5. Restrictive Emotionality | | | | | 1.00 |

Note. ** $p < 0.001$

Hypothesis 4 posited that for both formerly incarcerated and college Black males, racial identity would account for the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress. In order to establish mediation, three steps were followed as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). The first step involves establishing that there is an effect to be mediated (i.e. a relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable). Therefore, the four subscales of the GRCS were entered as predictor variables and the three subscales along with the Global Index Score of the BSI entered as the criterion variable. The result of the standard regression analysis was significant, in which three subscales of the GRCS scores (i.e. restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family) predicted somatization and depression in a positive direction.

Step two of hypothesis 4 entailed establishing that a relationship existed between the independent variable (GRCS) and the mediator (CRIS). Only the Anti-white subscale of CRIS was significantly correlated with two subscales of the GRCS (i.e. restrictive emotionality and conflict between work and family). Since the other subscales of the CRIS were not found to be significantly correlated to the GRCS, they were not included in the analysis for the subsequent procedure.

The final step in the test for mediation required determining whether the relationship between GRCS scales (i.e. independent variables) and BSI (i.e. dependent variable) disappears or is significantly diminished when the influence of racial identity statuses (i.e. mediator) on the BSI is controlled. The results indicated that, including the racial identity mediator variable, did not impact the relationship of GRCS on BSI. This finding indicates that the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological

distress in this sample is direct and not accounted for or mediated by racial identity status attitudes. Table 4 summarizes these results.

Table 4

Regression Analysis Summary for the Independent and Mediator Variables in the Prediction of Psychological Distress

| Variables | <i>b</i> | SE | B |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----|------|
| Testing Step 1: | | | |
| Criterion: BSI | | | |
| Predictor: GRCS | .05 | .04 | .16* |
| Testing Step 2: | | | |
| Mediator: CRIS (Anti-White) | | | |
| Predictor: GRCS | .07 | .05 | .17* |
| Testing Step 3: | | | |
| Criterion: BSI | | | |
| Mediator: CRIS (Anti-White) | .18 | .16 | .14 |
| Predictor: GRCS | .18 | .13 | .17 |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Supplemental Analyses

As an exploratory analyses, additional statistics were calculated that were outside the scope of the study hypotheses. These analyses may better inform the overall conclusions, which will be discussed in Chapter V. One particular variable of interest is the gender role conflict factor, Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABBM). As discussed in Chapter III, RABBM indicates a man's discomfort with expressions of caring between men. A man may restrict affectionate behavior between men in order to avoid being confused or to keep others from thinking he is homosexual. Given the high prevalence of homophobia among prisoners (Hensley, 2000; Newton, 1994), it was expected that between group differences would be found on the RABBM subscale of the GRCS. Furthermore, a significant relationship between negative values

subscale of the GRCS. Furthermore, a significant relationship between negative values such as homophobia and racism is expected (Loiacano, 1993; Nguyen, 2008). As homophobia is a variable of relevance to incarcerated males, an additional analysis was conducted to determine if RABBM was significantly related to the Immersion-Emersion Anti-white variable. Results of a bi-variate correlation revealed that RABBM was significantly related to antiwhite racial identity, $r(37) = .35, p < .05$ among formerly incarcerated males. Supplemental analysis findings, however, did not produce similar results for college participants, $r(40) = .08, p = .64$.

Demographic data shows that half of the college sample reported having a criminal history, which was unexpected and not accounted for in the original study design. Therefore, an additional exploratory analysis was conducted on all of the study variables in order to examine if significant differences existed between the following three groups of men: formerly incarcerated, college males without a criminal history and colleges males convicted of a crime. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the college males without a criminal history were significantly higher on Restrictive Emotionality ($M = 36.2, SD = 10.1$) and Success, Power, and Competition ($M = 59.5, SD = 6.6$) than college males with a criminal history (RE – $M = 29.1, SD = 10.9$; SPC – $M = 54.0, SD = 10.9$) and formerly incarcerated males (RE – $M = 28.2, SD = 9.1$; SPC – $M = 50.7, SD = 10.5$).

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings and is comprised of the following sub-sections: (a) study hypotheses and supplemental analysis, (b) limitations of the present study, (c) recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Study Hypotheses and Supplemental Analysis

Research examining the relationship between gender role conflict, racial identity, and psychological distress has mainly focused on a select group of Black males (i.e., Black college males). Consequently, the major purpose of the current study was to extend the existing body of research concerning these variables by evaluating them among a unique segment of Black men (i.e. formerly incarcerated males). Furthermore, in order to evaluate possible between-group differences and to account for the effects of incarceration, Black college males were also included in this study for comparative purposes. The overall results of previous research suggest that African American men's GRC is significantly related to negative psychological outcomes and racial identity statuses (O'Neil, 2008); therefore, an additional objective of the current investigation was to examine the extent to which racial identity attitudes mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress among both Black college and formerly incarcerated men.

As presented in Chapter II, incarceration and release from prison create a particularly unique set of challenges for formerly incarcerated individuals. This population is more likely to be unemployed, homeless, and substance users (Cooke,

2004; Martin, Butzin, Saum, & Inciardi, 1999). Given the serious difficulties formerly incarcerated males are likely to encounter while adjusting to the free world, it was hypothesized that formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher scores on all dimensions of psychological distress than Black college males. However, results from participants indicated that psychological distress was not more prevalent among Black formerly incarcerated men than Black college males. Thus Hypothesis 1 was not supported. One factor that may have affected this finding is the specific sample of formerly incarcerated men used in this study. Formerly incarcerated participants were comprised of individuals that successfully completed their sentences in a treatment correctional facility that provided intensive reentry counseling, which focused on changing addictive and criminal behaviors. Additionally, participants voluntarily chose to utilize supportive post incarceration services through an alumni association that assisted former offenders through the process of positive change. Therefore, it is not surprising that this sample presented as rather psychologically healthy individuals and did not experience more emotional distress than college males. Researchers have highlighted specific difficulties (i.e. lack of financial assistance, limited campus support services, and problems in their communities and homes) typically encountered by African American college males which pose challenges to their academic success (Fries-Birt & Turner, 2001; Palmer & Young, 2009). Furthermore, majority of the college participants used in the current study were Black freshmen, which research has consistently shown to be a group more susceptible to isolation and loneliness on predominately White college campuses (Boyd, Shueman, McMullan & Fretz, 1979; Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones, & Allen, 2010). Such challenges may lead to the development of psychological symptoms

associated with depression and anxiety. This finding will be discussed further in Limitations section of this chapter.

Hypothesis 2 was based on the premise that having been a part of the hypermasculine and emotionally restrictive prison environment, formerly incarcerated Black males would report higher levels on all dimensions of gender role conflict than Black college males. However, findings revealed significantly higher scores on two subscales of the GRCS, Success, Power, and Competition (SPC) and Restrictive Emotionality (RE), among college males instead. Supplemental analysis further revealed that college males without a criminal history were significantly higher on SPC and RE than formerly incarcerated men and college males with a criminal history. This particular finding is consistent with previous research examining GRC only among collegians, in which RE and SPC were found to be salient factors among that group (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Good & Mintz, 1990; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Shepard, 2002). Furthermore, this finding may be attributed to age differences found between both groups. A majority of the formerly incarcerated males were older males ($M = 33.77$) in comparison to the college group that consisted of younger males ($M = 20.6$). Previous research examining age differences and GRC have found that older men report significantly less SPC than college age males (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991). Lastly, this finding suggests that masculinity is uniquely associated with Black men's life experiences. It was assumed that the restrictive prison environment would possibly lead to the development of certain types of masculinity among the formerly incarcerated; however, the same may hold true for Black males on college campuses. Black males are less likely than any other racial group to attend or complete

college (Kunjufu, 2005). Black men that manage to stay out of trouble with the law and pursue a higher education may be aware of such grim statistics. Thus, they possibly will experience more internal strain as they work toward achieving academic success in hopes of overcoming statistical expectations.

Hypothesis 3 further revealed that RE was significantly correlated with psychological distress among both groups of men. Previous research on various samples of White males and the few studies using Black college samples have demonstrated that the pressures experienced by men to conform to their prescribed gender role leads to numerous negative psychological outcomes. This study's finding is congruent with previous research in which high scores on Restrictive Emotionality (Carter et al., 2005; Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Shepard, 2000) and Success, Power, and Competition (Hayes & Mahalik; 2000; Tokar et al., 2000) served as salient predictors of psychological distress among this sample as well.

Previous research examining how racial identity relates to GRC has expanded psychologists' understanding of the underlying psychological dynamics contributing to masculine gender roles (Wade, 1996). For African American men, racial identity status attitudes have been found to mediate the relationship between aspects of traditional masculinity and indices of psychological functioning (Carter et al., 2005; Wester et al., 2006). Thus, it was hypothesized that for both formerly incarcerated and college Black males, racial identity would account for the relationship between GRC and psychological distress. Contrary to previous research, racial identity was not found to mediate the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress in the current sample. Wester, Vogel, et al. (2006) findings indicated that Black men's internalized

racism (i.e. self-hatred) partially mediates the relationship between GRC and psychological distress. Carter et al. (2005) found full mediation, in which preencounter states of racial identity (i.e. idealization of the majority culture and the denigration of Blacks and Black culture) accounted for the relationship between GRC and psychological distress. The results of the current investigation indicate that the racial identity mediator variable did not impact the relationship of GRCS on BSI. In other words, the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress in this sample is direct and not accounted for or mediated by racial identity status attitudes. Much of what may account for the contrary finding is the particular sample of African American men used in the current research. Wester, Vogel, et al. (2006) and Carter et al. (2005) both found mediation exclusively among African American college students; however, the current sample was comprised of two groups of Black men (i.e. college and formerly incarcerated). This finding suggests that African American men's GRC relation to negative psychological outcomes and racial identity statuses may be contingent upon one's life experience (i.e. attending college versus serving time in prison). Furthermore, it should be noted that for both groups of men, Cronbach alphas for the CRIS were in the low range. The current finding may have been affected by the low alpha outcomes.

Although mediation was not found, correlations found through the mediation analysis are worth noting. The results of the regression analysis or step one of Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation method indicated that three types of GRC (i.e. restrictive emotionality, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and conflict between work and family) were predictive of certain psychological distress (i.e. somatization and depression). This finding suggests that the more the current sample of Black men

subscribe to traditional masculine roles, the more likely they are to experience psychological symptoms. As presented in Chapter II, African American men typically have to measure themselves against the standard that dictates the male gender role for the dominant culture, yet denies the same access to the opportunities that sustain that standard. Such circumstances may evoke feelings associated with depression and other forms of psychological distress.

The correlation analysis indicated that only the Anti-white subscale of CRIS was significantly related with restrictive emotionality and conflict between work and family. The immersion-emersion Anti-White subscale denotes attitudes that reflect a high degree of Black pride and idealization of Black culture and negative views of the dominant culture. An Anti-White attitude status is typically characterized by anger at Whites for their role in racial oppression (Cokley, 2007). Therefore, it is possible that one's awareness of societal barriers to achieving the masculine ideal of balancing work, school and family relations may increase internal conflict and strain (Wade, 1996). Furthermore, African American men may develop Anti-White attitudes after repeated encounters with societal adversities. As mentioned in Chapter II, Franklin (1999) believes that repeated encounters with prejudice and racism can lead to the development of an invisibility syndrome for Black men, in which they experience an inner struggle with the feeling that their overall worth is not valued or recognized by society simply because of the color of their skin. A lack of recognition from society may lead to restrictions and fears about expressing one's feelings as well as restrictions in finding the words to express basic emotions. Overall, the correlation analysis finding suggests that externally defined racial identity (e.g. Anti-White) is associated with discomfort and difficulty with emotional

self-disclosure and restrictions in balancing personal responsibilities such as work, school, and family relations.

Supplemental analysis revealed that Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABBM) was significantly related to an Anti-white racial identity. RABBM was explored given the prevalence of homophobia typically fostered within the prison environment (Hensley, 2000; Newton, 1994); therefore, it was expected that men having been a part of such a setting would more likely restrict affectionate behavior between men in order to avoid being confused or to keep others from thinking they are gay. A significant relationship between negative values such as homophobia and racism was also expected among formerly incarcerated men. Results of the supplemental analysis indicated that RABBM was significantly related to Antiwhite racial identity only among the formerly incarcerated males. This finding suggests that men that have been a part of a hypermasculine environment and hold negative beliefs about the majority culture are more inclined to be uncomfortable with the expression of caring between men.

Limitations

There are limitations to the present study that should be considered when drawing conclusions about the results. First, this research was limited to a sample consisting of Black college males from a small private university and Black formerly incarcerated males from a private treatment correctional facility alumni association both located in the Northeastern region of the US. Because participants were comprised of a select group of Black men, the findings cannot necessarily be generalized to Black men with different life experiences. Black men who have served their entire criminal sentence within a prison environment which did not provide psychological treatment services or received

post release support may render significantly different findings from formerly incarcerated participants in the current study. Furthermore, although the collegiate Black men in this study shared similar GRCS scores to previously published samples of Black college men, conclusions cannot be drawn about how other college males not attending a majority White private institution might experience GRC, racial identity, and psychological distress.

Second, the particular sample of African American men used in the current study appears to have presented another limitation. Mediation was not found among both the Black formerly incarcerated and college men; however, as shown in previous research, an examination of the variables among a sample of Black college men may actually show that the relationship between the variables is more pronounced than the results suggest. Therefore, it is also important to keep in mind that the samples (i.e. Black collegians attending a majority White university and Black formerly incarcerated men released from treatment correctional facility) used in the current study may not be representative of the majority of Black men with a criminal history and the majority of Black collegians. As such, future research might want to replicate these results with more diverse samples of formerly incarcerated men to verify current findings.

Lastly, the GRCS, CRIS, and BSI-18 are all paper-and-pencil self-report measures. Such measures are vulnerable to inaccuracies because of self-enhancement bias. Specifically, the psychologically healthy profiles found among many of the formerly incarcerated men may have resulted from them choosing to provide responses that depict them in favorable light. Further, it is possible that correlations among the self-report measures may be artificially enhanced because of monomethod bias.

Recommendations for Future Research and Conclusion

Future research should examine the relationship between gender role conflict and psychological distress among formerly incarcerated men released from non-treatment correctional facilities. The fact remains that majority of inmates leave prison with few job prospects, limited or no finances, and often no immediate entitlement to government assisted programs (Petersilia, 2000). Furthermore, less than 10% of prisoners, including those with serious mental illness, are released without a discharge plan or provided supportive reentry services; therefore, future research should examine the intersection of **GRC** and psychological distress among a more representative sample of formerly incarcerated Black men. Given the consistency in previous findings indicating that racial identity accounts for the relationship between GRC and psychological distress, future research should continue to explore those variables among a larger sample of formerly incarcerated men.

Future research should also continue exploring the salience of Restrictive Emotionality among the Black collegiate population. The finding of this study is consistent with previous research in which RE significantly predicted psychological distress; however, what remains unexplored is the possible impact criminal history along with the study variables have on educational outcomes of Black college males. College males with a criminal history and college males without a criminal history differed significantly on GRC and psychological distress. Further investigation about whether or not the two groups differ on educational outcomes such as GPA may provide additional insight on the varied effects of criminal involvement. For example, it may be that Black college males with a criminal history experience less academic success than those

without a criminal past. Furthermore, are men without a criminal history and high RE or SPC thriving academically? In either case, future research can help inform the relation of masculinity roles and criminal history on educational outcomes.

This research may also well have important implications for conceptualizing the role of the study variables within counseling. The overall findings of this study suggests that mental health professionals treating African American men should remain cognizant of the potential impact of masculinity and racial identity issues on their psychological well being throughout treatment. As previously mentioned, majority of the previous research has indicated a significant relationship between the study variables among men. Consequently, counselors and therapists may benefit from exploring a man's socialized gender roles and its impact on their race and psychological distress.

In conclusion, this study is unique in that it is the first to explore gender role conflict, racial identity, and psychological distress among Black formerly incarcerated males and compare their findings to a Black college male sample. In general, findings from this study indicates that there are small differences between men that have served time and college males on masculinity, racial identity, and psychological distress variables. However, what appears to partially account for the limited support of the study hypotheses is the life experience shared by both groups. Half of the college male sample was comprised of individuals who have been convicted of a crime at one point in time in their lives, making the college sample less homogenous than expected. Exploring the study variables among more distinct groups of Black males may illuminate true differences between men Black men with considerably different life stories. As such,

Black men's conflicts concerning their masculinity and what possibly impacts it deserves continued attention in the psychological literature.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaires

Formerly Incarcerated

Please mark your responses with an X or as indicated.

1. Age: _____

2. Ethnic Background:

_____ African American

_____ West Indian

_____ African

_____ Biracial. Please specify _____

_____ Other. Please specify _____

3. What is the total number of months you have been incarcerated for all criminal offenses?

_____ months

4. What is the total number of months you have been on parole?

_____ months

5. Criminal conviction:

_____ convicted of a violent crime

_____ convicted of a non-violent crime

6. Current employment status:

_____ Employed Full Time

_____ Employed Part Time

_____ Unemployed

_____ Self-employed

7. Marital Status:

_____ Single

_____ Married

_____ Committed relationship

_____ Separated

_____ Divorced

_____ Widowed

8. Education (indicate highest grade or degree completed): _____

College

Please mark your responses with an X or as indicated.

1. Age: _____

2. Ethnic Background:

_____ African American

_____ West Indian

_____ African

_____ Biracial

_____ Other. Please specify _____

3. Current year in college:

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

4. Enrollment status:

_____ Full time student

_____ Part time student

_____ Less than part time

5. Employment status:

_____ Full time employee

_____ Part time employee

_____ Less than part time

5. Are you a part of a fraternity: _____ Yes _____ No

6. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, where you convicted of a

_____ Violent crime

_____ Non-violent crime