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Black women's dual subordinate identities (black and woman) create unique experiences in America which are often erased or ignored. Studies focusing on race center on black men, while studies on gender focus on white women. Richie's (1985, 2012) trap of loyalty, the cultural and emotional exploitation of black women, helps to provide insight into black women's unique perspectives in America. The trap of loyalty consists of three defining qualities: (1) Black women are more privileged than black men; (2) Black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence; and (3) Black women are expected to buffer their family from racism. This study answers the question: *In what ways is the black woman's experience in the United States today defined, or not defined, by the trap of loyalty?* In this study, I conduct one-on-one interviews with 8 black women and femmes to examine the absence or presence of the three defining qualities. Findings indicate that black women and femmes are expected to prioritize race above all other identities, often meaning an erasure of gender issues and the endurance of abuse in silence. The erasure of black women's experiences and issues continues to leave them vulnerable to racism and sexism in America.

AMERICA'S BACKBONE: A CONTEMPORARY

ANALYSIS OF BLACK WOMEN AND

THE TRAP OF LOYALTY

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Black women always put their family before themselves. I watched my mom do it; she watched her mom do it. That's just what we do. We want to see everyone else doing well before we take care of ourselves. A lot of times we neglect ourselves for the sake of protecting and helping other people.
>
> <div align="right">-Mia</div>

In 1994, R. Kelly, a popular black male R&B singer, married an up-and-coming 15-year-old singer named Aaliyah (DeRogatis 2000). Kelly was 28 years old at the time. When Aaliyah's family found out about the marriage, she ended it quietly and out of the public's eye. The black community has been aware of R. Kelly's propensity for underage black girls for decades, but preventing the negative perception his transgressions would cast upon the black community is seen as more important than protecting young black women from his abuse.

R. Kelly's early career was rife with accusations that he was engaging in sex with underage girls. A majority of Kelly's accusers were young black girls interested in pursuing a music career. One of his accusers notes that he would recruit freshmen and sophomore girls from a choir at Kenwood Academy, Kelly's old high school. Kelly's former choir director at Kenwood, Lena McLin, was in charge at the time. When she was told about Kelly's penchant for younger girls, her response was defensive of the singer's actions. "I don't know what he did outside of school. But in the school, there was no

hanky panky. If they were involved in that, the sad thing is, it takes two to tango"
(DeRogatis 2000).

Kelly has been sued by multiple accusers. In 2008, the year of Kelly's last trial,
the singer was acquitted of 14 charges of creating child pornography (DeRogatis 2000).
Kelly's trial excluded compelling evidence against him, including Kelly's marriage to 15-
year-old Aaliyah, various claims of abuse and manipulation, and the contents of various
non-disclosure agreements from settled cases. Kelly's ability to escape prosecution for a
crime he clearly had committed is not unusual given his fame and fortune; however, the
support he still receives in the industry and by the black community is notable. Kelly has
been investigated multiple times by the Chicago Police Department, but cases against
him were often dropped for myriad of reasons. Accusers settled with Kelly outside of
court (provided a confidentiality agreement was signed), stopped cooperating with
prosecutors, and in an extreme instance dropped a lawsuit after Kelly countersued.
Though Kelly's career is filled with consistent accusations and proof of his sexual assault
of underaged black girls, parents still allow Kelly to assist with their daughters' careers.

DeRogatis (2017) notes in a follow-up piece about Kelly that the singer is now
accused of holding black women against their will in a cult. Though the women in
Kelly's "cult" are all of legal age, a former member and most recent accuser points out
that Kelly began grooming her for a sexual relationship with him when she was 14 years
old. Kelly's current accuser has not pressed charges, but continues to speak about her
experiences with the singer.

Kelly's predatory behavior towards young black girls and women provided him with a multitude of victims. In the aftermath of these revelations about the girls Kelly targeted, two groups that Black women should have expected to voice public condemnation of his abuse were silent. Those two groups are feminist activists, who champion women's rights, and civil rights activists, who champion black liberation. Neither group has stepped up to challenge this egregious sexual abuse experienced by black girls and women by a powerful figure.

Kelly's burgeoning career, in spite his sexual abuse of black girls and women, exposes the unique way that black women are exploited using racism and sexism. Beth Richie, a noted black sociologist and criminologist, discusses this idea as the trap of loyalty. The trap of loyalty is a set of cultural mandates black women adhere to within the black community. According to the trap of loyalty, black women are asked largely to ignore their own interests for the sake of the collective interests of the black community (Richie 1985). By allowing Kelly to continue to abuse young black girls and women to protect the image of black men, the black community posits racial issues as more important than gender issues.

This study answers the following question: In what ways is the black woman's experience in the United States today defined, or not defined, by the trap of loyalty? The next chapter provides the conceptual background for the trap of loyalty. Chapters 3 and 4 review relevant literature to explain the origins of the trap of loyalty throughout American history. The subsequent chapter provides detail about the methods of data

collection and analysis. The final chapters provide the study findings and a discussion of

the results. I close by discussing future implications for researchers.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The "trap of loyalty" was first introduced by Beth Richie in 1985. It refers to the cultural and emotional exploitation of black women's allegiance to their loved ones to ensure community loyalty. Ritchie's (1985) creation of this term gives a name to the racial and gendered experiences of black women within their own communities. The trap of loyalty contains three defining qualities: (1) Black women are more privileged than black men; (2) Black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence; and (3) Black women are expected to buffer their family from racism (Ritchie 1985, 2012).

The first defining quality is the belief within the black community that black women are in a better social position than black men. President Barack Obama, America's first black President, demonstrated this belief with his creation of My Brother's Keeper, (MBK) (Lee 2014). MBK is an initiative created to eliminate the gaps in opportunity for young black males. The initiative addresses challenges faced by young black men, such as educational disparities, lack of socioeconomic mobility, and being victims of violent crimes, to name a few. While many people within the black community supported the initiative, black women began to critique MBK for its exclusion of young black women. A letter written to the White House by over 1,000 women criticized the initiative's focus on young black men. Black women such as Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple,* argued that black girls attend the same schools, live

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in the same households, and experience the same struggles that are associated with racism and have the additional burden of dealing with sexism. As such, black women argued the initiative should include young black men and women. Upon hearing criticism from black women about their exclusion from the MBK initiative, White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett countered saying, "The President's approach is to create a society where nobody gets left behind, and right now are young boys of color are falling farther and farther behind than everybody." While black men have struggled disproportionately with various gaps in opportunities, it is debatable whether black men are more disadvantaged than black women. Black women's struggles are often overlooked.

Feminista Jones, a renowned activist and social worker, challenged the idea of black women's privilege with her 2014 campaign to raise awareness around the street harassment of black women (Berlatsky 2014). Street harassment is a specific type of sexual harassment that entails unwanted comments/advances that are often sexual in nature. "You ok sis" is a social media campaign created to address street harassment that disproportionately affects black women. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness about black women's vulnerability to abuse from *all* men, but especially men within their own communities.

The next defining quality is the belief that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence. Many black women academics have supported this assertion by noting the cultural expectation in the black community of not criticizing other black people publicly (Austin 1999; Hill 2002; Lewis 1977; Roberson 2003). Collins (2009) discusses the case of Anita Hill to demonstrate the consequences of black women

speaking out against powerful black men. Hill was a conservative law professor who levied sexual harassment allegations against Clarence Thomas, a black man, during his nomination to the Supreme Court. Thomas' nomination was considered controversial due to his extremely conservative views. He was opposed by civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Urban League, and the National Organization for Women (NOW), to name a few. Hill's accusations against Thomas led to a backlash against her in the black community because she broke a cultural taboo. Black women are supposed to be silent about issues dealing with black men, even when publicly victimized by them. Although the black community did not support Thomas' conservative views, Hill's public admonishment of a powerful black man was a greater affront to the black community. Collins demonstrates this idea using a quote by Lisa Jones, a notable critic of culture, "What happened to Hill sent a more forceful message than her face on the tube: Speaking out doesn't pay. A harassed woman is still a double victim, and a vocal, critical black woman is still a traitor to the race" (Collins 2009: 126). Thomas was eventually confirmed as the second African American to sit on the Supreme Court (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995). Since his confirmation, the black community has been highly critical of Clarence Thomas, even after defending him against sexual harassment allegations from Anita Hill.

The third and final defining quality is the belief that black women should buffer their family from the consequences of public racism (Richie 2012).   An example of this quality is Camille Cosby's defense of her husband Bill Cosby in the face of multiple rape charges. In 2014, a comedian named Hannibal Buress brought previous sexual assault

allegations against Bill Cosby, dating back to the 1960s, to the media's attention. After the allegations were picked up by the media, over 50 accusers, came forward to accuse the prominent actor/comedian of sexual assault (Finn 2015). While Cosby maintained his innocence, the number of allegations and consistency in the women's stories lent credibility to their accusations. Throughout the whole ordeal, Camille Cosby defended her husband against the accusations, alleging that the victims were not trustworthy. When she was questioned about the number of women making allegations against her husband, Camille suggested Bill Cosby was the true victim, "None of us will ever want to be in the position of attacking a victim. But the question should be asked—who is the victim?" (as cited in Finn 2015). Camille's framing of Bill suggests the accusations against him are unwarranted given his status as a victim. Given the historical context of black men being falsely accused of rape by white women, Camille's defense of Bill is not surprising. However, when combined with the number of accusers, Bill's position of power over the women who accused him and the stigmatization that many victims of sexual assault experience, it appears unlikely that all 50 women were falsely accusing Bill Cosby of sexual assault. Camille's defense of her husband within the midst of credible accusations demonstrates a common expectation of black women to protect their family from the repercussions of (potentially) racist criticism, even when overwhelming evidence suggests criminal activity did occur. Tracy Connor (2017) reports a mistrial was declared for Cosby in June 2017, when the jury dead-locked. A retrial for Cosby is scheduled for Spring 2018, with Camille Cosby standing by her husband.

As this section notes, Richie's trap of loyalty posits black women as more privileged than black men, expected to endure their abuse in silence, and to buffer their family from racism (1985, 2012). The next two chapters will explore the presence of the trap of loyalty throughout American history. The three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty have been present even before the concept had a name.   Chapter 3 provides a synopsis of black women's experiences throughout American history for context, while Chapter 4 analyzes origins of the trap of loyalty within that history.

CHAPTER III

ABRIDGED HISTORY OF BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA

In this chapter, I provide historical context to explore black women's roles throughout American history and to underscore the historical presence of the trap of loyalty. While myriad of approaches exists to organize this chapter, I elect to do so chronologically within each historical movement. This organization of different time periods allows me to highlight in the next chapter the presence of the three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty throughout history.

The historical time periods that are explored in this chapter include: slavery, the abolitionist movement, the civil rights movement, the "War on Drugs," and various waves of the Women's Liberation Movement. Each of these points in American history provides background necessary to understand the origins of the trap of loyalty. Each section in this chapter will explore how black women participated in these social movements and how black women have been oppressed by various groups throughout American history.

Black Women's Enslavement

Angela Davis (1983), a prominent scholar and political activist, notes that historical narratives about slavery often portray black women as house servants, given their gender and the traditional domestic role of women. However, within the institution of slavery, black men, women and children were all equally seen as "providers." As

such, black women were just as likely to be field hands as black men. Davis notes that enslaved black women comprised 50 percent of the labor force that built the Santee Canal in North Carolina.

Davis (1983) states even pregnant women were not given leniency in field work; they were beaten for not meeting their quotas, just as black men were. In addition, black pregnant women who were convicted of capital crimes often had their executions delayed to ensure the health of the enslaved child (Berry and Alford 2012).

Black enslaved women then were not seen as mothers in the way that white women were. In fact, black enslaved women were referred to as "breeders" to dehumanize them and rationalize their abuse. Black men, women and children would be sold like animals for profit. To limit enslaved persons from protesting this treatment, a South Carolina court ruling stated that slaves had no legal claim to their children. Kenneth Stampp, a renowned historian states, "…the slave woman was first a full-time worker for her owner, and only incidentally a wife, mother and homemaker" (Davis 1997: 100).

When the threat of abolishing the slave trade reached the United States, slave owners believed "naturally producing" more slaves was a necessity (Berry and Alford 2012). While enslaved men and women could reproduce with each other, enslaved women were legally deemed the property of white male slave-owners. The white male slave-owners had no reservations about forcefully using enslaved black women as breeders, with or without enslaved black men's participation (Davis 1983).

In 1853, Harriet Jacobs wrote a letter to the *New York Daily Tribune* entitled, *Letter from a Fugitive Slave: Slaves Sold under Peculiar Circumstances* (see Appendix A)*,* which depicted the horrific nature of enslaved black women's sexual abuse. Jacobs was born in North Carolina where she fled from slavery and lived as a fugitive until she was freed. In her letter, Jacobs recounted how her mother could not protect her youngest daughter from molestation by their married white male owner. When Jacobs' mother asked the owner to spare her youngest daughter, the mother was put in jail. The youngest daughter was then told she had to agree to the owner's sexual abuse or her mother would be sold. Jacob's youngest sister chose to endure the sexual abuse to protect her family (Jacobs 1853).

White male slave owners are often viewed as the main antagonist when describing the mistreatment of enslaved black women, but white women were complicit and just as brutal as their male counterparts (Berry and Alford 2012). Jacobs (1853) notes the jealousy of white women in her letter:

> Would you not think that Southern Women had cause to despise that Slavery which forces them to bear so much deception practiced by their husbands? Yet all this is true, for a slaveholder seldom takes a white mistress; ... But not so with his poor slave victim, that he has robbed of everything that can make life desirable; she must be torn from the little that is left to bind her to life, and sold by her seducer and master, caring not where, so that it puts him in possession of enough to purchase another victim. And such are the peculiar circumstances of American Slavery…. (Jacobs 1853: 2).

The white wives and mistresses of slave owners were jealous of the sexual relationships between their husbands and enslaved black women. Jacobs (1853) suggests white women were jealous of enslaved black women because they were forced to deal

with their husband's infidelity. The insincerity of the white women's jealousy is evident since enslaved black women were not in a position to deny their white male owners access to their bodies. To punish the enslaved women for their perceived transgressions, white women would beat the enslaved women to disfigure them, sell their mixed-race children, or participate in other actions that would cause emotional or physical harm to the enslaved women (Berry and Alford 2012).

Davis (1983) suggests although the sexual exploitation and physical abuse of enslaved women was prevalent, the abuse was not accepted passively; the women often fought off their attackers, some going as far as poisoning the slave owner. Enslaved women also resisted their enslavement in more subtle ways. For example, black enslaved women would learn to read and write to pass knowledge along to their communities. Jenny Proctor, a former enslaved woman explained the importance of learning to enslaved people, "None of us was lowed to see a book or try to learn. They say we git smarter than they if we was to learn anything…" (Davis 1983: 100).   In 1973, Katy Ferguson, an enslaved woman who bought her own freedom, opened a school called Katy Ferguson's School for the Poor in New York. The school's mission was to educate poor children, many of whom were black.

The resistance of racist, sexist activities by black women was necessary for the success of the pending abolition movement.   The next section will explore enslaved black women's role in their families during this time in history.

Enslaved Black Families

Davis (1983) explains the separation of black families during slavery, but the bonds of kinship and love, traditions of family relations, and families' desire to stay together remained. Families often consisted of adoptive kin, distant relatives, wife, husband, and child.   In other words, the resiliency of enslaved peoples' spirit could not be destroyed even by slavery.   Given the harsh conditions the women had to endure, they became mentally and physically strong, self-reliant, and protective of their families (Davis 1983).

Unlike their white counterparts, some enslaved black women did not view domestic work in their own homes as degrading since it was one of the only times they could control an aspect of their lives. Due to enslaved black women's expected participation in field work, a division of labor in the enslaved family home whereby public and domestic tasks were divided was impractical. According to Davis (1983:16), "domestic life took on an exaggerated importance in the social lives of slaves, for it did indeed provide them with the only space where they could truly experience themselves as human beings."

Domestic work was one of the only times black families could retain some portion of humanity by doing work that was not for the benefit or profit of someone else. This made domestic work essential to the survival of the black community so the tasks were shared equally between enslaved men and women. Since the division of the domestic work had no hierarchy, Davis (1983) suggests enslaved families were an early model of sexual equality in the domestic realm.

Abolitionist Movement

The abolitionist movement began in the 1830s as a response to the institution of slavery; it is noted as an important segue for black enslaved women to begin organizing for liberation. Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) note that enslaved black women's participation in the abolition movement was essential for their survival, given the physical and emotional abuse by white women and white men (who also participated in the sexual abuse of enslaved women).

Even black men within the abolitionist movement presented a problem to black women. Although the key purpose of the abolitionist movement was to emancipate all slaves, within the movement, black men and black women argued about the issues that were most important. One male abolitionist was quoted as saying "this is the black man's hour" (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995: 29).

Despite their contentious relationship with white women and occasionally black men, enslaved black women understood they were all necessary participants in the abolitionist movement (Lewis 1977). Enslaved black women garnered sympathy for their anti-slavery cause by telling white women in the abolitionist movement stories of their sexual abuse. Whereas the actual enslavement of black women did not garner the same sentiment, the stories of sexual abuse outraged white women. The flagrant hypocrisy in white women's failure to acknowledge their participation in the oppressive institution of slavery was noted by enslaved (black) women (Davis 1983).

During their enslavement, free and enslaved women worked together to destroy the institution of slavery and to combat sexual abuse that was racialized and gendered

(Taylor 1998). Black women urged white women to advance the liberation of all black slaves (men, women and children). Isabella van Wagener, a former slave turned abolitionist and more famously known as Sojourner Truth, elaborated on this idea. Truth is considered one of the earliest advocates for abolition and women's rights. Truth's famous poem *Ain't I a Woman?* noted the similarities between the work of enslaved black men and black women and acknowledged that the femininity of black women was treated differently than white women. She writes:

> And ain't I a woman? Look at me... I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man -- when I could get it -- and bear de lash as well! And ain't I a woman? (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995: 28)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* is a white abolitionist who was also essential to the movement. Stowe used literary prose to encourage white women to support the anti-slavery cause. In her novel, Eliza, a sheltered house servant and one of the main characters in the book, was portrayed as a more palatable version of womanhood so that the character would resonate with white women (Davis 1983). Stowe believed that appealing to white women's maternal instincts would accumulate more sympathy for abolition of slavery.

Supporters of slavery recognized the potential for an alliance to form among women of various races. In an attempt to destroy this alliance, racist rhetoric (such as calling white women "nigger lovers"), intimidation, and threats of harm were used to discourage white women from supporting the abolitionist movement.   While this tactic

worked for some white women, it was not enough to disrupt the movement that was

beginning. Stowe's strategic misrepresentation of enslaved black women assisted in

gaining the support of white women. However, the cost of this misrepresentation was

considerable. Black women were expected to adhere to the ideals of womanhood that

were unrealistic given their environment and the history they endured (Davis, 1983).

Another instance in which white women and black women tried to align forces to

fight patriarchal repression occurred in 1833 when a young white woman named

Prudence Crandall accepted a black girl into her school. The parents of the white

students attending the school protested the black girl's enrollment. Instead of allowing

racism to discourage her from helping abolitionists, Crandall opened her own all-black

school, the Canterbury Female Boarding School. Crandall's actions symbolize the

alliance between the black liberation movement and women's rights movement.

During the abolitionist movement, industrialization also was beginning to take

hold of the United States economy. This meant that white women were encouraged to

work outside of the home to meet increasing labor force demands. As factories became

more prominent, white men began to view white women as competition in the labor force

instead of solely as domestic partners. White women began to compare their domestic

lives to slavery, a marked exaggeration, but also evidence that black women and

abolitionists could potentially have a common goal (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995).

The abolitionist movement allowed white women to protest their oppressive roles

at home, while also pleading a cause with another oppressed group – black women.

White women in the abolitionist movement gained political experience used to develop

the women's rights movement.   However, white women's acceptance of racism, but not sexism made black women wary of forming an alliance with them during the abolitionist movement (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995).

Women's Liberation Movement

Taylor (1998) notes the first "wave" of feminism also can be viewed as the first phase of the women's rights movement, which effectively began during the abolitionist movement. White feminists who participated in the abolitionist movement focused on sexual oppression. Black women recognized the racism within the women's liberation movement, but decided dealing with white women's racism was a small price to pay for their own well-being (Davis 1983).

First Wave Feminism

During the first wave, black women became increasingly cognizant of the shared problems they had with white women, which included but are not limited to: wage issues, sexual violence, and lack of reproductive rights. Black women also began to realize their liberation would require confronting the oppressive systems of sexism *and* racism, simultaneously. To increase the impact of their efforts in the fight against gender inequality, black women chose to work with racist white women. In doing so, black women were often subjected to frequent reminders from white suffragettes that the right to vote would give whites supremacy over other races (Taylor 1998).

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the first white feminists to attempt to link the abolitionist movement to the women's suffrage movement.   However, given the precarious history black women had with white women, the nature of her intentions for

support were questionable. Stanton's inclusion of black women in the conversation regarding gender inequality is noteworthy because it was a last-ditch effort to include gender in the 15th amendment, which prohibits discrimination from voting based on race or previous servitude (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Davis 1983; Taylor 1998). Literature suggests white feminist support of the abolitionist movement stemmed from white women's fear that black men would receive suffrage before they did. The power dynamics that have shaped the discord between black and white feminists can be traced back to this time (Davis 1983; Taylor 1998).

After the 15th amendment passed, black men gained the right to vote while women of all races were still denied. At this time, black women became even more empowered in their fight for equal rights. Many black women believed they needed to vote more than white women to protect their rights and improve their overall conditions in society (Taylor 1998).

The climax of the first wave of the feminist movement was the passage of the 19th amendment, which was ratified in 1920. This amendment prohibits gender discrimination in voting and should have been cause for celebration for all in support of women's rights. However, black women were met with hostility from white women when they attempted to uphold their newly granted constitutional right. In 1921, the leading women's suffragette organization, National Women's Party (NWP), held a convention, which black women also attended. At the convention, approximately 60 black women requested to speak to then president Alice Paul about their voter disenfranchisement. Paul advocated for all women's right to vote, but refused to support

black suffrage out of fear of alienating her Southern constituency. It was no surprise that Paul was resentful of black women's criticism of voter disenfranchisement and their presence at the convention. As time went on, black women began to realize that the white suffragettes were willing to work with black women, but only to advance the issues most commonly faced by white women. A separation between what it meant to be a black feminist versus white feminist became a more concrete issue (Taylor 1998).

Second Wave Feminism

The first wave of feminism required black women to collaborate with white feminists for women to gain the right to vote. The second wave of feminism did not require the same strategy. After the passage of the 13th through 19th amendments and the realization that white women would not advocate for issues specific to black women, the division between black and white feminists expanded. Despite this division, black women were still willing to work with white feminists for gender equality for all women (Taylor 1998). The second wave is characterized by the focus on multiple issues, such as workplace discrimination, domestic violence, a lack of reproductive rights, and freedom of sexuality. This wave is commonly credited with being the official rise of the feminist movement (Taylor 1998). The emergence of the second wave generally coincided with the civil rights movement of the 1950s-1960s.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is credited with introducing "nonviolent, direct action," such as sit-ins (Taylor 1998: 239). The introduction of this protest strategy provided a framework for the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), which was a prominent force of the second wave feminist movement.

The WLM coincides with the Freedom Summer of 1964. During this time black women began to call black men out about their sexism towards women. Black women argued that those in civil rights movements were dismissing and dehumanizing black women's experiences. SNCC archives document this sexist behavior. One document, which details examples of patriarchal behavior within SNCC, was written by Mary King and Casey Hayden (see Appendix B).

At this time, some white women began to transition their participation in SNCC to a newer organization called the Students for Democratic Society (SDS). This organization catered more to elite white women's interests, effectively denouncing the anti-racism movement black women were fighting. In 1964, amidst the defection of white women from SNCC, the Civil Rights Act was passed. The Act sought to protect citizens' constitutional rights, including voting and home ownership, and to expand education and employment opportunities (Taylor 1998). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was initiated the following year. The EEOC was tasked with enforcing Title VII, which prohibits workplace gender discrimination. Soon after, Aileen Hernandez, Pauli Murray, Betty Friedan, and about a dozen unnamed women (who were influential in their respective communities) instituted the National Organization for Women (NOW).

NOW was brought to the forefront in the women's liberation movement courtesy of the younger white women who defected from SNCC and SDS. Given ample financial support by elite white women, NOW could flood media outlets with issues surrounding problematic gendering, but these issues focused on white women's experiences. Thus,

while the original purpose of the feminist movement was to rid society of racist, sexist, and legal barriers, the mission soon shifted to accommodate the needs of elitist white women (Taylor 1998).

Black Feminism

The erasure of black women's issues from the women's liberation movement and anti-racism movement necessitated the creation of a perspective to encompass black women's dual, and sometimes multiple, identities. Black feminism was a response to that erasure (Collins 2009; Few 2007). Few (2007) denotes the perspective of black feminism as the exploration of what it means to concurrently encompass the identities of a black person and a woman. Collins (1996, 2009) explains that black feminism offers black women a way to distance from white feminists by taking race *and* gender into consideration.

During black feminism's rise in the 1970s, terms like womanism and intersectionality began to emerge as a description of feminist issues specific to black women. Womanism, like black feminism, is grounded in the historical oppression of black women by race and gender and often is used to separate black women from the white feminist movement (Collins 1996). Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple,* is credited with the introduction of the term into the black feminist lexicon in 1983.

Throughout the history of feminism, a failure to consider the issues of women who did not identify as white remained (and remains) a source of contention. The term intersectionality addressed the issue by providing a description for the ways social categories interconnect. Kimberele Crenshaw (1996) is the originator of the term

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intersectionality. Intersectionality allowed a more nuanced exploration of black women's identities by focusing on taboo topics such as black women's sexuality (Crenshaw 1996; Williams 2013).

Richardson (2003) notes the erasure of queer black women from historic narratives in the black community. In the black community's attempt reject their dehumanization, they began to adopt the heterosexual gender norms of traditional (white) society. Sexual deviance from these norms included pre-marital sex, inter-racial sex, oversexualization of black women, and anything that is considered outside the heterosexual social norm. The black community believed their assimilation into white society would alleviate their continual mistreatment. Black respectability became a survival tactic in the black community, but especially for black women (Richardson 2003). Black women's recurrent struggle between their dual (and sometimes multiple) identities was evident when they began working with black men in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM).

Civil Rights Movement (CRM)

The mid 1950s to late 1960s is considered the timeframe for the CRM. Although men from the civil rights movement are the most commemorated, black women participated in every stage—and arguably initiated and maintained the power of the movement. In 1955, JoAnn Robinson and the Women's Political Committee worked together to organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott, though Martin Luther King Jr is the most lauded figure. Former NAACP secretary, Ella Baker, played an integral part in the organization of students (white and black) to create SNCC.

During the civil rights movement, black women began to hold men more publicly accountable for the sexist behavior they exhibited. However, black men in the movement often downplayed the concerns of black women and claimed the focus of the CRM was combatting racism. The violence was often used to put black women in a subordinate state, and women were expected to be silent about their abuse (Richie 1985, 2012). Crenshaw (1996) notes that rape accusations were traditionally used against black men to justify white terrorism.

Freedom Summer was a period during the civil rights movement where the goal was to register as many black people as possible to vote in Mississippi. During this time, sexual relationships between black men and white women became more prevalent (Taylor 1998). Black women were tethered to the myth of emasculating females, which made non-black women more appealing to black men. However, black women arguably were concerned about black men's relationships with white women because of their previous experiences with white women in the women's liberation movement, and the questionable nature of their intentions towards the black community.

The enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ultimately led to push back from white people, and a new phase of the civil rights movement was born. The next sections will explore various stages of the CRM, including the Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party.

Black Power Movement

The Black Power movement was developed to combat the white-lash black men and women experienced from the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[1] "Black Power" centered around the idea of Black nationalism (Taylor 1998: 243). Black nationalism encouraged black people to separate themselves from European (American) society and focus on their black identity.

During this time, racial uncertainties for white people who had been supporting the anti-racism civil rights movement were heightened. After the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, some white people found a new cause in the Vietnam War; others believed that justice had been achieved for blacks. Despite the reason, black people understood that their oppression had not been overcome (Taylor 1998). The Black Power Movement recognized the acts of violence committed by the state against the black community, which led black people to new tactics of defense.[2] Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination is one of the catalysts for the creation of the movement.

Black women within the Black Power movement were often treated as accessories to black men, often being relegated to the roles of "ego-stroking girlfriend, nurturing mother, or stoic wife" (Taylor 1998: 244). Black women within the movement were not

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[1] CNN contributor, Van Jones, coined the term white-lash to describe racist individuals anger about advances in civil rights (Ryan, 2016).

[2] Previously, non-violent direct action was the course of action, but the black power movement pushed the use of violence as a defense to the forefront (Taylor 1998).

only susceptible to sexual assault by racist white men, but even men within the movement, which will be explored in the next section.

Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party (BPP), one of the most prominent Black Nationalist organizations, was primarily male at its induction.   The BPP was established in 1966 in response to violence towards the black community by police officers and white people alike (Martin 2014; Taylor 1998).

Assata Shakur and Elaine Brown, two of the most well-known female members of the BPP, spoke out about the various ways women were unequal within the moment (Shakur 2009; Taylor 1998). Shakur (2009) spoke about the leadership in the BPP ignoring numerous complaints of physical and sexual abuse. To demonstrate the widespread nature of abuse, Brown recounts times when she was physically struck by Huey P. Newton, one of the founders of the BPP. Brown and Shakur both noted how men within the BPP were not receptive to the complaints from black women members who encountered assault (Morey 2013).

Eldridge Cleaver (1999) was one of the early leaders of the BPP. In 1958, Cleaver was arrested and sent to prison for sexual assault and intent to murder. During his time in prison, Cleaver wrote a book called *Soul on Ice* that detailed events Cleaver felt led up to the CRM, along with his own account of what happened during the CRM. While Cleaver's book was considered one of the top 10 books of the year, it included very disturbing material. In his memoir, Cleaver recounted how he believed that raping white women was a rebellious act against racism. However, Cleaver also noted that he

practiced raping black women to learn his technique. He recounts why he chose to rape

black women in his book:

> I became a rapist. To refine my technique and modus operandi, I started out by
> practicing on black girls in the ghetto -- in the black ghetto where dark and
> vicious deeds appear not as aberrations or deviations from the norm, but as part of
> the sufficiency of the Evil of the day -- and when I considered myself smooth
> enough, I crossed the tracks and sought out white prey. I did this consciously,
> deliberately, willfully, methodically -. (Cleaver 1999: 33)

Cleaver's book was considered "an authentic voice of black rage in a white-ruled world"

(Kifner 1998:1).

Mirroring the patriarchal structures in American society, black women played a

large part in the success of the BPP although black men in the movement get the most

acknowledgement. In 1967, Tarika Lewis was the first black woman to join the BPP.

Lewis is a graphic artist responsible for creating the first images documenting a call for

black people to practice self-defense. She is considered one of the greatest contributors to

the prevalence of the black male revolutionary image (Martin 2014). Though historically

dismissed as important, Shakur noted black women were the main participants in

maintenance programs, like the community breakfast program, which sustained

recruitment and vigor of the movement (Morey 2013).

Lewis and other black women graphic artists' artwork depicted black women as

"gun-toting revolutionaries," fighting alongside black men (Martin 2014:1). While the

imagery surrounding the BPP espouse a male-dominated organization, by the 1970s black

women comprised sixty-six percent of the members in the BPP. However, the erasure of

black women from the BPP and black power movement proved to be useful in black

women's progress. In 1968, the FBI deemed the BPP a threat to the government and subsequently assassinated or jailed the male leaders of the BPP. Since the organization was comprised of approximately two-thirds black women, the organizing for black liberation continued. The next section will explore the War on Drugs and its effects on the black community and black women.

War on Drugs

Richard Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, is considered the creator of the "War on Drugs." The War on Drugs refers to the policies enacted by the government to discourage illegal drug trade (Hudak 2016). Hudak notes that Nixon viewed drug abuse and addiction as a "criminal element". [3] Nixon is described as a man who was fearful of "otherness," which consisted of any group Nixon perceived as a threat (Hudak 2016: 50). A few examples of these groups include Jewish people, women, and African Americans. Nixon's War on Drugs utilized the Southern Strategy. Hudak defines the Southern Strategy below:

> It capitalized on white Americans' fears of a changing society and sought to shift blame for these changes onto the integration of schools, crime, drug use, urban unrest, and the quest for civil rights. (Hudak 2016: 50)

Nixon's WH counsel, John Elrichman, has been quoted overtly stating the War on Drugs was driven by racism (Hudak 2016).

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[3] Nixon's predecessor, Lyndon Johnson, viewed drug abuse and addiction as a public health crisis, rather than as a crime problem.

Hudak notes that Nixon posited the use and abuse of marijuana and other drugs as a predominant issue in the black community. Nixon's narrative created an "us versus them" scenario, with black people being considered the "them" (Hudak 2016: 51). In 1970, the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, also known as the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), was passed by the Nixon administration. The CSA assigned drugs into five categories, referred to as schedules, with Schedule 1 drugs being considered the most dangerous and heavily regulated. Nixon's early framing of drugs as an issue in the black community was successful in positing the black community as the enemy during the drug war.

While Nixon is considered the creator of the War on Drugs, Reagan is considered a central contributor to the expansion of the drug war (Kuzmarov 2009). Reagan, like Nixon, centered drug control in his administration's platform. Nixon was more focused on marijuana during his term, but Reagan's administration focused more on cocaine, specifically crack cocaine.

Small (2001) suggests the punishments for crack cocaine and powder cocaine are proof of the racist intentions of the War on Drugs. The possession and use of crack cocaine carries a harsher sentence than powder cocaine. She argues that this disparity in sentencing regarding cocaine is explained by the fact that black people are more likely to use crack cocaine and white people are more likely to use powder cocaine.

In 1965, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, Daniel Moynihan, released the Moynihan Report. The report was a government study of the black family that blamed the problems ailing the black community on a matriarchal family structure. The study

asserted the presence of a male-dominated household in the black community would alleviate many of the social problems plaguing the community (Davis 1983; Ocen 2013).

Reagan's push in the drug war focused more on attributing drug abuse and addiction to choices made by individuals and their cultural upbringing. This view was espoused by many prominent intellectuals like James Q Wilson of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Wilson promoted the idea of "career criminals," whose only deterrent from a life of crime was harsh punishment (Kuzmarov 2009:169). Even government officials contributed to the idea of black culture creating criminals and drug addicts (Davis 1983; Kuzmarov 2009).

The War on Drugs has been attributed with the rise in mass incarceration. Between 1977 to 2013, Ocen (2013) notes an 800 percent increase in the number of imprisoned Americans, with women being the fastest growing demographic.[4] While black people comprise only 13 percent of drug users, they represent a disproportionate number of the punitive actions levied against drug abusers (Small 2001).[5] Ocen (2013:472) points out that black women are three times more likely to be incarcerated as white women, often for "non-violent, drug -related offenses."

While many narratives surrounding mass incarceration focus on black men, black women also have been negatively affected. The framing of crime as an individual issue as opposed to a social one has had a profound effect on the perception of black women in

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[4] In the 1970s, approximately 250,000 Americans (5,600 of which were women) were imprisoned in the US; by 2013 over 2 million people were imprisoned (200,000 of which were women) (Ocen 2013).

[5] Black people represent 35% of individuals arrested for drug possession, 55% of individuals convicted, and 74% of individuals incarcerated for drugs (Small 2001).

the US (Ocen 2013). Between 1986 and 1991, black women incarcerated for non-violent drug offenses increased by 828 percent (Small 2001).[6]

Political leaders in the US often emphasize the myth that violence in America is a result of illegal drugs and inner-city gangs; black women are subsequently blamed for creating this culture (Ocen 2013). The tremendous increase in female headed households in the black family, as a consequence of mass incarceration, has contributed to this culture of blame. Black women's households are viewed as criminogenic, or likely to cause criminal behavior. Reagan is also credited with creating the "welfare queen" trope (Demby 2013). The welfare queen trope posits black women as lazy and living off (white) American taxpayers' money.

In recent years, the U.S. has seen a marked shift in the public's perceptions of drug policies. Medical marijuana is seen as acceptable and necessary, and drug addiction is starting to be viewed as a public health issue, as opposed to a criminal one. However, this has mostly applied to white drug abusers (Small 2001), as for example with the current opioid epidemic receiving so much attention.

Conclusion

Black women have played a large part in many social movements throughout American history, though their participation is often erased (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Davis 1983; Richardson 2003; Shakur 2009). They have contributed to the advancement of the abolition movement, women's rights, and civil rights, though their

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[6] The US imprisons more people for non-violent drug offenses, than it does for violent offenses (Small 2001).

roles often are not recognized because of their dual identity. In the fight for women's

rights black women are overlooked due to their race. In the fight for civil rights, they are

overlooked because of their gender. Yet, black women have played an integral role in

maintaining the black family, black culture, and various social movements. The next

chapter will use this historical context to examine the origins of the trap of loyalty.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGINS OF THE TRAP OF LOYALTY

The term trap of loyalty did not exist before Beth Richie created it, but the presence of the defining qualities existed in the black community for many preceding generations. While Richie (1985, 2012) emphasizes the trap of loyalty as ways in which black women are exploited by black men, it is important to understand how such an intra-racial exploitation within such an inter-racial context developed. In the following sections, I review literature to show how the trap of loyalty has developed throughout American history, and its effects on black women today.

Each section explores the origin of each of the trap of loyalty's three defining qualities: (1) Black women are more privileged than black men; (2) Black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence; and (3) Black women are expected to buffer their families from racism. These sections discuss how different groups of people, including white men, white women, and black men, have exploited black women, thus developing the trap of loyalty as Richie conceptualizes.

Black Women's Privilege

Richie (1985) argues that black women today are viewed as more privileged than black men. This section will examine how the erasure of black women from historical (slavery and the War on Drugs) narratives demonstrate where this defining quality originated and how it is still present today.

Davis (1983) notes historical narratives surrounding slavery imply black women's experiences only differed from white women due to black women's forced participation in slavery. This implies black women's experiences during slavery were less harsh than black men's.

Literature suggests that black women's gender is viewed as a privilege that protected black women, as opposed to the disadvantage it signified when combined with their dual black identity (Davis 1983; Taylor 1998;). The story of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings is an example of how black women's privilege was framed during their enslavement.

Hemings, a black woman enslaved by the Jefferson family, is often referred to as Jefferson's mistress. Given the power that slave owners wielded over enslaved black women, to call Hemings a mistress is to ignore the context of her relationship to Jefferson (Davis 1983). Stories about enslaved black women's sexual abuse are often ignored, creating a perception that black women fared better during their enslavement than black men. The idea that black women are more privileged than black men, becomes even more evident during the War on Drugs

The War on Drugs and issues surrounding mass incarceration typically focus on the negative effects of black men's experiences with and in the criminal justice system (Ocen 2013). The War on Drugs also is credited with the rise in the number of imprisoned black men in America (Lee, McCormick, Hicken, & Wildeman 2015). As such, black men's involvement with the prison system is often viewed as a common life occurrence for black men, but not black women. Black often women are excluded from

critiques surrounding the War on Drugs and mass incarceration since both have been primarily framed as systems of racial control of black men without considering other potential biases, such as gender.

Lee, et al. (2015: 270) support this idea noting early research surrounding mass incarceration focused "almost exclusively" on adult (black) men. Research focused on how black men's incarceration, due to the War on Drugs, affected their families and communities. These effects are known as the spillover effect.[7] Lee et al. (2015) suggest later research centering incarcerated black women and those connected to someone who is incarcerated are the result of the spillover effect. This suggests that black women's issues within the prison system are less serious than black men's.

Literature suggests black women are viewed as having an advantage over black men in the legal system, since they are not incarcerated at the same rate as black men (Lee et al. 2015; Ocen 2013). However, black women are 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than white women. Just like previous anti-racism and feminist movements, critiques surrounding the War on Drugs erased black women's dual identities (Ocen 2013). The erasure of black women from the War on Drugs and narratives surrounding mass incarceration continue to encourage the belief that black women have more privilege than black men.

While black men are often the face of many anti-racism social movements, Ocen (2013:277) notes when black women speak up about their gender issues, their critiques

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[7] Spillover effect refer to events that arise due to a seemingly unrelated event (Lee et al. 2015).

are often seen as a "distraction" to real issues in the black community. However, as later sections will explore, black women often choose their race over their gender (and other identities), which has historically meant black men's issues are viewed as black issues. The belief that black men's issues are more important than black women's suggests that black women are doing better than black men.

The erasure of black women's experiences within narratives surrounding slavery and the War on Drugs signifies that black women's privilege is a perception based on exclusion. Even current narratives surrounding black women in education imply black women are more privileged than black men (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995).

Black women are often lauded for having higher educational achievements than black men, while still being paid less than their male and white female counterparts.[8] Benokraitis and Feagin (1995: 35) support this point by stating, "If white women seeking promotions in white-collar settings often encounter a "glass ceiling" beyond which they cannot move, women of color face what has been called the "concrete wall."

As black women's stories are erased from history and current narratives, the assumption becomes that black women are doing better than men, offering support to Richie's defining quality that black women are more privileged than black men (1985, 2012). While much of the literature challenges the idea of black women's privilege over

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[8] The African American Policy Forum (AAPF) figures on the wealth gap for net income challenge the belief of black women's privilege. On average, the net worth of various groups is $43,800 for single white men, $41,500 for single white women, $7,900 for single black men, and $100 for single black women (2014).

men, it also introduces the idea that black women do hold privilege over other groups (Collins 1996; Crenshaw 1996; Richardson 2003).

Richardson (2003) points out black feminists often critique black men for upholding patriarchy, but black women and feminists continuously ignore heterosexual norms. Intersectionality introduced the ability to critique various dominant identities now that they have been acknowledged.

Williams (2013) discusses the Audre Lorde Project to highlight why intersectionality is necessary to understand black women's privilege over some others. The Audre Lorde Project's purpose is to explore the social environment for black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals on various Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses.[9] The dehumanization of black women throughout history and the black community's conformity to heterosexual norms meant black women who identified with the LGBTQ community added yet another subordinate identity. The project ultimately found that a climate of ostracization existed for members of the black LGBTQ community, which was intensified for those who identified as a woman (Williams 2013).

The absence of intersectionality from discussions surrounding black women's participation in different American social movements and institutions has fostered the belief that black women are more privileged than black men (Crenshaw 1996; Ocen

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[9] The project is named after Audre Lorde, a notable black feminist and the first black lesbian woman to give a speech at Spelman University, an all-women HBCU. Lorde is notable for bringing awareness to issues surrounding black people, specifically women, in the LGBTQ movement (Williams 2013).

2013; Richardson 2003; Williams 2013;). However, the idea that black women are more privileged than black men is contradicted by historic and current experiences. While the first defining quality was overtly present during slavery and the War on Drugs, the two remaining defining qualities of the trap of loyalty are present throughout much move of American history.

Black Women Enduring Abuse

The defining quality, and expectation, that black women should endure their abuse in silence is reflected throughout much of American history (Richie 1985, 2012). This section will examine black women's experiences during slavery and various anti-racism movements to trace this defining quality's origins.

Enslaved black women and black men were exploited through their physical labor, but black women experienced exploitation in other ways. Enslaved black women dealt with physical, sexual, and emotional abuse from both white women and white men. The unique exploitation of enslaved black women resulted from a combination of racism and sexism. The forced participation of black women in the institution of slavery meant black women were forced to adhere to many characteristics that were traditionally viewed as "masculine" (Davis 1983). This identity placed black women in direct opposition to traditional womanhood. As such, enslaved black women found ways to endure the abuse and exploitation, but this was often done behind closed doors as suggested by Richie (1985).

Harriet Jacobs' (1853) letter detailing her sister's sexual abuse is an early indicator of the expectation of black women to endure their abuse in silence. Jacobs'

sister chose to continue being sexually assaulted to protect her family. This choice is reflective of arguments that black women often deem their own safety as secondary to their community's. The sacrifice Jacobs' sister made also could explain why black women often endure their abuse in silence, usually out of protection for someone other than themselves (Richie 1985, 2012).

Although enslaved black women were often raped by their masters, they were subsequently blamed for their own victimization. Berry and Alford (2012) note white women were often jealous of the sexual attention their husbands gave to enslaved black women, even though the sexual relations were exploitive, forced and coercive. This suggests a disconnect between white women and their understanding of enslaved black women's victimization and abuse. Whereas white women did not appear to understand a difference existed between white womanhood and enslaved black women's womanhood, enslaved black women did and used that knowledge resourcefully (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Davis 1983).

Collins (2009) linked the denial of black women's victimization to historic and contemporary stereotypes of black women. For example, the label of Jezebel has been used to justify the sexual exploitation of black women. This controlling image posits black women as sexually available and fertile. Similarly, the Mammy controlling image is used to endorse subordination, obedience and servitude of black women. Black women consistently have had labels assigned to them to rationalize abuse they endured. Literature suggests black women endure their abuse in silence because they are not "allowed" to be victims (Davis 1983; Jacobs 1853; Taylor 1998).

The institution of slavery dehumanized all black people, but black women had the added burden of managing sexual and emotional exploitation and its consequences, while subsequently being denied victimhood by white women and white men. This contributed to an increase in the sexual abuse of enslaved black women by their white male slave owners, as white women subsequently ignored black women's abuse (Berry and Alford 2012; Davis 1983). Black women's consistent abuse during slavery and their denial of victimhood signifies an early historic presence of the defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence.

Though white women and white men were viewed as black women's main antagonists during slavery, black men also were problematic during various anti-racism movements, such as the CRM. Black men have historically been more empathetic of racism than sexism since gender is a privileged identity for them. This meant the sexual violence experienced by black women was swept under the rug during the CRM, just as it was during slavery.

During the CRM, black women were denied victimhood, but this time by black men. The erasure of black women's abuse in the CRM suggests that black men's abusive behavior towards black women was secondary to black liberation and a continuation of black women's dehumanization. The inability of black women to claim victimhood, even within their own communities, explains why black women endure their abuse in silence (Davis 1983; Jacobs 1853; Taylor 1998). If nobody considers you a victim, how can you speak out about it?

Crenshaw (1996) notes rape accusations were traditionally used against black men to justify white terrorism, which could explain why black women who did speak out were often labelled "race traitors" (Roberson 2003). However, the reality is that black women are more likely to be sexually assaulted than a black man is to be falsely accused (Ritchie 1985). Yet, black women are socialized not to critique the men in their community publicly (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Crenshaw 1996; Taylor 1998). The stigma attached to speaking out against black men's abuse is another example of the expectation of black women to endure their abuse in silence (Richie 1985, 2012). Black women see this as another way society ignores the victimization of black women (Few 2007). However, as Richie (1985, 2012) suggests, black women have often chosen to shield their families from the atrocities of racism, even at the expense of their own safety.

The denial of black women's victimhood during slavery and the CRM combined with the stigma attached to speaking out against black men highlights the historical presence of the defining quality, black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence. The next section will examine how black women enduring their abuse in silence also connects to the third defining quality, black women should buffer their families from racism.

Black Women as Buffers for Racism

This section will explore the origins of the final defining quality of the trap of loyalty; black women are expected to buffer their families from racism. The final defining quality differs from the previous two in two distinctive ways; it has the greatest historical presence throughout American history, and shares a unique connection to the

second defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence. As earlier sections have demonstrated, white women and black men have both historically abandoned black women when their issues no longer align with a dominant identity: white or male. When white women and black men choose their race, it's usually at the expense of black women; when black women choose their race, it's often at the expense of themselves. This section examines slavery, various anti-racism movements, and the Women's Liberation movement to denote the presence of the third defining quality: the expectation of black women to buffer their families from racism.

Davis (1983) challenged many of the misconceptions about black women during slavery. In order for sexist slave-owners to justify their mistreatment of enslaved women, traditional notions of white femininity had to be discarded. Black women's "genderless" identity bestowed upon them by slavery has historically been at odds with traditional white femininity (Davis 1983). Traditional (white) womanhood described women as gentle companions, nurturers, and homemakers, and gender ideologies usually viewed women as weaker and in need of protection. This has not been true for black women historically (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Messerschmidt 1993).

As mentioned earlier, enslaved women were expected to work alongside their male counterparts in the harsh conditions of the field, effectively rendering the women genderless or at least in contradiction to traditional, white femininity. The harsh conditions enslaved black people were forced to endure combined with the unique exploitation of enslaved black women meant the need to develop new strategies for survival.

The denial of black women's gender meant that enslaved black women were primarily identified by their race, thus making the racism they experienced a primary issue. This indicates an early presence of black women's expectation to buffer their community from racism (Richie 1985, 2012). Literature suggests that black women buffering their family from racism often leads to black women being forced to choose to endure their abuse in silence, since their gender is often erased (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Davis 1983; Taylor 1998))

While the sexual exploitation and abuse of enslaved women is now no secret, this noted consequence of slavery is often overlooked in the most widely disseminated historical narratives. The focus of historical narratives about slavery tend to focus on the racist implications of slavery, but rarely the gendered issues (Davis 1983).

Nonetheless, in this era, we see how enslaved women were essential to the preservation of the black family (just as black women remain the backbone of the family in present times). Enslaved black women believed that when black men were degraded, they were as well. As such, enslaved black women fought alongside black men—and at times alone— to protect the men from a system meant to demean them (Taylor 1998). In their fight for abolition, black women chose to work with the racist white women effectively choosing to endure racial abuse to protect their community. This is another indicator of the historic presence of the third defining quality (Richie 1985, 2012).

Black women worked with racist white women during the Women's Liberation movement (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995). White women's partnership with black women during the Abolition and Women's Liberation movement was borne of enslaved

black women's need to survive racialized and gendered violence (Davis 1983).

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) suggest black women were used as symbols for the

Women's Liberation movement, but their issues were discarded. The erasure of black

women's dual identity from feminist movements along with the view of black women's

race as their primary identity support Richie's final defining quality; black women should

buffer their community from racism (1985, 2012). While black women are expected to

buffer their communities from racism, black men often do not bear the same burden.

Taylor (1998) suggests the discord between white women and black men is not as

notable because each respective group maintains membership in an oppressive system

that provides a form of privilege. For white women, their race is what bestows privilege

upon them; for black men, their gender is a privileged identity.

Black women endured working with racist white women for the women's

liberation and abolitionist movement, and the abuse of white men and women during

slavery in an attempt to protect their families (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Davis 1983;

Jacobs 1853). Nevertheless, black men also participated in the exploitation of black

women which will be explored in this section. Black women's recurrent struggle

between their dual racial and gender identities was also were evident when they began

working with black men in the Civil Rights Movement.

During the CRM, black women were expected to prioritize their race before their

gender another indicator that black women were expected to buffer their community from

racism by pushing gender issues to the background (Richie 1985, 2012; Taylor 1998).

This divide became clear in the later Civil Rights Movement (CRM) where it became

more evident that black women's membership in two minority groups led to a struggle in choosing a master identity (Lewis 1977).

The disconnect between black men and black women on their purpose within anti-racisms movement created an uneasy relationship between the two groups (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; Hill 2002). Even with the tension between black men and women during this time, black women chose to continue their fight for civil rights that emphasized racial rather than gender or intersectional tensions.

Black women's participation in the Black Power period of the CRM mirrored their participation in the women's liberation and the earlier anti-racism movements—integral to its inception, but disregarded on various issues by their allies (Collins 2009; Davis 1983; Taylor 1998). The embrace of black identity as the primary identity was integral for the black community during the Black Power movement (Taylor 1998).

As such, black women's roles as helpers did not threaten black men's leadership standing in the movement. The relegation of black women to these subsidiary roles was problematic since black women's survival in America, at any point, required two things: black women's unconventional strength and engagement in their own liberation (Collins 2009; Davis 1983). Black men, like white women, understood the allyship of black women, but only for their own advancement. Black men's ability to consign black women to a subordinate role within the black power movement highlights the prioritization of black women's race, while subjugating their gender (Richie 1985, 2012).

Judy Hart, a notable black woman member in the BPP, joined the Black Panthers to work to end police brutality against the black community. However, Hart also

attempted to uphold traditional womanhood within the BPP, suggesting a rejection of black women's unconventional feminity (Morey 2013). While some black women disagreed with Hart's approach, the notion that black women choose their race before their womanhood is an idea that is still common in the black community (Hill 2002; Richie 1985,2012; Taylor 1998). The idea of black women choosing their race before their gender corresponds with the trap of loyalty's defining quality stating black women should buffer their community from racism (Richie 2012). Amidst the male dominance that permeated throughout the civil rights and black power movements, black women still fought for their empowerment although they did so cautiously and with the potential for harsh retaliation (Taylor 1998).

Black women have historically had the expectation to buffer their families from racism. This was achieved by prioritizing black women's racial identity and ignoring their gender (Richie 1985, 2012). The prioritization of race over gender can be linked to Richie's final defining quality; black women should buffer their families from racism because it suggests if race is viewed as the primary identity, there is a necessity to protect the racial identity first, relegating black women's gender issues to the background.

Conclusion

Black women have been participants in the fight for gender and racial equality throughout history. They worked with white women in the feminist movement and black men in anti-racism movements, although actions taken by both latter groups revealed a power differential. Black women have sought throughout history to empower themselves within both movements without having to choose one part of their identity over the other.

The conflict of identity for black women led to the creation of black feminism to address the oppressive systems of racism and sexism that were specific to black women. Throughout the different waves of feminism and anti-racism movements, black feminists attempted to re-shape what it meant to be a black woman into a positive narrative. While Ritchie's concept, the trap of loyalty, is a relatively new term, the defining qualities have been shaped by the experiences and relationships black women had with various groups (white men/women and black men) throughout history. The lingering effects are still visible among black women today.

CHAPTER V

METHODS

This study examines how black women and femmes view themselves within their families, communities, and society. The Trans Student Educational Resources website (TSER) (2017) defines femme as a term used by the LGBTQ community to describe individuals who do not ascribe to the gender binary (man/woman), but still present their gender identity as feminine.

This study explores in what ways black women and femme's experiences in the United States today are defined, or not defined, by the three defining assumptions of the trap of loyalty: (1) Black women are in a better social position than black men; (2) Black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence; and (3) Black women should buffer their family from the consequences of public racism. This study relies on open-ended, in-depth interviews with black women and femmes to explore this issue.

Participants

In order to be eligible to take part in this study, participants had to: (1) Attend both the Women's March on Washington (or a local related women's march) and a Black Lives Matter protest; (2) Identify as a black woman or femme, using an inclusive definition of woman, regardless of sex at birth; (3) Currently reside in the Piedmont Triad of NC; and (4) Be at least 18 years old. If participants met these requirements, they were eligible to participate in the study.

Participants' involvement in these protests are ripe for analysis since women participating in both arguably indicate an awareness of the simultaneous salience of gender and race. In addition, the inclusion of both black women and femmes allows for a more inclusive analysis of different women and non-binary individuals within the black community experience of the trap of loyalty.[10]

A total of eight participants took part in this study. Of the eight participants, there were seven black women, including one who identified as transgender, and one femme. The inclusivity of participants chosen allows me to explore the numerous intersectional identities of black women as they confront the trap of loyalty. Participants' ages range from 21-37 years old. Six participants identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, one person identifies as bisexual, and another as queer.[11] Seven participants self-identify their marital status as single, while one person reports being married but legally separated. All participants report attending college; however, six participants report being enrolled in or having completed a post-baccalaureate program while one person completed a four-year degree, and another is still completing a four-year degree. Two participants note they have white mothers, and another reports having a half Mexican father. One of the participants reports that she holds dual-citizenship in Canada. (For detailed demographic information about each participant, see Appendix C).

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[10] TSER defines non-binary as an individual who does not describe their gender using man or woman (2017).

[11] TSER (2017) defines queer as an individual whose sexual orientation and gender identity are neither heterosexual and/or cisgender ("identifies as their sex assigned at birth").

I expect variations in gender identity, age, and educational status may be helpful in illustrating the range of experiences that can be influenced by these external factors. Although results from this study will not be generalizable to the entire population of black women, generalizability is not the key objective. The primary goal is to explore how (or if) black women grapple with the trap of loyalty in their own narratives of their experiences.

Recruitment Methods

Participants in this study were recruited through two mechanisms. The first mechanism used to recruit participants was through personal relationships. I used this process to secure two pilot interviews. These interviews were conducted to ensure the questions asked of participants would be useful in answering the study's overarching research question: In what ways is the black woman's experience in the United States today defined, or not defined, by the trap of loyalty?

The second method of recruitment was posting flyers (see Appendix D) on Facebook and at several community resource centers (see Appendix E), along with snowball sampling. The following message was posted with the flyer in each Facebook group: "Paid Research Opportunity. Please review eligibility criteria and contact LaToya Dixon if you are interested in participating in this study." Facebook and the community resource center locations were chosen due to the high probability of people who may meet this study's criteria seeing them. If enough participants were not recruited through the aforementioned methods within a two-week timeframe, I planned to use snowball sampling, to find more participants. In using snowball sampling, I allowed participants to

provide suggestions of people who fit the study criteria. I gave participants copies of the study flyer, along with my information, to pass on to potential participants.

Interested participants filled out a demographic survey on Qualtrics to ensure participants in the study to provide information about participants' gender identity, age, and education (see Appendix F). The varying demographics are necessary to provide different perspectives of black women and femme's experiences in America. All participants who were selected for the study provided voluntary consent to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded. Upon completion of the interview, all participants received a $25 Target gift card (see Appendix G).

Interview Procedures

Participants were interviewed in several mutually agreed upon, quiet, semi-public locations. Interviews were open-ended and in-depth, lasting approximately 1-2 hours each. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Interview questions asked about the participants' relationships to society, family, and perceptions of themselves, including salient identities of race and gender. While I used an interview guide to ensure all relevant questions were asked of each participant, probes and additional questions were included (as relevant) to inquire about the three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty (see Appendix H).

Immediately after the interview, notes and memos of key points were recorded, including my observations of the participants from their language, mannerisms, and other seemingly relevant information (see Appendix I). Transcripts from the interviews were

transcribed within approximately three days of each interview. After all interviews were

complete, they were reviewed for relevant themes as they related to the trap of loyalty.

Coding

This study uses the three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty to develop

categories for analysis. Strauss' "grounded theory" is used as the mechanism for coding

the categories (Strauss 1987).[12] Specifically, the information gathered during interviews

was organized by the three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty, noting overlap as

appropriate. I asked participants specific questions to touch on themes relating to each

defining quality to determine the main themes of the study.

The following questions were asked to gain more insight into the first defining

quality that black women are more privileged than black men: (1) How does sexism

impact your life? (2) Do you think your racial identity affects how you view or

experience sexism? (3) How does racism impact your life? (4) Do you think your gender

identity affects how you view or experience racism? (5) When did you begin to

understand black womanhood?

For the defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in

silence, I asked the following questions: (6) What are different issues that affect black

men? (7) Can you explain why you do or do not believe that black women are victims of

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[12] Grounded theory was established by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser in 1967 to help
standardize qualitative research with a consistent method of comparison. It is a method
of research analysis that allows for the development of theories using the analysis of
qualitative data to discover patterns that show up in the data.

racism and/or sexism? (8) Why is it hard for black women to call themselves victims?

(9) What would happen if black women owned their victimization?

In order to understand better the final defining quality that black women are

expected to buffer their families from racism, I asked of participants the following: (10)

What expectations (if there are any) do you feel from your family /community about how

to cope with racism and/or sexism? (11) How do you contribute to your immediate

family? (12) What do you think the role of black women (and femmes) in the family

should be?   (13) What do you believe the role actually is? This list of questions is not

comprehensive, but provides an idea of the data gathered from participants (see Appendix

H for complete list of questions).

Using the three defining qualities as main themes, I created a spreadsheet

template for each theme to organize my data (see Appendix J). Before I began to read

through each transcript, I assigned every pseudonym a different color. I then read through

each transcript and assigned all relevant quotes to one of the three defining qualities.

After coding all of the transcripts, I copied the relevant quotes and information to

the corresponding spreadsheet and highlighted the quotes in the color that was linked

with each pseudonym. When I finished reorganizing the data, I read through the

spreadsheets to note the main themes that appeared from the transcribed data (subthemes

will be discussed in the findings section).

Using Beth Richie's three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty, I determined the

following as consistent themes: (1) Privilege, used to explore how black women view

their privilege relative to others; (2) Perception, used to explain how black women's view

of self relates to enduring abuse; and (3) Roles, used to examine black women's roles

within their families, communities, and society. Each of the aforementioned theme relates

to a defining quality of the trap of loyalty.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS

The trap of loyalty's existence throughout American history is documented in earlier chapters. This chapter will explore how the trap of loyalty's presence is experienced by participants in the study. The interviews with my eight participants reveal three themes related to the trap of loyalty — privilege, perception and roles. This chapter explores how each of these themes relates to the trap of loyalty and how they manifest in participants' lives.

Richie's (1985, 2012) defining quality that black women are more privileged than black men is represented in the data by the main theme of *privilege*. The black women and femmes in the study do not see themselves as privileged over black men, but they do believe many others may see them as privileged because of the invisibility and exclusion of their issues from both anti-racism and feminist movements. Thus, the use of this theme is to describe how black women self-report their privilege (or social status) in relation to a myriad of U.S. institutions, since their experiences are often erased. The second defining quality — black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence — is represented by the theme *perception*. Black women are often aware of their abuse/discrimination/oppression so their perceptions of self are important to understand why they endure mistreatment in silence. The final defining quality — black women are expected to buffer their families from racism — is represented by the main theme *roles*.

Black women self-report their own roles within their families and communities to showcase how black women are expected to buffer their families (and communities) from racism within different roles. The subsequent sections will examine each of the main themes in greater detail to explore the experience of the trap of loyalty in the lives of black women and femmes.

Privilege

> I'm not having kids for awhile simply because black kids are dying every day … and that affects me because . . . I'm not at liberty to say "Oh, after I get my master's degree, I'll have kids." It's like I need to be fully established with enough money to be in the same neighborhood, have my name known. That's when I'll have kids …
>
> <div align="right">-Evy</div>

If you cannot tell your own story, who gets to create the narrative? This appeared to be the underlying question when examining black women's privilege in America. As mentioned earlier, the erasure of black women and femmes from historical and contemporary narratives has contributed to the perception of black women as being privileged over black men.

This section explores how black women view their supposed privilege across various subthemes which emphasize place. Specifically, participants suggest ways in privilege or the lack of it operates within the workplace, academic institutions, family dynamics, and around other social issues.

Workplace

The interviews reveal the workplace is an environment where black women experience discrimination in varying degrees. Five participants described different

interactions they have had in their workplaces to describe their experiences. Kala, a 32-year old black transgender woman, and Leela, a 25-year old black woman, both note how they were not paid the same amount of money as their male counterparts.   Kala grows increasingly frustrated as she recounts a time she recognized that she was being paid less for her work:

> I'm on television, and I get paid $500 an episode for the show I'm on. White man, we were on the same show at the same amount of time, he gets paid for $1500 an episode. He has recurring contracts for the past five years. I have to renew my contract every year. They only do it year to year.

Tameeka, a 24-year-old black woman, speaks about how she worked for two years at her company with no raise or promotion, although she was doing a majority of the work. Tameeka also expressed that white men at her workplace did not respect her, and she was surprised by the consistently condescending way she was spoken to.

Kala and Seaira, a 34-year-old black femme, explains how black queer and transgender women do not have enough job prospects. Seaira believes legislation, such as North Carolina's HB-2 bill, is responsible.[13] Seaira recounts how not having protection cost her a previous job at an organization advocating for LGBTQ rights:

> I was like "Let me go work for a [name redacted]," but at that point, [name redacted] had been in operation for 12 years and never hired a black queer person, and when we pushed back, I was actually dismissed from my position there, and it wasn't paid.

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[13] North Carolina's HB-2 bill excludes sexual orientation from the classes of people who are protected from discrimination. A partial repeal bill (HB 142) was passed in early 2017, but still excluded many protections for transgender individuals (Mclaughlin 2017).

All participants who describe workplace discrimination in their interviews note micro aggressions they deal with at work. Kala talks about being called "ethnic" by her white supervisor and having other sexual and derogatory remarks made to her. Leela expresses feeling that she has to be mindful of what she does and says at work because of cultural differences.

Two other participants also mention worrying about their appearances at work. Angel attributes different consequences in the workplace to her curvy body type and the clothes she wears. If Angel wears a dress to work that accentuates her curves and her white coworker wears the same dress, Angel's is the one deemed "inappropriate." She also discusses making sure her hair is presentable at work to make sure she fits in. Participants are vocal about the presence of mistreatment within their workplaces.

Education

Schools are another location in which the participants believe black women are disadvantaged. Angel points out that while black women get more education than black men, it does not appear to give her an advantage over black men. This education gap is often used as evidence of how black women are privileged over black men. She explains how she thinks black men are prioritized in schools through the creation of initiatives centered on black males, although black women and femmes deal with similar issues as black men regarding racism in school.

Tameeka discusses her experiences in high school with racism to demonstrate the struggles of black women and femmes in school, noting two particular incidents with a teacher. The first incident with a teacher was one that her mother noticed. Tameeka

notes that she has always been a good student, but her teacher consistently marked off on her assignments. After her mother reviewed the assignments, she saw that Tameeka's work was correct, but the teacher was still marking answers as incorrect. When Tameeka's mother confronted the teacher, the teacher responded that she didn't think Tameeka could do the level of work she was turning in so the teacher was marking points off Tameeka's work instead of failing her assignments.

Another incident with the same teacher involved a white boy in her class who called Tameeka's mother a racial slur. Tameeka ended up getting into a fight with the boy. When Tameeka told the teacher about the incident, she was blamed for starting the fight. The white boy was suspended for five days, whereas the school attempted to expel Tameeka. Tameeka's mother worked within the school system and did not trust the teacher who reported the incident so she hired an attorney and put a recorder in Tameeka's backpack. During the dispute over her potential expulsion, Tameeka notes the instructions her mother gave her after putting the recorder in her bag:

> She put a recorder in my book bag, and it had been in there I want to say about a month. I didn't say anything to my teacher about it so I'm recording of course. My mom tells me, "She's outrageous; make sure you call your teacher by her name, make sure she acknowledges you" …and I was like, "Okay." I now realize the fact that my mom really had to deal with it, it's just ridiculous. My mom gave our attorney the recording, so now my attorney walks in with my mom with the recording, and she sets it on the principal's desk and looks the teacher in the face. I was back in school in 30 minutes. I had a new teacher, everything, and I'm just like, "Why did it really take all that. Why was that necessary?"

A couple of participants note their background shapes the way they view black women's education as a privilege. Jackie, a 37-year-old black woman, tells me she

believes education brings privilege. She also explains that a few of her other privileges are that her mother is white, she holds dual-citizenship in Canada, and she comes from a wealthy background. Jackie mentions her background information to tell me she understands she has privilege because of her upbringing so she views some issues differently than other black women. She discusses a time she got in trouble at school and saw how much "protection and privilege" having a white mother provided her. "I could be that little shitty black kid, but once they see that my mom's white, it's like, 'Oh, I'm not going to say anything'." Participants discuss the presence of discrimination in academic institutions that ranges from pre-school to graduate programs.

Family Dynamics

Another subtheme that emerges in participants' interviews about privilege is black women and the dynamics within the family. Seven participants mention an imbalance in power between black men and black women in their families. Participants note black men are often viewed as the head of the household, but black women bear the brunt of the work associated with running the household.

Five participants' stories center their mothers, or another woman within their households, and how the black men within the households are held to lower standards than the women, again contradicting the defining quality that black women are more privileged than black men. Evy, a 21-year-old black woman, talks about how black men are expected to bring home the money for bills, but black women are expected to pay the bills, take care of the home, and do any other task that needs to be done. Leela, Seaira, and Jackie note that although black men have fewer expectations placed on them than

black women, black men are posited as the head of the household in the black community.

Angel, Evy, Leela, Seaira, and Tameeka all note black men are viewed as the head of the household, yet black women and femmes are responsible for taking care of their husbands, being a submissive wife/partner, and running entire households. Evy points out that black women are expected to do all the work in the home while black men do not share this burden. Tameeka and Seaira are the most vocal participants when discussing the symbolism of black men as the head of household. Both participants believe black women's submissiveness within their family is an unnecessary problem that relegates black women to a lower status in the household.

Seaira explains how the submissive role becomes a problem as a single mother, as her daughter rarely expects her father to show up in the consistent way Seaira is required to. "She would never ask him to inconvenience himself to come and be present at her extracurriculars." Seaira believes that within the family black women and femme's time is viewed as less valuable than black men's. She mentions how she is expected to drop everything in her life and focus on her family, while her daughter's father does not have the same responsibilities.   Tameeka spoke about how she was groomed from an early age (high school) to begin taking care of her family so she was prepared when the time came to step up:

> My mom got sick. She had brain tumors. She had three different surgeries to the point we finished high school. So from beginning to end my mom was sick, and same time my stepdad is working night just trying to take care of us whatever. My grandparents are trying to help, but they're both disabled so it was just kind of like okay. I'm just like okay, I need to go get a job. So it was just one of the

things like just trying to find balancing it all, and trying to make sure everybody

was okay.

Tameeka also notes how her stepfather was around during this time, but he wasn't

prepared to take on handling her mother's sickness. Tameeka expressed frustration at

other family members for not stepping up to help her, leaving Tameeka to carry the

burden alone.

Six participants mention how they watched their mothers or other female family

members take care of everything dealing with the home, while their husbands would

relax.

Social Issues

Issues involving racism, sexism, and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals

are common themes in participant interviews. Five participants mention issues regarding

racism and privilege in their interviews. Angel believes that white women are

intimidated by her as a black woman because her "blackness" is threatening to them.

She also notes that black women's physical features are often commodified by other

races of women, but still viewed as unattractive on the black women who naturally

possess them. Jackie points out how white women's racism blinds them to issues that

black women may have:

> I think white women always have that privilege that holds them at all times. I
> think if we look at just when we talk about the issues that women as a whole face,
> … white women really aren't going to fight because they're like those aren't our
> issues. Why am I going to worry about racism? I got to worry about getting extra
> parent leave or stuff like that.

Seaira briefly mentions her issues with the Women's March and how the organizers did not consider voices of black women and femmes or any other marginalized groups. Evy points out the sexism experienced by black women is unique, and white women's racism is a part of that. Leela also notes how she expected white women to show up for the Women's March on Washington, while disregarding Black Lives Matter protests, which is led by black (queer) women. She states, "at the [women's] march that I went to, there were a lot of white women who I saw that I don't think I would necessarily see at a Black Lives Matter march…"

Tameeka, Evy, and Seaira all protested the women's march, either by not attending or by showing up to protest. Seaira and Jackie both state that they think white women's issues are what most Americans consider mainstream women's issues, since the racism black women deal with is often not considered an issue.

Evy, Seaira, Kala, Mia, and Tameeka all mention how black women's perspectives are excluded from narratives surrounding police brutality. Tameeka says, "with … racism and police brutality, you never hear about all the black women. Sandra Bland, it wasn't something that was widely talked about."[14] Kala thinks black transgender women have an even greater risk of being victims of police brutality, since their voices are often erased from the narrative.

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[14] Sandra Bland is a black woman who was pulled over by police in Texas for failing to use a turn signal. She was taken into custody and put in jail where she was found dead in her cell. Bland's death was ruled a suicide, but her family was awarded almost 2 million dollars in a wrongful death suit after investigations by the Bland family (Hassan, Yan, and Blau 2016).

Several participants talk about the abuse towards black women and femmes by black men. She expresses disappointment in the way the black community talks about rape culture and violence against black women and femmes:

> …what I do know is that black women and fem folks are being killed by black men more than anybody else so what I do think black men should be doing is eradicating whatever is causing that and healing whatever is causing that….

Several participants who identify as black women and both participants who did not point out issues involving black LGBTQ individuals. Seaira pointed out the prevalence of cisgender narratives within the black community.

> Yet as a black community, we can talk about white folks because that's a different kind of violence but … we police each other as far as gender expression, sexual orientation and things of that nature, and it's killing us because then we don't explore ourselves, … I think that trans phobia is killing trans women of color because it's like as people we walk around and we get into our careers and our professions, but we never look around and are like well we're not hiring trans women of color. What do you think is going to happen?

Seaira is passionate, sometimes almost tearful, about how the black LGBTQ community has been left out of black narratives, just like black women. Seaira and Kala both think their gender identity is sexualized, and express frustration with society's sexualization of their identities. Jackie, Evy and Tameeka all note that they believe they hold privilege over black transgender women.

Participants stories demonstrate the erasure of black women's narratives from the workplace, home, and various social issues. The erasure of black women's stories, as mentioned earlier, creates the false impression that black women as more privileged than

black men although their issues are just as pertinent as black men's. However, black women do possess privilege over black LGBTQ individuals. All participants believe black women are not more privileged than black men, or any other group that holds a dominant identity (white, male, heterosexual).

Perception

The concept of black women's privilege is further complicated by the defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence. This section explores how the black women's perception of themselves relates to how and why they endure their abuse in silence. This section looks at three subthemes: black women's self-perception of primary identities, various stereotypes, and victimhood.

Primary Identities

Five participants believe race is the first identifier people associate with black women. Angel discusses how she recognizes herself as a woman, but black is still her first identifier. She recounts how she came to realize being black is her primary identifier:

> …it's more blatant to me. Like if I look in the mirror, I'm a woman, but you see my complexion, you see that I'm black, and I think it's because that's your first identifier for me. I'm a black woman, I'm a black student; I'll be a black lawyer. You know what I'm saying? I'm not a lawyer who's black; I'm not a woman who's black; I'm not a student who's black. You're going to say black first. The more that you keep saying black first, the more I'm going to keep seeing and believing black first and then that becomes a problem once I start aligning with my blackness first. Then it's an issue for the other and for everyone else. I think it's because black being first is so projected on to me that's why I see it first.

Tameeka believes she can relate more to being black than she can to being a woman. She feels more of a connection with black men. She discusses the connection she has with black men and how she did not think she could relate to white women because black women's problems usually stem from their need to survive.

Although three participants view gender as a primary identifier, they still believe racism is a greater issue than sexism. Evy discusses feeling as if she is viewed as a woman first, because her gender multiplies how she negatively experiences racism. "I think the types of racism is a little different for the gender because at least if you're a black man and you get originally profiled, at least you have the power of a man." She also thinks there is more privilege in being white than in being a male.

> If I was a white woman, things would be okay; they wouldn't be horrible, but they would be different from a white man. But if I was a black man, things will be a lot worse than if I was a white woman, but it's still wouldn't be as bad as a black woman.

Even though Evy views her gender as her primary identifier, she relates more to black men than any other group. Evy and Angel think this is because blackness is viewed as a threat by others.

Jackie and Mia also discuss how sexism was a larger issue in their youth, but as they got older, race became a more prominent issue. Jackie recognizes that her [white] mother and growing up in Canada buffered her from racism for awhile. Now, even though Jackie's mother is a white woman, Jackie knows she is not. Mia mentions growing up in a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood and the racism she felt

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when white parents, mostly white women, stopped allowing their children to play with her.

Six participants mention feeling as if they had to choose between their race and gender. Jackie, Leela, and Mia explain they cannot separate being black from being a woman. Seaira does not believe she must choose between her identities, but other people want to force her to choose. Participants believe black women are expected to choose their race over their gender, but black men are not required to do the same:

> If you know anything about patriarchy, it's to be expected. Men are never asked to choose their gender over their race. They don't have to, they're men. They have the benefit of being male. That's something that they never had to think about. But with us, it's just one more thing, being black and being female that we have to deal with. (Mia)

Participants also discuss the difficulty of determining which identity is being discriminated against at any given time. Leela notes that she tries to protect both of her identities preemptively, since she doesn't know where the discrimination is coming from. Leela recounts a time she visited a church and experienced the internal struggle between her identities. "I'm walking into a church … trying to present myself as a woman to be respected, but also trying to make sure that I'm not just viewed as being black or just being a woman …."

Seaira explains the difficulty of pinpointing her discrimination "because sometimes you don't even fucking know if it's sexism or racism or queer phobia because it's all happening at the same time." Seaira identifies as a femme because it allows her as a black queer person to "reframe and claim my own identity," since queerness is

sexualized so often. Seaira mentions how race is centered too often in discussions around black liberation because black issues are often considered black men's issues. She thinks this is problematic because "being black is not a monolith."

Tameeka discusses how the black community believes talking about any other identity besides race "pushes an agenda."

> I had this conversation with …some person online about Black Lives Matter and how they felt like Black Lives Matter had a gay agenda, and I'm just sitting here kind of like but how? I'm still trying to figure that out. I was just like so because the people that happen to step up and draw attention to these issues that were going on in our community on a national level because they happen to identify as something different than you do, now they are pushing their own agenda….

She also thinks black women who identify with the LGBTQ community would have greater issues in choosing a primary identity. She talked about how she believed she shared similar oppressions with black transgender women. The dual/multiple identities black women and femmes hold presents a unique struggle for black women and femmes. Choosing race as the primary identity means often enduring your abuse in silence to protect the black men, who often are the perpetrators of abuse against black women and femmes. Since gender issues are viewed as secondary to race in the black community, the abuse of black women and femmes is not seen as an important black issue. The focus on black women's race as a primary identity leaves black women more vulnerable to abuse, since black women are still expected to support the black men who abuse them. This links directly to the third defining quality —black women are expected to buffer their families from racism — which will be discussed in a later section.

Stereotypes

All participants consistently discuss stereotypes associated with black women. Recognition of two negative stereotypes— the angry black woman and the oversexualized black woman— are present throughout interviews, along with the stereotype of the strong black woman, the most common stereotype associated with black women. This section takes a closer look at these stereotypes and how they relate to black women's perceptions of themselves amidst their mistreatment.

Participants who discussed the "angry black woman" stereotype believe black women who are assertive are labelled as angry so they proactively take steps to tone down their assertiveness. Angel thinks any emotion she expresses would be recast as being angry. Jackie says, "being a black woman, you're treated on a totally different plane …you have to almost tiptoe around because just your presence is aggressive." Jackie is expressive with her hands, even throughout her interview, and notes she tones down her hand gestures because she does not want to make white people at work uncomfortable. Jackie thinks if she was a man that her assertiveness would not be viewed as a problem, and while black men do not like aggressiveness in black women, they accept it in women of other races.

> I can say the same as a white woman, but I don't have tact like that's why I think it's the black woman package … because if a Latina does it, they're just being fiery and sexy. If an Asian woman does it, she's just coming out from being submissive, but we're automatically that angry black woman.

Tameeka expresses frustration with the angry black woman stereotype. She mentions other people, like black men and white women, believe black women are not

supposed to be angry, but "nobody will listen if we do not assert ourselves." She also

discusses how black women's anger is exploited by others. "It's one of those things,

everyone loves the angry black woman when it's time for stuff to get done."

Five participants explain feeling oversexualized as a black woman. Angel is more

conscious of outfits she wears to work in an effort to buffer the sexualization of her body.

Several participants believe white men are the group that is sexualizing black women

most frequently. Seaira, on the other hand, mentions black women and femmes are

abused by black men at a high rate due to their oversexualization. Jackie notes black

women are simultaneously oversexualized and viewed as unattractive, when compared to

other groups of women.

Seaira and Kala both believe their identities as femme and transgender women

leads to their entire identities being sexualized.

> …it's like the over sexualization of queerness. People are like, "Who do you
> sleep with?" Whose business is that? It's actually like how I pair … how I look
> at world. My politics is a very queer politics.… They make you seem like it's
> just about who you're going to bed with and I think that that's a disgusting way
> because I mean I don't know … being queer isn't just about having sex.… It's
> not about that, and I think that that's what people want you to have that
> conversation around, and I think that that's what happens with trans people... you
> know what I'm saying? It's just like really objectifying people and over
> sexualizing people in a really disgusting way. (Seaira)

Participants self-report various examples of the negative angry and

oversexualized black woman stereotype, but the strong black woman is the most common

stereotype noted throughout interviews. Every participant discusses their belief of black

women as being strong though most participants assume the strength comes from black

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women wanting to protect their families or working for their own survival. Angel mentions how black women's strength comes from being able to "handle whatever is thrown at them." She expects to be disrespected as a black woman so she has to be prepared for that at all times. Evy discusses black women's strength in a resentful way. She thinks the necessity for black women's strength to protect their children has affected her views on becoming a parent.

Kala is proud of being labelled a strong black woman, and relishes in the "power" she thinks the label provides her. She talks about how her family influences her view of black women's strength:

> …I think the black women I was raised around were strong black women. … the men in my family are great men, my great, great grandfather deacon, my brother was a pastor, my dad is chief of police, they are great men. It's the women that runs our family. I have a great aunt right now, her birthday is next month … still in her right mind, still driving, still getting up walking every morning… she buried three husbands. The black women that I have been raised around are strong, intelligent, smart....

Jackie and Seaira are resentful of the label "strong black woman" because it means black women and black LGBTQ individuals are often the ones doing all the "heavy lifting" for black liberation movements, although black men are the face (Jackie). She thinks black men do not show up for black women, even though black women show up for them. She explains to me why it is important for black men to acknowledge and respect the strength of black women and black LGBTQ individuals leading black liberation movements:

> Because black lives don't matter then. If black trans don't matter, then black lives don't matter. You can't have one group oppressed, and everyone else isn't oppressed. I think the issue is that, it's like, if people have color we try to be the lower oppressed group. As long as we get a step above someone else, we're cool. … You can get up here, that's cool, but I'm not gonna step down.

Seaira says if black women don't do the work, nobody else will so she does not really like being called a strong black woman because she "doesn't have a choice." Seaira believes black men resent hers and other "black femme folks' strength" in black liberation movements, but black men do not help do the work that also benefits them.

Several participants discuss how it was problematic for black women to be so strong because it is often at the expense of their own mental and physical safety. Leela thinks black women are often strong because they feel helpless, while Tameeka thinks black women are viewed as strong, but nobody ever considers what it takes to "put up with everyone else's emotional labor."[15] Black women are often told to "pray about it," when dealing with any issue in the black community, instead of seeking help from an outside resource, and women are stigmatized for seeking help for mental health. Tameeka laments how hard it is for black women to get access to mental health care if they want it:

> But I think for [black]women even if you want to get treatment, you can like you literally can't. If you're running the house, working, going to school, like you literally have no time, and that's mostly what I see is that people just nearly don't have the time even if they want to. Like men can make the time more so than women can.… It's a real burden to take care of yourself, take care of everybody else, and still maintain your sanity.…

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[15] Christine Hutchinson (2016), a licensed therapist, defines emotional labor as the way people, particularly women, manage feelings and emotions for various tasks. Emotional labor is not often considered work.

According to Seaira, the black community expects self-care to happen behind closed doors. She believes this is because black people have a hard time trusting people outside of their community, even if they can provide help. Black women's awareness of their stereotypes allows black women to negate them. However, when black women spend a majority of their time pushing back against other people's perceptions, they often do not have time to deal with the gravity of their actual situations.

Victimhood

The final recurring subtheme that appears when talking to participants about perceptions of black women is black women as victims. Participants struggle with being defined as a victim, while simultaneously noting their own victimhood. All participants are hesitant to label themselves victims, and a couple of participants are especially resentful of the label.

Tameeka expresses knowing she is a victim, in a "this is what it is" way, although she does not feel like one. Jackie believes she is considered "too strong to be a victim" in other's eyes. She does not believe anything positive comes from calling herself a victim.

Kala is the most uncomfortable with referring to herself as a victim because she views "victim" as a negative label. As she discusses more of her personal experiences, she begins to connect why she associates negativity with the victim label:

> I'm going to have so say I hate that word victim. Cause victims are weak…. The word victim is associated with weakness and disheveled and downtrodden and the opposite of strength. To be victimized is just as bad as being brutalized, and people don't realize that. This is why most women, black, white, brown won't come forward when they've been raped because the victimization of a person who's been raped is just as bad as the act of them being raped, and we don't think about it like that. …I remember the first time I was raped and molested, and I said

something, and it was just like, "Okay so now I'm the poster child of being molested and raped." I just want the shit to go away. Why do I have to say it and repeat it over and over and over again…?

Seaira also views the term victim in a resentful way. She discusses black women and femmes' victimhood even as "strong black women":

> …we are oppressed and we are victims of oppression. I don't want to stay here and romanticize shit that's killing people. So, I'm not going to act like "We are so powerful," but yea we're powerful and we overcome and we persevere and we create in spite of that.

The hesitancy of participants to label themselves victims stems from making them feel "helpless and weak," if they think about themselves as victims of racism and sexism (Angel). Angel describes the label victim as a "demeaning" description of black women. She also believes by not acknowledging her victimhood, she is causing herself unnecessary mental and physical stress.

Black women spend a large amount of time negating others' perceptions about black women. Negative stereotypes such as the angry black woman and the oversexualized black women prevent participants from expressing themselves out of fear of further societal stigmatization. The strong black woman stereotype prevents black women and femmes from being seen as victims. The strength black women exhibit is used to deny their victimization and perpetuate it. Black women's perceptions of themselves shape both how they perceive and what they consider abuse. Black women's perception of themselves is linked to the defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence because black women and femme's perception of

themselves reveal the powerlessness they feel from their consistent abuse. Black women and femme's perception of themselves allows them to reshape narratives around their abuse, since being a victim of abuse is viewed as another negative label for black women and femmes.

Roles

Earlier sections note black women are expected to prioritize their race before other identities. While all three defining qualities share a connection, black women enduring their abuse in silence and buffering their families from racism share a particular one. Black women's enduring of their abuse in silence is typically connected to the prioritization of race before gender.

In this section, participants explore various roles black women embody within their families and communities to determine how black women are expected to buffer their families from racism. Participants revealed three common subthemes when discussing questions about black women's roles. The first subtheme revolves around expectations for black women as mothers. The second subtheme centers black women as supporting other people in countless ways. The last subtheme focuses on black women as educators. Black women's various roles showcase how black women buffer their family from the consequences of racism in different settings.

Black Women and Femmes as Mothers

Seven participants discuss their mothers playing a large role in their identification as black women. Tameeka states, "black women's most important role is as a mother." Angel describes her mother as the "provider," "protector," "giver," and the "glue" that

holds everything together. Strength is a common descriptor when talking about black women as mothers.

Participants note black women wear a lot of hats in their families because they cannot control what happens in the real world, but they can "keep the peace" in their families (Angel). Evy thinks about watching her mother take care of everyone else while "holding it together." She watched her mother and other black women she knows take care of entire black communities:

> I know alot of black women who are like the grandmas of the neighborhood. You go to their house. The fridge is always open, the couch is always there, you can just hang out with this black woman. The black women in church, you can always go get a piece of candy… They always got something for you….

Several participants discuss feeling like a mother at a young age after watching all the work their mothers did for their families. Evy points out that she and her sisters were often expected to take care of their younger siblings, while her brother was not. Mia talked about watching her mother make sacrifices for everybody else in her family, and not having the same reciprocated for her, as she also deals with racism at work to pay the bills. She recalls a conversation with an older black man that made her think about her mother and the myriad of ways she shows up for her family:

> … we started talking about his at home life, and his expectations for his wife, like for example the fact that he expects his wife to work. She had a job …I think they have like eight children, and she'll work and then he expects her to come home and cook dinner, but he's been at home all day. I ask him, why should she have to do that? Can you not help her? Can you not help out? He basically was like why? I can't do that. That's her job. To me, it's kind of a slap on the face because I know what it's like for, I watch my mom, not really having a choice. My dad has cancer. She's the caretaker for my granddad, who we had to move up

here from Florida. She's still raising my youngest brother; he's 17. My mom also has breast cancer. But my Dad can't work; he's on disability. My mom is at home working. Mind you, my mom is 64 years old. My dad is 58. She still has to work full time. She even took like a higher position so that she could make a little bit extra money because she has to put her money with my granddad's money to pay for the assisted living where he's staying. She takes my dad to all his appointments, his doctor's appointments. Takes my granddad to all his doctor's appointments. They still, sometimes my dad expects her to like cook. I just look at him like he's crazy.

As Mia progresses in telling this story about her mother, she is most animated when talking about her mother taking care of everyone else, but not having help for herself:

Do you not understand all the things that she has to do on a regular basis? She took him to Minnesota to the Mayo Clinic, which is like the top medical facility in the country, well really in the world, for cancer treatment and things like that. She took him there, but she can't go there because they've used all the insurance money for my dad. Now that my mom's sick, it's like there's no one to take care of her. My dad, I think he has the opportunity to help out, but for whatever reason, he's just used to her taking care of him, and so he doesn't really know how to help her. Those type of things. I think, why can't you? You really don't understand? There's the expectation. She's the mom. She's supposed to take care of all these people, and no one is taking care of her. My grandmother did the same thing. She died very early taking care of my granddad. She had a son that passed away early, and she was taking care of other people's kids. I feel like she just stretched herself too much. It was to her own expense. I think that's the same for a lot of black women. They take care of everyone around them, but no one is there when they need help.

Watching her mother neglect her own health while taking care of other people made Mia feel she had to step up so her mother would not carry the burden alone. Mia is passionate when talking about how black women are taught to be "everything to everybody," but do not have the same sentiment returned. She did not think her brothers or father felt the same way she did about her mother's contributions to their family.

Tameeka recounts a time when she felt pressure to step into the mother role so

that her mother could take care of herself:

> My mom got sick. She had brain tumors. She had three different surgeries by the
> time we finished high school. So, from beginning to end, my mom was sick, and
> at the same time my stepdad is working night just trying to take care of us or
> whatever. My grandparents are trying to help, but they're both disabled so it was
> just kind of like okay… I need to go get a job so it was just one of the things like
> just trying to find balancing it all and trying to make sure everybody was okay.

As Tameeka continues the story about her mother, she recognizes how she learned to put

other people's problems before her own:

> I didn't have time for my own problems. If I had a issue, if I had a problem it just
> got – my … we'll deal with it later or we won't just deal with it at all and just
> push that over there. Like the way I see a lot of people kind of do that black
> women we do it to ourselves just because we got shit to do. And that's just where
> it was with me. I was just that one that just get it done and has been like that ever
> since.

Seaira notes a contentious relationship with her mother stemming from Seaira's

race that resulted in her mother and the white side of her family disowning her. She

explains that rejection along with her identifying as femme requires her to become a

nurturer:

> I've been having chosen family as a way of life since I was 12 years old when my
> white mother stopped talking to me or she was being anti-black and violent, and I
> had to distance myself from a really toxic, violent, abusive parent structure. I'm a
> provider then I have to be a nurturer, and I just create space for a lot of people.

As Leela sums up,

I think the black woman in the family is the backbone of the family and again that's based off of what I've seen my mom go through and what I've experienced in my own personal relationships as being the backbone of the relationship and being the person that everyone leans on or the person that gets everything done and is handling everything and takes care of everybody. I don't necessarily think it should be that way. I think it should be equal and that's something that I'm experiencing now in the relationship that I'm in now. I'm used to being the person in a relationship that takes care of the other person and is the backbone of the relationship, and I'm in relationship now where the person that I'm with does a lot of that and is my backbone for a lot of things, and I'm just not used to it. I'm not used to leaning on another person for things because I grew up handling everything and watching my mom handle everything and so that's just the role that I fell into. In short, I would say I think currently I would say the role as a black woman in the family is the backbone, but I think that it should be equal. I think that the man should lean on woman just as much as the woman is on the man.

Black mothers are expected to prioritize their families and to support black men for the benefit of the black community. Black women confront different social ills of the black community and take charge of their families to negate them. This often means black women support the individuals who victimize them.

Black Women and Femmes as Supporters

A second major subtheme among participants is the idea that black women are expected to support black men (and everyone else) in their families and within the black community. Angel thinks black women are expected to support black men because black people are expected to stick together. Several participants believe black women are more supportive of black men than black men are of black women. Angel explains why she continues to support black men, although she does not believe they would do the same for her:

> I think it just goes to being loyal to our men. Just believing that one day, we'll all be in one corner.… we think it's our job to do that because we're so used to doing it for everyone else, might as well throw in a black man.

Evy thinks black women have no choice but to be loyal to black men because black men are one of the only groups black women feel connected to.

Leela believes that black women's support of black men is based on Christian gender roles, where women are taught to be submissive to take care of their men. She recounts where she learned about black women's expectation of being submissive to men:

> …of course, there are views in the Bible regarding the men being the head of the household and woman being submissive to the man. My grandparents are very old-fashioned. I'm in a relationship now. I'm not married, but I know just thinking back on conversations that I have with them and they're just extremely old-fashioned in the whole submissive role.

Other participants also discuss the expectation of black women being submissive to black men. Mia thinks this expectation of black women is why black women are often the ones who end up having to take care of everyone else.

Participants mention how black men's voices are often the main ones heard when speaking about racism, but absent when the conversation involves sexism. Six participants think black men understand racism, but not sexism. Several participants also note black women and femme's missing perspectives from conversations involving black men's abuse. Seaira discusses how the black community often pressures black women to focus on black issues, which end up translating into "black men's issues," and other identities become secondary:

So, even me as an intersexual person, I actually lift out race more than any of the others, but my brother taught me because these are all symptoms of white supremacy. Once we get rid of racism, we're still going to have to with all the other isms.

Participants note black men's dismissal of gender issues is because they are the main perpetrators of sexism and misogyny towards black women. Mia talks about the struggle between wanting to help black men and being victimized by them:

…say a black male who is convicted of a crime, I don't know, robbery or something like that, we automatically… go into like protection mode because we know of black men's situation like in the criminal justice system and how the interactions with police are not always positive. … But it could be an instance where the same guy is also abusive to black women. It's like, okay, do you support him and try to protect him? Because while he's going through this process of going through court systems and all that, making sure that he's treated fairly, or do you go with the fact that he's abusive to black women, and you choose to protect the well-being of black women over the well-being of this one black man. I think there's plenty of situations like that. I think you are forced to choose sometimes. If you choose being a woman over being black then you're you don't care about black people and you're selfish. This is the problem with black women, they don't support their men. You get all the spite from that. But then if you support a man in that situation, what are you saying to women? What are you saying to little girls?

Kala discusses her traumatic experiences involving black men as a male child, since she did not transition until her early twenties: She mentions stories about being molested by black men throughout her youth, and being raped by different black men after she started identifying as a woman. When recalling these instances, Kala appears to detach the experience from herself as if speaking about another person. Seaira also talks about black children, especially girls, being molested by black male family members:

… because black girls, all black kids shouldn't be molested and sexually assaulted and we shouldn't be raped by our family. That's what's happening. It's kind of like they're escaping accountability because we don't think about it but it's like facts. The fact of the matter is that black women and femme folks and black girls particularly are getting raped and killed by black men.

A couple of participants are passionate, and sometimes appear irritated, when explaining how black women show up for others who do not show up for them. Kala points out black women are required to "have it together, or appear to have it together" at all times so she does not have time to worry about her own issues. Several participants note black women and femmes often show up for each other because they know nobody else will:

I think that there're certain people who say like, "You don't have to do it all," or, "You can take a break," but then like things don't happen. I think that black women are magic makers and we make a whole lot of shit out of nothing. If those things don't happen, if we wanted to tap out, shit won't get done. Things won't necessarily progress in these ways, and I do think that we act as a catalyst, especially for things that are going to benefit people who identify commonly, who shows up for black women but black women? I do think that even subconsciously when people are saying you don't have to do everything, I think that really makes me angry because if I waited around for some folks to show up for black women, we would all be dead and that's not romanticizing, that's not an over exaggeration, that's real talk. (Seaira)

Black Women and Femmes as Educators

Several participants note "educator" as a role for black women. Angel and Tameeka both discuss educating their families about issues relating to race and gender as an important role. Tameeka reflects on older black family members not being open to LGBTQ issues, and how she takes the time to educate her grandfather about their issues. She explains how her grandfather always had been extremely homophobic, but she spent

a few years telling him about information she is learning in college about the LGBTQ community. She mentions being surprised once when her family was talking about one of their gay male cousins and her grandfather told her cousin, "I just know you're my family and I love you." She is surprised by her grandfather's open-mindedness, but glad that he absorbed some of the information she has taught him.

Black women educate their communities and families about race, gender, and LGBTQ related issues in an effort to combat discrimination. Several participants recognize that their education affords them more context about issues within the black community, and believe their duty is to share the information with their families and community.

Black women buffer their families from racism by using their role as mother to protect and support whole families and communities. The support black women and femmes provide black men is often not reciprocated. Black women struggle with supporting black men who are their main victimizers. Black women educate their families about various issues in an effort to protect the black community from racism and other issues.

As black women explore their privilege relative to others, their perception of selves, and their roles within their families, they note a multitude of ways their dual identities are ignored outside and within their own communities. Participants are aware of their unique experiences due to their dual subordinate identities; some participants are vocal in expressing the complexity of their identities, while others are resentful of the factors that create the complexity.

Throughout this chapter, participants explore how black women and femme's perception of themselves versus how society views them. Their self-perception demonstrates that the current erasure of black women and femme's experiences from historical and current conversations is central to the defining quality black women are more privileged than black men. People believe this to be the case only because black women's experiences have been invisible. The participants in this study certainly do not see this privilege. Participants also examine how black women and femme's perceptions of themselves focus on negating other people's preconceived notions about them.

Focusing on negating these notions affects what black women and femmes determine as abuse and how they endure it in silence. Black women and femme's roles in their families and communities force them to choose between their dual (and sometimes multiple) identities. While race is often the primary identity of black women and femmes, participants are resentful or apathetic in its acceptance. They see how the black women and femmes in their families and communities are called on time and time again to support and protect them from the difficulties of life and how these women are unable to tend to their own concerns while remaining strong for others.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While the trap of loyalty is a relatively new term, the ideas it represents were clearly present throughout much of American history and are still present today (Richie 1985, 2012). This study set out to explain: In what ways is the black woman's experience in the U.S. today defined, or not defined, by the trap of loyalty? The trap of loyalty consists of three defining qualities: black women are more privileged than black men; black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence; and black women are expected to buffer their families from racism. This study examines black women and femmes' dual and multiple identities and how these identities provide a unique experience for black women and femmes in America.

As I argue, Richie's defining quality that black women are more privileged than black men stem from the erasure of black women from historical and current narratives. This erasure is associated with the belief of black women as privileged because those with the dominant identity (white or male) tend to create the mainstream narratives.

Participants discuss privilege, but most conversations center around black men's privilege over black women, as opposed to white men's or women's. The participants experience racism from white men and white women, while also experiencing sexism from all men, but particularly black men. Black men are viewed by a majority of

participants as a threat to black women, femmes, and young girls' safety. Some participants think putting their race before their gender makes them more vulnerable to abuse from black men, since they also are expected to support black men at all times. Black women are asked to sacrifice their own needs and concerns to maintain the public image of a strong black community.

Participants' dual and sometimes multiple identities challenge Richie's defining quality that black women are more privileged than black men. Data suggest black women do not perceive they have privilege over black men. While all participants are college educated, they tell stories about being underpaid at work, being passed over for promotions, and experiencing both racism and sexism in their workplaces and schools.

All participants agree that other groups have privilege over black women (black men most particularly and white women). White men are most privileged, but participants did not see any commonalities with white men. As black women, they at least could relate to black men and white women through either their race or gender. A few of the participants, including the black transgender woman and black femme, do think black women hold privilege over black LGBTQ individuals.

Richie's second defining quality that black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence posits black women as recognizing their abuse, but enduring it for a multitude of reasons. Participants believe they are oppressed in their homes, at school, at work, and within their own communities. Although participants recognize their dual (or multiple) identities cannot be separated, race is considered the primary identity for all but three participants. Some participants think sexism is a greater issue than racism. Yet they

still believe their race is perceived as more of a threat to others, necessitating placing their race before their gender. As a result, their needs and concerns as women are typically rendered invisible. Many participants resent black men not having to choose between their identities.

Black women's perceptions of themselves play a large part in how they chose to endure their abuse. Participants discuss an awareness of stereotypes about black women, with black women's oversexualization and/or the angry black woman being the most common negative stereotypes mentioned by all participants. As they discuss these stereotypes, participants focus on not wanting to be perceived in those ways. Participants accomplish this by changing their appearance, demeanor, or even their whole personality, depending on the environment, certainly a form of silencing. A few participants think black LGBTQ individuals (transgender women and femmes) are more sexualized than black women due to the sexualization of queerness.

While participants express an aversion to the negative stereotypes associated with black women, many participants are proud to be associated with the strong black woman stereotype. Several participants believe the strong black woman stereotype does not allow black women and femmes to be victims, forcing them to endure their abuse in silence.

Participants possess strong opinions about being called a victim. While everyone acknowledges that they are victimized by black men and white people, nobody wants to self-identify as a victim; they don't want to be viewed as victims, even as they are victimized. Reasons given by participants for not wanting to be called a victim are that

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black women could not be victims, nobody would care, victims are weak, and feeling like the word demeans them. Black women's endurance of their abuse is linked to how they perceive themselves in various social situations.

Richie's third and final defining quality states black women are expected to buffer their families from racism. The origins of this defining quality and data from the study suggest that Richie's second and third defining qualities are closely linked. The prioritization of race for black women is connected to black women enduring their abuse in silence because, as participants point out, black men are the common perpetrators of abuse against black girls, women, and femmes in the black community. Participants note black women are expected to ignore their dual (or multiple) identities, and focus on black issues, which often translates into black men's issues. They are asked to protect black men even at the risk of their own victimization. While participants are resentful of the erasure of their issues from mainstream narratives surrounding the black community, they continue to support black men. Participants realize the support they provide other groups, such as black men and white women, has yet to be returned by any group. Although black men are the focus of most of the participants' ire, participants also express frustration at white women's erasure of race from feminism, as is the case throughout much of American history. Data suggest black women are still expected to buffer their families and communities from racism, by focusing on black issues before any other issues associated with dual and multiple identities

The trap of loyalty is as present for black women in America, as it has been through American history. Black women are the catalysts for various social movements,

but erased from historical and mainstream narratives. Black women and femmes continue to show up to support various groups who have yet to show black women the same support. Black women's abuse remains a prominent issue that they are asked to shelve in support of black men and the public face of the black community.

Richie's concept provides a unique look at black women's experiences and perspectives in American society. The trap of loyalty explores how perceptions of black women shape their interactions with various individuals with whom they share an identity. The trap of loyalty helps to explain why black women continue to show up for groups of people who never show up for them.

Limitations

The sample for the study does have a few limitations. All participants have at least some college education so results are not representative of black women and femmes who have not attended college. The educational background of participants provides them with an academic background of social issues individuals who have not attended college may not possess which will likely influence the data provided by participants.

Participants' ages range from 21-37 so women under 20 and over 40 are not represented in this study. The addition of black women and femmes younger than 20 and older than 40 may provide different points of analysis. Older black women and femmes' views on racism and sexism are likely to be influenced by the time period in which they grew up. Another limitation of the study is a majority of participants identify as single and heterosexual, so different marital statuses and sexual orientations are not represented.

A mixture of different marital statuses may provide a different perspective on gender issues, as relationship status may provide different perspectives on gender roles. Only one participant is a mother so women with children also are underrepresented. Black women and femmes with children could provide insight into different issues that may be associated with parenting. Only one participant does not identify as a black woman, so the LGBTQ perspective is also underrepresented. The addition of LGBTQ perspectives is necessary because narratives may be more nuanced when they are presented by someone from the specific group being researched.

The study flyer lacked gender inclusive language and only mentions black women so non-binary individuals who identified as female are excluded from the study due to the exclusive language. The lack of language to represent the LGBTQ community meant leaving our individuals because there was no language on the flyer that let them know they could participate in the study.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to answer the question: In what ways is the black woman's experience in the United States today defined, or not defined, by the trap of loyalty? I set out to complete this study because black women's experiences in America are not widely represented in academic texts. If studies mention race, they are usually referring to black men; if they mention gender, they usually mean white women. This study fills the gap to explore black women's unique place in American society.

This study also was important because it is a study about me, a black woman. The most difficult part of this project was separating myself as a researcher from the

participants, although their experiences mirror my own. The analysis of data from this

study is affected by my own experiences with racism and sexism, as my perspectives are

influenced by the way I interact with society on a daily basis. I believe this study would

have produced different results if I did not relate to the participants. My identity as a

black woman allows me to use cultural cues and historical context to delve into issues

surrounding black women, while respecting their unique perspectives and identities. If I

were unable to relate to black women, I could have an issue like the lack of inclusive

language that occurred with the black LGBTQ community.

Black women's unique dual and multiple identities have been overlooked by

American society since the creation of this country. Although black women's

contributions to America, their communities, and families are often overlooked and

ignored, they continue to support groups who never reciprocate their effort. Black

women in America have worked and continue to work to ensure the American Dream is

attainable for everyone, except themselves, making black women the true "backbone" of

America.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM A FUGITIVE SLAVE

LETTER FROM A FUGITIVE SLAVE. Slaves Sold under Peculiar Circumstances

Harriet A. Jacobs, 1813-1897

From *New York Daily Tribune* New York, June 21, 1853, p. 6.

[We publish the subjoined communication exactly as written by the author, with the exception of corrections in punctuation and spelling, and the omission of one or two passages.—Ed.]

SIR: Having carefully read your paper for some months I became very much interested in some of the articles and comments written on Mrs. Tyler's Reply to the Ladies of England. Being a slave myself, I could not have felt otherwise. Would that I could write an article worthy of notice in your columns. As I never enjoyed the advantages of an education, therefore I could not study the arts of reading and writing, yet poor as it may be, I had rather give it from my own hand, than have it said that I employed others to do it for me. The truth can never be told so well through the second and third person as from yourself. But I am straying from the question. As Mrs. Tyler and her friend Bhains were so far used up, that he could not explain what those peculiar circumstances were, let one whose peculiar sufferings justifies her in explaining it for Mrs. Tyler.

I was born a slave, reared in the Southern hot-bed until I was the mother of two children, sold at the early age of two and four years old. I have been hunted through all of the Northern States, but no, I will not tell you of my own suffering—no, it would harrow up my soul, and defeat the object that I wish to pursue. Enough—the dregs of that bitter cup have been my bounty for many years.

And as this is the first time that I ever took my pen in hand to make such an attempt, you will not say that it is fiction, for had I the inclination I have neither the brain or talent to write it. But to this very peculiar circumstance under which slaves are sold.

My mother was held as property by a maiden lady; when she marries, my younger sister was in her fourteenth year, whom they took into the family. She was as gentle as she was beautiful. Innocent and guileless child, the light of our desolate hearth! But oh, my heart bleeds to tell you of the misery and degradation she was forced to suffer in slavery. The monster who owned her had no humanity in his soul. The most sincere affection that his heart was capable of, could not make him faithful to his beautiful and wealthy bride the short time of three months, but every stratagem was used to seduce my sister. Mortified and tormented beyond endurance, this child came and threw herself on her mother's bosom, the only place where she could seek refuge from her persecutor; and yet she could not protect her child that she bore into the world. On that bosom with bitter tears she told her troubles, and entreated her mother to save her. And oh, Christian mothers! you that have daughters of your own, can you think of your sable sisters without offering a prayer to that God who created all in their behalf! My poor mother, naturally high-spirited, smarting under what she considered as the wrongs and outrages which her child had to bear, sought her master, entreating him to spare her child. Nothing could exceed his rage at this what he called impertinence. My mother was dragged to jail, there remained twenty-five days, with Negro traders to come in as they liked to examine her, as she was offered for sale. My sister was told that she must yield, or never expect to see her mother again. There were three younger children; on no other condition could she be restored to them, without the sacrifice of one. That child gave herself up to her master's bidding, to save one that was dearer to her than life itself. And can you, Christian, find it in your heart to despise her? Ah, no! not even Mrs. Tyler; for though we believe that the vanity of a name would lead her to bestow her hand where her heart could never go with it, yet, with all her faults and follies, she is nothing more than a woman. For if her domestic hearth is surrounded with slaves, ere long before this she has opened her eyes to the evils of slavery, and that the mistress as well as the slave must submit to the indignities and vices imposed on them by their lords of body and soul. But to one of those peculiar circumstances.

At fifteen, my sister held to her bosom an innocent offspring of her guilt and misery. In this way she dragged a miserable existence of two years, between the fires of her mistress's jealousy and her master's brutal passion. At seventeen, she gave birth to another helpless infant, heir to all the evils of slavery. Thus life and its sufferings was meted out to her until her twenty-first year. Sorrow and suffering has made its ravages upon her—she was less the object to be desired by the fiend who had crushed her to the earth; and as her children grew, they bore too strong a resemblance to him who desired to give them no other inheritance save Chains and Handcuffs, and in the dead hour of the night, when this young, deserted mother lay with her little ones clinging around her, little dreaming of the dark and inhuman plot that would be carried out into execution before another dawn, and when the sun rose on God's beautiful earth, that broken-hearted mother was far on her way to the capitol of Virginia. That day should have refused her light to so disgraceful and inhuman an act in your boasted country of Liberty. Yet, reader, it is true, those two helpless

children were the sons of one of your sainted Members in Congress; that agonized mother, his victim and slave. And where she now is God only knows, who has kept a record on high of all that she has suffered on earth.

And, you would exclaim, Could not the master have been more merciful to his children? God is merciful to all of his children, but it is seldom that a slaveholder has any mercy for hs [sic] slave child. And you will believe it when I tell you that mother and her children were sold to make room for another sister, who was now the age of that mother when she entered the family. And this selling appeased the mistress's wrath, and satisfied her desire for revenge, and made the path more smooth for her young rival at first. For there is a strong rivalry between a handsome mulatto girl and a jealous and faded mistress, and her liege lord sadly neglects his wife or doubles his attentions, to save him being suspected by his wife. Would you not think that Southern Women had cause to despise that Slavery which forces them to bear so much deception practiced by their husbands? Yet all this is true, for a slaveholder seldom takes a white mistress, for she is an expensive commodity, not as submissive as he would like to have her, but more apt to be tyrannical; and when his passion seeks another object, he must leave her in quiet possession of all the gewgaws that she has sold herself for. But not so with his poor slave victim, that he has robbed of everything that can make life desirable; she must be torn from the little that is left to bind her to life, and sold by her seducer and master, caring not where, so that it puts him in possession of enough to purchase another victim. And such are the peculiar circumstances of American Slavery —of all the evils in God's sight to most to be abhorred.

Perhaps while I am writing this you too, dear Emily, may be on your way to the Mississippi River, for those peculiar circumstances occur every day in the midst of my poor oppressed fellow-creatures in bondage. And oh ye Christians, while your arms are extended to receive the oppressed of all nations, while you exert every power of your soul to assist them to raise funds, put weapons in their hands, tell them to return to their own country to slay every foe until they break the accursed yoke from off their necks, not buying and selling this they never do under any circumstances.

And because one friend of a slave has dared to tell of their wrongs you would annihilate her. But in Uncle Tom's Cabin she has not told the half. Would that I had one spark from her store house of genius and talent I would tell you of my own sufferings—I would tell you of wrongs that Hungary has never inflicted, nor England ever dreamed of in this free country where all nations fly for liberty, equal rights and protection under your stripes and stars. It should be stripes and scars, for they go along with Mrs. Tyler's peculiar circumstances, of which I have told you only one.

<div align="right">A FUGITIVE SLAVE.</div>

SNCC POSITION PAPER   (Name witheld by Request)

1. Staff was involved inCrucial constitutional revisions at the Atlanta staff meeting in October. A large committee was appointed to present revisions to the staff. The committee was all men.

2. Two organizers were working together to form a farmers league. Without asking any questions, the male organizer immediately assigned the clerical work to the female organizer although both had had equal experience in organizing campaigns.

3. Although there are women in Mississippi project who have been working as long as some of the men, the leadership group in COFO is all men.

4. A woman in a field office wondered why she was held responsible for day to day decisions, only to find out later that she had been appointed project director but not told.

5. A fall 1964 personnel and resources report on Mississippi projects lists the number of people in each project. The section on Laurel however, lists not the number of persons, but "three girls."

6. One of SNCC's main administrative officers apologizes for appointment of a woman as interim project director in a key Mississippi project area.

7. A veteran of two years work for SNCC in two states spends her day typing and doing clerical work for other people in her project.

8. Any woman in SNCC, no matter what her position or experience, has been asked to take minutes in a meeting when she and other women are outnumbered by men.

9. The names of several new attorneys entering a state project this past summer were posted in a central movement office. The first initial and last name of each lawyer was listed. Next to one name was written: (girl).

10. Capable, responsible and experienced women who are in leadership positions can expect to have to defer to a man on their project for final decision making.

11. A session at the recent October staff meeting in Atlanta was the first large meeting in the past couple of years where a woman was asked to chair.

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Undoubtedly this list will seem strange to some, petty to others, laugh-
able to most. The list could continue as far as there are women in the
movement. Except that most women don't talk about these kinds of incidents,
because the whole subject is discussable -- strange to some, petty to others,
laughable to most.

The average white person finds it difficult to understand why the Negro
resents being called "boy", or being thought of as "musical" and "athletic,"
because the average white person doesn't realize that <u>he assumes he is
superior</u>. And naturally he doesn't understand the problem of paternalism.
So too the average SNCC worker finds if difficult to discuss the woman
problem because of the assumption of male superiority. Assumptions of
male superiority are as widespread and deep rooted and every much as crip-
pling to the woman as the assumptions of white supremacy are to the Negro.
Consider why it is in SNCC that women who are competent, qualified and
experienced, are automatically assigned to the "female" kinds of jobs such
as: typing, desk work, telephone work, filing, library work, cooking and
the assistant kind of administrative work but rarely the "executive"
kind.

The woman in SNCC is often in the same position as that token Negro
hired in a corporation. The management thinkg that it has done its bit.
Yet, every day the Negro bears an atmosphere, attitudes and actions which
are tinged with condescension and paternalism, ahe most telling of which
are when he is not promoted as/equally or less skilled whites are.
                                    the

This paper is anonymous. Think about the kinds of things the author, if
made known, would have to suffer becuase of rasing this kind of discussion.
Nothing so final as being fired or outright exclusion, but the kinds of
things which are killing to the insides --insinuations, ridicule, over-

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exaggerated compensations.

This paper is presented anyway because it needs to be made know that many women in the movement are not "happy and contented" with their status. It needs to be made known that much talent and experience a re being wasted by this movement when women are not given jobs commensurate with their abilities. It needs to be known that just as Negroes were the crucial factor in the ecnomy of the cotton South, so too in SNCC, women are the crucial factor that keeps the movement running ona day to day basis. Yet they are not given equal say-so when it comes to day to day decision making. What can be done? Probably nothing right away. Most men in this movement are probably too threatened by the possibility of serious discussion on this subject. Perhaps this is because they have recently broken away from a matriarchal framework under which they may have grown up. Then too, many women are as unaware and insensitive to this subject as men, just as there are many Negroes who don't understand they are not free or who want to be part of white America. They don't understand that they have to give up their sould and stay in their place to be accepted. So too, many women, in order to be accepted by men, or men's terms, give themselves up to that caricature of what a woman is-- unthinking, pliable, an ornament to please the man.

Maybe the only thing that can come out of this paper is discussion--amidst the laughter -- but still discussion. (Those who laugh the hardest are often those who need the crutch of male supremacy the most.) And maybe some women will begin to recognize tday to day discriminations. And maybe sometime

in the future the whole of the women in this movement will become so alert as to force the rest of the movement to stop the discrimination and start the slow process of changing values and ideas so that all of us gradually come to understand that this is no more a man's world than it is a white world.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Pseudonym & Color	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation	Age	Marital Status	Highest Lvl of EDU	Additional Information
Kala	Woman (Transgender)	Heterosexual	32	Single	Completed College	Age of transition 20
Mia	Woman	Bi	25	Single	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	
Angel	Woman	Heterosexual	21	Single	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	
Evy	Woman	Heterosexual	21	Single	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	
Leela	Woman	Heterosexual	25	Single	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	
Jackie	Woman	Heterosexual	37	Single	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	White mother; Canadian-American dual citizenship
Seaira	Femme	Heterosexual	34	Married (Legally separated)	Enrolled/Completed Post Bac	White mother; Didn't attend women's march in protest
Tameeka	Woman	Heterosexual	24	SINGLE	Some College	Didn't attend women's march in protest

APPENDIX D

FLYER

Are you a black woman?

We want to know about your experiences!

Purpose of Study:

I aim to understand how the experiences of black women in the United States are shaped by the multiple identities they simultaneously hold.

I am seeking participants who:

- Identify as a black woman. This study uses an inclusive definition of woman, regardless of sex at birth.
- Currently reside in the Piedmont Triad.
- Are at least 18 years of age.
- Have attended **BOTH** a Black Lives Matter protest and the Women's March on Washington (or a local related women's march).

Interested participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey to determine eligibility. Selected participants will participate in one-on-one in-depth interviews, lasting 1-2 hours, about topics relating to the participant's relationship to society, family, and perceptions of themselves. All participants will receive a $25 Target gift card upon completion of the interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Toya Dixon at lsdixon2@uncg.edu.

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LOCATIONS

1. Facebook: Groups listed below
   a. Black Lives Matter Greensboro
   b. Black Lives Matter Winston Salem
   c. Black Girls and Women Matter
   d. NC Queer Troublmakers
   e. Queer People of Color Collective
   f. Women's March on Washington and Beyond- North Carolina
2. Community Resource Centers: Community Boards at all locations
   a. Goodwill
      i. 2701 University Parkway: Winston Salem
      ii. 1235 S Eugene St: Greensboro
   b. Beloved Community Center
   c. Super G Mart
   d. Interactive Resource Center
   e. Renaissance Community Co-Op
3. Purposeful Sampling

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY*

1. Have you attended a Black Lives Matter protest?
   - ❏ Yes
   - ❏ No

2. If yes to number one, when and where did you attend?

   _____

3. Did you attend the Women's March on Washington?
   - ❏ Yes
   - ❏ No

4. Did you attend a local women's march?
   - ❏ Yes
   - ❏ No

5. If yes to number 4, when and where did you attend?

   _____

6. How old are you (in years)? _____

7. How do you classify your gender identity? _____

8. Age of transition (if applicable) _____

9. Do you have children?
   - ❏ Yes; How many? _____
   - ❏ No

10. What is your highest level of education?
    - ❏ Some high school or less
    - ❏ Completed high school
    - ❏ Some college
    - ❏ Completed college
    - ❏ Enrolled/Completed post-baccalaureate (professional or graduate school)

11. What is your marital status?
    - ❏ Single (never married)

❏ Cohabiting

❏ Married

❏ Separated/Divorced

❏ Widowed

12. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

❏ Heterosexual

❏ Lesbian

❏ Gay

❏ Bisexual

❏ Questioning or unsure

❏ I prefer not to respond

To be completed on Qualtrics by all potential research participants

APPENDIX G

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Analysis of the Trap of Loyalty

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Latoya Dixon (PI); Dr. Cindy Brooks Dollar (FA) and Dr. Saundra D. Westervelt (FA)

Participant's Name: _____

<u>What are some general things you should know about research studies?</u>
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future.   There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?
This is a research project. Your participation is voluntary. This study will explore black women's perceptions of their status, position and well-being in society, their community, and family.

Why are you asking me?
Participants in the study have self-identified as black women (cisgender or transgender) and attended the Women's March on Washington (or a local women's march) and a Black Lives Matter protest. You must be 18 or older to participate.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?
Participants in the study will participate in a 1-2 hour in person interview, including a pre-screen demographic survey, with the principal researcher, LaToya Dixon. The interview will occur in a mutually agreed upon, quiet, public or semi-public location.

Is there any audio/video recording?
Interviews for each participant will be recorded using a digital audio recording device. The recording will not be published in any way. The file will be held on a password protected external hard drive kept in the principal investigator's locked file cabinet.

However, because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described below.

Written transcripts will be available to the research team and the IRB. The research team will consist of the principal researcher, LaToya Dixon, and the Thesis Committee, Dr. Saundra Westervelt, Dr. Cindy Dollar, and Dr. Shelly Brown-Jeffy.

How will you keep my information confidential?
Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym to be used on all documentation to ensure participants' confidentiality. Only the principal investigator and faculty advisors will know the real identity of participants. A master list of the pseudonyms will be kept on a separate password protected hard drive in a faculty advisor's locked filing cabinet. The master list will be destroyed 1 year after the completion of the study.

Participants will NOT be identified in any reports or publications resulting from this study. The audio recordings and interview transcripts will be stored on a separate external hard drive and kept in a locked file cabinet that only the principal researcher will have access to. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

After completion of the study, transcripts and recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet indefinitely.

What are the risks to me?
The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. The primary risk is the discussion of this information may cause some stress.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact LaToya Dixon, Dr. Cindy Brooks Dollar, or Dr. Saundra D. Westervelt who may be reached at (334) 334-5409. You may also reach Latoya Dixon at lsdixon2@uncg.edu.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Benefits of Study
This study will be an opportunity to examine the perspectives of an often-overlooked group, black women.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
Participants will receive a $25 Target gift card upon completion of the interview.

What if I want to leave the study?
You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read and fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study described to you.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Question: In what ways is the black woman's experience in the United States today defined, or not defined, by the three defining qualities of the trap of loyalty?

Defining Qualities:

Q1: Black women are in a better social position than black men.
Q2: Black women are expected to endure their abuse in silence.
Q3: Black women should buffer their family from the consequences of public racism.

The following questions will serve as an interview guide, though respondents' answers may lead to unforeseen questions.

Interview Questions:

1. Why did you attend the Women's March?
    a. How does sexism impact your life?
        i. How do you deal with it?
        ii. Do you think your racial identity affects how you view or experience sexism?
    b. What are issues facing women?
    c. Which issues do you think are the most important? Explain.
2. Why did you attend a Black Lives Matter protest?
    a. How does racism impact your life?
        i. How do you deal with it?
        ii. Do you think your gender identity affects how you view or experience racism?
    b. What do you think are the most pressing issues facing black women in America today?
    c. What do you think are the most pressing issues facing black men in America

today?

    d. Which do you think are the most important? Explain.

3. What does it mean to you to be a black woman?

    a. When did you begin to understand black womanhood?

    b. Do you feel like you must choose between being black and a woman? How does that make you feel?

    c. Does it depend on the situation? How so? Examples.

4. Which do you think affects your life more, racism or sexism? How so?

5. Do you feel expectations from your family/community about how to cope with racism, sexism? How so?

6. How do you contribute to your family (immediate and/or extended)?

    a. How do you feel about that role?

    b. What do you think is the role of black women (and femmes) in the family? Why do you believe that?

    c. What do you think is the role of black men in the family? Why do you believe that?

    d. Do you think the roles of black men and women in the family differ? How so?

7. What are different issues that affect black men and women?

    a. Have any of the aforementioned issues affected your relationship with black women? How so?

    b. Have any of the aforementioned issues affected your relationship with black men? How so?

    c. Would you say that black men or women have more issues to deal with?

        i. Why do you believe that?

8. Can you explain why you do or do not believe that black women are victims of racism and/or sexism?

    a. Why is it hard for black women to call themselves victims?

    b. What would happen if black women owned their victimization?

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW NOTES

(to be completed by the interviewer)

Participant Name:_____

Location of Interview:_____

Date:_____   Length of Interview:_____

1. How did the interviewee appear to me?

2. Disposition to talk/Motivation to take part in the interview

3. Gestures, eye-contact, non-verbal signals

4. Interaction during interview/difficult passages

5. Main points from interview

6. Other relevant observations

APPENDIX J

DATA ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

MAIN THEME:				
Quote	**Pseudonym***	**Page(s)**	**Subtheme(s)**	**NOTE**
	Ex. Jane Doe			
	Ex. Maria Doe			

*Each participant assigned pseudonym and specific color